



Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## St. Francis C of E Governing Board- Annual Statement

You will remember that I wrote to you in July to update you on governance at St Francis' and to inform you of the change of Chair. Now that the new academic year is under way, it is timely that I write to you again to inform you both of the progress made in 2018-19 and of the Governing Board's strategic priorities for 2019-20.

### Strategic Priorities and Impact 2018-19

The key priority was to secure interim school leadership during the absence of Mrs Thomas by appointing Mr Kewley as Acting Head; and to ensure that external support was in place from the Local Authority and the Diocese; part of which involved the appointment of a Local Leader of Education (LLE) as Associate Head. All of this provided essential stability during a period of change and transition.

The Governing Board also sought to strengthen the strategic leadership of the school by self-commissioning an External Review of Governance (ERG). To date, this has involved a sustained programme of training and support. Governance has been further strengthened by the appointment of new governors to fill vacancies. All were recruited for the skills they bring to add to the skills and experience of existing governors. As a result, the Governing Board has increased its capacity to fulfil statutory requirements by ensuring the necessary challenge and support needed to hold school leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the school. Our collective aim is to provide the best possible quality of education for all our children.

The positive impact of the key priorities above was endorsed during the Ofsted Section 8 short inspection which took place on 5 February 2019. This confirmed that the school's overall effectiveness remains good; but the report also sets out the school's clear priorities for improvement. These are as follows;

*'Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:*

- *governors hold senior leaders more stringently to account for the impact of their work to improve the school*
- *the quality of teaching continues to improve, enabling pupils to make consistently strong progress from their starting points*
- *leaders and teachers accurately evaluate the effectiveness of their work to improve pupils' learning and use this information to secure further improvements*
- *the curriculum is broad, appropriately challenging and equally well taught across all subjects.'*

Ofsted will return to school at some time prior to February 2021 to conduct a more thorough (Section 5) inspection; and the school leadership team and Governors are working together in preparation for that visit.

The impact of the introduction and application of consistent policies, systems and processes for monitoring and evaluation; along with the external support provided to ensure consistency in teaching and learning, was evident in the excellent results achieved by our Key Stage 2 pupils.

However, we are aware that there is still much work to do as we strive for the very best for our school.

## Strategic Priorities 2019-20

Throughout the current academic year, the Governing Board will continue to address the next steps for the school as identified by Ofsted via the following key priorities:

- Mr Kewley will continue as Acting Head, supported from September by Mrs Foster as Acting Deputy Head. In October, the Governing Board hopes to appoint a substantive Head following the resignation of Mrs Thomas. The Local Authority and the Diocese continue to provide support.
- The programme of developmental support and training for the Governing Board will continue to ensure that we are the best we can be for our school.
- Maintaining the current safeguarding policy, systems and processes remains a key priority in order to fulfil statutory requirements to provide a safe environment for all pupils.
- During this academic year, the school will have its SIAMS Diocesan religious inspection. In preparing for this, the Governing Board will ensure that the school is governed and led according to its mission statement:

### ***'Love Faith, Love People, Love Learning'***

- Guided by the key priorities for school improvement as identified by Ofsted, the Governing Board in partnership with school leaders will ensure the school's growing readiness for the full Ofsted Section 5 inspection. This will be under the new Ofsted framework, introduced in September 2019 which places increased emphasis on inspecting curriculum intent, implementation and impact.

I will write again to update you as appropriate, but in the meantime, please rest assured that the Governing Board has the interests of every child at its core.



Mrs Nicola Duffy  
Chair of Governors