



**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body  
of Croft Church of England Primary School  
July 2017**

The Governing Body have published this document to give parents an idea of the work that has been undertaken during this academic year. We hope you will find it informative.

**School context.**

Croft Church of England Primary School is a small rural primary school. In terms of North Yorkshire it is quite a large school, but the DfE recognises those with less than 200 pupils as small schools. Around 40% of our pupils come from outside our catchment area.

There are currently 111 pupils on roll + 12 Nursery pupils. There are no pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, no service children or pupils with English as an Additional Language. 3.6% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium.

We have a lower than average percentage of pupils with Special Educational Needs overall but a higher than average number of pupils with high needs. We have a low percentage of ethnic minority pupils.

Our absence rate for 2016-17 was 3.49%, which is below national average. There were no exclusions.

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

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- 2. Holding the Head teacher 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 Croft Church of England Primary School was reconstituted in September 2014 and is now made up of:

2 Foundation Governors, (Mrs V. Waugh and one vacancy), 4 Parent Governors (Mr P. Knapp, Ms S. Thornton (Resigned 14.5.17), Mrs M. Patterson and Mrs D. Wilson-Bainbridge), 2 Co-opted Governors (Mr D. Blenkarn and one vacancy), 1 Local Authority Governor (Mrs A. Russell), 3 Associate Governors (Dr G. Sale, Mrs J. Evans and Mrs K. Jones (Appointed March 2017)), the Head Teacher (Mr S. Robson) and 1 Staff Governor (Mrs G. McManus).

Mrs Evans has unfortunately been poorly since her appointment and has been unable to attend any meetings.

Ms Thornton offered her resignation in May, we are very grateful to her for her contribution and support over the years. We will be holding a parent governor election in September.

Experience in education, finance, personnel, management and health are valuable to the Governing Body, however, the key attributes that Governors need are time, enthusiasm and an interest in education.

This year we have not had committees with delegated functions, instead we have discussed all business as a full Governing Body. Meetings have taken place every half term. This has ensured that all governors are fully informed and able to make a contribution to all aspects of Governance.

### **Attendance record of governors**

A record is kept by the clerk to the governing body, of governors' attendance at meetings; details of attendance can be found at the end of this report.

Meetings need to be 'quorate' to ensure that decisions can be made. All meetings have been quorate this year.

### **The work we have done in the governing body meetings.**

#### **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**

It has as always been an exceptionally busy year, focusing on school improvement.

One of our main aims this year was to embed the **School's Vision and Values** within the curriculum and school policies. As a Church of England school the Church and especially Christian values are fundamental to the ethos of the school and the education which pupils receive. We are extremely fortunate to have Mrs Lancaster, our R.E. and Collective Worship as subject leader and Foundation Governors, Mrs Waugh, Reverend Lane and Mrs Jones, Youth Leader to provide support and advice.

#### **Academy conversion and formation of a Diocesan led Multi Academy Trust (MAT)**

The Academies programme was first introduced by the DfE in 2000, but in 2010 there was a drive to increase the number of school conversions. As a Governing Body we discussed this at least annually in terms of conversion to a standalone academy. (There were very few Multi Academy Trusts in our area until very recently). We decided at those meetings that we would not convert as we felt as a small school standing alone we would have to take on an enormous responsibility.

The government has continued to drive forward with the programme and wants all schools to convert by 2022.

We were approached by the Diocese in October, along with a group of Church schools in the area. They asked us to consider being part of a new Diocesan led MAT. This was a new approach to it and led to us having a lot of discussions as a Governing Body, meetings with the other schools and the Diocese as well as conducting a lot of independent research. The result was that having expressed an initial interest, we decided in June to go forward to the next stage with the proposal, which is the formal consultation process.

The reasons for us taking the decision now are:

- It is proven that school to school support and collaboration is the best way to achieve school improvement. We already collaborate with other schools. The MAT formalises that collaboration and ensures that we all work towards that common goal of providing the best education for all children.
- The Diocese has provided all of the help and support in terms of expertise and funding during the decision making process and in helping to establish the MAT. This is a huge and complex process and would have been very expensive as a school standing alone.
- As a school we felt this was an opportunity to help shape the direction and vision of the MAT rather than fit into one which was already established. This will enable us to reap the benefits whilst still retaining all of our own school's uniqueness which is incredibly important to us and all of the schools involved. It provides enormous opportunities for us as a group of schools to tailor services to our schools rather than one size fits all.
- Services at the Local Authority are diminishing, which is of great concern. We already have to seek our own support elsewhere and this is increasing. Some large secondary schools are converting and this will undoubtedly have an impact upon the LA. We will still buy in many services from the LA and will continue to have a positive relationship with them. The Local

Authority retains the role of Admissions Authority and the responsibility for Special Educational Needs.

The parent and community consultation is currently online and there is a link to it from the school's website [croftprimaryschool.org](http://croftprimaryschool.org). Please complete the consultation, we will feedback once all the responses have been received. The consultation ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> September.

Governors decided to offer the **30 hour free childcare** initiative to most eligible children from April 2017. All eligible children will be able to access this from September 2017.

### **Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils**

The Head Teacher has clear targets set for his performance in the Autumn Term. These are set by three governors with the advice of an external Education Adviser who can look at the performance of the school objectively. The targets are drawn from the developments or improvements the school needs to achieve. The Head Teacher's progress towards those targets is monitored and formally evaluated throughout the year. The Head Teacher and all other teachers' pay is performance linked. One of our most important roles is to provide support and challenge for Mr Robson as he leads the school in moving forward.

As you are probably aware it is quite a number of years since the school was last inspected. We have been working hard to re-evaluate the school against these standards which were updated in September 2016. This is done in part by looking at school data and reports of external advisors. Key areas for improvement have been identified. Ambitious targets were set for pupils by the full Governing Body. The progress of all pupils has been monitored. Information gathered through parent and pupil questionnaires has also been reviewed by Governors and areas for development identified.

Governors have monitored areas identified in the School Development Plan and ensured that the new curriculum for English and Maths, with much higher expectations for each year group, has been embedded. New assessment strategies were introduced last year by the Government and Governors have monitored how these have been implemented across the school along with the impact on pupil achievement. The last two years have been incredibly challenging year for all schools in this regard.

More recently Governors have been looking at the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) self-evaluation. We have been looking at what makes our school distinctive as a Church school. Governors and staff have been involved in training as the standards for this have recently changed.

### **British Values**

Schools now have a duty to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. As Governors we monitor how this is being implemented in school.

Governors regularly visit school. They have specific roles and responsibilities for example Special Educational Needs, Safeguarding or a specific curriculum area. They monitor that area and report back to the full Governing Body. This involves discussions with subject leaders, observation of lessons, book scrutinies, learning walks and conversations with pupils. They do not judge the quality of teaching but monitor the impact of teaching or strategies on pupil outcomes.

### **Pupil Premium**

Governors monitor how Pupil Premium is being spent and what impact it has on children's outcomes. This information is on our school website.

## **Sports Premium**

The link Governor for PE reports to the full Governing Body on how this grant is being spent and the impact it is having on pupils. The report is on the school website.

## **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent**

Financial management of the school is overseen by the full Governing Body. They receive monthly budget monitoring statements and updated financial forecasts for school from the Local Authority School Bursar who visits each month.

They plan expenditure to meet the needs identified in the School Development Plan. The full Governing Body approves the school budget for the year. Although school budgets have not been cut, they have not been increased for many years and as a consequence increasing costs have to be absorbed. This has been particularly difficult this year with increases in the national minimum wage, national insurance and superannuation contributions in addition to a new apprenticeship levy. It is always our aim to achieve best value and we compare our school with similar schools to benchmark this.

Governors have completed a staffing review this year. The school now operates with four classes with full time teaching and support in those classes. We have enjoyed specialist science, music and French teaching this year through Mrs Lynch, Apollo Arts, and Madame Vardy but due to budget constraints we will have to reduce this specialist input next year whilst maintaining the high quality provision.

The building improvements made last summer, using Devolved Capital, have improved the operation and safety of the school premises. We are currently applying for grants to provide Forest Schools, a curriculum kitchen in the Out of School Club room, update computer equipment and improve the school library.

The Health and Safety Governor ensures that all Health & Safety issues are addressed and that risk assessments are in place. The Safeguarding Governor reports to Governors on safeguarding matters including the prevention of radicalisation of pupils. Governors are responsible for reviewing and agreeing some policies in school in particular, Child Protection, Health & Safety, Special Educational Needs, Behaviour, Complaints and Pay Policies.

The County Catering Service started to provide school lunches from September. The quality of food is excellent which was reinforced by parents when they were invited into school this term to try school lunches. Governors eat school lunches on occasions too, not only to sample the quality but to chat to the children about school. A pre-order service is being introduced from September to ensure that every child gets their first choice of food each time. We are grateful to Mrs Breeze and Mrs Geldard who prepare our excellent meals.

Minutes of the Governing Body meetings are available on the school website once they have been agreed by the full Governing Body.

## **Governors' Development**

Many changes happen in the course of a year in terms of educational development and practice. Governors keep on top of these changes by attending relevant training, local and regional conferences. Our training has included RAISE online and the formation of Multi Academy Trusts, both provided by Leeds Carnegie University. The Governing Board is a member of the National Governors Association. The Chair of Governors visits other schools and clusters for example the Swaledale Teaching Alliance. All Governors complete Child Protection training and Prevent (prevention of radicalisation) training.

## **Communication**

The Governing Body is committed to including parents, staff and pupils and the local community in activities which affect the school. The Chair is often in school as are other governors. We are more than happy to chat to anyone and discuss any concerns.

There have been more information events for parents this year including Curriculum, SATs Information and Growth Mindset Evenings, Induction and Stay and Play in Early Years and a Stay and Read session in school. These sessions give parents more information about school, what their children are learning about and how to help them.

## **Future Plans for Governors**

If the school becomes part of the MAT, the local Governing Body still has the same very important role in an academy as it does under the control of the Local Authority. Their responsibilities are determined by the Scheme of Delegation. All Governors will have responsibilities for certain areas of the School Development Plan/ links. They will attend all meetings: two per term. An annual plan for meetings will ensure that all aspects of Governing Body business are covered. Governors will carry out monitoring visits for their particular area and report their findings at the Governing Body meetings. Governor panels will still exist for pay review for example.

## **Staffing**

In a small school Governors assist with the appointment of staff. This year has seen some changes in staffing. We welcomed Mrs Carbert in September as Class 3 Teacher to cover Mrs Lancaster's maternity leave. In the summer term Mrs McManus moved into Class 4 and Dr Bretherton was appointed for the term to cover her in Class 2. Mrs Donoghue joined in June in Class 4 and Mrs Hinley joined in September in Early Years, both providing Advanced Teaching Assistant support. Mrs Brown joined as a General Teaching Assistant in Class 4 and Mrs Robinson in Early Years.

Specialist Science, Music and French teaching continued with the addition of a specialist Maths teacher for Year 6 pupils.

Miss Rogan left to take up a full time post at Easter and Mrs Schmidt left in the summer term. Our thanks and best wishes go to them.

In September Mrs Carbert will be moving into Class 2, Mrs McManus will remain in Class 4 and Mrs Lancaster and Mrs Prudhoe will both work part time in Class 3. We will welcome Miss Bleasby as class teacher in Early Years.

## **School Year**

Governors are justifiably proud of our school and recognise that we have a wonderful team of staff who embrace changes and work tirelessly to provide the best possible outcomes for the children in all aspects of life. These achievements are celebrated by everyone.

Congratulations to the children in Years 1, 2 and 6 who have recently completed their statutory assessments. Year 1 children sat their phonics assessment and have performed well above 2016 average national levels of achievement.

As you are aware there were significant changes to assessment last year at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Teacher assessments and tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in Reading, Writing, Grammar Punctuation and Spelling and Mathematics indicate that the percentage of children achieving the national average scaled score (2016) in all areas has been exceeded.

Our Year 6 pupils have performed extremely well in all areas against the much more challenging standards. Results have been communicated to individual parents.

Attendance is closely monitored by the Governing Body. It sets targets for it annually. This year it has been above the national average at 96.5%.

The school curriculum been reviewed and enhanced this year and this will continue. Pupil Voice in school has been improved through Pupil Leadership Teams, including the School Council. These groups of pupils focus on aspects of school life for example Health and Wellbeing. They research aspects of this and report directly to Governors.

You may have seen the WOW display in the school hall which celebrates special pieces of children's work and there is a writing journey on display showing development from Reception to Year 6.

Drama and music have always been strengths in school. This year, two incredible productions were staged at Christmas. Well done to all the children and everyone involved in the productions they were outstanding. As mentioned previously Classes 2, 3 and 4 have had the opportunity to have whole school music lessons delivered by Apollo Arts. We hosted a whole school workshop in September led by Snake Davis, the hugely talented Saxophonist. There is an excellent take up of music lessons in school including recorder, violin, woodwind, guitar and piano. Children showcased their talents at the wonderful Strawberries and Dreams Concert.

Children have used their Art and Design talents to provide items for sale at the very successful Enterprise Fairs which took place in the Autumn and Spring terms. Children not only created beautiful things to sell but also honed their business skills in calculating profits and selling goods. They have created some beautiful artwork some of which is displayed around school too.

School visits have included a trip to Flamingo Land, Cleveland Mining Museum, Stockton ARC, Darlington Museum, Beamish, Durham Cathedral and The Centre for Life. These visits have given children new and practical learning experiences which enhanced the curriculum taught in school.

Visitors to school have included the children's author and former Northern Echo Editor, Peter Baron, David Waugh, children's author, Snake Davis professional musician and the Kingswood Centre to deliver a Bronze Age Experience. These visitors have been inspirational to children.

Whole school workshops have included European Day of Languages, Chinese New Year celebrations, Number Day and Science Week, when all children worked together in mixed aged groups to take part in a variety of activities.

Our Year 6 pupils took part in and I am delighted to say, won, the Small Schools Cluster Debate held at County Hall. Well done to everyone.

Mrs Carbert has led P.E. this year. Well done to our sports' teams who have competed in a variety of different sports this year. The government sports grant has enabled us to be part of the Richmond cluster for Sports. This funding has enabled us to provide professional development for our staff, buy some new sports equipment, provide a variety of sports activities for all children and to join in additional inter- school sports competitions. A focus this year has been the introduction of more lunch time sports. This has been led by Nathan from Richmond and Mrs Marksby and has been very successful. As a result more children have taken part in optional activities and the children have grown in confidence. A full report is on the school website.

The Out of School Club provides an excellent service for parents and children. Kerry and her assistants work extremely hard to provide a home from home with lots of fun activities. Attendance during holidays has still improved since Governors made the decision to reduce the charges.

The Friends of the School play a crucial part in school. They work tirelessly to raise much needed funds for equipment in school. As budgets become tighter the fund raising becomes increasingly important and we are extremely grateful for everyone's efforts. Please support them. Through funds raised at

various events they have been able to provide a replacement for the old Smart Board in Class 4 and subsidise some school trips.

It is impossible to mention everyone and everything that happens in school over the course of a year. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our exceptional, hardworking and dedicated staff; to the children for always trying their best and to you as parents and carers for your support.

Next year will be just as exciting and of course challenging in its way. It is a privilege to be a governor to be involved in such a lovely school community.

Finally,

Best wishes to those children leaving us this summer.

We look forward to seeing everyone else in September. Have a lovely summer.

Alison Russell  
Chair of Governors

### **Strategic Planning for the future**

The School Development Plan 16 -17 focussed on the following areas:

- Safeguarding – to embed and further develop the security, administration and procedures to ensure pupils remain safe
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – to develop an exciting curriculum that meets the new vision and values of the school and prepares pupils for the next stage of their learning
- Outcomes for pupils – to improve the proportions of pupils who make more than expected progress
- Increasing the proportions of pupils who achieve more than expected outcomes in Early Years

### **Governing Body attendance at meetings**

Governor	Full Governing Body (6)
Alison Russell	6
Michelle Patterson	5
Paul Knapp	5
Denise Wilson- Bainbridge	6
Susan Thornton	2 Resigned May
Derek Blenkharn	3
Jean Evans	0 Illness
Viv Waugh	4
Kath Jones	3 Joined March
Simon Robson	6
Gemma McManus	6
Georgie Sale	2

### **How to contact your governing body**

Information about the school's governing body is available on the governors' page of the school's website [croftprimaryschool.org](http://croftprimaryschool.org).

E mail the Chair of Governors at:

[CofG@croft.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:CofG@croft.n-yorks.sch.uk)

Or leave a message/ letter at the school office.