



Governing Board Annual Report

Academic Year 2020/21

After the upheaval of the last academic year, 2020/21 has been just as testing for schools across the country. At John Rankin we have been blessed with an exceptional Executive Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team who have worked tirelessly to provide as smooth and safe an experience for our children as has been possible during the past few months. The work of all staff has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated this past year and on behalf of the Governing Board I would like to take the opportunity to express our deep gratitude for all that everyone has done.

As a community, JRS has continued to pull together and I know that the ongoing parental and carer support received by school during this prolonged difficult period has been much appreciated.

Yet despite the challenges of the past year, there is much to be celebrated about John Rankin Schools. Our reputation continues to be very good and evidence of this is the high number of places we have offered to Reception aged children from September 2021, with the vast majority choosing John Rankin as their number one choice.

During most of the Spring Term, school provided Home Learning across all year groups for the first time and this was a great success. Parental feedback was very positive around the mixture of live sessions and recorded lessons offered and on again on behalf of all governors I would like to congratulate all teachers on their fantastic efforts during those long weeks at the start of the year.

Of course for the children of critical workers, school remained open to our Rankin Rangers and governors are very aware of how everybody pulled together to support these children, with special mention to TAs who in the words of Mr Rayner ‘really stood up to be counted’.

Since returning to school, as a Governing Board we have been extremely pleased to see attendance rates so high, teaching staff so positive and overall to understand how the children have taken it all in their stride and enjoyed being in school once again.

Parents’ evenings were also adapted to take place online and online learning has now been incorporated into homework with children able to access learning platforms at home to support their school learning. As the adage goes, ‘necessity is the mother of invention’, and in this regard the Covid crisis has shaped, and in some ways improved, the way that our children have opportunity to learn.

Once again, staffing is extremely stable with no teaching staff leaving except for two TAs - Mrs Ritchie who retired this year – and Mrs Mason. We also sadly say a very fond farewell to Karen Babbage who has given so much to JRS over the years in both her capacity as a valued member of the School Business Team and previously as a governor herself as well. Thank you, Karen, and enjoy your travel plans! We welcome two new teachers from September; Miss Atkins and Miss Lancaster. Their addition to the teaching team will enable Miss Bradley and Mrs Murphy to focus solely on the catch-up plan over the next academic year; to target and give extra support to children for whom the disruption to normal school life was especially difficult.

The Year 6 children have been extremely lucky to have been able to get away to Rhos in North Wales for their residential trip. The JRS team worked extremely hard to make this happen and in the end it was an amazing experience for all our Year 6 children, made even more special given the unsettled time they have all had over the past 16 months.

Governing Board activity, albeit completely via remote meetings, has continued to focus on our core areas of school oversight– its ethos, its finances and its educational offering. Pleasingly our board has remained very stable with a solid group of experienced and committed governors. We welcomed a new Parent Governor, Sarah Ruddock, at the end of March along with a new co-opted Governor, Rebecca Brophy, who used to be schools’ Operations Manager. I welcome both formally here and look forward to working with you over the next year.

I am very pleased to report that our financial situation remains extremely favourable due to strong financial management. We closed off last year’s budget with a significant variance and have agreed and started into this financial year with a budget that includes significant spend across staff, resources and premises. We are in a very good position to help support our children to flourish at JRS. As I mentioned in my previous report, as Chair I am determined to make sure that our resources are used in the best possible way and that money is well spent to

ensure that all children at JRS have the quality of education and overall experience of primary school that they deserve.

Once again there have been no SATS at either KS1 or KS2 this year but monitoring of children's attainment and progress across all year groups has continued to be a top priority for governors. Regular analysis of data at FGB as well as dedicated Teaching & Learning Committee meetings enable governors to understand the trends and address any concerns in a timely manner. We very much hope to be able to start coming into school again during the Autumn Term, specifically with a Learning Walk where we will see what we read about on paper brought to life once again.

Looking forward to September, the focus for us as a Governing Board is to oversee the strategy of ensuring all children catch up any lost learning. Equally as importantly we will continue to keep track of our planned spend and the impact that has on the quality of teaching and learning.

In summary this has been another school year of huge challenges but the teamwork, co-ordination, organisation, flexibility and adaptability shown by everyone within the JRS community has made it a success nonetheless.

Thank you to you all.

Tessa Roots

Chair of Governors, July 2021