



Ambition, Respect, Courage, Pride, Happiness

Priory School

The Governing Board Annual Report to Parents (October 2023)

Welcome to this Governing Board Report to Parents.

As Chair of Governors, I want to use this report to look back briefly over the past year and look forward to the new school year.

I was appointed as Chair of Governors in October 2022. Although I have been a governor and Chair of Governors for a number of years, I was new to Priory School. I was given a great welcome. Although there were some very committed governors on the Board, some were finding that they no longer had time to commit to what is a demanding role. There had also been problems recruiting new governors. I would like to record my thanks, and the thanks of everyone in school to all those governors who worked tirelessly in recent years, particularly during the pandemic.

So, my main task during my first year has been to reorganise the way that the Board works, while also recruiting new people to the Board. We have abandoned the committee structure and we now work as one Board, meeting three times a term on Tuesday evenings from 6 – 8 p.m. In order to address the full range of our work, we have appointed Link Governors who have particular knowledge and/or skills to monitor the progress of school activities towards priority milestones or statutory duties and report back to the Board.

The Governing Board has an important role as part of the leadership of the school. So, as we were in a time of transition, it was no surprise that our work was criticised in the Ofsted inspection saying that we need to challenge the work of leaders more robustly and monitor the work of the school to identify areas where the school must improve.

As we start the new school year, I am delighted that 8 new governors have been recruited, including our new parent governor, Travis Littlechilds.

We are looking forward to working with the school community, and we are ambitious to play our part in helping the school to move forward and to become the best that it can be.

Meet the Governing Board

The Governing Board is a team of people with different skills, experience, and knowledge. There are several different categories of governor: parent governors (who are elected by parents), co-opted governors (who are appointed by the Board because they have the right skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school), Staff Governors (elected by the school staff) and Local Authority Governors (who are nominated by the Local Authority, and who serve as a link between the school and the local authority. In addition, the Head Teacher is an Ex-Officio member of the Board.

Effective from September 2023, the members of the Priory Board comprises:

Parent Governors	Travis Littlechilds	Cheridah Caesar Mejias
Co-opted Governors	Jade Baker-Smith	Harriet Brown
	Harry Humphrey (to 11/23)	Gertrude Martindale
	Susan Powell	Dominic Riddex
	Hazel Samuriwo	Holly Smith (from 12/23)
Local Authority Governor	Jenny Hitch	
Staff Governor	Jonathan Wiltshire	
Head Teacher	Julie Evans	

The role of the governing board

The board exists to make sure that the school runs effectively. It is a strategic role, and the governing board performance manages the headteacher, who runs the school on a day-to-day basis.

The core functions of the governing board are:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding the executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Link Governors have been appointed specifically to monitor and report back to the full Board in the following areas: Safeguarding (including Child Protection), Special Educational Needs and Careers Guidance (all of which are statutory roles). In addition, the Board has agreed Link Governor roles for Finance, Staffing and Staff Wellbeing, Health and Safety (including Premises) and Parents and the Community. We also have a Training and Development Governor who is responsible for ensuring the Governing Board are adequately trained and kept up to date with changes in education regulations and policies.

In addition, our role includes ensuring the voices of the school's stakeholders are heard. So, we also hope to attend some parents' meetings and events when we will be happy to talk to you about our work and the things that are important to you. We also take account of the annual Parent Questionnaire, so please do fill it in and return it!

Our aims for 2023-2024

The governing board is responsible for setting the school vision and aims and the strategy to achieve them. We are guided primarily by reports that we receive from our headteacher, as well as feedback from our visits to the school and reports from consultants and Ofsted.

For the school year 2023-2024, our main areas of focus are:

- Ensuring that the governing body becomes well equipped to carry out its statutory duties, by undertaking training and developing individual and corporate skills.
- Becoming familiar with the School Improvement Plan, through monitoring, making visits to school and scrutinising reports from the head teacher and other members of staff.
- Becoming known within the school community, particularly with our parents and staff, and supporting the school to develop outreach links within the local authority and beyond.

Statutory information about the governing board

On the school website you will find the following information that we have to publish:

- Information about each governor who has served at any point in the last twelve months
- The attendance record at the governing board and committee meetings over the last academic year

If you have any comments or questions about this report or about the work of the governing board, please send them to spowell77.306@lgflmail.org. Alternatively, please send written comments to the school office, marked 'For the attention of the Chair of Governors'.