

Holly Hill Infant School Governors Annual Statement

2024- 2025

Holly Hill governors have the job of supporting the school leadership at Holly Hill and in holding the school to account in three areas, finance, educational performance of the children and ensuring the Christian values, ethos and vision of the school are met.

It has been a year of growth and reflection, with on-going improvement to the already fantastic provisions on offer at Holly Hill. Building on the successful Ofsted inspection of the last academic year, Headteacher Mr Carr has led all the staff at Holly Hill through a challenging and at times, unknown, future with temerity and always with Holly Hill at the heart of every decision. Governors made the difficult decision this year to withdraw from the academisation process with ILET. This was based on concerns raised by governors for Holly Hill's representation as a founding school, the representation of primary schools and also of church distinctiveness. Whilst a disappointing end to an initially exciting opportunity, the difficult decision for Holly Hill to withdraw from this process highlights the commitment of Mr Carr and governors to prioritising the needs and potential of its children above all else. Governors would like to reassure members of its community that they remain in an excellent position to embrace the future with confidence and remain committed to joining a Methodist School's Trust that is right for the school.

The governors are ever thankful for the hard work of Mr Carr in ensuring the children and young people in our care do exceptionally well. We are also grateful to the whole staff team for their dedication to the school and the wider community which it serves.

The governors continue to exercise their strategic oversight of the school in their specialised areas of expertise and in asking the difficult questions which ensure the high expectations of Holly Hill are maintained and applied thoughtfully.

Finance

In the Autumn term we look closely at school finance to make sure that the money received by the school is well spent. The Board were satisfied that the school is currently in a sound financial position at the moment. However, like all schools and many people at this time, we continue to feel the effects of increased bills. The governors continue to ensure we are able to put children first as we navigate these difficult financial times, also making space for increasingly costly priorities, such as Net Zero and Holly Hill's sustainable energy use.

Mr Carr continues to work on recruiting more families to the community and has built on the great work of last year in increasing the number of people who have applied to join us. This is in part due to his tireless efforts and the excellent relationships maintained between school staff and parents/carers, but also due to Holly Hill's enduring reputation as a steadfast and welcoming provider of high-quality provision for children. The more children we have on roll, the

more money we are given to provide this high quality of education, and governors are excited to see these efforts showing success.

We continue to explore a variety of options and opportunities to help us navigate through the changing landscape in education and constantly review and improve our providers, where possible. With a positive balance to school income and expenditure, governors remain confident in the school's ability to manage their funds effectively and with an equitable approach to educational provisions.

The governing board have also looked closely at the use of money allocated for Pupil Premium children and are confident that it is being used wisely to implement bespoke strategies to help decrease the attainment gap. These strategies are born of a collaborative and cohesive approach from all staff and are based on a series of reviews and assessment benchmarks, thus assuring that the most impactful provisions are assigned to each student. Teachers on a higher pay scale continue to exercise their additional responsibilities over designated areas of the curriculum, each in part dedicated to maintaining this equitable approach to education.

Educational performance

In Autumn 2024 the Governing Board looked at achievement and progress from the previous year. The Governing Body is extremely pleased with the results and achievements of our children. We are celebrating an good set of outcomes. Our teachers and the entire school team have worked exceptionally hard, despite challenging times, to ensure our children succeed.

Children at Holly Hill have achieved strong results this year. In Reading, 73% reached the expected standard, with 20% achieving greater depth. In Writing, 63% met the expected standard, but 15% reached greater depth, which is notably higher than nationally. In Maths, 71% met the expected standard, with 15% achieving greater depth. Combined results for Reading, Writing, and Maths show 63% meeting the expected standard, and 10% achieving greater depth. Science outcomes are also strong, with 85% meeting expectations. These results demonstrate that children at Holly Hill continue to achieve well, with particularly strong greater depth outcomes in Writing and Reading.

Our bespoke curriculum continues to be adapted to ensure it meets the needs of all children. It is aligned with Holly Hill's vision, the OFSTED Outstanding grade descriptors and SIAMS Framework. We now look to next year as governors to support the school-wide priority of Phonics, with the intention of raising the attainment further of Holly Hill children in Writing. This has already begun, and we are excited to see Holly Hill children continue to achieve excellent results across all subject areas.

In recent years, the school has improved their already impressive SEND provision in direct response to the growing numbers of students with additional needs and the heightened levels of need. We are committed to inclusive education and so have developed special provision for some of our children, with specialised staff continuing to develop their own skills and the skills of others to ensure an unwavering quality of provision for all our children. This continues to make others recognise us as a place of good practice for inclusive education.

Ethos and vision of the school

The Christian values and ethos at the school are evident from before you enter the school and are clear from the behaviour of the children and their excellent understanding and application of the values. The values are also well evidenced through the school website. The website is an excellent support for parents too. They are able to view assemblies, view the values and “big question” for the week and watch videos on how to support their children with reading. From walks along the corridor, out in the various areas of play and enrichment, as well as the classroom beacon examples themselves, spirituality is seen, heard and felt at every turn at Holly Hill.

The Governing Body continues to put wellbeing at the heart of its conversations. We believe that the whole school community should be given the chance to flourish. At the forefront of this is the wellbeing of all staff at Holly Hill, so they may continue to lead by example. To support in this, the board has a permanently appointed governor for wellbeing. This often means asking questions about teacher workload and ensuring equitable expectations of all staff are achievable, enabling them to maintain the excellent educational and enrichment offer that Holly Hill has become known for.

The Governing Body is a great team to work with and we love supporting Holly Hill. Here are some of the things that the Governors have said about Holly Hill:

“Holly Hill is a wonderful school where the warmth of the staff and students shines through. The progress the staff make with the children is miraculous and I feel so proud to be part of the Governing Board.”

“I love the ethos of the school: living life in all its fullness and how the school values carry through in all we do in the school, from the pupils to the staff. I love the atmosphere of love and drive to be the best one can be that I feel when I am in Holly Hill.”

“It is very fulfilling being a governor at Holly Hill and having a part to play in its growing success story.”

“Holly Hill has its own special magic.”

“The children here are really loved including all those children with their own particular difficulties.”

“You can feel the joy here.”

“Staff work so hard to bring life in all its fullness to the whole school community.”

We believe that the board has been able to support the school through prayer and in decisions made in all areas, to help it to fulfil its mission of “life in all its fullness” recognising the importance of education and the school environment for our children and their families.

Christian Bromley