Sheriffhales Primary School and Preschool Governors' Report for 2023/24

'Growing hearts and minds'

Executive Summary

Our school is committed to enabling pupils to achieve the very best social, personal and academic outcomes: growing hearts and minds. The performance monitoring record from the LA School Improvement Advisor to the headteacher 23/24 notes the:

- *significant improvements in the school environment*
- *significant improvements in the quality of education and the learning behaviours of the children*
- *Children actively engaged in their work and with 'their' school*
- *all staff should be proud of the journey they have taken the school on over the last year and it is a pleasure to see such a happy school community in action*
- *an impressive improvement in outcomes, particularly in Year 1*

Governors have seen that the school, under the leadership of the Headteacher, has welcomed input from external organisations such as other MATs, CEOs, TSI advisors and Local Authority advisors and have been receptive to constructive feedback incorporating improvement opportunities into the School Improvement Plan. The head is regarded positively by the board and the LA and has additional roles including the Education Partnership Board and governorship outside this school, regular attendance and input at local authority leadership panels. Further roles and staff development have taken root, particularly in developing mathematics, SEND support and subject leadership, leading to consistently improved outcomes in all areas for all children: the school has benefited from a focus on continuous improvement to children's learning.

The school works collaboratively with local schools to raise standards, including inter-school visits and moderation.

The school has continued to grow in size, reflecting the positive reputation of the school in the area, with robust application numbers in Reception (over subscribed) and cohorts filling / full in the rest of the school.
The new preschool for 3+ children opened in April 24 and has begun strongly.

The school environment, already much improved, continues to improve and give an excellent learning space for all children.

The governors have seen that the 5 School Improvement Priorities for 2023-24 have been met.

This report considers the following:

Governors' role
Safeguarding

Finance
Health & safety
Data protection
Progress and attainment
Quality of Education
Leadership & management
Behaviour & attitudes
Personal development
Early Years

Governors' role

This Governors' annual report looks in more detail at the actions the Headteacher and her directed staff team have taken to ensure that the school has met the outcomes of the SIP and statutory / D f E requirements. It is the role of the Governing body to support the school to continue in its development and covers 4 main areas:

- Ensuring the head has clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- reviewing the school's educational performance
- Ensuring financial resources are well spent
- Safeguarding

Sheriffhales Primary School and Preschool is a community school and has 10 governors in its Instrument of Government:
4 parent governors
1 LA governor
1 staff governor
1 headteacher
3 co-opted governors.
This instrument was made by order of Shropshire LA on 27.2.2015

The board is active and engaged. Governors fulfil their time in office. New governors are appointed according to the skillsets needed. Governors continue to undertake training to enhance their governor skill set. Governors are regularly in school according to a comprehensive monitoring schedule from the headteacher; her and her staff are always engaged in visits to support governors' understanding of developments in school. Governors share reports about their visits with the rest of the board.
Governors receive regular, detailed headteacher reports and provide critical challenge. They meet with subject leaders and the head to understand specific areas and subjects and all have core areas of responsibility. Governor visits, reports and oversight relate to the SIP. The LA Monitoring Report notes that 'leadership and management governance is much stronger than it was at last inspection. Structures are in place and governors proactive in carrying out their roles.'

Safeguarding
At least each term, the safeguarding governor reviewed safeguarding records and procedures and met the head then concluded that safeguarding (deemed effective in Ofsted March 2023) was robust.

Finance
Post Covid, cohort needs have been prioritised and school funding used to target children with a programme of timetabled intervention hours and a dedicated staff employment. Children and the key years most affected remain a priority for the head. School finances have been extremely well managed following the financial challenges of last year and governors are satisfied that resources have been appropriately deployed into staffing, learning environment and resource and key children's groups.
The school has a three-year strategy to support spending of the Pupil Premium Grant allocation. The focus of the strategy is to finance activities and staffing that supports the learning of children in the school that are disadvantaged, to ensure that all pupils make progress and gaps in attainment close.
The board is satisfied that the school budget is well managed between the headteacher, the office manager and the School Finance Officer. The board has been regularly updated and has reviewed the school budget.

Health & safety
Governors reviewed a number of important School policies, and conducted Health and Safety site visits and training.

Data protection
Governors reviewed a number of important School policies and conducted GDPR training. Governors are aware a new data protection officer has been appointed.

Progress and attainment
The positive aspects of the way that, under the direction of the Headteacher, the school has moved learning forward, is seen in our pupils' end of year achievement results which have rapidly and significantly increased from below local and national averages in 2022 to above local and national averages in both key stages in 2024. The board know and understand the headteacher's next priority to maintain and enhance these results with particular regards to SEND, writing and greater depth in all core subjects.
An important role for governors is to ensure statutory duties are met, the curriculum offer is appropriate, and priorities approved. The governing body approved the school's wide ranging development plan for 2023/24 early in the academic year. Governors have judged the impact of the curriculum versus the results produced by the children - 'A well-constructed curriculum will lead to good results because those results will reflect what pupils have learned. Therefore, such a curriculum contributes to evidence of impact.

Quality of Education
Governors consider that a key strength of the school is the individualised, targeted support given to pupils, particularly the lower 20% and those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Link governors for SEND have found effective provision for pupils with SEND with a focus on the consistent use of adapted teaching methods and resources.
Positive findings include:
•Early Stage readers are targeted in several ways. Learning to read is given the highest priority. Each pupil reads for pleasure every day, is read to every day and reads to an adult with frequency depending on the stage of their learning journey but no less than every day for early stage readers and no less than twice a week for free readers in year 6, evidencing a

high ambition for the promotion of *reading for life*, a school vision driver. Reading texts in each classroom library are matched to **all** the children in that room.
• Staff are well informed about the needs of pupils and interventions are of high quality – these are monitored regularly through SENCO support. The LA Performance Monitoring notes that 'SEND structures and policies have been significantly improved with the excellent support' of the external SENDCO. A new internal Sendco has been appointed and will begin training in late 2024. A support TA has been appointed and training has been received by all staff to support children in early reading, maths and outdoor learning.
• Experiential learning and well considered educational visits are used to support the learning of all pupils but are crucial to our disadvantaged pupils extending their experiences, vocabulary and cultural capital.
• Leaders high ambition for pupils' writing is evident and improvements continue to be made based on knowledge of the intake, research into good practice, engagement with external bodies and analysis of data.
The LA Performance Monitoring notes that whereas the initial priority was to ensure National Curriculum coverage, this has now 'evolved into a rich, bespoke curriculum for the school including key drivers, which builds from the Early Years in a spiral approach.' It also notes 'an impressive improvement in outcomes' for phonics.
There have been significant improvements in SEN support since with more children getting the support they need and the school acutely aware of what areas need to be developed to support further.

Leadership & management
The board have led the appointment of the previous Acting Head appointed October 2022 as substantive Headteacher in April 2024, following the resignation of the previous Head. The governors have taken a proactive role in following a monitoring schedule which sees governors in school across all subjects and areas of judgement. Governors have been involved in the Safer Recruitment of new staff members and the Performance Management of the headteacher.

Behaviour & attitudes
The school works very hard to ensure children's behaviour and discipline at Sheriffhales is excellent both in and outside of school, and that the school Behaviour Policy is adhered to and consistently applied. Positive feedback from the Local Authority found *Children actively engaged in their work and with 'their' school*. There is effective management of, and support for, those needing help with their emotions – the pastoral support staff member has dedicated time to support individuals and groups with needs as diverse as bereavement to behavioural regulation.
Governors have seen multiple and constant examples of a strong code of behaviour supporting high expectations for all children.
Governors understand that good behaviour in schools is central to a good education. Schools need to manage behaviour well so they can provide calm, safe and supportive environments which children and young people want to attend and where they can learn and thrive. Being taught how to behave well and appropriately within the context they're in is vital for all pupils to succeed personally. (Behaviour in schools Advice for headteachers and school staff September 2022)

Governors review attendance figures to ensure that they are high and sustained and see frequent promotion of the need for regular attendance whereas non-attendance is quickly challenged. Attendance is above national averages and the headteacher constantly supports improvement. Persistent and SEN absenteeism is above national averages: this is represented by a very small number of families with whom an extensive amount of support work is done. An Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works closely with the Headteacher and families of disadvantaged pupils to raise their awareness of the need for regular attendance in school and the head employs various strategies for improving school attendance . There were no pupils excluded from school.

Personal development

The school has developed more clubs, committees, positions of responsibility including interview panels, representation to the board, school council, eco committee and has achieved a number of awards including RHS level 5, Gold Gamesmark, GreenTree. Pupil survey and frequent subject survey obtains pupil voice around their experiences in school. Governors have seen that children feel heard and valued and contribute positively to their community. Governors have heard extensive pupil voice across subjects and school areas. Governors know that children know who to talk to, to keep them safe and comfortable. Governors have seen that the school gives comprehensive support to children to be safe online and in their social development, with a broad range of safeguarding activities and curriculum . Children are clearly very happy in school and take a real sense of pride in their school community and in representing their school. 100% of children said they feel safe in this school. No Outsiders is incorporated into the school curriculum to support teaching and learning around diversity and inclusion.

Early Years

EYFS has seen a transformation in the quality of its delivery following the building conversions in summer 23 and redeployment of staff to support improved outcomes. Reviews of provision from the LA EY Improvement Adviser in Autumn 23 and the external TSI review in Jan 24 considered provision to be a 'breath from outstanding' . The appointment of a highly experienced EYFS teaching team has resulted in a rich, tailored curriculum for EY and the environment continues to be polished. Outcomes for 23-24 were 92.3% scoring a Good Level of Development (68.3% Local 67.8%National). Applications for Reception continue to rise.

A new Preschool for 3 year-olds was opened in April 24, with much interest and uptake, and meets a high need for this provision in the locality.