

Governors' Impact Statement for 2020-21

The Local Governing Body is a sub group of the NAS Academies Trust (NAS-AT) Board. This board delegates some of its functions to our Local Governing Body. All governors have three core strategic functions which are to:

1. ***Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;***
2. ***Hold the Head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school; and***
3. ***Oversee the financial performance of the school, ensuring value for money;***

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;

Despite the disruption to schools and education over the last 18 months, the Local Governing Body has continued to meet virtually and fulfil its role and responsibilities. Governors have engaged in a wide range of online training and carried out a full programme of governor monitoring visits to ensure their knowledge of the school and its strategic priorities is up to date. Over the coming months the board plans to recruit at least two additional governors to further strengthen and diversify its scope of expertise.

'Governors are forward-thinking and have a wide range of skills. Governors have attended a range of training courses to improve their skills.' Ofsted Report, January 2018.

Governors are kept informed of the many changes within School Governance via access to Local Authority termly reports, weekly email updates from the National Governors Association (NGA), termly journals from the NGA and access to governor conferences and forums.

Governors regularly review NAS-AT's shared vision for the school, the school's own self-evaluation of its performance and the School's Improvement Plan. Best practice is regularly shared amongst local schools and NAS-AT's other academies.

This year the governors have supported the school with the challenges faced during the nationwide closure of schools as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the deliverance of remote learning and the provision of safeguarding and pastoral support for families throughout this unprecedented and difficult time. They have also been kept informed of the risk assessments and mitigation measures the school has put in place in order to re-open safely.

The wellbeing of both students and staff has also been a key priority for the governing body this year. Governors have checked in on staff at every meeting and considered the strategies the school has put in place to identify and provide appropriate support. The Governing Body regularly thanked staff for their hard work, expertise, and resilience in what was an extraordinary year.

2. Hold the Head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school;

During the Autumn term, governors reviewed the school's baseline assessment data for students, along with the school's priorities and plans for supporting children's re-engagement with learning. Governors fully supported the school's decision to deliver its recovery curriculum through the Quality of Life (QOL) programme, in which each child student was appointed a Key Worker to support the child and their family through regular home contact. Governors received termly updates on pupil performance and any interventions the school has put in place to further improve progress.

Governors regularly visited the school, virtually and in person where possible, to enhance their knowledge and to monitor the implementation of policies, procedures and priorities of the School's Self Evaluation & Improvement Plan (SEIP). This information is used, together with the information provided by the Senior Leadership of the school, external data and information from NAS-AT

monitoring reports to provide assurance to governors that their 3 core strategic functions are being exercised appropriately.

‘Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They visit the school regularly and remain focused on ensuring the best outcomes for pupils. The minutes of governors’ meetings demonstrate that over time governors ask probing questions and hold leaders to account. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for further improvement as the school continues to grow each year.’ Ofsted Report, January 2018.

This year governors have overseen the building of a new Science classroom, to better support children’s learning and practical development of the subject. The new building also allows for the creation of additional school places as required going forward.

As a Local Governing Body, our focus is on the effectiveness of Teaching and Learning and pupil outcomes. Governor visits to the school, in addition to reports from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), help inform the way we monitor and challenge the SLT. Parental views are an important element and the results of parental surveys are reviewed by governors.

The Safeguarding of pupils is of paramount importance and the policy is regularly updated in-line with regulations and best practice. Safeguarding audit reviews are conducted regularly by an appropriately qualified governor and reported to the LGB for consideration. Safeguarding in this school is judged to be effective by Ofsted.

‘All governors have completed training in safeguarding and the Safeguarding governor visits frequently to check the information that the school holds on keeping pupils safe.’ Ofsted Report, January 2018.

3. Oversee the financial performance of the school, ensuring value for money;

All schools receive public money and as such it is essential that this is managed effectively both at the NAS-AT Board level and at a local level.

Governors receive half-termly reports on the in-year budget. In addition, financial procedures are checked including the application of best practice, and the appropriateness of Service Level Agreements with NAS-AT and contracts with third parties.

During 2020-21, governors reviewed the purchase of various contracts to ensure best value, approved a proposal for SLT restructure and staff retention, along with spending statements for Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and Coronavirus Catch-Up funding. The board also receives the school’s updated risk register at every LGB meeting.

Referrals continue to be received from Cheshire East Council and neighbouring local authorities and governors will be supporting the school to ensure there is capacity to offer additional pupil places in the future.

The work of the governing body, in conjunction with the schools Senior Leadership Team, has had a significant impact on developing the school. Listed below are examples of activities, events, and systems that illustrate the impact the governing body has had on school improvement.

- Self-Evaluation & Improvement Plan (SEIP) – Governors have provided input to and monitored the SEIP with the Principal. They receive termly reports from the Principal, relating to the SEIP and challenge progress and outcomes.
- Governor visits – Governors adhere to an agreed plan of visits throughout the academic year as part of their monitoring of the SEIP and of specific subjects such as safeguarding, performance data, teaching and learning, attendance, school website, parent forum, book reviews, School Council, Single Central Register, Finance, Health & Safety and much more.

- Data analysis - Governors receive termly anonymised reports on progress and attainment of pupils collectively. They identify any strengths and weaknesses and monitor action plans for improvement with the Senior Leadership Team. Pupil progress data is also shared with parents on a termly basis at 'My Progress' meetings.
- Policies – Governors review policies regularly to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Where appropriate, National Autistic Society policies are implemented locally, and local policies are reviewed and adopted accordingly.
- Financial management – Governors monitor financial processes, budget reports and forecasts. The impact of the governors' role in school helps to ensure that the budget is managed effectively and used to develop the school according to the agreed School Development Plan (SEIP).
- Pupil voice – Governors are interested in the views of pupils and this information helps to inform school developments. The pupil surveys, visits by governors to School Council meetings and governor monitoring visits all contribute to understand more about the individuals that make the school what it is today.
- Parental Engagement – the Parent Forum continues to provide feedback to the school and governors on hot topics. The school now has a Family Liaison role which is providing additional support for families and parents directly.
- Governor Expertise – the governors bring a wide variety of expertise to the school and this helps to ensure the school continually develops. Governors regularly undertake training to assist them in their roles and clear governor roles and responsibilities help with governor recruitment, retention and succession planning.
- Staff recruitment – Governors are involved in the recruitment and selection of senior staff and use the appointment process to ensure that those that are appointed share the schools vision, strategy and ethos.
- Community – Governors monitor the progress of the school's active engagement with the local community, residents and other schools in the area. The school is actively involved with several local schools and community groups.