

**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of Alington and Bergh Apton  
C of E VA Primary School July 2020**

**In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of Alington and Bergh Apton C of E VA Primary School's Governing Body are:**

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- 2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;**
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

**Governance arrangements**

The Governing Body of Alington and Bergh Apton Primary School is made up of 1 elected Parent Governor, 1 Local Authority Governor, 1 elected Staff Governor, 1 Headteacher, 6 Foundation Governors and 1 Co-opted Governor.

There are Governors responsible for Sports Premium, Safeguarding, SEND, LAC, RSHE and the Headteacher's Performance.

Michael Hibbin has stepped down from Governors after serving as Vice Chair, Joint Chair and then Chair. He extended his time as Chair in order to oversee the recruitment process for the new Headteacher, and we would like to extend our thanks for this and for his years of service. Elizabeth Willmot has now taken on the role of Chair of Governors. Despite the lockdown, we have continued to recruit new Governors. Governor succession is considered at each Full Governors' Meeting to maintain strong governance from people with a wide range of skills including the educational, public, business, health, financial, engineering and charitable sectors.

The Full Governing Body meets twice each Autumn, Spring and Summer term. There is an extra meeting in April to set the budget.

There are 3 committees which discuss different aspects of the school. The Headteacher is a member of each committee and 2 of the 3 committees meet each half term.

- Effectiveness Committee: responsible for the setting of targets, the provision of the statutory curriculum and the performance of staff and pupils as well as communication with parents and the wider community.
- Resources Committee: focuses on finance, premises and personnel matters including pay.
- Ethos Committee: advises the Governing Body and the school on all matters related to the school's Christian character and ethos and the effective implementation of its values.

**Attendance record of Governors**

Governors have good attendance at FGB meetings and these have never been cancelled due to not being quorate. Most committee meetings are also well attended. During the pandemic, the Governors have been meeting via an online platform, with no decrease in attendance.

<p><b>The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing body</b></p>	<p>The <b>Effectiveness Committee</b> continues to focus on matters relating to statutory curriculum provision and pupil and staff performance. It looks at the implementation of the school’s vision and values and the communication of this to parents/carers and the wider community. It has a shared responsibility for the effective safeguarding of pupils and staff.</p> <p>This year it has needed to adapt the way it works with the school in terms of monitoring due to the outbreak of COVID-19. It had set up a robust programme of monitoring focussing on further development of the curriculum in the light of the new OFSTED framework. Some of this was able to be carried out through a member of the Committee attending one of the Bring &amp; Share staff meetings set up by the new Head and partly through the Governor Dig Deep Day. Monitoring has focussed collective worship, RSHE, planning and outcomes and RE, floor books, learning environments, engagement and questioning, cross curricular links and building on prior learning and meeting the needs of all learners. However, due to lockdown not all intended monitoring was able to be completed.</p> <p>Instead, the Committee met virtually and looked at the way home learning had been set up for pupils during full lockdown; how this was later adapted as some pupils in key Year Groups returned and in turn a full return to school for all pupils on a part-time basis. Staff have continued to ensure that pupils have had access to a wide range of experiences, making the most of a ‘bubble’ environment and the outdoor space. Discussions have focused on staff and pupil well-being and decisions made through consulting with parents in relation to the overall educational experience of all pupils. A safeguarding addendum was added to the school Safeguarding Policy to reflect the pandemic and all risk assessment documents were shared and discussed to ensure the best possible protection for pupils, staff, and parents. Communication and adaptive working practices between school and Governors has continued to be excellent and has ensured a positive response in a difficult time.</p> <p>Continued collaboration and support between the staff and Senior Leaders from Alington and Thurton schools has been very beneficial during this unprecedented time in terms of planning, communication and the ongoing and sometimes rapidly evolving guidelines being issued about good practice for schools.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic, there has been a robust focus on ensuring the school curriculum continued to be developed considering the new OFSTED framework and staff have been fully engaged with this. From discussions about moral purpose and ‘Alingtonness’ and what the vision for the curriculum looks like in terms of the What? Why? How? and When?</p> <p>Reported outcomes for pupils this year will look very different in that statutory tests did not take place and teaching and learning has been very different in terms of curriculum coverage, attendance at school and the range of experiences for individual pupils. All children will receive an end of year report, which will be personalised. The staff have looked at data pre-lockdown and have a clear picture of whether, at that point in time, children were on track to meet their predicted targets. Staff have liaised with High Schools and Pre-Schools regarding transition.</p>
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TA deployment and pupil classes for September have been carefully considered, including parents of pupils within a split class being consulted to ensure the best possible start for pupils in the next stage of their education.

The Committee, which includes the SEND Governor, has continued to ensure pupils with SEND have their needs met and has been proactive in ensuring that the SEND Annual Report is completed and includes views of all stakeholders and that SEND funding is fully in place.

Overall, this rigorous programme has ensured that the Committee is confident that the school continues to move forward with educational developments, adjusts its practice accordingly and keeps parents/carers well informed.

The **Resources Committee** oversees the maintenance and development of the school premises (including Health and Safety), contributes to the school development plan, sets and monitors the school budget, as well as facilitating the ongoing strategic objective of the Board of Governors to ensure the financial stability of the school for the foreseeable future. The Resources Committee has continued to work hard in securing much needed financial support to ensure the school building has the space and facilities to create a good environment for learning. This is always a challenge as the general funds the school receives primarily cover the direct day to day costs of educating the pupils.

This year has seen the retirement of the existing Headteacher and the successful implementation and appointment of a new Headteacher. The Resources Committee successfully managed the program to recruit a new Headteacher. The Chair of Governors led this process with interviews undertaken in September 2019 and the new Headteacher starting in January 2020.

This has allowed the school to restructure its staff cost base and along with changes to working between teachers (part time to allow for maternity leave). The resignation of a Teaching Assistant (with associated assessment and non-replacement decision) and a new approach to utilisation of TA's via pooled teams between classes means that the school budget is now structurally more robust going forward.

The restructuring and other funding assistance has meant that planned cuts in external support, languages and music have been reassessed and has allowed reallocation to learning experience aspects in the school (class resources). Due to good budget management and investment over the previous three years by the School Management team, major expenditure for facilities and renovations have taken place resulting in reduced forecast expenditure.

The school saw a significant challenge in March 2020 with the COVID-19 crisis and compliance with associated government guidelines. This was a particular challenge for the new Headteacher having been with the school for a short period of time. It has been managed very well with consensus between parent, staff and Governors on the approach. A special COVID-19 governance team was formed to assist the Headteacher during this period. Initial assessment at the school budget revision in June 2020 is that there should not be a significant impact on the school finances but application will be made for funds that are available to cover unexpected costs of additional cleaning and Supply Teacher costs to cover staff who were shielding or risk assessed to stay at home following the partial reopening.

The school was able to provide key worker support to families throughout the crisis on a full-time basis with 4 days a week provided where possible. The school also achieved the ability to meet government guidance and allow year 6 and reception children back to school in accordance with guidelines.

Significant investment has been undertaken over the past five years and so near-term major projects are not planned. An updated SIDP following the COVID-19 guidelines will be reassessed to identify if any facilities are needed to allow for full return to school in September 2020 over the summer.

The school continues to be supported by parents with excellent attendance and support at fund raising events (fund raising events have been impacted by COVID-19 and new methods need to be identified for the coming year). The Friends Association continues to be proactive and raise funds for school.

The school continues to be popular with the full reception class being filled from first preferences.

The **Ethos Committee** identifies and reinforces the common experiences, shared values and beliefs which promote the school's ethos, vision and values. The Headteacher reports on the different assemblies (whole school, class, Open the Book, child-led, celebration and special events) which comprise the daily and collective worship requirements. Visitors are regularly invited to contribute to an assembly. During the pandemic the school has been unable to meet all together for collective worship, but instead the pupils join in virtually from their own class bubbles which is working well.

Governors have continued to monitor the introduction of the new Understanding Christianity curriculum and also observed RE lessons and collective worship. Through these methods, and also walk-rounds of the school, the Committee has monitored Christian Distinctiveness, to ensure that the Christian faith is central to the life of the school.

Church schools are assessed according to the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) framework, which focuses on the impact of the school's Christian vision on the pupils. The school was inspected in November 2019, and we are delighted to report that it received an 'elusive' Excellent grade in all categories, which reflected the hard work and commitment of all staff, in particular the RE Co-ordinator. During the COVID-19 crisis the committee has focussed on the wellbeing of staff and pupils.

The **Full Governing Body** ensures Safeguarding is a priority for all Governors. The Headteacher reports each half term on Safeguarding in her reports. It is always a separate item on the FGB agenda and on each Committee agenda. The Safeguarding Governor attends the relevant training. Safeguarding is particularly a concern during lockdown, with lower visibility of pupils. The Safeguarding Policy has been updated to take into account the unusual circumstances faced during the pandemic. The Governors are continuing to monitor Safeguarding and are satisfied that the systems in place to identify concerns are working.

Monitoring of pupil progress is always included in the Headteacher's reports. Dig Deep Day was a successful in depth look at the school including lesson observations, meetings with subject leaders and the School Council, collective worship participation, lunchtime

	<p>and playtime. The Governors gave feedback to the staff and written reports are on Governorhub.</p> <p>As Governors, we are indebted to our teaching and support staff. The staff are very proactive and give willingly of their skills and time. This has been demonstrated during the pandemic, with staff responding quickly and adapting to the new ways of working to ensure the best support for the pupils, often stepping outside their usual job roles and comfort zones to help with whatever is required. The new Headteacher has coped admirably with the numerous challenges facing the school during lockdown; keeping the school open for Key Worker children and furthermore being able to offer all pupils some time back in school during the summer term. Processes have been put in place to allow the Governing Body to respond quickly to the changes within the school and the government guidelines during the COVID-19 crisis, and weekly discussions are taking place with the Headteacher to offer support and update on the latest situation.</p> <p>We recognise the strength of the school's teaching staff team. The staff demonstrate a wealth of experience and this has been freely shared with new teaching colleagues.</p> <p>Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents - copies of approved minutes can be obtained from the school office.</p>
<p><b>Future plans for the governors</b></p>	<p>Over the last few difficult months, the school staff have coped brilliantly with the challenges posed by COVID-19. The governors continue to work with and support the Headteacher as plans are put in place for reopening the school in September in line with government guidance.</p> <p>The Governors are committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for children at the school and continually monitor the suitability of the buildings and facilities to offer the best possible learning environment for the pupils. At the same time, Governors are mindful of the increasing demand for places at the school and how the school might respond to ensure the school continues to flourish and thrive long into the future.</p>
<p><b>How you can contact the governing body</b></p>	<p>We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents - please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office or the email address on the school website. You can see the full list of Governors and more information on the Governors' page of the school website.</p>