



**HEATHCOTE SCHOOL AND SCIENCE COLLEGE**

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018/19**

## Foreword

Being part of a Governing Body for a large secondary school such as Heathcote School and Science College is both challenging and rewarding in equal measure. This Annual Governance Statement sets out the main organisational, academic and financial challenges the Governing Body has been involved with this year. It celebrates the level of commitment teachers, leaders, staff, governors and pupils have shown to the school. Without all the individuals involved Heathcote would not be the school it is today or be showing such potential for the coming year and beyond.

The year began with a section 5 Ofsted inspection which is two days of tough scrutiny of every aspect of school life. This includes the Governing Body. We were pleased with the outcome as it deservedly reflected the hard work and effort that had been implemented by the Headteacher and her team. The school has a firm foundation on which to move forward and reflects our ethos of a positive whole school life experience.

The Government has moved much responsibility onto the shoulders of Governing Body's in recent years and governors, despite being volunteers, take this responsibility very seriously. This year was a time of change with many long-established governors finishing their terms of office, and new governors joining bringing a different range of life-experiences. At Heathcote, collectively, governors gave over 366 volunteer hours of their time, not including training, disciplinary panels, visits and other support to the school. We are hugely grateful to our governors, past and present, for this gift and what they have achieved.

This statement sets out what our Governing Body does and what we here at Heathcote are committed to achieving for our pupils. It is also an open invitation to parents and people in the community to consider what they could bring to a school in the heart of our community as governors, as supporters, and as neighbours.

**Mike Ashwell and Amanda Roper**

Co-Chairs 2018/19, Heathcote School and Science College Governing Body

## Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Governance Statement for Heathcote School and Science College Governing Body for the 2018-19 academic year. The statement includes the main organisational, academic and financial challenges the Governing Body has been involved with this year.

## The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has a strategic role with three core functions. These are to:

- set the vision and strategic direction of school;
- hold the Headteacher and senior leadership team to account for its educational performance; and
- Ensure public financial resources are well spent.

## Governing Body composition and membership

The Governing Body is composed of 6 parent governors, 9 co-opted governors, 1 local authority appointed governor, 1 staff governor and the Headteacher. This year has seen a high turnover of governors including the appointment of a new Chair of Governors. From August 2018 through to September 2019, six co-opted governors, one local authority governor and five parent governors stood down, with the majority completing their term of office. Despite the turnover of governors, the Governing Body has remained full and benefited from the introduction of new skills and ideas.

## Attendance

Overall 70% of governors attended Governing Body meetings and 82% of governors attended Committee meetings. Please note attendance only includes Governing Body or Committee meetings. It does not include the significant contribution governors make through working groups, governor training days, writing reports, Governor Disciplinary Committees or governor visits (LINK visits).

## Committees

The Governing Body had three main Committees this year, with the following purpose:

- **Resources:** To provide overall scrutiny and put forward recommendations to the Governing Body and Headteacher on all matters relating to personnel, premises, security, health and safety and finance. The latter as outlined in the School's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
- **Behaviour, Attendance, Safeguarding and Outcomes (BASO):** To advise the Headteacher and Governing Body on matters concerning pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, in particular to ensure that the requirements of pupils with special needs are met, and ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve their potential.
- **Learning, Teaching and Development (LTD):** To advise the Headteacher and Governing Body on matters concerning curriculum and professional development for teaching staff and non-teaching staff.

The Committees worked through the policies and procedures relevant to their areas, took decisions where they had delegated authority and made recommendations to the Governing Body. In addition, the Governing Body held the Headteacher's appraisal for 2017/18 and informal mid-year appraisal in June 2019.

**Note:** In September 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) published a new OFSTED framework with the following changes. BASO is now referred to as Behaviour, Attitudes and Personal Development (BAPD). LTD is now referred to as Quality of Education (QOE).

### Governor Disciplinary Committees (GDC)

A GDC panel is formed from three Governors whenever a child is excluded from school, for either a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

### Governors visits (LINK)

Governors are assigned to a specific area in the school that are either statutory or the Governing Body wishes to monitor more closely. Governors normally make two visits per year. Governors visit the school to monitor, support and challenge the Headteacher, leaders and heads of departments to ensure outcomes are achieved. The focus areas for this year included:

- Safeguarding and Looked After Children
- SEND
- Data, Progress and Attainment
- English, Literacy, Maths & Numeracy
- Science
- More-able and Higher Attaining Pupils
- Pupil Premium and Pupil Council
- Behaviour & Attendance
- Sixth Form
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Outward Facing and Community Engagement
- Educational visits and careers
- Y6/Y7 Transition and Parent Engagement
- Communication
- Training
- Culture Champion (LBWF)

Each area had at least one visit or meeting with the relevant Link Governor who provided reports on what they found.

### Working Groups

Committees or the Governing Body are occasionally supplemented by Working Groups who look at specific areas in much more detail. This year there were two such Groups:

- Improving our Governance
- Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) Payment Structure Working Group

### Improving our Governance

Improving our governance was a major focus for the Governing Body before the start of term and from June 2018 to September 2018 the Governing Body ran a review of its Governance. The aim was to improve how we work and what our objectives were for the school. This was led by a small group of governors and involved discussions about specific issues such as our culture and values as a Governing Body, our committee structure and ways to get the right information without putting unnecessary pressure on the school's Senior Leadership Team. The ideas were discussed with the whole Governing Body in a series of three 'governor days' so we could implement the proposals from the first meeting of 2018/19 in September.

## TLR Structure Working Group

The TLR Structure Working Group was a key focus for the Governing Body from February 2018 to March 2018. The role of this group was to focus on proposals to restructure the TLR bandings to provide the school with greater flexibility in what to award staff through each band.

## Support from a National Leader of Governance

This year the Governing Body benefited greatly from the support and advice of Gillian Barker, a National Leader of Governance. Gillian provided coaching for the new chair and guidance to the Governing Body on different ways to work and improving our understanding of the complex regulations and guidance from the DfE.

## Governor Training

This year 50% of governors attended training provided by LBWF, including a governors training day that looked at strategy, governance and team working. Governors attended the schools INSET day on 3rd September 2018 which is a chance to meet staff and greet new joiners. Governors are required to attend training on regular basis to ensure a balance of skills across the Governing Body.

## Successes and Challenges

### Ofsted

Our year started with a section 5 (two day) Ofsted inspection where staff, pupils and governors worked to show the inspectors the values and commitment at Heathcote. Ofsted had previously questioned the 'rigour and challenge' that governors had demonstrated 'about pupils' progress'<sup>1</sup> and this inspection reflected how we had improved by noting that governors 'are determined to ensure that all pupils achieve the best they can'<sup>2</sup>. Overall the school received a 'good' rating which reflected the hard work that is put into the school by everyone. This is a good base to work from for the coming year.

### Finance

The financial position of the school continues to be a challenge, with the in-year Net Revenue deficit standing at **£72k**, with a small surplus of **£13,716** which was carried into 2019/20.

The Net Cash position at the end of the year was **£105,876**, the cash flow outlook for the year ahead is positive and there are no current concerns. The school has taken steps to implement robust monitoring of the net cash position each month and flagging issues to the Local Authority as necessary.

Moving into 2019/20, the school will continue to focus on budget forecasting, cash flow monitoring and ways to save money. To ensure robust Financial Systems and Governance, the school will be audited in the autumn term to ensure good practice is built into our processes and any corrective action can be put into place.

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<sup>1</sup> Short Inspection, January 2018: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50034821>

<sup>2</sup> Full Inspection, September 2018: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2753127>

## Behaviour

We have explored the effectiveness of the new Behaviour Policy with the Headteacher and the school's Senior Leadership Team. While this has had a positive impact with good feedback from pupils and parents, it has, as expected, resulted in an increased number of internal and external exclusions.

There were eight cases that required governors to hold a Governor Disciplinary Committee (GDC) and they dealt with four fixed term exclusions and four permanent exclusions. The number of GDCs and the range of behaviour shown by a minority of pupils are reflecting issues within the community and we will continue to work with those in the surrounding area, pupils and police to make sure Heathcote is a safe environment for pupils, parents and staff.

## Staff

Performance, recruitment and retention of staff continues to be a challenge. Governors continue to work with the Headteacher and staff to constructively challenge and assess each subject department at quarterly reviews. These have allowed the Governing Body to understand the strengths and areas for improvement in the teaching and environment at Heathcote School. As a result, we have been able to take more effective decisions on pay and the curriculum.

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