

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of Jesse Gray Primary School

This time last year, the Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body was dominated by the impact of COVID-19 and the role Governors had played in helping Jesse Gray navigate a very challenging period. This year, I'm pleased to be able to talk about how the school has not only emerged from the shadow of the pandemic but how Governors are now supporting Mr Belton and the team to look to the future.

Governors continue to support and challenge the school in a wide range of capacities. Three specific areas that our report describes in more detail are:

- Ofsted
- Recruitment & Staffing
- Capital investment

Just as Jesse Gray has experienced a significant amount of change recently, that is also true for Jesse Gray's Governing Body. After many years of valuable support, we say goodbye to three Governors: Karen Davies, Adam Bevan and Rob Woods. Of course, this has resulted in opportunities for new Governors to get involved. Camilla Gillmore, Rina Chana and Jane Gill have all recently joined the Governing Body and bring with them significant expertise in their relevant fields. This continues to demonstrate just how blessed the school is to be supported by such skilled and dedicated parents.

Finally, I must also share the news that after four years as Chair of Governors I have taken the difficult decision to stand down as Chair at the end of this school year, although I will remain on the Governing Body. My decision is prompted by the impact of other commitments as well as the fact that now, as the school looks to the future and the next stage of its journey serving the local community, feels like the right time for a new Chair to work with Chris and the team. I am delighted that Liz Hopkins has agreed to take over as Chair and that Kaj Ghattoara will continue in her role as Vice Chair. I look forward to supporting them both in my ongoing role as a Governor at Jesse Gray.

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Chris Walker
Chair of Governors, Jesse Gray Primary School

Ofsted

Ofsted's inspection of the school in January 2022 resulted in the regulator re-affirming that Jesse Gray is a 'Good' school. Whilst Mr Belton and the team should be rightly proud of such a successful inspection, especially coming so soon after lockdown was lifted, Governors played a key role in the inspection:

- 1) *Preparation for the Inspection* – In anticipation of an impending inspection, Governors reviewed the school's plans for an inspection with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that all key areas had been considered. Important documents, such as the School Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation Form, were reviewed and updated. In addition, Governors prepared a list of key questions and suggested answers to ensure Governors shared key messages when the Inspector questioned them as part of the visit.
- 2) *Involvement in the Inspection* – Several Governors were interviewed during the visit as the Inspector assessed the strength of the school's governance. In addition, all Governors were invited to attend the closing meeting with the Inspector to hear them summarise their thoughts and recommendations directly.
- 3) *Post-inspection Monitoring* – Governors are playing an active role in monitoring the school's action plan in response to the Inspector's recommendations. We receive termly updates from the Headteacher and continue to challenge to make sure progress is made quickly following the inspection.

Recruitment & Staffing

Having led the recruitment of Mr Belton in 2019, Governors were again heavily involved in appointing Mrs Viggars as the new Deputy Headteacher following Mrs Moore's appointment as Headteacher at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Mrs Thompson's period as Acting Deputy Headteacher.

A panel of Governors worked closely with Mr Belton and Mrs Thompson to design and run the recruitment process and provided significant challenge and perspective to ensure that the right appointment was made. We are all looking forward to Mrs Viggars formally taking up her new role in September and continuing to build on the good relationship that she already has with Governors from her current role.

In addition, Governors have been heavily involved in scrutinising the planned staffing and class structure for 2022/23.

Capital Investment

Now that the effects of COVID-19 have started to recede, Mr Belton has been able to initiate some of the long-held plans to invest in the school's infrastructure. This includes both large capital projects, such as the replacement windows, new boiler and central heating, as well as smaller enhancements, such as the fence around the school field.

Governors have scrutinised the plans to ensure they represent value for money and are in line with the school's Finance Policy. The Resources Committee continues to monitor progress to ensure the disruption to daily school life is kept to a minimum. The Resources Committee also continues to challenge Mr Belton to make sure the school's remaining capital reserves are well targeted for the benefit of the children as well as the wider community.

Other Areas of Impact

- *Governor Recruitment* – With several Governors stepping down from the Governing Body this year we revised our skills audit and took the opportunity to use this to help direct our

search for new Governors. Key areas of focus were safeguarding, education experience and health & safety. All of these skills are now well reflected across the Governing Body.

- *Governor Links* – We have refreshed our programme of Governor links; this programme ensures each year group and subject lead has a dedicated Governor contact who supports and challenges them and also helps build closer links between Governors and the classroom.
- *Policies* – The refreshed programme of Governor links also has helped Governors take a more focused and targeted approach to reviewing the school's policies to ensure they meet the necessary statutory requirements and are appropriately tailored to Jesse Gray's context.