

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.

As we approach the end of another academic year at St Francis, I am writing to you to update you on both the progress made in 2021-22 and of the Governing Boards strategic priorities for 2022-23.

As we have progressed through this academic year we have thankfully started to see some normality start to resume and whilst the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will no doubt linger for some time yet, we have continued on our journey to excellence and have begun to embed the initiatives and strategic priorities set out last year.

Governors' Role

For those who are not aware, the role of the Governing Board is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, often unseen by parents/carers and other community stakeholders, however as I have outlined in our previous years statements, we are here to oversee the school is providing the best possible outcomes for your child(ren) to the best of their abilities. This 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 twelve 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 and diverse 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

Throughout 2021/22, all member of the Governing Board continued to engage in training virtually. This has been a continuation of the extensive training that has been undertaken in previous years 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 undertaken. Learning and actions from training is shared at Full Governing Board meetings and this academic year our specific area of focus has been on preparation for our next Section 5 Ofsted Inspection which is due imminently and ensuring our new Governors who have joined the Governing Board this academic year are fully aware of their role and responsibilities.

Full Governing Board Meetings

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 could be to meet with Subject Leaders or members of the Senior Leadership Team to review and understand the quality of education, its intent, implementation and impact. During 2021-22 this has again been critical given our requirements to focus on closing the gaps of learning through the RESTORE model to ensure that the impact of the pandemic on children's learning and the difficulties that the pandemic brought have been mitigated as much as possible.

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's 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 internal and external audits and benchmarking to get as full picture as possible about how the school is doing, whether good, bad or in-between.

Headteacher's Appraisal

A subset of the Governing Board undertakes the Headteacher 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 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 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

Whilst this year has again been somewhat challenging, given the narrative of COVID, 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 2021-22 we have:

1. **School Improvement** – guided by the school improvement plan and improvements identified by Ofsted and in partnership with school leaders, we have continued work to ensure the school is ready for the next full Ofsted Section 5 inspection that will likely take place during 2022/23. We placed priority on curriculum intent, implementation, impact and reading across Key Stage 1.
2. **Training** – we have continued the programme of developmental support and training for the Governing Board to ensure we are the best we can be for our school as well as implementing a training matrix to ensure we have the right skills and knowledge to best serve the role as a Governor;
3. **Finance** – Governors approved budget which has supported the embedding of instructional teaching and instructional coaching to further improve teaching and learning across school;
4. **Progress and Attainment** – Supported the implementation of the revised and updated RESTORE curriculum to ensure children do not leave Year 6 with gaps in their learning. Data for all children across the school, including vulnerable groups, has continued to be analysed. Recent statutory assessments have highlighted the focus on reading for our younger children has been successful and our Year 6 SATs data shows that the updated RESTORE curriculum has been achieved;
5. **Monitoring, including external visits** - Governors have undertaken a number of monitoring visits, including separate meetings with the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leads to hear more about the specific areas of focus on the School Improvement plan with particular emphasis on Key Stage 1 curriculum, Special Education Needs and Leadership and Management. A commissioned external safeguarding audit concluded practice continues to be a strength of the school;
6. **Governance** – we have recruited a number of new Governors to the Board this academic year, to ensure we have wide range of skills, experience and diversity to bring fresh ideas and new ways of thinking. We said goodbye to a number of long serving Governors who have served the board with passion and dedication.

Priorities for 2022-2023

1. Guided by the school improvement plan, in partnership with school leaders, we will continue to ensure the school is ready for the next full Ofsted Section 5 inspection that will likely take place sometime in 2022/23, placing continuing priority on curriculum intent, implementation, impact and areas for improvement which will have particular focus on writing, whilst ensuring the broader curriculum is broad and fulfilling;
2. Due to Covid-19 the scheduled SIAMS Diocesan religious inspection has not been undertaken as planned during the current academic year, this will now likely take place in the new academic year. 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.
3. In line with the Government's white paper, we will commence strategic discussions as a Governing Board around the requirements to convert to an Academy by 2030;
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. To reenergise the collaborative work with parents/carers to further children's outcomes.

As always, I will endeavour to keep you updated with any significant communications as we go through the next academic year and hope and pray that we have now come through the other side of Covid-19, but in the meantime, please be assured that, as always, the Governing Board has the interests of every child at its core.

Nicola Duffy
Chair of Governors