

**Local Governing Body Annual Impact Report 2023-24**

**Summary of Achievements During the Year**

- For yet another consecutive year, Smarden continues to be an extremely popular school within the local area, with a record 65 applications made for Reception class. The school is now at full capacity.
- Smarden was awarded a Gold Carnegie Mental Health Award. This was a huge accomplishment and shows excellent dedication to the field of mental health. Many new initiatives have been implemented over the past couple of years and I am pleased to see recognition of this.
- Governors were extremely supportive and proud of Mrs Miller's secondment to the Extended Senior Leadership Team of TKAT. This was an excellent opportunity and one which has provided Mrs Miller with a wealth of support and experience to bring back to the school.
- Smarden were delighted to be awarded the school Games Mark Silver Award for 2023/24. PE, led by Miss Edmondson, continues to be an area of strength for the school. Pupils are offered many opportunities to engage in sports and physical education; from taking part in the daily mile, to inspiring PE lessons and a range of after school sports clubs. It is wonderful to see this being recognised.
- A group of pupils won first prize in a competition run by the local community, for their project on environmental sustainability. Their achievement was acknowledged in the TKAT newsletter.

**Local Governing Body (LGB) Membership, Meetings and Activities**

- Four LGB meetings were held in September, December, March and July.
- Claire Summers continued to serve as Chair, with Kathy Gibbs stepping into the Vice Chair position.
- One of our stated priorities for this year was the appointment of new governors to improve our community links and our coverage of Nursery and early years areas with the appointment of one new governor – Kym Marsh.
- We currently have six governors with vacancies for a parent and appointed governor, which we are in the process of filling.
- 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 have also continued to provide 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.

### **2. 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 monitoring improvements in Handwriting.
- 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.

### **3. 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 currently have a vacancy for a parent governor and appointed governor in our LGB but 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 the improvement of handwriting throughout the school.** The progress of handwriting has been closely monitored and challenged at every Governor meeting. A new handwriting policy has been implemented however is not yet fully embedded. We will therefore continue to monitor this for the next school year.
- **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.** This has been successfully implemented, strong progress was made early on in the school year and continues to be successful.
- **Continuing to monitor whether the more able are always challenged through the use of the teaching cycle to improve outcomes for all pupils.** This has also been closely monitored and challenged by governors throughout the year. There have been some challenging circumstances which have affected statistical data therefore, as with handwriting, this will continue as an area to monitor for the 2024-25 school year.
- **Recruit a SEN Governor.** Mrs Kim Marsh was recruited in September 2023 as the SEN link governor. Kim has extensive experience in the area of SEN which made her the ideal candidate for this role. Her input has already been of great value.

### Future plans: Priorities for 2023-24

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

- Continued monitoring of the improvement of handwriting throughout the school, with particular focus on EYFS.
- Continuing to monitor whether the more able are always challenged through the use of the teaching cycle to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Monitor progress of embedding effective feedback into the curriculum.
- Review the LGB structure and ensure all governors are effectively engaged with their link roles by encouraging attendance to TKAT training sessions. Consider implementation of annual review of governors handbook and confidentiality agreements.

Chair of Governors: **Claire Summers**

Date: **October 2024**