**Russell Lower School - Governors’ Report to Parents 2015-16**

The last 12 months have been a time of enormous change for Russell Lower, this time last year we had just completed the extension to the school, Mrs Sealey was about to leave us and Mrs Walker was set to join us. At the same time Mr Gary Summerfield stepped down as Chair of the Governing Board and I was elected to take over.

As a Board we have also changed enormously over the last 12 months, we have re-structured our sub-committee groups and their terms of reference, and given those groups delegated powers. We have re-aligned the schedule of meetings to better fit the school calendar, ensuring that our focus is always on the progress of the children and that any actions taken impact positively on the children.

Headlines for the last 12 months have been the creation of a new vision for the school which I hope you have all had the opportunity to see, the refurbishment of the ‘old’ classrooms, and the creation of our parent/governor forum.

It has been a challenging year both in terms of budgets and also working to the new assessment system.

My sincere thanks go to all the staff, parent volunteers and PTA for making Russell Lower a truly wonderful place for our children to learn.

Andrew Allison

Chair of Governors

**Leadership and Management Committee**

It has been a busy and productive year for the Leadership and Management Committee. We met in September (2015), January and May this year. Our function is principally to consider matters relating to leadership and management, staffing, performance management of the staff and safeguarding.

As many of you will be aware, an important task was to review and rewrite the school's vision for the next 3-5 years. This focused on what we think the school currently does well and how we would like that to grow and develop. Thank you to everyone that contributed to this; your input was both helpful and valuable to the process. After much work a new Vision document has been agreed and was recently sent out to all parents/carers.

A successful project has been the introduction of the Parent Governor Forum. So far this year, there have been 3 meetings which have covered homework, information given to parents/carers on their children's progress and the accelerated reading programme. The forum has been extremely valuable in enabling parents/carers, staff and governors to provide constructive feedback to each other on some tricky topics. The next meeting will discuss bullying.

A vital part of our function is to ensure that we are satisfied that all safeguarding issues within the school are dealt with appropriately. Therefore, at each meeting Mrs Walker and the Safeguarding Governor report on any issues and matters that we need to be made aware of. We have recently reviewed our safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure they are up to date.

As the school grows (those new houses will eventually be built!) we have reviewed the staffing structure. From September 2016 KS1 and Foundation stage will be 3 form entry across the board making the most of the smart new classrooms. We now have the staffing structure in place for 2016/17 and are formulating plans for 2017/18.

Nicolette Ford

Chair – Leadership & Management

**Teaching, Learning and Standards Committee**

It has been a challenging year for this committee due to a number of major changes to both the curriculum and assessment. Our main purpose has been to consider matters relating to curriculum, assessment and progress. This year we met in November (2015) April and July (2016).

A key component of our work is to monitor the school’s assessment data to ensure that all children are making or exceeding the expected progress. At termly meetings we discuss in detail each year group, breaking data down into different areas of the curriculum (such as reading, maths and writing). We also look at disparities in results between groups of children, such as, boys and girls, summer born, pupil premium and SEN. This helps us ensure that all the children are making progress at school and have access to additional help if needed.

We have also reviewed a number of the schools policies, the most significant this year has been the new Marking and Feedback policy introduced by Mrs Walker. This has been embraced by staff and pupils; you may have noticed the marking symbols on classroom walls and in your children's books. It was felt that there was a need for a consistent approach to marking across the school. This is having a really positive impact on children's work by allowing them to easily understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work going forward.

Catherine Norris

Chair – Teaching, Learning & Standards

**Finance and Premises Committee**

The Finance and Premises committee was established in 2015 as the new build activity drew to a close. The purpose is to provide focused attention on all funding and cost items required to run the school, as well as ensuring we invest appropriately in the school infrastructure and learning facilities required to continually improve and develop the school’s capability. The overall objective is to always ensure a balanced budget looking at pupil number projections over a 3 to 5 year period. In addition this committee has a focus to ensure the grounds and building are safe and secure for the children.

During the 2015/2016 school year significant investment has again been possible following the school build completion. All original “pre-build” classrooms have now been fully refurbished, toilets refitted in the original building areas and carpets fully replaced. Technology usage continues to grow in the school and during this academic year the school has invested in both Clevertouch screen and iPads to aid our children’s learning experience. In addition to the internal enhancements you will have noticed the improvements around the pond area and the addition of the playground “play zones” as well as the significant investment in the new Trim Trail. I am sure you have heard the positive feedback from the children.

As we move into the 2016/2017 academic year the committee will continue to focus on how best to use the budget we have available. A specific area to call out for focus will be the investments in additional staffing to target smaller class sizes.

Finally the committee would formally like to thank all parents and in particular the efforts of the PTA in supporting the school’s ongoing improvements. The work you all do to support fundraising initiatives is invaluable and is truly appreciated.

Stuart Price

Chair – Finance & Premises