



**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body
of Croft Church of England Primary School
July 2020**

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.

Covid 19 Pandemic

When we started this Academic Year, no one could have imagined what was to happen in early 2020. This would eventually lead to the closure of all schools from 20th March, except to the children of Key Workers and vulnerable children. Thanks to the enormous efforts of Mr Robson and all of our staff the school remained open to those pupils including wrap around care at the beginning and end of the day and throughout the school holidays.

Teaching staff provided high quality weekly Learning Packs for all pupils and differentiated work for pupils with learning needs from the beginning of lockdown. They have done an immense job of responding to posts, often up to 100 per day, and providing feedback and support. Support staff have helped to care for and supervise children in school. Mrs Banks has worked incredibly hard in providing information, coordinated all feedback from parents, providing endless returns to the DfE amongst a million other jobs. This was in addition to staff caring for and supporting their own families at home.

When the announcement was made that schools could reopen to more pupils from June 1st to those in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 all staff worked together to risk assess, and make the necessary adjustments to enable this to happen, which it did after Trust Board approval, on 4th June. Although we could not accommodate all children in these year groups measures were put in place to allow as many as possible to return. It was wonderful to hear the children's voices in the school again on the 4th.

All available teaching and support staff have been working with the children in school and continuing to prepare and support learning at home. More and more activities have been developed to allow those pupils at home become more involved with their peer groups and classes in school. We can't wait to see the whole school reunited.

During 3 weeks of the summer holidays we have been able to arrange to open the Out of School Club. We are grateful to Kerry for leading this and other members of staff who will provide lots of fun and exciting activities.

We are so lucky to have an amazing team of staff in Croft. They have worked tirelessly and continuously throughout this time in a completely selfless way. They have overcome difficulties, been innovative, supportive, and adapted to the circumstances with patience and positivity. Our huge thanks go to them all for the work they have done and continue to do.

We are also incredibly grateful to you as parents for supporting your children at home with their learning. From feedback to questionnaires and general comments, it would seem that at times this has been an incredibly rewarding experience and at other times exhausting.

It has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone, and we look forward to some sort of normality in hopefully the not too distant future.

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 fewer than 200 pupils as small schools. Around 40% of our pupils come from outside our catchment area. The school became an Academy in January 2018 and is part of the Dales Academies Trust.

There are currently 105 pupils on roll + 11 Nursery pupils. Around 2.8% of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals. There are no service children. 5.6% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium. 3.7% of pupils have English as an Additional Language.

13.9% of pupils have Special Educational Needs (EHCP and SEN support). We have a low percentage of ethnic minority pupils.

Our absence rate to the end of December 2019 was 4.0%, 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 Viv Waugh now an Associate Foundation Governor and one vacancy), 4 Parent Governors (Mrs Julia Clarke, Mr Nick Potts, Mrs Julia Preston and one vacancy), 2 Co-opted Governors (Mr Derek Blenkharn and Mrs Alison Russell), 1 Local Authority Governor (Vacancy), the Head Teacher (Mr Simon Robson) and 1 Staff Governor (Miss Nicola Bleasby).

Mrs Michelle Patterson resigned in January 2019. The appointment of one Parent Governor will begin in September. We thank Michelle for her hard work, dedication and support during her time as a Governor.

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.

We do not have committees with delegated functions; instead, we have discussed all business as a full Governing Body. Meetings have taken place every half term. During school lockdown meetings have been virtual. This has ensured that all governors are fully informed and able to make a contribution to all aspects of Governance. The responsibilities of the Governing Body are determined by the Scheme of Delegation of the MAT.

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.

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Strategic Planning for the future

The School Development Plan 19 -20 focussed on the following areas:

- To ensure that the school's curriculum intent is well-implemented, and leaders effectively monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of education for pupils.
- To improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with learning needs and those with SEND and embed a culture of independence and self-sufficiency.
- To improve the consistency and quality of the teaching of phonics and spelling and improve outcomes for pupils.
- **Governors:** To appoint and successfully induct two new parent governors and one foundation governor. To arrange CPD where needed, Induction, CofG, Complaints, OFSTED, Curriculum. To assign curriculum monitoring responsibilities to all Governors. To continue to communicate effectively with parents and the community. To monitor the mental health and well-being of staff

In September, the new curriculum was launched. It is exciting, challenging and incorporates the school's Intent, Implementation, and Impact.

Our curriculum intent:

Happiness is at the heart of the curriculum at Croft Church of England Primary School.

At Croft School, we believe that happiness is... the feeling you get when you help others and contribute to the world; when you work hard at something that was difficult to begin with; when you feel safe, cared for and respected; when you feel confident in your uniqueness and know where you are going.

Our curriculum is ambitious and designed to meet the diverse needs of the children who attend Croft School. It aims to provide all pupils with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Our core aims are to provide a curriculum that builds on pupils' individual talents and uniqueness and empowers our children to be:

- independent
- resilient
- emotionally intelligent

We believe that these are the three gifts that we would like to give our pupils help them to succeed as life-long learners and children of God. The 'giving' of these gifts are what drive the curriculum at Croft school.

Our curriculum implementation:

Our curriculum provides pupils with rich, deep, inter-connected contexts to develop their skills of empathy, independence and emotional intelligence. These key curriculum elements are woven into our coherently planned, sequenced, enquiry-led programmes of study. Learning enables pupils to think about and debate challenging real-life issues, to work and socialise with others from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and to lead and take part in genuine social action projects that will impact the lives of others. Teaching promotes the development of pupils' metacognitive knowledge to improve

independent thinking skills to become confident, self-assured learners. Mental health and well-being is a right of way for all pupils at Croft school; it is given high priority. Personal development and relationships shape our approach to learning to ensure that our pupils are happy, emotionally intelligent citizens who know themselves and their place in the world as unique individuals. We assess our pupils diligently, so we know where we need to take them next; we know our children and their families exceptionally well.

The impact of our curriculum:

Our curriculum ensures that our children develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve exceptionally well and is reflected in our consistently high outcomes for our pupils. Pupils with SEND and those in receipt of pupil premium funding achieve very well. Pupils have a love of reading and read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. They enjoy the challenge of maths and are able to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriately for their age. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils' personal development is a strength and is evident in the way that pupils contribute to the life of school and how they interact with each other and the world around them. Our pupils understand and express their emotions well and handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. Pupils develop into confident, attentive, independent learners ready for the next stage in their education. Our pupils are continually growing as empathetic, independent and emotionally intelligent learners and citizens.

Governors have been assigned subject responsibilities this year and have liaised closely with their subject leaders. They have discussed the subject policy, action plans, looked at coverage and progression and where possible completed some subject monitoring.

In September 2018, a new framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) was introduced and since then the school has been working towards those new standards. As a Church of England school, the Church and especially Christian values are fundamental to the ethos of the school and the education that pupils receive. We are extremely fortunate to have Mrs Lancaster, our Collective Worship and RE subject leader and Foundation Governor Mrs Waugh, to provide support and advice.

Special Educational Needs Review

Our School Improvement Adviser spent a day in school in the Autumn Term reviewing our SEN provision. He was impressed with the education, care and support provided for pupils with wide-ranging needs. In his report he commented,

'....this is largely due to the effective leadership of SEND by the headteacher and the school's success at managing pupils with SEND through personalised programmes provided by caring, knowledgeable staff. It is for these reasons that parents are confident to send their children to Croft CE primary school because they know that children with SEND are well taught, supported and included'.

Mental Health and Well Being

There has been a significant focus on the mental health and well-being of pupils, staff and the community throughout the year. We have in place in each school in the Trust, a Mental Health Champion. There have been regular meetings and the sharing of good practice. The Chair of Governors is on the Trust working party and Clare Martin is our Mental Health Champion. She has undertaken training through Compass Buzz, Emotional First Aid and Drawing and Talking therapy. All staff have had some mental health training. This has been and will be especially important as children return to school from lockdown.

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

We have now completed our second full year as an Academy as part of the Dales Academies Trust.

- During the past year school to school support and collaboration has strengthened amongst the schools in the MAT, with Head Teachers from all schools taking the lead on certain aspects of school improvement
- The Chief Executive Officer, Damian Chubb, continues to provide support and challenge for all schools
- Some changes to service level agreements have been made which have reduced costs
- We have a School Improvement Adviser for the MAT who is a serving Ofsted inspector
- We have a dedicated Health and Safety Adviser who has been working with us all to provide a safe return to school
- We are sharing expertise and standardising information and policies within the MAT where appropriate
- We have strengthened our links with the Diocese and benefit from the services of a Diocesan School Improvement Adviser who provides support, advice and professional development
- We have been able to arrange joint professional development with other schools
- There are now 13 primary schools and 1 secondary school in the Trust

2. 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 Summer Term. These are set by the CEO of the Trust, the School Improvement Adviser and three governors. 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 by OFSTED. We have been working hard to re-evaluate the school against OFSTED standards which were updated in September 2019. 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. This has obviously been a very challenging year because of the pandemic and although pupil progress could not be tracked because of home learning, Governors have monitored safeguarding, pupils' access to home learning, content of home learning packs, provision for key workers' children and vulnerable children, staff wellbeing.

Following some pupils' return to school, Governors reviewed risk assessments and actions taken to ensure the school was safe to open on a weekly basis. They will be working with Mr Robson to prepare for reopening of the school to all pupils in September.

British Values

Schools 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 are involved in preparing a Pupil Premium Strategy. They 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 priorities for PE, how this grant is being spent and the impact it is having on pupils. The report is on the school website.

3. 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 Finance Manager of the Trust. The school has received a visit from the auditor for the Dales Academies Trust this year.

We plan expenditure to meet the needs identified in the School Development Plan. The full Governing Body provides an indicative school budget for the year which is approved by the Trust Board. 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. The new Spending Review has allocated some additional funds to school in the next financial year, but this is dependent upon pupil numbers. It is always our aim to achieve best value and we compare our school with similar schools to benchmark this.

The building is maintained to a high standard. We applied for Condition Improvement Funding to refurbish another part of the school roof but were unfortunately unsuccessful this year.

We have purchased a number of new I Pads this year through the generosity of the Dodgson Trust. We have installed a new curriculum kitchen area in the Out of School Club with funding from Friends of the School and we are hoping to install a climbing frame in the Early Years outdoor area this summer through the generous donations from parents and by using some of our PE grant.

Next year we are hoping to purchase additional IT equipment.

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 Relationships and Sex Education.

The County Catering Service provide nutritious school lunches. The quality of food is excellent which was reinforced by parents when they were invited into school 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. An online pre-order service ensures 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 and have continued to do so throughout the pandemic. There will be a new school meals provider in September, but our catering staff will remain.

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 the new Ofsted Inspection Framework and SIAMS. The Governing Board is a member of the National Governors Association. The Chair of Governors visits other schools and there is

now a Dales Chair of Governors group. All Governors complete Child Protection training, Online Safety 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.

Until lockdown, there have been more information events for parents this year including Curriculum and SATs Information Evenings, Induction and Stay and Play in Early Years and Stay and Read sessions in school. These sessions give parents more information about school, what their children are learning about and how to help them. We now hold termly drop in sessions after community Collective Worship each term and produce a termly newsletter. Parents are invited to family lunch each term.

Staffing

In a small school Governors assist with the appointment of staff. This year has seen some changes in staffing. In September, we welcomed Mr Conway as Class 4 teacher and Mrs Donoghue as Class 3 teacher. Miss Bleasby continued as Early Years Teacher and Mrs McManus and Mrs Lancaster shared teaching in Class 2. This staffing arrangement will continue in September.

Our congratulations go to Mrs Donoghue who has successfully completed her NQT year.

Mrs Carbert left her part time SENCO role in school in October to take on a greater responsibility in another school. Mr Robson took on this role for the rest of the year.

Mr Ryde joined the team as an ATA in Class 3 and Mrs Martin as an ATA in Class 4. We said goodbye to Mrs Halliday at Christmas, Mrs Marksby in March, and Mr Ryde this summer. We thank them for all their hard work and contribution to our school.

In September, we welcome Miss McNulty, Advanced Teaching Assistant to Class 2 and Mrs Sellers, Advanced Teaching Assistant to Class 4.

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.

Unfortunately, children in Years 1, 2 and 6 were unable to complete their statutory assessments this year.

Attendance is closely monitored by the Governing Body, who set targets for it annually. This year's annual attendance could not be measured as the school closed in March.

The new Ofsted Framework has raised the importance of a broad, balanced and systematic curriculum which focuses on the pupils' needs in our school. This year has seen staff implementing our new, exciting and systematic curriculum. 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 the Social Action display.

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. There is an excellent take up of music lessons in school including guitar, piano, drums and woodwind.

Children have created some outstanding artwork, some of which is displayed around school and the Art Gallery in the school entrance too. This has continued throughout the pandemic and has been shared on Tapestry and SeeSaw.

Children in Years 5 and 6 spent three days at East Barnby residential outdoor activity centre at the beginning of the year. They had a fantastic time trying new outdoor activities including rock scrambling and canoeing. They developed their independence by being away from home and showed resilience and growth mindset in trying new activities.

School visits have included: The Oriental Museum in Durham, Kings Church Foodbank, Darlington Mission at St Augustine's Parish Centre, Hurworth School, Nightingale Care Home in Richmond, Crucial Crew, Wynyard Hall, Durham Castle, Ripon Museum and Darlington Synagogue. These visits have given children new and practical learning and social experiences which enhanced the curriculum taught in school.

Visitors to school have included language specialist, Alison Vardy, Little Sprouts Cookery teachers, members of the Kings Church Foodbank team, 2 Swiss Student Teachers, Mr P., Oliver King from Durham Cricket Club. These visitors have been inspirational to the children.

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

Miss Bleasby has led P.E. this year. Well done to our sports' teams who have competed in a variety of different sports this year and been incredibly successful. The government sports grant has enabled us to be part of the Richmond cluster for Sports competitions. 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 Matthew Brown, Middlesbrough FC and Mrs Marksby and has been very successful. Mrs Sellers has enhanced the dance, drama and gymnastics curriculum. We are very grateful to Mr Robinson for running a lunchtime football club and Mrs Jewkes who has run lunchtime Netball. 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.

A big thank you to all those parents and grandparents who support us in school in a variety of ways, including listening to readers or providing an extra pair of hands on school visits.

The Out of School Club provides an excellent service before and after school and during some school holidays for parents and children. Kerry and Hayley work extremely hard to provide a home from home with lots of fun activities.

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 we have been able to install the Curriculum Kitchen.

We have supported many charities over the year, this raises awareness of others in need and raises much needed funds. Please see our SMSC Calendar on the school website for further information.

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 and 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. Take care and have a lovely summer.

Alison Russell

Alison Russell,
Chair of Governors

Governing Body attendance at meetings

Governor	Full Governing Body (7)
Alison Russell	7
Michelle Patterson	1 (Resigned January 2020)
Julia Clarke	7
Nick Potts	7
Julia Preston	7
Derek Blenkarn	7
Viv Waugh	1 (Became Associate Jan 2020)
Simon Robson	7
Nicola Bleasby	7

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

How to contact your governing body

Information about the school's governing body is available on the governors' page of the school's website croft.dalesmat.org

E mail the Chair of Governors at CofG@croft.dalesmat.org

Or leave a message/ letter at the school office.