



## Abbeyfields School – Governors’ Vision

**“The role of school governors is to set strategic direction, to hold school leaders to account for improving performance, and to make sure money is well spent.”** DfE web site

### What is this document?

This is a statement by Governors setting out a vision for our School. It explains our ethos, how we set our strategic direction, and most particularly what we expect the school to achieve.

After 20 years as a ground-breaking integrated Maintstream/SEN First School, Abbeyfields re-structured in 2010 to become once again a Mainstream school. Governors and staff worked hard to envision the changed school and declared its priorities to be:

- Quality of provision
- Financial sustainability
- Staff security and development
- Furthering 0-19 integration in the Morpeth pyramid to improve overall provision
- Innovation - keeping Abbeyfields special.

*(Governor paper: “Abbeyfields: Principles For Future Structure”, 2 Dec 2009)*

This is a “living” document – it is reviewed regularly in the light of changes in educational practice and thinking, locally and nationally. A key aim of the school is to be alert, worldly, and forward thinking.

### Status - what sort of school are we?

We have high expectations of ourselves as a school and our pupils’ educational and personal development. We strive for the highest standards in teaching and learning, behaviour, and social awareness. We promote and value critical thinking; we seek to inculcate ethical principles; we are imaginative; we are secular. We value all of our pupils and their families.

We are a consciously inclusive school, welcoming children and families from a much wider area than our regular catchment. Building on our past experience as an inclusive Maintstream/SEN school we regard ourselves as particularly able in providing for children with Additional Educational Needs and those who are otherwise disadvantaged; Governors monitor closely the use of Pupil Premium to maximise achievement. Through our Forest School we are innovators in the development of outdoor educational provision.

We keep under constant review our position as a Maintained School, examining the benefits of possible Federation, and/or Academy status, and other beneficial ways of working with other schools within the Morpeth partnership. We are active in developing educational



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provision through participation in Northumberland Schools’ Forum, and we are taking a leading role in developing a vision for the Morpeth partnership of schools under the aegis of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (sponsored by Morpeth Town Council).

Both the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors work actively within the local partnership and support other schools in Northumberland.

The safety of pupils is paramount and is constantly assessed. A caring attitude is inculcated amongst pupils and adults alike and particular strategies e.g. Abbeyfields Expects, positive behaviour management, golden rules, code of conduct, Learning for Life Days, are deployed to promote this.

### Strategy – what are our goals?

We work hard to ensure all pupils achieve their educational potential and are set on a path to become rounded, competent citizens who possess intellectual capacity, social-awareness and emotional intelligence in equal measure. We seek to be self-sufficient and use every current opportunity to explore and adopt managerial independence within the maintained schools sector. We test the market for the provision of all external services to the school. We actively promote co-operative, ever-closer (rather than competitive) working between our colleague schools within and beyond our local pyramid.

Following the re-structuring of the school in 2010 (see paragraph 1) and consequent loss of a considerable amount of budgetary provision otherwise available for use across all aspects of the school, Governors set a target to compensate for this by maximising pupil intake year-on-year. This is being achieved, and the school is now full at EYFS and KS1, and projected to be full in KS2 by academic year 2015/16.

### Leadership – how do we realise our goals?

We promote leadership at every level, including pupils, and value the contributions of all. The Headteacher is pivotal, working daily with the Senior Leadership Team to address targets, levels of achievement and other practical issues. The Headteacher liaises closely with the Chair of Governors to consider overall direction and levels of achievement, with a particular view to the future, and also any less tractable managerial matters; together they form an “Executive” under the supervision of the Governors. Governors work with the Headteacher and Chair to set and ensure progress on overall targets, taking particular interest in achievement data. The School Business Manager supervises all non-teaching staff, and maintains ongoing control of budgets and other resources, working closely with Governors iro of Finance, Estates/Buildings, and H&S, keeping the Headteacher advised. A key aim of the SBM role is to free the Headteacher to concentrate more on pedagogical matters.



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A Deputy Head supports the Headteacher throughout, and takes direct responsibility for outcomes at KS2, fulfils the role of SENCO and spends 50% time as a class teacher. Other staff lead EYFS, KS1, Forest School/Outdoor Learning, kitchen/school meals, and premises. All staff have performance targets and are assessed against these termly and annually, and are encouraged to lead on specific initiatives as required.

Parents/carers/families are welcomed into the school and encouraged to help and support their own and other learners. The views of Parents are surveyed annually, reported publicly, and fed into the annual process of creating the SDP. A *Friends of Abbeyfields* (FoA) group promotes social ties across the catchment and provides valued financial support. FoA also sponsor a Community Governor.

Pupils in Year 4 form the Abbeyfields Parliament (AMPs) to represent all pupils in school. They lead on an aspect of the school development plan and have a responsibility to seek out pupil views and to present findings, often to a variety of audiences. They lead by example and make excellent role models to the younger children in school.

### **Governance – how do we set and maintain focus on our goals, and manage our resources?**

Our *School Development Plan* (SDP) is a rolling programme of targets that seeks to fulfil the immediate requirements of our pupils, identify and achieve key areas for improvement, and secure future financial viability. School Self-Evaluation is an ongoing process and the Abbeyfields SEF document is updated at least termly. It is informed by regular monitoring activities and evidence trails. This in turn informs the SDP. Governors work with the Headteacher in creating the SDP. The Headteacher is accountable for fulfilling the SDP and is assessed accordingly, termly and annually.

RAISEonline and other relevant performance data are scrutinised, and the SDP created accordingly and approved by Governors, during the autumn term. The SDP informs all targets for all staff. Performance against the SDP is assessed by Governors termly thereafter, using outcome-data. New/adjusted targets are agreed and related to resource projections; and outcomes/projections (successes and/or otherwise) are used to inform future strategy and goals.

Resources are managed on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team including the School Business Manager (SBM). The Headteacher is responsible for the management of all staff; the SBM is directly accountable for all ancillary staff including the Clerk to Governors, who is independent of the LA. An account of all resources is made termly to Governors. Use of resources is supervised and approved throughout by Governors’ *Finance, Staffing, and Buildings/H&S Sub Committees*.

Pupil Outcomes are at the heart of the School’s business. These are monitored throughout the year at termly Governors’ meetings and are continuously scrutinised together with curriculum developments by the *School Development and Evaluation Sub Committee*. The



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Headteacher is held rigorously to account for the overall achievement of standards in line with projections made each autumn in the SDP.

The school has assessed teachers’ performance annually for the past twenty years, well before the principal was generally established. Teachers’ performance is managed robustly, assessed termly and annually, and used as the basis for salary determination. A full statistical account of teacher’s performance standards is made to the autumn termly meeting of Governors. The performance of all other staff is similarly appraised.

### Outcomes – what do we achieve?

If you’re reading this on a computer linked to the internet, the latest OFSTED data for our school can be accessed on the link below – hold CNTRL and click ENTER:



Our School Development Plan can be viewed on the School’s web-site, accessed on the logo below – hold CNTRL and click ENTER:



### We welcome ideas and comments.....

Governors would welcome any thoughts that you have about this document and any other aspect of the School. We can be contacted through the School or by email at:

- [abbeyfields.governors@gmail.com](mailto:abbeyfields.governors@gmail.com)



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## Appendix

### How We Assess & Validate What We Do

#### Achievement

- Focus on gains in knowledge
- Maximise achievement for all pupils
- Ensure disadvantaged groups achieve at least as well as others
- Ensure most able students achieve the highest levels and grades
- Benchmark comparisons within the school, the LA, and national groups
- Pupil Premium:
  - knowing how and why PP has been deployed at individual pupil level
  - evidence of achievement in learning and progress of pupils, incl. looked-after children
- Primary School Sports Funding:
  - participation and inclusivity
  - range and quality of activities
  - evidence of impact on pupils' lifestyles and physical wellbeing
  - quality of partnership work and inter-school sports

#### Leadership and Management

- Impact of the Headteacher
- Support for other schools
- Accuracy and rigour of self-evaluation especially EYFS and KS1 and cross-moderation
- Quality of middle leadership and its development
- Succession planning
- Views of parents
- Performance management data showing:
  - how staff performance is monitored and related to CPD
  - how staff budget is used to differentiate appropriately between performance
  - evidence that any poor performance is rigorously managed
  - annual report to governors showing correlation between quality of teaching and pay progression
- Teaching Assistants:
  - impact
  - being active in the classroom at all times
  - focus on supporting learning (not just keeping students on task)
- Behaviour and Safety
  - Focus on students being safe as well as feeling safe
  - Promotion and control of e-safety



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## Role of Governors

- Clear statement of the role of the governing body showing that they:
  - ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
  - carry out their statutory duties
  - understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching
  - performance manage the headteacher rigorously
  - ensure the school's finances are properly and effectively managed
  - are challenging and supporting leadership in equal measure
  - hold senior staff accountable for pupil achievement
  - are transparent and accountable
- Understanding of and familiarity with:
  - pupil performance data, including the school data dashboard
  - the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
  - how the school makes manages staff performance and related decisions about teachers' salary progression
  - how the school is using pupil premium and the new primary school sports funding



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## Bibliography

This document takes account of the following:

- ***Governors’ Handbook: for governors in maintained schools, academies and free schools*** (DfE: January 2014)
- ***The Role of School Governing Bodies: Government response to the Committee’s Second Report of Session 2013-14 - Education Committee*** (House of Commons)
- ***Leading governors: the role of the chair of governors in schools and academies*** (DfE: 2011)
- ***School Governance: A policy overview*** (School Governance Unit, DfE: November 2013)
- ***Changes that reduce the burden on maintained school governors*** (DfE: May 2013)
- ***Effective governance for good schools: Twenty key questions for a school governing body to ask itself*** (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Education Governance & Leadership: July 2012)
- ***The Framework for School Inspection*** (OFSTED: January 2014)
- ***School Inspection Handbook; and Subsidiary Guidance*** (OFSTED: January 2014)
- ***Headteacher insights into Ofsted inspections*** (National College for Teaching and Leadership: June 2013)
- ***Pupil Premium for Looked After Children - Principles and Practice*** (Northumberland Virtual School for Looked After Children)
- ***Children and Families Bill: 2014***