

Governors' Annual Report to Parents

2022/2023

This year, Rhodes Avenue Primary School experienced the unimaginably tragic loss of our much-loved Headteacher, Adrian Hall. It is difficult to find the words to express how much Adrian meant to so many people. He was truly an inspiration to everyone who had the privilege of meeting or working with him. His unstoppable energy, passion and vision for creating a fairer world will be just one of the many legacies he leaves to the staff, children and community of Rhodes Avenue Primary School and beyond. We want to begin this report by acknowledging the tremendous outpouring of support the school has received from parents and carers and the wider Haringey community and to thank you for the kindness you have shown towards us as we have all navigated our way through these past months. Our deepest thanks also go to Adrian himself for everything he gave to Rhodes Avenue, and to his family who have been so incredibly considerate of us all in the wake of their own grief.

This year, perhaps more than any other year in our recent history, we would like to voice a sincere and heartfelt thank you to all staff for their outstanding work. It is not hyperbole to say that every single person in the school has gone above and beyond this year - and especially in the past term and a half - to ensure the school has continued to be a place of warmth, stability and learning for the children. Thanks to Interim Headteacher Maria, who together with Emel, Matt and Aileen has worked tirelessly and relentlessly to uphold the high standards of the school every single day. Thanks to the teachers, TAs, learning support staff, Jo Tillson and the administrative team, Andrew Satwick and our site staff, the cleaning staff and all of those keep the school running every day.

Special thanks to those staff moving on at the end of this year. Thank you for all you have done - you will be missed. The governors would like to thank Matt Henson in particular for his compassion and care, and for his contribution to the leadership team. It has been a real pleasure as governors to work with you. We wish our leavers every success in your new homes, new jobs and new adventures.

Finally, the biggest thanks to the pupils for their hard work and resilience in such a tumultuous year. We are so proud of you all for the strength and kindness you have shown to your classmates and your teachers this year. We know Adrian would be so proud of you all as well.

Wishing you and your children a wonderful summer,

Fiona Doyle and Helen Walsh

Co-Chairs of Governors on behalf of the Rhodes Avenue Primary School Governing Body

Key Functions of the Governing Body

School governors have a varied role helping the school run effectively. The governor role is strategic rather than operational; governors don't get involved with the day to day running of a school, instead supporting and challenging the school's leadership team to drive school improvement.

The governing body undertakes a wide range of monitoring activity, including:

- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- Planning the strategic direction of the school including its values, aims and aspirations
- Inviting members of the senior leadership team and subject leads to governing body and committee meetings to report on key areas
- Monitoring visits within school to meet with subject leads and discuss aspects of the school development plan
- Pupil, staff and parent surveys

Overview of the Year

Fiona Doyle and Helen Walsh were re-elected as co-chair of governors to serve alongside Lucy Freestone, who was re-elected as vice chair. At the end of this academic year, Helen Walsh will be stepping down as co-chair but will continue to serve as a co-opted governor. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to Helen for her leadership both during the pandemic and following Adrian's passing; two unbelievably extraordinary events where her calm presence and strategic leadership have been invaluable. Fiona Doyle will continue as Chair of Governors from September.

We said goodbye to governors who had come to the end of their terms. We thank Camilla Bolt and Jo Yurky, both parent governors who contributed an enormous amount to the governing body during their time with us. We welcomed new governors this year; Lou Colley as staff governor and Christy White and Nick Read as parent governors. We also welcomed Emel Ali and Matt Henson as associate

governors. Simon Green was reappointed as LA governor in May 2023 and Lucy Freestone as parent Governor in July 2023.

We continue to have oversight of the school's policies and within our committees and link governor roles, are able to scrutinise, question and challenge where appropriate, all aspects of the school's strategic development. We are working with the headship team to finalise the school development plan for the next academic year, where the wellbeing of the community will take precedence.

A huge challenge this year has been the impact of the NEU teacher strikes across the UK. There has been much coverage in the national press about the strike action but at times, the reasoning behind them may have been lost. The government awarded teachers an average 5% pay rise for this academic year. However, this proposed pay award was not fully funded by the government. Instead, schools were expected to find the money within our existing budgets to fund this pay rise, which is money that most schools simply did not have.

At Rhodes Avenue, this has amounted to £140,000 that we have had to account for, in addition to repaying a £200,000 debt to Haringey Council for a deficit loan taken out during Covid and a subsequent second loan taken out in December 2022. The strike action was to convince the government that this pay rise needs to come with funding for school so they can continue to provide a high-quality education, educational support, materials and resources and extra-curricular activities for our children. Without this funding, many of these aspects of the school will begin to disappear and indeed this process has already begun at Rhodes Avenue and in many other local schools. It is a difficult time for education but as governors and school leaders, we are working hard to try and minimise the impact of this on our school whilst we all await the outcomes of the independent School Teachers' Review Body and decisions on funding. At the time of writing, a pay deal has been offered and we are currently waiting for the next steps.

With finance in mind, we thank RAPSAs for their continued commitment to raising funds and exemplifying the enthusiasm of our school community, and we are sincerely grateful to all parents who have fundraised or donated this year to help keep the school afloat. You can make a one-off donation or set a monthly contribution by following this link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/rhodesavenueprimaryschool>

The governors have organised a number of events over the past few months to celebrate Adrian's life and contribution to Rhodes Avenue Primary School. We hosted a memorial over February half term where members of the community could visit the school to sign books of condolences and gather in the immediate wake of Adrian's passing. On 7th July, a celebration of Adrian's life was held at Alexandra

Palace where hundreds of parents, children and members of the Haringey educational community were able to say goodbye to Adrian in the most fitting of venues. We thank parents Emma Dagnes, Melanie Johnson, David Kester, Damian Reilly and Dan Knight for their hard work and generosity in enabling us to hold such a memorable tribute evening. We led a school consultation on a suitable memorial for Adrian within the school grounds and following this, have revamped the amphitheatre space to name it after Adrian and install rainbow flooring, a commemorative plaque and two outdoor libraries.

Governing Body Membership

Co-Chair of governors:	Fiona Doyle & Helen Walsh cochairs@rhodesavenue.org.uk
Vice Chair	Lucy Freestone
Clerk to governors:	Hannah Cleary hannahhmc@aol.com

Parent governors	Lucy Freestone, Alex Morgan, Christy White, Nick Read
Co-opted governors	Helen Walsh, Fiona Doyle, Pawan Dhir, Stephen Wan, James Etheridge, Shanuk Mediwaka
LA governor	Simon Green
Staff governors	Jette Rayner, Lou Colley
Headteacher	Maria Panayiotou
Associate members	Jo Tillson, Andrew Satwick, Emel Ali, Matt Henson

Governor Body Vacancies

The governing board currently has the following vacancies (as of July 2023):

- Co-opted Governor

Governor Attendance at Meetings

The governing board has met remotely via an online platform as well as face to face over the course of the year. We have maintained all our statutory requirements for meetings of the governing body during this time ([view Governor attendance](#)). All minutes are available on the [Governor's page](#) of the Rhodes Avenue website.

Governor Monitoring Activity

All governor visits are recorded on the governor portal section of the school website. This allows all governors to read about which visits have taken place and what has been monitored or discussed. We are pleased to have been able to resume in-person visits to the school to meet with school leaders and enjoy seeing learning taking place.

Governing Body Priorities for the Coming Year

- Whole-school wellbeing
- Finance
- Appointment of new Headteacher

Governing Body Development

The Governing Body's priority is to ensure governors fulfil their strategic role to support and challenge the school's leadership team. Whilst our roles have been largely supportive of late, we have continued to challenge the school's leaders to ensure high standards are maintained and built upon. The areas for improvement identified in our self-evaluation will feed into our Governor Development Plan, which is a working document. We are pleased to see the continuation of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee this year which builds on the important work undertaken since 2020. Our curriculum committee holds strategic oversight of the learning taking place in the school and the resources committee scrutinises school spending and seeks to find ways in which we can make savings and remain financially viable as an institution. Our premises and health and safety committee is responsible for the strategic oversight of the building's maintenance and ensuring it is a safe workplace for staff and children.

School Vision and Values

The updating of the school's vision and values has been almost two years' worth of work on the part of governors and school leaders. A strategic working party was set up to guide this important change and consultations were held with parents, staff and children to learn more about what they felt the school represented to them and how we could best encapsulate this. Our resulting Vision and Values statement is:

At Rhodes Avenue, we want our children to:

Know who they are

Respect others for who they are

Never stop learning

School Values:

*We will act with **cooperation** because we are a **community**.*

*We will use **creativity** to learn and grow.*

*We will show **consideration** as everyone is of equal value and importance.*

This can be found on the first page of our school website and is also on display in the main foyer of the school building. We firmly believe that these values are inherent in the fabric of Rhodes Avenue and we are proud of the work that went into forming this new vision statement. We are also reminded of the poignancy of these words as Adrian's own passion and ambition for all children in the school can so clearly be felt in them. We hold them as a lasting legacy from him.

Reports from Committees and Link Governors

Safeguarding – Lucy Isabella Freestone, Safeguarding Governor

Safeguarding in schools is essential for keeping children safe. This requires Rhodes Avenue Primary School to have whole-school policies and procedures in place; staff and volunteers that are confident in identifying and raising concerns; leadership confident in responding to and referring concerns and working with other agencies, and community groups, to protect children; knowledge and resources to effectively teach and promote safety and wellbeing.

Governors ensure statutory requirements are being met by actively monitoring safeguarding provision at the school. We review and approve policies, question relevant information, and ensure that safeguarding is a top priority in all areas of school provision. As Safeguarding Governor I have assisted the Governing Body in these responsibilities by:

- Keeping up to date with statutory safeguarding guidance
- Ensuring the school has relevant and up-to-date policies related to various aspects of Safeguarding – these policies can be found on the school website
- Supporting the Governing Body to develop its understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, and reporting back to the board about safeguarding issues and development
- Challenging Senior Leaders on strategies for monitoring, reporting and implementing Safeguarding policies and interventions.
- Meeting termly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Emel Ali.
- Monitoring the single central record with the DSL to make sure the school carries out appropriate recruitment checks and that adequate training has been undertaken by staff, governors, and volunteers.

Rhodes Avenue staff take their role in keeping children safe very seriously and there is a strong safeguarding culture within the school. This approach centres the safety and wellbeing of the children and endeavours to ensure that all children at Rhodes Avenue have the best outcomes and are protected from harm.

School Finance - Pawan Dhir, Chair of Resources Committee

The 2022/23 School year has been very challenging as inflation continues to persist, we experience further operational cost increases and staffing industrial action continues as funded pay negotiations remain unresolved.

Nevertheless through strong executive leadership teamwork and overall efficient financial resource management, we again generated much needed income from school lettings, breakfast, after school and holiday clubs, in addition to invaluable extra funding from a number of successful RAPSA events. Our thanks again go to all parents involved in RAPSA for their extraordinary fundraising efforts.

The Governors would also like to thank the entire school leadership team for their effective financial resource management throughout the year, which is critical to the successful operation of the School, including delivering the challenging budget for the year ahead.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – Alex Morgan, Chair

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has been active this year reviewing a number of the school's policies and helping to support the school in having vital conversations about EDI. The EDI committee supports the school in its aims to make sure every pupil, staff member, parent and other stakeholder feels included, valued and represented. The EDI Committee has been responsible for monitoring the school's performance against its EDI aims and considers relevant evidence and practical tools to make change happen. In this regard, this year the EDI committee has recommended and / or encouraged EDI training sessions and worked (and will continue to work) with the school to address EDI issues, including underrepresentation and raising awareness.

Curriculum – Lucy Isabella Freestone, Committee Chair

The Curriculum Committee oversees all aspects of the school curriculum, monitors national and local targets, and looks at attainment data to identify trends or potential issues. We challenge the Senior Leadership Team about the school's plans to bolster progress or attainment in particular areas and about how they track the effectiveness of these plans. The committee also reviews curriculum policies and is the forum for discussing any issues or new developments relating to the curriculum.

This year, the curriculum committee has met at least once a term to discuss the curriculum focusing on Priority 2 of the School Development Plan (SDP): Outstanding to Exceptional, and the Priority Target: To ensure curriculum

learning is exceptional and consistent within the whole curriculum. To effectively monitor progress against the SDP we have undertaken the following:

- Reviewed updated policies relating to the scope of the committee
- Participated in book looks for Math and Geography
- Received informative presentations from subject leaders in Math, Geography and, Design & Technology
- Met with the Deputy and Interim Head Teacher to discuss Curriculum
- Carried out School Visits
- Reviewed performance data for all Key Stages, at various data points, throughout the year

The committee acknowledges and thanks all members of staff for their continued commitment to ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum is offered, at an exceptional level. The learning at Rhodes Avenue is guided, but not limited to, the National Curriculum. This learning is greatly enriched by the enthusiasm and skill of Rhodes Avenue staff who endeavour to ensure it is accessible for each child at the school. The staff embodied the Rhodes Avenue school value: We will use creativity to learn and grow.

Premises and Health and Safety – Simon Green, Committee Chair

The committee continues to meet twice a term to review all matters relating to the school premises and buildings, the policies relating to Health and Safety, including the Accessibility Policy and First Aid Policy, both of which were reviewed and updated this year. The Medical Tracker system remains effective in monitoring incidents, and we are pleased to report that there have been no Reportable Incidents.

Maintenance of the buildings remains well managed, and the Facilities Team are working with the Local Authority on measures to mitigate warmer temperatures experienced on hot days, particularly on the first-floor level of the school building.

During the year a substantial grant was awarded to the school for works to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, this is most welcome in the era of increasing energy costs that we have witnessed in the last 12 months.

The annual Health and Safety Audit which is carried out by external professional assessors was completed, and the committee were able to commend Andrew Satwick, the Facilities Manager, and his team, on the report received. The recommendations in the report were few and relatively minor, and all noted works were carried out in a timely fashion.

Following the tragic loss of our Headteacher Adrian Hall, who passed away in February, Adrian's Amphitheatre is due to be unveiled on the school grounds on the 18th July, in his memory.

Inclusion /SEND – Shanuk Mediwaka, Link Governor

It was a pleasure to meet with the school's SENCO, Matt Henson, and hear about the school's work this year in this area. This has included a greater focus on individual action plans, recognising the importance of tailoring intervention around the specific circumstances of each child. The school has also rolled out lanyards and a wider information campaign to ensure staff are aware of the different levels of intervention that are available to them.

There has rightly been an emphasis on general wellbeing and on ensuring that each pupil feels comfortable raising concerns that they have, especially in light of the tragic events of earlier this year. Addressing behavioural issues (particularly those driven by the Covid-19 pandemic) has continued to be a priority, with ongoing monitoring.

Early Years - Jette Rayner, Link Governor

This year, as the EY link governor, I have:

- Watched parent workshop videos and met with Nursey Lead and Reception Lead to discuss parental engagement and reported back to governors.
- Met with Nursey Lead and Reception Lead in the spring term to discuss transitions and attended transition training for EYFS.
- Met with EYFS SENDCO to discuss interventions in EYFS.
- Attended the opening evening for new parents in Nursery and Reception in the summer term.