

**ASHTON WEST END PRIMARY ACADEMY
ACADEMY TRUST**



“Today I am proud of my school, tomorrow my school will be proud of me.”

Ashton West End Primary Academy Governance Statement 2020/2021.

The role of our Governing Body is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight, and assurance for educational and financial performance.

In accordance with the Government’s requirements for all governing bodies, the three core functions of our Governing Board are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding school leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and ensuring that money is well spent.

The day to day management of the school remains the responsibility of the Principal and Senior Leadership team.

Governance Arrangements

The Governing Board of Ashton West End Primary Academy consists of four elected Parent Governors, two elected Staff Governors, the Principal and five Co-opted Governors. With the support of the principal, we have achieved our focus of extending our governing board by recruiting seven new governors who bring a wealth of experience, including some who have financial and educational backgrounds and some who are familiar with the local area. Two governors have left the Governing Body due to their term of office ending. Our aim is to ensure that the Governing Board reflects our local community and includes a range of people with the skills and experience to contribute to the effective governance and success of the academy within its statutory and legal expectations. This academic year we are continuing to ensure that all governors have access to training to further develop their understanding of their roles. Meetings are clerked by a professional clerk from Tameside council.

Committee Meetings

The Full Governing Board meets four times a year. During exceptional circumstances related to COVID-19, we have also held two Extraordinary Full Governing Body meetings. The Finance, Premises and Pay committee and the Curriculum Standards Committee meet four times a year. The Finance Committee work closely with the Principal, who is the

Accounting Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, who is the school business manager. We work in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook. The Pay Committee meets to review pay related to performance.

The Curriculum and Standards committee meeting focuses on educational provision at the academy including the monitoring and reviewing of policies.

The Audit Committee meets as required to maintain an oversight of the Academy Trust's governance, risk management, internal control and value for money framework.

There are also committees that meet as required to consider appeals and complaints. The Coronavirus Oversight Committee meets every two weeks to discuss matters related to Covid-19 issues and monitoring. The SENCo attends the COVID-19 meetings to support this group.

To ensure the safety of Academy staff and governors at this time, all Governing Body meetings take place virtually through video calls.

The Chair of Governors and the Vice chair of Governors are on the Principal's Performance Management panel.

Attendance record of Governors

Governors' attendance at meetings this year has been good. We have always held all the required meetings and have had the appropriate quorum attending each one. (Quorum is the number of Governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). Please see a full list of governors and their attendance at meetings on the school website.

The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing body.

The Governing Body welcomed a new Principal in January 2020 with the skills, enthusiasm, empathy and ambition to drive the school forward. The Governing Body have supported the Principal and staff in pursuing a shared vision for the academy. It has been a busy, pro-active, and challenging year due to the present climate and COVID-19 restrictions for all involved.

The Finance and Premises Committee have ensured that the budget is allocated and used effectively and that best value is sought at all times. The business manager provides a budget monitoring report for the governors at each meeting and this is scrutinised by the committee members. Due to careful and effective management of the budget, the governors were able to approve construction and building work for the development of a new Foundation Stage unit and new resourced outdoor provision. Two governors who have recently visited the new Foundation Stage unit and outdoor areas were excited by this new development and how it will enhance teaching and learning, providing the children with the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet stimulating, indoor and outdoor areas. Governors have approved the budget for 2020/2021.

The Curriculum and Standards Committee meets termly. Subject leaders are invited to the meetings on a rota system to present their subject to the board. At a recent meeting, the Design and Technology subject leader presented an informative power point to the governors. As in all meetings, governors used effective questioning and monitored progress to ensure accountability. Teaching and Learning for the term was reviewed. This year one of our focuses has been to increase standards of reading across KS1 and KS2. The Principal reported on strategies implemented and progress in this area. Curriculum policies were also reviewed and agreed on. This committee analyses and scrutinises assessment data, pupil progress and School Performance data, however due to the academy being closed during most of the Spring and the Summer term due to COVID-19, circumstances have been different.

All the governing board attend the Full Governing Body General Meeting led by the Chair of Governors. These are held four times a year. During these meetings, the Principal reports on school Performance and Standards. At the first meeting of each Academic year the Academy's' Development Plan is presented to the governing body by the Principal. This year the plan focuses on the areas of Leadership and Management, Quality of Education, Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes and EYFS provision. The Governing board will receive updates from the principal on the progress of its implementation at the subsequent termly meetings. Again, it is the responsibility of the governing board to question and challenge the senior leadership team on the impact of their work.

Governors have been informed of interventions for the pupils to catch up on missed learning during school closure due to the pandemic. The welfare of all pupils at this time is also a priority.

The Chair of Governors delivered a report regarding her role during the previous term. The governing body analysed the Committee Block and delegated roles for committees and curriculum areas depending on the skills of each governor.

Attendance is also reported and scrutinised by the governors at Full Governing Body Meetings.

The Audit committee have attended meetings and earlier in the year they completed tasks in school alongside the Principal.

Governors have completed an annual skills audit and this has indicated areas of strength and areas to develop. Governors are encouraged to attend up and coming training to further develop their skills.

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The Principal and Chair of Governors speak together regularly throughout the school year and all governors are kept updated with school matters.

School Visits-All governors are encouraged and are expected to be familiar with the school for various reasons. This would include visits to see the learning environment and to attend parents evening, fund raising events, celebrations and visits to lessons. The lessons governors visit can be linked to an area of learning on the Academy Development Plan. A governor's role is not to observe the lesson, but more of a strategic role where they find out information to help them with their role. All visits must be organised with the Principal and governors are to follow the School Visits Policy for governors. During the pandemic it has not been possible to visit lessons, however governors are kept well updated by the Principal and the Academy website is full of up to date information and home /school learning opportunities. On a recent visit to the Academy, two governors observed a brighter, child friendly environment which created new learning areas for the children.

Staff Recruitment-Governors participate in all staff appointments. The more senior the post, the greater number and degree of governor involvement. We adhere to Safer Recruitment principles and requirements before, during and after the appointment process. During 2020, we have welcomed and recruited new staff including an Assistant Principal, two teachers and teaching assistants.

Safeguarding-Another important role for governors is ensuring the safety and well-being of all the children and we have nominated two Governors for Safeguarding who report to the governors about any safeguarding matters. Governors also review and agree key school policies. This year we have reviewed a number of important policies including Safeguarding; Child protection; Medicines in School; Curriculum; Attendance and Behaviour. Some policies have also been updated in line with COVID-19 guidance. These have been approved by the governing body. The Principal has reported to the governing body that all staff have completed online training on safeguarding. Governors have attended safeguarding training and recently new appointed governors will be encouraged to attend and update their Safeguarding training this term. The Chair of Governors has also completed Safer Recruitment in Education training.

COVID-19- This year the academy has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. A detailed and rigorous risk assessment was implemented, and this continues to underpin safe practice in the academy. The risk assessment is regularly amended with local and national updates. Governors approved the risk assessment and were consulted on the future school reopening during an Extraordinary GB meeting. During lockdown, the academy was proud to support our critical key workers and ensure provision was also in place for vulnerable children. During this time, the Principal, SLT and staff who worked on a rota basis, worked hard to maintain links with families and provide learning opportunities for children, through our learning platform including Class Dojo and the Academy website.

This ensured families were supported and contact maintained during this difficult time. When the school reopened, the Principal worked hard to ensure children, staff and parents were safe and rigorous timetables were put in place for the beginning and end of the school day and lunchtimes to reduce close contact between pupils. Fortnightly COVID-19 Oversight Committee meetings are held where governors are provided with updates and governors ask questions to ensure the effectiveness of the meetings and the implementation of the risk assessment. The Principal informs all governors regularly on Covid-19 issues and updates. The well being of the Principal, the SLT and the staff is paramount during these challenging times and it is the responsibility of the governing board to ensure that their health and well-being is paramount.

Future Plans for the Governing Body

During 2020/2021 the governors will continue to focus on aspects of the Academy's Development Plan to ensure that standards for all groups of children are high and that all children are supported to reach their full potential with a particular focus on reading.

The governors will continue to work with the principal, SLT and staff to deliver a shared vision of the academy.

The governors will continue to work with the Principal to ensure a safe learning environment for all during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The governors will continue to develop their skills through training.

How you can contact the Governing Board or find out more

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors, Mrs S. Jones, via sjones@awepa.org.uk

You can see the full list of Governors and more information about what we do, on the Governance page of the school website. Minutes of Governing Board and Committee meetings are public documents – you can contact us if you would like to see any of the minutes of our meetings.