



# HAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

Learning together Achieving together

8 July 2021

## Chair of Governor's Annual Report to Parents of students at Hampstead School 2020-21.

### Introduction:

The purpose of this report is:

- to enable governors to be more accountable to parents
- to celebrate the successes of the school
- to help to inform parents of what the governors do
- to help enable the governors to continue our self-review and the impact of their governance

You can find out more about the governors from Hampstead School's website [Hampstead School - Governors' Biographies](#)

### Contact details:

The Head is Matthew Sadler, and the Chair of Governors is Brian Netto.  
 The school's website is [www.hampsteadschool.org.uk](http://www.hampsteadschool.org.uk)  
 The school's address is Westbere Road, London NW2 3RT  
 The email contact for the school is [enquiries@hampsteadschool.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hampsteadschool.org.uk)  
 The telephone contact for the school is 020 7794 8133

### Who we are and our main responsibilities:

The membership of the governing body can be found on the website.  
Our 4 core functions are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.
4. Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

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**Background to the report:**

This is the first annual report of the chair, following advice from the NGA [National Governor's Association]. It has come during an unprecedented time, with Covid-19 dominating the agenda since spring 2019, and with a new head, Matthew Sadler, formally starting in September 2020, though he had spent several weeks before then ensuring a smooth start to the term, alongside his leadership colleagues.

In October 2020 I was elected as Chair of Governors, having served as co-chair the previous year. Hunter Danskin stepped into the role as Joint Vice-Chair alongside Paul Stratton. There have been a few other changes within the governing body during this academic year. Part of the focus of these changes have been to encourage succession planning for new leadership within the governing body; and also to improve the diversity of the governing body to better reflect the wider school community.

During the autumn term we have again had to hold virtual meetings [as we did from March 2020 onwards], continuing to use the online platform Zoom rather than Microsoft Teams during the spring term 2021. Attendance at meetings has been good this year, and there has been a core group within the governing body that has undertaken the key responsibilities.

The spring term saw the third lockdown, and the gradual return to school, and further recovery; with hopes of a more predictable future based on the anticipated success of the vaccination programme.

**The governors' vision for the school.**

This is the first year that the governors and the clerk have collaborated to produce our own strategic plan. This plan will be presented to governors during the autumn term 2021. The main priorities for the governing body during the academic year 2021-22 will be to support the school through the expected Ofsted inspection so that we continue to be a good school.

With Matthew Sadler starting as the new head in September 2020, governors have seen the school's vision changing and adapting to the unprecedented situation we faced, whilst remaining true to our core values.

Another priority will be to ensure that the governing body better reflects the diversity within the local and wider community. Governors received collective training in equalities and diversity, and this has helped further improvements in this area. We contributed to the local authority's review of governing boards, as part of their plan to ensure greater equality and diversity. The results of the governor diversity survey furthered the school's focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Camden Learning began a series of 'conversations' to support its development of a education strategy. Inexplicably they chose to draw on schools outside the maintained sector to initiate the conversations [academies and free schools]. Along with our partners, Camden Learning, governors will be pursuing an agenda of increasing collaboration. Camden also continued its review of school rolls, in the context of London-wide [and national] rapid falls in the birth rate- resulting in a primary school strategy with school closures and changes in PAN {this is the published admission number for the school, which limits how many students can enroll, and the impact was also being felt at secondary level, especially in 2 of our schools}. A secondary strategy is due to follow. It will be necessary for governors to seek collaboration in order to prepare for the challenges of a falling roll.

By this time, the school had developed a well balanced blended curriculum, combining ever more sophisticated remote learning opportunities with face to face learning.

**Holding leaders to account:**

Governors had other challenges to follow through from the previous year which included changes on the leadership team and the management of the well-being of the team as a result of these changes, alongside the management of the demands of the pandemic.

Aside from recruiting a new head, we were also successful in recruiting a new deputy head, a new assistant head, and 3 new internal appointments of associate senior leaders.

The school's new Camden partner is Lisa Gorman with whom the school and governors would be closely working in preparation for an anticipated Section 8 Ofsted visit. Along with Jon Abbey, Director of Camden Learning, Matthew Sadler, Head and I met with Lisa during the year to discuss the school's performance.

Following a short consultation, the government abandoned its plan to hold examinations during the summer term; a different system of teacher assessment was put in place, though its exact nature was not communicated to schools for some time. This meant that examination outcomes, a key part of a school's accountability, could not be fairly compared for at least a 3 year span.

Governors were able to celebrate our best performance in exams, both at GCSE overall, and in A Level outcomes. With student assessments changing again this summer, the expectation is that we will be celebrating another year of successes at GCSE and A Level.

The Cabinet released its report on school exclusions, following the publication of the government's own review in the Timpson Report. Unfortunately, the Council appeared to be accepting a colour-blind approach to exclusions, and set as one of its targets an unrealistic elimination of fixed term exclusions. Governors are keen that the school continues to reduce the numbers of both fixed term and permanent exclusions, as well as maintaining a good level of overall attendance.

Named governors take on specific statutory responsibilities for the following areas, and report back to the governing body each year; safeguarding, special education needs, careers guidance, and data protection.

#### **Finances:**

Governors were able to agree a balanced budget. However, further unexpected costs were experienced, and a thorough on-going review of governance was proposed, alongside a review of school practices and procedures. Governors are acutely aware of the challenges to come with regards to finances, and have given fund-raising a high priority.

#### **Stakeholders:**

This is a relatively new core function for the governors. Governors of course work closely with senior leaders, and meet with subject leaders at committee meetings. The Head Girl and Head Boy routinely meet the governors at an autumn term meeting, and there are now plans in place to have student representatives on the governing body.

Parents are an important part of the governing body. However, governors are considering annual surveys as another means by which parents can express their views. The school works closely with other Camden schools, for example through agreeing mid-term admissions via the Fair Access Protocol; through the secondary chairs of governors network, the head network and subject networks. The school has also played a prominent role in Camden's new curriculum conversations.

#### **Let us know how we are doing.**

Governors are keen to know what parents think of the school, and how you think the governors are doing.

Please send any comments to Margaret Johnson, Clerk to Governors, on [m.johnson@hampsteadschool.org.uk](mailto:m.johnson@hampsteadschool.org.uk)

Brian Netto  
Chair of Governors 2020-21.