

Governors annual impact statement 2021/22

'Planting the seeds, growing the future.'

Our school is dedicated to providing the best possible education in a stimulating and safe environment. Our curriculum vision has the development of English, Maths, Science and Computing at its core.

Our three core functions as a Governing Body are:

1. Setting the strategic direction of the school
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for its educational performance
3. Ensuring financial resources are well spent

As a school, like thousands of educational establishments across the world, the last 12 months have continued to challenge us all. Together we have been emerging from the pandemic with the education standards and quality, along with the emotional and mental health and wellbeing of our amazing pupils, at the forefront.

The workload, wellbeing and personal development of our staff across the board has been a focus as unprecedented demands have been placed on all staff members as the balance of the hybrid model of remote learning and school-based learning continued.

Despite high levels of Covid in our region resulting in increased absences of both staff and pupils, the Governing Board, leadership team and all staff worked together to ensure learning was of the same high standard and all children progressed and were ready for the next stage of their educational journey.

As a school we understood anxieties were felt by many pupils as they returned to the classroom after lockdowns, yet remained under restrictions such as not being able to mix in full year groups or go on school trips as in pre-pandemic years. Children, along with their parents and carers, were supported with our 'recovery programme' for both learning and their educational and mental health and well being.

The 'catch-up programme' was essential for many children as they transitioned back into the classrooms after such a long period at home. Children who struggled to meet their targets were identified quickly on the return to school and intervention sessions at lunchtimes and after school were set up.

Through Pupil Voice children said they had enjoyed the return to the classroom and especially liked how the learning was delivered. As a school we understood all families had had different experiences during lockdown and many had experienced emotional trauma, grief, anxiety and varying losses - for this reason children needed to be reunited with their friends and learn some basic skills again in the case of

younger children especially. Socialisation was contained to parents and siblings for so long, in many cases school was an unfamiliar place. However staff and parents saw smiles return almost immediately and seeing children walk back through those gates with confidence was a proud moment for all.

The “Ready to Proceed” programme developed by the leadership was equally important as many children had completed and understood all work during lockdowns and were ready to proceed with the appropriate stage of the curriculum. These children were also identified and appropriate work set.

Our Governing Board focused on the quality of the education and the implementation during home learning, as they would when learning was solely classroom based.

As our school had an established i-pad project in place in Key Stage 2, every child already had their own device which they were familiar with for homework. This allowed the transition to home learning and any hybrid learning seamless. Governors helped to identify needs such as younger children needing to hear their teacher’s voice and see their face and changes were made to ensure this could happen on a daily basis.

Speaking of the recovery curriculum, the external school advisor said it “encouraged pupils to re-engage socially, both with each other and across the wider community.” and “provided a safe forum for pupils to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas.”

The recovery curriculum successfully helped pupils to re-engage into the school community, re-connecting with each other and with school life and has helped pupils to express their feelings through discussion, writing and drawing.

Communication has been more important than ever before and the frequency and timing of that communication was key during the pandemic. We were the first primary school in Telford to communicate about the possible school closure during the first lockdown as we recognised the time the families needed to prepare and every hour could make a difference (we understand it wasn’t what any parents wanted to hear but it was important to communicate that as early as possible.)

This communication continued via social media, e-newsletters, letters and telephone calls throughout. Often this communication is to reassure, support and signpost parents and carers to other services they may need as we journey through together.

The school website and the new app are both used to illustrate the high priority the school places on the teaching of reading. In the Reading curriculum section, there is now a section on The Love of Reading. Alongside text, photographs are used to exemplify what the school does to engage pupils in reading. For example, dressing up as book characters for World Book Day. There is also a very helpful section

where staff share their favourite book, reading them alongside the text so that pupils can hear as well as follow the written text on the screen. The website provides information on how parents can help their child/ren develop a love of reading whilst at home. This includes recommended book lists for different year groups and lists of the age-appropriate sounds that pupils will learn in their phonics lessons. At Lawley Primary School the Governors and staff want all pupils to develop a love of reading. The lowest 20% of readers across the school receive additional daily support to improve their phonics, vocabulary, communication, fluency and accuracy.

Governors give their full support and praise to the leaders who have carefully researched ways to enhance their curriculum offer through, for instance, utilising the specialisms from local secondary schools. Pupils also take part in regional competitions which give them opportunities to use and apply the subject specialist knowledge and skills they have mastered. The Year 5 pupils, for example, have previously been involved in a STEM Scifest project which involved construction engineering, structural engineering and aerospace engineering. Engaging in these activities helps their learning to become purposeful and meaningful and the pupils love it!

School life has had to include relentless adaptations during Covid-19 - however the Governing Board has supported the headteacher and the leadership team to maintain a focus on school improvement throughout the academic year.

The mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils has been at the forefront with our parent support team expanding in recent months to cope with the demand. This team has supported parents whose children are suffering from anxiety, preparing for the transition to secondary school, speech and language and family problems.

Of course the same goes for staff - they have all had their own anxieties and difficulties during the pandemic and Governors have supported the headteacher to support the school-wide team. Governors have expressed their support for the need to support staff and also to monitor the workload at all stages.

The external school advisor said: "Relationships between staff and pupils and peer to peer are very positive. The pupils clearly love being at their school. They say that they are looked after well by teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors."

The external school advisor reported: "The pupils can speak eloquently about the strategies they use to help them maintain positive mental health. These include making sure they get regular exercise, including spending time outdoors and socialising with friends. This has been further developed by setting the pupils the challenge of undertaking '30 days of wildness'. This involved completing 30 acts which involve physical activity, exploration and investigation."

The school is proud of their pupils who are enthusiastic about so many subjects, issues and the community and world around them.

The Children's Safeguarding Board were pleased to recommence their meetings at the start of the Spring term. The adult leaders made a recruitment video and pupils applied for a place on the Board. As part of the process the pupils explained why they would like to be involved and how they could develop the role of the Board in the school. The Headteacher compiled an impact driven report to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Children's Safeguarding Board. This involved recording a video to show the positive impact of the new traffic crossing which the Board had planned, initiated and implemented. This led to the school being awarded a Picture News Impact Award. Other work completed by the school Parliament and Eco Group included overseeing the construction of a new outdoor gym, which the pupils are now very much enjoying! They are currently working on sourcing non-plastic water bottles for pupils to use. They are a very proactive group!

The latest group to form is the new Eco-Committee (supported with an eco-after school club) which is working to change the future for all. They have already written to the Governing Board to ask for their ideas to be considered and the Governors have now included the Eco-Committee on the agenda at each meeting, have replied to the committee to confirm their commitment and are pleased to see some of the ideas already being put into action including the youngest children growing some produce for the school kitchen to use in the school meals.

The Governors have ensured the experience of "awe and wonder" has returned post pandemic with experiences to extend the pupils' horizons re-introduced.

The pupils' collaborative and team building skills have been demonstrated with the return of much-enjoyed residential visits. These are very important memory making, skills and personal development trips and after two years of missed residentials, staff and pupils are pleased to see them return.

PSHE has never been so important than now as pupils develop in the "new norm" and consider the historic period they have been through. The school has invested in a new scheme of work to cover the subject and ensures it progresses through the year groups.

It also includes areas such as economic wellbeing and citizenship, integrating well with the pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, and their understanding of British values.

The sporting achievements of pupils inside and outside of school have been celebrated year on year and despite having such a long period without competitions, our pupils have returned with a bang!

Girls and boys football teams have reached final stages in regional school competitions bringing home the silverware, whilst competitions have returned including dodgeball, cricket and hockey.

Outside of school talented sports players in dance, BMX, skiing, martial arts and so much more have returned to their chosen sports and continue to excel.

Governors' meetings have remained on-line but the presence of the Governors has never been so important. The chair of Governors wrote to parents throughout the pandemic to update them on the current situation and offer support and to ensure they realised the school remained open and all staff were available for support.

Investment in the school has continued throughout the last few years and areas of the school were improved and opportunities taken when fewer pupils were in school. New LED lighting has been installed; new outdoor areas including the new gym; a new area for reception children; a new visitor signing in system; new furniture and a new projector screen to enhance the learning experience in the hall is planned.

The quality of education; leadership and management; behaviour and attitudes and personal development has remained as key focus areas for the Governors and the leadership team.

Governors have continued to develop their learning and skills through virtual conferences and courses.

This included an Equality and Diversity presentation to ensure our school was meeting and exceeding all standards for children who have English as an additional language; tackling racism and promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. At Lawley we will eliminate discrimination and promote equality - not just in our school but across our community.

Other courses included a Safeguarding conference; Child Protection training; Prevent training and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Health and Safety walks were carried out by appropriate Governors which were essential as guidance and Risk Assessments changed so rapidly throughout the last two years.

SATS returned for the first time in two years and the children were excellent throughout the week and worked hard to prepare for them. We are sure the results will reflect their hard work of the Year 6 team and all of the pupils after a very difficult two years.

Finally we must credit the most recent school community effort and the collaboration of the wider community in raising money for a pupil who is undergoing treatment.

The parents, staff and children have pulled together in the hardest of times to raise much needed funds for our young pupil. We know her family are extremely grateful of the fundraising and the support everyone at Lawley Primary School and the wider community has offered. The Governors gave their full support for a school fundraising campaign to take place and the Chair of Governors was able to support the family with media coverage to raise awareness of their campaign.

The Governing Board wishes to thank our amazing, resilient, talented pupils, along with all members of staff and all parents for their support over the last 12 months.

Together we are looking forward to a 'calmer' 12 months and we look forward to welcoming our new Reception children in September and wish our current Year 6 pupils good luck for the next chapter of their journey.