



## Introduction

St Gregory's Primary School's Governing Board is committed to being open, transparent and accountable to parents and all our stakeholders. This Annual Governance Statement is published to help you understand the Governing Board as well as providing a review of the work and impact of the Governing Board for the academic year 2016-2017.

## Core Strategic Functions

The core strategic functions of St Gregory's Governing Board are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school;
- Oversee the financial performance of the school, ensuring value for money;
- Promote the highest possible standards for Safeguarding.

This is all done in accord with the school's motto of: **'BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE TOGETHER'**

The values by which we live and learn at St Gregory's are:

- EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
- EVERY CHILD COUNTS
- CATHOLIC-INSPIRED VALUES
- CONTINUOUS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

## The Governing Board

St Gregory's has a strong Governing Board made up of individuals with a wide range of experience. The Governing Board is fully committed to our core strategic functions whilst being acutely aware that as governors we are not responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. We see ourselves as the school's 'critical friend'.

St Gregory's Governing Board comprises

- Foundation Governors (appointed by the Diocese of Shrewsbury);
- Parent Governors (elected by parents);
- (appointed by the governors);
- Local Authority Governor (appointed by the local council);
- Staff Governor (elected by the staff);
- The Headteacher.

Every governor is assigned oversight of one or more curriculum subjects and individual governors take on responsibility for non-teaching aspects of school life, for example Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Health and Safety, Safeguarding etc.

The curriculum link governors take a special interest in their subject(s) and endeavour to meet the subject lead teacher formally at least once during the year. These formal visits are recorded in a standard report and are presented to the Governing Board for review.

All governors undertake training both general and specific to their roles. All governors work in line with our agreed Governors Code of Conduct and School Visiting Guidance which we review annually and publish on the school web site.

The full Governing Board meets once each term.

## Committee Structure and Meetings

The Governing Board delegates specific work to the following standing committees:

- Building and Premises, now incorporating the Communications and Marketing
- Finance and Personnel
- Pupil Welfare, Achievement and Curriculum



The scope of action of these Committees is defined in their Terms of Reference which are reviewed on an annual basis and can be viewed on the website. Each Committee is focussed on a key function of governance. Ad hoc committees are set up as-and-when required e.g. Pay Appeals, Recruitment etc.

Additionally, an end-of-year review and planning meeting is held in early September at the start of each new academic year. This meeting is attended by all governors, teaching and support staff where we review the school's year and identify key improvement priorities and tasks that will improve outcomes for all our children.

In meetings of the full Governing Board we are joined by a professional clerk who not only supports the meeting process but also brings a great deal of expert advice which makes possible more informed decision making.

#### **Register of Interests**

We have a duty to publish on the school web site a register of governors' interests to ensure impartiality.

#### **Governor Visits**

Governors visit the school frequently, for example to attend meetings with Local Authority (LA) advisers and the School Improvement Partner (SIP), to inspect the fabric of the school environment, to meet with subject Leaders, and to assist with recruitment interviews. Every visit helps provide the governors with a broader understanding of the school's delivery of education and develops open and constructive relationships with the staff.

#### **Governor Training**

All governors are up to date with Safeguarding training, our most recently appointed governor has training in Safeguarding, Level 3. Governors that have most recently joined the Board have completed the very detailed Induction day for governors. The vast majority of governors have completed the Prevent training online, as recommended by the Department of Education.

Many governors attended a course this year emphasising the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of all pupils. Happily, observations have borne out our school's delivery of wide-ranging classroom activities and extra-curricular opportunities devised to ensure enrichment opportunities for every pupil in a wide range of areas, including sports, dance, music - often at no charge.

Three governors on the finance committee completed the School Finance Training earlier this year. The Chair of the Governing Board attended several training courses (Monitoring Role of Governors, Exclusion Training, Child Sexual Exploitation Training) as well as attending the Governor Conference in February. Governors with special roles attended specific training to support them in their role (LGBT training, Pupil Premium, Development Governor training).

#### **Governance Report 2016-2017**

This is a summary of the involvement and impact of the Governing Board during this academic year.

#### ***Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction***

Each year school leaders develop a School Strategic Development Plan (SSDP). This is a statement of the school's forward vision that covers a three year time span. The governors ensured that the SSDP set out an ambitious but manageable number of medium-term and longer-term aims for the school with clear priorities and cost estimates in terms of both time and money, taking in to account feedback from the parental survey.

For information, this year's SSDP had the following 4 key improvement priorities (KIPs):

- KIP 1: TO RAISE ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS MEASURES IN READING, WRITING, MATHS, SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR
- KIP 2: TO RAISE AND ACCELERATE PROGRESS OF PUPILS IN THE EARLY YEARS
- KIP 3: IMPLEMENT NEW ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE
- KIP 4: DEVELOP AND IMPROVE PUPIL VOICE

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***Ofsted assessment - September 2016***

The Governing Board are proud that in September 2016, St Gregory's school was graded by Ofsted as continuing to be 'Good'. Many features of the school that staff and governors have worked hard to achieve were recognised; for example:

- Children in early years enjoyment their learning, they are clear and confident in their speech; behaviour is good and it is clear that there are established routines already in place creating a calm, purposeful atmosphere.
- Assessment procedures are comprehensive and frequent. Tracking records demonstrate that assessment is accurate.
- Pupils achieve well and that they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics is very high. The achievement of pupils at key stage 2 is similarly good.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve particularly well at the school. Disadvantaged pupils often achieve better than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils' attendance is very high and no pupils are persistently absent. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is very thorough.
- Pupils behave very well around the school. Records of behaviour are comprehensive and any incidence of misbehaviour is swiftly followed up.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. The response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, was very high and almost all parents would recommend the school to others. It is clear that parents are considered an integral part of pupils' progress in learning.
- The curriculum is wide and imaginatively built around topics and themes. Pupils particularly enjoy science, art and history. It was clear from the work sample that pupils' subject knowledge is developed well.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and they are supported in this by parents who are asked to spend 10 minutes reading with their children every day. Many of the pupils spoken to said how much they enjoyed reading. When listening to pupils read, it was clear that they have been taught in a systematic way. A number of pupils read with convincing excitement and expression. There are lots of appropriate books made available to pupils. The parents' association has been very supportive in the purchasing of books for the school.

Ofsted identified the following next steps for the school, which will be a focus for ongoing activities; leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils' writing is as strong across the curriculum as it is in English
- planning documents and analyses from assessment information are very specific as to what needs to be done to improve learning further
- the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards across reading, writing and mathematics improves through greater challenge in lessons.

***Hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school***

The Governing Board expects high standards from the school as we want to see every pupil achieve their full potential. The educational performance of the school is monitored mainly by the PWAC Committee.

Early in the school year we considered data from a wide range of independent external sources including the Department for Education, Cheshire East and Ofsted. We ensured that the school identified any significant differences in achievement and progress for any particular groups of children. The school has rigorous tracking and interventions in place to ensure that all children can achieve their potential and intervenes when necessary.

Whilst some governors are experienced in education, the Governing Board also employed a School Improvement Partner (SIP) (this year it is Mr John Mollard) to provide independent analysis of education performance to the Governing Board. In 2016-7 the SIP produced a comprehensive report and verification of the school's performance data which was most useful to the governors. In particular, he has challenged the school to improve in several areas to help meet Ofsted next steps listed above.

The SIP also advised the Headteacher's Performance Management Committee and assisted this committee in carrying out the Headteacher's annual appraisal and the setting of objectives in-line with school priorities. This committee was formed from the most appropriately skilled and trained governors, a mix from both PWAC and F&P subcommittees.

***Oversee the financial performance of the school, ensuring value for money***



The role of the Governing Board is to manage the school funds economically, efficiently and effectively for the purposes of the school in accordance with Department of Education and Local Authority guidelines.

Each year the Governing Board must agree a three year financial plan for the school. The plan must align with the education priorities in the SSDP and cover the incoming financial year in detail and be prepared on a prudent basis. The plan has to be consistent with the financial resources available to the school and be based on realistic assumptions of pupil numbers and income and estimates of expenditure. We are required to assure ourselves that the school is securing value for money and acting with financial integrity.

The Finance Committee fulfils these responsibilities, drawing upon Governors' financial management expertise.

In the current year the Finance Committee's duties included:

- Considering and agreeing the financial plan for the incoming year in the context of the school's formula funding allocation and its SSDP; audit and sign off the school accounts
- exploring different expenditure options;
- forecasting future pupil enrolments and income levels;
- monitoring budgeted income and expenditure on a termly basis;
- agreeing the LA services that are purchased to provide value for money;
- monitoring and adjusting as necessary in year actual against approved expenditure;
- finalising the end of year accounts and reviewing outcome;
- assessing the effectiveness of financial decisions;
- reviewing the written statements of the school's financial systems and procedures;
- making recommendations to the Governing Board on financial matters.

The school is required to have an effective system of financial control in place with sufficient oversight from the Governing Board to satisfy the requirements of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS). The SFVS is a self-assessment that is completed each year to confirm effective financial management of our resources. Due to increasing new starters in Sept 2016 St Gregory's will be moving to a 3 class structure in KS1 as agreed by Governors

The School has an experienced admin/finance assistant in Mrs Smith and the SFVS is completed following a detailed assessment by the governors of the Finance committee in conjunction with the Headteacher and Mrs Smith. The self-assessment has been considered by the Local Authority who has confirmed that there is Satisfactory Assurance.

The school takes advantage of the Physical Education (PE) and sport premium funding initiative of the Government, designed to help primary schools improve the quality of the PE, dance and sport activities offered to pupils. Any extra funds are directed to provide additional equipment and expert tuition.

The Pupil Premium Grant accessed by a small number of our pupils is invaluable, enabling maximum benefit for vulnerable children, and additionally their peers. Timely, targeted interventions using appropriate staff resource is responsive to individual needs. Governors monitor closely the school's provision and are delighted that the achievement of our Pupil Premium children is almost exclusively in line with or exceeding national expectations.

A key challenge for all Governing Bodies is reacting to a national Funding Formula for schools that repeatedly reduces governmental funding to schools, provoking uncertainty and increasing financial constraint. This year the Minimum Funding Guarantee has somewhat protected the school. The Governing Board monitors all proposed and actual changes in government funding policy and supports the staff's sustained efforts to reduce expenditure and direct ever-dwindling resources for maximum demonstrable advantage for all pupils. Additionally, the Governing Body regularly researches new possibilities for increasing financial income, consulting with other comparable schools about the financial and health benefits of bring-catering in-house, for example. Academies have been a subject on and then off the agenda, with financial implications featuring strongly in broader educational discussion.

We are also very proud of the amazing contribution to school funding provided by the St Gregory's school PTA. We applaud all those involved with the planning, implementation and participation of the many fun fundraising events that are driven by parents and staff. The funds raised go directly towards materials or events that benefit the school children; a report will be produced and published that details how funds have been spent.

***Promote the highest possible standards for safeguarding***



The welfare, safety and well-being of pupils is a prime concern. Mr Daley is the school's designated safeguarding lead and Mrs Crook his deputy. Mrs Anstey leads the governors' supervision of timely school compliance with national recommendations as they emerge. Local Authority safeguarding team visits to the school have positively assessed our safeguarding procedures. Staff and governors regularly update their knowledge of best practice, as advised by Cheshire East training courses, local professionals like the Police. In 2015-6, courses have been attended concerning: PREVENT (anti-radicalisation) measures, LGBT awareness and SMSC.

Governors are pleased to see the continuing emphasis to children of online protocol, particularly safety measures and general protocol, resistance to all forms of bullying and school drills in evacuation and invacuation of the premises. Welcome too, is increasing encouragement of "the student voice" in exploring/drawing up guidelines. The "Be A Buddy Not A Bully" posters now displayed everywhere evolved from such a participatory process and are currently being copied by other schools as a great example.

The Buildings and Premises Committee meets three times a year to guarantee the fabric of the school and the surrounding area is safe and inviting and allows children the best possible environment for their learning. It directs an ongoing programme of rolling rejuvenation, internally and outside, overseeing small projects. It influences the Governing Board in the big decisions about future development, emphasising health and safety implications.

This year the school enjoys an enlarged playground that is safer, more attractive and encourages varied play.

### **General**

The appointment and integration of new staff members, midday assistants and governors has all proceeded well this year. Planning and recruitment decisions have been considered with care for personnel as well as school imperatives.

The governors were particularly pleased that the school continues to encourage the continuous professional development of its staff, from external trainers and enterprising peers. The successful trialling of "Tapestry" - based recording in EYFS this year will be extended to other classes next year and is a good example of sharing best practice.

The Ofsted inspection provided the opportunity to demonstrate how the hard work of our entire school community is helping all pupils to achieve their full potential. We are confident of the school's achievements, assured by its policies and proud of its growing ethos, "To Believe and Achieve Together".

The Governing Board would like to pay tribute to all the staff for another year of exceptional commitment to the school. The team has worked together with great commitment and professionalism to ensure the happy, smooth running of the school and the greatest enrichment for our children.

### **Governor Achievements & Activities in past academic year**

- Head teacher performance review: Nov 21, 2016
- Review of all school policies, to include areas newly required, to ensure they are up-to-date, fit-for purpose and compliant. These have been composed, agreed and displayed on the website.(eg Admissions Policy, Staff Appraisal, pro-formas for visits etc)
- Staff appraisal monitoring, guidance and decision making (Oct 15 as well as F&P meetings);
- Sports Premium research, investigations and suggestions (Sports Champions role)
- Visits and monitoring for Maths, Literacy, EYFS and Safeguarding (at least termly)
- Pupil Premium monitoring and input to webpage (termly)
- Agreement of Key Improvement Priorities and establishment of SSDP summary (July/Sept 16)
- Effective planning for class sizes in 2017-2018 and beyond.
- Successful employment of two teachers for Years 3-4 and Year 1 to accommodate the forthcoming 4.5-class model.
- School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) submitted successfully in the autumn 2016 term. A full review of the services St Gregory's pays Cheshire East for have resulted in saving costs.
- School budget monitoring, guidance, decision making (ongoing)
- Residential visits decision as well as request for annual costs info to be made available to parents
- Planning for and writing of a crisis Management Policy in the event of a critical incident or indeed the need to deal on site with a crisis away on a trip



- Extensive consideration of the current and future provision of pre and after-school care on the premises, and the future of Funtime, playgroup opportunities. Implications for pupil recruitment and teaching spaces and the playground.
- Regular discussions, challenges, support and decision making re school performance, school activities, parental engagement and any issues or complaints related to the school (full board and sub-committees)
- Attendance at parents' evenings, New Parents Induction, Information evenings, Showcase mornings and other events at school.
- Updates to the school web pages, to ensure information is accessible to all, including: biographies of current governors, their personal and pecuniary interests beyond the school and other relevant affiliations; a governor's particular responsibilities within the Governing Body, as Chair of a subcommittee of given a specific remit ie EYFS in school; a detailed record of training governors have undertaken; governor attendance at sub-committee and Full Board meetings.

#### **And Finally...**

Thank you for taking the time to read this Annual Governance Statement, we hope you found it informative and gave you an overview of some of the work that goes on at the school behind the scenes.

We are always looking for ways that we can improve, therefore your feedback on this report or indeed any other matter would be very much appreciated. To get in touch with us please see the Contact page on the school web site.

St Gregory's Governing Board  
July 2017