



Kingswood, Leeds and Broomfield CE Primary, Platts Heath  
and Ulcombe CE Primary Schools.

## **Chair of Governors Annual Report 2020-2021**

I began my report last year writing about unprecedented circumstances, at the end of some of the most difficult months most of us had ever experienced and unaware 2020/21 would turn out to be even more challenging!

We have continued as Governors to fulfill our responsibilities and the main difference which has sometimes been extremely challenging has been the restrictions preventing us from going into Aspire Schools. The lack of personal face to face contact has meant we have needed to think 'inside, outside and around the box' to ensure all our monitoring and reports were done remotely including all our Board Meetings.

Throughout the lockdowns the Aspire Federation have provided continuous education, we have a very committed dedicated staff who under the leadership of our Executive Headteacher, Emma Hickling and three Heads of Schools, Emma Masters, Lynsey Sanchez-Daviu and Fiona Steer have worked extremely hard to ensure our children have continued to receive a quality education, often under difficult personal circumstances. We also acknowledge the difficulties faced by many parents and carers, with home schooling and working from home, and the stress and financial implications of no work.

During 2020/21 the Governors met virtually, monitoring, evaluating and challenging the core activities within our Schools. Governors would normally visit all four of our schools regularly and clearly this has not been possible. However, we are also aware as we have four individual Schools in the Federation of the potential risk of going between the four Schools which cannot be disregarded in the current circumstances. We have therefore agreed as a Board to review our strategy on School Visits at each and every Board Meeting in the coming year, to ensure we are fully up to date. Also Governors are under no obligation to do face to face visits as virtual monitoring may be just as effective when carried out appropriately.

The Board acknowledges Governors need to be cautious about visiting one or more of the four individual Schools and this needs to be fully discussed with the Executive

Headteacher and/or relevant Heads of School and/or Senior Leader before any face to face visits are planned.

Further, we have agreed Governors should not visit more than one School in a single day.

All Staff continue to regularly lateral flow test themselves and as Governors we also need to be extremely cautious, it is therefore, strongly recommended we do a lateral flow test the morning before going into a Federation School (which is in line with Government Guidance) even when double vaccinated. We also recommend Governors continue to wear face masks as best practice. This was fully discussed at our September Board Meeting and unanimously agreed.

Governors will be and are constantly mindful to protect pupils, staff and themselves.

I am asked about Governance and the purpose of Governance so have attempted to hopefully give you a brief insight into our role as Governors.

1) The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

2) All Governing Boards, no matter what type of school or how many schools they govern, have three core functions:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;** *(please find our updated version attached below)*
- **Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.**

Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by questioning, examining and reporting the progress in any given area, by referring to the key targets and milestones in the Federation and four individual School Plans and reporting back to the next Governing Board Meeting where it can be discussed and challenged to ensure evidence of implementation and impact. We also monitor the implementation and impact of major policies across all the Schools for example, Pupil Premium, Sports Funding and more recently Covid catch up funding. Thus individual Governors report directly to the next Board Meeting on their school virtual meetings or visits which ensures all aspects of the quality of the education and outcomes are constantly under review.

There are also certain areas that have an individual Governor as defined by the Department of Education such as Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Mental Health and Finance which are discussed at every Board Meeting.

The minutes of our Governing Board Meetings once agreed are public documents and can be obtained on request from the School Offices. Details of Governors attendance at Meetings is also recorded and updated regularly on the Federation Website.

### **Our priorities for 2021/22**

- \* To focus on the Wellbeing and Mental Health of all our Aspire Children.
- \* To monitor the Wellbeing, Mental Health and workload of staff.
- \* To constantly improve the quality of our monitoring and challenge the impact of the recovery curriculum in Term 1&2 and adapt to the School Plans from January 2022.

- \* To ensure all Governors are trained and fully engaged with SIAMS in our two Church Schools.
- \* To continue to recruit new Governors to raise the profile and skills of Governors.
- \* To engage more with parents /carers to have their views to guide and maximise our strategic leadership within the Federation and the four individual Schools
- \* To ensure strong governance which is challenging to drive the constant improvement of all aspects of education within the four Federation Schools.

Throughout the pandemic to date, all the staff across all our four Schools have worked closely and tirelessly to always ensure the safety of pupils and staff and still maintain a high quality of education for all our children. Our staff have had to at speed learn to plan their lessons and teach online, adapt to Google Classrooms, and there have been so many changes adapting to constant updates from both the Government and KCC (Kent County Council) although still always ensuring the children are at the forefront of everything they do.

**As Governors continue to monitor the impact and progress of all pupils, we thank all our Staff most sincerely for everything they have done and continue to do for Aspire.**

Several Governors have resigned through the year due to the unforeseen consequences linked to Covid, Joanne Watts who we thank her for all the time and commitment given to both KULB and the Aspire Federation, and a more recently appointed Governor Jacky Offen and our thanks to her for her enthusiastic input, we also welcome back Richard Stansfield after a leave of absence. We have advertised and interviewed and hope to shortly announce several new Governors joining the Aspire Board. We will then produce updated photographs of the entire Board of Governors for notice boards in all the Schools so everyone is more familiar with us all and the areas / roles we have as our monitoring priorities.

We are a very committed, busy proactive Governing Board always looking for new enthusiastic Governors, if you would like to discuss this interesting, voluntary role please do not hesitate to contact me and my details are below for your convenience

As we move forward into a new exciting academic year 2021/22 we look forward to the challenges and changes as these often bring new opportunities, the Governors have a wide variety of transferable skills and experience with one common interest ensuring the best possible education for every single individual child in our Federation Schools.

Finally, we welcome all comments and suggestions from parents, carers, staff, and other members of the school community who can always contact me directly by email or via any of the school offices.

Warm wishes



Annie Allum  
Chair of Governors  
The ASPIRE Federation  
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October 2021



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## **The ASPIRE Federation**

A School Partnership of Four Primary Schools in Rural England

Our Motto : ‘ **We Aspire to Inspire** ’

**Our Values** – using the initials of the names of the schools.

**K** – Kindness

**U** – Understanding

**P** – Patience

**H** – Honesty

**L** – Love

**B** – Boldness

### **Our Mission Statement**

The ASPIRE Federation will nurture curiosity and creativity through an inspiring, active, broad and engaging curriculum, where learning is at the heart of all that we do. Our children learn to become resilient and self-assured in environments where pastoral care is excellent and wellbeing and mental health underpin each daily aspect of our community. Everyone is challenged and encouraged to thrive and achieve as individuals, preparing them for their role as caring citizens in modern Britain.

### **Our Vision**

We aim to be an outstanding Federation at the heart of our culturally diverse communities, striving for excellence, enabling our children to achieve their highest potential in all areas of the curriculum in line with each school’s values and beliefs.