



Applegarth School Governing Body Annual Governance Statement 2021/22



Introduction

Welcome to our annual governance statement 2021/22. We intend to provide one of these on an annual basis going forward, so that parents, carers and others in the community can see how we have been working over the last school year, what issues we have focussed on and how we have helped to ensure the continued improvement of the school.

Information about the governing body, its members (including their terms of office) and their attendance can be found on the school website at www.applegarth.n-yorks.sch.uk/our-school/governing-body/ and copies of our monthly meeting minutes are available to view through the school office.

About the governing body

The governing body has three core functions:

- To oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent;
- To hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

We meet six times a year to rigorously review the school's progress in meeting its aims and vision. We comprise twelve governors who represent parents, the wider community and staff. Each governor also has a 'link role'; normally a subject area or issue delegated to one or two governors to monitor throughout the year (see "Monitoring activity") below.

We help to set priorities for the school, in conjunction with the senior leadership team. These are formed by us doing various things including: looking carefully at various data collected in and out of school, monitoring the curriculum and seeking external audit/opinion.

Our priorities for 2021/22 were, in the main, set by our review of school data (internal testing and monitoring plus previous years' external results), our need to ensure proper use of things like our Pupil Premium funding and our ongoing responsibility to ensure the safety of all pupils. Having developed a refreshed Vision and Strategy in July 2021, we have also been keen to ensure that progress is being made against our vision for the school and its pupils over the next three to five years.

The governing board's focus during 2021/22

Below are some of our key areas of focus over the last year, some of which continue to be monitored in 2022/23.

Impact of Covid-19

During this exceptionally difficult period, our primary focus has been on ensuring the continued wellbeing and safety of our pupils (and their families) and all school staff. We have done a large number of things including:

- Ensuring that suitable risk assessments have been put in place by the leadership team to support safe return of pupils and staff to school;
- Monitoring that appropriate arrangements were put in place during lockdowns for more vulnerable pupils and their families;
- Seeking an update from the Headteacher at each board meeting on staff and pupil wellbeing. This led to additional wellbeing training being provided for staff;
- Ensuring the school provided for access to learning for all families, including making arrangements for access to computers or web access for more vulnerable or disadvantaged learners;
- Reviewing engagement with online learning across the school;
- Considering, with the leadership team, how to ensure an effective return to school for all pupils and how to ensure pupils are supported to 'catch up'. This included agreeing use of the government's Covid 'catch-up premium' for targeted interventions ([see link to Catch Up Strategy document](#)).
- Regularly checking in with our link staff members, to offer support and to thank them for their continued hard work.

We will continue to monitor the impact of the Covid catch-up funding on learning outcomes across the school.

<https://www.applegarth.n-yorks.sch.uk/key-information/catch-up-premium/>

Safeguarding – Safeguarding and the need to support our most vulnerable pupils has been paramount and the school, through the DSL, the safeguarding team and all staff, has provided early help to ensure, as far as we are able, all pupils had equal access to learning, and in the interests of the children has gone beyond what it would be obliged to do. The school has continued to invest in membership of the Safeguarding Network which has included KCSIE 2022 training for the Governors and staff, . We have also benefitted from NSPCC safeguarding training, including Keeping Children Safe Online. All staff have also undertaken Sexual Harassment Training. A classroom management system has been put in place to further support Online Safety during taught computing and ICT sessions. We have seen in action the robust systems of monitoring and recording safeguarding matters and the governing body is confident the school is providing an environment that is safe for children, one in which they are well cared for and are able to learn and flourish.

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School improvement – notwithstanding the difficulties presented by the pandemic, governors have been keen to ensure that the school continues to improve on pupil outcomes and that a broad and balanced curriculum is provided. The governing body has a highly constructive relationship with the staff and senior leadership team in our role as 'critical friends' to the school and we are mutually focussed on ensuring the best education for all.

Over this year, we have been particularly keen to ensure continued improvement to outcomes across the school for phonics, reading writing and maths and that the gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged learners are narrowed. This was comprehensively achieved with some of the strongest progress and outcomes the school has ever achieved.

<https://www.applegarth.n-yorks.sch.uk/key-information/school-performance/>

The recently-implemented Positive Behaviour Policy has had a significant impact on serious incidents. Over this academic year, we saw a reduction by 63 incidents when compared with the same time the previous year.

Improvement to pupil outcomes for vulnerable or disadvantaged children. We have this year introduced a governor with responsibility for Special Educational Needs and examining how the school supports SEN pupils. This will strengthen our understanding of this area and monitoring will be reported back to the full governing body. [Our three-year Pupil Premium Strategy was finalised prior to the first lockdown.](#) This sets out ambitious targets – agreed jointly with the senior leadership team – for closing the gap in attainment between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium pupils. governors enhancing understanding of data; focus on phonics, reading, writing and maths.. Progress for disadvantaged and SEND learners at the end of Key Stage Two was excellent.

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Effective use of resources. We have ensured that the school maintains a balanced budget, while also investing in areas such as the outdoor provision for children in Reception. We are supported by a school bursar (from NYCC) who has helped the governors to forecast our budget over the next three years and to make informed decisions. We have undertaken the Schools Financial Value Standard to ensure that we, as governors, are confident that we have the requisite knowledge and skills around finance matters to be able to govern effectively. As part of our forward financial planning, we have requested from the local authority that our Pupil Access Number (PAN) in Reception be reduced to 30 pupils from September 2023. We have also engaged with the local authority on developing nursery provision from September 2023, which will provide an additional source of income for the school.

Committees

Delegating aspects of our governance responsibilities to committees enables the governing board to remain strategically focussed on the agreed key areas of school development and work in an efficient way. It is decided which governors will join each committee by analysing governors' skills and experiences through a skills audit and assigning committee membership accordingly. Committee membership and the committee structure is reviewed at the beginning of each academic year.

We currently have the following committees in place:

Committee	Overview of work this year	Impact of the committee
Performance Management	Annual and mid-year performance reviews for the Headteacher have taken place in the 2021/22 school year.	Objectives were set for the Headteacher for 2021/22 which also fed into the strategic plans

		for the governing body and the school.
Complaints	An updated complaints procedure is in place. New governors have joined the committee and further training is in process for their role.	Continuity of knowledge has been retained on the committee this last year and following a comprehensive review of the complaints policy, the governing body is well placed to deal with complaints robustly.
Pupil Discipline	This committee convenes only when required and has not been called this year.	n/a
Staff Dismissal/ Staff Dismissal Appeals	This committee convenes only when required and has not been called this year.	n/a

Monitoring activity

One of the key functions of the governing board is to undertake strategic monitoring activity, the purpose of which is to triangulate information shared with governors by the senior leadership team. The governing board undertakes a wide range of monitoring activities, including:

- Monitoring visits to the school to meet with subject leaders to discuss aspects of the curriculum and where the subject sits in SDP.
- Understanding external reports and building this into monitoring.
- Pupil surveys.
- Pupil conferencing.
- Staff and parent surveys.
- Inviting staff members to governing board and committee meetings to report on key areas.

The table below gives an overview of some of the governor monitoring activity during this academic year:

Monitoring activity	Reason for monitoring activity	Impact of monitoring activity
Phonics and Early Reading	To review the impact of changes to phonics teaching in the school and children are progressing towards becoming confident and capable early readers.	Governor reassurance around the impact of phonics teaching due to a greater than 5% increase in the pass rate for Year 1 phonics.. Teachers work to identify children who would benefit from intervention sessions.

Early Years	To understand how the school has prepared for implementation of the new Early Years framework.	Reassurance was obtained around plans put in place to ensure the requirements of the framework are being met.
Reading and Writing	To monitor the progress of reading and writing throughout the school and to ensure impact of new strategies is monitored closely.	Greater understanding of the writing focus on the three Cs (collect, connect and create) and the use of writing walls in classrooms. Increased awareness of the areas which would benefit from further teacher training around writing practice. Monitoring also deepened understanding of the benefits of the Collins E-Book scheme and how additional decodable books will be introduced to complement this.
Pupil Premium and Looked After Children	To monitor the use of Pupil Premium funding, in-line with Applegarth's three-year Pupil Premium Strategy; and to discuss provision for looked after children.	Ensured that funding is being used in-line with our own strategy and best available evidence. Agreed achieved milestones for 2020/21 and intended impacts for 2021/22. Received assurance on the school's extensive efforts to ensure children in receipt of the Pupil Premium were able to access learning at home or school during lockdown periods.
Safeguarding	<p>Initial Introductory visit in January to review policies, records (CPOMS), vulnerable learners</p> <p>Visit March for SCR audit</p>	<p>New Safeguarding governor gained a deeper understanding of the processes and system in place. Processes are in place that ensure 'live' reporting of attendance or concerns. Staff have received Early Help training; training in appropriate physical restraint; invite catering and cleaning staff to join in with the safeguarding training; and adopt a safer recruitment and Harassment policy. Restorative Practice and de-escalation training has been delivered and is working well. There was an opportunity to include more on the training spreadsheet; audit personal files; and return the safeguarding team meetings to fortnightly. Information is stored securely and confidentially.</p> <p>Safeguarding posters and information for visitors is clearly displayed and up-to-date. Safeguarding team information displayed in pupil cloakrooms, at child height.</p>

		Signing in procedures have been reviewed and improved. Information in Staff Room being revamped and extended with fob locked doors being instated in key areas of vulnerability to improve site security.
SEN	To review the impact of developments in policy and practice in school and monitor progress for SEN pupils	<u>SENCo has completed NASENCo qualification and disseminated latest SEN and Ofsted updates to staff.</u> <u>QFT folder now in Sharepoint for all staff</u> <u>As a result of feedback Pupil handover transitions will be enhanced for 2022</u> <u>IPM - new target record sheet, allowing for continuous updating by all teachers.</u> <u>SEN File - containing key information in each classroom</u> <u>Regular SEN dropins taking place allowing dialogue with pupil and teacher.</u> <u>Monitoring of data demonstrated that SEN pupils are making good progress in all areas.</u>
PSHE	To gain an understanding of the new statutory guidance for PSHE & RSE and implementation of the school's curriculum in this area.	

Pupil voice

Listening to the views of the pupils who attend the school is an important aspect of the work of the governing board and something we hope to be able to do more of as we come out of the pandemic. We sought the views of a cross-section of pupils to help us to develop our vision, values and strategy. The pupils engaged were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences at the school and the enrichment activities they are able to undertake, which they felt give them many wonderful memories to take away on leaving. We also reviewed the Applegarth pupil response to the wider Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey, undertaken via NYCC. **In the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Section 85% (74%) of pupils responded that they worry about at least one of the issues listed on 'most days'.** This has been the driver for developments to the school behaviour policy and implementation of new Jigsaw scheme.

Engagement with parents and the community

Listening to the views of parents and the school community is also an important aspect of the work of the governing board. As part of our exercise to develop a clear vision, values and strategy for the school, we sought to engage with parents/carers and a wide cross-section of the local community, to

get views on the school. This provided very positive feedback about how well the school is run and the perception of Applegarth pupils. There was some feedback to suggest that further engagement would be welcomed with particular stakeholders in the community, to build stronger links between the community and the school. We will be exploring how we can develop these links further and have ensured that our new vision incorporates a wish for our pupils to understand their place in their community and to be good citizens.

The parent/carer survey that we undertook again provided some fantastic feedback. In particular, it identified that the overwhelming strength of the school, as parents see it, is our wonderful group of staff and through our strategy we will continue to ensure that all staff are supported and developed to flourish at the school.

“We are really pleased with the school. The teachers are approachable and work so hard to make learning interesting and fun.”

“In spite of all the upheaval and uncertainty this year, my child has thrived and loves school, which is a testimony to the hard work, kindness and dedication of the staff. Thank you!”

“We think the school has done an amazing job to support our family over a difficult 18 months.”

Governor training and recruitment

The governing board takes their responsibility to stay up-to-date seriously and places high importance on this, including undergoing any necessary training. The table below shows all of the various training and CPD the governors and governing board has undertaken during the last academic year.

Training or CPD undertaken	Impact of the training or CPD
Complaints training	Developed the ability of committee members to deal effectively with complaints. Enabled a review of our complaints policy, leading to revisions
Introduction to Governance	Induction training for our new governors, providing an overview of key roles and responsibilities.
Safeguarding Level 1	Ensured governors have a solid understanding of their role in relation to safeguarding.
NGA Leading Governance	Applegarth’s Chair and Vice-Chair took part in the National Governance Association’s year-long Leading Governance programme, which developed their leadership skills and networks; and contributed to effective and sustainable governance at our school.

There are a number of other courses and training undertaken by governors as part of their professional roles (e.g. teaching) which help to enhance the training undertaken as a governor. Applegarth governors are also part of the Swaledale Alliance network of governors, which provides opportunity to attend network meetings a couple of times per year. We also ensure regular

attendance to the NYCC School Improvement Network meetings, to maintain our knowledge of developments in education.

Governing board priority areas for this academic year

At the end of the summer term, the governing body undertook a detailed exercise to gather the views of parents, carers, pupils, staff and community stakeholders about the strengths of the school, areas for improvement and what kind of school it should be in three years' time. This helped to inform the development of our school vision and values, along with a three-year strategy which will help us to achieve the goals of our vision.

The vision and values can be located on our website at: <https://www.applegarth.n-yorks.sch.uk/our-school/vision-values/>

Over the next year, the key areas of the strategy that will be our focus are:

Vision 1: Our learners will be confident and aspirational individuals, who have high expectations of themselves and are courageous risk-takers, ready for the next step in their lives.

- **Objective 1:** there will be a decline in the number of negative behaviour incidents recorded on CPOMS as a result of the implementation of the updated behaviour strategy.
- **Objective 2:** pupils will report feeling less worried in the 2022/2023 GUNY survey as result of Jigsaw, REST, Military Kids Club and our Learning Mentor.
- **Objective 3:** pupils will develop confidence as active participants in the development of the school: school council, eco-council, house captains and pupil ambassadors.
- **Objective 4:** there will be further opportunity to speak and perform in public.

Vision 2: Pupils from all backgrounds, contexts and starting points will have achieved exemplary academic progress and excellent personal development, where talents have been quickly identified and effectively nurtured.

- **Objective 1:** early reading, phonics and reading will be outstanding across the school.
- **Objective 2:** the disadvantage gap will decrease in line with the 3-year Pupil Premium Strategy.
- **Objective 3:** progress for pupils with SEND will be above the national average.
- **Objective 4:** gifted and talented pupils will be formally identified by the SENCO, and support will be provided to teachers and families to nurture strengths both in and out of school.

Vision 3: Our school community will be able to celebrate their own unique qualities within a diverse and ever-changing community and the world around them

- **Objective 1:** leaders will have a definitive understanding of the context of the school through in depth analysis (Anthony Connelly).
- **Objective 2:** the curriculum will be sharply focussed on educating children about the urban, historical and agricultural setting which pupils are familiar with as well as providing them

with experiences of the diversity, cultures and languages that are not prevalent in their surrounding area.

- **Objective 3:** strong links will be made with a French-speaking school and schools with diverse intakes.

Vision 4: High standards will be achieved through a rich, contextually-relevant and exciting curriculum that provides memorable experiences through inspirational teaching, high-quality visits and input from experts.

- **Objective 1:** Outstanding teaching and learning will be achieved through: robust CPD and coaching for all staff, the implementation of evidence-based pedagogy and a continually evolving curriculum.
- **Objective 2:** leaders, including governors, regularly monitor and review the impact of the broad and balanced curriculum.
- **Objective 3:** Applegarth will be a lead school for the teaching of **phonics, early reading and reading**.

Vision 5: We will be proud to say that we have fulfilled the purpose of being the model school at the heart of our town and county.

- **Objective 1:** we will nurture system leaders: SLEs (Specialist Leaders of Education; LLEs (Local Leaders of Education) and NLGs (National Leaders of Governance) and plan for succession through responsive and systematic CPD.
- **Objective 2:** stakeholder and community questionnaires highlight our positive reputation in the local area.
- **Objective 3:** involve the wider community in PTA events and school projects where possible (e.g. history projects with local residents, links with churches, visiting nursing homes, working with charities such as Food Share and using our outdoor area to support food scarcity initiatives).

The governing body will assess progress against these over the course of the year, through termly monitoring activity and assessment of school data, seeking updates from subject/Key Stage leads at our meetings and engaging further with pupils and community stakeholders. We will report back to you next year to highlight progress made against the strategy and whether there are areas which we feel require further focus.