



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY 2014 - 2015

Review Statement

The Governing Body consists of 12 governors and 3 associate members who have between them a broad base of abilities and skills which has enabled an effective measure of support and challenge for St Joseph's. In accordance with DfE statutory guidance issued in May 2014 the Governing Body proposed a restructure which has received approval from the Diocese and Local Authority and will take effect from September 2015. St Joseph's Instrument of Government is updated to include the revised constitution.

Governors during the academic year have taken the opportunity to pilot a governing body structure consisting of two main committees Teaching & Learning and Resources. The roles and responsibility of each Governor redefined in order to avoid duplication of effort and take full advantage of governor skills. Areas of responsibility are outlined in the structure and are delegated and involve each and every governor. The outcome intended to ensure a more robust and smarter decision making on key issues taking into account the school improvement programme priorities.

School improvement will continue as the main focus and the newly formed committees will carry on with their strategic, monitoring and executive roles. Governor visits to undertake learning walks based on their area of responsibility are planned in the school improvement programme during the academic year. These actions are intended to make best use of both governor and senior management time for the benefit of the children. Current priority will be the implementation and development of the new national curriculum and revision of pupil assessment.

Governors are aware of the need to obtain evidence to ensure policy and practices are robust and implemented efficiently. A systematic approach to school improvement which has involved a programme of monitoring visits and interviews with senior leadership team, reports from subject leaders, teaching assistants and administrative staff. The evidence collected by governors has demonstrated the high level of enthusiasm and commitment by all staff in the overall school improvement programme and concluded more importantly that they share St Joseph's stated mission, ethos and strategic direction of the school. The conclusion reached by governors has been underpinned by the annual anonymous parent questionnaire returned by parents. In addition governors have carried out pupil voice interviews involving a representative from different groups of children which again demonstrated the unanimous support for the work of all staff.

Governors welcome the DfE publication "Keeping children safe in education" and the Safeguarding of children. Governors have sought surveys and interviewed individual children in order to measure how safe they feel in school. The outcome produced positive comments from children. *"Teachers are trustworthy" "Feel confident telling a teacher of a problem and that something would be done"*

Action against bullying receives specific attention and recently the Behaviour Policy has been revised by governors and senior staff. Governors carried out a monitoring visit to see the Policy in practice and the respect between children and staff is evident. The external SPA judged the behaviour of the children at St Joseph's to be outstanding.

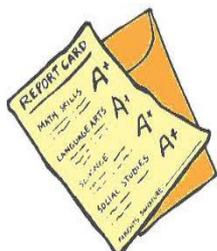
The Governing Body is committed to training and development and engages annually in self-evaluation of their own work and carry out an audit of skills. The results are evaluated and factored into the School Improvement Plan. The outcomes used when appropriate to support recruitment of new governors to fill skills/ethnicity/gender gaps among their number and to retain governors with a level of commitment to the overall strategic direction of the school. It is seen to be important to maintain the standards of effective governance and retain expertise and ensure effective succession management is undertaken. The policy was successfully put to the test following the sudden illness of the chair of governors during the spring and summer terms. The Governing Body has a service level agreement for the provision of training from the local authority. This agreement is monitored for efficiency and best value and feedback reports are made at every meeting on attendance at governor training sessions. Governors have attended internal training conducted by the Senior Leadership Team on the effective use of Target Tracker which provides up to the minute data on the children's progress and attainment and also Religious Education. New governors are welcomed and inducted by the Chair and Head Teacher. Training is valued and has led to governors being more confident in asking questions at meetings and a greater awareness of their strategic roles and responsibilities.

Mrs Sinclair implements St Joseph's mission statement robustly and with vigour and together with her team has assisted in enabling the pupils of St Joseph's to achieve higher, often significantly higher results than National. 'Progress Measures Value Added' are consistently above National Standards. The National Floor Standards for Level 4+ in reading, writing and maths are 65%, at St Joseph's they are 90%. The school recognises that still more needs to be done to address the progress of disadvantaged children and to ensure writing standards match our high reading standards. Target Tracker is being developed to track attainment and progress against the new national curriculum. The senior leadership team has ensured teaching is almost always good or better by sharing and implementing best practice throughout the school. Pupil voice interviews by governors substantiate that children are fully aware of what is expected of them and were able to confidently explain the Marking Policy and how the process worked.

Governors have taken particular interest in the effective use of Pupil Premium and Sports Premium allocation. The SEND data shows that children have made expected or above expected progress in reading and mathematics. Pupil Premium children benefit from a range of intervention strategies matched to their needs. Sports Premium has been used to employ a specialist teacher in order to increase the number of sporting activities available. The impact expected is an increase in the level of participation by both boys and girls and most importantly vulnerable pupils.

Governors are aware of changes in the dynamics of the school involving a rise in the numbers of vulnerable children and vulnerable groups of children and ethnicity. Strategically governors have had to plan and budget for intervention strategies using pupil premium monies to support these children to reach their academic potential.

Governors have seen evidence of intervention strategies and the relevant entry and exit data. Individual case studies are initiated when intervention strategies are not able to produce the expected outcome.



School Improvement

In 2013 Ofsted recognised the governing body of St Joseph's had enthusiastically embraced its responsibilities and stated it provides well-informed challenge and good strategic direction. Ofsted also judged the school to be good in delivering the school mission of providing a broad and balanced curriculum to enable each child to achieve the highest standard of education whatever their ability in a Catholic ethos and in a safe environment.

It is part of the quality assurance process which has led the Governing Body to engage in the self-evaluation exercise. Governors are committed to demonstrating accountability for decisions and actions taken. Governors use school self-evaluation process in order to identify areas of strength and skill gaps. School self-evaluation is robust and judgements were found to be sound in the Ofsted inspection. The judgements are used to inform the strategic direction of the School Improvement Plan by identifying School Improvement Priorities. These priorities are systematically addressed on the agendas of each of the committee and governing body meetings. The Governing Body Business Plan and Scheme of Delegation to Head Teacher, committees and individual governors has ensured all agendas are clearly focussed on key priorities of the school. This Scheme is reviewed annually and where appropriate amended to provide greater effectiveness and to develop a culture of ambition. Governors invited Bexley School Improvement officer to undertake an external review of the governing body. The findings confirmed St Joseph's governors are *"fully committed to providing high quality support and challenge for the schools performance"*.

Teaching and Learning Committee hold senior leadership teams to account by requiring reports on pupil progress, challenging areas where improvements have been slow and supporting intervention measures with urgency. These improvements are measured using assessment and data collected on children from the point of entry throughout their movement through the school. The committee consider in detail the annual RAISEonline and Data Dashboard report to benchmark standards. Governors have attended training sessions to understand and interpret the report to ensure a robust approach is taken. The Report from the External Adviser is considered carefully before data is used to set challenging targets for the Head Teacher. Governors support the school in achieving the targets through targeted resources linking the School Improvement Plan to budget setting processes.

Governors are committed to ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of the children and spend time and gain knowledge on all new initiatives such as Target Tracker. Better informed governors through learning walks and classroom visits has led to more questioning of staff and encouragement to improve the children's progress. They use their visits as part of their systematic visits programme to see progress for themselves. Governor monitoring has assisted with improvement in the quality of marking as acknowledged by Ofsted. Governors are more able to support the Head

Teacher and senior leadership team to bring about necessary but challenging changes. Governors observed KS2 Sats tests.

Phonics throughout the school has been high priority and governors have supported the drive with resources which has had a positive impact on children's reading, writing and speaking. Governors observed KS1 phonic tests. Phonic results at the school are high with 90% of children passing the Phonics Screening test, the national figure is 77%.

The Teaching and Learning Committee monitor standards of behaviour and the School's Discipline Policy, sanctions and intervention strategies are used to reinforce good behaviour amongst the children. Expectations are high and praise has been used to effect change in even the most challenging children. The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are embedded and evident in the everyday working environment during governor visits to the school.

Involving the children in their own progress is critical to school improvement and governors' interest in the school council emphasises the importance of children's views. Discussion with children has led to a greater appreciation of education from the children's perspective and understanding of their well-being and safety. Governors are keen to support extra curricular activities which they see enrich the curriculum on offer to the children including vulnerable groups.

The Resources Committee assess the accommodation to support an enriched learning environment to support strategic curriculum and staffing developments. The budget setting process is closely scrutinised to take account of the school improvement priorities and these are costed in addition to maintenance needs and developments to ensure resources are allocated appropriately. Governor visits confirm the health and safety monitoring reports and also the stimulating learning environment for the children. Statutory policies are in place to secure a healthy and safe working environment for staff and children. Governors receive a fire drill report each term. The Committee have completed the SFVS on time.

Governors asked the Head Teacher to provide detailed information on the Pupil Premium monies and how it is spent on intervention strategies to reverse children's underachievement. This money is making a difference and being monitored and evaluated by governors. This action also applies to Sports Premium and the benefit to and the significant increase in children being involved in sporting activities.

The Committee have received regular reports on health, safety and security of children and staff.

Developing a good relationship with parents is seen as a high priority and information including newsletters and school website are used to keep parents informed of developments. Children's attendance levels are good (96.5%) and result from a robust policy on not approving absence during term time and by having incentives for good attendance and punctuality.

The Teaching and Learning Committee focus on good personnel practices and see the School's Performance Management Policy and practice as key to school improvement. Regular reports are received on the outcomes of lesson observations.

When less than “good” judgements are made the committee seek information on action taken to support learning and teaching. Zero tolerance is the approach and action taken robustly and swiftly where necessary to support school improvement.

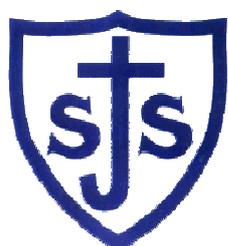
Programmed conversations with staff have ensured governors understand and are aware of the value and need for continuing professional development. Training is linked to ensuring subject leaders can carry out their role effectively. In service training is budgeted for and monitored through the Head Teacher’s termly report to governors.

Governors have completed the “NCSL Safer Recruitment” training on Child Protection. This aspect has a high priority with governors who continue to up attend regular training. One governor has a particular interest in this aspect and the Chair signs the single central register each term when he is satisfied that the school is compliant with requirements. The systems in place are seen to be robust and children at risk are particularly well supported and catered for.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and has recently achieved the Eco School Silver Award and Green Flag.

Governors on school visits particularly note the way that children are engaged and enjoy their education. School music, drama performances and sporting activities involve a large majority of children and “fun” is part of the many activities.

The Life of the School



The Governing Body sees itself in an active partnership with the senior leadership team of the school. Key strategic decisions such as are discussed with the staff at the school and consideration given to the impact of changes on the education of the children at the school. Such is the relationship which is built on trust, integrity, honesty and objectivity in accordance with the Standards of Public Life that mutual respect underlies all decisions.

The Governing Body has adopted a Code of Practice to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities for their work particularly as employers.

The relationship between the Chair and the Head Teacher is built on a professional working partnership. The Chair acknowledges the key role in leading the governing body to know the strengths of the school and areas that require improvement, using a range of evidence, and challenge and support for the school to secure school improvement. The Chair and Head Teacher meet on a regular basis and discuss progress and actions necessary to achieve their shared aspiration of St Joseph’s being judged outstanding by Ofsted.

The values and vision will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are “fit for purpose” in the local and national context of educational changes and made known through the website. The school website has been created to provide up to date easily accessible information for the whole school community. Feedback on the website shows the impact of this initiative has been successful.

Governors attend school functions including workshops for parents, prize giving events, sports activities and art displays reinforcing and celebrating success.

We are proud of the new school motto “Love, learn, live” which has been created and chosen by the whole of St Joseph’s. Children, Staff and Governors.

The Community



Governors are committed to serving the families of the local community. Governors are committed to a robust effort to secure community cohesion, provide equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Governors believe that it is only in this environment that the mission statement of the school can be fully realised.

Secondary liaison is especially important for governors and members of the senior leadership team are encouraged to engage with local schools.

Governors are members of the Bexley Catholic Education Partnership (The Corpus Christy Trust) involving seven other primary schools, two secondary schools and a sixth form college to share expertise, training and educational opportunities. Working with other schools in the Partnership has brought sharing of good practice and economies in respect of time and costs. Governors are also linked to the Bexley collaborative of schools to enable full use of best practice initiatives.

The chair works closely with the parish priest of St Mary of the Crays and the governing body has had representatives on the Holy Communion and Confirmation programmes. The Parish Priest is invited to become an associate member of the governing body and we are pleased that Fr Ignatius has accepted the invitation. The school attends Mass in church on a regular basis during the academic year. Dates may be found in the newsletter. The Governor for RE is actively involved in the prayer life of the school, leading the Rosary during October and May, with parents and children. Priests are always welcome to attend functions along with representatives from the local community.

September 2015.