



**DURANTS SCHOOL –  
GOVERNANCE ANNUAL STATEMENT**

*Reviewed & updated: September 2023 (Alison  
Towndrow)*

*Next review date: July 2024*

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

## Governance Annual Statement – 2022/23

### Introduction

Durants is a community special school, having 189 pupils with autism on roll in the Autumn term 2022, aged 11 to 19. The school is based over 3 sites in Southgate, Enfield and Winchmore Hill.

Durants' Governing Body aims to make a positive impact on the school by supporting the Head and the staff in their work to educate young people with autism. Governors are accountable for securing high quality outcomes for learners with SEND, ensuring that pupils are able to make appropriate progress and are kept safe.

Governors visit school regularly and attend relevant meetings and training. The Local Authority provides a programme of governor training which covers all aspects of their role.

Governors' concern for the health and safety of the staff and pupils remains a priority in decision-making.

It is our belief that the Governing Body should support the school and 'embed a culture of inclusion, collaboration and support within education' (SEND Governance Review 2017/18)

There was a short OFSTED inspection in May, 2018 when the school was still found to be Good (Previous full visit December 2014). Inspectors found that 'the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school' and that 'Pupils love their school and attend regularly'. (May 2018)

The school expects to have an Ofsted this new academic year (2023/24) and is preparing to improve on the previous classification.

### Governors' Statutory Role

Durants governing body has four core functions;

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.
4. Ensuring decisions take into account the views and experiences of stakeholders.

(See also the new Governors' Induction Pack, 2022 }

### Durants' Governing Body Structure

There are up to 11 Governors who each have a four year term of office.

The full Governing Body meets once a term as do the two committees: one for School Improvement and Development; and the other for Finance & Premises.

There is a Chair and Vice Chair of the full Governing Body; and a Chair for each of the Committees.

Governor attendance and commitment is high. Since Covid there has been the option of participating in meetings via Teams and this has proved very useful.

We usually have two governor days per year and governors are encouraged to make termly visits and are invited to attend special events.

Governors also participate in interviews for staff and appraisal of the head teacher.

A profile on each of our Governors, a copy of our Register of Business Interests and attendance records can be found on the school website.

### **School Mission statement and Vision**

The Governors have helped the school to develop a clear mission statement and vision. The fundamental ethos promotes a holistic vision, PATH, offering a person-centred curriculum:

- **P**reparing for independent living
- **A**ctively promoting good health
- **T**eaching skills for employment
- **H**elping to develop friendships, relationships and participate in the community.

With a focus on Independent Living; Friendships, Relationships and the Community; Good Health and Employment.

### **School Improvement Plan**

This is prepared by the Head Teacher with support from the school staff and co-operation from the Governors. The Plan sets out comprehensive aims for the year based on school evaluation and Ofsted priorities and identifies key tasks.

It is important for Governors to understand what we want our pupils to have achieved and experienced by the time they leave school.

The Plan is monitored termly by the Governors who ensure that outcomes can be measured.

It currently focuses on 4 key areas : the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; leadership and management.

### **Data Analysis**

Governors review data prepared by staff at termly meetings where the information is questioned and validated. Particular attention is given to pupil progress and the effective use of pupil premium funding. The school received the pupil premium for 105 pupils in 2022/23, which is approx. 56% of the school population.

It is important for Governors to have an awareness of how our data compares with that of other similar schools to ensure that the pupils are achieving at expected or higher levels. There is a Benchmarking tool to assist with this. [schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk](https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk)

### **Policies**

Governors review all relevant policies on a regular basis to ensure that all information is current. There is a full list on the website in 10 different categories.

Policies cover all aspects of health and safety; safeguarding; and staffing issues like absence and attendance, as well as the curriculum and ICT.

Policies recently reviewed ( Summer 2023) include: Equal Opportunities, Child Protection, School Attendance, Reporting and Recording Racist Incidents.

### **Financial Accountability**

Governors regularly review the school's financial statements at the termly Finance & Premises meetings. Expenditure is challenged and ideas put forward for ensuring value for money.

These continue to be particularly difficult times as Durants is based over 3 sites in different parts of the Borough . Split site operation presents greater challenges for ensuring that a realistic budget, sufficient to cover the needs of all sites, is maintained. Governors are mindful of the need to ensure the safety of staff and pupils whatever the pressures.

Durants budget is currently just under £5m and a small deficit is predicted..

### **Achievements in 2022/2023**

These include supporting the Head Teacher and Senior Management with the following:

- Continuing to work with the Local Authority to identify accurate and appropriate funding that ensures safe staffing levels despite efficiency savings and maintains the effective safeguarding of pupils
- Managing the budget to ensure the school remained solvent and within predicted spend.
- Managing the ever increasing pupil numbers by setting up new classrooms and ensuring there are sufficient staff.
- Supporting the school in having achieved the following: NAS Accreditation; Enfield Inclusion Charter Champion School; Sandwell Wellbeing Mental Health Kitemark; Enfield Trauma Informed Practice School (E-TIPSS); being an Asthma Friendly School.
- Supporting and monitoring the developments in the School Improvement Plan including the online reading programme, promoting Positive Behaviour Support, and supporting the SoSafe policy.
- Ensuring that the schools remain safe in all ways (e.g. Asbestos audits carried out in 2023)

### **Governor Challenges for the Future (2023/2024)**

These focus on maintaining high quality provision at both Durants Schools and Winchmore ARP whilst planning for the potential increases in pupil numbers (possibly 226 in 2023/24).

- To prepare for the next Ofsted inspection supporting the school with its organisation and planning with the aim of ensuring that Durants achieves the highest level. This includes participating in a 'Health Check' and challenge for the 3 areas of the curriculum i.e. intent, implementation and impact. Also to evidence that the points raised in the 2018 inspection have been actioned i.e. that procedures are further developed to support the analysis of behavioural incidents, so that timely action can be implemented ; and that all staff provide more opportunities to promote and develop pupils' independence
- To continue to support the plans for the new Curriculum.
- To ensure the appointment of appropriate staff at all levels to manage increasing pupil numbers and the complexities of split sites
- To support the planning of strategic school developments including the development of the 6<sup>th</sup> form studio and 'cottage' for the joint Durants Winchmore provision

- To liaise with the Local Authority to ensure sufficient financial resources for the developing needs of Durants School and supporting the Head Teacher in managing the anticipated deficit budget and the challenges this is already bringing
- To continue to monitor the effective safeguarding of pupils
- To continue to extend and develop collaborative links with other partners
- To support all staff in developing their potential and ensuring their well being
- To encourage and learn from feedback from all stakeholders

The Governing Body continue to demonstrate effective governance in relation to six key features: strategic leadership, accountability, compliance, structures and progress, people management and evaluation. (See the Governance Handbook, March 2019).

The Governors are full of praise for the Head teacher, her Senior Management Team and staff who, through their incredibly hard work and commitment, make this school the welcoming, safe and happy place it is today. Parents are also warmly thanked for their support and commitment as it is they who encourage their children to attend this amazing school.

We look forward to the challenges of the academic year ahead!