



**RELEASING
THE
IMAGINATION:
CELEBRATING
THE ART OF
THE POSSIBLE**

GOVERNORS' REPORT TO PARENTS | 2021-2022



The School Governing Body

CONSTITUTION: UTS Cambridge ("the UTS Trust") is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association (submitted to Companies House on the 5th June 2013) are the primary governing documents of the Trust. All Trustees of UTS Cambridge are also School Governors and directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the Annual Report and Financial Statements. The charitable company is known as UTS Cambridge t/a University of Cambridge Primary School. This the Governors' Annual Report to parents 2021-2022.

The Governors

Mrs Amy Weatherup (Governance expert; **Chair of Education Committee**; Safeguarding Link governor)

Ms Claire Vane (Director Integrated Resources: expertise in HR; **Chair of HR Committee**)

Professor Susan Robertson (Head of Faculty of Education: school leadership, ITE; Global Sociologist)

Professor Graham Virgo (Pro-Vice-Chancellor: expertise in governance, University education, law and administration; **Chair of Research Committee**)

Dr Kirsty Allen (Senior Administrator at the University; expertise in governance, administration, PREVENT agenda, standards; **Chair of Governors**)

Dr James Biddulph (Headteacher; **Accounting Officer**)

Mrs Penny Coltman (Senior Lecturer: expertise in school governance, Early Years' education, ITE)

Mr Laurence Weeks (Senior Law Partner: expertise in conflict management, law; co-opted governor; **Chair of Finance Buildings & Resources Committee**; Chief Finance Officer)

Mrs Bullen-Smith (Staff Governor)

Mr Marvin Fernandes (Parent Governor)

Ms Sarah Hoole (Parent Governor)

Mrs Samantha O'Byrne (HR expertise)

Dr Martin Vinnell (Health and Safety expert; Compliance; University Director)

The Core Leadership Team

Dr James Biddulph (Executive Headteacher)
Mr Luke Rolls (Associate Headteacher)
Mrs Amy White (Director of Business)
Mrs Aimee Durning (Director of Inclusion and Community)

The Leadership Team

Ms Charlotte Bray (Phase Leader EYFS)
Ms Harriet Lang (Phase Leader Year 1 and 2)
Ms Ellen Millar (Phase Leader Year 3 and 4)
Mr Robert Drane (Phase Leader Year 5 and 6)

From the Chair of Governors

Dear Parents/Carers,

This year we have seen the eventual unlocking of our lives and in relation to the school, more opening out and grasping new possibilities. We employ an external consultant to support and challenge the school and each time governors are pleased with the report that indicates high quality learning and teaching. Our Year 6 children completed their SATs; they are our first cohort of reception children who have moved through our school – we are very proud of them and what they have achieved.

We are acutely aware of the pressures on public sector workers. My governors and I are concerned that we do whatever we can to ensure our team of educators and administrators are best equipped to do their work. We need to continue fostering a community of high challenge and quality support.

Surveys of parents/carers and the team indicate an overwhelming satisfaction with the work of the school. In our visits to the school, we see children happy and polite, well behaved and well mannered. There is a unique balance of freedom and rigour in the school, which is commented upon by many people who visit. Despite the great efforts of families and educators in school, there remains a big challenge in developing core skills and knowledge, lost for many because of the extended periods away from school.

Our older children performed their school show – We Will Rock You – in June. I was delighted to see their confidence and sheer exuberance. They are certainly the champions – and the reason why we all do what we do. Whilst I remain a governor of the school, I will be stepping down as Chair. It has been an honour to contribute to the school during its most pressing period in history. I look forward to much more joyful learning in 2022.

With best wishes,
Dr Kirsty Allen | Chair of Governors

From the Finance Resources & Building Committee

Despite the challenges and additional costs associated with COVID-19, we have a secure budget for this year and our planning for the next three years give confidence. The Finance Committee's objective (and role) remains to ensure that our school leaders focus on how to use available funding effectively to support children as the school begins to reopen. We did this through commissioning internal and external audits of process and actuals.

Schools Choice is our finance support service and together with Ms White, our Director of Business, Mr James Tweddle, our Business Support Assistant and Dr Biddulph, the Accounting Officer and Executive Headteacher, we have managed a budget with a decent surplus. This careful planning and use of tax-payers' money means that not only have we enabled the executive team and education team to provide a high quality education, we can use resources to develop other aspects of the school. For example, as our start-up funding ends (now that we are almost full), we need to save a percentage of our funds to replenish and replace IT equipment and services in the school and also to provide sufficient resource for the upkeep of the building and site.

As in previous reports to you, we remain mindful of the significant level of uncertainty that exists within the educational sector (and beyond). We will continue to follow a prudent approach whilst that uncertainty continues. Once things become clearer and we understand fully our financial commitments going forward, we shall review the surplus position as appropriate. It remains our primary goal that our funding is focused on the children's educational experience.

The COVID-19 lockdown has prevented FOCUS from raising the same level of funds that the school has enjoyed in previous years. A huge thanks to the Green Shoots initiative which has raised in the region of £30000 since starting. What an achievement. This is being used to enrich the educational experiences of all children and provides the flexibility that is needed in a school like ours that looks for new and exciting projects and opportunities. The funds raised will make a real difference as the school begins its journey to normality. Thank you so much to those parents (and others) who give their Time, Treasures and Talents to the school. It is much appreciated.

Laurence Weeks | Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee

From the HR Committee

The HR Sub-Committee's main focus has been to support the school in implementing the new leadership structure. The continuing challenge of COVID-19 has inevitably resulted in a systemic pressure on schools and their leaders. Particular attention has been given to being mindful of the overall wellness of the team, asking questions of members of the team as appropriate, while exercising the important challenge that is always required of an executive team.

One of our success criteria as a school is how we see staff developing and being promoted. Therefore, the focus on professional development is key as a mechanism to help individuals grow professionally. We know from most sectors that individuals leave organisations because of those with whom they work, rather than the inherent nature of their work. By contrast, it is always a boon when individuals leave for development reasons and promotions. Nonetheless, it will be sad to say goodbye to Mr James Hayward, who has a promotion to become a Headteacher of a Cambridgeshire school and Mr Smith who will be starting a doctorate in Educational Psychology. We are grateful for all their work. We are delighted to welcome back Ms Kat Bates who, following the birth of her son, will be our new SEND Coordinator. We also say farewell to Mr Sam O'Dell and Ms Georgia Fletcher who are returning to University to start their PGCE qualification (who knows, they may be back as qualified teachers). We thank Ms Amy Rosier, who joined the school as a maternity cover teacher. Mrs Bullen Smith is changing her role and will be working with us for two days a week from next year.

We are pleased to inform that we are fully staffed for 2021. We continue to test the culture of the school through external review and in speaking with the team, and also by gaining insight from parents by way of informal discussion and surveys. There is an enormous sense of team spirit and collaboration which has allowed Dr Biddulph and his team to provide online learning. We note the video communication to you as a new way to share the work of the school with you, and also to provide support. We do believe this is unusual compared with the wider sector.

Now that we have struggled through a full year, we must note again that the community, including the teachers, learning coaches, admin team and leaders, have been affected by COVID-19. They have also, as keyworkers, had to balance work and their own family commitments, including childcare and online examinations. To say it has been tough is an understatement. Now it will be necessary to re-adjust expectations about what is possible, as we cautiously move to a more normal educational experience.

Together with the support from the Finance Committee, we have been able to retain funds for professional development which is a key area, so as to improve outcomes for children. We continued to provide professional development online, welcoming expertise from various Universities.

As the team widens yet again, the process of induction and mentoring is important to ensure a smooth transition and a continuation of the educational experience with which your children have become familiar. Our attention as governors is ensuring this is robust, safeguarded and inspiring.

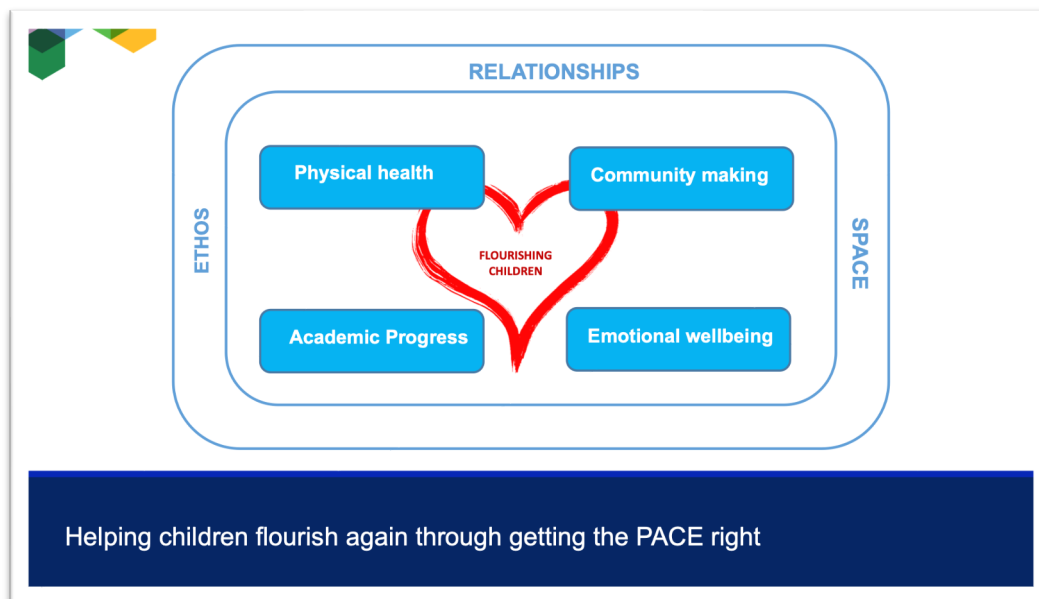
Ms Claire Vane | Chair of HR Committee

From the Education of Children Committee

The Education Committee is responsible for all aspects of the school that affect the children, from assessment to safeguarding, curriculum developments to home-school partnership. Our members include representatives from the University of Cambridge, a National Leader of Governance, parent governors, and a primary expert from the Faculty of Education. All members of the committee have prior experience of education.

This has again been an unusual academic year for us all. In the midst of lockdown and insecurity about people's health and safety in school, the school team and governors have endeavoured to continue with our plans to develop the curriculum and teaching and learning. Governors worked closely with the school to ensure that focus could be given to developing the school's high-quality remote learning offer, including attending some of the online classes and assemblies ourselves as part of our monitoring role, and commissioning an external review of the provision. We are confident, through our continued scrutiny and review that the result was of the highest quality, and was in keeping with the ethos of our very special school.

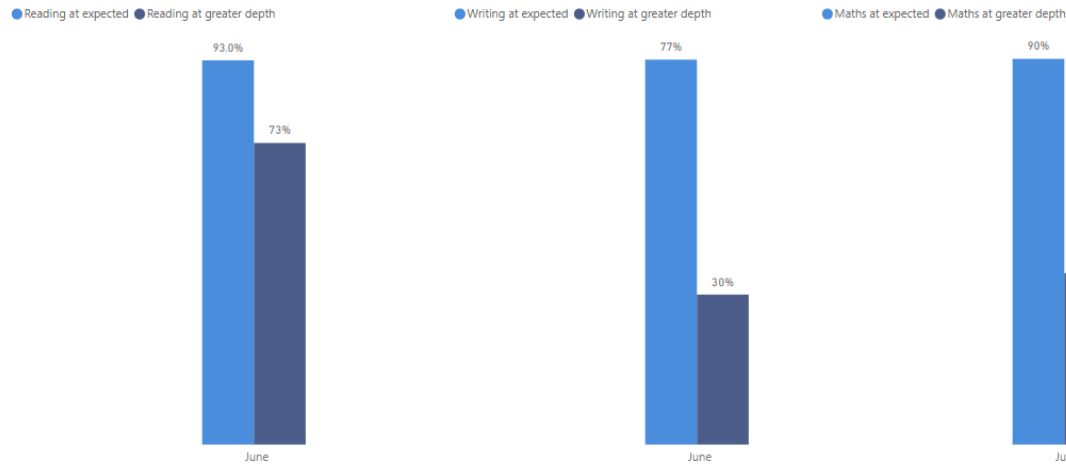
Governors have also monitored the return to school in September and March and supported the school's approach of focusing first on wellbeing, social skills and learning-to-learn skills, which are the core foundations needed before young children can be expected to gain more formal academic knowledge.



The school's curriculum has continued to develop and be improved based on the three key pillars of Oracy & Dialogue, Habits of Mind and Playful Enquiry. The school is developing partnerships with various organisations in Cambridge and beyond, which will support the ongoing curriculum development and continue to expand the knowledge and skills of the team. For example, the emphasis on physical and mental health is expanding to include nutritional health as well. In addition, governors have monitored and provided supportive challenge as the plans have been developed for the opening of the school nursery for the first time in September. We are very excited to be welcoming our new nursery children!

Although external assessments did not take place this year, our internal assessments, which are externally reviewed, indicated that our Year 6 children would have done exceptionally well. The chart below shows the excellent progress that children have made, particularly in the last year when they have had to adapt to periods of remote learning. The lighter blue bars show the percentage of children at or above age-related expectations and the darker blue bars, the percentage of children above age-related expectation for reading, writing and maths. A combined total of 80% of children achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in comparison to the national average of 65% (2019), and 40% of the year group achieved a combined greater depth score in reading, writing and maths compared to 11% nationally.

Attainment



Safeguarding continues to be a particular strength of our school, and this has been even more important when considering the impact of both the first and second lockdowns on the children and their families. Mr Rolls and Mr Smith have met once or twice each term with the Safeguarding governor, Amy Weatherup, and there was a specific focus on Safeguarding when governors reviewed the online learning provision in the spring term.

The past year and a half have been difficult for all schools, but have demonstrated the strengths of our school and the resilience and adaptability of our teaching team. Governors would like to congratulate the staff on the quality of the education they have managed to provide in very unusual circumstances, and for the genuine care and concern they have shown in supporting the children at the school.

Mrs Amy Weatherup | Chair of Education Committee



From the Research Committee

The Research Committee continues to provide a vital link between the University of Cambridge and the school. The Committee is chaired by Professor Graham Virgo, who is the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) in the University and a governor, and its membership includes Professor Susan Robertson, the head of the Faculty of Education, three other representatives from the Faculty of Education and Dr Biddulph.

Building on Dr Biddulph's initiative to create a series of research-informed books, called *Unlocking Research*, Cambridge University Press has approved another series called *Educational Visions*, which involves co-written chapters from leading experts in various subject areas and practitioners in primary and secondary schools. This second series will be looking to the future of education and making bold statements about what next for our children in a post-COVID world.

The development of a centre of research is coming on well but has been disrupted by the uncertainties that COVID-19 brought for us all. The Research Committee seeks to ensure that connections continue to be made and developed between what is happening in the school and the University's commitments and objectives, particularly relating to climate change and sustainability and that research has a national and a global impact.

Professor Graham Virgo, Chair of the Research Committee and Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor

From the Executive Headteacher

It has been a challenging year by any definition. However, my team and I are grateful for your support and the trust you have given. We have focused on the present to support children in remote learning but also looking to the future. We are developing our curriculum, looking at the knowledge and skill progression, considering the diversities inherent in it and those voices which are missing. Several members of the team have been co-writing chapters in books on top of their 'day job' – this is the essence of the way we work: to keep asking questions about the purpose of education.

On 1st September, we planted a meadow. For much of the year, it was nothing more than a muddy bog land. Through the darkness of these months, through the uncertainty of COVID, the seeds germinated. We had hope that it would grow. We had doubts that it would. The meadow is now in full bloom. Nature teaches us again and again to have faith in the possibilities of the human spirit and the potential inherent in every one of us. Your children are amazing. They have struggled differently during this time – that is quite expected and normal. Together we can provide the nurturing space in which they are challenged to be the very best version of themselves – and when they know a new best, they incorporate that into their new way of learning and being.

Kindest wishes on behalf of the whole team,

Dr James Biddulph FCCT FRSA | Executive Headteacher

