

**WOODCOCK HILL
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
2021-22**

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021-22 +

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PART 1. GOVERNING BOARD FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

All school governing boards have three core functions, which are defined by the Department for Education as follows :

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

In addition to performing these core functions, during the 2021-22 school year the governing board engaged with a series of special challenges and discharged their ongoing statutory responsibilities as explained in the following sections of this statement.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

There were nine meetings of the Full Governing Body during the school year. Meetings were scheduled on a roughly monthly basis. The governing body chose not to establish any regular ongoing committees. Governors took the view that as a relatively small governing body it was preferable for all governors to be engaged in all meetings and decisions.

The following special purpose committees were required during 2021-22 :

- **Pay Committee**. This committee held one meeting in the autumn term to scrutinize the proposed pay awards.
- **Head Teacher Performance Management Committee**. There was one meeting of this committee during the year.

Governing body membership and meeting attendance records for 2021-22 can be found in part 5 of this statement. These records are also published on the governors' page on the school website.

PART 2. CORE GOVERNING BODY FUNCTIONS

2A. ENSURING CLARITY OF VISION, ETHOS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The governing board established a clear strategic direction through holding a planning meeting at the start of the year which focussed upon the following key questions :

- How can it be proven that the school should now be judged as “GOOD” by OFSTED and no longer “REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT” ?
- What help is required and how can the school be supported to prove this at the OFSTED inspection which was anticipated for some point during the school year ?

On the basis of this discussion, governors agreed to set the following strategic priorities for 2021-22 :

- Attendance improvement.
- Improvement of outcomes, with particular focus upon Key Stage 1 and Early Years.
- Engagement with, and support for, subject leaders
- Engagement with parents

The governing board therefore prepared an action plan and schedule of business for the year which enabled a strategic focus upon these priorities.

2B. HOLDING THE HEAD TEACHER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION

SCRUTINY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Governing Body received regular reports on teaching and learning, and the wider quality of education at the school, from the School Improvement Advisor who was appointed by the Birmingham Education Partnership to support the school. These reports included the following observations :

- On 23 November, the advisor arranged her visit to imitate an OFSTED inspection. The advisor’s report stated not merely that Woodcock Hill was making progress, but that it was making accelerated progress.
- Following her visit in February, the advisor stated that she was *“impressed by the continued drive and commitment of the Head Teacher who remains open to challenge and dedicated to school improvement. It is clear progress against OFSTED outcomes”*.

The quality of education provided by Woodcock Hill was examined and judged to be GOOD when OFSTED inspected the school on 27-28 April. Governors met the inspectors to receive their feedback and comments, and later reviewed the formal inspection report. The inspectors made a series of highly complementary statements about the school, which included the following statements :

“Woodcock Hill Primary School is a very welcoming and supportive place to learn. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school....

Leaders are ambitious for the pupils at this school. They ensure that the curriculum is exciting and that all pupils follow it.....

Pupils behave well in classrooms and around school. They are kind and thoughtful to each other....

Curriculum leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum at Woodcock Hill and have worked hard to ensure it is taught well. They have thought hard about the order in which children learn each subject. This results in children remembering more over time. Pupils enjoy talking about their learning and do so confidently and enthusiastically.....

In the early years, children settle quickly because teachers focus on their well-being and social skills from the start. Routines are clearly embedded, and children feel safe and secure. They are already becoming confident, independent learners.....

The teaching of reading has a high priority at Woodcock Hill. Children learn phonics daily from the start of Reception so that they become fluent readers as soon as they can. The school has a well embedded and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics.....

Pupils, including those in the Early Years, behave well. They show very positive attitudes to one another and to their learning.....

Governors, leaders and all staff are passionate about their school and want the best for all pupils. Since the last inspection, leaders have followed clear plans to improve the school.”

SCRUTINY OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Governors received a presentation from the core subject leaders, explaining recent curriculum developments in each subject.

English teaching developments

In December, the English lead delivered a presentation to governors. This presentation included the following key points :

- Reception and Year 1, along with some Year 2 children, continue to follow the Read, Write, Inc phonics programme, receiving a daily thirty-minute session in addition to their daily thirty-minute English lesson.
- Years 2 to 6 have continued to follow the Read Write Inc. spelling programme, which involves a daily spelling lesson of 10-15 minutes duration. This uses skills taught in Read Write Inc. phonics (for example, dots and dashes to identify sounds) and applies them to age-appropriate words. It also explicitly teaches the statutory word lists. Evidence that the programme is being followed can be seen in pupils' English books.
- The school has continued to develop curriculum planning. English planning is now fully cross curricular. Each class has a half termly topic with a main text. Teachers plan English lessons around this topic, linked to the main text and drawing on supporting texts when needed. This facilitates cross-curricular writing around subjects such as history and geography. Pupils have reported that they enjoy the new topics and that their learning is more linked across subjects.
- A new story collection had been purchased for the school with a focus upon mental health and well-being. This includes a range of picture books with different themes linked to mental health. Each class reads one text each week, during their Monday story time slot. These texts provided a discussion point to ensure pupils have an opportunity to discuss any worries they have had during the pandemic.

Maths teaching developments

In January, the Deputy Head Teacher, who had also taken on the role of Maths lead, delivered a presentation to governors. This presentation included the following key points :

- A “Year Zero” approach to maths leadership had been adopted. This involved rewriting all the maths policies and practices, which are available for inspection on the school website. A maths Statement of Intent can also be found on the website, which reflects the new school values.
- The school continues to follow a Maths Mastery approach, although again on a “Year Zero” basis. Woodcock Hill was signed up to the Central Maths Hub for mastery training. Maths Mastery does not necessarily mean that all pupils will be achieving at high levels. It means developing children who have the skills and confidence to be able to use maths at an appropriate level in their lives. It means ensuring people have the knowledge and ability to use numbers and mathematical skills in a variety of contexts.
- Woodcock Hill continues to use the PowerMaths teaching scheme within lessons. Successive curriculum reviews had identified a whole school issue with how this scheme is being used, especially in regard to differentiation within lessons. Therefore a major school focus this year had been to ensure that appropriate differentiation is in place. The further development of differentiation would continue to be a priority.
- A new initiative this year was the Class Feedback Sheet, which is to be completed at the end of each lesson by the class teacher. The feedback sheet indicates which children encountered problems with the material being taught and what is to be done to address those problems. This was intended to become a very helpful tool for tracking the progress of individual children but as it was a completely new tool the Deputy Head did not yet have any evidence to show how it was working.
- The school had recently reviewed how children are using concrete resources in their maths lessons. Concrete resources are physical three-dimensional objects that children can pick up and manipulate to improve their maths knowledge. Examples include Numicon counters or cubes. Concrete materials are not only be used by younger children in Key Stage 1. Concrete resources can also help Key Stage 2 children to develop their learning through providing them with items to handle and manipulate to aid their understanding of different maths concepts.

SCRUTINY OF PROGRESS AND ATTAINMENT

Governors received regular reports throughout the year upon progress and attainment levels being achieved throughout the school. This included the following information presented to governors in July concerning the end of school year assessments :

Key Stage 2 attainment

The Key Stage 2 attainment outcomes are shown in the table below. This was the first year that national and externally marked Key Stage 2 SATS had been conducted since 2019.

WOODCOCK HILL PRIMARY KEY STAGE 2 OUTCOMES 2022					
		Woodcock Hill 2019	Woodcock Hill 2022	National average 2022	Variation from nat. average
Maths	Expected level or better	60 %	76 %	71 %	+5 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	10 %	21 %	22 %	
Reading	Expected level or better	67 %	69 %	74 %	-5 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	10 %	31 %	28 %	
Writing	Expected level or better	63 %	69 %	69 %	+0 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	0 %	7 %	13 %	
SPAG	Expected level or better	73 %	69 %	72 %	-3 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	23 %	28 %	28 %	
RWM	Expected level or better	50 %	62 %	59 %	+3 %
	Greater Depth than Standard		7 %	7 %	

Governors expressed their delight at these outstanding results, particularly as Woodcock Hill attainment was above the national average in Reading, Writing and Maths combined. Governors noted how the national averages for Maths, Writing and Spelling Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) have all markedly dropped since 2019, demonstrating the impact of lockdowns and school closures during 2020 and 2021. This makes the Woodcock Hill performance even more remarkable, as the school's results have notably improved since 2019.

Governors were advised that the school was chosen by the local authority for moderation of writing assessment. The moderation fully endorsed the Woodcock Hill assessments, with the assessor reporting that the school should continue its' current excellent work. The sole change to school assessments made through the moderation was to upgrade one pupil from Expected level to Working at Greater Depth.

Key Stage 1 attainment

The Key Stage 1 attainment outcomes are shown in the table below. The national averages for this phase were not available at the time these results were presented to governors. Governors noted that these results are better in all subjects than the 2021 equivalents. No pupil had achieved working at greater depth at the end of Key Stage 1 last year.

WOODCOCK HILL PRIMARY KEY STAGE 1 OUTCOMES 2022			
		Woodcock Hill 2022	Woodcock Hill 2021
Maths	Expected level or better	68 %	50 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	11 %	0 %
Reading	Expected level or better	64 %	40 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	8 %	0 %
Writing	Expected level or better	73 %	47 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	8 %	0 %
RWM	Expected level or better	54 %	37 %
	Greater Depth than Standard	8 %	0 %

Early Years outcomes

The Early Years and Year 1 phonics outcomes are shown in the table below.

WOODCOCK HILL PRIMARY EARLY YEARS & YEAR 1 OUTCOMES 2022				
	Woodcock Hill 2022	National average 2022	National average 2019	Variation from national average
Early Years Foundation Stage – Expected level or better	63 %	Not available	75 %	-12 %
Year 1 Phonics check – Expected level or better	55 %	Not available	82 %	-27 %

Governors were advised that the school phonics attainment is low, as typically 70 – 80 of pupils will pass this check. The 45 % of pupils who did not reach the required standard will re-take the test next year while in Year 2.

Internal assessments

Governors also received termly assessment reports on progress and attainment for each year group, with accompanying analysis by pupil groupings (such as boys / girls, eligibility for the Pupil Premium, children with or without special educational needs). Governors noted the following points emerging from the data presented during the year.

- There remains a gap in all year groups between the attainment of children eligible for the Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium children. It should be remembered that 68 % of Woodcock Hill students are eligible for the Pupil Premium. This is much higher than the national average of 27.3 % in primary schools.
- In most classes and subjects, more girls than boys are working at greater depth.
- The Key Stage 1 data is notably poorer than Key Stage 2. It was noted that lockdowns during the last two school years will have had a particularly heavy impact upon younger children, as the missed time represents a larger proportion of their overall time in education. This means that their Key Stage 1 experience has been highly disrupted. Governors were advised that class teachers were having to deal with matters usually addressed in nursery or Reception, such as socialization and getting children ready to learn. Children entering the school were also demonstrating a lower level of language development, which might be a consequence of missing time in a nursery.

SCRUTINY OF PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

A new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) joined the school in September 2021. The SENCO delivered a presentation on her work, and the initiatives she had introduced, to the governors during both the autumn and spring terms. These presentations contained the following key information :

- In March there were thirty-nine children on the SEND register which is 19 % of the school population. That percentage is slightly higher than the national average for primary schools. There had been thirty-five children on the register in the autumn term.
- The principal area of need was Communication and interaction (i.e. speech and language) needs. The second greatest area of need was Cognition and Learning needs. During the school year, the

number of children with Cognition and Learning needs overtook the number with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The fourth highest area of need was Sensory or Physical needs, including medical needs.

- A whole school provision map had been created which identifies what support is being provided to which pupils and how that support is being delivered. The provision map demonstrates the graduated approach followed by the school. This approach categorizes the forms of support as follows :
 - Universal. This support is provided in every class.
 - Targeted. This involves interventions on a one-to-one or small group basis.
 - Specialist. The school involves outside agencies to work with children.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have been introduced for each child on the SEND register. Each plan is limited to three targets for that child to achieve. The limit ensures the plan is not overwhelming, and the success criteria within the plan identifies what is to be achieved. Class teachers prepare the IEPs, and the plans are sent out to parents. This ensures parents can see the individual support which their child is receiving and enables them to augment the school's efforts by working with their child on the targets at home.
- Each term, the IEPs were to be reviewed, and Teaching Assistants were to be responsible for writing on the plan whether each target has been achieved, partially achieved or not achieved. Where targets are not achieved or only partially achieved, the SENCO will review with the class teacher the next steps to be taken to reach that target. Where targets have been achieved, new targets can be set, or a decision taken that the child no longer needs additional support in that area.
- Class folders had been prepared. Each class folder has general information on the graduated approach and contains the IEPs for each child in that class. Whenever a professional assesses and makes recommendations concerning a child, a copy of that report will be placed in the class folder and the IEP revised in light of the recommendations. These class folders were to be passed on each year to facilitate a smooth transition between classes.
- Efforts to develop parental engagement were ongoing. The SENCO advised that she endeavours to be at the school gate at least two days each week so that parents can speak to her informally. She has been available at Parents evenings. A coffee morning was staged for parents of children on the SEND register at which she shared information about the school website and the school SEND policy. The SENCO believed that parents are becoming more willing to approach her as she becomes a more familiar figure at the school.

In addition to the SENCO reports, the Head Teacher advised governors during the spring term that Woodcock Hill was beginning to benefit from Elklan training funded by a Developing Local Provision (DLP) project. DLP is a Department for Education (DfE) funded scheme which allocates money to consortia of schools which determine how these resources can be used to benefit the local area. Elklan training is designed to help develop pupils' speech and language capacities. Two teachers and two teaching assistants started this training which was to be rolled out more widely across the school. It was hoped this training would help to address the poor speech capacity and limits on vocabulary which form a barrier faced by many children entering Woodcock Hill.

LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICE ELSEWHERE

Governors both supported and actively encouraged the Head Teacher's key strategy for school improvement, which involved learning from best practice in other schools and introducing that practice to Woodcock Hill. Governors noted where this strategy was being followed. Examples included :

- Partnership with St Chad's, Newtown which included the following
 - Support to the English lead from her counterpart in that role at St Chad's
 - Support with assessment and moderation
- The use of facilities offered by the Fischer Family Trust. The school planned to use the remainder of its COVID catchup funding on a programme offered by the Fischer Family Trust Lightning Squad. The Lightning Squad is a reading tutoring programme where pupils work in small groups with a tutor to improve their reading skills. This tutoring programme was planned to assist thirty pupils between Years 1 and 5 who needed catchup support.
- Partnership with Marsh Hill, Erdington, with a view to learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage provision at that school which is rated OUTSTANDING by OFSTED.
- In March, governors approved the school accepting an invitation to join the Oaks Primary collegiate which features eight other schools from the south-west Birmingham area. Participating in the consortium will provide support for school improvement work and participation in peer reviews. The geographical proximity of these schools should make visits and peer reviews easier than is possible with Woodcock Hill's other partner schools.

2C. HOLDING THE HEAD TEACHER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE PUPILS

Governors received regular reports from the Head Teacher upon developments within the school and containing statutory data that must be presented to governors. These reports included the following matters :

- School census data
- Attendance reports
- Safeguarding data

SCRUTINY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In addition to the Head Teacher's reports, the governing body received comprehensive reports on attendance over the course of the school year from the Pastoral Manager. This included the following information :

- A report of weekly school attendance by year group throughout the year.
- Weekly comparisons of school attendance figures with Birmingham schools, West Midlands schools and the national average for schools in England.
- The attendance tracking dashboard facilities being employed by the school, using data provided by the Fischer Family Trust. This enabled easy comparison of Woodcock Hill with national averages by pupil groups, such as male/female, pupils eligible for Free School Meals and pupils with special educational needs, highlighting any areas of concern.
- The number of children arriving late to school by week and by year group.

- Throughout the school year, Woodcock Hill attendance was consistently above both the local and national averages, but below the level of 96 % which is regarded as the benchmark for good school attendance.
 - During the autumn term, it was reported that weekly attendance had ranged from 89.8 % to 94.1 %, with an overall average of 91.5 %.
 - During the spring term, overall attendance averaged 90.7 %, with a high point of 95 % for one week.
 - In the summer term, the overall average school attendance had been 92.3 %
- The persistent absence level (that is, the number of children who are absent for more than 10 % of school sessions) was reported in June to be 31 % for the first six weeks of the summer term. This was recognized as being too high, and OFSTED inspectors drew attention to this within their report. However, the inspectors also acknowledged that the school was doing everything that could be expected to address the issue. The inspectors commended the number of home visits and phone calls that are made to pursue absentees. Nonetheless, persistent absence remained a significant issue for the school to address.

Punctuality - The Attendance HEROs initiative

During the autumn term, governors received a report on the HEROs initiative which had been implemented to reward attendance and encourage punctuality. This included the following key points :

- The system is designed to encourage children to be Attendance HEROs – pupils who are Here Every day Ready and On time.
- Every pupil has an Attendance Reward Card which is completed daily. The child receives a mark on their card for arriving at school on time. At the end of the week, any child with five marks on their card can claim a prize from the HERO box, which contains an array of colourful trinkets which appeal to children.
- Any child who has received a prize every week of the term (that is, any child with 100 % attendance record) would be awarded an attendance badge which they can wear on their school uniform.
- The key to this system is that children start afresh each week. Even if they were absent or late during the previous week, they still have a chance to win a prize during the following week. Children will be absent for legitimate reasons such as illness, and this system still enables them to win prizes even if they can no longer secure 100 % attendance.

Punctuality – other matters

Governors received regular reports from the Pastoral Manager on efforts to improve punctuality as well as attendance. This included the following key points :

- In November, it was reported that during the first six weeks of the school year, the number of “lates” (that is, the number of sessions at which pupils arrive late for school) ranged from 31 to 45, with a weekly average of 39.2. During the week commencing 18 October, the number of lates fell to 29, and it fell still further to just 17 during the week commencing 1 November. This suggested the new incentives were having a positive impact upon punctuality.
- A corollary to the incentive scheme was that parents of children who arrived late were given a slip which reiterates the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. This slip notifies parents that they could be liable for a penalty charge of up to £120 if their child is late or fails to attend school.

- In January, governors were advised that a data issue had been identified arising from inconsistency around how punctuality / lateness was being recorded. There appeared to be different understandings amongst school staff concerning at what time a child should be deemed late. Governors were therefore asked to clarify the practice to be adopted for closing registers and recording lateness.
- Governors believed there must be consistent practice across all classes for closing registers. They decided that school registers should close at 9.20 a.m. Teachers should be responsible for recording whether or not a child is late up until 9.00 a.m. Children arriving after the teacher completes the register and before 9.20 a.m. will be recorded as “late before registers close”. Children arriving during the morning session and after 9.20 a.m. will be recorded as “late after registers close”.
- By the summer term, it was recognized that there had been improvement over the course of the school year, but that the number of lates remained too high. The Pastoral Manager reported in July that the average number of lates had fallen to four per class per week, compared with five per class per week in the autumn and spring terms.

SCRUTINY OF SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR

The Deputy Head Teacher presented termly reports and analysis of school behaviour incident data. This included the following information :

- Behaviour incidents analysis by category.
- Behaviour incidents by year group.
- Numbers of fixed term and permanent exclusions by year group.
- There were no permanent exclusions made during the school year.

Governors noted the following points within these behaviour reports :

- There is a trend which shows behaviour incidents have been decreasing since 2018-19.
- The majority of incidents involve boys and occur at playtime and particularly at lunchtime.
- Most behaviour incidents relate to a small number of pupils who have a disproportionately high effect upon the overall figures.

Governors noted other evidence, apart from the internal school behaviour logs, which demonstrated that behaviour at the school was good :

- The Birmingham Education Partnership advisor referred to the low-level of behaviour incidents within the school within her reports.
- The OFSTED inspection report stated that “*pupils behave well in classrooms and around school*”. At the feedback session following the inspection, the lead inspector informed governors that they had seen no bad behaviour at all during their inspection of the school.

SCRUTINY OF SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Governors also took the following actions in connection with scrutiny of the school safeguarding arrangements :

- Scrutinized the S175 safeguarding audit that had been submitted to the local authority. The Safeguarding link governor advised that she was satisfied that the self-assessment formed an accurate reflection of safeguarding arrangements at the school. Governors expressed their confidence that appropriate arrangements are in place for the safeguarding and welfare of children at the school.

- One governor reviewed the Single Central Record maintained by the school. He had found everything to be in order and he had raised no concerns.
- All governors were required to read the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the statutory guidance upon safeguarding in schools, and make a formal declaration that they had done this.

SCRUTINY OF OTHER PUPIL WELFARE MATTERS

The governing body also engaged in the following work in connection with pupil welfare matters :

- Governors received reports on the engagement of a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist for one day each week from September 2021. This therapist had been engaged to help any child or family who are experiencing any kind of difficulty which impacts on schooling as well as any member of staff who would benefit from the service. The psychotherapist worked closely with the Pastoral Manager.
- Governors received reports on pupil engagement with clubs operating at the school. This included the following :
 - Regular reports upon the Breakfast Club, which continued to offer a free service for all families who wish to use it. In July, governors were informed that the number of children using the Breakfast Club had increased from between twenty-five and thirty earlier in the year to forty-two.
 - After-school sports clubs which were available for all year groups. It was reported in the autumn term that 116 pupils were participating. A Sports Coach who had worked at the school for some time continued to take a club for juniors while a further Sports Coach had started to run a club for infants.
 - During summer 2021, the school staged a successful holiday club over two weeks. Fifty-four children attended the first week (twenty-three infants, thirty-one juniors) while forty-three attended the second week (twenty-one infants, twenty-two juniors). This was a free of charge facility which included free food and drink – the club was funded through a Department for Education initiative. Food left over at the end of the day was distributed for people to take home.
- Governors received reports on the promotion of school values, which was a pastoral initiative introduced during the autumn term. These reports included the following information :
 - These values were intended as a more positive method of encouraging behaviour and establishing a positive school ethos than setting school rules.
 - The values statement says that at Woodcock Hill : “We are respectful, ambitious, creative, inclusive, independent and we persevere”
 - These values are intended to celebrate good things in life and show the qualities which the school aims to inspire. There would be a focus on one value each half-term.
 - Governors were shown how the values were hung from the ceilings in classrooms.
 - The values have been explained at school assemblies. Praise and reward for pupils was now being expressed in terms of the school values.
- Governors received a report on the work of the School Council. This included the following information :
 - The School Council meets on a fortnightly basis and contains twelve children, with two drawn from each year group. The Pastoral Manager and a teacher oversee the council, but in practice it is led by the council’s Chair and Secretary.

- The council members gather information from their classes and bring it to discussions about school matters. For example, all classes were asked to identify what is good about Woodcock Hill school. The results clearly demonstrated that children like their teachers, enjoy school dinners and appreciate the celebration assemblies.
- There were plans to introduce a School Council page on the school website to record all the positive work being undertaken within the council.
- Governors received a report on the establishment of a Parent Teacher Association, which was to be called the Friends of Woodcock Hill.
- Governors received a report of a survey to gauge whether there was sufficient parental interest and demand for the establishment of a wraparound care service, offering before and after school care for pupils. This survey had been conducted in 2020 and was repeated during the summer term of 2021. There were only three responses, and just one person requested such a service. Governors recognized that this demonstrates insufficient demand for the establishment of wraparound provision.

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

The Head Teacher reported upon the work of the School Business Manager in regard to health and safety arrangements. This included the following points :

- The new School Business Manager was assigned the priority task of reviewing all Health and Safety policies and procedures and to focus upon statutory compliance testing of equipment such as fire alarms.
- Several Year 6 pupils were appointed as Health and Safety Officers. These children were given lists of items to check and were asked to draw attention to anything they believed ought to be reported. The Head Teacher thought this innovation was better than appointing school prefects, as it provides the children with a defined role and purpose.

2D. HOLDING THE HEAD TEACHER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF STAFF

In November, the Pay Committee scrutinized the performance management process conducted during the previous school year. Governors were satisfied that a robust, thorough and equitable assessment process had been completed and accepted the school's performance management recommendations.

2E. OVERSEEING THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL AND ENSURING MONEY IS WELL SPENT

SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT OF THE SCHOOL FINANCIAL POSITION

Each term the governing body received a report from the School Business Manager explaining the current financial position of the school. Reports considered included :

- Income and expenditure by cost centre with variances from budget.
- A three-year strategic financial forecast presented alongside the 2022-23 budget.
- Budget revisions approved by the Head Teacher under delegated powers and budget revisions requiring approval by governors.

Overview of financial position

In July, the official end of year balances for 2021-22 which had been declared by the local authority were reported to the governors. Woodcock Hill Primary had recorded annual funding of £1,455,816 and recorded annual expenditure of £1,443,098. This means that the school had an in-year surplus of £12,717. As the school had a cumulative surplus of £76,237 at the start of the 2021-22 financial year, this outcome increased that surplus to £88,954 by the end of the year.

The school budget for the 2022-23 financial year envisaged an overall in-year deficit of £36,776 for 2022-23. However, nearly half of this deficit is accounted for by funding received in 2021-22 not being spent until the following year. Even with this in-year deficit, Woodcock Hill was still forecasting a carried forward surplus balance of at the end of 2022-23.

SCRUTINY OF SCHOOL FINANCIAL CONTROLS

Governors received and scrutinized the following documents concerning the financial controls operating within the school :

- **The Schools Financial Value Standard**

Governors approved the Schools Financial Value Standard (S.F.V.S.) return to the local authority, on the basis of the report and assurances provided by the School Business Manager.

- **Statement of Internal Controls**

Governors approved a Statement of Internal Controls declaring that the school's internal systems provide as much assurance as is reasonably possible (not absolute assurance) that assets are safeguarded, transactions are properly authorised and recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or can be detected promptly. The statement recorded one notable weakness pertaining to the need for the Business Continuity Plan to be updated and reported within the current financial year.

- **Local authority audit**

The local authority conducted an audit of school finances and procedures in January. When the final audit report appeared, it reached the following conclusions :

- Woodcock Hill is rated overall at assurance level 2. This means that generally controls evaluated are adequate, appropriate and effective although some specific control weaknesses were noted. The auditor had verbally advised that the local authority never awards the highest level 1 to any school, so in practice Woodcock Hill received the highest possible grade.
- The audit report made fifteen recommendations, although most concerned tiny issues and the school questioned whether these genuinely represented serious concerns.

Governors noted the auditors' comments and recommendations but disagreed with some of the risk assessments made. For example, governors did not believe that the absence of a pecuniary interest declaration from a teaching assistant constituted a major risk, when that employee had no control or influence whatsoever over school expenditure.

SCRUTINY OF SPECIAL FUNDING RECEIVED

Governors particularly scrutinized how special purpose funding was being used. This included the following work :

- **Pupil premium funding**

The pupil premium is additional school funding provided for disadvantaged children, to help tackle barriers to learning and close attainment gaps between these children and their peers. The Full Governing Body received a report outlining the school's strategy for using Pupil Premium funding over the previous year (2020-21). The principal barriers identified for Woodcock Hill pupils were as follows :

- Low attainment on entry – the majority of pupils enter Reception at below age-related expectations in all subjects.
- A historic trend of below national average progress and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- Attendance and punctuality are below the national average.
- Loss of learning due to lockdowns.

The school used funding as follows :

- **Teaching assistants in each year group £137,807**. Deploying these teaching assistants enabled more effective differentiation in class and allowed for short, targeted interventions as required. This strategy was directed toward the principal target outcome of closing the attainment gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- **Higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) £37,480**. One HLTA was deployed in each key stage. The HLTAs assumed greater responsibility both within and outside class and could lead support and interventions.
- **Additional support from the Acting SENCO £19,840**. The Acting SENCO worked for two additional days providing high quality teaching targeted at specific pupils and areas of need. This contributed to the school's other target outcomes of improving teaching and learning and raising attainment in core subjects to match national levels for all pupils.
- **Instrument tuition £2,588**. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 were offered the opportunity to learn to play the ukulele. This was intended to increase the cultural capital of disadvantaged pupils as part of the development of the wider school curriculum.

In addition to the Pupil Premium funding, the school used COVID catchup funding for Key Stage 2 teacher support. This provided high quality teaching targeted at pupils in the upper Key Stage 2 years for maths and literacy.

- **P.E. and Sports premium funding**

Woodcock Hill was allocated Sports Premium funding of £17,800 for 2021-22. The purpose of this funding is to improve pupil engagement in sport and physical education activities. Funding was allocated as follows :

- **Sports coaches £16,800**. The school engaged the services of two sports coaches, one working with the infants and the other with the juniors.
- **Sports equipment £1,000**. This money was divided equally between equipment for infants and juniors.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Governors also received reports/considered the following matters relating to school finances :

- **Problems created by implementation of new Birmingham City Council systems**

During the summer term, governors were advised that serious problems had been caused for the school when Birmingham City Council (B.C.C.) implemented new finance / HR and payroll systems.

Although there had been no issues with the school payroll, there were horrendous difficulties with the processing and payment of invoices. The School Business Manager reported that the school had been subjected to late payment fines from some suppliers in addition to receiving multiple letters demanding payment. The new system had involved additional work for office staff to enter invoice data twice to arrange payment.

Governors were advised that the problems had been caused by poor implementation with no proper practice or parallel running of the new and old systems. The Head Teacher believed that schools had been left to work things out for themselves and identify problems.

- **School milk provision**

During the summer term, the school asked governors to consider whether free milk should continue to be provided for all Early Years and Key Stage 1 children. Governors were advised there is a lot of wastage with this provision. Cartons are handed out at the end of the day, but many are left unopened in the classroom. A related problem is that some children only drink a small sip of the milk and throw away the remainder.

Governors were reluctant to withdraw a free service at a time when families were experiencing cost of living rises. They asked the school to provide some statistics on milk consumption and wastage to enable governors to make an informed decision.

The analysis found that only about eight to ten cartons are being used in each class. This means that up to twenty cartons per class are being wasted, which represents around sixty cartons per day. Feedback from teachers indicated that milk is not popular with many children.

Governors agreed that the provision of milk should remain free for the moment. However, governors also agreed that the school's milk order should be reduced to reflect actual usage and that this matter should be kept under review.

PART 3. SPECIAL PROJECTS DURING 2021-22

3A. APPOINTMENT OF A NEW HEAD TEACHER

During the last school year, the governing body had the task of appointing a new Head Teacher at the school in view of the retirement of Mrs Jayne Kitaratzis at the end of the school year.

Governors discussed succession planning arrangements at length and appointed a recruitment panel which comprised the Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair of Governors and a governor who is a professional member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. This panel then conducted a recruitment process which resulted in the appointment of Mr Derek Higgins as Head Teacher from September 2022.

PART 4. OTHER GOVERNING BODY ACTIONS

4A. GOVERNOR VISITING

Governor visiting was restricted at times during 2021-22 due to the school infection control measures discouraging non-essential visitors to school premises. However, much governor visiting did take place. This visiting included :

- A Governor of the Month scheme. This involved the nominated governor coming into school and meeting the Head Teacher and some classes.
- A link governor was established for each class within the school.
- A Governor Visiting Book was maintained to provide a tangible record of all governor visits to the school.

Link governor reports were a standard agenda item for each Full Governing Body meeting. These reports included the following matters which occurred or were discussed within governor visits :

- One governor reported that highlights of her Governor of the Month visit had been joining Year 2 learning about housing in the local area, Year 3 studying ancient Greek gods and Year 5 studying “The Tempest” by William Shakespeare.
- Another Governor of the Month was impressed by the Year 4 children in the school hall preparing for an assembly on plastic pollution, and by Year 2 children rehearsing a jolly song to be performed at a forthcoming coffee morning. This governor had also discussed with Reception teachers how children coming into the school have to be integrated and prepared to learn in school more than used to be necessary.
- A third Governor of the Month had spent time with some Year 5 children receiving interventions in the Community Room. This governor had been struck by the confidence of the children talking about their learning.
- The Pupil Premium link governor had been particularly impressed to discover through her questioning that all the teaching assistants could identify the children in each class who were eligible for the Pupil Premium and all the children who have special needs.
- One governor joined a science lesson about the sense of smell. She had discussed with a teaching assistant the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme, which the Head Teacher has introduced into Key Stage 1 learning.
- One governor accompanied Year 1 on a visit to Selly Manor as their class governor. The lady who showed the children around commented that she was very impressed by their behaviour.
- One governor visited during both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs testing to observe the security and integrity of the examination procedure being followed.

4B. GOVERNOR TRAINING

During the spring term, there was a whole governing body training session on school financial matters, which covered the following items :

- Governing body financial roles
- Approving the budget
- Reviewing the three-year strategic forecast
- Ensuring the budget is aligned with the School Development and Improvement Plan
- Elements within the National Funding formula

Individual governors also attended various online training sessions, which included :

- Oversight of how Pupil Premium funding is used
- Governor induction course

4C. OTHER STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

The governing body approved the statutory and non-statutory policies listed below. Some approvals involved adopting a local authority policy without modification. Other policies had been prepared by the school.

- Behaviour policy and statement of behaviour principles
- Bereavement
- Charging and remissions
- English
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Handwriting
- Maths
- Mental health and well-being
- Pay
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- School uniform
- SEND policy / local offer

PART 5. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE RECORDS 2021-22

5A. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

Name	Governor category	Start of term	End of term
Chatham, Mrs Kathleen	Co-opted	21/03/2022	20/03/2026
Clarson, Mrs Vanessa	Elected staff governor	09/11/2018	08/11/2022
Crosby, Mrs Sarah	Co-opted	04/10/2020	03/10/2024
Dakin, Mr Jonathan	Co-opted	05/04/2022	04/04/2026
Higgins, Mr Derek	Co-opted	16/12/2020	15/12/2024
Kirkman, Prof. Andrew	Parent governor	17/01/2022	16/01/2026
Kitaratzis, Mrs Jayne	Ex officio	Not applicable	
Mercer, Mr James	Co-opted	17/12/2019	16/12/2023
Murray, Miss Toni	Parent governor	17/10/2019	16/10/2023
Saunders, Mr Andrew	Local authority governor	18/12/2018	17/12/2022
<u>Resignations / departures during the year</u>			
Crooks, Dr Mark	Co-opted	22/09/2020	30/11/2021

Notes on governing body membership

- Mrs Chatham had previously served more than one co-opted term and was appointed for a further term from March.
- Mrs Kitaratzis ceased to be a governor at the end of the school year when she retired from her position as Head Teacher.

5B. GOVERNOR ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Full Governing Body

Name	Attended	Called	Apologized	Attendance %
Chatham, Mrs Kathleen	9	9	0	100%
Clarson, Mrs Vanessa	9	9	0	100%
Crosby, Mrs Sarah	9	9	0	100%
Dakin, Mr Jonathan	3	3	0	100%
Higgins, Mr Derek	8	9	1	89%
Kirkman, Prof. Andrew	2	5	3	40%
Kitaratzis, Mrs Jayne	7	8	1	88%
Mercer, Mr James	6	9	3	67%
Murray, Miss Toni	7	9	1	78%
Saunders, Mr Andrew	9	9	0	100%
<u>Resignations / departures during year</u>				
Crooks, Dr Mark	1	3	2	33%

All meetings were quorate and held in person. Mrs Kitaratzis was not eligible to attend the meeting held in April.

5C. GOVERNING BODY OFFICERS 2021-22

Chair of Governors : Andrew Saunders

Vice-Chair of Governors : Sarah Crosby

Statutory/recommended best practice link roles

Safeguarding governor : Toni Murray

SEND governor : Toni Murray

Pupil Premium governor : Sarah Crosby

The Governing Body of Woodcock Hill Primary School

September 2022