



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



Chair of Governors Annual Report 2023-2024

December 2024

I thought it would be helpful to provide an update / Annual Report to summarise the work of the Aspire Federation Governing Board and reflect on 2023-2024.

As you were aware from previous letters Aspire were exploring the possibility of becoming a Multi Academy Trust. This unfortunately was not to be for a variety of reasons:

- The DFE decided a Trust of just small rural Primary Schools would no longer be supported and were suggesting we linked in with Secondary Schools and Aspire did not want to deviate from our original vision
- The new Labour Government are no longer supporting new Academy Trusts
- There is no longer funding to support the development of Trusts.

We therefore plan to use our expertise and resources to continue to improve and develop our 4 schools as a Federation.

Financially, we are in a positive position and ended the year with a healthy surplus carried forward in all our schools. This has given us the flexibility to spend money on all 4 sites and we now also have caretaker support in all 4 schools and I hope you are all beginning to see the benefits of this additional maintenance support.

The number of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) entering our four schools has continued to increase. Fortunately our amazing staff always seek to provide the best possible educational experience for all our pupils. We have increased our SEND staff in an attempt to alleviate some of the pressure and appointed a senior SENCO to head this vital team. We also now have a SEN assistant and a Family Liaison Officer (FLO), with a second SEN assistant starting in January. Another of our Senior Leaders is also starting a provision in January for some of our children to combine sport and nurture.

We are hoping that the announcement by the new Government that Education is one of their key priorities for the coming year will result in some alleviation of the financial pressures that we are currently facing and will improve the support for and management of SEND in all our schools. The intention seems to be to build upon the Green Paper produced by the previous Government in promoting more coherent provision for children with SEND from nursery through to tertiary education, with the focus on inclusion something the Federation is passionate about.

This would mean children receive the appropriate support and learning opportunities in whichever educational environment has been diagnosed best for them. Although the plan for this will be delivered across the local community in a more flexible manner and this means funding is changing dramatically so we wait for further details. There is also a proposal to have mental health professionals based in every school so again we wait for greater detail.

As a reminder to everyone - **a brief outline of Governance particularly for our new parents:**

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;**
- **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.**

The Aspire Governing Board

The current structure of the Aspire Federation Governing Board is as follows:-

- 1 Executive Headteacher
- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 9 Co-Opted Governors
- 2 Foundation Governors
- 1 Staff Governor

We are currently looking to recruit both Co-Opted and Foundation Governors. Governors need a variety of transferable skills and experience, whilst all sharing one common interest, ensuring the best possible education for the children in our 4 Federation Schools.

Governors are recruited to match skills identified to provide effective school governance and are reviewed annually using the National Governors Association designed skills audit

which relates to the DfE's Competency Framework for Governance. Governors strive to keep up to date with the requirements and therefore undertake mandatory and relevant training during each academic year.

Monitoring and evaluation are the work of Governors and in order for these to be successful Governors are linked to the subject leaders and therefore join the Extended Learning Walks and visit classes in all the Schools on a regular basis, observe book looks and listen to pupil voice to gain an informative overview of subjects.

We also have specific responsibilities, some statutory such as Safeguarding, SEND, Health and Safety. Our Governors generously devote considerable time to support the strategic leadership and management of the Aspire Federation Schools and it is that commitment that has played a vital role in making the Aspire Federation the exciting, dynamic success we see today.

We value energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the role and would be delighted to hear from anyone who is interested in becoming a School Governor.

Please contact Sam Branchett, Office Manager for further information or an application form or as Chair of Governors I am always happy to call you for an initial informal chat. Email: office@plattsheathkentsch.co.uk or contact any school office.

Aspire Federation Governing Board Priorities 2024 - 2025

- * To support all Governors with the latest approach to monitoring with Extended Learning Walks especially new Governors and help embed and develop their knowledge, through mentoring and training including preparation for Ofsted and SIAMS inspections.
- * To maintain strong strategic challenging governance and continue to drive for constant improvement in all aspects of education within the Federation Schools.
- * To promote and support an ethos where wellbeing and mental health is at the forefront of every approach we adopt, where we encourage a safe and secure environment throughout the Federation for all stakeholders. Thus encouraging all adults from Governors to Parents and Carer, to treat each other with dignity and respect in all areas of communication and to ensure there is a clear reporting system and robust accountability when this is not adhered to.
- * To establish good communication by regularly refreshing and updating the Aspire website and developing an Aspire Newsletter.
- * To secure good Governing Board succession planning including recruiting new Co-Opted and Foundation Governors.

Please note: The minutes of the Full Governing Board Meetings are public documents and can be obtained on request from the School Offices. All the details of Governors attendance at meetings is updated regularly and available on our Federation Website.

As some of you may be aware, we were in the window for a (SIAMS) Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools at Ulcombe. The inspection took place in November and I am delighted to be able to confirm we have received the final report and achieved a successful very supportive positive judgement.

We are a very committed Governing Board, always positively encouraging everyone to communicate with us and welcome comments and suggestions from parents, carers, staff, and other members of the school community.
As Chair of Governors, I can always be contacted directly by email or via any of the school offices.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all Governors past and present, our Executive Headteacher, Heads of School, all our Staff and of course, our Clerk to the Governing Board.

On behalf of all the Governing Board I wish everyone

**a Very Merry Christmas
and a
 Happy New Year **

Warm wishes



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December 2024