

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20

This Governance statement gives an overview of the focus and activities of the Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School over the past year.

Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body

The three core functions of a Governing body are:

- to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money well spent
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff

Our school vision to '**Love, Learn, Grow**,' recognises the potential of every child and as a governing body we believe in a collaborative approach, working with pupils, families and the community, to prepare children for the challenges and opportunities they will face. This Vision is reflected in the School Development Plan, all policies and is embedded throughout the whole school.

Purpose

As the Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Pre-school, we are proud of our school which offers a broad and balanced curriculum, underpinning our faith in Christ and Catholic values. We fully endorse the school vision, '**Love, Learn, Grow**' to ensure we create the right environment to support the learning and development of all children within our school and this was evident during our Ofsted inspection, "**The rich and vibrant curriculum is imaginatively designed to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to excel**" Ofsted (2017).

As the Governing Body of a Catholic school, our overarching responsibility lies in ensuring that the School is conducted in accordance with its Catholic character, at all times and this overriding duty (which is also a legal duty) permeates through everything that we do. The Governing Body endeavours to operate at a strategic level, leaving the headteacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable for the operational day-to-day running of the School. It is by achieving these aims that we can be sure that our School has effective governance.

Foundation governors have a particular responsibility, including Fr Michael from St Joseph's Church, to implement Catholic values throughout the community and curriculum within the school. The school has weekly assemblies and pupils attend church and retreat days in the parish.

Review of Effectiveness – (Ofsted 2017)

Building a successful Governing Body is about achieving balance and diversity in skills and knowledge. I am proud to inform you that St Joseph's has a highly committed and effective governing body.

Ofsted acknowledged:

“Governance is highly effective. Governors have a wide range of experience and expertise, and relevant skills, that enable them to oversee the work of the school effectively. They are eloquent and knowledgeable about how the school's performance compares with the national picture.”

“Governors rigorously hold leaders to account. They carefully consider leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and keep a sharp eye on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. They are quick to identify any anomalies, and governors' minutes show that they routinely ask insightful questions.”

“Members of the governing body gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They keep informed through focused visits during the school day and talk to subject leaders, staff and pupils. Subject leaders make presentations at governors' meetings where they outline their improvement plans and respond to governors' questions.”

Composition of the Governing Body

The Governing body consists of 12 governors:

- 2 Parent Governors (appointed by parents)
- 1 Local Authority Governor (appointed by the Local Authority),
- 1 Staff Governor (appointed by all school staff),
- 1 Headteacher and
- 7 Foundation Governors (appointed by the Diocese)

The Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Body and both work closely with the Headteacher and the Clerk. The Diocesan Bishop is Canonically responsible for his schools and academies. He ensures that the catholic ethos is maintained, particularly through the appointment of the foundation governors but also through overseeing the appointment of members of staff and through Diocesan inspection, in order to ensure that the school is fulfilling the objects cited in its Instrument of Government/Articles of Association and trust deed under which the school was established. A list of serving governors can be found on the school website.

Current Committee Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body is committed to promoting excellence throughout the school. Following a reconstitution in 2018, the Governing Body incorporated the work previously done by the Teaching, Learning and Standards Committee, and the Resources Committee, into the Full Governing Body meetings to ensure that all governors are able to impact the strategic functions and priorities within the school:

Teaching Learning and Standards – monitoring the quality of teaching within the school, along with monitoring and evaluating the progress and attainment of all pupils, in all subjects within the curriculum.

Resources – agreeing the annual budget with the Head Teacher and Business Manager and for monitoring expenditure. Overseeing the maintenance and development of the premises, as well as Health & Safety.

Personnel Committee – determining and approving the pay structure and pay awards for school staff. Whilst the Diocese owns the land and buildings, the Governing Body is the legal employer of school staff.

Admissions Committee – ensuring that the admission rules set out in the determined Admissions Policy for the Primary School is correctly applied.

During the school year 2018/19 the Full Governing Body have met six times over the year, as well as additional committee meetings, workshops and learning walks.

The Governing Body takes part in the annual cycle of school improvement by its interpretation and analysis of school data including, SATS results, government data, Phonics Screening Check, Baseline Assessment, Ofsted Data Dashboard and regular internal school assessment data. Through data analysis, pupil progress and attainment is scrutinised and vulnerable groups including pupil premium children are closely monitored. Data monitoring together with external reports such as Ofsted and external educational consultants, mean that the Governors play an active role in the development of the annual School Improvement Plan.

Governors are also expected to undertake training to fulfill and improve their role. During 2018/19 a number of training sessions were undertaken by individual governors, to reflect their area of interest and skills, as identified by their Link Roles within the school. The governors also undertake annual safeguarding training updates.

Training needs have been identified within the Annual Skill's Matrix, to ensure the right people are making the right decisions. The Governing Body is also a member of the National Governors Association, to ensure it remains up to date on relevant developments in the education sector. All Governors have a detailed job description to support the development of their key roles and areas of responsibility within the school. We have been successful in maintaining a strong sense of identity as a team and have successfully recruited new governors over the year.

The governing body has maintained a cycle of self-evaluation and improvement over the past year, including:

Self-evaluation exercise

Strategy Day

Skills Matrix / Meeting Attendance Record

Governing Body Annual Engagement Plan

Termly Learning Walks – RE, Science, Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTIC)

Priorities during 2018/19

We were delighted with the School Ofsted report 2017 which validated the internal and external data we had for the school. It also identified priorities that were already within our School Development Plan and the governing body remains focused on reviewing them regularly within the annual monitoring cycle, with the headteacher and senior leadership team.

Since Ofsted's visit, the governing body invited an external school improvement advisor to review our internal data and monitor all educational processes within the school. He provided a valuable report to ensure there is a continuous drive for improvement and we do not become complacent.

The School Development Plan sets out our clear priorities and the success criteria in order to measure outcomes. We review and monitor this termly as well as our School Evaluation Form (SEF), with an evaluative overview presented to Governors within the termly headteacher's report.

Review of Value for Money

The Governing Body has used its resources to provide good value for money during the academic year and has assessed where value for money can be improved including the use of benchmarking data where available. The Governing Body annually approves a 3 year school budget and regularly monitors the in-year budget with close scrutiny of the Resources committee, Business manager and School Finance Officer. It is important to acknowledge that the reduction in pupil numbers and voluntary contributions from parents over the last 3 years has impacted greatly on the school budget. This information has been shared with parents.

The Risk and Control Framework

The School's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties where possible, and a system of delegation and accountability, where appropriate. In particular, it includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body;
- Regular reviews by the [Governing body] of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecast and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- Clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines; Delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- Identification and management of risks.

Future Plans

A key focus for next year will be to continue working with the new headteacher to make school improvements as identified in our Ofsted report and internal monitoring reports. Our marketing committee will aim to promote the school within the local community to increase pupil numbers and raise the profile of St Joseph's as a very good school to send your children. We have already seen a small but significant increase in our Reception intake for 2019.

There have been significant changes within Education and in the way schools are governed and funded. As a governing body, we work collaboratively with members of the Bucks Catholic School Partnership. Due to the current climate in education we may need to consider the option of converting to academy status and explore the opportunity to collaborate with other similar schools, within a Multi-Academy Trust. However, any such conversion would only occur following consultation with all stakeholders if it was agreed to be beneficial to the education of all children within the school.

As a Governing Body, we recognise the fantastic support of the FOSJ's and all the parents who assist in raising funds for the enhancement of the environment and education of the children within the school. We will continue to seek additional support via grants and the monthly/annual contribution of some parents, to ensure the education of all children is not compromised.

How to Contact Governing Body

This report is just an overview of the work that goes on within the school by an incredibly strong team of dedicated staff and governors. Being a governor is a fulfilling role and if you would like to know more about the work of the governing body or have any comments/questions in respect of this statement please email governors via the school office or by emailing the Clerk to the Governors at **governors@st-josephsprimary.bucks.sch.uk**

We aim to explore new ways to recruit potential governors with the skills and experience required to help us continue, in our provision of strong strategic leadership and seek to explore a more open and diverse representation of the parents and community we serve. We always welcome suggestions and feedback from parents, carers and the wider school community.

Further information can be found on the Governor's page of the school website.

This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Governing Body on (date) and signed on its behalf by:

Signed:
Barry Moloney
Chair of Governors

Signed:
Caroline Lovegrove
Headteacher