



St Mary's RC Primary School:

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body

Academic Year 2017 - 2018

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 RC 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
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Governor 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:

- ✓ **Resources**: This committee 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. **Meets each half-term.**
- ✓ **Achievement, Standards and Outcomes**: This committee evaluates progress against school development priorities, validates evidence against self-evaluation judgements, monitors provision for SEN, scrutinises and challenges progress and attainment of all groups, reviews policy and considers external recommendations. **Meets each term.**
- ✓ **Children and Community**: This committee considers pupil and parental voice, evaluates questionnaires, considers ways to effectively communicate with parents, explores and develops links with the wider community and ensures smooth transition of pupils into the school. **Meets each term.**
- ✓ **Pay Review (first)**: Reflects on Pay and Performance and makes decisions under personnel procedures. **Meets annually.**
- ✓ **Headteacher Performance**: To agree and set the Headteacher challenging but achievable targets, monitor performance and effectiveness, and review accomplishment. **Meets Annually.**
- ✓ **Admissions**: To ensure that new admissions comply with relevant legislation, school policy and diocese/county guidance. **Meets annually.**
- ✓ **Personnel**: The committee is responsible for teaching staff and permanent non-teaching staff appointments. It also ensures that the Performance Management Policy is in place and considers the staffing structure of the school. **Meets on an infrequent basis as/when required, at least on an annual basis.**
- ✓ **Appeals**: This committee meets if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

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Governing Body Membership

The Governing Body of St Mary's was re-constituted in 2015 and now consists of:

- ✓ 7 Foundation governors, appointed by the diocese
- ✓ 2 staff governors (including the Headteacher)
- ✓ 2 elected Parent Governors 1 Local Authority Governor

The Chair of Governors for 2017/18 was Mrs Michelle Harris.

The Vice Chair of governors for 2017/18 was Mrs Anna Herdman.

The academic year saw the induction of new governors due to the resignation of existing members. Mr Paul Brown and Mrs Louise Milbourne were inducted as Foundation Governors. Mr Chris Affleck was inducted as a Parent Governor. In the latter stages of the Summer term, Mr Steve Watson tendered his resignation; this position remains vacant.

Further information regarding current governors, who appointed them and our Instrument of Governance is available elsewhere on the school website.

All governors are committed to following the NGA Code of Conduct.

Governor Training Record:

During the year, governors attended the following training courses:

- ✓ Governor monitoring by visiting classrooms
- ✓ Prevent Online
- ✓ Safeguarding and Child Protection
- ✓ Budget Planning and Monitoring
- ✓ SFVS
- ✓ Managing the Ofsted process
- ✓ First Aid
- ✓ GDPR
- ✓ General Induction Programme

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).

A full list of governor's attendance at meetings is available on the school website.

In addition, the Chair of Governors met with the Headteacher on a weekly basis to discuss relevant matters and governors were involved across the school on an informal basis as and when required.

Key Issues Faced and Addressed by the Governing Body

There has been some turbulence at Senior Leadership level this year; the Early Years Leader (TLR) was on maternity leave for the first two terms. The Deputy Headteacher was also on maternity leave and subsequently resigned, not returning to her substantial post. In the interim period, the school has been operating with staff members 'acting up'. In May, the Governing Body appointed a full time Deputy Headteacher to start in September 2018. The Early Years Lead returned at the start of the summer term thus alleviating pressure on the Leadership team. Governors have worked closely with Mr Miller to ensure our pupils and parents suffered the minimum disruption possible during this period.

The Chair of Governors has led a restructure of the governor committees in order to ensure all governors are immersed in the operations of the school and are equipped to provide improved challenge, thus holding school leaders to account. The Chair of Governors has produced a new and updated terms of reference document clearly outlining roles

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and responsibilities. In addition to this work, governors actioned a full independent health check of efficiency; an action plan with clear actions and milestones is now in place to allow the governors, with support of School Governor Support Services, to meet all legal obligations and to ensure operational efficiency is maximised.

The Chair of Governors continues to attend all EDP meetings with the Headteacher; this ensures full transparency and understanding, in terms of context, evidence and questioning, of the termly report. The Governing Body has developed a strong professional working relationship with the Educational development Partner, Governor Support Officer and overall links with the Local Authority.

To enhance facilities available to the children, St Mary's are currently installing a new library in school, which will be the base for the Accelerated Reader Programme. Governors are fully committed to developing the schools infrastructure further and constantly re-evaluate finances with regards to the planning permission obtained for the MUGA unit. This academic year has seen the installation of a new outdoor classroom primarily used for art, enhanced lunchtime provision and community events.

The governors continue to work with the Headteacher to monitor performance targets and implement strategies to resolve problem areas. A new sub-committee has been established to evaluate the school development plan and self-evaluation document regularly ensuring all governors are fully aware of the schools strengths and weaknesses and the impact of all agreed actions to further development school performance. Findings are clearly communicated by the Headteacher via termly reports. Statutory assessment data was generally very good but governors are aware that there are some areas where improvement is needed; such identified priorities form part of the school development plan for 2018-2019.

Governors are acutely aware of the financial/ funding problems with the education system; Resources committee meetings (finance & health and safety) occur every half term. This approach allows governors to carefully track expenditure, take immediate remedial or alternative action and ensure funding received is used efficiently and effectively. From a position of a deficit budget model, just over 24 months ago, governors have managed a budget, which has allowed for standards to be maintained, investment in resources and no reduction in staffing.

Other notable issues include the change of contracts issued to the Teaching Assistants. It is a reflection of the professionalism and dedication of our staff that no effects of the changes were felt by parents or children. Governors have continued to help staff and support if and when required.

The Chair of Governors continues to meet with the Headteacher on weekly basis as a minimum. In addition to the points detailed above, the normal day to day business of the school continued with as little disruption as possible.

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. The school actioned a DCC Safeguarding audit this year and safeguarding was deemed to be effective. All adults working with our pupils have been subject to suitable DBS checked.

Assessment of Impact

Governors have spent the year supporting the Senior Leadership Structure and allowing the Headteacher to review school operations, implement new techniques & technologies and utilise the available staff to the best of their talents.

Performance has been a key theme to the year, with new tracking systems being introduced to enhance the data available to staff. This has led to revised and improved systems for communicating progress and attainment to parents.

The level of challenge and support to the Headteacher and senior leaders has increased, with governors in a better position to make a positive impact. This is due to improving working relationships and an increased flow of information and knowledge between both sides. The action plan following the Governing Body audit clearly details how the governors will plan for continuous improvement within this area.

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Future Plans for the Governing Body

The following points are brief summaries and is by no means exhaustive:

- To fully implement all agreed action points identified via the Governing Body Audit
- To implement a process allowing Committee Chairs to triangulate evidence thus providing more challenge and holding leaders to account more robustly.
- To support leaders as the school prepares for Ofsted via increased involvement in a quality assurance/ monitoring programme for the new academic year.
- The governing body membership will change, with a vacancy for a parent governor. The recruitment and selection of governors, both parents and Foundation, has been discussed and the skills and experiences we require identified. The recruitment process will begin in Sept 2018 to allow the new governors to be given a full induction in Autumn 2018 term.
- Governors are confident in the abilities of the new Deputy Headteacher joining us and expect her to complement the existing staff. Performance management will be crucial and will be subject to additional scrutiny and support going forward. To support this St Mary's governors will continue to develop best practice and improved working relationships with staff at all levels across the school.

Contact Details

The Governing Body welcomes suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents, carers or anyone within the parish and our local community. If you raise any issue please contact the governors c/o the school office.

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