**Governors Annual Statement 2020**

The focus of the Governing Body (GB), during the start of this year had been one of maintaining the high standards that we now all expect of Newport Junior School and looking at how we as a GB can build upon the good work the Head Teacher, Deputy Head and all NJS Staff continue to undertake. However, with the arrival of COVID-19 our emphasis became one of ensuring that the spiritual and well-being of the NJS School Family was considered and we as a GB supported the work being undertaken by the Staff to support themselves, the children both those in school and at home, and their parents and carers. The GB appreciated that this was a difficult time for all and that at this time the academic progression of the children was secondary to their well-being, to that end the Head Teacher and her staff ensured that the pupils were well supported by the innovative use of technology to produce interactive, class and whole school events, YouTube videos and so on in order to ensure that the NJS School Family, all be it virtual, continued to feel as one. The effort and commitment to this is to be highly commended and was in no small part down to the leadership of the Head Teacher and the support of her, enthusiastic, professionally competent and highly motivated staff who all worked together to ensure that all children achieve the best they could, at all times within the ethos of ‘learning to make a difference with Gods love’. These trying times have demonstrated to the GB that the NJS school family is a strong one that has continued to nurture it pupils, staff and other members of the NJS school family

Throughout this year the Governors continued to appreciate the requirements for the governing body to provide the assurance to children’s parents and carers that the leadership and management of the school and how it affects safety, learning, progress and enjoyment is at the highest standard. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic the governors have continued to challenge and evaluate the performance of the Children and the Staff through meetings, learning walks and by spending time within the school. To support these activities, they publish relevant information to all appropriate parties.

During this period I am very pleased to report that we have seen a marked increase in the investment in the school infrastructure, some funded from within the NJS Budget for items such as new IT throughout the school, school redecoration, new chairs and desks, and significantly Local Authority funding for the new teaching block opened in April 2020.

**Governors Visits –** The governors visit the school as part of their monitoring of the school’s performance and in order to address any specific issues raised during the academic year. Guidance in terms of the roles and responsibilities of statutory link governors are provided to relevant governors and regular training is available in order to provide the governing body with the skills it needs. In addition, I have undertaken a number of visits to school to assure the GB and parents and carers of the COVID-19 control measures put in place to ensure that the school is as safe as practicable were in place and I also worked with the HT to ensure that the school is meeting the requirements of the Local Authority approved Risk Assessment.

**Data Analysis –** Data continues to be used as a key resource for the Governors to assess progress and retention, the data is made available to governors through termly meetings, with verbal and written presentations to support the data. There are also question and answer sessions with the head teacher and members of the senior leadership team. This data enables the governors to benchmark their data against similar schools within the Local Authority and schools nationally to ensure that the governing body and the teaching staff strive to achieve the highest standards in all they do, and that expectations are kept high.

Particular scrutiny is placed on pupil progress across all groups including vulnerable groups and those in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG).

**Policies –** Governors review all relevant policies on a regular basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list and the Local Authority recommended list.

**Financial Management –** The governor’s role in this area is to ensure that the schools budget is managed effectively and any improvements are effective and well targeted. Governor expertise – the governors bring a wide variety of expertise to the school and this helps to ensure the school is moving forward.

**Safer Recruitment –** The head teacher and a number of staff and are trained in “Safer Recruitment”. Governors are involved in the recruitment and selection of all teaching staff and use the appointment process to ensure that any new staff are of the highest quality and that they bring to the school new skills, but most importantly they share the ethos and aims of NJS.

**Governor Meeting Attendance –** Governor attendance has been of a good level, with any absences having been fully explained and accepted and approved by the governing body. The membership of the governing body has been stable; however, as of the end of the 2020 Summer Term the LA Governor has resigned and a replacement is being recruited. Governors have the relevant expertise to support the School and moreover, continue to provide the assurance to all in the spirit of being a ‘critical friend’.

**Review -**The governing body, the head teacher and all members of staff collectively strive to improve and develop the school. This desire to improve being recognised by the awarding of the Tribal Award.

The Governing Body of Newport CofE Junior School continues to work under the Task and Complete construct, with Governors being given specific responsibility for Finance, DATA and Health & Safety and Behaviours. This construct has not only continued to provide the assurance required by all parties but has also ensured that all members of the GB are better informed across all governance areas; furthermore, it has reduced the number of meetings to be supported by all parties, which continues to have a positive impact upon teachers work life balance and the time the GB needs to commit to support the school.

**Special Interest Governors –** These cover different areas and include Special Education Needs, Health and Safety, Pupil Premium, Safeguarding and Children in Care

In order to fulfil their strategic role and address the development of the school Governors have:

* Provided challenge and support to the Head teacher and other Senior Leaders.
* Visited school to monitor the performance of pupils, for example by learning walks to look at specific aspects of the children’s work including their books.
* Talked to pupils about their work and their targets and observed them in the classroom.
* Monitored and evaluated all available data, including Government Data Dashboard and internal reports from teachers to ensure that action is being taken on targets set.
* Sought the views of parents and pupils via questionnaires, evaluated the responses and ensured that appropriate follow-up actions are taken.
* Ensured robust appraisal systems for teachers and addressed any under-performance.

In order to fulfil their statutory duties Governors have:

* Ensured that the school website is up-to-date and complies with regulations.
* Attend regular meetings with clear agendas to discuss, review and approve key compliance requirements, e.g. Child Protection Policy, and that Safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Achievements for 19-20 have been summarised as follows:

* Continued to integrate the school vision, values and motto and associated school branding.
* The school achieved ‘The Tribal Mark’ for standards in Literacy and Numeracy.
* The school have achieved the Gold School Games Award.
* The Music Hub have awarded the school a Bronze level of recognition.
* The School achieved the Bronze Modeshift stars Award for school travel.
* The use of IT during the COVID-19 lockdown to maintain the positive relations with parents and carers.
* Provision of support to Key Worker children during the lockdown period.

Lastly on behalf of the Governing Body I would like to thank the Head Teacher and all the Teaching Staff for their fortitude, dedication and commitment to the pupils of Newport Junior School during what has been a year which we will all remember and one I hope we do not experience again in my lifetime.

Lawrie Boardman

Chair of Governors