



## **2017 - 2018 Annual Governance Statement** **from the Board of Governors for Rodings Primary School**

This statement gives a brief overview of the activities of the governing board during the last year as well as a summary of some of our plans for the coming year.

The report is organised around the three primary objectives of the governing board

- setting the vision and strategic direction of the school
- holding the school to account
- ensuring the financial well-being of the school.

### **Vision and Strategic Direction**

In October 2017, we reviewed our vision and strategy for the school. Parents, staff, governors and pupils were all asked the question 'what makes our school special'. Governors formed a small working party to collate these answers under the five core values of Respect, Enjoyment, Care, Confidence and Challenge. The resulting document can be found on the school website and is referred to regularly as well as being reviewed annually by the governing board in the autumn term.

This July our double year 6 group will move on to secondary school and after one year of three double year groups, in 2018-19 we will once again return to having two double year groups in the school in years 4 and 1. We recognise that the popularity of our school locally may lead to a general rise in school numbers over the coming years. We are also aware of the increase in house building in the local towns and villages – some of it within our priority admissions area.

Above all we remain committed to providing places for children from our local community and we strive to ensure that the quality of care, support and teaching that we provide will continue to be excellent. We are prepared to meet the challenges of the future and move the school forward in the best interests of our pupils.

Over this past year, we have continued to build on our good connections with other school governing boards within DEEP (Dunmow Excellence in Education Partnership) and through a network of Uttlesford and Bishop's Stortford primary schools. We are looking forward to increased opportunities to share best practice with governing boards in our partnership and intend to build on our network of support, challenge and shared knowledge.

### **Holding the school to account**

This year our school received a long-awaited Ofsted inspection. With only half a day's notice it was always a big 'ask' to be able to put together a team of governors to meet separately with the inspector. Six governors had a meeting with the inspector and discussed all the excellent developments the school team has been working on since the last inspection in 2013. Since this year's inspection we are in the process of reviewing our action points and we look forward to another busy year of supporting and challenging our school.

Our governors are keen to support the school with regular visits and try to spend time in school whenever their own working and family timetables allow. Governors see first-hand the happy environment the pupils are working in when they attend 'Learning Walks' with the Headteacher and his staff. Governors may also

attend assemblies and observe lessons and group work. We continue to work through a programme of reviewing key school policies.

Some of our governors help within classes or on special subjects or projects and individual governors continue to support the school staff and pupils with class links, often maintaining this link with their class as they move through the school. These links can be found at the end of this report.

Our Safeguarding governors (Steph Green and Leah Bruce) have between them carried out 3 safeguarding checks this year and we are confident that safeguarding at the school is excellent.

We have two governors who are linked to Special Education Needs and Disability – Brian Hardcastle and Sarah Stevenson. They have regular meetings with the school’s SEND Co-ordinator (Miss Ducat) and are always impressed with the amount of planning and encouragement which goes into supporting our SEND children.

Governors are also responsible for monitoring staff development and pay and with the help of another Headteacher within our DEEP group (Claire Jackman from Great Easton Primary School), the Personnel and Pay Committee has carried out the Headteacher’s performance management review and has set targets for the coming year.

Government information on a school’s Early Years, Phonics and SATs results has been presented to schools and governors in a different format this year and we continue to hold the Headteacher and his staff to account for the ongoing improvement of these results and the setting of ambitious progress targets for all pupils across all subjects. We are strongly committed to supporting our school and are always impressed and inspired by the enthusiasm and professionalism of all the school’s staff.

Our visits and discussions with staff help governors to understand and identify potential improvements, as well as celebrating successes.

### Financial Well-Being of the School

Reports of schools struggling with funding cuts have been well documented over the past year. Rodings is not immune to financial concerns and the pressure on our budget is greater than ever. However, the finances have been well-managed over the years and with exceptional fundraising efforts by our Friends we are pleased that the school remains in a comparatively good financial position. Governors will continue to monitor the school’s finances on a regular basis to ensure the best value for money and to secure the long-term viability of the school.

This year the Finance Committee has implemented more structured termly reviews to confirm that not only are processes and procedures in place, but that these are ensuring best value and an efficient use of funds. The Committee monitors the school’s finances at their regular meetings and was heavily involved in the budget setting process.

Our chair of the Finance Committee, Andrea Beard, worked on ensuring that the committee and governing board understood their obligations under the school’s financial regulations as we completed our annual financial review. As part of this review we have identified that our business continuity plan needs reviewing and a working group from the Finance Committee has already started work on this.

Without financial contributions from the Friends, the provision of many resources and facilities would not have been possible. This year our Friends have contributed towards the fantastic Rodings Radio Station as well as works on the swimming pool pump. All their support, time and hard work is greatly appreciated.

## Governance

### Structure:

Our board of governors is made up as follows: -

4 elected parent governors, 2 staff governors (of which one is the Headteacher and the other is elected by staff), 1 Local Authority governor (recommended by the board and appointed by Essex LA), 2 partnership governors and 5 co-opted governors. Both partnership and co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board for their specific skills and experience.

### Who's Who:

In September, Steph Green was re-elected as our Chair and Leeann Goddard was re-elected as Vice Chair. In the last year, we have welcomed Dipti Patel and Alice Smith as new parent governors. We also welcomed Owen Wright as staff governor after Sian Turnbull left at the end of last year. Unfortunately, we said goodbye to parent governor David Lucy, who moved out of the area. Bernard Lawrence, who has been a governor at Rodings for 25 years and who also served as Chair for many years, was persuaded not to step down completely from our board and is now an Associate Member who will be available to assist us with his many skills. Our clerk, Julie Parmenter, who also supported our board for 25 years, took retirement in April and we would all like to thank Julie for her hard work over the past years. Our new clerk, Debbie Hilliard, has started working with us and we look forward to many successful years of her support.

### Vacancies:

We currently have one vacancy for a partnership governor from within the local community and we will continue to ensure that we recruit local people with the skills and experience necessary to govern our school.

### Meetings:

The full board of governors has met 8 times this year. We also have committees who consider different aspects of the school in detail. We have a Teaching and Learning Committee which has met 3 times and a Personnel and Pay Committee which has also met 3 times. Our Finance, Premises and Health and Safety Committee has held 4 meetings. In addition to these meetings there have been two special governors' meetings and several working groups throughout the last year, all concentrating on aspects of the school's governance. In addition, we are able to form committees if required to consider discipline and complaints.

### Information:

As part of our governance arrangements we maintain a register of declarations made by governors of any financial or other interests that may have a bearing on decisions made by the governing board. A summary of this register is available on the school website along with a full list of governors, their responsibilities and a record of attendance at meetings.

### Training:

Governors have attended many and varied training sessions this year. These were: Strategic planning; General Data Protection Regulations; Governors' Guide to the Curriculum; Induction Training for Governors; Finance, Budgets and Financial Monitoring; the Role of Link Governors; Designated Safeguarding Lead; Governors' Guide to Data. We have also carried out in-house and on-line

training on Safeguarding and on Prevent. Our Chair and Vice Chair have attended several local network sessions.

Self-Evaluation:

We have continued our programme of governor self-evaluation, carrying out a full skills and experiences audit in the summer term. This audit helps us focus on our training requirements as well as inform us of gaps in experience within our board when recruiting new governors. Our aim is to ensure that the governing board reflects our local community and includes people with the skills and experience to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

How to contact the board of governors

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents. Please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office. Any parent or member of our wider school community who is interested in becoming a school governor is encouraged to make an appointment to discuss this further with our Chair.

## Steph Green

### Chair of Governors

July 2018

Name of governor	Class the governor is linked to in 2017-2018	Class the governor is linked to in 2018-2019
Andrea Beard	Year 2	Year 3
Leah Bruce	Year 1	Year 2
Leeann Goddard	Year 5	Year 6
Steph Green	Year R	Year R
Brian Hardcastle	Year 3 Puffins	Year 4
John Hildrew	Year 6 Falcons	Year 1
David Lucy	Year R (until Oct '17)	
Dipti Patel		
Alice Smith	Year 4 (from April '18)	Year 5
Sarah Stevenson	Year 3 Owls	Year 4
Colin Todd	Year 6 Golden Eagles	Year 1
Mark Walker	Year 4	