



HEATHCOTE SCHOOL AND SCIENCE COLLEGE

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

Forward from the Chair of Governors

Being part of a Governing Board for a large secondary school such as Heathcote School and Science College is both challenging and rewarding in equal measure.

The Government has moved much responsibility on to Governing Boards in recent years. Governors make up the UK's largest volunteering workforce, but regardless of being volunteers, Governors take their responsibilities very seriously.

This Annual Governance Statement sets out the achievements made by the Governing Board during the Academic year 2022-2023 and celebrates the level of commitment that teachers, leaders, staff, Governors and pupils have shown to the school. The Governing Board has a very close working relationship with the Headteacher and works in partnership to bring continual improvements to the school and deliver the best life chances for our young people.

At the start of this academic year, we welcomed our new Headteacher Ms Sonia Close who took up her position from 1 September 2022. Ms Close was previously a Deputy Headteacher at our school and brings her expertise, skills and enthusiasm to the role. The Governing Board wish Sonia all the best in her new Headship.

I am immensely proud to be Chair of Governors and I will continue to drive improvement in our Governance and strategic oversight to deliver the best outcomes for pupils and staff.

I hope that you find our Annual Governance Statement insightful.

Stay safe and well.

Mike Ashwell

Chair of Governors

Heathcote School & Science College

March 2024

The Role of the Governing Board

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



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- Ensure public financial resources are effectively, efficiently and appropriately spent; and
- Hold the Headteacher and senior leadership team to account for its educational performance; and
- Set the vision, ethos and strategic direction of School. **Governing Board membership**

The Governing Board is comprised as follows:

- Six Parent Governors elected by parents
- Nine co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Board
- One Local Authority Governor appoint by the Governing Board
- One Staff Governor appointed by a ballot of staff
- The Headteacher

This year we refreshed our Governing Board with the introduction of **two** new Parent Governors who each bring their own skills and experiences to the team.

Attendance

Overall **80%** of Governors attended Full Governing Board meetings and **88%** of Governors attended Committee meetings. In addition, Governors made a significant contribution through participation in Governor training, Annual Department Reviews, Governor Disciplinary Committees and LINK visits to the school.

Improving our Governance

The Governing Board continues to raise our standards and ensure it is working in the most efficient way, whilst helping the school to improve. Governors conducted a review of governance and after a robust debate, agreed to embed the Behaviour, Attitudes & Personal Development (BAPD) and Quality of Education Committees into Full Governing Board meetings as Governors recognised that there was some duplication at committee and FGB level.

Governors agreed to focus on the School Improvement Plan, with Governors responsible for their dedicated areas. This would enable effective challenge and maximise the time that Governors have available. Governors also created a Steering Committee with the specific role of agreeing agenda items ahead of forthcoming FGB meetings

It was agreed to run this enhance model for one year as a trial and then to review at the end of the Academic year.

Our committees

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

- **Resources:** To provide overall scrutiny and put forward recommendations to the Governing Board and Headteacher on all matters relating to personnel, premises, security, finance and H&S. The latter as outlined in the School's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.



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- **Pay Committee:** Meet annually to review performance and set pay for all teaching staff across the school including the Headteacher.
- **Headteacher Performance Management Committee:** Meet annually to review performance of the Headteacher and setting targets for the coming year.

Governors visits ([LINK](#))

Governors are assigned to a specific area in the school that are either statutory or the Governing Board wishes to monitor more closely. Governors normally a minimum of one visit per year to monitor progress against the School Improvement Plan. The focus areas for this year included:

- Safeguarding and Looked After Children
- EDI
- SEND
- Data, Progress and Attainment
- English, Literacy, Maths & Numeracy
- Science
- More able and Higher Attaining Pupils
- Pupil Premium
- Behaviour & Attendance
- Sixth Form
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Outward Facing and Community Engagement
- Careers
- Parent Engagement • IT

Working Groups

Committees or the Governing Board occasionally supplemented by the establishment of Working Groups who look at specific areas in much more detail. This year Governors were involved in the following Working Groups:

- IT improvement programme
- Monitoring of the Alternative Provision at Heathcote School
- Deputy Headteacher recruitment



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Governor Training

Governors continue to attend training provided by the Local Authority to ensure they remain skilled and up to date with the latest standards. Governors are required to attend training on regular basis to ensure a healthy balance of skills across the Governing Board.

Key achievements

The following highlights the positive impact Governors have made to the school:

- Governors were instrumental in setting the School Improvement Plan and agreeing targets and objectives with the Headteacher.
- Active involvement in the Annual Department Reviews with the Heads of Department and the Headteacher to review and assess progress and provide challenge and support.
- Governors were involved in the recruitment of two Deputy Headteachers.
- Governors took part in the lesson observation process which was a quality assurance exercise to see how teachers are being assessed, trained and supported with their professional development.
- Governors ensured that all the required policies were developed, reviewed and adopted in-line with DfE guidelines, to ensure the school is compliant with its statutory obligations.
- Governors have ensured that information displayed on the school's website meets statutory requirements.
- Governors have sought to ensure that the school's financial resources are used diligently and Governors worked extremely hard to ensure public money was managed sensibly and that the school financial obligations were achieved.
- Governors took part in numerous LINK visits to the school, providing written feedback.
- Governors continued to be involved in improvement to the schools IT infrastructure and were instrumental in saving the schools > £40,000 on CAPEX spend.
- Governors held their Annual Training Day in July 23 at the school, with the key focus on EDI and this session included support from a leading EDI expert who attended the day to provide extremely valuable insight to all Governors.
- Governors continue to support the Headteacher on all matters relating to the PFI maintained building and challenging Kier to ensure they meet their contractual obligations.
- Governors took part in training to ensure their skills are updated and relevant. Training included topics such as: Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Disciplinary and Grievance Management, Finance, HR, Gangs, Exclusions, Complaints, Headteacher Performance Management and Governor Accreditation.

Finance

The financial position of the school continues to be challenging. Whilst the school finished with a positive outcome with a carry forward of **£3,482**, there is a forecasted in-year deficit



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for 2023/24 of (£155,914), which means that the Governing Board was unable to set a balanced budget.

Governors approved a Capital budget of £76,919 to carry forward into 2023/24.

Governors continue to closely monitor the schools financial position and moving into 23/24 and the focus will continue on accurate budget forecasting, cash flow and ways to save money. Governors will provide ongoing support to ensure the school continues to take steps to build robust Financial Systems and Governance.

Governors will continue to take part in external audits to ensure good practice is built into our processes and any corrective action can be put into place. There are challenges ahead for the school which is not uncommon for Local Maintained Schools.

Behaviour, exclusions and complaints

Where pupils are excluded through either a fixed or a permanent exclusion, the Governor Discipline Committee (GDC) is established to support the appeal process. There were **Four** cases that required Governors to meet, and they dealt with **Two** fixed term exclusions and **Two** permanent exclusions. Governors continue to monitor the number of exclusions and continue to work in collaboration with the school and Local Authority to develop strategies to reduce exclusions, whilst reviewing the Behaviour Policy to ensure Heathcote School is a safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors.

Conclusion

The Governing Board wish to thank our Headteacher, Ms Close on her first year as Headteacher in what has been both challenging and refreshing. The school continues to head in the right direction.

Governors would finally like to express their sincere thanks and appreciation to all the pupils that have worked their hard in very challenging circumstances. Also to the parents and carers for providing encouragement to enable pupils to keep learning.