



Chair's Report

Summer Term 2020

As the academic year draws to a close, please find below the Summer Term report for Livingstone Primary Governing Body.

WHAT DO WE DO AS GOVERNORS

The school's Governing Body provides strategic leadership and accountability in the school, both supporting and challenging the school management team. We are tasked with three core functions:

Setting the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school;

Holding the Head Teacher to account for the school's educational performance; and

Ensuring financial resources are well spent.

COVID19

Since my previous report we have all been working under, and dealing with, the unprecedented conditions dictated by the global COVID19 pandemic. As you are aware, this has extended to the operation of our school and how our pupils continue to learn.

When the country entered full lockdown at the end of March the school remained open for children of key workers and vulnerable children in line with guidance from the government. This facility has remained in place since the end of March, including during the Easter break period, and is still operational. More recently the school has commenced a partial reopening to welcome back pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, with teaching support continuing for all pupils not attending school through home learning packs and more recently through an online learning platform, Seesaw.

These changes to the usual operation of the school are extreme and given the wider context of the COVID19 crisis, establishing safe methods for achieving the continued support and learning for pupils has been a challenge for the school leadership team. Governors have supported the school throughout this process, discussing and agreeing plans for safe operation of the school, reviewing extensive risk assessments covering all aspects of daily life within under the new conditions and continually reviewing the effectiveness of new measures with the school, in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.

In line with government guidance, a separate COVID19 committee has been formed by the Governing Body and this group meets with the school leadership team on a fortnightly basis to review risk and operational challenges faced by the school. Extraordinary meetings of the Governing Body have also been convened during the crisis as required in order to deal with what was and continues to be a fluid set of national and regional circumstances.

All Governing Body and committee meetings have been held virtually since the end of March 2020 and will continue to be held in this manner until guidance is given from government indicating that it is safe to meet face to face.

GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body had been operating at capacity, with all posts filled since my previous report and good attendance has been observed at full Governing Body meetings and committee meetings. Meetings have been held on a monthly basis throughout the year and the finance committee meets three times annually.

Aside from the routine responsibilities of the Governing Body, we have focussed with school leaders on certain key areas to better understand and support the school in decision making and ensuring appropriate support and strategies are in place:

- Supporting the school through the current COVID19 crisis;
- Development of new curriculum plan focussing on intent, implementation and impact;
- Management of SEN pupil numbers; and
- Financial and budgetary management following the move to single form entry and the potential effect of changes to national school funding policy.

As we have mentioned previously, the Governing Body feel strongly that the ethos of the school remains integral to the management process and we have tried to ensure that this ethos is retained as much as possible under the current working conditions.

The new curriculum plan prepared by the school has been fully reviewed and endorsed by governors, however it is accepted that it would not be possible or appropriate for the school to work to this plan given the current situation. The school has discussed with governors their intention for a scaled back approach to implementation of the plan, however it is expected that the plan could be adopted in a fuller version in the future as we emerge from the current operational constraints.

The Governing Body continues to be provided with regular monthly updates in respect to the number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils that are on roll in the school. The number of pupils at Livingstone with or applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is higher than national average, which introduces resourcing and financial pressures for the school to manage. Although management of pupils with SEN continues to challenge school resources and finances, Governors are satisfied that the long-term plans for care of these pupils is being well managed by the school.

The finance committee have reviewed financial accounts and budget modelling over coming years which shows that as pupil numbers continue to increase, this will meet the financial requirements for future budgeting of the school. The current operational conditions, however, have meant that there are some significant expenses being carried by the school which were not originally budgeted for. We also anticipate that there may be further expenses going forward as the school moves towards a full opening in the next academic year, under new national guidelines. Although government have promised financial aid to all schools to cover extraordinary expenses, we are experiencing some challenges in justifying all our additional

costs given the criteria that government have set. The finance committee will continue to monitor this situation with the school and will review new school budgets accordingly.

The Governing Body has completed a Competency Framework document in order to map skills within the body and to identify any potential areas of weakness. This framework will be discussed later in the year in order to determine any potential requirements for training.

Although the normal monitoring of pupil performance and progress is very difficult at the moment, the Governing Body continues to discuss pupil learning on regular basis. Any potential areas of concern are analysed to understand potential underlying reasons and areas for particular focus. Governors are satisfied that progress and attainment is good and that school leaders understand in detail the complexity of the 'story' behind all the data presented.

Governors continue to work with school leaders in monitoring progress against goals and targets within the current School Improvement Plan, although it is accepted that the current operational conditions are exceptional and any actions on the plan are likely to have a lesser priority below the challenges of meeting the needs of the current operational restrictions.

Pupil Premium monies have been used to fund intervention teaching and until the current restrictions were helping with Speech and Language Support and the provision of Support Staff through school and extracurricular activities.

Sports premium continues to fund working with a coach from Active Tameside who operates across all schools in the Mossley area. Funding is also used to improve and replace equipment and resources used for PE and earlier in the year for top-up swimming lessons.

We continue to be pleased with local perceptions of the school in Mossley and we see this reflected in the choices being made by parents and carers in selecting Livingstone as the preferred option for their child.

LIVINGSTONE'S GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body has been relatively stable, with all posts filled. We thank all current and past members of the Governing Body for their time and their hard work.

POLICY APPROVAL

We have approved and updated a number of policies this year which include Health and Safety, prevent duty and SEND policies. The school continues to work with an external party to ensure that Livingstone is compliant and all policies reflect requirements set out under GDPR.

FINALLY

All on the Governing Body recognise the extreme challenges that everyone is facing across all aspects of 'normal' life and we would like to thank all pupils and parents or carers for your patience and understanding as we work with the school to ensure that the needs of all young learners are met.

We would like to thank all staff within the school for coming in to work on a regular basis to support our pupils during this time and for adapting to the new regime of school operations. Although it is different in how pupils go about their learning experience, you have all retained the

ethos of which we are all so proud at Livingstone. We applaud your continued commitment to the success and wellbeing of all the students in the school.

The time and effort put in by the head teacher and the Senior Leadership Team at the school is also recognised. The challenges set by COVID19 have affected everyone across all aspects of their lives, however despite this you have managed to keep pace with the ever evolving government and regional guidance and you have come up with numerous plans and risk assessments to prepare for the various operational commitments required of the school. The Governing Body thank you all. Without your tireless efforts the school would have been even more disrupted.

We always welcome feedback from parents, carers, staff, students and members of the community.