



Chapmanslade

Church of England Voluntary Aided
Primary School

Friday 25th October 2024

Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

Dear Parents , Carers and Friends,

I was in the process of writing and almost completing the annual statement for 2023-2024, when I heard that the Headteacher had received the SIAMS Inspectors call. The majority of the statement on the following pages had been written and I was in the process of deciding what else needed to be reported.

The decision made in that moment was to hold the statement until after the Inspection and give time to focusing on the Inspection, wait for the Inspection to be completed, hear the feedback and wait for the official report to be released and then complete the Annual statement.

There was no doubt that the 4th October 2024 was an amazing day starting with a church full to the brim with parents, grandparents, staff, pupils, governors, younger children, and members of the PCC. Plus of course the SIAMs inspector and her shadow colleague. The Harvest service and the children's enthusiasm in participating was stunning as was their music, prayer reading, singing and the liturgical dance, which was all truly enhanced by the sun rays that shone through the church window and onto the children as they performed. The tears that were quietly shed, with pride and joy, are a true reflection of how the Christian vision and ethos of this school embraces its Christian distinctiveness, is inclusive of all and is embedded throughout. As Governors we are very proud to be able play our part in supporting the committed, enthusiastic, dedicated and hardworking, leadership and staff team of this stunning school within our community. How lucky are we?

Minnie House Chair of Governors.

Compassion • Service • Courage • Trust

High Street, Chapmanslade, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 4AN

Email: admin@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk Tel: 01373 832367

Headteacher: Mr Robert Cottrell

Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

Firstly, I would like to welcome many of you back to a new academic year and to also welcome the new families and children to the school. From talking with the Headteacher we know that the new reception children have settled in well and that the new to school and returning children have all settled quickly too. We hope that the forthcoming year is more settled with less staff illness and pupil absences.

My thanks go to the Governors who have been on the Governing Board throughout the year and those who have joined us during and at the end of the year.

The Governing Board are:

Rob Cottrell, Headteacher; Rebecca Holloway, Staff Governor; Rev. Gay Maynard, Ex officio; Sally Evans, Vice Chair; Ann Gomeze; John Foster; Jonathan Newbound, Parent Governor ; and Minnie House, Chair of Governors

As a governing board, our role is to focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent and in addition,
4. upholding the Christian distinctiveness, and ethos of the school
5. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

Looking back on the last year it certainly was a very busy one for the school and for Governors.

In October, the Governors revisited the question of “should the school join a MAT?”, (Multi Academy Trust) and subsequently invited a member of the Diocese to come and talk to the school about Academy conversion and joining a Multi Academy Trust. Ian Buick, Churchwarden, also joined the meeting as a member of the Parochial Church Council. Whilst the Diocese were very keen for this option for their church schools and promoted the positive aspects, the Governors strongly questioned the not so positive for conversion, ensuring that if we chose to take that path, it was the right move for the school, staff and pupils.

After many following discussions it was unanimously agreed to research possible MATs which would be supported by the Diocese, and which would continue to support the uniqueness of this school within the community. With many schools moving into MATs within Wiltshire, the Diocese and across the country, it was becoming clear that the diminishing funding and support for schools would have a negative impact on small schools such as Chapmanslade. Moving into a MAT sooner rather than later was considered the best possible option.

The engagement with Acorn Education Trust and the support previously provided and now being provided prior to conversion (in February 2025) has been very strong during the year.

There is no doubt that the financial position for the school has been a challenging one during the last year. The set budget in April 2023 was tight but not in deficit. Governors have kept a strong eye on spending but with the Diocesan income lessening and funding not being allocated by the Diocese for essentials like a new boiler, it has been challenging. Increased energy costs, pay review outcomes and costs in general have had a negative impact. Hopefully such matters will be less of an issue when the conversion takes place.

Governors have focused their monitoring during the year on discussions with subject leaders on the impact of their role in raising standards in their curriculum area, talking with pupils about safeguarding, being safe in school, online safety, and bullying, understanding new practices in early years, whilst also considering the impact for pupils of the RE and World views, and Christian distinctiveness of the school. In the Autumn term last year we were also able to contact the reception class parents to see how their children were

Compassion • Service • Courage • Trust

High Street, Chapmanslade, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 4AN

Email: admin@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk Tel: 01373 832367

Headteacher: Mr Robert Cottrell

settling and how that experience was for them and their children. These calls are a useful insight for us as Governors. Thank you to all who were able to participate. Governors have also attended parents' evenings throughout the year.

During the Headteacher interviews for Headship in March 2023 the advisers who joined us from the Local Authority and the Diocese were completely amazed at the professionalism of the pupils involved in the interviews as were Ofsted during the two days before. This continues to be very evident throughout the school. Archdeacon Alan visited in June and the children avidly listened to the story he was telling in collective worship, answering questions when asked and asking well thought, provoking questions of him. He was very impressed with all of them.

The children have certainly embraced the concept of being a good neighbour, and tell us they think that the ready, respectful, safe ruling works well. Governors have visited the Early years classrooms and been able to see the children's growing enjoyment in writing. We also sat in on SATS assessments in May and were highly impressed with the dogged determination and calmness of all the Year 6 children as they worked their way through each paper during that week. Walking around the school it is very clear that pupils are supporting each other in varying ways and without doubt being good neighbours.

Being able to talk with and listen to the children's opinions is always a pure joy and a privilege and in a world of uncertainty, they become role models for so many, through the way in which they support and look after each other, how they listen and resolve potentially contentious issues, respect each others' points of view, how they embrace learning, how they reflect and ask meaningful questions and how respectful they are to each other and adults. **A huge thank you** to all the pupils for being the very special people that they are.

A major achievement in this year was the development of the School Travel Plan and the successful bid for changes to improve parking in and around the vicinity of the school and make it safer for pupils and parents walking to the school. The Headteacher worked with the Parish Council to consult with parents and the local and wider community. The further consultation which took place in the Village Hall was challenging but compromises were made and hopefully the programme will now be taken a step further and be completed by the end of October. **Thank you** to all parents who have read the Headteacher's requests to be mindful of where and how they park and ensuring safety for all for acting appropriately and parking a. The whole process has been about ensuring safety at the beginning and end of the school day and your positive response has made a huge difference.

Our thanks go to:

The Headteacher and staff for all they do for the children and parents, and for their support for Governors. They are an amazing group of people who, as a very strong team, continue to put all their energy into providing an excellent learning environment for all children and adults. Sometimes it is very easy to forget that teachers are also "human beings" who have other lives and subsequent stresses. Being a teacher has become a role which requires a great deal of emotional energy and the kindness you show by a smile and a cheerful good morning makes a big difference. **Thank you.**

You as parents for supporting your children, to be the special people that they are and supporting the staff in making the school a happy place to be.

The members of the Church who support the school in leading collective worship and Open the Bible sessions and the members of the PCC, and particularly Ian Buick, for all their support.

The Friends of School (FoCS) who enable extra funding, through enjoyable activities and make a huge difference for all the children.

Compassion • Service • Courage • Trust

High Street, Chapmanslade, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 4AN

Email: admin@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk Tel: 01373 832367

Headteacher: Mr Robert Cottrell