



# Lings Primary School

## **Policy Statement: Governors' Strategy**

Date of Last Review: July 2017

Date of Next Review: July 2018

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## **1 Mission Statement**

The Lings Primary School Mission Statement (September 2010) is as follows.

**Children at Lings Primary School will:**

- have an enthusiasm for learning
- aspire to achieve
- face new challenges with confidence and resilience
- develop life skills

**The children will achieve this through:**

- enriching, enjoyable experiences
- feeling a part of and belonging to our community

The Governors' Strategy is designed to meet the needs of Lings Primary School to satisfy the requirements of the Mission Statement.

The Mission Statement sets out the aspirations that Lings Primary School has for the Pupils and how each will achieve their potential. In addition, the Governors' Strategy refers to the mechanisms by which standards in the provision can be improved.

At the heart of the Mission of education at Lings Primary School is the desire to

***Prepare the children for life in modern Britain.***

Not only do we prepare the children for success in secondary education, but also we instil in them the life-principles of caring, fairness, tolerance, respect, equality and inclusion. This will be achieved by emphasising the value of every individual and reinforcing the meaning of the School motto:

***Setting the Standard***

## 2 Introduction

The Governors have a clear view of the ethos of Lings Primary School, as distilled into the Mission Statement, and how the values of that ethos can be imbued in the children for whom they are ultimately responsible. In partnership with the Head Teacher and all the Staff, the Governors have a clear strategy as to how those aspirations and targets can be achieved.

This document sets out the components of that strategy. Since circumstances change in a dynamic school environment, of which Lings Primary is a good example, the details of the strategy must necessarily be fluid, reactive and proactive, whilst preserving the fixed principles of the Aims and Objectives underpinning the Mission. Consequently, the policy is to update the Governors' Strategy annually: typically, the schedule is for the review to be conducted prior to the Autumn Term (subject to changes in circumstances), so a revised and current Strategy will be published and made available to all the Stakeholders of Lings Primary School at the beginning of the academic year.

## 3 Aims and Objectives

The Aims and Objectives summarise the aspirations of the Governors with regard to the impact of Teaching and Learning on the pupils of Lings Primary School and how the best outcome can be achieved. The Governors also recognise the need to develop the children, in the widest sense of the word.

The **First Objective** of the Governors is to provide the support and organisation required to the Head Teacher and Staff to deliver all the elements of the Lings Primary School Mission Statement.

The **Second Objective** is to provide the infrastructure to allow the Head Teacher and Staff to deliver the provisions of the curriculum in ways by which standards of attainment and achievement by the pupils of Lings Primary School are constantly driven upwards. Those standards refer not only to the core academic subjects of the curriculum, which are tested by external agencies, but also to the social, artistic, sporting and pastoral aspects of the pupil experience in the educational journey.

The **Third Objective** is for Lings Primary School ultimately to achieve 'outstanding' rating by Ofsted criteria and inspections and thereafter to maintain that status. Until that happens, the Objective is to maintain our 'Good' status. However, it is equally important that the school should not be judged to be 'coasting' ie the Governors will ensure that there will be a programme of constant improvement, as evidenced by the School Development Plan.

The Governors aim to reach the stated Objectives in the following ways:

- by actively participating in all the aspects of life of Lings Primary School, attending classes and assemblies and other features of the learning experience, such as 'learning walks', to support the efforts of the Head Teacher and the Staff.
- in the spirit of teamwork and maximising the resources available to the staff, Governors have the option of registering with the School as Resource Assistants. This is a similar arrangement to the one offered to parents and carers of the pupils. In this way, staff may call on the services of those Governors for duties such as educational visits, thereby freeing up teachers and teaching assistants for other duties at School: the benefit of an official register is that staff can have no compunction in calling on Governors' time, knowing they are not imposing. In addition, Governors may elect to undergo training for assisting with reading in classes.

- by bringing to Lings Primary School a variety of life experiences which can contribute to enhancing the pupils' learning experience.
- by adopting a prudent but sympathetic and creative approach to managing the budget and application of the available funding, to maximise and optimise the facilities and opportunities open to the pupils, both in the classroom and outside.
- by acting as the 'critical friend' to the Head Teacher - in this way, the collective experience of the Governing Board is brought to bear on the successful functioning of the School.
- by supporting the Head Teacher in delivering the best possible provision to the pupils: in part this will be achieved through the annual appraisal process, which always results in the setting of challenging but achievable objectives, which impact on the progression of improvement in learning and teaching. At the same time, the Governors are acutely aware of their 'duty of care' to the Head Teacher: they acknowledge the necessity for the Head Teacher to maintain a realistic 'work-life' balance and thereby to work efficiently and effectively.
- by supporting all the Staff in their careers, being aware of the need for 'continuing professional development', which will have benefits for the pupils of Lings Primary School in terms of driving up standards of learning and teaching and consequent outcomes in all aspects of the provision.
- by supporting the concept of *time in lieu*, whereby staff time spent outside normal working hours, such as running the after school clubs, can be compensated with extra leave. Lings Primary staff freely give of their time for extra-curricular activities and such professional devotion will be recognised and addressed at the discretion of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- by identifying ways in which the smooth and effective running of the School can be maintained and enhanced, through discussions with the Head and Senior Leadership Team and

discussions within the Finance and Personnel Committee and the School Improvement Committee, then reaching decisions in the Full Governing Board.

- by creating the Policies and Procedures which define the agreed ways in which the School is run and governed in all its aspects. These Policies also define the philosophy of the Governors, regarding the educational and social lessons they wish the children to acquire and understand during their time at Lings Primary School. See also Section 6 and Appendix.
- by contributing to the School Development Plan, the detailed programme through which the School will drive up standards of Attainment and Achievement and all other aspects of the School's provision. In particular, the Governors are acutely aware of the need to monitor the academic performance of the various groupings within the pupil population, so that no group is left behind or disadvantaged and that struggling learners are helped wherever and whenever possible to 'close the gap'.
- by supporting the ethos of inclusion within the School, whereby the pupils experience an enhanced feeling of belonging to the School community.
- by supporting the widening participation of all pupils in internal and external activities: the availability of after-school clubs and sports, both individual and team based, the use of visits to places of educational value and enjoyment, especially those which contribute to the core curriculum subjects.
- by supporting and contributing to the reward of pupils' achievement and attainment of potential or excellence.
- by actively participating in the Multi Academy Trust Partnership, see Section 8.

## **4 Curriculum**

The Governors do not set the Curriculum, which is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Staff, but they do endorse and

support the principles of curriculum development and integration, not only to meet the requirements of the formal testing of pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, but also to facilitate the constant improvement of levels of attainment and achievement in the core subjects across the School.

Here, the key to success is the creation of a linked curriculum, with imaginative content, designed to impact positively on all the children and the development of every learner. However, the creativity of the curriculum will be designed to include and apply appropriate emphasis to the core subjects of reading, writing and maths. The role of the Governors is to remove obstacles to this process and maintain an open attitude to the provision of resources for that purpose.

The development of new ideas regarding the conduct of the School, for example the uniform, will usually come from the Head Teacher and the staff, who will present proposals for change to the Governors. Governors have a responsibility to engage in discussion regarding change, providing checks and balances, but will adopt a supportive stance, rather than demand conventional approaches to education. This will apply equally to developments in organisation and curriculum, consistent with the Objectives set out above.

In addition, the Governors will contribute wherever possible to the variety within the curriculum: for example, they bring their life and career backgrounds to the School, together with opportunities for the children to experience some of that professional and grown-up world.

In preparation for life on modern Britain, the children must be familiar with the latest information technology and hardware: this is viewed as a vital tool for Teaching and Learning, not only for the learners, but also for the Staff and parents/carers, to assist the



progress of the children through the Key Stages of their primary education.

## **5 Staff**

It is the policy of the Governors to support the Staff in their Continuing Professional Development, to ensure excellence in teaching throughout the School, as outlined in Section 3.

The Governors are committed to contributing to the quality of Leadership and Management of the School: they will avail themselves of appropriate training courses to be able to fulfil their duties to the best of their abilities. They undertake to participate in all aspects of the day-to-day running of the School, as required and deemed useful by the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.

The Governors consider themselves to be part of the educational team of Lings Primary School: consequently, they will act as role models for the children at all times.

## **6 Governance**

Since converting to an Academy within the NPAT Trust Partnership, the principles and practice of governance of Lings Primary School have not changed with respect to the requirements and expectations of government and the Local Authority which were in operation hitherto. However, three changes have been introduced to reflect changing circumstances in modern life and adapt to the difficulties in retaining and recruiting Governors.

## 6.1. Committees

In order to comply with the desire to have consistency of governance across NPAT, it is decided that a programme of Committee meetings will be reintroduced in the Autumn Term of 2017: this is also addressed in the Governance Meetings Policy, which includes the Terms of Reference for the School Improvement Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee.

## 6.2. Governance at a distance

It is not always possible for governors to attend meetings in person. However, with modern communications, such as Skype, it is possible for a Governor to participate fully but at a distance. This will be recorded as such, but will not be regarded as non-attendance.

## 6.3. Associate Governors

Whilst there are members of the local community who are willing to contribute to the functioning of Lings Primary School, but who are unable to commit to the duties of regular governance, it is to the benefit of the School to create an official relationship with those individuals, to allow the School to benefit from their expertise.

Consequently, the Governing Body of Lings Primary School has defined the position of Associate Governor. The job description can be summarised as follows.

- (i) The Associate Governor (AG) will receive such documents pertaining to governance as shall be agreed with the Chair of Governors: the AG is consequently subject to the same restrictions of confidentiality as a regular Governor.
- (ii) The AG may interact with the staff in the ways of the regular Governors, being able to visit as and when is appropriate, often by

arrangement. He/she should complete visit reports on each occasion.

(iii) The AG will be DBS registered, but does not have to undertake the conventional governor training.

(iii) The AG may attend Full Governing Board meetings at the invitation of the Chair. They may be invited to address the FGB when appropriate, but may not vote on any issue.

## 7 Policies

In partnership with the Staff of Lings Primary School, the Governors establish Policies to define the principles and procedures for running the School. Importantly, the Policies also set out the philosophy underpinning governance. Seminal in the attitude of the Governors to preparing the children for life beyond Lings Primary School are the Policies concerning **Behaviour**, **Equality** and **Inclusion**, which incorporate the lessons of individual and social responsibility that we wish the children to absorb, understand, accept and learn, as the basis for adult life.

The Policies are not regarded as a rigid, unchanging set of rules which define the School, but as a flexible guide to good governance, which is allowed to be expanded, modified and improved as circumstances and thinking develop.

Prior to conversion to an Academy, Lings Primary School created its own policies and continues to modify and ratify those policies as and when they are due for scrutiny. However, NPAT has an aim to unify policies across the Trust. Consequently, there is a programme of developing policies for all school in the Trust partnership. It is the policy of the FGB of Lings Primary School to accept those policies as and when they are available, when they will replace any equivalent Lings policy.

## **8 Two-form entry**

At the beginning of the Academic Year 2015/6, Lings Primary School expanded to two-form entry. This is a development undertaken with the enthusiastic support of the Governors, who regarded the development as a societal obligation to the local community, but additionally as an opportunity to offer the Lings Primary ethos to even more children.

It is the strategy of the Governors to facilitate the expansion, to support the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team with each annual intake. In partnership with the Bursar, the economic implications will be managed with the prudence shown in the past, to ensure the whole School benefits from the changes as the School expends year on year.

## **9 The Multi Academy Trust Partnership (NPAT)**

In November 2012, the Northampton Primary Academy Trust Partnership was officially constituted with the Primary Schools Weston Favell, Headlands, Abington Vale and Ecton Brook: this provides an additional feature to the strategic roles of the Governors of Lings Primary School. During the academic year 2015-6, the Trust Partnership expanded to include Simon de Senlis Primary School and in 2017, Rectory Farm Primary School joined the Academy Trust Partnership. More schools are likely to join over the next few years, especially with the encouragement of the Local Authority and DfE.

In addition to those aforementioned members of the MAT, the Trust has already accepted responsibilities for assisting other schools in the town: this is a supporting role, without necessarily involving expansion of the MAT. The Governors regard this new role for the MAT as an obligation to the children of Northampton, which

they welcome. However, they also acknowledge their primary duty of care to the children in the MAT schools, so any additional consultancy for the Local Authority will be managed appropriately and judiciously, bearing in mind a duty of care to the Head Teachers, on whose shoulders such loads will be borne.

It is the intention of the Lings Governors to support the MAT in the following ways, which should all be consistent with the prime responsibility and duty of care owed by the Governors to Lings Primary School.

- Contribute through the Chair and supply of funding to the governance of the MAT, to ensure it operates successfully for the benefit of Lings Primary School and all the other pupils within the Trust Partnership.
- Support the Head Teachers, Staffs and Governors of the other schools wherever and whenever possible, consistent with safeguarding the specific interests of Lings Primary School.
- Participate in discussions and decisions regarding the mutual benefits which can be gained from the larger grouping of schools - particularly the economies of scale, co-operative use of resources for mutual benefit, pooling of resources, exchanging experiences of best practice to achieve excellence across the whole of the MAT etc.
- Support the creative use of the resources within the MAT to gain commercial benefits eg by agreeing to and providing consultancy to other schools seeking advice on conversion to academy and achieving managerial and academic excellence.
- Contribute to the creation of agreed Policies and Procedures within the MAT, for consistency of governance and optimum benefit to Staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Adopt a creative approach to the use and development of pooled resources for the benefit of all the pupils of the MAT.

- Each school in the MAT will independently control and disburse its budget for the benefit of its own pupils (as was the case before the MAT was formed): however, the Governors of Lings Primary School can see the benefits of pooling of some part of the budget and other such requests for wider mutual benefit will be viewed sympathetically, positively, but always prudently.

An important and novel addition to the administration of the MAT is the position of the Strategic Director, now the Chief Executive Officer, whose responsibility it is to have a role operating across the MAT, in partnership with the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of all the schools, in particular to coordinate corporate affairs, monitor and assess consistency in governance and academic performance and standards in the Schools. In this function, she will be supported by the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer and appropriate office staff.

The Lings Primary School Board of Governors will support the activities of the managers of NPAT, especially in the need to expand the office, necessary to service the expanding MAT and its outward facing activities.

### **Confirmatory Signatures**

**Signed.....Head Teacher**

**Signed.....Governor**

**Approved on.....**

**To be reviewed on.....**