

St Francis C of E Governing Board – Annual Statement

School Vision

To guide our children to live fulfilling lives, rooted in the values taught by Jesus, based on the Gospel value of love for one another.

Love Faith. Love People. Love Learning.

Last year, I wrote to you in June to update you on governance at St Francis and as we come to the end of another academic year, I am writing to you again to update you on both the progress made in 2020-21 and of the Governing Boards strategic priorities for 2021-22.

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has continued to significantly impact many of our children attending school during the Spring and Summer terms, we have continued in the background to do as much as we can in order to make inroads on our journey and in order to achieve the strategic priorities set out last year. As we hopefully start to move out of the pandemic, we will continue to focus on building the foundations we now have in place across the school.

Governors' Role

As I outlined last year, the role of the Governing Board is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, which is often unseen by parents/carers and other community stakeholders, however we are here to oversee the school is providing the best possible outcomes for your child(ren) to the best of their abilities. This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Board articulates their role in school leadership, the impact we have had on school improvement, and how we have been transparent about these activities. The Governing Board is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers, who invest a huge amount of good will, hard work and time for the sole purpose of improving the education of every child in our school. The Government expects us, as your Governing Board to be a dynamic group of highly skilled individuals who focus on supporting the Headteacher and all the staff to shape the strategic direction of school. As Governors we are accountable for the performance of our school and we are measured by three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure the money is spent well.

Training

Following an extensive programme of training in 2019, throughout 2020 and 2021 all members of the Governing Board have continued to engage in training virtually. The impact of this is that the Governing Board are kept abreast of their responsibilities regarding the latest requirements and expectations. Learning and actions from training is shared at Full Governing Board meetings and one specific area of focus this academic year has been on SIAMs (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) in preparation for the upcoming Diocesan inspection.

Full Governing Board Meetings

Each term in addition to the Full Governing Board meeting, Governors are invited to attend two committees: Curriculum and Resources, in addition, Governors may also attend monitoring visits at the school; the purpose of this is determined by areas of focus on the school improvement plan. For example, meeting with members of the Senior Leadership Team to review and understand the quality of education, its intent, implementation and impact. During 2020-21 this has never been more critical given the implications that the pandemic has had on childrens' learning and the difficulties it has brought for many, both mentally and physically. Understanding gaps in learning quickly and implementing interventions through the RESTORE model has been a key area of focus for this Governing Board this year.

The impact of the committees and monitoring is that governors are aware and understand the areas of strengths and areas of focus in teaching and practices within the school. It also enables us to understand how good practice within school is being evolved and shared to benefit the whole of all the school years and focus our attention on areas of development or concern which have been identified.

We use a range of different sources of information from the school and through benchmarking to get as full picture as possible about how the school is doing, whether good, bad or in-between.

Headteachers Appraisal

A subset of the Governing Board carry out the Headteacher Appraisal annually. A number of Governors have undertaken Headteacher's Appraisal Training, and with professional support from an independent educational advisor through the Local Authority, the appraisal is carried out. The appraisal process allows us to look closely at the performance of the Headteacher, have discussions about areas of strengths and where necessary, areas for development. New targets are then set against criteria which is aligned to the schools priorities and these are reviewed at regular points throughout the year and objectives adjusted as necessary, the Headteachers performance is then evaluated towards the end of the academic year.

Further Impact across the School

Despite the challenges this year has brought, as Governors we continue to celebrate the great work around the school and provide challenge and support in areas that can improve, we also monitor progress in all areas and during 2020-21 we have:

1. **School Improvement** - Guided by the school improvement plan and improvements identified by Ofsted, in partnership with school leaders, we have continued work to ensure the schools readiness for the next full Ofsted Section 5 inspection that will likely take place sometime in 2022, placing priority on curriculum intent, implementation, impact and reading across Key Stage 1.
2. **Training** – We have, where possible continued the programme of developmental support and training for the Governing Board to ensure we are the best we can be for our school.
3. **Finance** – Governors approved capital funding which has allowed significant improvement to the KS2 learning environments. We have also approved funding to support the replacement of the boiler which will reduce our carbon footprint. Funding was also approved for Purple Mash as a system to support virtual learning and remote learning environments.
4. **Progress and Attainment** – Data for all children across the school, including vulnerable groups, has continued to be analysed. Data focuses on reading, writing and maths. Analysis is completed at varying levels, including year groups, classes, pupil premium, high ability and boys/girls. The impact of this is that governors are aware of how children are performing; where there are issues, challenging questions can be asked to ensure that any identified problems are addressed in a timely manner. This ensures that the Governing Board know throughout the year how the school is progressing towards the school priorities and targets and whilst we recognise this has been a challenging academic year given that formal assessments have been paused, we have continued to undertake internal assessments to ensure we have a good understanding of where focus needs to be placed as we move into the next academic year.
5. **Monitoring visits** - Governors have undertaken monitoring visits, including separate meetings with Mr Kewley and Mrs Foster to hear more about the specific areas of focus on the School Improvement plan and this has included how Leadership and Management is embedded across the school.
6. **Remote Learning** – Due to the pandemic, we have placed a significant importance within this area. The Governing Board has been keen to understand the differing remote learning offers and have offered appropriate challenge to ensure that the best options are being pursued. This has led to better ways of remote learning, ensuring interaction through live lessons and online remote learning. Disadvantaged children who were struggling with technology were identified quickly and provided with devices through school and children who required work packs as an alternative to technology were provided with these to ensure gaps in learning were minimised.

Priorities for 2021-2022

1. Support the revised and updated RESTORE curriculum to ensure children do not leave Year 6 with gaps in their learning;
2. Support and review the roll out plan of instructional teaching and instructional coaching to further improve teaching and learning across school;
3. Guided by the school improvement plan and improvements identified by Ofsted, in partnership with school leaders, we will continue the work started this year to ensure the schools readiness for the next full Ofsted Section 5 inspection that will likely take place sometime in 2022, placing continuing priority on curriculum intent, implementation, impact and reading across Key Stage 1, whilst ensuring the broader curriculum is broad and fulfilling;
4. COVID-19 restrictions, we will continue to be guided by Government guidance and support with the implementation of remote learning as required. We will look at what benefits the pandemic has brought and look to support and enhance these further, for example, encouraging outdoor learning more to bring further benefits to mental health and metacognition;
5. Ensure the internal robust and rigorous monitoring of school, led by senior leaders, continues and all recommended actions are completed;
6. To continue the programme of developmental support and training for the Governing Board to ensure we are the best we can be for our school;
7. To work collaboratively with parents/carers and within the local community and take the feedback received from parents/carers through the work undertaken remotely and capitalise on these where possible, this includes increased awareness from parents/carers about what children are learning and how they are doing and parents/carers awareness raised through teacher modelling in a live/pre-recorded session.
8. Due to the current Covid-19 situation the scheduled SIAMS Diocesan religious inspection has not been undertaken as planned during the current academic year, this will now take place in the new academic year. Therefore, in preparation for this, the Governing Board will continue to ensure that the school is governed and led according to the vision, values and mission of this school.

As I said last year, I will endeavour to keep you updated with any significant communications as we go through the next academic year and hope and pray that next year brings a sense of normality for us all, but in the meantime, please rest assured that, as always the Governing Board has the interests of every child at its core.

Nicola Duffy
Chair of Governors