

Governors Report 2021



“Rudgwick Primary School aims to be a community where everyone is inspired by a love of learning, is supported and encouraged to believe in themselves and is enabled to achieve success.”

Who are the Governors?

As the School’s Governing Body, we are made up of a mixture of elected and appointed individuals. Some of us have a particular specialism, but together we work to fulfil our role, as defined by the Government and supported by the Local Authority. Governors are the strategic leaders of the school, and have a vital role to play in making sure that every child gets the best possible education. Rudgwick Primary School’s governing body consisted 10 core members and 1 Associate Member; they are made up as follows:

5 Co-opted Governors – David Buckley (Chair), Joy Rolland (Vice-Chair, Inclusion), Martin Lundy-Lester (Vice-Chair, Disadvantaged Children, Safeguarding, Schools Financial Values Standard)
Matt Gilmour (Finance, resigned July), Sharon Mellors (Safeguarding),
1 Local Authority Governor – Mike Flower (Health & Safety)
2 Parent Governors – Fiona Bull (Performance Management, Link, Early Years Foundation Stage),
Jane Thomas (Performance Management, Website Compliance, Sports Premium, Curriculum)
Headteacher - Serena Nicholls (Headteacher Jan - Sept) Terry Ryan (Headteacher Sept 2021 onwards)
Staff Governor - Hayley Edwards (Deputy Headteacher)
1 Associate Member – Ed Nice (resigned Sept 2021)
Clerk to the Governors – Kate Mayo

Our role is primarily to oversee the management side of a school: strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. We hope to enable the school to run as effectively as possible, working alongside the Headteacher and their senior leaders and supporting teachers to provide excellent education to children. We are there to both support them and to act as critical friends. We do our very best to help make our school the very best it can be for the benefit of our children. In particular, we are responsible for:

- **Strategic Vision, values and ethos of the school.** Along with the Headteacher, it is the job of a governing body to set the school's aims and objectives of how the school will develop and improve. We set policies, help formulate plans and agree targets to help the school achieve these objectives, as well as regularly reviewing their strategic framework in light of that progress.
- **Accountability.** We are there to support and challenge the school's senior leadership team. In particular we are there to hold the Headteacher, to account for securing the best possible outcomes for all the pupils. Through asking pertinent questions, school visits and assessing internal data we aim to ensure high standards for all our children.
- **Oversee Financial Management.** Whilst we are extremely fortunate to have a very effective Business Manager, the governing body is responsible for setting and checking Financial priorities through the school development plan and the annual budget. In particular we also ensure that Pupil Premium and Sports Premium money is spent accordingly.

So what did we achieve this past year?

Our first meeting was an emergency meeting on 2nd January to discuss the re-opening of the School on the 3rd January. Ensuring that all relevant risk assessments had been covered, On the 3rd January we went back into lockdown after only one day of term. This was an indicator of some of the challenges the school as a whole would face during 2021.

Remote Learning

- During lockdown we ensured that the welfare of the children and staff was the primary concern in all decision making. Agreeing School Risk Assessment and Risk Management policies during Covid 19.
- Ensure that remote learning was taking place as set out by the Government.
- Ensuring that all stakeholders felt engaged by the school. We undertook Staff Survey, a Parent and a Pupil survey in March 2021. Year 6 Pupils were also surveyed on their experiences at school in July 2021. The purpose of the survey was to assess safeguarding, engagement, staff and pupil welfare. We asked about remote learning over the first part of 2021 and how effective they felt it had been.

Allocation of Resources

- With a lack of data from national testing the school went through its own assessment of children and identified the needs of each individual in "catching up". We supported the Head in allocating any additional funds towards the most proven and effective measures to assist those children who had felt the largest impact of lockdown.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Covid Recovery plan for the school.
- Ensuring the Pupil Premium budget is spent effectively. This is to do our best to meet the needs of every single pupil and ensure there is not a gap between the attainment of children from different social backgrounds.

Safeguarding

- A continuing focus on Safeguarding – ensuring all staff, governors and involved individuals are fully trained and aware. Ongoing SCR checks and premises maintenance. A specific working group created to monitor and advise on Safeguarding.

Curriculum

- Throughout lockdown, Rudgwick Primary, and in particular the Assistant Head and Subject Leaders, created and rolled out a new bespoke curriculum to Rudgwick Primary. This was broken into study units,

which incorporate several areas of the curriculum into one unit to allow for a deeper level of creativity and thinking to be developed. This was a large task and, once school visits were possible, we had the pleasure of seeing the new curriculum and agreeing on future monitoring and assessment.

- During the summer the governors focussed on monitoring transitions and how they were being managed. These not only included Year 6 going onto secondary school but also whether classes were “ready to progress” up to the next year.

Headteacher recruitment

- Sadly, Serena Nicholls resigned for personal reasons in May, and so we were tasked with recruiting a new Head. We undertook advertising the role in June and interviewed in July, with the view of having a new Head start in January. We were delighted with the high calibre of applicant and agreed to appoint Mr Terry Ryan to join the Rudgwick Community. His current school agreed to kindly release him early so that he was able to start in September 2021. This was fantastic and allowed a handover and a consistent approach and leadership for the school and in particular for the children.
- As part of our role as Headteacher performance role we are there to ensure that the new head is supported and has access to advice and mentoring as required.

How did we make a difference?

Whatever we, as a Governing Body do, the question that must always be at the forefront of our minds is “How does this impact on the children?” To this end our main activities were to:

- Assess and agree risk management throughout varied stages of lockdown and bubbles.
- Ensure effective remote learning occurring
- Considering Staff welfare and workloads
- Considering pressures for families and how best to deliver remote learning for the children.
- Review policies
- Ensure Performance Management was effective
- As no national testing took place in 2020, we relied on internal data and teacher feedback. We monitored this where possible with regards to improving outcomes for the children.
- Make sure the budget supports the School Development Plan
- Ensured everyone felt they had a voice through staff, parent and pupil surveys, young governor meetings.
- Where feasible we undertook School visits to observe: Pupil Premium Review (Feb), Health and Safety Reviews (May & Oct), Assessment and Covid Recovery plan (May), Early years Foundation Stages (May), Personal Development (May), new Curriculum (March & Sept) and Maths and Maths progression (done remotely Sept), English Leader Report (July).
- Exit interviews were conducted with year 6 pupils (July) and Serena Nicholls as Headteacher (July)

Our own improvement?

As a group we also recognise the need to keep improving our own skills, knowledge and approach. The Governing Body meets 6 times a year, in person or by Zoom, alternating between Curriculum and Standards meetings and Business meetings. We retain one smaller committee which is Staff and Finance. Throughout the year all governors take part in individual training in order for us to be effective in our role.

- All governors undertake training in Safeguarding and Prevent.
- The whole Governing body undertook training in Preparation for OFSTED, in order to understand the new criteria
- Mike Flower trained in Governing Body responsibilities to Health and Safety (NGA March).
- Matt Gilmour completed Head Teacher’s Performance Management training.

- Jane Thomas and Hayley Edwards undertook Safer Recruiting in Education May.
- Jane Thomas did Understanding of Quality of Education and Curriculum June.

We now have a gap for both a co-opted Governor and potentially an associated governor for Finance. To this end we have published an article in the local magazine and have had a positive response. This bodes well for the continued strength of the governing body and the school.

We would like to thank Miss Nicholls for all her efforts over the last year. She rose to each challenge and calmly led our school through an unprecedented year of change. Likewise, we would like to thank each and every member of staff for all their hard work during the year. The healthy position the school now finds itself in, is due to them consistently going above and beyond to prepare our pupils for life, both academically and socially despite the challenges of 2020. Finally, we would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr Ryan and thank him for working so hard to gain such an understanding of Rudgwick primary, its staff, pupils and workings. In a short period of time Mr Ryan has succeeded in becoming part of our school community. We are delighted that he has joined us and look forward to 2022.