

Primary Advantage Federation annual governance statement April 2018-March 2019

Primary Advantage Federation (PAF) vision, schools, and governors

Our eight schools achieve significant benefits for our pupils by working together. We are committed to a shared responsibility for; the provision of the highest-quality education and improving the life chances for all pupils in the community, within and beyond our own schools. We continue to refine our governance structures and processes to ensure that they are effective and efficient. Although annual governance statements are no longer a statutory requirement, they are still considered good practice and we think they are an effective way to communicate succinctly with our community.

Vision

- Every teacher is a great teacher; every school is a great school. We aim to move incrementally towards excellence in all aspects of our work.
- All pupils will make good or better progress and will be properly equipped for the next stage of their schooling.
- Learning environments are of high quality where pupils feel safe and secure, known, valued, and motivated to learn.
- Curriculum provision is bespoke, broadens horizons, and inspires our pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, and responsible citizens.

Our learning community provides growth opportunities for pupils, staff, and families.

Schools

Our federation consists of eight Hackney primary schools:

- De Beauvoir Primary School
- Gainsborough Primary School
- Holy Trinity CE Primary School
- Morningside Primary School
- Springfield Community Primary School
- St John & St James CE Primary School
- St John The Baptist CE Primary School
- St Matthias CE Primary School

Governors

Our 16-person Central Governing Board (CGB) consists of:

- Two parent governors
- One local authority governor
- One staff governor
- One executive principal – ex officio
- Two co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Body
- Nine foundation governors:
 - i. Four Bishop of Stepney nominations
 - ii. One London Diocesan Board for Schools appointee
 - iii. Two Hackney Deanery Synod appointees
 - iv. Two co-opted Governors nominated by other foundation governors and appointed by the CGB

The CGB delegates some functions to a Scrutiny Committee (focused on standards) and to a Business Committee (focused on finances).

Business interests and attendance

The business interests and attendance for CGB members are on the federation website '[our governance](#)' page. For Local Advisory Board (LAB) members they are on each school website. The CGB has met three times (one meeting per term) this year. Meetings have been generally well attended.

Core functions of the Central Governing Board

The CGB has a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and direction;
2. Holding the Executive Principal to account for the educational performance of the federation schools and pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the federation and making sure its money is well spent.

At the 2018 Spring Term meeting, the Governing Board agreed four objectives for development over a two year period.. This document identifies the progress and impact made towards each objective to the end of March 2019.

Objective 1

Improve attendance so that all schools are at least in the top 50%, with all schools working towards being in the top 30% of schools nationally.

Progress and impact

- Leaders and staff in all eight schools work with great determination to improve the attendance of pupils. Governors continue to prioritise pupil attendance because of its impact on children's learning and development. Governors monitor attendance centrally, at each school Board meeting, and through link Board members who visit each school separately. School leaders provide governors with data showing each school's performance against national averages. We also monitor the proportions of pupils regarded as 'persistently absent' with attendance below 85%.
- Headteachers have been asked to help ensure families are challenged and supported to improve pupil attendance. For example, our schools have identified staff (such as a pastoral manager, learning mentor or school home support worker) who monitor attendance and track pupils for whom attendance is becoming a problem. Where necessary, we also buy in extra support from the local authority. Our schools also celebrate good attendance, recognising this through assemblies and certificates. We report individual pupil attendance in school reports to help parents monitor attendance too.
- The impact of this work has resulted in an improvement in attendance in identified schools. Governors are not complacent and have identified those schools where attendance needs to improve in order for our objective to be met. Improving attendance requires daily efforts from the whole school community.

Objective 2

Focus on improving standards in all eight schools

Progress and impact

Our schools are split into three key phases of learning; Early Years (Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), and Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6). Schools carried out standard assessments at the end of each phase as required. Governors reviewed the data for each key phase of learning for the end of the 2017-18 academic year. Each school published their data on their website.

- At the end of the Early Years phase, school performance was in line with both Hackney and national averages.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, the proportions of pupils achieving at expected standards in reading, writing, and maths was above national averages, as is the proportion of pupils achieving above expected standards.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, for the Federation as a whole, the proportion of pupils achieving at expected standards in reading, writing, and maths was 9 percentage points above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving above expected standards in all three subjects was in line with national averages.
- Results of KS2 SATs show that pupils have made strong progress from their KS1 starting points.
- In the three schools where the results in one subject showed a dip in 2018, governors are clear of the actions the schools are taking to improve standards by the end of the 2019 academic year.
- The majority of the schools in the Federation maintain standards which are well above national year-on-year. The Governors continue to monitor these standards, supporting and challenging school leaders to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. Governors greatly appreciate the endeavours of all staff to maintain and further improve these high standards.
- The Teaching School continues to support professional development in order to recruit, develop and retain good staff, despite a challenging context in London.

Objective 3

To review the business functions of the expanded federation and teaching schools to ensure that:

- a. finance and admin teams are trained and supported to fulfil their roles;
- b. all schools are fully compliant with financial procedures; and
- c. the business functions of the federation are efficient and cost effective.

Progress and impact

- Finance and admin teams are trained and supported through ongoing continual professional development and central support.
- The Business and Finance Committee of the Governing Board maintain an overview of each school's financial procedures and is satisfied that all schools are fully compliant with financial procedures.
- Training took place across all eight schools to ensure compliance with the 2018 General Data Protection regulations (GDPR).

- A Federation Finance and Business Director took up post in January 2019. He has started the process of identifying options for cost savings and efficiencies.
- The Schools Financial Value Standards were completed for all schools and budgets were closely monitored to ensure expenditure is effective. The CGB and LABs reviewed the budgets for the previous and new financial years. All schools successfully passed local authority audits. Financial procedures were reviewed by the Local Advisory Boards at each meeting. The wider context was challenging but all PA schools ended in a good financial position.
- Local Advisory Boards scrutinise financial audits. Governors continue to challenge leaders to ensure that the correct financial systems are in place, are robust and cost-effective.

Objective 4

To continue the development of governance systems and structures to ensure the effectiveness of the Central Governing Board, its two Committees, and the eight Local Advisory Boards.

Progress and impact

- Governance continues to be a focus for improvement across all eight schools, as well as centrally in the Federation. After reviewing the required skills, new governors have been appointed to fulfil specific roles. Work continues to ensure the right balance between what is decided by Local Advisory Boards in the schools and by the Central Governing Board. Similarly, the distinctive ethos is maintained between the four church schools and the four other schools, which adds some complexity, but makes us a richer and more diverse community.
- A new Governance Manager has been appointed and will take up his role in June 2019.

Other work completed by the Central Governing Board

Training and development

Governors made use of training offered through Hackney Learning Trust and LDBS. Support was also offered through services such as The Key, Modern Governor, National Governors' Association, and HASGA. Governors were well-represented at the cross-federation training day in January 2019. The theme of this day was 'Sustainability'.

Teaching School

In addition to our eight schools, Primary Advantage also has a central teaching school, which co-ordinates professional training and development for all federation schools, as well as other schools in Hackney, London, and beyond. The teaching school also develops approaches to teaching and learning, the curriculum, and helps to share best practice. Details of the work of the teaching school can be found on the [Primary Advantage website](#). Governors supported the work of the teaching school and received regular reports about its priorities, performance, and impact.

Policies

Governors have reviewed policies in line with the agreed cycle, including: Safeguarding & Child Protection, Sex and Relationships, Collective Worship, Email and Internet Use, Harassment and Bullying and the Complaints Policy.

School development

Governors and LAB members actively contributed to the School Development Plan in schools by attending INSET Days, link visits, learning walks, and meetings with staff. The Governors and Local Advisory Board members who attended the Federation Art Exhibition on the theme of 'Sustainability' were full of admiration for the quality of the children's art-work and for the way in which they had been inspired to represent the theme in a variety of media.



