

St Francis C of E Governing Board – Annual Statement

School Vision

As a church school we aspire to live life in all its fullness; Loving Faith. Loving People. Loving Learning. - following in the footsteps of Jesus.

As we come to the end of the academic year at St Francis, I am writing to you to update you, as I normally do on the progress made in 2022-23 and of the Governing Boards strategic priorities for 2023-24.

As we have progressed through this academic year, we have maintained our focus on our journey to excellence and have continued to embed our strategic initiatives and the priorities we set out last year.

Governors' Role

As a reminder the role of the Governing Board at St Francis, is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, a lot of which is unseen by parents/carers and other community stakeholders, we are here to oversee the school, ensuring it is providing the best possible outcomes for your child(ren) to the best of their abilities. This statement is one of the ways 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 twelve volunteers, who invest their time, hard work and a large amount of good will, for the purpose of improving the education of every child in our school. The Government expects us, as your Governing Board to be an energetic and diverse group of highly skilled individuals who focus on supporting the Headteacher and 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

Throughout 2022/23, the members of the Governing Board continued to engage in training. This is to ensure that the Governing Board is well informed regarding the latest updates, requirements and expectations and so that our impact is relevant and in line with the responsibilities of the role we undertake. We share our learning and actions from training at Full Governing Board meetings and this academic year our specific area of focus has been on Keeping Children Safe in Education whilst continuing to prepare for our next Section 5 Ofsted Inspection which is due imminently. We have also ensured our new Governors who have joined the Governing Board this academic year are fully aware of their role and responsibilities.

Full Governing Board Meetings

This year, as in previous years, each term, in addition to the Full Governing Board meeting, Governors are invited to attend two committees: Curriculum and Resources and Governors also attend monitoring visits at the school; the purpose of these meetings are determined by areas of focus on the school improvement plan. These meetings take place with Subject Leaders and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team to review, be curious and understand the quality of education, its intent, implementation and impact. During 2022-23 we have undertaken monitoring in the following areas: Leadership and Management, Curriculum, SEND and Safeguarding.

The impact of the committees and monitoring is that as a Governing Board we 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 across all school years and focus' our attention on areas of development or concern which have been identified.

We also continue to use a range of different sources of information from the school, through internal and external audits and external benchmarking to get as full picture as possible about how the school is doing.

Headteacher's Appraisal

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

Further Impact across the School

As always, this year has been challenging in many ways but as Governors we have continued to celebrate the great work around the school and provide support and challenge in areas that can improve. During 2022-23 we have:

1. **Ofsted Inspection** – following the visit undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectors at the beginning of July, a number of Governors met with the lead Inspector during the visit. Whilst at this stage we are unable to share the judgement from the inspection, we were a key part of the visit. We were really pleased with how the inspection was undertaken and cannot wait to share with you the report when it is finalised (which will likely be at the start of the new academic year);
2. **SIAMS Inspection** – Governors also took part and supported the SIAMS Diocesan religious inspection in December 2022 which resulted in the school achieving a Good rating in line with the new SIAMS framework. We are really proud of #teamstfrancis to have achieved this rating;
3. **School Vision** – Governors played a key part in the refresh of the School's vision and values, incorporating it into an easy to follow jigsaw that our children are able to relate to, understand and make the connections with our school values, rules and fruits of the spirit.
4. **Monitoring including external visits** – Governors have continued to undertake monitoring visits, including meetings with the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leads to focus on specific areas of the School Improvement Plan, areas have included Leadership and Management, SEND, curriculum and safeguarding. Governors have also commissioned a number of external audits including a further Safeguarding audit which as a Governing Board we are overjoyed that it continues to be an area of strength across the school as well as SEND and Pupil Premium;
5. **Training** – we have continued to implement a programme of training underpinned by areas of specialisms for the Governing Board to ensure we are the best we can be for our school;
6. **Finance** – we have continued to ensure that finances are used effectively to improve children's outcomes, linking to school's improvement plan, and we have approved budget for continued staff development.
7. **Governance** – we have continued to strengthen our Governing Board and have appointed a new Parent Governor who further enhances the experience and breadth of skills we have across the board. Additionally we have begun to explore the current educational landscape and what joining an academy may look like for St. Francis in future years.

Priorities for 2023-2024

1. Guided by the school plan and feedback received by Ofsted, in partnership with school leaders, we will continue to ensure the school continues to improve, placing enduring priority on the curriculum and areas for improvement which will have sustained focus on writing, monitoring and also ensure the broader curriculum is comprehensive and fulfilling;
2. We will continue to support the implementation of Outdoor Play And Learning (OPAL) to develop our children's social and emotional development, play skills, executive functions and mental health.
3. Continue to ensure the internal robust and rigorous monitoring of school, led by senior leaders, continues and ensure this is underpinned by external audits with all recommended actions completed;
4. 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;
5. As a number of Governor terms of office come to an end through the next academic year we will look to fill our Governing Board with a diverse group of dedicated people.
6. In line with the Government's white paper and aspirations, we will continue our strategic discussions as a Governing Board around the potential opportunities of converting to an Academy.

As mentioned above, we are awaiting receipt of the full Ofsted Inspection report which due to the upcoming summer holiday will be communicated at the start of the new academic year by Mr Kewley. In the meantime though, as always, I will endeavour to keep you updated with any other significant communications as we go through the next academic year.

I hope you all have a wonderful, peaceful and restful break and would like to assure you that St Francis Governing Board has the best interests of every child at its core.



Nicola Duffy
Chair of Governors

9th July 2023

For and on behalf of St Francis Governing Board