

# **Sheldon School**

## **Annual Governance Statement 2021-22**

### **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.

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.

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.

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. This year, we have had presentations from the SEND Governor, the Safeguarding Governor, and the Pupil Premium Governor, and we've discussed a wide variety of topics, including Health and Safety, Child Protection, the Sheldon Student Opportunity Fund, admissions, the budget, examination results, risk management, governor succession planning, the 'Everyone's Invited' website and movement, and a proposal from Chippenham Cricket Club for a new pavilion.

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 2021 were:

- Continue to monitor emerging and ongoing risks to the school's financial position
- Monitor investment in school infrastructure and consider future investment priorities
- Assess impact of initiatives aimed at all aspects of staff and student wellbeing and mental health initiatives
- Continue to monitor progress towards achievement of SDP targets and associated risks
- Ensure all governors are equipped with the knowledge and awareness to respond appropriately to likely Ofsted areas of questioning
- Ensure all governors have the opportunity to provide inputs to the development and implementation of the Operations Strategy within the context of the new SDP
- Continue to pursue and record learning and development activities, including effective induction, mandatory training, experiential learning (through e.g. Link Governor roles) and knowledge acquisition (through sources such as The Key and the NGA)
- Monitor the effective management of the school as it recovers and learns from the impact of the pandemic, ensuring good outcomes for all children and effective use of resources.

## **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 Chair 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.

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 2021/2022**

During the last school year, we have successfully:

- Set BOG objectives and led a progress measurement activity
- Agreed an internal audit programme to begin in June 2022
- Agreed and reviewed an audit of the school's PR and marketing strategy
- Monitored progress with action planning from the review of governance
- Considered governor succession planning
- Considered proposals for improving governor visibility
- Revised the Skills Audit
- Provided input to the new SDP and agreed progress measures
- Provided input to the SMT restructure

- Monitored appointments and staffing issues
- Participated in the recruitment and selection of senior appointments, including Head of Maths, AHT, and School Business Manager as well as the Clerk to the Governors / Governance Professional
- Implemented a Risk Management Strategy
- Agreed 4 cross-cutting risks which are reviewed at every meeting along with individual committee top or deteriorating risks
- Discussed options for becoming part of a MAT
- Discussed the Link Governor role
- Reviewed admissions (including Sixth form) numbers
- Monitored the school's management of Covid-19

## **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 had two staff presentations

- Feedback from the Staff Wellbeing survey
- The Tutor programme

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 wellbeing
- Monitored staff recruitment and retention
- Review the Risk Register and the 2021-24 School Development plan

### **Objectives for 2022-23**

In addition to our routine tasks, the primary objectives for 2022/23 are

- Ongoing monitoring of staff and pupils' morale and wellbeing, with greater emphasis on pupil wellbeing
- Monitor the redistribution of roles amongst the Senior Management Team
- Ongoing monitoring and review of the Risk Register and the 2021-24 School Development Plan
- Monitor the development of new staff, particularly the Early Careers Teachers (ECT)
- Benchmark five specific Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

# **Finance and Audit Committee**

## **FINANCE& AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT 2021/22**

### **Our Committee's Role**

The Finance & Audit Committee plays a key role in directing and supervising the management of Sheldon's finances. The Committee also shapes and oversees our programme of assurance and audit.

This includes:

- making financial plans including the agreeing of a draft budget and presenting it to the BOG
- determining the broad financial priorities and ensuring 'best value' is achieved in the use of Sheldon School funds
- ensuring Sheldon's policies and systems for recording and managing expenditure, assets and income are sound.
- Overseeing risk strategy, identifying, monitoring and mitigating financial risk
- working with the Premises Committee to ensure adequate business continuity plans are in place, and to oversee investments in the Sheldon estate and IT, and the progress of our largest contracts (catering and cleaning).
- overseeing the process of financial reporting including receiving accounts prepared by external auditors
- appointing internal auditors, setting priorities for internal audit and monitoring action against audit reports

Together these elements form the Committee's ongoing work. In addition, we set some additional objectives which provide a specific focus for the year.

### **Objectives for 2021/22**

- 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 the 2021/22 Academic Year
- To ensure 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
- To provide support from the Governors to new and existing members of the Finance Team including the School Business Manager

### **Achievements in 2021/22**

Covid continued to affect Sheldon's finances in 2021/22 with additional support grants for Covid-related issues offset by ongoing shortfalls in income from our Trading subsidiary and other earned income as well as additional items of expenditure. The Committee met 6 times in the year to review financial reports and monitor ongoing changes in Sheldon's Finances. Annual report and Accounts were submitted on time and with only one minor point from our External auditors.

A review of whether Sheldon was achieving 'best value' in procurement was included in our annual internal assurance programme with a report due in 2022/23 financial year.

In addition, we have commissioned an assurance review of Sheldon's HR system and strategy which reported in July 2022, and we will be developing an action plan to deliver its recommendations for 2023. The changeover to Sheldon's new financial software proved challenging and Sheldon has become one of a handful of schools helping the software provider to improve the overall performance of their product.

Sheldon also changed its chart of accounts this year to align with the preferred model of the Dept. for Education. As such, we are still working on achieving the ideal reporting formats and are working towards better visualisation of data for all Governors. We have also supported a significant transition in Finance Team personnel this year and Sheldon's Operations Management is now under new leadership.

In a volatile year, our biggest challenge remains to work towards a reduction in our deficit budget and this will be a key focus for 2023 against a backdrop of rapidly rising costs and additional costs which are not centrally funded.

### **Objectives for 2022/23**

The core objectives of the Committee remain in place for 2022/23. The Committee will finalise its specific objectives in September 2022 but draft objectives for 2022/23 are as follows:

- To monitor the progress of action against internal reviews of Sheldon's HR and Procurement systems
- To ensure that the suite of reports provided to Governors from the new Finance system is optimised to enable Governors to discharge their responsibilities
- To manage escalating costs where feasible, and work towards a reduction in Sheldon's deficit budget for 2023 onwards including considering different scenarios within integrated curriculum and financial planning
- To research the financial implications of the new requirement for Sheldon to become part of a Multi-Academy Trust as set out in the Schools White Paper 2022<sup>1</sup>
- To contribute to the development of a new 'Operations Strategy' for Sheldon

## **Premises Committee**

### **Role**

The Premises Committee ensures that there are systems 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 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 for 2021/2022**

- We started the year without our long-standing School Business Manager, James Couchman. The SBM is our key contact within the school and we are delighted that James' replacement Julia Finch has quickly got to grips with life at Sheldon and is working well with the committee.
- Moved to a more strategic view of the school estate so that Governors have a better view of which areas will need improvement in the medium to long term.
- Continued our focus on Health and Safety by reviewing external surveys of the school estate and conducting Governor walk-arounds
- Supported the move to a simplified arrangement for discounts on School Lettings.
- Saw the benefits of our switch to LED lighting in reduced electricity usage.
- Benefitted from our earlier decision to fix our energy prices until next year, although these contracts will need re-negotiating this year.
- Supported funding bids for a Fire Alarm replacement.

### **Objectives for 2022/2023**

- Continue working towards defining an operational strategy for the school.
- Continue the move to more strategic and less operational reporting
- Investigate initiatives to move towards being a zero-carbon school
- Highlight any facilities aspects that may be affected by any change to the school's governance.



## **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 2021/22**

- Working with school leadership to shift committee focus from data tracking to discussions about the intent, implementation and impact of curriculum. All governors benefited from training from an HMI on the latest Ofsted framework.
- Introduction of bi-annual Head of Faculty reports, providing governors with greater insight into subject level plans and progress. This will enhance reporting by Link Governors, which needs further attention.
- We have followed closely the school's efforts in terms of recovery from Covid and, in particular, the impact on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. We have also had regular updates from leaders about the changing national assessment processes.
- There has been a continual focus on the benefits or otherwise of the school's curriculum and provision on disadvantaged pupils, monitored through the (revised) Pupil Premium strategy, which has a greater focus on evidence-based, high-quality teaching at its heart. However, the gap between disadvantaged/less able pupils and their peers remains wider than we would like.
- 'Whole Child' reports, Student Voice, and reports from the pupil-led Inclusivity Committee have provided insights into all aspects of our pupils' experiences. This continues our focus on wellbeing, as well as academic progress, attendance and behaviour, enrichment activities and work experience.
- We have received presentations from the Humanities and Science departments, as well as Learning Support, looking in detail at their curriculum and how it is delivered. We had a summary report from the SMT on the ongoing work on revising the KS3 curriculum across the school, which assured us good progress had been made on this important project.
- We have maintained a risk register with regular discussion of and adjustment of the risks around curriculum. Our view is that many of the actions taken by leaders this year have lessened the likelihood of these risks, but we will continue to monitor closely.

### **Objectives for 2022/23**

The committee will determine its focus at the first meeting of the new academic year. This will include scrutiny throughout the year on disadvantaged and less able pupils, with close attention on the Pupil Premium Strategy and the school's Inclusive Classrooms initiative. We will continue to focus on curriculum, hearing from subject leaders about the implementation of new KS3 curricula in particular. Our intent is to enhance the Link Governor model to provide better, more granular insights into the implementation of curricula.

## 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.

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, Marketing and Marketing Communications activities, adopting a strategy with the joint aims of raising the profile of Sheldon School and attracting and retaining a target number of pupils. The committee also consults with SMT regarding reputational management in promoting and protecting the school brand.

### **Achievements in 2021/2022**

- Worked with the school in commissioning an external Marketing Audit undertaken by an external PR and Marketing Consultant in Autumn 2021. This was circulated to all stakeholders and reviewed by the committee. The audit was positive although there is more work to be done particularly with raising profile in the community. Some of the recommendations were helpful and would be followed once the appropriate resource was in place in the school.
- Marked increased in social media activity across all channels including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Most year groups have an Instagram feed and are using this form of communication extremely well. When benchmarked against other schools, Sheldon School posts a range of material more frequently and has a greater number of followers, covering all faculties. The committee realise that this is the media that most parents and students now use.
- Discussed and monitored the role of Primary School Outreach and how this can be improved further – all within budget allowance.
- 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. In line with the audit recommendations, there was a greater emphasis on promoting the Student Voice and this will be recognised in new videos that are being commissioned.
- Promoted 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.
- Ongoing effort to establish good communications with local press, particularly Gazette and Herald, the main Chippenham regional newspaper, covering most of the catchment areas – the Gazette and Herald. Meetings to be set up between headteacher and editor to cement relationship. Difficulty remains in placing regular stories as there is no longer an education journalist. However the school has persisted in sending out positive news stories with the hope that Sheldon School get regular placements of press releases and share of photo stories.
- 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 had been found to promote one off articles. This was to be reviewed against effectiveness and budgets.
- Reviewed findings from Parent Survey conducted in April 2022. Largely positive comments on communications – content and regularity – but this was to be benchmarked against future surveys and discussed by committee.
- Regular review of Risk Register for committee.

- Completed Committee Effectiveness Review and Skills Audit.

### **Objectives for 2022/2023**

The committee will determine its exact focus at the start of next term with a likely focus on raising awareness of Sheldon School amongst all stakeholders but particularly those in the local community. Also to take forward those findings from the PR & Marketing Audit and look at developing initiatives that will 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.

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