



BirchfieldSchool

Albrighton, Nr Wolverhampton, WV7 3AF

Telephone 01902 372 534

Website www.birchfieldschool.co.uk Email office@birchfieldschool.co.uk

BIRCHFIELD SCHOOL

2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT of the School Governance Advisory Committee

The report for this academic year reflects the work of the Governance Advisory committee and decisions taken over the last 12 months. We support and advise the Proprietor and Headmistress in making decisions in the best interests of our pupils. We scrutinize and approve the policies and procedures of the school. We work with the Headmistress to create development plans for future improvement. We monitor the work of the Headmistress and her staff. We monitor and evaluate the safeguarding procedures and aim to ensure that every child is kept safe whilst at school. We monitor and report on financial arrangements and annually submit accounts to Companies House. School policies required by the ISSRs can be viewed on our website. For information regarding the successes and activities of the children and students at the school, see the Headmistress' regular Newsletters and the website.

The annual report is a brief synopsis of just some of the positive changes during the course of the year, and the benefits that subsequently accrue to your children. The news of the excellent education on offer here at Birchfield have spread far and wide. You the parents and your children are our best ambassadors because of the way you speak about the school. This has led to significant growth in numbers on roll, so thank you!

The first full year of Birchfield School as part of the St Philips Education group has been truly momentous. In November the Independent Schools Inspectorate were welcomed into the school as part of the inspection cycle. The Headmistress has worked incredibly hard over the last three years to get the school ready for such an inspection. We were all absolutely delighted with the outcome. The inspectors reported that the school was not only 'fully compliant' with all regulatory aspects of the inspection but also judged the quality of the pupils' academic achievements, the quality of their personal development, and their other achievements to all be 'Excellent' – the top grading! Your children were brilliant in their interactions with the inspectors and were a credit to both the school and you! The inspectors also commended the forward-planning and provision already in place for the expansion of the school into a senior school in the future. The governors whole-heartedly congratulate Mrs Morris and all her staff for such an outstanding outcome!

With sensible budgeting allied to considerable investment, the future of the school is extremely secure. The proprietor, the governors, the Headmistress and the staff are all determined to protect the very special characteristics of Birchfield School whilst simultaneously driving the school onwards and upwards into an exciting future.

The decision to expand the age-range of the school to include the GCSE examination years has been well-received. Many parents have expressed their delight that their child does not have to move school at 11 or 13 years – a time in their young lives when there is so much change that some youngsters can find it over-whelming. Our children just completing Year 7 are the first who can remain with us all the way to age 16 years. They have made very good progress and we are confident that our first-ever cohort of GCSE examinees in the summer of 2026 will be a very successful one!

The school welcomes children with a wide range of abilities and aims to stretch every child to achieve their academic and personal potential. We support those who find learning more challenging with our Learning Enhancement sessions and Star programme (in the Junior school only) to hopefully enable all youngsters to access our curriculum. As well as achieving academically, we want all children to be well-rounded, respectful and polite individuals who have been given opportunities to experience the delights of music, the arts, sport and outdoor education. We believe that happy children are more likely to thrive!

Children, staff and parents have all been delighted with improvements to the school environment. These include new buildings, re-modelling, refurbishment as well as massive re-decoration and improvements to lighting, doors and windows. Rooms have been re-arranged and re-organised to create more appropriate learning spaces as we become a senior school. Planning permission is currently being sought for further development including the new extensive botanical greenhouse which will provide a teaching and learning space for biology as well as a valuable resource for the younger years to learn about the environment.

Outside, the superb grounds are the envy of many! Our cricket facilities are outstanding and other sports are equally well catered for. We want children to have the benefit of excellent facilities for sport and outdoor education. The renovated cricket pavilion now hosts cricket teas and welcome visitors to matches. Our football and hockey pitches will continue to host regular inter-school matches. The tennis courts and all-weather areas will also be improved.

But facilities do not make great schools – people do! We are striving to ensure we recruit the very best teachers and enable them to flourish and develop. We are proud of our staff and are determined that we remain so!

A great school requires the best facilities, the best teachers but also something else. It requires parents who believe in and support the school ethos. We know that in the myriad of interactions that take place every day in every school that things will occasionally not be ideal. We strive for perfection but the realist must accept occasional lapses! When this happens, please talk with us about any concerns; they can usually be resolved quickly and amicably. But we need you to trust us to make decisions in the best interests of everyone.

This has been another exciting year. There have of course been the huge challenges presented by the pandemic, but thankfully the immunisation programme is allowing the nation to gradually return to something like normality. We have tried to ensure that the Headmistress and her team have been well supported in keeping the children and staff at Birchfield as safe and healthy as possible.

We look forward to working with you the parents in the coming years in helping Birchfield School to become an outstanding school for children of all ages and abilities, talents and backgrounds. We want everyone to be proud of being members of the Birchfield community.

Have a great summer break!



Sir Michael Griffiths
Chair of the Governance Advisory Committee
July 2022