

# Darlinghurst Academy

## Impact Statement 2017-18

### **Introduction:**

This report summarises what the governors have been doing over the academic year 2017/18 and how we have played a role in our pupils' education.

The priority for Darlinghurst's Rapid Improvement Board (RIB) is to ensure that all pupils progress well in their education.

We understand that for this to be achieved pupils must be supported by a well-managed, inspiring and motivated staff who work together in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment to ensure that the school's vision of a 'happy learning community where everyone works hard, plays well and achieves their best' continues.

To do this, the Rapid Improvement Board works with the Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to develop the strategic direction of the school, as set out in our Rapid Improvement Plan hold them to account for its delivery. This plan was developed following the last Ofsted inspection of the school in December, 2016.

We ask for and receive high-quality pupil progress data from the SLT which enables the RIB to track every child and look in detail at the effectiveness of teaching and learning and interventions used to improve pupil progress.

We also form our own view on the quality of provision by visiting the school and talking with staff, pupils, parents and carers. Educationalists on the Board also undertake learning walks to ensure good practice in the classroom. We monitor and investigate the success of initiatives and interventions under the school's Pupil Premium programme and ensure the funding is used where possible to benefit every child.

### **Safeguarding**

The SLT reports on these areas and the Board challenge and seek to test and discuss the school performance information in the role of a 'critical friend'. This helps to hold their decisions and actions to account and drives continuous improvement. The Chair also thoroughly checks the Single Central Record each term to ensure all appropriate checks are undertaken on staff and volunteers.

### **School performance planning**

The Board works with the SLT on the academy priorities for action, which is aligned directly to the conclusions of the Ofsted report from December, 2016. This plan sets our goals and outcomes to aim for, for the benefit of our pupil's academic progress and enjoyment of learning.

The plan is monitored at each meeting. Broadly, our current goals are:

- To improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that practice is consistently good with significant elements of outstanding practice

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developing, ensuring any remaining Requires Improvement practice is eliminated (Quality of teaching, learning and assessment).

- To improve the impact of the SLT ensuring that their capacity is fully utilised and focused tightly on driving up standards and improving outcomes for all of our pupils (Effectiveness of Leadership and Management). We have taken steps to strengthen our leadership team and are proud with their impact on the academy.
- To develop and embed a curriculum that is broad, balanced and progressive, supports mastery and takes account of the differing needs of groups such as boys, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Pupil Premium and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) (Effectiveness of Leadership and Management).
- To promote and embed a rigorous and robust pupil tracking system (Effectiveness of Leadership and Management / Quality of teaching, learning and assessment).
- To improve standards in writing across the school so that pupil achievement is in line with the standards achieved in reading and maths (Outcomes of Pupils).
- To increase the proportion of children passing the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 so that outcomes are above National (Outcomes of Pupils).
- To ensure that Pupil Premium funding is spent effectively in order to continue to improve the attainment of disadvantaged children (Effectiveness of Leadership and Management / Outcomes of Pupils).
- To ensure that a higher proportion of children go on to achieve the highest levels of attainment in all subjects (Outcomes of Pupils).
- To raise expectations of children with SEN so that they make good progress and achieve well relative to their starting points (Outcomes of Pupils).
- To monitor and challenge the use of Pupil Premium money to ensure it is used to best effect (Outcomes of Pupils).
- To review the provision for children with EAL to improve the acquisition of language skills and increase progress and attainment for this group (Outcomes of Pupils).
- To review behaviour policy and ensure consistent application of expectations by all staff so that behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding across the school (Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare).
- To continue to improve attendance for all groups of pupils so that it is at least in line with the national average. This has been a particular area of focus for the

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Board and has been discussed in full at recent Parents' Forums. (Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare).

### **Analysis and understanding the school's performance**

Crucial to the effectiveness of the RIB is being able to understand the school's performance as measured by external and internal benchmarks. We work hard to understand what story the school's internal reporting and Ofsted's published information is telling us so that we can ask the right questions of our SLT, challenge as appropriate, and make relevant suggestions and ensure improvements are carried out and monitored.

The SLT explains the school's performance information to the governors in regular question and answer sessions to explore what might not be working, what is working well and can be expanded on, and new ideas.

### **Governor meeting attendance**

During 2017-2018 we met as a full RIB twice per month. This was recently reduced to once a month as we looked our progress to date on the Rapid Improvement plan. The focus of meetings is primarily progress against our plan plus a review of any statutory or administrative matters that require attention as part of our planned cycle of activities.

We normally have a question and answer session with the Principal and SLT based on updates circulated in advance.

Our meeting attendance levels show no issues regarding the availability and commitment of governors and occasional apologies for not attending on reasonable grounds have been accepted.

### **Summary and the future**

The RIB at Darlinghurst has been on a journey of self-evaluation and improvement that continues in earnest. We are focused on driving improvement at Darlinghurst and across the trust and we hold senior leaders to account. The RIB was always intended to be a temporary measure to swiftly address the last Ofsted report and implement and monitor a rapid improvement plan. We intend to establish a shadow governing body in September 2018, and move towards this body taking over monitoring teaching and learning and some other governance functions (safeguarding, health and safety) within the next academic year.