

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of The FORT Federation

Spring Term 2017

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of The FORT Federation Governing Body are:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- 2. Holding the Executive 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 reconstituted on 31 August 2016 in line with new government guidelines, such that the current 2 parent governors on the Board can come from either school within the Federation. Our Governing Body now consists of 2 elected parent governors, 1 local authority governor, 2 staff governors (one of which includes the Executive Head Teacher), 9 Foundation Governors and 2 co-opted Governors. There is currently one unfilled foundation governor position. Due to the amount of ongoing projects at the moment, the Governing Body has decided to wait and review our structure and skills sets again prior to seeking to recruit a new foundation governor. Our term of office will remain at 4 years for all Governors.

Committee Structure of the Governing Body

The FORT Federation has a Chair and Vice Chair of Governors who are elected each September, and a total of 6 committees to ensure that all requirements of the Governing Body are met over a yearly cycle. The Full Governing Body as the name suggests is comprised of all Governors, and meets twice termly (6 times a year). All governors attend either The Teaching and Learning Committee or the Resources Committee, again twice termly. There is also a small Admissions Committee, Pay & Performance Committee and Executive Head Teacher Appraisal Committee. Please see the website which shows Governors Committee Lists to see which governor attends each one.

All committees have a 'Terms of Reference' which is reviewed annually by the Full Governing Body each September, and sets out in broad terms the membership, quorum requirements, Chair, Clerk and meeting dates for the following academic year. Also

	<p>responsibilities of the committee, authority/delegation levels and details of any 'lead' governors who have specific oversight of a subject and/or policy, and their authority levels.</p>
<p>Attendance record of governors</p>	<p>Governors have excellent attendance at meetings and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not "quorate" (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). See the website for details of individual governors' attendance at meetings.</p>
<p>The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing body</p>	<p>The governing body has a substantial amount of work to get through each year, which is guided by an 'Annual Cycle of Business', tailored to our schools' requirements by the Chair of Governors, Chairs of committees, Executive Headteacher and Clerk to Governors.</p> <p>In the 2015-16 academic year, the governing bodies of Payhembury and Awliscombe schools came together to form the new FORT Federation. Already significant benefits have been achieved, with savings made from resources being used more effectively across both schools, such as joint working of staff, moderating and scrutiny across both schools.</p> <p>Last year saw a restructure across both sites, the implementation and bedding in of a new curriculum (Cornerstones), and new teaching staff. This continues into 2016/17 with the ongoing expansion project at Payhembury (see below).</p> <p>Ongoing changes at national level continue to prove challenging for all schools; changes are still being made to the assessment process for children, and the testing process is still not secure; There have been significant changes in supporting children with Special Educational Needs (SEND); Greater focus on Safeguarding in schools, with the introduction of CPOMS, a new software application for monitoring child protection, safeguarding and a whole range of pastoral and welfare issues; The proposed National Funding Formula for schools remains a major concern;</p> <p>In the latter part of the year, parent, pupil and staff questionnaires were sent out, and acted upon, with the governors providing feedback to parents/carers. Also, the governors met to discuss ideas for the creation of a set of Visions and Values and a Motto for the FORT Federation. A small working party then took those ideas and came up with the following, which has now been adopted:</p> <p>Visions and Values of the FORT Federation</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our vision for the Federation is of a family of schools founded on strong Christian values. Working together, we are stronger than we could be alone. We develop inspiring work and play space across the Federation. • Our children, always curious about the world around them, take pride in their school and the Federation. They are eager to excel and to help others to do so too. • Our staff work together across the Federation. With constant support and exciting resources, they feel valued, confident and secure. They have the highest expectations of every child. • Each of our schools lies at the heart of its community. It is strongly supported by parents, other local people and businesses, and shares its success with them. <p>Motto</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Growing together; aiming high”</p>
<p>Future plans for the governors</p>	<p>A significant project is the build to provide additional classrooms at Payhembury. This is an exciting development for our Federation. We have an experienced Project Manager overseeing the build, which involves changes to the main building, which as you know is listed, and placing a new ‘Wernick’ style building on the Village Hall side of the site.</p> <p>Looking to the future, the Governing Body is considering the Federation’s position in light of the current Government trend to turn all Schools towards Multi Academy Trusts. We will ensure that we stay fully informed and consider all options available but keeping the best possible outcome for the children within our Federation at the forefront.</p>
<p>How you can contact the governing body</p>	<p>We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents. Please contact the Chair of Governors Mrs Emily Meek, via either school office or via email to:</p> <p>chairofgovs@fort.devon.sch.uk</p>

Our Full Governors Meetings are open to the public to observe, and we would welcome seeing more people attending. So if you are interested in coming along, please send an email to the Clerk of Governors at:

clerkofgops@fort.devon.sch.uk

The dates of Full Governor Meetings for 2016-17 are as follows:

- 30 November 2016 18:00 Payhembury
- 22 February 2017 18:00 Awliscombe
- 19 April 2017 18:00 Payhembury
- 24 May 2017 18:00 Awliscombe
- 5 July 2017 18:00 Payhembury

Please look out for a reminder of the dates in the school newsletters.

Our new website also contains lots of useful information so please take a look at www.fortfederation.com.

GOVERNOR IMPACT STATEMENT

Best practice suggests that as governors we produce a statement of the impact that our actions and decisions have had on the Federation. The strategic nature of the governors' role means that it is often difficult to make a quantitative assessment of impact, at least in the short term, so in some cases the impact we have identified may be ongoing or anticipated.

It is not practicable to list all governor actions, but we believe that these are some of the most significant.

Action/decision by governors	Impact
The formation of a single unified governing body of the Federation	<p>The value of the federation has been recognised by children, parents and staff. In particular, staff benefit from working together across the federation and this has improved the quality of teaching and learning.</p> <p>The way in which the governing body has so quickly formed a unified whole has been recognised by the Senior Leadership Team as providing a secure and supportive foundation for the Federation.</p>
Analysis of responses to the parent questionnaire early in the 2015/6 school year and the development of a set of actions to deal with the issues raised	By demonstrating responsiveness to parents' concerns, we believe governors have improved parental engagement with the Federation schools as well as initiating the specific improvements requested.
The development of a Federation Vision Statement and Motto and the presentation of these to parents	We believe that this has helped, and will continue to help, to bring together all in the Federation community
The decision to move to a four class structure at both schools	As numbers in both schools grow, this will help us to ensure that class sizes are kept at a reasonable level.
The new build at Payhembury	<p>This allows us to adopt a four class structure at Payhembury - see above.</p> <p>In addition to scrutinising and approving the proposal governors have supported the Senior Leadership Team in particular aspects of the process, for example in helping to deal with some external agencies.</p>
The upgrading of both school websites and the creation of a Federation Website, which has been	This provides more information to parents and other stakeholders, and also to prospective parents looking for a school place for their children.

managed by a small governor team working with the website designer	We have also ensured that the websites now give all statutory information about our schools.
Revision and integration of school policies to provide a single set of policies for the Federation (ongoing)	Creates consistency across the Federation and ensures that we are in line with statutory requirements and/or best practice
Completion of Risk Assessments at both schools, together with the development of a Federation Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Improved safety and security at both schools
Completion of annual <i>Schools Financial Value Statement</i> ; regular scrutiny of school budgets, in collaboration with Senior Administrator and Executive Headteacher	Helps to ensure best value and the most efficient allocation of limited resources.
The ongoing engagement with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) by governors generally and 'lead governors' (with particular responsibilities) specifically. Governors act as 'critical friends' by scrutinising, questioning and supporting the work of the SLT. This is evident both in formal governor meetings and in monitoring visits by governors over the course of the year.	The Executive Head reports the positive impact on the SLT of governor engagement as follows: <i>While being very visible the governors have found the balance to be supportive but discreet; critical yet not disruptive. The senior leadership team have benefited from the dialogue resulting from the monitoring and it has been used to review practice and make small tweaks when necessary.</i>