



## Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of

### Riverside School, London Borough of Bromley

July 2018

As a Governing Board we believe it is important that any families or partners who wish to know more about what we do are able to find this out. Many of the activities we carry out as a Board are continuous activities which happen every year such as reviewing achievement reports, budget and expenditure reports, policies, etc. If you would like to find out about the general work of the Governing Board, including what **we do and don't do**, please visit our website [www.riversideschool.org.uk](http://www.riversideschool.org.uk) (Menu>Community>Governors) or go straight to the page by clicking on the link <http://www.riversideschool.org.uk/page/?title=Governors&pid=62>

The aim of this statement is to update you on our governor priorities for the 2017/18 academic year and outline our priorities for next year. We'd also like to share with you some of the changes that have been put in place by the Senior Leadership Team this year, which I hope you agree, will continue to enhance your child's education and school experience.

Each year Riverside's School Development Plan is updated to include the initiatives that are believed will make a difference to our pupils and lead us closer to not only our vision of *'inspiring breakthroughs in the way society enables children with complex needs find true fulfilment'*, but also support our school aim of *'transforming the lives of our children and the lives of their families'*. The initiatives which the school have implemented this year are summarised on page 5. The key elements of the school's plan for 2018/19, are summarised on page 5 of this report.

Thank you to so many of you who have completed our governor surveys during the year. We are still in the process of collating the feedback from the whole school survey which has just closed; highlights, however, are included on page 3. You will recall that we had a routine inspection from Ofsted this year too, following their previous visit in December 2014. More details of that on page 2.

At any time if you have any comments on anything we do, we'd love to hear from you - in any way that suits you.

<p><i>"Clarity of vision"</i></p> <p><i>"Educational Performance"</i></p> <p><i>"Holding the Headteacher to account"</i></p> <p><i>"Financial Performance"</i></p>	<p>As a summary, and in accordance with Government requirements, Riverside School's Governing Board focuses on its statutory duties and 3 main strategic functions, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;</b></li> <li><b>2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and for the performance management of the staff;</b></li> <li><b>3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.</b></li> </ol> <p>Details of who we are and how we work under these 3 headings are included within the governor section of the website and are largely unchanged from last year.</p>
	<p><i>"Transforming our children's lives and the lives of their families"</i></p>

**2017/18  
Governance  
Priorities**

The Governing Board had 3 priorities for the 2017/18 academic year.

**1. Further involvement in our Measuring Success initiative and ensuring initiatives the school put in place make a tangible difference**

**2. Continue to work with our colleagues across the sectors, and nationally, to inform them of priorities for our pupils and think creatively of ways in which we can provide our children with what they need in light of squeezes in national funding for services**

**3. Continue to consider options for school ownership in light of the national academy agenda**

**1. Further involvement in our Measuring Success initiative and ensuring initiatives the school put in place make a tangible difference**

Building on the work of one of last year's governor working parties we have continued to look at creative ways of measuring school success. We believe, in the longer term, this is best when we monitor success at a strategic pledge level.

*The Riverside Way*

**Our Mission**  
To transform our children's lives and the lives of their families

**Our Vision**  
To inspire breakthroughs in the way society enables children with complex needs to find true fulfilment

**Our Pledges**

- We will equip our pupils with a bespoke package of profoundly personalised support so that when they leave school, they succeed, flourish and leave their mark on society.
- We will inspire our pupils, families and the wider community to make the seemingly unachievable achievable through the Performing Arts.
- We will ensure current and future pupils make remarkable progress by attracting and training the highest calibre special educators at Riverside School and beyond.
- We will influence the world of specialist education by creating an innovative curriculum framework based around The Pursuit of Happiness.

*Be All That You Can Be*

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL

*'Riverside School's mission, vision, and strategic pledges'*

*'Measuring what matters'*

*'Ofsted feedback'*

A lot of information is provided to governors in various reports, in addition to the impressions we form as we visit the school and engage with our whole school community. Governors regularly make visits to school whether that is as part of committee meetings, termly Governor Days or one off visits. This year all governors have been aligned with one of the four strategic pledges (in the slide above) in addition to any other specific focus they have. This year our whole school family survey was based on providing us with information which directly correlated to measures within our pledges. We have led feedback exercises with last year's leavers, this year's joiners and our Early Years families. Information from these sources not only tell us how well we are doing, but also provides input into new initiatives in those areas.

You will recall that Ofsted carried out a short inspection visit in June. Governors took part in the inspection and also were present to hear wonderful verbal feedback from the Lead Inspector. As from January 2018, the process is such that if Ofsted now think a previously 'good' school has the potential to be classed an 'outstanding' school, then the only way of upgrading the rating is to come back and carry out a full 2 day inspection at a later date (called a Section 5 inspection). We are delighted that this is the decision that Ofsted has taken, as outlined in their letter. We look forward to welcoming Ofsted back to Riverside in the near future.

*'Family survey feedback'*

In terms of our whole school survey, we will be providing a more detailed report to you all in the Autumn Term, to include what will happen as a result of your feedback, but I would like to take the opportunity to share with you some high-level statistics from this year's family survey. We received 112 completed surveys. Thank you. ☺

<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>97% of families said they would recommend Riverside School.</li> </ul>
<b>Pledge 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of families agreed that the PLP (Personal Learning Plan) outcomes that their child is working towards are relevant to their overall development</li> <li>96% of families agreed that the PLP outcomes are relevant to enhancing their child's wellbeing / happiness</li> <li>91% of families agreed that the PLP outcomes will make a real difference to their child's life</li> <li>92% of families agreed that the PLP outcomes are consistent with what they think is important for their child</li> <li>92% of families agreed that the PLP outcomes are consistent with longer term outcomes included within their child's EHC Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Pledge 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>79% believed that being involved in Performing Arts activities is benefitting their child's development</li> <li>81% believed that being involved in Performing Arts is benefitting their child's wellbeing and happiness</li> <li>33% of pupils participate in any Performing Arts activities either at home, at clubs or as part of activities in the school holidays</li> </ul>
<b>Pledge 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>97% of families felt that their child had made progress in the last 12 months</li> <li>96% of families agreed that relationships between their child's class team and themselves are good</li> <li>93% of families agreed that the school responds well to any concerns they may have</li> <li>96% of families agreed that the school is well led and managed</li> </ul>
<b>Pledge 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>98% of families felt that the wellbeing of their child at school was taken seriously</li> <li>99% of families felt that their child is happy at school</li> </ul>

As mentioned above, governors have aligned themselves with one of four pledges. Having a dedicated focus on Pledge 1, for example, has led to the school extending relationships with other provisions and ensuring we are doing all we can to equip pupils for these different environments post-Riverside. It has also led to a greater focus on pupil voice initiatives which have resulted in a better dining room experience for pupils, the redevelopment of an outdoor play area and a chance for pupils to advocate for one another in terms of difficulties getting around the school and improving bathrooms. Governors continue to ensure school initiatives around Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are aligned with national initiatives; are seen as a core part of the curriculum; are personalised and in line with what families think is important to their child's development.

*'Aligning our work with pledges'*

Governor work within Pledge 2 has dovetailed with the work already underway at Riverside to gain the prestigious Artsmark Platinum Award. This recognises schools and settings which are 'making the arts come alive'. Only 64 out of 3667 settings in the whole of England who are registered, working towards or already have their Artsmark Awards, have been awarded the highest Platinum award.

Work within Pledge 3 has led to a review of assessment tools to ensure they are well understood and consistent. It has also led to encouraging the school to respond to national consultations on how pupils with complex needs are assessed nationally.

You will have seen that as a school, the Pursuit of Happiness is becoming an integral part of the school's curriculum. Parents want their children to be happy. Governors have supported and encouraged this initiative. Ensuring our pupils are, and feel, safe is a key priority for us and all part of ensuring we are maximising pupil wellbeing and ultimately happiness. Governors continue to work pro-actively with the school's safeguarding leads to ensure safeguarding follows national guidance. Two Pledge 4 governors have been aligned with the provision of nursery places for three year olds and have been monitoring progress of this to ensure that nursery provision is a success. We are delighted with the feedback received so far and this monitoring will continue next term.

Feedback from all data sources, including family and pupil surveys, will help us continue to ensure we are getting closer to achieving what matters. Thank you everyone.

*'Feedback from our 2017 leavers'*

Our July 2017 leaver families completed a survey and told governors us that they would give us 10 out of 10 and there were no suggestions as to how we could have done anything better or how we could improve the transition to their new placement.

Our July 2017 pupils who were leaving Riverside told governors that:

- Friendship was extremely important to them. The school continues to value this and prioritise time for friendships to continue and flourish;
- They enjoyed The Isle of Wight residential trip and this went ahead again this year;
- The tuck shop was important and continued this year;
- School trips (educational visits) were very important and enjoyed by the 2017 leavers. Pupils saw these as opportunities for them to have fun with friends and compete in PE activities. From a school perspective, they also provide valuable opportunities for learning;
- 5 out of 7 pupils liked the dance studio and 6 out of 7 liked the performing arts hall. This has led to a continued drive and investment in Performing Arts.

*'Feedback from our 2017 joiners'*

Our September 2017 joiners told governors that they were very impressed with their experience so far of our Riverside family. Many of the comments centred around the friendliness, warmth, professionalism and dedication of Riverside's staff. Additionally there were comments on the excellent facilities, teaching and the activities the children do at school.

To ensure the school initiatives continue to make a difference we have included our measures of success into the school's development plan.

**2. Continue to work with our colleagues across the sectors, and nationally, to inform them of priorities for our pupils and think creatively of ways in which we can provide our children with what they need in light of squeezes in national funding for services.**

You will have seen on national news, reports of funding gaps for vulnerable children and adults. It is important to us that we try and minimise any impact for our pupils and families and seek to find creative ways of ensuring that the outcomes across Education, Health and Social Care are maintained, whilst a national review of services is undertaken.

*'Multi-agency working'*

It is our belief that therapy is best delivered for our pupils when integrated into daily activities and we have worked hard to ensure that the expertise of our therapy partners is shared as far as practical with professionals who spend the most time with our pupils. Riverside has continued to upskill staff and one of our Assistant Headteachers has undergone training on sensory profiling, an area normally reserved for Occupational Therapists. Sensory profiling and dealing with sensory processing is a key part of our development plan for next year.

However, there are always areas which require the specialist knowledge of health professionals, particularly in terms of new therapies and interventions, and we continue to stress the need for this knowledge for our pupils and families.

We know that our pupils finding their 'voice' whatever that looks like is so incredibly important to our families and, from September 2018, we are securing more input from professionals in this field. Additionally, we are also freeing up time for some of our own communication experts to support our pupils in finding their voice.

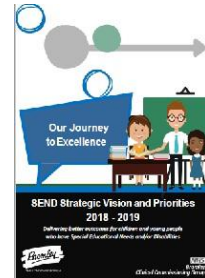


*‘Working in partnership with the Local Authority’ and other colleagues’*

Alongside this, Steve Solomons (Headteacher) and I have been involved in borough-wide discussions and working parties this academic year looking at the challenges which face those involved with supporting children and young people from 0-25 with SEND. We both attend the termly SEND Governance Board meetings which includes directors and officers from across the Local Authority and the CCG as well as providers and Bromley Parent Voice representatives. There is on-going work with colleagues to identify the gaps in provision and what is needed in order for our pupils to achieve holistic outcomes. Two of our other governors are members of Local Authority committees. There have been more conversations than ever before with colleagues working at a strategic level.

The commissioning of therapy services is a key initiative within the borough’s action plan.

The Local Authority’s and Bromley’s Clinical Commissioning Group’s ‘Our Journey to Excellence’ document outlines the broad vision for the next 5 years and priorities for 2018-19, and is due to be launched in September this year.



**3. Continue to consider options for school ownership in light of the national academy agenda**

As you will probably have experienced firsthand, if you have other children who go to school in Bromley, there was a push towards schools becoming Academies and being part of Multi Academy Trusts. This was a national initiative and the aim of this was to improve standards for all pupils in the country and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to attend good schools. We continued to monitor the situation and felt, and still do feel, that becoming an Academy is not going to provide any significant benefit for our school community and therefore we did not pursue any plans to convert to an Academy. As a Board though, we are never complacent or fixed in our thinking, and we will continue to keep abreast of ownership and collaborative working arrangements which could improve standards and outcomes for our pupils.

*‘To Be or Not To Be’*

**What has changed this year?**

**As part of Riverside’s School Development Plan, the school has successfully implemented the following initiatives in 2017/18:**

- ✓ Achieved Artsmark Platinum;
- ✓ Contributed to local and regional moderation and shaped training around assessment for children with complex needs;
- ✓ Extended our Options Model to ensure that all pupils from Year 10 attain externally accredited modules;
- ✓ Performed at the Churchill Theatre and Laban Centre and extended the range of immersive in-house Expressive Arts experiences;
- ✓ Created a team of Lead Teachers to drive improvement in assessment practices across the school;
- ✓ Introduced nursery provision for three year olds so that children and families experience The Riverside Way one year earlier;
- ✓ Trained a greater number of key personnel in SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support) in order to further shape our curriculum model;
- ✓ Introduced Happiness Passports to improve wellbeing and happiness for all pupils;
- ✓ Increased influence across the local authority through representation on various LA committees;
- ✓ Crowned Wellchild “Choir of the Year” and as a result, being given the opportunity to perform in front of a star-studded audience in September.

**School Development Plan Priorities for 2018/19**

*“18/19 School Development Plan”*

The main areas for us as a school next year, building on previous year initiatives include:

2018/19			
Pledge 1	Pledge 2	Pledge 3	Pledge 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All pupils having a 'voice'</li> <li>Sensory information profiling and processing</li> <li>Enabling all pupils to be truly in their element through further personalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater fulfilment through personalised Expressive Arts initiatives</li> <li>Life-enriching community participation within the Expressive Arts</li> <li>Expressive Arts in the home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment for Learning</li> <li>Fully aligned professional learning processes</li> <li>Contribution to improving outcomes for pupils outside of Riverside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedding Happiness Passports</li> <li>Pupil emotional regulation</li> <li>Embedding Riverside Way for nursery-aged pupils</li> </ul>

**2018/19 Governance Priorities**

- 1. Continue to embed our Measuring Success initiative and the collation of evidence enabling Riverside to efficiently and effectively monitor the delivery of its pledges**
- 2. Continue to engage with the whole school community, ensuring feedback continues to be fed into strategic planning exercises**
- 3. Preparations for articulating Riverside’s 2020 vision started in 2014. During 2018/19 it will be necessary to start looking ahead to 2025 and thinking collectively about what will be important for Riverside’s ‘Think 2025’ vision**
- 4. Continue to contribute to LA and CCG SEND strategic planning initiatives and develop the outward facing nature of our school, as indicated within Pledge 3 and Ofsted feedback**

Additionally, the Board will continue its statutory duties and, most importantly do all that it can, challenging and supporting the Leadership Team, to ensure Riverside is an amazing school.

**Thank you Riverside Staff**

*“Amazing staff”*

It is always so heartening for us to hear stories of how Riverside staff are making a difference. The feedback from you has been wonderful and we have shared this with staff when you have indicated you are happy for us to do this. I’d like to finish this annual statement by staying a huge thank you to Steve Solomons and all of the staff at Riverside School, who work tirelessly and with so much passion to ensure Riverside School is The Best That It Can Be. Thank you.

**Contact Us**

*“Get involved”*

Should you wish to know more, share your views, are interested in becoming a Governor or helping us as a Board in any capacity, please contact Katrina O’Leary, Chair of Governors, via [katrina.oleary@riverside.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:katrina.oleary@riverside.bromley.sch.uk)



**Thank you for reading!**

Katrina O’Leary, Chair of Governors (July 2018)