

# Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Birchwood Community Academy Trust School Year 2020-21

## Role of the Governing Board

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

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

## 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
  - Mark Proctor
  - Nicola Winstanley
  - Kelly Leonard
  - Gabriel Callwell
  
- Parent Governors
  - Nigel Reeves
  - Charlie Ruddy
  
- 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

Safeguarding and Child Protection: Rosemary Panting

Curriculum: Kelly Leonard

Wellbeing: Andy Lindsay

Business: Charlie Ruddy

Training: Mark Proctor

Science: Nigel Reeves

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 2020-21 School Year**

#### **Full Governing Board**

- New governors have been appointed and welcomed, adding to the board's range of skills
- Governors had received and discussed information about how the school was coping with Covid-19 and the risk assessment had been reviewed.
- Governors ensured that a balanced budget had been set for the 2020/21 financial year.
- The governing board had made progress in terms of policies and the appointment of link governors.
- The establishment of a RAF cadet unit would open up opportunities for certain target groups of students.
- The school had not been badly impacted by Covid-19 to date which was a reflection of the professional management and effective procedures within school.

- Recent systemic changes had had a positive impact on student and staff wellbeing.
- Discussions regarding the appointment of new members to improve compliance.
- Raised awareness of the impact of change in ethos and routines in reducing FTEs.
- Skills audit outcomes showing the strength and breadth of the governing team's knowledge and skills.
- Nominated governor reports starting to be received. It was noted that reports from the extended senior leadership team were planned for future meetings.
- Improving governors' knowledge of teaching and learning, including the school's curriculum and data.
- Governors had challenged, supported, and suggested ways of enhancing learning.
- Questions submitted in advance of the meeting allowed the headteacher time to prepare detailed answers.
- The school continued to be robustly managed and to follow good practice regarding Covid-19.
- Improving governors' knowledge of teaching and learning, including the school's curriculum and data.
- Governors had challenged, supported, and suggested ways of enhancing learning.
- Agreed an improved structure of SLT in order to meet the aspirational ambition that had begun.
- Progress had been made in understanding the need to move forward with SEND, and developing a more robust approach to accessibility while taking account of resourcing.
- Preparing for the future in terms of realignment of departments and faculties.

### **Finance and Audit Committee**

- Detailed scrutiny of decisions concerning staffing arrangements and the use of reserves leading to effective management of available resources.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the current Academies' Financial Handbook.
- Governors agreed the impact of their deliberations/decisions at the meeting as follows:
- Adding a narrative to the financial statements would enhance governors' understanding of the reports.
- Progress had been made regarding the appointment of new members.
- The risk register had been reviewed and modifications made.
- Close monitoring of the budget demonstrated effective use of funds despite current financial fluctuations.
- Governors were assured that robust plans were in place to ensure the safety of students on their return to school.
- To ensure that prudent financial decisions were made while prioritising the raising of standards in English.
- Governors had improved their knowledge regarding the board's processes and delegation arrangements.
- The committee had recommended a review of its remit and consequently, the governing board's annual work plan.
- Governors had noted improvements in catering income in addition to improved recruitment to Y7 which would have a beneficial impact on the academy's future finances.

### **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
- Ensure in-house training continues in every FGB.
- Implement new work plan for the year.
- Hold an annual review of governance.
- Review the Articles of Association.
- Put in place an external review of governance.
- Have a full understanding of the spending of the funding around recovery within the school: Pupil Premium, Recovery Premium and School-led Tutoring.
- Improve the understanding of the roles around governor responsibilities.
- To explore the possibilities of becoming a sponsor school in a Multi-Academy Trust.