

Governor's Annual Report 2023/24

The governing body is pleased to report the progress the school made in 2023/24 under the management of Vicky Dangerfield, Headteacher and Caroline Powell, School Business Manager with all the staff working excellently together.

I. How well is our motto/vision/ethos embedded in the school?

Our motto: to create *'an inspirational setting, where all children flourish'*.

Our vision: to be a school where children actively engage with local and global communities and develop the confidence and skills they need to have an impact on the world around them in years to come.

Ethos. Every activity involving the whole school community is strengthened by being caring, thoughtful and reflective.

Our motto, vision and ethos summarise well everyday practices in our school. We are particularly proud that this was visible to external Teaching and Learning experts for two years in a row. They commented that our motto shows exactly what the school is about, and that the staff work exceptionally well as a team focusing on every child's success. The governing body had a significant turnover (3 new members and a new clerk), but the transition was seamless as new members joined with understanding and commitment for our motto/vision/ethos.

Our ethos is reflected in the effort that goes into ensure wellbeing for children, staff, parents and the community. Our wellbeing surveys for children in 2021/22 and 2023/24 and staff in 2022/23 were all extremely positive. Still, our policies and practices for wellbeing were further consolidated to ensure further improvement. In our parents' survey in March 2024, we were heartened to see their clear and enthusiastic endorsement. They confirmed that their children feel safe (97%), that they are happy (90%), and that their children's personal development is well supported by the school (95%). Informal feedback from pupils, staff and parents all indicate that they enjoy being part of the learning community. We are pleased to see continued high retention and very low sickness absence of our staff.

II. Has every child succeeded as well as they could?

II-1. Academic learning (see Annex 1)

We have a well-established practice of (a) our headteacher setting ambitious achievement targets for each child based on child's track record, (b) monitoring and assessing individual attainment systematically; (c) offering additional support/interventions if and when needs are identified. Whenever there are assessment results (internal or external) which fall short of expectations, extra scrutiny is given to the case to identify causes and remedial actions.

We are delighted to report that our performance in 2024 SATS exceeded national average in all areas for Year 6. We were equally successful in other subjects: writing and science for Year 6, Year 1 phonics screening check, and EYFS monitoring for GLD (see Annex II). We note, however, that given the small size of our cohorts, we should remain diligent and expect significant variability in such measures across years.

Our analysis indicates that such good results do indeed reflect considerable effort made in consolidating and implementing curriculum across the school, progress made in building

resilience, improving internal assessment and individualised attention given to every child's attainment.

The main emphasis last year was to implement our curriculum by ensuring consistency in teaching. For example, the curricular framework for thematic teaching was completed, and the role of subject leaders were further enhanced with a culture of openness emerging across teachers to share what goes on in their classrooms. Teachers were encouraged to take CPD in area of their interest (e.g. early years/headship/leadership) consistent with school priorities. There was also a school-wide emphasis on CPD in maths including improved use of teaching materials (Can Do Maths). The next step for us would be to ensure consistency in learning of all children to close gaps before they widen – this we endeavor to do using Lesson Study as a method of CPD starting with maths in the future.

II-2. Developing emotional and physical stability and confidence

We believe that our breadth of curriculum, emphasis on music, forest school, arts, DT and sports, as well as an unusually wide range of enrichment activities, all contribute to children developing emotional/physical stability and confidence. We are proud of our ambitious offer of regular enrichment activities, including mock trials, numerous sports activities (which led to the School Games Gold Award for the second year in a row), Wildlife Quiz (we continue to be one of the best in the county), Cheltenham Festivals (Jazz, Science, Literature), expeditions to museums/cultural places, our annual residential visit to Morfa Bay for years 3-6, every year (with new ones as described in II-3), and a wide range of after school clubs. Our annual 'productions' – e.g. Nativity and the summer musical theatre performance – provide excellent examples of settings where children are encouraged to take on challenges within a framework of support to build confidence while having fun.

Pupil premium and sports premium funding (see ANNEX V and VI for details). Pupil Premium funding helped us achieve all our goals with 100% of PP children more positive about themselves and their ability. PP funding enabled us to maintain small class sizes with teaching assistant support and to offer access to all activities/opportunities for PP children. PE and Sport Premium funding has enabled us to dramatically enhance our sports offers with excellent, inclusive access to diverse sports opportunities. The result is visible in enthusiasm for sports amongst our children as well as in our winning the Gold Award for sports for two years in a row.

II-3. In developing creativity, communication, and problem solving

Our action-packed school life helps promote creativity, communication and problem solving. Last year, the Sheepscombe Award, our own version of an award based on some of the principles of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, was introduced to encourage children to take initiatives outside school, testing their creativity, communication and entrepreneurship. Children responded with great enthusiasm, undertaking diverse challenges (with great support from parents and community), learning much not only from their own experience but also from their peers.

Maths Week was a special event organized to immerse and engage children with maths. Rich talks from guest mathematicians, extra-curricular activities, unusual classes which emphasized maths (even in PE) filled the week and met enthusiastic responses from the

children. One example was a problem-solving task that Year 5/6 undertook to examine “if we could save rainwater to flush our toilets”. The children surprised us with their ability to take on such an open and realistic task, demonstrating their ability to think through the problem accurately, creatively and with resilience– while collaborating well in developing their answers.

III. Has the school made progress in environmental sustainability?

The school now has a rolling Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action plan, as a joint document between the governing body and school management. It is actively discussed in all governing body meetings, ensuring that sustainability remains a priority in governing body’s agenda. There is now a culture of continuous questioning about what more we can do. Environmental sustainability is now featured in all our thematic teaching, and our staff regularly and enthusiastically introducing new sustainability-relevant activities/tasks into classrooms. The governors continued to review options to reduce carbon footprints, but this is not as easy given space/physical set up – we expect to have to take a deeper look to develop a medium-term plan.

IV. Have school finances been managed soundly?

Finances have been a significant issue across all schools and more broadly the education sector nationally with many schools/institutions falling into deficits. Small schools such as ours are particularly vulnerable as small cuts and changes can have significant impact. Cost escalation was another factor that adversely influenced our finances.

In 2023-24, the school managed to complete the year with a small in-year deficit of £5,656 and maintained a carry forward of £17,625 at the end of the year. Little Lambs raised £21,546, which was not quite enough to cover the staff costs of £24,677 even with the carry forward from the previous year (£2,583). FOSS ran a number of events across the year raising just over £9500. This was spent on whole class music lessons across the school, where the children have been taught to play a variety of instruments. FOSS also raised money to cover some coach costs, provided the school with three educational software programmes including the new Lyfta programme to widen children’s world and cultural knowledge, and paid for various other resources and equipment through the year.

V. Challenges

Finance. 2024-25 is looking to be another tough year given cuts in sparsity funding and increased requirement for school contribution for Special Educational Needs (SEN) support costs, which is a national issue. There remains significant uncertainty about government intentions on funding. We are already taking key steps to reduce/contain costs and raise revenues to enable us to come to a sustainable level, but much depends on government funding. As this will be the first year for Mr. James Dangerfield, our new business manager, who is taking over from Mrs. Powell, we have arranged to have her provide transitional guidance, and plan to step up our own monitoring. The coming year will also be a test year to see the sustainability of four class structure given the available funding.

Attendance. Attendance rates have been a key focus again this year. While most attend well, those who do not, often consistent non-attenders or persistent absentees, bring down the average attendance. We are very concerned that those children who miss lessons and events suffer from double negative consequences in learning and in sharing fun and joys with their peers. This can also lead to unfair and negative effect on the rest of the children, who do attend regularly. As the teachers may need to spend extra time helping those

children who missed classes to catch up, they may have less time and attention for the rest of the class. We plan to step up our effort in improving the situation in collaboration with parents.

VI. Governance

We continue to have a full 9 member governing body supported by a new clerk. The gaps left by departing governors/clerk were filled quickly with new members, who brought in enthusiasm, skills and energy. A formal skills survey conducted during the year showed a reasonable balance of skills, and the co-chair arrangement (Debby Thacker and Sachi Hatakenaka) is positively regarded by all governors in our on-going self review. The four-member Finance and Resource Committee continued to take responsibility in financial oversight under an interim co-chairs (Sachi Hatakenaka and Matt Stanway). Each governor took on key 'elements' such as safeguarding and 'subject championships' to provide additional in-depth oversight, implemented via planned visits. (see ANNEX II and III for profiles and roles)

We were delighted to welcome two new governors and a new clerk in November 2023. Dave McCarthy, a finance expert from the village and a former parent, has become immediately active in FRC and is expected to become chair for FRC in 2024/25 to give fresh oversight and guidance during this critical phase when all schools are facing tough financial situations. Alex Craven, also a parent, joined as a co-opted governor, bringing in a helpful mix of skills in IT, premises and art, and has made an excellent headway in getting to know the school. Bea Hyde, also a parent, joined us as a clerk, immediately offering the much needed clerical support to the Governing body

VII. Looking into 2024/25

We look forward to another year of success, working with challenges as listed above and ensuring that we continue to improve and thrive. As this is the final year of our strategic priorities, we look to review our own performance and to prepare the next chapter strategic priorities for the school. Further plans to improve sustainability and to engage parents will also be developed. A governance self-review is planned early in 2024-25, as a preparatory step for an external review to follow in the future. The governing body is pleased to report the progress the school made in 2023/24 under the management of Vicky Dangerfield, H71leadteacher and Caroline Powell, School Business Manager with all the staff working excellently together.

Annex 1. Key performance indicators

Criteria	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<i>Pupil numbers</i>	70 (plus 7 Little Lambs)	73 (plus 8 Little Lambs)	71 (plus 8 Little Lambs)
<i>A good rating from Ofsted</i>			
<i>All procedures are in place for good governance</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>The best possible level of attendance</i>	92.4%	93.6%	94.2%
<i>Success of every child: Target setting/Assessment/monitoring/corrective action</i>	Ambitious attainment targets are set for each child by headteacher Internal assessment used to monitor attainment KS1 internal assessment process verified as appropriate by LA review	Target setting as before Improved internal assessment through introducing a new method (NFER) KS2 internal assessment process verified as appropriate by LA review	NFER and gap analysis for summative testing A more systematic and individualised follow up for children falling behind Attendance added to My Plans
<i>Attainment as assessed internally</i>	Most pupils made progress to return to pre-Covid levels with persistent negative effects still observable for late starters and poor attenders.	On track and plans in place to tackle gaps	On track and plans in place to tackle gaps
<i>Attainment as measured by external tests</i>	Good KS1 SATS results Disappointing KS2 SATS results in maths which appeared to be caused by poor resilience with testing Plan to improve assessment.	Good KS1 SATS results, but with a disappointing KS2 SATS Maths result owing to a small number of children falling a little short. The school plans to have a focus on CPD for mathematics in 2023-24	Excellent EYFS GLD Year 1 Phonics screening check – 100% achieved Year 2 Phonics retest – some additional support needed and in place Excellent KS2 SATS results exceeding national average in all areas (Maths/Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling); and in Writing and Science as assessed by teachers 80% of Year 6 passed the grammar entrance test.
<i>Expectations of excellence in teaching</i>	Managed the return to face-to-face teaching successfully. Greater responsibility given to subject leads to develop a strong and cohesive teaching team. New curriculum written involving governors and all teachers.	Subject leaders developed subject specific action plans based on SWOT analysis, with classroom observation as a regular feature of monitoring. Staff continued to receive opportunities for CPD in subject specific training, and	Thematic teaching framework was completed as part of curricular implementation. Subject leads used action plan for continuous improvement School-wide maths CPD was successfully conducted and Can Do

	Staff continued with CPD to enrich their subject knowledge	for their own developmental interest.	Maths has been embedded Staff received CPD in areas of their interest/development needs consistent with school priorities
<i>Progress in environmental sustainability</i>	A governor in charge of Environmental Sustainability appointed A preliminary review of status quo and target setting	Environmental action plan drafted with implementation initiated; Sustainability embedded in curriculum as golden thread	Environmental sustainability strategic action plan was regularly reviewed/updated; Sustainability embedded in curriculum/thematic teaching
<i>Sound financial management</i>	The newly acquired Sparsity funding and covid grants helpful in relieving financial pressures A 4 class arrangement is in place	4 class structure maintained partly through Sparsity funding, continuing with diverse enrichment activities, and with FOSS providing key support	Maintained a 4 class structure and diverse rich enrichment activities despite cost escalation and reduced funding leading to a small in-year deficit and a small carry forward

Annex II: Attainment as measured by external tests

Link to KS2 results

[Sheepscombe Primary School - Key Stage Two Results](#)

ANNEX III. Governing board: members and responsibilities

Name	Type of governor	Committee membership	Any link roles
Alex Craven (since November 2023)	Co-opted Governor		PSHE/RHE, Staff Well-being, Art, Computing, Website, premises (with Simon)
Richard Crocker	Staff governor		
Vicky Dangerfield	Head Teacher	FRC	
Simon Fraser (from June 2023)	Parent Governor	FRC	Deputy chair, Premises including Health and Safety, History
Sachi Hatakenaka	Co-opted Governor	FRC	Co-CoG, Music, Science, Maths, Environmental strategy
Tessa Lentel	Local authority governor		SEND, Safeguarding, RE, Pupil Premium, Attendance Governor
Dave McCarthy (since November 2023)	Co-opted governor	FRC	FRC; Geography; Pupil Premium

Matt Stanway	Parent governor	FRC	Staff CPD, Geography, Sport, CPD, Forest School, Parent links, DT
Debby Thacker	Co-opted governor		Co-Chair, English, EYFS, Languages

ANNEX IV. Governor attendance

 SHEEPSCOMBE SCHOOL - GOVERNOR ATTENDANCE 2023 - 2024										
	CATEGORY	Full Governing Body					Finance and Resources Committee			ATTENDANCE %
		19/09/23	14/11/23	20/02/24	04/06/24	09/07/24	21/11/23	12/03/24	21/05/24	% YTD
Debby Thacker	CO-OPTED - CO CHAIR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				100%
Jon Clarke	CO-OPTED	✓								100%
Matt Stanway	PARENT GOVERNOR	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	75%
Richard Crocker	STAFF GOVERNOR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				100%
Sachi Hatakenaka	CO-OPTED - CO CHAIR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Simon Fraser	PARENT GOVERNOR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	88%
Tessa Lentel	LA GOVERNOR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				100%
Alex Craven	CO-OPTED		✓	✓	✓	✓				100%
David McCarthy	CO-OPTED		✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	57%
Vicky Dangerfield	HEADTEACHER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%

KEY	In attendance	✓
	Absent	x
	Not obligated to attend	

Note: The date for FRC in May had to be adjusted at the last minute to accommodate LA budget review timing

ANNEX V: Pupil Premium

- 100% took part in music lessons, residential, school trips and sports events.
- 100% had access to additional support and teaching (including mathematics).
- 50% children (100% of those that needed it) had access to targeted therapeutic interventions.
- 100% children accessed additional tuition in school.
- 100% children had access to small class sizes.

Link to PP report [Sheepscombe Primary School - Pupil Premium](#)

ANNEX VI: Sports premium

- a very wide range of physical provision (from yoga/dance to full range of games - selected by sports lead and offered by Atlas) in support of a wide range of interest/capability
- participation in a wide range of competitive events offsite
- staff CPD to ensure effective implementation/continuation of above
- These complemented what the school offers from its own budget, eg. training of sports lead, and outdoor physical activities including forest school or morning runs

Link to Sports report

[Sheepscombe Primary School - Sports & PE Funding](#)