

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Birchwood Community Academy Trust School Year 2019/20

Role of the Governing Board

The three core functions of the board of governors in an academy school are:

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| Setting Strategic Direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensuring clarity of vision and ethos- Engaging with stakeholders- Making sure statutory duties are met. |
| Creating Robust Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Accountability for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety- Strengthening and supporting school leadership- Performance managing the Headteacher- Contributing to school self-evaluation. |
| Ensuring Financial Probity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Making sure the school's money is well spent- Monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium grant and other resources to overcome barriers to learning. |

Governance Arrangements

The governing board is made up as follows:

- Community Governors:
 - Andrea Atherton, Chair
 - Colin Burrows, Vice Chair
- Co-opted Governors:
 - Andy Lindsay
 - Rosemary Panting
 - Debi Ost
 - Mark Proctor
 - Paul McCaffrey
- Parent Governors
 - Nigel Reeves
 - Charlie Ruddy
- Staff Governor: Carol Walsh
- Ex-officio Governor: Emma Mills, Headteacher

The full Governing Board meets six times a year term and Governors also meet at least termly as committees to consider various aspects of the school in detail. At Birchwood Community High School we have the following committees:

- Finance and audit committee
- Pay committee
- Policy committee

Governors also have links to specific aspects of school and visit school regularly to meet pupils and staff. The governor links are below.

Safeguarding and Child Protection: Rosemary Panting

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Debi Ost

Pupil Premium: Paul McCaffrey

Governor Induction and Training: Mark Proctor

There are also committees that meet, if required, to consider pupil discipline, staffing appeals and complaints.

A list of Governors, their terms of office and positions of responsibility is published on the school website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Governors' Attendance Record

Governing boards make decisions collectively, though they may choose to delegate responsibility to committees, or individuals (including the Headteacher). Attending Governing Board meetings is an essential part of a governor's role and the attendance record for the governors of our school is excellent. This ensures that all governors receive the necessary information all at the same time and therefore important and informed decisions can be made as and when necessary on all aspects of the school, staff and pupils.

The attendance record for all governors is published on the school website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Assessment and Impact of the Governing Board during 2019-20 School Year

Full Governing Board

- Oversight and scrutiny of school plans for opening during COVID-19 partial closure
- Oversight and scrutiny of risk management plans for wider re-opening of school
- Approval of changes to the key stage 3 curriculum
- Approval of the proposal to move to early entry for English literature with the aim of improving student performance and wellbeing;
- Arrangements for parent governor elections to improve community voice.
- Improved ability to hold school leaders to account using the inspection data summary report ("ISDR")

- Scrutiny of the pastoral system review aimed at improving standards of behaviour and attitudes to benefit pupils and staff, and to maximise the use of resources.
- Identification of the need for in-house governor training and recruitment of a new governor to contribute much-needed skills to the board.
- Recruited two new members of the governing body to increase areas of expertise in business and education.
- Review governance on an annual basis but this has been impeded by the onset of Covid.
- Appointed a governor responsible for training who is going to co ordinate the skills audit and training needs.
- Started in- house governor training and have begun with safeguarding.
- Actively recruiting new members of the board and have approached someone with a school finance background.
- Supported the new headteacher with changing performance management and quality assurance processes in school.
- Adapted to the Covid-19 climate and restrictions by moving to virtual meetings which have increased attendance. We intend to continue with those meetings in some form in the future.
- Moving towards introducing a new work plan which will enable us to be more strategic in our planning for the future.

Finance and Audit Committee

- Oversight and scrutiny of assumptions to improve long term financial planning
- Support school leaders with school resource management advisor visit
- Budget monitoring and challenge throughout the year to improve early identification of potential underspending
- Oversight and scrutiny of successful funding bids to the Condition Improvement Fund (“CIF”) generating £457,000 of grant income.
- Scrutiny of procurement of contracts for CIF bids ensuring value for money
- Benchmarking financial performance using various sources to improve focus on areas of potential future savings
- Increased the members of the committee and given them new terms of reference.
- Appointed a new clerk in order to make financial scrutiny more efficient and challenging.
- Appointed a new chair who is actively working in a financial capacity.

Future Plans for Continuous Improvement

- Support and challenge school leaders through the unpredictable academic year ahead as the challenge presented by COVID-19 change over time.
- Embed integrated curriculum and financial planning (“ICFP”) into the annual business cycle of the Finance and Audit Committee
- Appointment of professional firm as an internal scrutineer to improve governors’ assurance on internal control
- Ensure in-house training continues in every FGB.
- Implement new work plan for the year.