

# Annual Governance Statement for the Fells' Federation

## ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/23

### Governors' Role

The Governing Body supports and challenges the head teachers of both schools (John Ruskin Secondary, and Coniston Church of England Primary) to continually improve the school and provide the best education for every child. This Annual Governance Statement is one way in which the Governing Body communicates its work and the impact on school improvement. In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body in The Fells' Federation are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteachers to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

### The Governing Body Structure

The Governing Body is made up of a group of committed volunteers who bring a range of skills and expertise and come from a variety of backgrounds. The Governors are committed to supporting and sustaining the continual improvement of the education of every child in both schools.

The Fells' Federation had a full governing body for most of the 2022/23 academic year, (one parent governor stood down and a new one was appointed within 3 months) with all eleven positions filled as per the following structure –

- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor appointed by the Local Authority
- 1 Staff Governor
- 2 Headteacher
- 2 Foundation Governors
- 3 Co-opted Governors

The Governing Body appoints a professional clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on all actions. The clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key role in the work of the Governing Body.

Two new governors joined the Governing Body during 2022/23, one of whom was a co-opted governor and one a parent governor. The chair and vice chair are elected by the Governing Body and work closely with the headteachers and the clerk. In June 2022 the Governing Body elected Joyce Hallam as Chair and in September 2022, Brian Streeter as Vice Chair.

### Training

To effectively fulfil its role, the Governing Body must ensure that all its governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the schools' priority objectives. Members of Governing Body have undertaken a skills audit to support their development and have accessed appropriate training provided by the Local Authority or Diocese. Training is recorded by the clerk and includes safeguarding. Information learned at training sessions is shared throughout the year at FGB meetings. Training ensures that our Governing Body keeps up to date regarding best practice and the latest requirements and expectations from the Department for Education. All new governors take part in a process of Induction, as laid out in the Induction Policy for Governors.

## Impact of Full Governing Body Meetings

The Full Governing Body met four times over the 2022/23 academic year to review and agree school policies and monitor progress against the School Development Plans at CPS and JRS. The SDP identifies the key areas on which the school and the Governing Body wish to focus during the academic year. In addition, the INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION and IMPACT statements, along with subject Action Plans, provide a framework for monitoring outcomes along with progress and attainment figures. The School Development Plan includes measures and milestones that the Governing Body uses to satisfy itself that progress is being made against objectives and that all actions being taken are improving teaching and learning outcomes for all children. In addition to FGB meetings, smaller Curriculum and Standards committees for both schools and a Finance and Resources committee meet between FGB meetings to allow for more detailed review and monitoring.

Overall governor attendance at meetings and commitment to relevant school monitoring visits is high. As well as continuing to meet its statutory obligations, the Governing Body maintain a particular focus on the wellbeing of the headteachers and the staff, and children at both schools.

The schools' budgets were scrutinised and reviewed in detail by the Finance Committee, which includes the school (JRS) bursar. **The "Schools financial value standard (SFVS) and assurance statement"** is completed each year which ensures basic standards for good financial health and resource management are upheld. The committee considers whether resources are being used in the most effective ways to support the best education outcomes for all children; in particular that the schools are making effective use of the Pupil Premium and Catch-Up Funding to deliver positive educational outcomes and mitigate some of the impact of the pandemic on pupil progress, particularly on vulnerable pupils.

## Performance Management

Governors are responsible for undertaking the headteachers' performance management review each year. In 2022/23 this was undertaken by an external provider for both headteachers.

Two designated governors, supported by an expert external advisor, carry out the annual appraisal of both heads, which is reviewed at points throughout the year. The appraisal process allows the Governing Body to look closely at the headteachers' performance, and discuss areas of strength and, where necessary, areas for development. New targets are then set against criteria on which each headteacher's performance will be evaluated.

## Monitoring Focus Areas in 2022/23

The Governing Body uses an agreed monitoring timetable throughout the year for specific areas. Governors take responsibility for contacting the schools, to arrange a visit that is mutually acceptable. Monitoring visits are a chance to get to know the schools better, to observe and communicate with staff and to hear the pupil voice. Visits enable governors to ensure that actions agreed in the School Development Plan of each school are being taken forward. A monitoring visit report is prepared and presented at the Governing Body meeting following the visit, allowing other governors to ask questions. Lead teachers at CPS shared their Action Plans in key areas during 2023, which included Geography, History, Science, Art and DT. In addition, 3 workshops for governors have been provided on SEND, Curriculum development and Health and Safety.

Specific Link governors have been assigned to the following areas:

- Health & Safety

- Safeguarding
- Finance
- SEND
- Pupil Premium and Looked After Children
- Curriculum and Standards
- Data protection
- RE, Careers and PHSE

**SIAMS and OFSTED at CPS:**

CPS successfully underwent a SIAMS Inspection by the Church of England in February 2023 and an OFSTED inspection (Section8) in April 2013. In both cases, the outcomes were good. The school continues to develop and maintain its high standards.

**Governor focus areas for 2023/24**

The Governing Body, the headteachers and senior management team and all members of staff are constantly striving to improve and develop their schools. Governors will review the long-term vision for the Federation as part of their strategic planning in the coming year.

**Governors' priorities for the academic year 2023-2024 are:**

- To ensure that the schools remain financially stable during the increasing financial pressures on the schools' budgets through energy costs etc
- To ensure the schools have strategies in place to support the most vulnerable families through the cost of living crisis
- To prioritise reading support at all ages
- To maintain an open dialogue with other organisations about school structures and the long-term status of the schools as maintained / voluntary controlled organisations
- To encourage leaders to engage with nationally recognised qualifications that empower them in their roles
- To develop and train governors to be better able to deliver on their functions as a governing body of The Fells' Federation