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Governance impact: The Governing Body provides strategic leadership, informed support and robust challenge across both schools. Governors use their knowledge, professional expertise, monitoring, data and first-hand evidence to test leaders' self-evaluation and assure themselves of impact. Their work is increasingly focused on whether decisions improve pupils' experiences and outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, children known or previously known to social care and pupils facing other barriers to learning or wellbeing.

Strategic direction, self-evaluation and improvement

- Governors understand the distinct contexts of Sydenham and Lighthorne Heath and the benefits and complexities of federation working. They contribute to self-evaluation and improvement planning, scrutinise priorities and ensure that strategic decisions remain rooted in pupils' needs, the schools' ethos and long-term sustainability.
- Monitoring pairs test leaders' evaluation through visits, discussion, pupil voice, work scrutiny and data. Findings are reported to the Full Governing Body. Minutes increasingly record questions that test impact, risk, sustainability, value for money and pupil experience, with actions followed through by named leaders or governors.

Inclusion, achievement and vulnerable pupils

- Governors maintain a strong focus on disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and EHCPs, children looked after and previously looked after, pupils with EAL, young carers and pupils experiencing attendance, SEMH or wider barriers. Recent scrutiny has included nurture and therapeutic provision, Lexia, LEGO Brick Club, Makaton, Pupil Premium, attendance and persistent absence, and the extent to which adaptations maintain access to an ambitious curriculum.
- Governors scrutinise SEND funding at each setting, including individual EHCP allocations and changes arising from the Local Authority funding matrix. They challenge leaders where funding reduces while statutory provision and staffing costs remain, balancing financial sustainability with the schools' duty to meet pupils' needs.

Safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing

- Safeguarding remains a standing strategic priority. Governors scrutinise the Warwickshire safeguarding audit and action plan, KCSIE requirements, safer recruitment, the Single Central Record, DSL capacity and follow-up actions. They consider attendance, behaviour and safeguarding together where this gives a more accurate picture of pupils' needs and risks.
- Governors support the Federation's relational, trauma-informed and restorative approaches while maintaining clear expectations for safety, attendance and behaviour. They also support leaders in responding proportionately to aggressive or unreasonable parental behaviour, recognising both the importance of legitimate parental challenge and the need to protect pupils, staff and leadership wellbeing.

Finance, resources and premises

- Governors scrutinise budgets, staffing, expenditure and value for money, including the financial implications of rising SEND complexity, nursery development, site security, capital works and the future Lighthorne Heath site. They challenge whether expenditure is proportionate, sustainable and linked to pupil benefit, and distinguish appropriately between school, landlord and Local Authority responsibilities.

Professional learning, leadership development and succession

- Governors regard staff expertise as a key driver of improvement and support high-quality, evidence-informed CPD matched to school priorities. They support direct access to external specialists where practicable, rather than relying solely on cascade models, and have endorsed development across SEND/inclusion, mathematics, literacy, nurture, safeguarding, Forest School, LEGO Brick, Makaton and arts/cultural partnerships.
- Governors actively support distributed leadership and succession planning, including SEND leadership, development of middle and senior leaders, Learning Mentor roles and staffing structures. They monitor leadership capacity and recognise that effective governance includes giving due regard to leader and staff workload and wellbeing.

National quality marks and external validation

- Governors deliberately support the schools in achieving and sustaining nationally recognised quality marks and accreditations where these align with strategic priorities. This is viewed as a vehicle for whole-school improvement and leadership development, not as an isolated award-seeking exercise. Examples include School of Sanctuary, UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Gold re-accreditation and longstanding Eco-Schools work.
- Governors recognise that these frameworks promote staff ownership, distributed leadership, pupil voice and sustained improvement. External validation - including quality marks, peer review, consultancy, Local Authority review and Ofsted - is considered alongside governors' own monitoring rather than as a substitute for it.

Headteacher appraisal, governance capacity and community

- The Headteacher Appraisal Group uses an external adviser and agrees objectives linked to Federation priorities, with clear success criteria, milestones, evidence and review points. Governors evaluate impact on school improvement and leadership capacity, while also considering the sustainability of senior leadership workload.
- Governors support constructive relationships with parents and the wider community and value partnership with the Local Authority, Warwickshire services, the South Leamington Consortium, external providers and other schools. The Governing Body reviews its own skills and link responsibilities and responds to vacancies or lost expertise through recruitment or reallocation.

Evidence of impact

- Governor impact is evidenced through the quality of challenge recorded in minutes; monitoring reports; follow-up actions; scrutiny of outcomes, attendance, safeguarding, SEND and finance; and leaders' responses to challenge. The Board's ambition is to sustain governance consistent with the Ofsted Strong Standard: knowledgeable governors providing consistent support and robust challenge across all aspects of the schools' work, helping leaders secure strong standards, develop staff expertise and act in the best interests of all pupils.

Richard Butler
Chair of Governors