

St Paul's Catholic Primary School
Annual Governance Statement

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of St Paul's Catholic Primary School, October 2023.

Governance arrangements

The Governing Body of St Paul's Catholic Primary School currently has 7 foundation governors (appointed by the Diocese of Shrewsbury), 2 staff governors (one of whom is the Headteacher, the other is elected by the rest of the staff), 1 local authority governor and 2 parent governors (elected). This makes a total of 12 governors.

There are three main committees of the Governing Body.

- Curriculum and Standards
- Finance and Personnel
- Premises and Safety

The committees meet at least once termly in the first half of each term. The full Governing Body meets normally once termly, in the second half of each term.

Governors visit the school regularly, with each governor having a link to a specific class. Governors carry out visits to their link class; these are informal but very informative. We are always made welcome by the staff and children and they are happy to share their work with us. These visits give us the opportunity to see the children progress as they move up through school and to relate to the work the children are doing and are told about at our termly meetings. Some governors have special responsibilities (e.g. English, Maths, and Special Educational Needs). Governors are also linked to particular areas of the School Improvement Plan.

In common with all schools we have had another challenging year; although the Covid pandemic faded away its effects are still being felt particularly affecting attendance and because the children were not physically writing as much due to lessons being held "electronically" they haven't always progressed as much as we would normally expect, however, this has been addressed and there is a greater focus on writing currently.

OFSTED Inspection

The school was inspected in November 2022 and we are very happy to report that it went very well and the school's rating of good was maintained. The inspector raised very few issues which were very minor and told the governors at the feedback session that if there was such a thing as a "Very Good" rating we would have deserved that. It was also great to hear him say that we had a very good head teacher. All the staff and children were a credit to the school.

Attendance record of Governors

Governors have excellent attendance at meetings and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not "quorate" (the number of governors needed to ensure that decisions can be made legally is 3). The attendance record of governors is recorded on the Governors Page for inspection. If a Governor is unable to make a meeting, apologies are sent beforehand and recorded in the minutes.

The work that we have done through the three committees and the Full Governing Body (September 2022 – October 2023).

During the Academic Year from September 2022, the full Governing Body met on three occasions:

- I. Thursday, 8th December 2022
- II. Thursday, 30th March 2023
- III. Thursday, 6th July 2023

For each of these meetings the Headteacher submitted a detailed report to the governors. Typically, this report refers to staffing, admissions and pupil numbers, the Catholic life of the school and pupil behaviour; subject reports from key areas (RE, English, Maths, Special Needs and Early

Years); whole school visits and enrichment areas, pupil premium and school sports funding. The governors questioned the Headteacher about any aspect of the report and fed back their response. This process is minuted in detail and can be seen by anyone when the minutes are released. School policies are reviewed and amended, as required. The Chair of the three committees which meet in the first half of each term, gives a brief report on their meeting and its minutes are noted. The Chair of Governors reports on his responsibilities, which includes attending meetings run by both the Local Authority and the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Governors with special responsibilities report on the work that they have done.

During the Academic Year, the Finance and Personnel Committee met on three occasions:

- i. Thursday, 20th October 2022
- ii. Thursday, 16th February 2023
- iii. Thursday, 11th May 2023

The school's finances continue to be stretched as a result of central government funding restrictions. Despite the best efforts of the school's staff and governors and in common with many schools around the country, years of underfunding will continue to put great pressure on our own finances in particular which have been badly affected by the previously reported underfunding during the years that we hosted a bulge year of pupils. Unfortunately, in addition, demand for places in our nursery has dropped significantly, so much so that it is likely that it will be financially unviable and unable to continue in the future. We are saddened that this is the case because the nursery has always given a fantastic start to our children and help ready them for "Big School".

The Curriculum and Standards Committee met on three occasions:

- i. Thursday, 13th October 2022
- ii. Thursday, 9th February 2023
- iii. Thursday, 25th May 2023

The key purpose of this committee is to review the performance of the pupils and how it compares to other schools. Whilst individual year groups vary, sometimes quite significantly, the overall performance is good and compares well to similar schools and national averages. As mentioned earlier the pandemic effects are still being felt but results show that the school and children have recovered well and getting back on track.

The Premises and Safety Committee met on three occasions:

- i. Friday, 7th October 2022
- ii. Friday, 27th January 2023
- iii. Friday, 28th April 2023

The committee regularly carries out internal and external inspections and highlights any needed works to the diocese. Various works have been carried out including repairing/replacing the canopy of the nursery building and its internal ceiling. Two new heating boilers have been installed during the summer break so hopefully we can cope with the coming winter weather. Some remedial work on toilets have been carried out and new staff and disabled toilets installed.

When the minutes of the Full Governing Body or any of the three committees have been formally adopted, they become public documents. Governors have attended virtual and/or training/update sessions provided by the Local Authority and/or The Diocese of Shrewsbury to ensure they have the latest information and knowledge to carry out their duties. These include things such as Induction sessions for new governors, safeguarding and health and safety training.

The governors would like to record their thanks and appreciation for all the hard work and care that all the school's staffs provide for our children, especially the extra effort that has been needed to ensure the children continue to progress after the disruption caused by the pandemic.