

# Vernon Park Governor Impact Statement

## Governor Impact Statement

Vernon Park school has been in the heart of Stockport since January 1909 and a primary school since 1958. Vernon Park Primary School believes in our school motto, **'An exciting place to learn, an exciting place to be'**.

This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Board articulates their role in school leadership and the impact we have had on school improvement.

## Governors' Role

Our Governing Board is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers that focus on the core strategic functions of effective governance: 1) ensuring clarity of core vision, ethos and strategic direction, 2) holding leaders to account for the educational performance of staff and the school and the attainment of pupils, 3) oversight of the finances of the school to make sure the money is spent well.

In parallel, and resonating with aim 1, at Vernon Park we have a 4<sup>th</sup> cross cutting core strategic function - and that is the wellbeing of the whole Vernon Park community.

Governors attend a full governing board (FGB) meeting each term. In addition, all governors are invited to meet three times a year in dedicated sub-committees that report termly to the FGB and are linked to the School Improvement Plan:

- Teaching & Learning/Monitoring
- Resources
- Wellbeing

Effective governance requires a board with a range of skills to ask the right questions, analyse data and have discussions which create robust accountability for school leaders. We conduct an annual NGA skills audit together with an accompanying skills matrix. These are aligned to the six features of effective governance in the [DfE's competency framework](#).

## The Governing Board's Role

1. **\*\*Setting Vision and Mission\*\***: The governing board collaborates with school leadership to define and articulate the school's vision and mission, ensuring it reflects the values and aspirations of the school community. Our core values are kindness, empathy, friendship and respect. The GB has a dedicated Wellbeing sub-committee.
2. **\*\*Developing Ethos\*\***: The governing board works with school leadership to establish and promote a positive ethos within the school, emphasising values such as inclusivity, respect, and high standards of achievement.
3. **\*\*Strategic Planning\*\***: The governing board participates in the development of the school's strategic plan, identifying key priorities, goals, and objectives to drive improvement and enhance outcomes for students.
4. **\*\*Resource Allocation\*\***: The governing board allocates resources in line with the school's strategic priorities, ensuring that funding, staffing, and facilities support the achievement of its vision and goals. The GB has a dedicated Resources sub-committee.
5. **\*\*Monitoring Progress\*\***: The governing board monitors progress against the school's strategic objectives, reviewing performance data and reports from school leadership to ensure accountability

and alignment with the agreed-upon direction. The GB has a dedicated Monitoring-Learning & Evaluation sub-committee and the HT and Chair of the GB speak weekly.

6. **Engaging Stakeholders**: The governing board engages with parents, staff, and the wider community to gather input and feedback on the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. The GB conducts staff and parent surveys and supports the school's Pupil Council. To improve stakeholder collaboration and cohesion, we have prioritised the strategic management of parent engagement. Parent representatives are consulted and help to shape and inform school policy, ensuring all stakeholders have ownership and accountability of the school's performance.

7. **Adapting to Change**: The governing board remains flexible and responsive to changes in the educational landscape, economic conditions, and community needs, revising the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction as necessary to stay relevant and effective.

These examples illustrate how a governing board plays a crucial role in shaping and guiding Vernon Park Primary school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction. More details are provided below.

## **Core vision, ethos and strategic direction**

Governors are clear on boundaries, statutory roles and responsibilities and that the role in terms of vision, ethos and strategic direction does not relate to operational issues. Governors work co-operatively with the Headteacher and senior management in the writing and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The current SIP is based on priorities identified from the "All in One Place" data report provided by the HT termly with school self-evaluation and Ofsted priorities. The SIP and "All in One Place" data report are set out with clear aims, the key tasks that will be completed to achieve these aims and the success criteria to measure outcomes. These are monitored and reviewed termly by governors, with an evaluation overview being completed and presented to governors as part of the Headteacher termly report at FBG. The targets and objectives are directed by a commitment to the vision and ethos of VP as an inclusive school.

The governing board has fostered a strong commitment to wellbeing, openness, safeguarding and respect. Safeguarding is the paramount responsibility of all staff and volunteers in VP.

### Governors' Whole School Aim

We pride ourselves on being a caring and inclusive school which helps all its children to succeed in a supportive environment. Every child is their own baseline and we enable all members of our school community to follow the school vision and strive to achieve their potential, to develop the confidence of the whole child, the promotion of whole child development in all areas, enjoy learning, communicate effectively, work with and show respect to others and empathy towards the diverse cultures and faiths within our wider community. Our aim is to enthuse pupils to learn but to encourage them also to be forever curious and to be lifelong learners.

### School Policies

Governor's review and approve policies termly or annually as advised by our LA clerk. This takes place throughout the year in FGB meetings, Teaching & Learning/Monitoring and Finance and Resources Committee meetings. The Headteacher is asked to give examples of when the policies have been used to ensure the policies are being followed and practiced and to ensure policy review is not just a paper exercise. Policies are updated on the school website.

### Training

All members of Governing Board have and continue to have significant training with new governors undertaking the Stockport council "New Governor Training Programme". The impact of this is that the

Governing Board are kept abreast of their responsibilities regarding the latest requirements and expectations. Recent training has included:

- Safer Recruitment
- Safeguarding
- SEND co-production
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
- SEND Inclusion strategy development
- Budget Monitoring
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Governors

## **Wellbeing**

A key aspect of the strategic direction of governance at VP was a step-change of focus and priorities with the establishment in 2016 of a dedicated, discrete and equal sub-committee on Wellbeing, Vernon Park was the first school in Stockport and perhaps Greater Manchester to establish such a Wellbeing sub-committee as we recognised that formal sub-committees including the FGB focused on performance, attainment and finances but less so on the Vernon Park wider community - what it is like to be a pupil or a member of staff at Vernon Park as well as a parent/guardian etc. This priority focus is reinforced by a Wellbeing governing lead. Our focus is on the wellbeing of pupils and equally the wellbeing of staff. Soon after we established a dedicated GB wellbeing sub-committee, staff established a parallel staff wellbeing committee. Now wellbeing is embedded in school – and it is a standing item on all committee meetings.

The focus on wellbeing resonates with the school vision of inclusiveness and the approaches used in school such as restorative approaches. We ensure that the school promotes tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles. Vernon Park has an active “Pupil Voice” with Pupil Voice feedback notice boards on continuous display in all of the school cloakrooms. VP has a School Council and a prioritisation of Restorative Champions from KS2 – overseen by Pastoral Manager and DHT – diarise half-termly meetings to ensure continued good practice. The GB promotes the ethos of Restorative Approaches throughout the wider school community and environment and maintain the status of School Values across the school and wider curriculum, ensuring all stakeholders are encouraged to demonstrate, model and inspire behaviour consistent with our values. We continue to place the safety and well-being of our community at the forefront of everything we do. The GB approved funds for a new full-time Pastoral Manager, Emma Brough, who started with us just before Easter 2023.

The GB continues to prioritise safeguarding so that all staff are aware of their collective responsibilities to safeguarding: offering continuous CPD, INSET days, staff meetings, department briefings and support from phase leaders, DHT, HT and Governors. Wellbeing and Safeguarding are key issues included in all staff Performance Management assessments with regular progress checks across the academic year.

The school is part of external university projects on such as the Poverty Proofing Project.

## **Holding leaders to account**

Governors provide strong support for the Headteacher and senior leadership and work co-operatively with the Headteacher and senior management in the writing and monitoring the School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) sets aims for the forthcoming year. Governors are clear on boundaries, statutory roles and responsibilities and that the role in terms of holding the HT, senior leaders and the whole school to account does relate to operational issues.

Governors are responsible for and conduct an annual HT performance and management monitoring review supported by an appropriate LA external advisor, setting annual targets and with objectives linked to high-level school improvement priorities. The Headteacher completes an annual performance management report for the governors evidencing that performance management has been completed for all staff and that staff have meet performance management targets. Governors scrutinise the report and use evidence to approve pay recommendations based on the performance management report given by the Headteacher. Pay recommendations decisions follow the Stockport Council Pay Policy adopted by governors at Vernon Park.

Attendance and punctuality remain an ongoing area for improvement across the whole school and governors ask challenging questions as evidence in FGB and sub-committee minutes with standing items on pupil attendance, staff absence, staff training, exclusions, 'hate crime' episodes, physical interventions.

We gather evidence via termly Teaching & Learning & Monitoring sub-committee and review pupil progress, statutory assessments data and informal ongoing internal pupil data (Monitoring and Evaluation schedule) including relating to pupil premium, SEND etc and use the evidence to support or challenge the senior leadership team.

The GB promotes a broad & balanced curriculum with 2 curriculum leads per subject with subject-leads monitoring progress and regular super-learning days scheduled.

VP is a reading school. The GB supports the school vision and strategy that reading is at the core of all successful learning and has focused attention and resources on reading & writing including 'Read-Write' across VP and in 1-1 interventions, with focus on ensuring parity and school-wide cohesion through use of initiatives such as Kagan structures, DEAL drama, text-led learning, White Rose maths and Word Aware.

Recent data show an improvement in phonics.

## **Resources & finances**

- Vernon Park has a dedicated Resources sub-committee that meets termly to review budgets, including reviewing and monitoring PPG expenditure.
- SFVS is completed and submitted annually.

The school budget is scrutinised and reviewed in detail at Resource sub-committee meetings. Governors question deficit/surplus balances. Using benchmarking information, the committee scrutinise the effect of pupil numbers on the budget and how these impact on staffing and resources.

Through working closely with the School Business Manager and Headteacher, the Finance and Resources Committee has supported the school and held it accountable to ensure effective budgeting. Careful monitoring and planning of the budget by the Resources sub-committee has impacted positively on the subsequent year with governors recognising the need to focus scarce expert resources for best value for money and highest impact. This has enabled the school to have a strong and effective staffing structure to drive school improvements. For example, governors decided to approve funds to:

- Appointment of 4 HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistants) to cover staff absence and reduce locum costs.
- Release the deputy HT from classroom duties to focus on supporting Y1/2 transition into KS1 and booster support for Y5/6 and SATs (beginning in January 2023) to target vulnerable groups and ensure maximum impact for progress from year starting point. DHT teaches a Y6 group,

focusing on moving EXS to GDS in Reading, Writing, Grammar and Maths and ensuring all pupils at least maintain expected progress and attainment.

- Release the SEND/Inclusion lead from classroom duties, who will be non-class based, to focus on Y1/2 transition into KS1 and booster support for Y5/6 as well as SEND throughout VP, supporting all phases across the wider school and managing support staff in their roles, including HLTAs.
- Funding for year 6 booster sessions.