

Sheldon School

Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

The Board of Governors

Sheldon's Board of Governors (BOG) comprises:

- 7 parent governors elected by parents
- 3 teacher governors elected by teachers
- 1 staff governor elected by the non-teaching staff
- the headteacher, as an ex-officio governor
- 6 community governors appointed by the BOG
- 1 community governor appointed by the Local Authority (or by the BOG if the Local Authority fails to make a nomination)
- Up to 3 Associate Members can be appointed by the BOG

In addition, the deputy headteacher and School Business Manager attend full BOG meetings and committee meetings. Other members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) also attend when required and appropriate.

There are six governor committees: Strategy; Staffing, Care and Guidance; Finance & Audit; Premises; Curriculum; Public Relations and Marketing. These meet up to six times each year. The full BOG meets six times a year; at each meeting we have reports from the committees and a report from either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

The BOG core roles are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Most of the governors' work takes place at committee level; when the full meeting of governors convenes, we look at all the work done at committee level. In the last twelve months we have had presentations from:

- the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Governor
- the Reporting Officer (scrutinises internal assurance)
- the headteacher
- the deputy headteacher
- the Safeguarding Governor
- the Pupil Premium Governor

And discussed:

- Health and Safety
- Child Protection
- Pupil Premium
- the Sheldon Student Opportunity Fund
- Admissions
- School budgets
- Exam results
- Pupil data
- Committee reviews
- Business Interests Register
- Covid-19 updates and school closure due to Covid-19
- Risk management
- Governor succession planning
- The 'Everyone's Invited' website and movement
- A proposal from Chippenham Cricket Club for a new pavilion

In addition, we have:

- Reviewed our Scheme of Delegation and Decision Planner
- Monitored our progress against the School Development Plan (SDP)
- Made a minor change to the Sheldon Constitution & Charters (timetable for Annual Report)
- Produced an Annual Report from the BOG to the Members and the Charters Board
- Reviewed and agreed Terms of Reference for all committees
- Received Link Governor reports from all faculties
- Recruited and selected new members of SMT and Faculty Heads;
- Undertaken and evaluated Governor skills development activities and training
- Conducted a BOG Self-Evaluation
- Commissioned an external review of Governance

Link governors are attached to each faculty and report back to the BOG, enabling faculty staff to share practice and progress, and for the BOG to see the impact of their decisions.

Parent Forum governors attend forums for each year group and share feedback with the BOG.

The Chair of Governors, appointed (or re-appointed) at the start of each academic year, meets with the headteacher at least once a month and between meetings they discuss any matters that need attention.

The focus areas for the coming academic year will be agreed at the first full BOG meeting in October.

BOG objectives set in October 2020 were:

- Continue to monitor emerging and ongoing risks to the school's financial position

- Monitor investment in school infrastructure and consider future investment priorities
- Look at all aspects of staff and pupil wellbeing and mental health initiatives
- Improve overall BOG effectiveness through enhanced cross-committee learning, stronger communication, skills development and knowledge sharing
- Ensure continued effective management of the school and regular engagement with stakeholder groups during the Covid-19 pandemic in line with Governors' core roles
- Work collaboratively with the headteacher and SMT to develop an ambitious new 3-year SDP

Strategy Committee

Role

The Strategy committee meets before each full BOG meeting, six times a year. It consists of the Chair, the Chairs of all the committees, the Vice Chairs of Governors, and the headteacher.

The purpose of the Strategy Group is to monitor the school's strategic direction, ensuring appropriate oversight, continuous improvement and innovation, through synthesising the knowledge and expertise of the Committee Chairs, the Vice-chairs and the headteacher.

Its role is to:

- Engage periodically with the SMT, including after the SMT Conference, to review strategic themes with the headteacher
- Agree governor involvement in formulating and monitoring the SDP, in consultation with SMT
- Make recommendations to the BOG to establish ad hoc teams for specific purposes such as a building project or preparation for an Ofsted inspection
- Ensure the work being undertaken by committees, ad hoc working groups and individuals is coordinated and reported to the full BOG, as required
- Act as a sounding board for the headteacher, providing advice, as required and appropriate, on matters of particular difficulty, sensitivity or emergency
- Consider how the school will address issues and changes nationally and locally relating to matters including staffing, funding and admissions
- Annually review the overall operation of the BOG to evaluate its efficiency and effectiveness and act on feedback to ensure continuous improvement
- Annually propose objectives for approval by the BOG
- Ensure the BOG has in place the required mechanisms and processes to enable it to fulfil the 3 roles of governance and its core functions effectively, as outlined in The Governance Handbook and other reference documents
- Support governance through the risk register, ensuring appropriate audit and assurance processes are in place, review the top risks at each meeting and bring these to the full BOG
- Participate in the recruitment and selection of senior members of school staff.

Achievements in 2020/2021

During the last school year, we have successfully:

- Reviewed the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of References for all the committees
- Reviewed BOG and committee reviews and agreed actions required
- Commissioned an external review of Governance
- Set objectives

- Considered succession planning
- Revised the Skills Audit
- Discussed changes to the Sheldon Constitution & Charters (timetable for Annual Report)
- Monitored the SDP
- Monitored staffing
- Reviewed the Risk Register
- Considered the requirement for a Risk Management Strategy, including pan-BOG audit and assurance responsibilities
- Discussed pupil destinations
- Reviewed admissions (including Sixth form) numbers
- Participated in the recruitment process for the Head of Performing Arts and School Business Manager posts
- Considered the school's responses to COVID-19, including reviewing and commenting on the Risk Assessment for school reopening

Staffing, Care and Guidance Committee

Role

The Staffing, Care and Guidance Committee (SCG) supports the Board of Governors and has delegated responsibility for the spending of all staffing budgets to agreed staffing levels, ensuring a spread of curricular expertise through the process of our teaching staff appointments.

During the last school year we have supported the following:

- Helped teachers become more effective through INSET opportunities and personal development
- Ensured that teachers are appropriately rewarded so far as budget and national teacher's pay structure permit
- Reviewed staffing policies
- Reviewed complaints and exclusions
- Monitored staff and pupils' morale and well being
- Monitored staff recruitment and retention

Objectives for 2021/22

In addition to our routine tasks, the primary objectives for 2021/22 are:

- Ongoing monitoring of staff and pupils' morale and wellbeing with additional emphasis on Years 12 and 13
- To ensure staffing changes are effectively managed with minimal impact on pupils
- Ongoing monitoring and review of the Risk register and the 2021-24 School Development Plan
- Ensure Safeguarding information is updated and disseminated to Governors, staff, parents and pupils in a timely way

Finance and Audit Committee

Role

Audit and assurance work is central to the role of the Finance & Audit Committee and we ensure that the highest standards of financial control and administration are adhered to. We also ensure that there is a robust system in place for monitoring the progress of expenditure and income during the year which enables the committee to act in good time to prevent any budgetary difficulties. We have oversight of school budget setting, determination of financial priorities and end of year reporting, including receiving accounts prepared by external auditors. We have a strong link to the Premises Committee and maintain oversight of investments in the Sheldon estate as well as our largest contracts including catering and cleaning. We also help to define and oversee the internal assurance work done within the school to ensure its processes and procedures are adhered to, it is fully compliant with any regulations and that financial risk is managed effectively.

Achievements in 2020/2021

In 2020/21 academic year, the committee's work included:

- continuing to monitor the financial position of the school in light of the significant additional challenges of COVID-19. This included monitoring the trading company and likely shortfalls in income in 20/21
- continuing to review detailed monthly reports comparing actual expenditure to budget and to scrutinise any unexpected variances
- continuing to review cash flow and investment requirements with consideration to falling available cash balances
- sourcing high quality, new internal and external audit service providers for the school which were put to Members for approval and appointment
- supporting the selection of new finance software to streamline financial management and reporting in Sheldon
- reviewing our approach to governance of risk and internal assurance in collaboration with Board colleagues
- to preparing a new budget for 21/22 and forward 3-year forecasts

In addition, the Committee Chair was part of the recruitment panel for the appointment of a new School Business Manager.

Objectives for 2021/22

For 2021/22, the Committee has clarified its core objectives as being to:

- Direct and supervise the management of the school's finances
- Make financial plans (including the agreeing of a draft budget and its presentation to the BOG)
- Determine broad financial priorities and ensure 'best value' is achieved in the use of Sheldon School funds

- Ensure the soundness of policies and systems for recording and managing expenditure, income (including earned or voluntary income) and assets
- Monitor and, as necessary, agree adjustments to the progress of budgeted income and expenditure
- Oversee risk strategy, identify, monitor and mitigate risks
- In conjunction with Premises Committee, ensure adequate business continuity plans are in place
- Oversee the process of financial reporting including receiving accounts prepared by external auditors
- Appoint internal auditors, set priorities for internal audit and monitor action against audit reports

The Committee had also identified some specific annual objectives for the year 21/22:

- To continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sheldon expenditure
- To monitor the impact of centralising the school procurement process in 2021/22 academic year
- To ensure that the suite of reports provided to Governors from the new Finance system is sufficient to enable Governors to discharge their responsibilities
- To work towards a reduction in Sheldon's deficit budget for 2022/23 onwards by end June 2022
- To provide support from a governance perspective to new and existing members of the Finance Team including the new School Business Manager

Premises Committee

Role

The Premises Committee ensures that there is a system in place for monitoring plans for the development, maintenance and security of the school's buildings and grounds as well as the delivery of support services by external contractors. In consultation with the Head, it is responsible to the Board of Governors for:

- Reviewing the condition of the premises and developing strategic plans for the development and maintenance of the school's buildings, grounds and IT Infrastructure
- Forming the policy and recommending the charges to be applied for the letting of the school's premises
- Reviewing risk management as it concerns the premises, including the oversight of Health and Safety and GDPR policies and issues
- Establishing and keeping under review the Critical Incident Policy and procedures
- Overseeing the Security Policy and monitoring reports of security incidents including data

Achievements in 2020/21

During the last school year we have supported the following:

- Changes to the school due to the COVID-19 pandemic including one-way systems, hand sanitisers etc
- Continued monitoring of Health and Safety requirements through Governor walkarounds
- Review of a comprehensive school condition report and fire safety assessment
- Monitoring improvements in Information Technology to support remote learning where necessary
- Ensuring we get value for money with our energy contracts
- Review of Risks commensurate with our role and the development of a new risk register

Objectives for 2021/22

In addition to our routine tasks, the primary objectives are:

- Develop a new Master Plan for the facilities and Estate Strategy to create a long-term vision for the use of the facilities that considers the school's obligation towards zero carbon initiatives
- Look for opportunities to reduce impact on the environment through engagement with our third-party contractors and seeking energy efficient utilities where possible
- Support the development of new CIF bids for Fire Alarm replacement as a minimum

Curriculum Committee

Role

The committee ensures the curriculum offered is broad and balanced, good progress is made by pupils from all groups and at all stages, and that emotional wellbeing and pupil destinations are monitored. Each member champions the needs of a specific pupil group during data analysis and policy review.

Achievements in 2020/21

- Our 'Whole Child' reports have been particularly invaluable this year in terms of gaining insights into all aspects of our pupils' experiences. There is a focus on wellbeing, with information detailing the support in place and pupil engagement with it, academic progress, attendance and behaviour, enrichment activities, work experience and post-18 preparation
- We have received regular reports on our disadvantaged pupils, monitoring their attendance, the impact of interventions and provisions put in place for them. Progress of all Pupil Premium pupils has been monitored, including those who are in full-time alternative provision
- We have received presentations from the Maths and MFL faculties - fewer faculties than usual, as we have needed to be agile and responsive to the needs that have emerged with COVID. Extra-curricular provisions have also been covered. Presentations provide an overview and highlight strengths and weaknesses (including strategies), opportunities and threats
- Performance data has been compared to national data and the committee has continued to receive training in the use of Fischer Family Trust (FFT) summary dashboard, Analyse School Performance (ASP) and Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)
- We have reviewed the UCAS monthly key statistics report
- We have been informed regarding the response from The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) to the Department for Education and Ofqual consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021
- We have had a presentation on Risk Management to enable our committee to assess risks in relation to the curriculum

Objectives for 2021/22

The committee will determine its focus at the first meeting of the new academic year. This is likely to initially focus on recovery with short, medium and long-term objectives, including pupils across all year groups, with a specific focus on Years 11 and 13.

- There will also be a focus throughout the year on disadvantaged pupils and the impact of well-researched, targeted interventions
- Intent, Implementation and Impact will be monitored across all disciplines and pupil groups. Link governors will be encouraged to attend meetings
- Wellbeing, SEND and Pupil Premium will continue to be on every agenda

SEND Governor

The Board of Governors has legal duties in relation to pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). According to the [Governance Handbook](#) the functions these duties require can be delegated to a committee, an individual Governor or to the Headteacher; although the responsibility is still with the Board of Governors itself to ensure that the functions are carried out. It should decide, with the Headteacher, the school's general policy and approach to meeting pupils' SEND.

At Sheldon, the SEND Governor, as a member of the Curriculum Committee, assists the Governors to fulfil their legal duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, School Admissions Code and the Equality Act 2010.

The SEND Governor helps ensure that the Board of Governors has regard to the [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) and that information is published on the school's website about the implementation of the Board of Governors' policy for pupils with SEND: [SEND Information Report 2020-21](#). The SEND Governor's principal function is to keep the Governors informed about the way the school manages its provision for pupils with SEND and ensure that the Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities by:

- Being familiar with relevant documents and legislation, including relevant school policies
- Meeting regularly with the SENDCo to become better informed about the assessment of special needs, the numbers of pupils with SEND, provision made, staffing and funding levels, how pupils access the curriculum and SEND priorities in the School Development Plan
- Making visits to the school to see what pupils need, what resources are available for SEND pupils and how teaching methods work
- Advising on any Board of Governors decisions which have implications for SEND pupils
- Overseeing the implementation of the [SEND Policy](#) and [Equalities Policy](#)
- Attending INSET days and Governor training courses relating to SEND
- Reporting regularly to the Board of Governors.
- Ensuring that all SEND pupils have been supported appropriately during the pandemic

Public Relations & Marketing

Role

The committee directs and monitors all PR and Marketing activities, adopting a communications strategy with the aim of attracting and retaining a target number of pupils. The committee also consults with SMT regarding reputational management in promoting and marketing the school brand.

Achievements in 2020/21

- Discussed and monitored the role of Primary school outreach and how this can be improved further – COVID restrictions permitting. We gained valuable feedback from primary schools and fed this back into the lesson we teach. Programme of visits to 21 primary schools in the area
- Championed better use of media, in particular videos used in promoting the school to the best of its ability in a virtual environment, including Open Days and Evenings
- Increased significantly social media usage across all relevant channels including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. All year groups now have an Instagram feed and some are using this form of communication extremely well
- Developed a guide for staff to use school's social media accounts to ensure that all Heads of Faculties are confident and familiar with the 'rules' of using this platform to promote exemplar work
- Produced a survey comparing all local schools' websites, social media and effective branding. This highlighted a vast difference of branding and straplines which provided a useful benchmark and should be reviewed again along with Sheldon school's offering early in next academic year
- Developed a better working relationship with editor of main Chippenham newspaper: Gazette and Herald. Meetings set up between headteacher and editor to cement relationship. Assistant headteacher formed good relationship with feature editors to ensure Sheldon had regular placements of press releases and share of photo stories. Press release template was provided for relevant staff members to use
- Assessed advertising spend over the year and its effectiveness in Newsquest publications as well as specialist magazines covering Bath area. Main advertising focused on Open Evenings and Open Days although extra spend was found to promote one off articles including editorial 'Meet the Head'
- Developed series of questionnaires to establish why pupils make the choices they do with regard to secondary school. Most findings related to peer group pressure and sibling placement although some nuances were evident. Year 7s were specifically questioned although opinions were sought from parents/pupils at various 'touch points' within the school
- Developed first Risk Register for committee. This is to be used as a benchmark and assessed at regular intervals next year
- Agreement to bring in external PR and Marketing consultant In Autumn 2021 to look at all 'customer touch points' and advise an appropriate strategy and marketing communications plan to assist the school in its activities. Initial pitch document was presented

Objectives for 2020/21

The committee will determine its exact focus at the start of next term with a likely focus on looking at initiatives to attract more pupils into school. The Committee would look to raise awareness of Sheldon school within its target market and increase media coverage. It would look to build on journalist relationships and increase social media followers and activity. From a crisis management perspective, the committee would look to assist SMT in managing and protecting Sheldon school's reputation.