

Lilleshall School Governor's Report for 2020/21

Executive Summary

For a second school year we have seen disruption to children's learning because of Covid-19 restrictions. Our Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team had to organise teaching around two lockdowns, with restricted learning for all, apart for the start and finish of the school year. Thus the majority of children learnt at home, while the school remained open to teach key/critical worker and vulnerable children. While there were significant challenges for teachers and the Senior Leadership Team in this, the school could see from the progress and attainment of pupils from the previous disruptive year and the enthusiasm with which pupils returned to school after the summer break, that the actions implemented related to in-school and home learning had worked well.

The positive aspects of the way that; under the direction of the Headteacher the school has moved learning forward were captured in the report by our school attached adviser who identified that:

'The school has robust procedures for assessing where children are and addressing their needs both academically and socially. The disruptive year has affected pupils in different ways and staff are sensitive to this. The school and Headteacher have enabled pupils to make the most of the opportunities and both parents and pupils really appreciate the efforts that the school make to ensure children feel safe and secure and well-motivated to learn. Pupil voice sessions carried out by the school, Governors and myself over the year show how much pupils enjoy the school routines even under current restrictions.'

However, it is acknowledged that national Covid-19 restrictions have severely disrupted the education of all pupils with some negatives issues regarding Covid-19 and school life being apparent. Feedback from children and parents and our observations of children during school activities demonstrate that some children have missed out on the social aspects of school which as well as impacting on personal development in that some children show signs of anxiety and lack of resilience, also impacts on their learning interactions. Some children have not had the repetition and reinforcement of learning concepts that they would have had, had they been fully in school so that areas such as spelling and comprehension have become weaker for some. Forthcoming actions will be to target children carefully, ensure the right teachers are with the right groups and provide support to teachers.

The following Governors' annual report looks in more detail at the actions the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team have taken to ensure that despite huge uncertainties and challenges the 2020/21 academic year ended on positive notes.

National lockdown measures and restricted access to school also ensured that Governors faced challenges in perform our governance duties. While Lilleshall School is an outstanding school, it is the role of the Governing body to enable the school to continue in it's development and progression so that our pupils continue to receive the very best primary education. Our governing role in facilitating school improvement covers 4 main areas, our core functions remained throughout the year:

- Ensuring the School management has clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- The School's educational performance
- Ensuring financial resources are well spent.
- Ensuring statutory duties are met, the curriculum offer is appropriate and priorities

approved

The Governing body is composed of 10 members, including myself as Chair, the Head Teacher, a Teaching Governor, co-opted Local Authority Governors and Parent Governors. As well as attending our formal meetings, each Governor has a focus on a particular subject area related to a key priority on our school development plan, for example: numeracy, art, safeguarding. It is a mark of the strength of the School and the commitment of Governors that we have continued year-on-year to have a stable and active Board with the vast majority of our Governors fulfilling their full terms of office. Because of this second year of Covid 19 related disruptions, some of our Governors who were due to complete their term of office, demonstrate their commitment to the school by extending it for another year. This has allowed us stability in our governance activities during this challenging year.

Our governors comply with the statutory requirements to declare any conflicting business or work interests that could adversely impact upon the role and integrity of a school governor. Governors reviewed the national Code of Conduct early in the school year and signed it to acknowledge our compliance.

The School is assessed annually against the **Telford and Wrekin Local Authority's quality performance indicators**, contained within its 'Securing School Improvement Policy'. The education quality assessment this year, again judges the school to be performing at the highest colour coded grading: 'Green'. This means that the School has been assessed as being 'self-improving' – though the actions taken by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body – and has the potential to share effective practice with other schools. Our Head Teacher continues to have a formal role as an Attached Advisor to other local primary schools.

Governors are pleased to see that our Annual Summary Report to the Governing Body compiled by the **Severn Teaching School Alliance School Improvement Team** from visits by its attached adviser states that Lilleshall school demonstrates the following good practice:

- Despite the unexpected and disruptive aspects over 2020-21 the school leadership maintains drive and passion to continue to ensure all pupils attain well and receive the best school opportunity possible. This level of commitment led by the Headteacher was exemplified during the Covid19 closures with the exceptional support provided for pupils by all staff. This was noted by HMI in their consideration of remote learning.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and pupils through a comprehensive programme of visits, monitoring, focused pupil voice sessions and meetings which have continued despite the lockdowns. They hold the Headteacher and staff to account.
- Staff and governors work exceptionally well together, know the school and pupils well and openly share information for the benefit of the pupils.
- Leaders work productively with the local cluster of schools at both primary and secondary level. Senior leaders support other local schools and teachers through the Severn Teaching School Alliance and the headteacher is a School Improvement Adviser providing support for leadership.
- Parent views sought over the year show a very high rate of appreciation for the efforts the school has made to respond to the many changes brought about by the pandemic restriction.
- The school has very good capacity to continue to improve.

Over the following pages I have reflected on our governing role and activities during the last academic year and the impact this has had on the quality of education and the curriculum, pupils'

personal development, behaviour and welfare and their academic performance, along with many adjustments the school had to make as a result of the continuing Covid 19 pandemic.

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

In order to carry out our statutory duties we would normally meet formally as a governing board three times over the school year. Because of Covid 19 lock downs and social distancing requirements, the majority of our autumn and spring term governors formal governors board meetings and committees meet were conducted via Teams video conferencing. With just our late summer term meetings taking place (socially distanced) face-to-face, where we formally review pupil progress and attainment through the Head Teachers Report; took place with a small cohort in the school hall, and with other Governors participating through video conferencing. This enabled Governors to actively question the Head teacher on the contents of those reports and consider responses.

Our formal meetings are:

Full Governors Board Meeting take place three times each year where we formally review pupil progress and attainment through the Head Teachers Report. Governors are active in questioning the Head teacher on the contents of her reports and considering her responses. Prior to our full board meetings, the Head Teacher and myself attend the termly Telford and Wrekin Local Authority Heads and Chairs Briefing sessions. These ensure that we are fully conversant of any national policy changes and are able to benefit from the sharing of good educational practice and national Covid-19 adjustments across the local authority.

Strategic Governors meetings which normally take place three times each year at the beginning of each term. During these we aim to review the work for the year and plan the activities and meetings each Governor will attend in order to fulfil our statutory duties of governance.

Formal **Sub Committees** which meet each term. They are composed of members of the Governing body, that play key roles in monitoring and evaluating progress in meeting targets of the School Development Plan and scrutinise aspects of school management and academic activity.

- Progress, Achievement and Behaviour Committee.
- Finance, Health and Safety Committee

These termly committee meetings have enabled us to scrutinise specific areas of finance, pupil progress, use of the pupil premium grant for instance, so that committee members are well prepared for discussion and questioning in our full board meetings. Minutes of committee meetings are sent to all Governors and formally received at our full board meetings.

This year we added a third sub-committee looking at the school curriculum. The aim of our **Curriculum Sub-Committee** is to review the progress of the development, implementation and impact of the taught curriculum, following the national curriculum review.

Likewise, our **Strategic Governors** meetings and **Sub Committees** meetings which are in addition to our full governor board meetings, and that fell in the summer term, were scheduled to be attendance/video conferencing.

In normal years' Governors will ensure that the vision, aims and values of the school are maintained through visits to the school for pupil workbook scrutinies, learning walks, attending Senior Leadership Team meetings and Staff Meetings, to name but a few. Of course for a second school year these activities could not be conducted on a regular basis. To ensure Governors could

still carry out their statutory governance role, myself and the Vice-Chair undertook to have regular communications with the Headteacher and updated Governors regularly.

Governors scrutiny visits to school outside of national lockdown periods:

- English book scrutiny
- review of Safeguarding Section 175/157
- meeting regarding Early Years action plan
- Curriculum Sub-committee meetings
- Governors scrutiny visits via remote access:
- Curriculum update training in Geography
- Outstanding subject leadership in History

Covid 19 Pandemic Special Measures

There were specific measures (DfE Guidelines) that had to be carried out to ensure the safety of those pupils still attending school and school staff. Some of these required Governor oversight, and outcomes were communicated to all Governors. At times during the two national lockdowns, nearly 50% of pupils could be still attending school.

- reviewing and signing off of Covid 19 specific risk assessments to ensure that all safety and infection control measures were in place – completed by Chair of Governors
- reviewing and signing off new Covid 19 specific addendum to the School Child Protection Safeguarding Policy to ensure that protection measures were in place – completed by Chair of Governors
- discussions with the Headteacher about specific communications to parents, related to the isolation of specific class bubbles, for example, – completed by Chair of Governors

School policies

During this last year we again worked with the Head Teacher and teaching team to review, and amend where necessary, a number of important School policies to ensure they are current and relevant:

- Risk Assessment Covid 19
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Accessible use Policy
- Special Leave Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Supervision Policy
- First Aid – Administration of Medication Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct

The School's educational performance

Because Lilleshall is a one form entry school and that nearly half the pupils have been in school for face-to-face learning, teachers have had the challenge of teaching in school as well as preparing and monitoring remote learning tasks. Unlike many other schools, the Senior Leadership wanted to continue the school curriculum for all pupils, rather than providing special remote learning packages for home schooled children. This confidence in the appropriateness of our curriculum for both modes of learning has meant that both sets of pupils learnt the same subjects at the same time so that if children had split time in school and at home they could still carry on with the same topics. Additionally, once children had all returned to school to learn together again, all children could resume normal learning, seamlessly. Her Majesty's Inspectorate, via a Local authority meeting, judged that Lilleshall provided 'outstanding home learning'.

Progress

We have reviewed **pupils academic progress** regularly throughout the year within the Full Governors meetings and our Progress and Behaviour Committee where we scrutinise pupil's progress in the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and science and monitor the progress of actions as part of the School Development Plan. Governors have reviewed data relating to the progress made by pupils as they progressed through their stage of learning, either the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 for each of the core subjects. Again, this year we have seen a good number of pupils making sustained (expected) or accelerated (greater than expected) progress. Of the handful of children who have not made their expected progress, 70% of these were either not in school at all or in for a reduced period of time. The SLT have identified pupils to target for improvement and will be looking at this with the class teacher.

Attainment

The impact of the pandemic has again meant that national SATs tests were cancelled. Pupil attainment has, as in 2020, been established by practise test outcomes and teacher assessment. The school has maintained a rigorous scrutiny of teacher assessment. So that we are confident that the results awarded reflect pupils' true attainment and was assessed at both the expected standard of attainment and the higher standard of attainment in the core subjects of maths, writing, reading, spelling, punctuation & grammar and science. Those children who were below their expected standard of attainment will be targeted for accelerated progress. Governors are encouraged that excellent attainment levels will stand Lilleshall pupils in good stead on their transition to their secondary schools.

The impact of national Covid-19 restrictions on achievement and progress has been mainly felt in their progress where not so many children are seen to be working at greater depth as we would normally expect. Individual children are being targeted for accelerated support while ensuring the right teachers are with the right groups and providing support to teachers. As with other national exams, SATs tests for Years 2 and 6 were cancelled. The school assessment is however, that had pupils completed SATs tests, they would have achieved very well.

Ensuring financial resources are well spent.

At Lilleshall Primary School the Senior Leadership team and Governors work together to carefully plan how we allocate and monitor the spend of our funding. This is through our governor's meetings and particularly through our Finance Committee.

Government Catch-up funding was provided to support pupils following the disruptions to their learning caused by Covid 19 restrictions. This was used to provide targeted academic support to children of additional teaching assistants and qualified teaching support. Teachers were also provided with additional CPD to review the curriculum provision, that now had to include home learning. Additional teaching resources were purchased to support planning that identified the gaps in the teaching/curriculum that had occurred due to Covid 19.

The school's **pupil premium grant allocation** (PPG) was spent on activities and staffing that supported the learning of those children that were disadvantaged to ensure that all our pupils made progress and gaps in attainment closed. Because of the disruption to schooling from national Covid-19 lockdowns, the positive impact that we would normally see in our PPG pupils from targeted interventions could not be as good this year.

PPG spend:

- The school has continued to employ an Early Intervention Worker to support pupils quickly and effectively with emotional and mental health areas of need.
- The Educational Welfare Officer continued to track attendance.
- Continuation of the resourcing of the Jigsaw programme – The mindful approach to PSHE.
- Additional support for PPG children who were working towards or not achieving their potential in Reading, Writing and Maths. This was provided by a mixture of TA support and fully qualified teacher support.
- Additional support in small groups by a qualified teacher to enable accelerated progress and greater attainment
- Ensuring lessons were experiential and hands on and making the most use of the outdoors environment as much as possible.
- 1-1 support for those children who are exhibiting emotional health and wellbeing needs due to issues at home or in school.
- Head teacher leading 1-1 sessions with pupils who are struggling with anxiety to build coping strategies
- Additional 1-1 support was given before school or after to target specific areas of learning identifies as a gap in knowledge and understanding
- Talk It Tuesdays have been accessed by pupils for support and to share their issues and concerns. They are offered advice and support and strategies to help them move forward.

School PE and sports funding: Governors have been able to monitor how the sports funding the school receives is spent. The funding supports improving the physical education opportunities we offer. This has included:

- investing in a trim trail for all pupils to access during break times and lunchtimes: encouraging increased participation in physical activity.
- additional equipment purchased to support quality experiences during break times enabling pupils to develop fine and gross motor control whilst being active.
- developing support materials for Lilleshall Explorers. Teachers and pupils have really enjoyed the walks and exploring their local area. This has led to more opportunities for children to go on walks and take exercise as part of their school day.

As with last year, these activities were severely disrupted during the school Covid-19 lockdown periods and the restrictions on visits and social activities. The school purchased access to materials to support PE at home and directed pupils and parents to appropriate websites. During the second lockdown 50% of pupils were in school and the school continued to support playtimes and work with coaches for PE.

However, when swimming visits could resume, the school has increased the percentage of pupils who can swim 25 metres unaided, can tread water and who can self-rescue by the time they leave at the end of Yr6 to 92% of pupils. Significantly, the school employs a PE sports leader to facilitate lunchtime activities. For four years the school has achieved Active Mark Gold and achieved Platinum in 2019. Despite significant disruptions to sporting activities, the school teams in cricket, orienteering, football, hockey and basketball all enjoyed successes. The school archery and tennis teams both won gold in the Shropshire School Games and are now county champions for their sport.

Ensuring statutory duties are met, the curriculum offer is appropriate, and priorities approved.

School Development Plan

The governing body approved the school's development plan for 2020/21 early in the academic year. However, due to the disruptions caused by Covid-19, the Headteacher and SLT pragmatically changed these priorities in the spring term to more appropriately reflect these new challenges:

1. To ensure staff are up to date with developments with the national new EYFS curriculum and to develop a cohesive pedagogy across Year R and Year 1
2. Reset and Recovery - to baseline, identify need and provide the appropriate curriculum for children in all year groups
3. Mathematics – to address the gaps in teaching and learning due to Covid 19
4. To further embed the foundation subjects curriculum

Governors carefully monitored the school's development plan's progression throughout the year to ensure that educational priorities were on track.

Quality Assurance

While there has been no recent Ofsted inspection, the school is monitored and external quality assurance judgments given. Extracts from this years' Annual Summary Report to the Governing Body compiled by the Severn Teaching School Alliance School Improvement Team have already been identified on page 2. The judgements below are from the Local Authority's annual assessment, by the Quality Assurance Specialist for School Performance and Development Education and Skills which has contributed to the school's 'Green' rating:

- Quality of education across the school:

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and interesting, with lots of opportunities for pupils to 'hang their learning' on to make it memorable and to provide a rationale. Through this staff add cultural capital, as they are aware that many families, either because of income constraints or working lives may not do as many things with their children to support learning. Strong, explicit links are made between subjects to reinforce and support learning, and to help all pupils remember more.

- Walk round school:

Learning around school is exciting, interesting and appropriately sequenced as well as effectively developing pupils' cultural capital. Y5 British values and discussing relationships. High levels of interest and engagement from pupils, high quality resources that foster good engagement and interest. Pupils could confidently explain about what makes a relationship, and what makes a good relationship. Pupils could explain how to make a good relationship, in terms of friendships. They were starting to make explicit links to British values and linking across to the UN rights of the child.

- High quality displays in every classroom to support learning and encourage pupils to work independently, consistent approach to colours of borders and display to help pupils find information in every classroom. Lovely examples of pupils work all around school.

- Special Education Needs and Disability pupils:

All SEND pupils have individual learning programmes, to embed an ambitious curriculum for every pupil, these are understood and used by staff to support and tailor learning to ensure staff know what to target.

- Behaviour, discipline and wellbeing:

Excellent behaviour for learning seen in all groups. Engaged and interested pupils. School is calm and well organised. The SLT meet pupils on arrival to school and quickly pick up any concerns to support pupils in school. Personal Development Good structures in place to support pupils' personal development. Good co-operative working in all classes.

Remote home learning

Learning remotely at home was used by the majority of pupils at different points throughout the this school year. Whether they were unable to access school because of closure to all but critical worker or vulnerable children or were in their short term protective 'bubble' isolation at home. Governors were pleased to hear the positive message from HM Schools Inspectorate: that Lilleshall school was regarded to have provided outstanding home learning.

The full curriculum was accessed whether children were in school or working remotely. Teachers provided lessons on-line daily which covering the planned curriculum. This meant that children who may have had mixed weeks of both in-school and remote learning were able to seamlessly continue learning topics. Teachers were in contact with pupils at home and followed up those who were not regularly keeping in contact. An email address for each class was set up. Teachers, parents and children used these to keep in touch and a register of contact was maintained. Any family that did not use this facility or make contact with the school was phoned by the teacher. Some pupils were provided with laptops from school to enable them to access the online learning materials.

Parental and pupil feedback regarding home learning has been very positive. Children from years 4 & 6 in school full-time, part-time and those being home educated were interviewed via TEAMS about their thoughts and opinions of their learning experiences. Children's comments from the school's Pupil Voice analysis are:

- All children in both year groups that are accessing home learning confirmed they had found it easy to access the learning materials and resources.
- For those attending school on a part-time basis, they found their learning to be in-step with their full-time classmates.
- Whether at home or in school, a lot of children found science had been "a lot of fun" and they had done some really good experiments.

- Children had varied opinions regarding subjects they had found most challenging, the answers including Maths, history, foundation subjects, English and science.
- All children could confirm what they had learnt recently – all year 4 children talked about the ‘Bus Stop’ method in maths, year 6 children explained about long division and turning fractions into decimals and vice versa.
- For those in school, the positives of lockdown learning include there’s not been as many children in school; it’s quieter; smaller groups; more teacher attention; not having to share the outside equipment; we’ve done PE twice per week and we’ve been able to play football at lunch time.
- For those children at home, the positives include spending lots more time with my family; I’ve been working harder to keep up with others; I can work quicker and write quicker; if I wake up earlier, I can do my work then finish ‘school’ earlier and have the rest of the day to myself.
- The negatives for all children have been the inability see and play with their friends. A lot of children commented that “it’s just not school.”

In addition the school has used an approved audit tool to complete a whole school review of its remote learning offer; the findings were extremely positive. The SLT also completed an in-depth audit of all the home learning provided to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage.

Pupil attendance

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, attendance has been higher - at 97.45% - than our target of 96% and is higher than national levels. Consistent with previous years, there were no pupils excluded from the school.

Supporting the formal curriculum with extracurricular activities.

The opportunity for pupils to experience in school and out of school visits and trips and the experiential learning it facilitates is felt to be very supportive to pupil’s holistic learning and contributes ideas and inspiration when developing other subject areas. The aim is for all year groups to have these opportunities. But for a second year pupil visits that serve to support curricula topics, and physical and sporting activities, had to be limited due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Year 6 outwards bound experience

Due to its timing in the middle of the summer term, in previous years Pupils in Year 6 had the opportunity to spend the week participating in outdoor activities. This year, because of Covid-19 restrictions and different regulations in Wales and England; the weeks’ activities were split with two days at Bewdley, with an overnight stay and then three days spent at Arthog, Wales.

The outdoor learning experience children experienced at Arthog particularly showed its value this year. Due to the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on school attendances meaning that the majority of Year 6 had limited time in school, it became clear that children were not so familiar with or were practising the Making Our Learning Fly attributes as we would normally expect. Thus a key goal for the week was to focus around positivity and team building activities so children could expand their social and motivational skills in particular. By the end of the week, helped by the fast pace of activities, the professionalism and positivity of the staff at Arthog, we saw a marked improvement: children were more open to experiencing new challenges and risked doing

new activities, their social skills had improved, they were kinder and helped each other and they were more self-reflective.

Fundamental British Values observed: significant lesson learned over this week for all pupils was the importance of working together in a team, listening and taking instructions and that stretching and challenging themselves could give self-satisfaction. Pupils participated in a learning experience that yielded a positive impact on their personal development and which we believe has the potential to be progressed onto their continuing secondary education.

As we have learned to expect at Lilleshall School, pupils were extremely well behaved during their time away and were a credit to their school, both during their time on outdoor activities and during their leisure time.

Christine A Raper
Chair of Governors Lilleshall School
September 2021