

DISLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020-21

Governing Board effectiveness and impact.

At the beginning of the school year the Disley Primary School (**DPS**) Governing Board (**GB**) and Co-Headteachers (**Co-HT**) created our annual School Improvement Plan (**SIP**). The SIP identifies the key areas on which the school and the GB wish to focus on and includes scheduled milestones to assist with ongoing key performance indicators (**KPIs**) and performance assessments. KPIs are used so that the GB can be assured that the actions taken within the SIP improve teaching throughout DPS and learning outcomes for all our pupils.

What were the significant challenges for the governing body in 2020-21

1. Integration of DPS with the True Learning Partnership (**TLP**)
2. COVID-19 national lockdowns and school closure generally
3. The expansion of virtual learning and home schooling
4. To provide a safe learning environment for all our children
5. Due to COVID-19-enforced school closure, statutory KPIs and performance assessments were not available during this period as a tool for governors
6. Continue to work effectively within a tight school budget
7. Appointment of a new Headteacher during a period of restricted onsite access

How were the challenges met?

1a. The GB worked to ensure the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the TLP MAT is aligned with that of DPS and continues to offer better outcomes for the pupils, staff and school. The GB collaborated with the TLP Senior Leadership Team (**SLT**) in developing good working relationships across the trust. Further, the GB worked to ensure that:

- The TLP and DPS budgets are being effectively managed
- Value for money is being obtained, always
- Financial management and planning are in place, to support the ongoing viability and success of DPS
- The best use is consistently made of TLP and the DPS resources

1b. Governors worked to hold everyone on the GB responsible for the decision-making processes with regard to COVID-19 national lockdown and school closure.

1c. DPS 'Remote Education Plan September 2020'; all governors fully supported the recommended aim to ensure consistency in the approach to remote/blended learning for pupils who were not in school during lockdown. The plan set out expectations for all members of the school community with regard to this new form of learning.

2. This has been an unprecedented year for everyone, and previously recognised working practices had to adapt further to the new situation. The GB worked closely with and fully supported our SLT to ensure the school consistently and fully conformed to the national lockdown rules and followed the Cheshire East

guidance throughout. Regular Committee and full Governing Board (**FGB**) meetings continued as scheduled but changed from in-school attendance to being held on-line.

3a. COVID-19 has continued to transform education throughout the past academic year. By lockdown 3, school had ensured daily video contact comprising of two live Zoom check-ins for KS1 and KS2. The learning platform 'Class Dojo' received positive feedback from both the children and parents. Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**) uploaded twice daily pre-recorded video information on 'Tapestry'. The Governors encouraged the adoption of virtual teaching programs and the development of new teaching skills to use them effectively. Funding was made available for online learning platforms to enhance/facilitate remote learning from our school budget. Governors recognised the challenges of home schooling and that some of our children did not have access to the internet. Using information provided in response to the DPS parental survey, we ensured teachers were closely monitoring these children and providing learning materials in appropriate formats.

3b. DfE 'Review your remote Education Provision in Schools - January 2021'; a Governor review took place of the 31-page document completed by the SLT. Results demonstrated the school has gone above and beyond what has been recommended by the DfE.

4. The GB approved new safeguarding systems to ensure our vulnerable children, children from keyworker families and our staff had a safe learning/working environment in school. The Safeguarding Committee (**SGC**) continues to develop a culture of robust support and has worked closely with our SLT to embed a culture of openness combined with appropriate vigour. The SGC recognises the opportunities to share good practice and to take advantage of the support and resources that will be increasingly available from our TLP 'partner' schools.

5. The GB has followed the local authority guidance on this matter and continue to monitor the impact lockdown had primarily on our children. In-school assessment of our pupil performance indicate COVID-19 has impacted on the data in all year groups and the end of year data is not as strong as it would usually be. Regular catch-up teaching has taken place for all children across the school. Provision will continue to be put in place for children not achieving their targets in year 2021-22.

6a. Despite continued additional COVID-related costs, responsive financial management by the school enabled DPS to report a small in-year surplus for the 2020-21 financial year. COVID continues to exert financial pressures on the school, including increased supply staff costs, new IT systems to support remote learning, cleaning & PPE costs. The continuing pandemic negatively impacted income (e.g. Club DP, lettings). Despite this, the school is forecasting an appropriate in-year surplus for 2021-22. This will see the school continue to have the flexibility to respond to future challenges and to further enhance its provision.

6b The Finance Committee (FC) has supported the Bursar and Co-HTs to monitor the budget closely during this challenging year. This SLT have worked very effectively with the TLP finance team - taking advantage of group purchasing and expertise to minimise costs and actively manage the budget. This has resulted in the school finishing the year on-budget, which is a commendable achievement.

6c. The FC monitored the continuing transition to operating within the TLP - including the practical operation of financial controls & procedures and the financial information and support provided to the Bursar and Headteachers.

6d. The Committee also monitored capital and minor projects to maintain premises and improve facilities.

7. The process for recruiting a new headteacher coincided with the third Coronavirus lockdown restrictions and how this would impact on the selection and interviewing procedures. The GB decided to select and appoint an internal candidate as an acting headteacher for a twelve month period. The permanent post will be advertised externally in the spring term for a September 2022 appointment.

The GB recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that the board encompasses a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience to support DPS for both the present and future academic years. During the last year four new co-opted governors were appointed onto the GB. Their skills and experience will add an additional dimension and depth to the board and complements our existing strengths.

Governors are continually encouraged to further develop and broaden their skills by attending governor training courses, which have continued online and virtually throughout the pandemic. Disley GB is a member of the National Governors' Association and uses this and other relevant information channels to ensure it remains abreast and up to date on relevant developments in the education sector.

How have these achievements improved areas of school life (impact)?

- Joining the MAT has enhanced areas of the school provision and further helped bridge the transition from DPS to Poynton High School, taking into account the pandemic restrictions
- The decision to adopt different, age-related virtual learning platforms for our children has resulted in a higher volume of engagement and positive feedback from both our learners and parents
- Individual pupil performance assessments by our teachers has highlighted and measured the impact of the pandemic on their education. Appropriate provision for catch-up has been put in place and will continue next year

The GB will continue to develop and work towards the longer-term planning and execution of school strategy; to closely monitor financial status, progress against the school plan and to continue working closely with the HT, SLT, staff, and carer communities to deliver the best outcomes for our pupils.