

## **St Paul's Catholic Primary School**

### **Annual Governance Statement**

#### **Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of St Paul's Catholic Primary School, October 2021.**

##### **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 usually visit the school regularly, with each governor having a link to a specific class. 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. Unfortunately, visits have not been possible since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic but is something we will start again as soon as it is safe to do so.

##### **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 2020 – October 2021).**

##### **During the pandemic period all meetings have been held virtually.**

During the Academic Year from September 2020, the full Governing Body met on three occasions:

- I. Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- II. Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021
- III. Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021

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, these governors would normally undertake class visits during the school year but for safety reasons these have been suspended for the duration of the pandemic although we hope to reinstate them from the autumn term.

Additionally during the pandemic period members of the governing body have been meeting virtually fortnightly to receive briefings from the Headteacher and her deputy to keep informed of how the school is being affected and managed and how the pupils and staff are faring in this difficult and stressful time.

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

- i. Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- ii. Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Following on from the previous year, at each of these meetings, there has been further discussion about the funding of the bulge year, when, at the request of the Local Authority, we agreed to make an additional 30 places available. This was last year's Year 6 who have of course now moved on to their new secondary schools. Despite reassurances, the year was never full and no additional funding was made available for the shortfall in the second and third year of the provision. We incurred significant costs which were acknowledged by a funding allowance of about £30,000 per year from the fourth year onwards but no account had been taken of the £60,000 shortfall. Governors continued to appeal to the Local Authority officers about this matter and eventually we received £13,600 from their Primary School Contingency Fund. This amount will help but it is considerably less than the above shortfall. 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 of our finances.

The **Curriculum and Standards** Committee met on three occasions:

- i. Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- ii. Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021
- iii. Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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. During the pandemic the committee learned how teaching staff have kept the school open for children of key workers prior to opening fully using technology to carry out virtual lessons and activities. The school reopened fully as soon as was allowed by the local authority and the children have responded well to the new and unusual conditions. Given that many of the children were away from school for an extended period there is now a lot of catching up to be done and both children and staff are striving to move forwards. It has been noted that some children have

been nervous about returning to school and starting to mix with other year groups again but gradually this is fading and they are feeling more comfortable.

The **Premises and Safety** Committee met on three occasions:

- i. Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020
- ii. Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- iii. Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Once again the risk of cross infection has meant that the usual internal and external inspection walks were not carried out. However, the caretaker has ensured that the committee was kept informed of any issues and the teaching staff also assisted in keeping the school clean and safe, including the Headteacher cleaning toilets!

A detailed Health and Safety Audit was successfully completed during the last academic year.

Various works have been carried out during the holidays including the installation of a new games wall on the Key Stage 2 playground. This is now fully functional and has certainly been a welcome addition for the pupils. The footpaths at the front of school have been replaced. The soft surface play area, at the rear of Nursery, has also been replaced as has the canopy covering the outdoor area. This has enabled the Nursery children to have access to outdoor learning at all times. The children also took responsibility for designing the new colour scheme for the refurbishment of the toilet blocks in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and the Key Stage 2 corridor.

Sadly currently it is still not feasible for an Out of Hours club to be provided but it is an item that governors discuss regularly with a view to changing this at some point.

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 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.

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 during the coronavirus pandemic in an extremely stressful and demanding situation.