



Statement for the Governing Body of
Our Lady & St Thomas RCVA Primary School - 2020-21 Academic Year



Our Motto is: *'You are unique, talented and loved by God'*

The Governing Body of Our Lady & St Thomas RCVA Primary School has a strong focus on its three core strategic functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

COVID 19

Since the start of the pandemic, many things have changed in school and both staff and governors have had to adopt to new ways of working. During this time, opportunities have arisen to be involved in school life, which we may not have thought about prior to March. Governors have still attended a full meeting schedule – mostly virtually using Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet

Governors have been able to see activities being brought alive in school through regular Facebook post and virtual awards ceremonies.

This virtual approach has further integrated the home / school links.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Governing Body of Our Lady & St Thomas RCVA Primary School was re-constituted in November 2014 and consists of the following members:

- The Head teacher
- 1 staff governor
- 2 elected parent governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor and
- 7 Foundation Governors

Foundation Governors – are appointed by the Diocese and are people who have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. On our Governing Body four of our Foundation Governors are parents and the remaining three are active members of the Church Community.

Mrs Aisbitt (Chair) is a National Leaders of Governance, providing challenge and support to other Governing Bodies

The Full Governing Body meets once each term, and we also have committees who meet to consider different aspects of the school in detail.

We have welcomed four new governors this year, including a new Parish Priest, Fr Tindall and so are concentrating on new Induction and training plans to fully support them.

A skills audit has taken place, and the results fully analysed, this has directly led to the areas of responsibilities/ priorities allocated.

Committees:

- Admissions Committee
- Appeals Committee
- Curriculum and Standards Committee
- Finance and Premises Committee
- First / Pay Review Committee
- Head Teachers Performance
- Pupil Discipline Committee
- Staffing Committee

Governors take a specific interest in subjects and specialist areas examples being; Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Pupil Premium and Special Educational Needs

Attendance Record of Governors

Governors have excellent attendance at meetings and any absence from meetings is due to unexpected work commitments or illness. Our Governors are pro-active and keen to express their views in meetings.

Religious Education Inspection

A Diocese Inspection took place March 2020, and a thorough review was undertaken. We were thrilled to be graded Outstanding once again, and we are very grateful to Mrs Fulton, the RE lead and Sarah Jackson, who recently took on RE monitoring from the Governing body.

Work Completed by the Governing Body

Governors held several working meetings to create and shape a bespoke Curriculum Intent.

The Curriculum & Standards Committee undertook a full Pupil Progress Review in Spring of 2020, including a full assessment of data.

Governors attended Academisation Briefings, in preparation for the Diocese proposals.

Governors of the First Committee met in December 2019 and again in the summer term 2020, to look at budget and staffing implications.

Mr Tinsley undertook a Sports Premium review with Mrs Graham in November 2020. We are currently applying for the AfPE Award and the School Games Award.

There have been many meetings to refine the schools Risk Assessment to be able to respond to the COVID – 19 Pandemic and various meetings to discuss staffing contingency and planning.

The Full Governing Body closely monitors

- Pupils Performance
- Pupils learning and how it impacts on their attainment and progress
- Interventions to accelerate attainment and progress
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour Management
- School Improvement Plan

- Management and Curriculum Activities and the impact they have – to be able to present challenge to senior leaders.
- All School Policies

New policies have been created in response to the COVID – 19)

- Annex to Safeguarding
- Virtual Meeting Policy
- COVID – 19 – School Behaviour
- Remote Learning Plan

Due to COVID, we have been unable to host our regular Governors Day, where Governors are able to see first-hand how decisions they make impact upon the education of our children.

Miss Jackson monitored Safeguarding and Vulnerable children provision throughout lockdown. Ms Mortimer monitored EYFS in December 2020.

Personnel Committee

This Committee continues to make decisions around staffing structures and TA support.

Finance Committee

School spending is carefully monitored, and governors ensure best value is obtained. The Committee now has a new Chair, Mr Fraser Tinsley.

Pupil Premium Funds are carefully tracked and the impact they have on pupils' attainment and progress monitored. Governors ensure an up to date report is produced as soon as the relevant data is made available. Mrs Norman (Parent Governor) has now taken the lead in this area, as part of a new focus on accountability. A new strategy statement was agreed 30.9.20.

Sports Premium Funds are carefully tracked and outcomes for pupils are measured. Governors ensure an up to date report re this is produced as soon as the relevant data is made available. Mr Tinsley monitors this with Mrs Graham.

ICT Spending and Resourcing is carefully monitored by this Committee. Approval has been granted for 20 new Chromebooks to be purchased to ensure all pupils in KS2 will have access to a device.

Curriculum and Standards Committee

Governors continue to attend these meetings, and this includes the following:

Collaboration around the creation of a new School improvement Plan 20/21.

Work scrutiny by the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher relating to the quality of our online curriculum and the Engagement of pupils during Lockdown 3 is monitored by the Chair and Vice Chair. Curriculum and Standards work has been focussed on our Remote Learning Provision.

Attended **Subject Progress Meetings** and were provided with reports on different subjects. This gave governors the opportunity to see the work completed by pupils; they were overwhelmingly impressed with high standards of presentation and content.

Data Analysis The Head teacher provides Governors with a Data update at termly meetings.

Action Plans: for Maths, Reading and Early Years have been evaluated and the Self Evaluation Plan for the school discussed in detail.

The School Improvement Plan

Governors have been involved in developing a new Plan, which is now in place and has clear priorities. Governors have been allocated specific areas to concentrate upon and will monitor subjects with link staff members.

The Schools website was audited by the Local Authority in February 2018 and March 2019.

The Local Authority conducted a review of Safeguarding and the Single Central record in May 2018.

In June 2018 the School had a Health Check.

The Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark Award was re-accredited in January 2019.

Currently looking into being re-accredited for the Investing in Children's Membership Award and the International School Award.

The Curriculum & Standards Committee agreed the SIP for 2021-21 and receive termly updates to drill down into progress against priorities.

Reviewing Statutory Policies

Policy reviews are carried out on a rolling programme by staff and Governors.

Continuous Professional Development

There is a whole school training approach to Safeguarding Training

Courses undertaken

- New Governor Course
- Discussions around succession planning and future proofing the Governing Body
- Child Protection
- SEND - Governor Responsibilities
- Budget Planning and Monitoring
- Understanding School Data
- Governors Role in Appraisal and Capability
- Chair undertook a 360 appraisal

Courses scheduled for this year

- Governor Monitoring – looking at different approaches
- Children Who Are Looked After
- Safer Recruitment- full review of Governors skills
- Pay Review and Performance Management

Governors have supported the school in a wide range of areas

- Appointing staff
- Evaluating Health and Safety Provision
- Supporting Work Scrutiny
- The Development of Reading
- Supporting Preparation for First Holy Communion

- Supporting the Women's Day of Prayer
- Accompanying pupils on Educational Visits
- Accompanying pupils to Sporting Activities

Governors this year have continued to challenge the school to achieve the very best outcomes for all pupils.

Future plans for the Governing Body

- Building on virtual learning
- Refining New Induction & Mentoring plans
- Discussions around succession planning and future proofing the Governing Body
- Preparing for conversion and entry to the Bishop Hogarth Trust

Contact Details

The Governing Body welcomes suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents/carers. Please contact the Chair of Governors c/o the school office on 01388 746336 or via email ourladyssthomas@durhamlearning.net