

The William Ransom Primary School

Governing Body Annual Report

2017 - 2018



"The William Ransom School aims to provide all its pupils with the highest possible educational opportunities. We believe that the best education is the entitlement of every child and this is realised at this School within a structured, disciplined, caring and safe environment where expectations are high."

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Governing Body 2017 - 2018

Ian Hankin (Chair)

Mary Driver

Emma Faulkner

Jack Wells (Chair of Premises)

Ann Light

Ian Albert

Victoria Wheat

Karen Massey (Minuting Secretary)

Bob Chohan

Funda Shibli (Vice-Chair/Chair of L&T)

Andrew Fennemore

Crispin Holder

Catherine McIntosh (Chair of Personnel)

Alison Wood

Jane Buchanan (Chair of Finance)

Gillian Mackilligan

Sian Ayliffe

Please see the school website for further information on the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body.

WR Annual Governing Body Report produced June/July 2018
Designed by Sam Hankin [@hankin](#)



...from the Chair

“Everyone who remembers their own education remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the heart of the educational system.”

Welcome to the Governing Body's annual report for 2017/18. Whilst the mandatory need for a Governing Body to produce an annual report was removed a few years back, we still feel it is an excellent form of communication. It's also a great way to celebrate successes, to say "thank you's and goodbyes", and to highlight challenges faced (and those on the horizon!).



It really has been another amazing year for William Ransom. Whilst the school continues to increase in pupil numbers, the ethos and the high level of outstanding teaching has continued. My sincere thanks to all the staff for their continued focus and commitment. It has been my privilege to have been working with such a fantastic team of people as Chair of Governors for six years and Governor for thirteen years.

During those thirteen years, the Governing Body have faced and overcome many challenges. Our current and ongoing challenge - and one which no doubt you will have seen in the media - is that of school funding and budgets. As a school, we also have the added difficulty in that we are incurring certain expenses, during these transition years to full pupil capacity, which the Governors had anticipated and highlighted to Herts County Council (HCC) in 2015 prior to agreeing to the expansion. The combination of both enforced expected and unexpected expenses is really adding an additional strain on our budget. The Governing Body continues to work with HCC to ensure the appropriate promised financial support is in place.



William Ransom has an excellent reputation and we know there is an excess number of pupil applications for places each year. We just can't get the children in quick enough! For September 2018, there were 258 applications for the 60 places!

Especially during these difficult times, we are extremely thankful, as always, to the members of the SPA for organising and running such a wide variety of events – from the annual Summer Fete to the inaugural "Pig and Prosecco" evening. Each event raises a substantial amount of funds for the school, which are spent wisely on items for the benefit of the pupils. Thanks to everyone who has been involved with or supported these events. As a community school, we need all our parents to be as involved and supportive as possible.



Buster the Stepasaurus was the special guest who opened it and the Governors cut a cake in celebration! Yes, after starting a petition five years ago then presenting our case to the County Council as part of the school expansion in 2015, the Zebra crossing in Wymondley Road is now in place. I hope you've used it?



Pedestrian one: I've been waiting here for five minutes to cross the road.

Pedestrian two: There's a zebra crossing further down the road.

Pedestrian one: Well, I hope he's having more luck than I'm having!

Each year, all Governors are encouraged to visit the school and see teaching in action first-hand. This is an important part of their responsibilities and I would like to thank them for finding the time to do so - it's important to remember that Governors are volunteers and Governor work is done in addition to "day jobs".

"I attended an extended "Achievers" award assembly which not only acknowledged academic achievement, but also recognised progress and personal milestones. Pupils were selected from across all years from Reception to Year 6. It was easy to see that pupils took great pride in this assembly and the recognition by their fellow pupils and staff."

The school is lucky in that it benefits from an experienced and committed group of Governors. At the end of term, we will be saying a huge "thank you" and "goodbye" to Catherine McIntosh. Catherine has been a Governor at the school for in excess of 20 years, during which time she has held the position of Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of most of the committees. She has also supported the school in innumerable ways. Catherine will be missed enormously by everyone who has been fortunate to work with her and we wish her well for the future.

We will also say "farewell" to Emma Faulkner, who is temporarily standing down due to increased family commitments. We hope Emma will be able to re-join us at some point in the future. We will keep your chair warm!

I'm pleased that Funda Shibli, our Vice-Chair and Parent Governor, has been appointed Co-opted Governor from September 2018. This, therefore, leaves a vacancy for a new Parent Governor. Details of the role and nomination form will be sent to all parents at the start of next term.

Due to other commitments, I was unable to go on the Year 6 school journey to Wales this year, having been the previous four years. They had such fantastic weather, I won't be invited again! I am sure all the pupils found the week an exciting, rewarding and exhilarating experience.



My thanks, not only to those five members of staff who went to Wales, but to all staff at William Ransom who give up so much of their own time to provide the extra wonderful opportunities for pupils throughout the year.

I started by saying this Annual Report provides an ideal opportunity to celebrate successes. One of the biggest this year is that Mrs Driver has celebrated 35 years at William Ransom. A fantastic achievement for one so young! Congratulations Mrs Driver.

I do hope you have the opportunity for a relaxing and refreshing summer break, whether spending time at home or abroad.

Ian Hankin

Finance

All schools are under financial pressure due to the changes in the National Funding Formula for Schools, the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and increases in staff costs since the implementation of the living wage. William Ransom is no exception. Some 80% of the school budget is spent on teaching staff costs (and our financial benchmarking shows this is in line with primary schools of similar profiles). You can see that leaves a very small proportion of budget for all other areas of expenditure and in reality, very little ability to reduce costs while maintaining high educational standards at William Ransom.



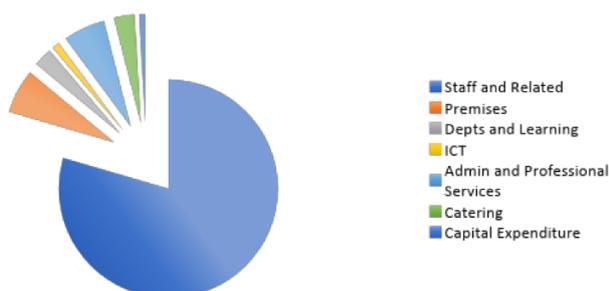
For the financial year 2017-2018, the school submitted a deficit budget to Herts County Council which we consider to be due wholly to the associated additional and ongoing expansion overheads and which do not take into consideration the school is not full for another 5 years. For example: lift services, security, cleaning and utilities costs. Over the course of this year the staff have been very diligent and, due to their efforts, the school was able to reduce the deficit from £54,000 to under £30,000. However, the next financial year brings the same challenges and once again we have submitted a deficit budget - on the basis that this is the minimum level of expenditure Mrs Driver and the staff can make that will not compromise the quality of education.

The Finance Committee is confident that the current deficit is wholly a result of the cost of expansion, and not the wider financial pressures that schools are experiencing. We have been monitoring the school financial reports monthly and going through them line by line in the quarterly Finance meetings as well as continued dialogue and discussion with HCC.



Finishing on a more positive note – pupils should not see any reduction in the wide range of activities and learning experiences on offer. The Governing Body is also very grateful to the SPA for their support and funding of IT related items and reading books this year to name a few of the purchases made with the money raised. We have a fantastic new building and much improved facilities in the existing building too. The school has been lucky enough to have the roof and cladding replaced which has smartened up the whole exterior. The Premises Committee has applied for funding for a window replacement project which will further enhance the original building and reduce heating costs. So, it really is “Business as Usual”.

Budget 2018-2019



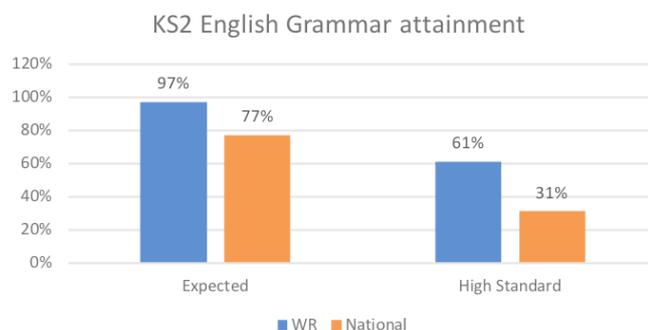
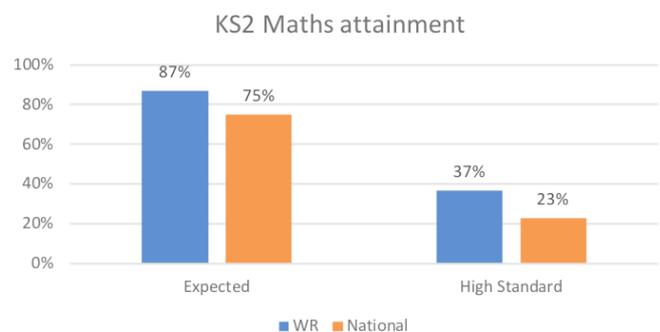
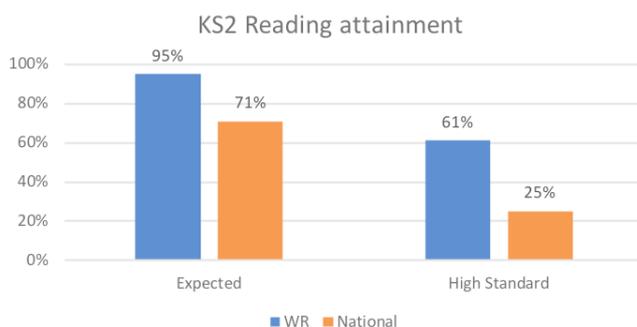
Jane Buchanan

Learning and Teaching



The main role of the Learning and Teaching Committee is to monitor the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of individual pupils, and which achieves high standards of attainment. Teacher Assessment is key to ensuring that children achieve their potential and the school has a rigorous system of assessing, tracking and monitoring the achievements and progress of individual pupils. This is followed by setting both short and long term aspirational goals for each child.

Our school continues to maintain very high standards and the results achieved last year reflect the excellent progress our pupils make throughout their time with us. Our end of Key Stage results in 2017 show that children at our school achieve well above National average. When children start in Reception they join us with a wide range of abilities, and because of the focus staff give to individual needs and targets across the school, by the end of Year 6, the vast majority of our pupils have made excellent individual progress.



Mrs Light, Miss Barnet and the TAs do a tremendous job in preparing our young Reception pupils for school life both socially and academically. This high standard is maintained throughout KS1 and KS2 which is why the number of children attaining higher scores at the end of Key Stage 2 continues to remain high.

Reception is the most important year as it provides pupils with a strong foundation for the rest of their time at William Ransom. A recent study, published in School Effectiveness and School Improvement, showed that pupils taught well in Reception do better in their GCSEs because the strong foundations laid in Reception boost a child's opportunity to excel as well as inspiring an independent desire to learn. We know homework can be challenging for our young pupils, but we are grateful for the ongoing support and help pupils receive from parents at home. It really is a partnership and it really does make a difference.



Throughout the year, Governors visit the school on a regular basis and once or twice a term we schedule in official visits with a particular focus. These visits are then written up and reported back to the full Governing Body. We are always delighted to see the school in action and thoroughly enjoy chatting to staff and pupils as well as seeing the outstanding work being done in school by all involved. This academic year, visits have focused on: whole school learning walks- observing the learning taking place in each class and talking to the pupils about their work and their learning journey in the lesson; SEND Benchmarking- reviewing the SEND provision we provide at the school; observing our pupils on a visit to Princess Helena College; listening to class assemblies; looking at the important role of TAs in the school and carrying out a Health and Safety check.



As one of the priorities on the School Development Plan, staff have continued to focus on the teaching of Maths across the key stages ensuring that there are plenty of opportunities for the application of knowledge and investigative skills. They have continued using the highly successful method of 'bar modelling' which is a pictorial representation of problems or concepts that can be used for any of the operations: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In word problems, they hold the huge benefit of helping children decide which operations to use or visualise problems. This has made Maths more accessible to those who find Maths challenging but also enabled pupils to be stretched and challenged in a fun and engaging way. I was lucky enough to observe Year 2 learning all about fractions in a practical way by making delicious marshmallow crispie cakes. I wish Maths was this exciting when I was at school!

The school has a close working relationship with parents/carers as they are kept informed and involved through discussion with teachers, regular newsletters, Twitter and the school website. Please look out for the 'Stop Press' email which informs parents/carers of the weekly activities and events taking place.

The pupils continue to have a wide range of sporting opportunities as well as opportunities to participate in The Arts and represent the school in regional events, competitions and quizzes. As you will have seen on Twitter, the pupils' achievements in these areas have been amazing and we are incredibly proud of them all! There have also been some wonderful trips: Lion King, Duxford, Fitzwilliam Museum, British Schools Museum and Mountfitchet Castle to name but a few. It is always a pleasure to see pupils enjoying the extra life of the school and taking full advantage of the great clubs and activities offered to them.



The Governing Body are very grateful to all the staff for their hard work and dedication, without which the school would not achieve and maintain its high standards across all aspects of education. They are also grateful to the pupils for their hard work and to their parents/carers for their continuing support.

Funda Shibli

Personnel

I must start by congratulating Mrs Driver on surviving 35 years at William Ransom!

As we head to the end of another academic year, we are pleased to report that our wonderful staff have produced their usual high standards in educating our children. We are fortunate to have such an amazing team: from our class teachers at the forefront (including our regular supply staff) to our supportive teaching assistants; from playground and midday supervisors to the catering team; from our office staff and site managers to our cleaners, and of course, our Mrs Driver at the helm!



In our report this year, we thought we would focus on the contribution of the Teaching Assistants (TAs) who are an often-overlooked resource in a school as they quietly get on with their work – mainly behind the scenes. The following are extracts from a report on a recent visit to observe the role of TAs in William Ransom:

- The level of high quality engagement between TAs and children is superb. There is no opportunity missed to support and encourage; every interaction I saw between TA and child/ children was meaningful.
- TAs have an extensive and detailed knowledge of individual children which means they can significantly contribute to a supportive learning journey for each individual child - depending on need.
- It is incredible that William Ransom TAs are all able to consciously articulate pedagogical approaches they are using whilst in the process of helping children. This confident verbal commentary, alongside the clear progress being made by the children, is undeniable evidence of how the William Ransom environment and its sharing ethos is constantly building capacity to ensure the best outcomes for all children .
- TA roles at William Ransom continue to inspire a number of individuals to pursue their options to become qualified teachers.
- From staff: “I could not expect any more of my TAs – they go above and beyond.”

In summary, TAs are vital to the success of William Ransom as a whole, and to individual children’s academic, personal, emotional and social success.



On a more sombre note, you will all be aware that school funding is a hot topic at the moment with budgets getting impossibly tight and many local schools are struggling. Our beautiful new expansion, whilst providing fantastic new premises, has exacerbated our current situation because of fluctuating class sizes and the increase in overheads from the new building. The fact that staffing takes up around 80% of our overstretched budget means that we must continually monitor staff arrangements. As the number of children at the school grows, the variety of needs of our children will increase.



We will work with the Head to ensure that the continuity of excellent teaching remains in place at all times and continue to benchmark our spending against other schools in the area.

And a final word from me, Catherine McIntosh...Having been on the Governing Body now for more than 20 years, first as a parent governor, latterly a community governor and having chaired the full Governing Body and most of the committees plus various other ancillary posts, my time has now come to an end. I want to use this opportunity to say goodbye and a big thank you to all the staff, Governors, parents and children that I have worked with over the years. I started back when my children were at school because I wanted to help, and the only reason I have carried on for so long is due to all of you who contribute towards making our school the cheerful and pleasant place that it is. Best wishes to everyone for the future.



Catherine McIntosh

Pupil Safety

Mrs Driver has in her recent newsletters, expressed concern about the safety of pupils due to inconsiderate parking and speeding by a small minority of parents/carers.

We would please ask all parents/carers to follow these simple rules to ensure your child's safety and to help improve relations with our neighbours.

NO PARKING

Please DO NOT park in the school car park unless you have been given a parking permit.

Please have consideration for our neighbours and DO NOT park across drives, even if it is 'only for a moment'!



DRIVING THROUGH THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

A ONE-WAY system operates - From Stuart Drive to Holdbrook.

Please AVOID turning round in Stuart Drive. Drive through the school and go down Holdbrook

Please DO NOT drive up Holdbrook and then try and turn round; this is dangerous!



A 5 MPH SPEED LIMIT APPLIES THROUGH THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.

The school operates CCTV which will help to identify drivers who do not abide by these rules.



We would thank you for your co-operation and help to ensure every child arrives and goes home safely.

Premises

A key issue for the Premises Committee is ensuring the facilities are the best they can feasibly be at all times. This year we have had the honour of introducing Peter Carmody into the William Ransom family. Peter has made a great first impression on William Ransom by treating every penny of the facilities budget as if the cash is his own! He tirelessly hunts for the best way to procure anything from toilet paper to leaf blowers! He always considers both the long-term and short-term costs for each individual item - so that we are able to make informed decisions on what is best for the school.



Peter has worked closely with us and we have focused on a number of major and minor projects within the year. The largest of these projects has to be the re-insulation and replacing of the roof covering, which was hampered by the 'Beast from the East' (and if the contractor is to be believed, the beast from the north, west and south as well!). We were also fortunate to have our heating system upgraded and both elements have made for a more environmentally efficient building.



One of the Premises Committee's responsibilities is to consider the unfortunate possibility of a 'lock down' procedure and how alarms should be raised in such an event. To a lesser degree, we have worked closely with Peter to agree on a revised access strategy for the external gates during occupational hours. We work hard to maintain a balance between creating a safe and secure learning environment whilst avoiding an unwelcoming 'fortress feel' for visitors to our school.

Our next focus will be to continue to lobby for replacement windows, which will give multiple benefits to the school such as increased security, reduced heat loss and making the building more aesthetically pleasing.

One way to keep the facilities at their best is for everyone to play their part. People are already doing this, but if everyone can report any issues, no matter how small, it will help us maintain the building economically. If we can prevent issues from occurring or worsening this can be more cost effective than fixing them at a later date. Thank you to everyone for helping in looking after our premises.

Jack Wells

Child Protection

Child protection and safeguarding are key areas of Governor responsibility. Our designated Child Protection Governor (currently Mrs McIntosh) has termly meetings with Mrs Driver to help fulfil the monitoring role of the Governors. All Governors receive child protection training which is updated every few years.

Sport @ WR

It has been a year of mixed fortune for the school sports teams. In the autumn term, both football teams went out in the group stages of the pre-season rally, however the girls came 2nd in the ESFA competition. In table tennis both teams won the area competition but were to progress no further and the basketball team came 2nd in the area competition.



Spring term saw the school send teams to indoor athletics, where the girls came third, tag rugby where we went out after the group stages and the teams came second in the area in both hockey and lacrosse. The girls' football team improved on the autumn results by coming second in the end of season rally, the boys' A team went out in the group stages but the B team made it to the semi-finals in their rally. The netball teams won the vast majority of the matches convincingly.

The final term started with the speed stacking team coming 3rd in the area competition. Both the netball A and B teams came third in their respective rallies. The boys reached the Wix Cup semi-final in football and we fielded very young teams in the quik cricket competition, including some Year 3s, as Year 6 were in Wales. It was great experience for both teams and the girls did amazingly well coming third out of 16 schools.

Finally, the girls' football team won the Wix Cup on penalties. They have improved all year and have all now joined local teams and we hope they continue to enjoy the sport. Great thanks as always to all the staff involved with the sports clubs and teams, in particular Mrs Light, Mr. Maranian, Mr. Sears, Miss Vivian and Miss Hallahan.



WR Supported Charities 2017 - 2018

MacMillan Nurses
Great Ormond Street Hospital
Sports Relief
Brain Tumour Research
Children in Need
Compassion UK
Hitchin Partnership Hardship fund
Save the Children
Poppy Appeal
Shoebboxes Link to Hope
Keetch Children's Hospice



Meet the Governors

I was honoured to have been elected as a Parent Governor. This first year has been an incredible learning experience particularly against the backdrop of the challenging budget situation. This time has also given me an insight into how much work Mrs Driver and her staff put in to maintaining the high standards and respect that have been the core of the school for generations.

I attended a few class lessons during my day visit, and I was just amazed at how much preparation and passion goes into lessons by the teaching staff and that this passion and enthusiasm is matched by the teaching assistants as they work with our children.

I look forward to continuing my time on the Governing Body, and to working with fellow Governors all of whom have such a wide breadth of experience and great commitment to William Ransom.



Bob

...from the Head

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.

Those of you who know me well, know that Dr Seuss has always been my favourite childhood author. I was brought up on Dr Seuss and learned to read with *The Cat in the Hat*. Yes, it had been written all those years ago!

I recently came across a new Dr Seuss book which made me re-think my approach to education and teaching. 'Hooray for Diffendoofer Day' celebrates all that can be different in education:

'Our school is at the corner of Dinkzoober and Dinkzott. It looks like any other school, but we suspect it's not. I think we're learning lots of things not taught at other schools.

Our teachers are remarkable, they make up their own rules.

*Miss Bobble teaches listening,
Miss Wobble teaches smelling,
Miss Fribble teaches laughing,
And Miss Quibble teaches yelling.'*



However, we are slightly constrained by the National Curriculum as smelling and yelling are not included in our programmes of study!

When I look back over all the things that have happened in the last 12 months however, I think we get as close to the Diffendoofer School as possible! There have been some amazing school trips, to Cadbury World, Stansted Mountfitchett Castle and Airbus at Stevenage. We have had some very interesting visitors into school from Pudsey Bear and Buster the Stepasaurus to Hywel Roberts to inspire and motivate the teaching staff.

Your children have produced some fantastic work, there have been some wonderful displays up and around school and whilst away on School Journey with the Year 6 pupils recently, I was frequently complimented on the behaviour and positive attitude of the pupils. They were a pleasure to take away.

So, in this world of ever changing demands from the powers above, and difficult financial decisions that have to be made, I think it is essential we remember what our core purpose is: preparing children for life itself.

*'Oh, finest school in Dinkerville-the only one as well-
We love you, Diffendoofer School, much more than we can tell.
You are so diffendooferouse it gives us joy to say,
Three cheers for Diffendoofer School- Hooray, Hooray, Hooray!!!'*



Mary Driver

The William Ransom Primary School Roll of Honour 2018

Wathaq Arnon
Evelyn Atkinson
Leila Atkinson
Arran Brown
Lewis Clark
Samuel Crossland
Wyatt Dow
Aaron Evans
Abigail Farrington
Carys Faulkner
George Fox
Maya Henderson
Hadee Islam
Cassidy James
Isabelle James
Simran Khattran
Enya King
Sevraj Lidder
Kayleigh Maxwell

Kalleigh McCabe
Hargun Minhas
Erica Morey
Ertan Osman
William Probyn
Ria Shah
Leyla Shibli
Ribhya Singh
Krishpal Sodhi
Mathilda Start
Noah Start
Emily Stokes
Pip Taylor
Noah Tingle
Joseph Waite
Jake Wallace
Melody Ward
Isla Watts
Eleanor Wilding

