

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of St Mary's Blackhill RCVA Primary School Academic Year 2014/15



School Vision/Mission Statement

A Christian ethos lies at the heart of St Mary's School community, with particular emphasis being placed upon the nurturing in each child of a knowledge and love of the Catholic faith. We foster relationships which reflect our values and attitudes of care, respect and trust between children, staff, governors, parents and parishioners. We strive to enable each child to grow; aspiring to excellence and beyond the limits of potential.

The Governing Body of St Mary's RCVA Primary School has a strong focus on its three core strategic functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance arrangements

The full Governing Body meets once each term and we also have a number of committees to consider different aspects of the school in detail:

- **Finance and Buildings**, which focuses on ensuring that the school sets and uses its budget appropriately, making sure that staffing levels meet the needs of the children, that the school premises are kept in good condition and the school grounds are developed to enhance the learning experiences of the children.
- **School**, this committee focuses on promoting opportunities for children within a broad and balanced curriculum, which encourages healthy life styles, achievement both academic and sporting and ensures that children are well supported in RE and PSHE. The committee also ensures that SEN provision is in place and vulnerable children are well supported and catered for. The committee monitors provision across the school, sets and agrees aspirational targets and ensures that reporting arrangements are met by the school.
- **Pay Review (first)**: Reflects on Pay and Performance and makes decisions under personnel procedures.
- **Head Teacher Performance**: to agree and set the Head Teacher challenging but achievable targets, monitor performance and effectiveness, and review accomplishment.

- **Admissions:** to ensure that new admissions comply with relevant legislation, school policy and diocese/county guidance.
- **Personnel:** The committee is responsible for Teaching staff and permanent nonteaching staff appointments. It also ensures that the performance Management Policy is in place and considers the staffing structure of the school.
- **Appeals:** This committee meets if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

Governing Body Membership

The Chair of Governors for 2014-15 was Mr John Chirnside, Vice-Chairs were Dorothy Quinn and George Dunn.

This last year the Governing Body has seen changes in membership with George Dunn retiring in February 2015 after many effective years on the GB and two new governors joining, Mrs Collette Smith as a Foundation governor and Miss Steph Hughes as a staff governor. For the autumn term our new Acting Head Teachers Mrs Veitch and Mrs Fleming will be joining the governing body, following Mrs Lacey's retirement. Further information regarding current governors and who appointed them is available [here](#).

Following government guidance, the governors discussed the reconstitution of the Governing Body with both the diocese and county council. We subsequently reduced the governing body down to twelve members, a new Instrument of Governance has been formulated (available [here](#)) and will be implemented in September 2015.

All governors are committed to following the NGA Code of Conduct [here](#)

Governor Training Record

During the year governors attended the following training courses:

- An Introduction to Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Governors Role in School Improvement
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- Governors Role in School Improvement
- New Governors Induction Programme
- Recruitment and Selection Procedures
- Social Deprivation and the Pupil Premium
- Succession Planning
- Supporting Pupils with Behaviour Problems
- The Use of Data in Target Setting (Raise on Line)
- First Aid Level 3
- One Governor is studying for an NVQ Level 5 in School Business Management

Attendance record of governors

Governors attend our full Governing Body meetings and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not 'quorate' (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

For a full list of governors attendance at meetings please click [here](#)

During the course of the year a number of governors attended school for a Special Interest visit for a particular topic. In addition, the Chair of Governors met with the Head Teacher on a weekly basis to discuss relevant matters.

Key Issues faced and addressed by the Governing Body

The Governing Body has had a particularly busy year, with the school subject to two separate inspections and major changes made to the structure and personnel of the Senior Leadership team.

During the autumn 2014 term our Deputy Head Teacher Mrs Veitch returned from maternity leave and reduced her working week. Governors were keen not just to replace the other half of the post but to use the opportunity to increase the capacity of the schools senior leader team. An experienced Deputy Head was recruited with the help of the diocese and county council, with Mrs Fleming appointed in January 2015.

Spring Term 2015 brought two inspections. The Diocese Section 48 Inspection was a two day visit from an experienced inspector, who met and engaged with governors throughout the whole process. Also during the same term Ofsted visited, with two inspectors in school for a two day visit. Again inspectors met with governors throughout the review, questioning our vision for the school, the impact we have on the schools success and our strategic input. Both inspections resulted with St Mary's rated as a Good school.

Summer 2015 term saw Mrs Lacey announce she was to retire at the end of term after eleven years at the helm. Governors spent a considerable amount of time assessing our leadership options with our county Education Development Partner and our Diocese HR advisor. We held interviews and put applicants through a long and hard day in school, resulting in an appointment of Mr David Miller as our new head teacher from January 2016.

In addition to the four major items above, the normal day to day business of the school continued with as little disruption as possible.

The GB has spent time this year reflecting on the school's provision for eligible children identified under 'Pupil Premium' from both an effectiveness and value for money perspective. There has been a strong emphasis on raising educational aspirations, access and achievement and Governors have closely monitored the impact of this on pupil performance via the School Improvement Plan.

Governors set and agree school targets and aspirations and closely monitor progress towards targets. They have a particular focus on Y1 Phonics screening, KS1 and KS2 SATs tests so that they can be sure that the school performance is on track to fulfil its ambitious targets for all pupils.

Governors are also instrumental in ensuring that intervention strategies are in place to support and promote pupils' performance.

Governors continue to focus on promoting a range of sports activities and competitive sports and to make good use of the 'Sports Premium' funding.

Governors continue to monitor safeguarding and our nominated governor for Safeguarding has been highly active in school to ensure policies and procedures are up to date, relevant and adhered to. Governors oversee that all adults working with children in our school have been DBS checked.

Governors help to manage the school financial affairs and ensure funding is used efficiently and effectively.

Assessment of Impact

Governors have provided the school and senior leaders with a considerable amount of support this year. It has set challenging targets and has ensured that data has been rigorously monitored.

There have been significant improvements in pupil progress and teaching and learning in all Key Stages and staff are aware of the high expectations and respond well to this. July 2015 saw the school achieve their best ever SATS results, a reward for the hard work and dedication of all staff involved.

The school received an Ofsted Inspection on 5th & 6th March 2015– this report states that:

'The Head Teacher provides very strong and determined leadership for the school. She is supported well by senior leaders. Together with governors, they have high aspirations for the school and a clear vision for continuous improvement which is shared by all staff. Leaders and governors sustain a successful, relentless focus on improving teaching.'

From the inspection on 28th & 29th January 2015 the school's Diocese Denominational Inspection Report states:

'The Head Teacher and governors have a clear vision for the Catholic Life of the school: they are firmly committed to the Church's mission in education. The relatively new governing body are highly ambitious for the school and share in the aspirations of the senior leaders. They are visible around school, providing support and challenge where necessary. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school.'

Future plans for the Governing Body

The autumn 2015 term will see St Mary's under new leadership, initially under a joint headship of Mrs Veitch and Mrs Fleming until our new Head Teacher Mr Miller joins us in January 2016. Governors will be focussed on a business as usual approach, ensuring the transition goes as seamlessly as possible by offering support to all senior leaders while maintaining the high standards already established.

Governors will be reviewing the 'New Primary Curriculum' and the school's progress on 'Assessment without Levels' in 2015/16.

Contact Details

The Governing Body welcomes suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents, carers or anyone within the parish and our local community.
Please contact Mr John Chirnside, Chair of Governors c/o the school office.