



Governors' Annual Report to Parents and Carers

Summer 2018

In our report last year, we covered a number of matters such as the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), Finance and Teaching & Learning and some of these will feature again in this year's Annual Report to Parents and Carers.

The Laurus Trust

It is now almost two years since Gorse Bank School became an academy and joined with Cheadle Hulme High School in a MAT so it seems appropriate to take a step back and consider the benefits that have accrued to the school, the pupils and the staff in that time. Probably the most obvious benefit has been the ability to make use of expert and specialist staff to either provide direct teaching to pupils at Gorse Bank or to train and guide our staff in the development of our school curriculum. This has all helped to provide a better quality and more focused education for the children. The Trust has also provided extensive IT support to the benefit of both pupils and staff and also enabled us to provide a wider educational experience such as the Oracy Framework we are in the process of developing with Patsy Rosenberg OBE. In addition, membership of the MAT has released funding for staff to undertake training and work for enhanced professional qualifications. On a more practical level, it was only as a consequence of being an academy that we were able to secure funding for the much needed, and long running, repairs to the school roof. Similarly, match funding towards the Multi Use Games Area has been provided by the MAT.

Finance

At this point last year there was a real concern over the future funding of education both locally and across the country. Whilst those concerns have not entirely gone away, prudent financial management has provided some stability. As hoped when we joined the MAT, we are now seeing the benefits of scale in the securing of goods and services backed up by a strong financial team who provide the governors with comprehensive financial information that enables us to monitor performance and look to the future. As part of our remit we have been looking at how we might further increase the income school secures and several initiatives are underway or being considered. At Gorse Bank School we are fortunate to have highly qualified good quality experienced staff and we are able to use this as an asset to generate income by providing consultation services and training to other schools. The Forest School and the recently introduced Holiday Club, whilst not being massive earners, will also help school finances. The trick for governors and staff is to find a level of charges for these initiatives that is both affordable, covers costs and yet at the same time provides some remuneration for the school that makes the effort involved worthwhile. Not always easy.

Role in the Community

At the recent staff/governor strategy day we took time to consider Gorse Bank's position in the local community, the local perception of the school and how we incorporate the school and the education the children receive into that community. Our deliberations also went on to the

broader worldwide community and how we ensure children understand world events and their implications in a manner and at a level appropriate to their age. Personally, as the Chair of Governors, I have no doubt that Gorsey Bank School is looked upon very highly both within Wilmslow and over a wider area but nevertheless governors feel that we could do more to promote the school and to communicate more effectively with you, the parents. To this end, one of our governors is now charged with developing this aspect of our work and many of you will, I hope, have read the resumes of our meetings that are now made available on the school website. We intend to do more in this area over the next year. The always successful Aspirations Week brought many guest speakers from local businesses to the school and there were lots of volunteers to sponsor the Year 5 and 6 projects. Aspirations Week is a good example of how we can provide an education in the broadest sense to prepare the children for the adult world and broaden their horizons. Involvement with various charities and in particular the Dementia Café at Wilmslow Methodist Church, adds a further dimension and helps pupils to understand that Wilmslow is a far more diverse and complex community than it perhaps appears at first sight. As many of you will be aware, the school has also started making greater use of Skype as a means of developing contacts with other parts of the country and the world to add further understanding of how others live - an exciting initiative.

Quality of Teaching and Learning

Almost three pages of this report last year was devoted to this topic and of course it is the *raison d'être* of the school and the most important responsibility of the governors. Nevertheless, this will only be briefly touched upon on this occasion. High standards of education are important and we all wish to see our children make good progress whilst in school and achieve as highly as they reasonably can. Over many years Gorsey Bank School has enjoyed a reputation of delivering those high levels of progress and attainment and the initial SATs results for this last academic year show that pupil achievement is better than ever. Governors were very impressed by the initial data released last week that showed very high scores across a range of measures and overall outcomes of which pupils, staff and parents can feel proud. More importantly, the impact of efforts to improve the key areas that were identified last year, for example progress in Maths, is evident in this year's results. As governors we expect the high standards to be maintained and with the staff we are lucky to have in the school and the benefit we enjoy as part of the MAT, some of which are referred to above, Gorsey Bank is well placed to continue to flourish. This is not complacency but a real belief by the governors that the school as a whole is focusing on the right things. The SATs are challenging for all and the school takes great pride in finding the best possible balance between the rigours of examinations and the need not to place more pressure than can be avoided on the children. We have to consider their welfare as well. It was pleasing therefore that external Local Authority moderation and monitoring of all statutory assessments (Early Years, Key Stage One and Two) fully approved the manner in which the school undertakes this important exercise.

Looking Forward and Summary

The next academic year will see a number of changes. From September Mrs Woolley will fully take up her role as the Executive Head (Primary) within the MAT and Mr Maguire will take on the role of Head of School with Mr Thompson in the role of Deputy Head of School. As governors we would like to thank them for their contribution in the past and wish them well in their new roles – all of which will ensure that Senior Leaders are focusing on the education of your children. This would also seem an appropriate point for me as Chair to thank **all** of the staff, teaching and non-teaching, for their tremendous, and often unnoticed, contribution to the school and all the hard work they put in and without which the school would not be the happy and successful establishment that it is.

We also expect to see a number of changes to the Local Governing Body over the next couple years as a number of long serving members reach the point where they feel it is time to move aside for younger and fresher blood. The first changes have already started. When the time comes they will leave with the very sincere thanks of the whole school community.

Finally, this will be the last report I will pen as the Chair of the Local Governing Body as I will be standing down from the role of Chair at the end of the calendar year after five years in that position although I hope to continue as a governor for a little longer. A new Chair has been identified and during the Autumn months a full induction process will be taking place. I will close by thanking my fellow governors, past and present, for the support they have given me whilst I have occupied the hot seat, it has been an “interesting” five years. Thank you.

Colin Shepherd

Chair of Governors

Appendix

Record of attendance of Governors at Local Governing Body meetings for the 2017/18 academic year

Governor	Possible Attendance	Actual Attendance	Apologies Given
C Barber Brown	5	5	
C Ellender (Elected September 2017)	3	3	
E Goodwin (Vice Chair)	5	4	1
J Maguire (From September 2017)	4	4	
S Mellor	5	3	1
A Metcalfe (Elected November 2017)	4	3	1
T Munro	5	2	3
C Shepherd (Chair)	5	4	1
S Stedman	5	5	
C Stubbs	5	4	1
R Thompson (term of office expired September 2017)	2	2	
C Windsor	5	3	1
L Woolley (Head Teacher)	5	5	

In addition J Maguire and R Thompson from the school and L Magrath (CEO, Laurus Trust) have attended meetings as observers.