

Chair of Governors report – annual report & statement of GB performance/impact

19 July 2018

This past academic year has been one of significant progress. Now fully two years into the role, our Executive Head Teacher (EHT) Mr Rayner, has continued to lead a team of dedicated professionals to not only provide a wonderfully safe and calm educational environment for the children, but one that also has achieved significant progress across a wide number of educational indicators. All of this against a backdrop of evermore reduced funding from central government and one of an expanding school – with the final increased intake in September 2018 confirming us as the largest primary school in West Berkshire by some distance, catering for and educating daily some 690 children.

But first let's celebrate the progress made. I am delighted we most certainly now have one 'brand': John Rankin Schools. In my opinion the differentiation between Infants and Juniors has historically led to a lack of integration and interaction between staff and pupils. These Chinese walls have now been very much knocked down and it is plain to see we are a single entity both from the outside and within. The safety and welfare of and for the children has been taken extremely seriously. New perimeter fencing around over half of a 10-acre site, new procedures for locking gates and daytime access, new routines such as the single daytime access Reception office and a number of other important steps have all combined to provide a superbly safe environment. But we as Governors do not rest on our laurels – this continues to be a top priority for us as we look to challenge the EHT and his team to ensure safeguarding is exemplary.

The business of JRS is of course education. In this matter I am delighted to report continued excellent progress across all age groups and Key Stages. It is progression that is seen by the Department for Education and educators alike as the key measure in education in these formative years, rather than pure attainment, and in this regard the JRS children have performed incredibly well across all year groups this past academic year. Equally, the amount and variety of extra-curricular activities continues to grow, across the 2-11 age range, cementing JRS as a wonderful community-oriented school for our children.

As documented in my last report to Governors in June this year, I am pleased our Governing Board continues to be engaged with the School at a number of different levels. From positive and productive Committee meetings to Learning Walks, plus many ongoing meetings in which we provide support, guidance and relevant challenge, the Board is functioning well. For the record, we remain at a healthy 11 out of 12 Governors recommended for a primary school and I am hopeful of an excellent appointment being made to fill our complement in September. I thank you for all continued dedication and time given up from your busy lives in your voluntary roles.

It is indeed our duty as Governors to challenge Mr Rayner and his team. During a complex and evolving period over the past 2-3 years I am confident this challenge has been at the right level and correctly focused. It is equally our responsibility to work collaboratively and positively with the senior executive team. Again, I believe our balance to be correct. Our role and capacity is strategic oversight, not operational, and it is our longer-term vision for JRS that we strive to achieve. We are

undoubtedly a 'Good' school, as Ofsted ratings confirm, but our real challenge is to strive for 'Outstanding'. To this end we will continue to strive for improvements across the 2-11 age provision wherever possible.

My final comments are about individuals. We sadly say goodbye to our longest-serving member of staff and Infants Head of School, Mrs Wheable. After some 23 years working at the school, having been promoted through the ranks, Mrs Wheable is retiring and leaves the school in a very strong position. Her tireless dedication, rapport with colleagues and unswerving focus on helping children learn will be sorely missed. Happy retirement to you!

I must also thank each and every Teacher, HLTA, TA, Administration and all support staff – your dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm was very much brought home to the Governing Board just a month ago during our Governors' Day at school when we witnessed at first-hand what a rich environment and establishment we have of which should rightly be proud. To Mr Rayner I extend a significant congratulations and vote of confidence. It really shouldn't be under-estimated or under-valued the impact he has had on JRS. As a Governing Board it is our duty to remain challenging and analytical, but equally we cannot ignore the incredibly positive 'Felix Factor' you have brought to our school and community.