

Local Governing Body Annual Impact Report 2022-23

Summary of Achievements During the Year

- Smarden continues to be an extremely popular school within the local area, with 63 applications made for Reception class and a final intake of 29. Most classes throughout the school are now full.
- In July 2023 an ungraded OFSTED inspection took place. Despite challenging circumstances, the school received a continued rating of 'Good', with a glowing report praising staff and pupils. The report notes that 'All at Smarden Primary have the highest aspirations and ambition for all their pupils. Pupils benefit from this ambition and the thorough approach to everything in school. They are happy and do well in their academic and wider development...Pupils behave well. They are courteous, polite and interested in other people...Leaders ensure there is high ambition within the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)...Pupils thrive here, regardless of circumstance. As one parent described it: 'A wonderful village school that promotes hard work, confidence, kindness and mindfulness.'"
- Wellbeing champions for both staff and pupils are successfully in place and proving to be effective.
- A recent parent survey showed 100% of parents thought their child was happy at Smarden Primary School and would recommend the school.

Local Governing Body (LGB) Membership, Meetings and Activities

- Four LGB meetings were held in September, December, March and July.
- Matt Hardwick was elected to serve as Chair for 22-23, with Claire Summers stepping into the Vice Chair position.
- Mrs Laura Pickard continued as our Clerk to the Governors. In addition to co-ordinating and documenting the activities of the LGB, Mrs Pickard acts as valuable liaison between TKAT and the LGB
- One of our stated priorities for this year was the appointment of new governors to improve our community links and our coverage of pre-school and early years areas with the appointment of two new governors – Gill Copping and Kym Marsh.
- We now have a full complement of eight governors as set out in our constitution (as revised and adopted in October 2019).
- Governors took part in training (including the safeguarding training at the start of each school year), attended LGB meetings, and undertook monitoring of specified areas in visits to school.
- Governors also have provided challenge to the school and to the head teacher in key areas such as safeguarding, health and safety and educational attainment scores via the Headteacher's report

Governance functions

The core functions of governance in publicly funded schools are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In MATs these functions must be carried out at board level, and in some cases aspects of these functions will be delegated to LGBs.

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

- Smarden School embraces TKAT's vision: Inspiring Learners, Changing Lives.
- Our school motto is "Enjoying, Learning and Achieving Together" and our school values and governance ethos are set out on the Governors page of our school website: <https://www.smardenprimaryschool.co.uk/governors/>
- The Governor's Mission statement is available online via the above link
- This ethos underpins the support and challenges that governors offer to the SLT.
- This academic year provided an opportunity for us to make sure that enjoyment, learning, and achievement were pursued in a safe and reassuring learning environment.
- This experience refocussed the minds of governors and staff on questions of wellbeing which will shape our future work.

- **Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.**
- The priority areas on which the school was challenged by governors included stretching more able pupils, and achieving greater depth in maths and other subjects.
- Governors supported Mrs Miller in her view that the wider curriculum continues to need to be further deepened and enriched.
- Governors challenged the school on spending, value for money, and getting the most out of the budget.
- Staff and governor online wellbeing surveys were used to provide the SLT with accurate snapshots of parental and community concerns.

2. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

- Governors continue to explore with the school leadership how to make the best use of all funds, including those raised by Friends of Smarden Primary School (FOSP, our PTA).
- Financial and budgetary matters are monitored throughout the year by Claire Summers as chair of governors, who is also our lead finance governor, as well as by the full LGB meetings.

- This year, as in previous years, the headteacher, business manager and governors have done all they can to ensure that every penny of the budget is spent wisely and any surplus, where possible, is redirected towards supporting the safety, wellbeing and academic progress of children.

Summary of Local Governing Body effectiveness:

- We now have all posts filled in our LGB and the balance between staff, parents, community and other areas is good.
- Governors are familiar with their particular areas and have a good understanding of the role of governor monitoring.
- Mrs Miller has successfully instilled a rigorous attitude in the LGB, encouraging all governors to ask difficult questions and to demand high standards in all areas of school life, and supporting an ethos of transparency and of ambition for all our children.

Review of progress on stated goals in last year's impact statement:

- **Monitoring whether we have embedded higher expectations for all so that the more able are always challenged** Successful this year but continues to be monitored and 'use of the teaching cycle to improve outcomes for all pupils' is included in the School Improvement Plan.
- **Embedding Maths Mastery throughout the school.** Successfully achieved - report produced by Maths Lead show good results and good level of progress consistently made in Maths: 86.7% of KS2 pupils achieved expected level in 2022 and GDS is also rising.
- **Making wellbeing a priority area for Smarden – improving provision for children and staff – and enriching the curriculum through improved teaching and resources in PSHE, RSE, and emotional literacy.** Successfully achieved - wellbeing champions in place for both staff and pupils and wellbeing surveys are periodically completed with reports to Governors.
- **Supporting and extending the wider curriculum.** This remains a focus after the recent OFSTED review and is stated as a continued priority in our Future Plans for 2023-24.

Future plans: Priorities for 2023-24

Aims for the LGB and priority areas which Governors will be supporting and challenging the SLT on are:

- Monitoring the improvement of handwriting throughout the school.
- Ensuring the curriculum is implemented consistently throughout the school - as per the recommendation in the OFSTED report, with a particular focus on Nursery and Reception.
- Continuing to monitor whether the more able are always challenged through the use of the teaching cycle to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Recruit a SEN Governor.

Chair of Governors: **Claire Summers**

Date: **October 2023**

Comment from Director of Education

Smarden continue to embed and improve their offer and the Ofsted visit was very positive. The

continual challenge in a smaller school is how to keep that improvement going and maintain high standards whilst balancing the demands on a small number of staff. It is a challenge that has been very well balanced and Smarden continues to be a successful school. Thank you to the governors for their role in this and for their continual dedication to keeping the school at the heart of the community.

Comment from Link Trustee

I am really looking forward to visiting Smarden over the coming months. Not only does this impact statement reflect the hard work and progress that the team have been making but I have also seen online some of the DEI vlogs that the children have made and am really excited about learning about how inclusivity at Smarden is embedded. I am eager to learn how I can support and challenge over the next year to drive progress forward at the school even more with the teachers, staff and pupils at the school.