

**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of
Cold Norton Primary School
July 2023**

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Cold Norton Primary School Governing Body are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance arrangements

The Governing Body of Cold Norton Primary School as of July 2023 is made up of 1 Local Authority governor, 4 Co-opted Governors, 3 elected Parent Governors and 2 Staff Governors (including the Headteacher). Co-opted Governors are appointed by the Governing Body. These are people who, in the opinion of the governing body, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

On our Governing Body, the Co-opted Governors are members of the local community and/or whose children have attended Cold Norton Primary. During this academic year, we thanked Mrs Stone for her long service to both the school and the Governing Body and Mrs Kirkman, who chose to stand down following her term in office. During the summer term a parent election was held and we welcomed Mr Yates and Mr Nicoll to the governing body.

The full Governing Body meets once each term, and we also have two committees to consider different aspects of the school in detail. At Cold Norton Primary School we have a Finance Committee, which focuses on finance, premises and some personnel matters and a Curriculum Committee. We also have committees that meet if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

<p>Attendance record of governors</p>	<p>The register of who attends meetings is available online. Our FGB meetings take place on site. In order to ensure that meetings are quorate (the legal number of governors required to make a legal decisions), we do have meetings on Microsoft Teams.</p>
<p>The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing body</p>	<p>This academic year has once again proven a challenge for all those involved in education. Attendance across the country continues to be below pre-pandemic levels and the cost of living crisis has hit small school like ours more than most.</p> <p>The Finance Committee has continued to keep an eye on the school's finances, and whilst we ended the financial year in the black, we are facing a huge challenge to balance the books in the very near future. The Finance Committee looks at the maintenance and development of the school premises, and makes decisions about how the school should use the budget. Early in the summer term, the Finance Committee approved the 2023/2024 budget plan for the school: the school is no longer in a positive position financially – there are a number of reasons for this - rising costs for everything has not helped and staffing costs, in particular, continue to need close monitoring. Universal Free School Meals continues to place a burden on the school with particular challenges regarding the provision and delivering of the meals. The Finance Committee has noted that whilst the budget plan has been agreed, there are continuous variables particularly to personnel costs that are monitored regularly.</p> <p>We have seen initial works take place to install a heat pump and solar panels in order to meet Essex's commitment to sustainability, funding for which has come from the county's sustainability fund.</p> <p>The Curriculum Committee continued to look at pupil achievement and progress and was pleased with the KS2 SATS results. Absence continues to be a national concern as the cost of living crisis means that families make the most of cheaper holidays during term. Focus has been on updating curriculum plans and this is ongoing.</p>

	<p>The Governing Body continues to be proud of the resilience shown by the staff and families at Cold Norton Primary School.</p> <p>Safeguarding continues to be given high priority for governors and the Nominated Governor for Safeguarding, Mrs McNally continued to meet with the Headteacher regularly and reported to governors at the Curriculum Meetings.</p> <p>One of the roles for the governors is reviewing and agreeing school policies, and this year we have considered a number of key policies. The governors continue to monitor attendance and targets are set yearly.</p> <p>Governors visited the school when able to and spoke to children and staff. Governors report what they have seen to the relevant committees. The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors have maintained contact throughout the year by visiting on site and meeting the Headteacher.</p> <p>During 2021 / 2022 the Chair of Governors met with the Chair of a local Academy with a view to formally looking into joining an academy. This academic year the Academisation Committee met with the same CEO to discuss what the pros / cons would be for a school like ours. We have also looked into other options available, including entering some kind of Federation Agreement with another local primary school. We are still exploring this, however whilst the school's finances are not where they should be, we did not think it appropriate to continue these conversations during academic year 2022/2023.</p> <p>Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents – you can ask at the school office if you would like to see any of the minutes of our meetings.</p>
<p>Future plans for the governors</p>	<p>The governors are very aware of the ever changing educational landscape both locally and nationally. Finances for the school are a real concern and we are very aware that the school building is looking tired and requires some maintenance.</p> <p>A small school like Cold Norton will find it increasingly difficult not to be part of a bigger consortium of schools. We currently work with local Dengie schools with regards to monitoring teaching and learning and this would appear to be</p>

	<p>the model for school improvement in the future. Therefore, governors will continue this academic year to explore the options available to the school in order to continue providing an outstanding education to its pupils but mindful of the financial position of the school.</p>
<p>How you can contact the governing body</p>	<p>We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors, Gloria Gold , via the school office.</p> <p>You can see the full list of governors; their committee membership and positions of responsibility; their attendance at meetings and their ‘conflict of interests’ all on the Governors’ page of the school website.</p>