

Dear Parent/Carer,

As members of Greengate Lane's local governance committee (LCG), we wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate the school's continued improvement and success over the last year and to give you more information about our work.

As part of the Astrea Academy Trust, the school has a dedicated local committee, which is chaired by Dr. Simon Merrywest. You can find out more about us and our work on the school's website.

As an LGC, we have several responsibilities, which are set out in bold below. Beneath each one we have given a sense of how we have sought to achieve this. Above all though, it continues to be a great privilege to work with Mrs. Robinson and her team to support the success and further development of the school.

Best wishes,

Simon Merrywest (Chair), Kara Robinson (Principal), Marcia Bennett, Sarah Jolley, Sally McConnell, Rosie Selman, Seth Garvin-Smith, Georgina Rusling (clerk)

**To ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Astrea is maintained within each school.**

- **In what ways has the committee promoted a culture of high standards, expectations and aspirations?**

The monitoring and further enhancement of performance and standards form the core part of every committee meeting, with the Principal presenting a range of data and commentary across all aspects of school life, but in particular on the work to ensure positive academic attainment for every pupil. To promote expectations for all pupils, the committee reviews a range of data at every meeting. This includes academic outcomes, any relevant attendance information, wider outcomes tracking and the strategic response made by school to address any barriers to learning that children may have.

In addition, the committee have reviewed with the Principal the School Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation Framework (these are tools used by the School to assess provision and practice, informing plans for future developments) and receive a substantive update on the targets and plans therein annually. These documents along with questioning and analysis of data helps to set the plan for the following year.

- **How has the committee engaged with the Board or the wider Trust in order to achieve this?**

Committee members have taken advantage of the Astrea Trust governance training to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding around key issues such as data,

safeguarding and curriculum. The Chair receives regular updates from the Trust's CEO and members of their senior team on wider developments within the Trust and on wider matters relating to the effective performance of schools, all of which is cascaded down to committee members.

- **How has the committee supported the Principal in carrying out this role?**

Each committee member understands their role as a critical friend both to the Principal and the School more generally and the Principal responds at every meeting to a wide range of questions aimed at both deepening insight and providing constructive challenge.

The Chair meets in person with the Principal fortnightly and they liaise on other matters on an ad hoc basis as required. The Chair also liaises with the Principal and Clerk to draw up agendas for meetings, ensuring that there is time on the agenda for a more in-depth discussion of a strategic topic, such as a knowledge-rich curriculum; excellence in teaching; behaviours and staff and student well-being.

- **Have committee members visited to the school to deepen their understanding?**

Whilst visits were curtailed in the first part of the year because of the pandemic, committee members are now again visiting the school to look thematically at topics in greater depth. This usually involves a deep dive with the relevant members of staff and a subsequent report and discussion at the next governance meeting. All governance meetings are also held in person in the school, giving a further opportunity to visit.

**To hold school leaders to account for the educational performance of the schools, the inclusion of all pupils and the offer of a knowledge-rich and broadly-based curriculum.**

- **Has the committee scrutinised and challenged educational performance? AND How has the committee ensured that school performance is at the heart of their discussions?**

At every meeting a set of data and commentary on educational performance are presented and scrutinised. This might include predicted outcomes or the results of assessments such as SATs performance. The committee will also spend time understanding mitigating actions where performance is not on schedule and tracking progress against these in future meetings.

- **How has the committee ensured its own strength and development (e.g. recruitment and training)**

The committee Chair and Clerk undertake an annual skills audit to identify areas in which the committee as a whole might benefit from some additional experience and supports individual development plans. Numbers of committee members are also kept under review and as individual circumstances mean that members need to leave, recruitment of a replacement is followed up quickly. The committee are also mindful of their own performance and effectiveness. At the end of each meeting the final agenda item asks and records 'What have we done for our children today?'. In part this item allows reflection on the role the committee has played in ensuring sufficient scrutiny of all aspects of School life.

- **What has the committee done to support inclusion at the school? AND How does the committee ensure that the interests of all groups of pupils are met? (e.g. SEND, EAL, Looked After Children)**

Members of the committee work with link members of staff to address specific issues around SEND, behaviour and attendance and safeguarding. Each Principal's report also includes a diversity profile for both staff and students and data on the attendance and performance of pupils who are in receipt of, or might benefit from additional support or monitoring.

**To work with the school's leadership and central team to ensure that high standards of safeguarding are maintained.**

- **Have all committee members undertaken safeguarding training?**

Yes, all members complete safeguarding training once a year. This includes reading the Department for Education's statutory guidance for schools on safeguarding children - Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1 and Annex A) and completing online training modules to enhance understanding. In addition, the Trust's Safeguarding Development Manager delivered a bespoke training session during a committee meeting. This training has been completed by all members regardless of whether similar training has been completed as part another professional role.

- **Is there a dedicated safeguarding link member?**

The committee is fortunate that Rosie Selman, the Trust's Safeguarding Development Manager is a member of this committee and undertakes this role. The committee none the less fully understands that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility (LGC, staff and parents) and cannot be delegated to a single individual.

- **Does the committee have a clear understanding of how effective safeguarding is within the school? And Does the committee have a clear understanding of the main areas of strength and / or concern?**

Safeguarding data is presented at every meeting and processes are discussed, questioned and clarified, enabling members to build a picture of strengths and concerns.

Detailed safeguarding reports are received at every committee meeting, giving members a clear understanding of how effective safeguarding is within the school and highlighting any areas of concern for further scrutiny. The Principal also discusses any specific issues confidentially with the committee Chair during their regular 1:1 meetings.

**To promote positive parent, community and stakeholder engagement and to drive school-to-school partnerships for improvement within the Trust.**

- **What has the committee done to support and encourage collaboration with other schools in the Trust or the local area? AND Has the committee supported partnerships with local businesses or community groups?**

The committee have enthusiastically supported a wide range of activities that have seen the School participate and collaborate in the local community and in the wider city. This has

included a local swimming gala, Y5 mixed cricket, athletics, girl's football academy with Sheffield Wednesday Football Club and tennis.

▪ **How have the committee ensured that the work of the school takes into account the views of pupils, parents and the wider community?**

The committee benefits from a very active parent member, who lives in the local community and they routinely report feedback from other parents at committee meetings. The committee is also keen to recruit at least one further parent member and anyone interested in contributing to the further success of the School can contact the Principal for more information about what the role involves.

**To identify, understand and report to Trustees any strategic risks facing the school.**

▪ **Has the committee discussed strategic risks faced by the school and ensured they are reported back to the Trust? Do committee members have an understanding of the potential risks to the school?**

A specific discussion on risk is part of each committee meeting, with the top risks in the School's risk register being discussed in detail, with the committee agreeing whether any further mitigating action is required. Indeed, the approach to risk management by the School and the Committee was recently highlighted as good practice in a Trust-wide governance seminar (in particular this related to the Chair escalating an estates risk to the Trust to ensure that appropriate action was taken to address it).