



# **Governing Board Annual Report Academic Year 2019/20**

To say that recent weeks have been unprecedented is no understatement. Covid 19 has changed all of our lives. We have all been faced with situations and challenges that we simply could not have imagined at the beginning of the year. For schools, this has meant a closure to the majority of children since 23<sup>rd</sup> March and no SATS tests have been taken at either KS1 or KS2 this summer at JRS.

As with schools across the country, this closure has meant that Mr Rayner and the JRS team have had to dig deeper than ever; firstly to understand the huge amount of DfE guidance that has been produced in response to the pandemic and, secondly, to react very quickly to it. This has been done admirably, with school adopting a pragmatic and agile approach to the situation. This work has been underpinned by an overarching desire to provide the best possible environment within school for those children still able to attend. Initially this was for children of keyworkers and some of our more vulnerable children, but from June 1<sup>st</sup> we welcomed back children from our Reception year, Year 1 and Year 6. On behalf of the Governing Board I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire JRS team for making this happen. It has been a great team effort and one of which everyone involved should be very proud. As a community, JRS has pulled together like never before and I know that the parental and carer support received by the school during this very difficult period has been much appreciated.

Despite all of the upheaval since March, there is still a lot to celebrate and be proud of over the past academic year. The school's reputation continues to be strong and we have featured in a number of very positive articles in the Newbury Weekly News. Consequently, word of mouth continues to spread across the community. As evidence of the school's continued positive standing, places in Reception from September are now full. It is vital to us as a school to know that people are choosing JRS for their children's education.

Pleasingly, staffing has been very stable this year. One phase leader, Miss Marsh, is leaving us to be able to work closer to home and we wish her all the best - she will be greatly missed. Thanks to our talented staff, her leadership role and consequent staff movements to accommodate this position have been filled 'in house' after a rigorous selection process. In some cases these roles have been filled with teachers joining the school where they did their training. Additionally, two new leadership roles created for the coming year will add to school capacity; a temporary SENDco and a Sport and Wellbeing Lead.

Behind the scenes, Governing Board activity has obviously had to continue. This included the closing of last year's budget and the agreement of a new budget for this financial year. The difficult financial position the school found itself in a few years ago has been reversed by Mr Rayner's school business team - JRS ended the financial year with a significant variance. One of the three core functions of the Governing Board is to oversee the financial performance of the school and to ensure that its money is well spent. As Chair of Governors, I am determined to make sure that this variance is used in the best possible way to ensure that all children at JRS have the quality of education and overall experience of primary school that they deserve.

Prior to March, our Governing Board continued to engage with school at a number of different levels. In addition to its financial responsibilities, The Governing Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school and for holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and all its pupils. From positive and productive Committee meetings to Learning Walks and enjoyable school lunches, the Board continues to function well, offering a combination of support and challenge to Mr Rayner and his team. As Governors, we developed and agreed a three year Strategic Development Plan last October. It reflects our ambition

and determination to become an exceptional school and will be the benchmark for important decision-making over the next school year.

There have been a few movements within our Governing Board this past year. Firstly, our Chair for the past three years, Dr Adrian Garcia-Sierra, stepped down in June and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all of the time and energy he gave to leading Governors and for playing an important role in the progression of the school. We welcomed Katie Kearney as a Parent Governor in February and, more recently, Chris Adams, Head of Sixth Form at Kennet School, to our already strong and solid mix of experience and skills on the Governing Board. We are saying goodbye to our other Parent Governor, Natalie Ivey, and would like to thank her for her contribution over the year. This departure means we will be holding another Parent Governor election in the autumn term. I am very grateful to all of our current Governors for their continued dedication and for their time given up from their busy lives in this voluntary role.

As I write, the Government's objective is to have all children back in school from September. JRS is now planning for this return and looking forward to getting back to a new routine after the summer holidays. There will be many challenges over the next few school year so our primary focus as a Governing Board will be to help guide and support school towards ever improving standards. I am confident that with the current leadership and team in place we can look forward to another very successful year at JRS.

Finally, I want to thank again Mr Rayner and every Teacher, HLTA, TA, administration staff member, site staff and all support staff at JRS - your dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm create a fantastic school of which I am very proud to be Chair of Governors.

Tessa Roots  
Chair of Governors