



Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of St John's Catholic Specialist School

October 2022

In accordance with its legal obligations, the Governing Body of St John's Catholic Specialist School endeavours to operate at a strategic level, leaving the headteacher and the senior leaders responsible and accountable to it for the operational day to day running of the school.

The three core strategic functions of the Governing Body of St John's Catholic Specialist School are :

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

Canon Law (Church law) also requires that Catholic schools are "...at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area" and the Governing Body of St John's Catholic Specialist School are mindful of this requirement in all that they do.

<p>Governance arrangements</p>	<p>The Governing Body of St John's Catholic Specialist School is made up of 7 Foundation Governors, 3 Staff Governors (including the Headteacher), 1 elected Parent Governor, 1 Local Authority Governor.</p> <p>Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop of Leeds, not simply because of their particular skills, but, more importantly, for the strict purpose of ensuring, on his behalf, the Catholic character of the school. Foundation Governors are also under important legal duties to preserve and develop the school's religious character. In order to ensure that the school's religious character is protected and that the school is being conducted in accordance with the tenets of its religious designation, Governing Bodies of Catholic schools must always have a majority of Foundation Governors.</p> <p>The full Governing Body meets at least once each term, and we have a number of committees to consider different aspects of the school in detail which also meet termly or more frequently if required. At St John's Catholic Specialist School, we have 5 standing committees. A Governors strategy group meets regularly with representatives of the senior management team in order to develop and drive forward plans for the next 3-5 years. Additional committees are established and meet, as and when necessary, to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.</p> <p>A list of serving Governors is set out at Appendix 1</p> <p>Teaching and Learning Committee</p> <p>Objectives :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and monitor the quality of pupils' learning and achievement • To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered • To review developments in the school's curriculum • To ensure relevant policies are up to date • To ensure the activities of the committee consider how the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff at St John's can be promoted.
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	<p>Finance, Property and General Purposes Committee</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and monitor the financial performance against the school development plan and against budget forces. • Prepare and submit the annual financial plan to the main Governing Body for approval • Review the production of statutory accounts • Review property maintenance and management (in conjunction with the Diocese of Leeds) and ensure spend is appropriately prioritised. • To ensure relevant policies are up to date • To ensure the activities of the committee consider how the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff at St John's can be promoted.
	<p>Human Resources Committee</p> <p>Objectives :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating, setting and approving personnel policies • Reviewing staff grading and salaries • Terms and conditions of employment including disciplinary and capability procedures • Monitoring the effectiveness of the staff appraisal process • Ensuring the work of the committee continues to promote the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff • To ensure relevant policies are up to date • To ensure the activities of the committee consider how the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff at St John's can be promoted.

	<p>Student Care Committee</p> <p>Objectives :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor and review safeguarding documentation and practice • To monitor pupil welfare and the quality of care • To monitor arrangements to promote the health of pupils including for the recording, storage and administration of medication • To ensure relevant policies are up to date • To formulate and monitor care policies • To ensure the activities of the committee consider how the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff at St John's can be promoted. <p>Premises, Grounds and Health and Safety</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor compliance with health and safety legislation and best practice • To formulate and review policies relating to health and safety • To monitor the maintenance and development of the premises • To ensure relevant policies are up to date • To monitor the maintenance and development of the grounds • To ensure the activities of the committee consider how the mental health and well-being of pupils and staff at St John's can be promoted.
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Governors' attendance record	<p>See Appendix 2 for individual governor attendance at meetings</p>
The work that we have done on our Committees and in the Governing Body	<p>Over the past year, the Governing Body has focused on improving outcomes for all pupils at St John's. We have been briefed regularly about student progress and achievements and given details of the destinations of our leavers. We have been able to question and challenge the progress data thus helping to ensure that all of our children and young people make the best possible progress in their education and personal development.</p> <p>We have discussed school policies to be updated and ratified by the Governing Body. Safeguarding is a major focus of our work and we undertake training in this important area, as do the staff. As we have come out of the pandemic it has been important to re-engage with all involved both at the school and our wider partnerships.</p> <p>Wellbeing has always been a priority at St John's and Governors are particularly aware of the extra challenges which the pandemic has posed to the mental health of everyone involved. During the past year Governors have received specific training to increase their understanding of mental illness. This has improved their capacity to identify issues of concern and better equipped them to monitor the introduction of additional measures to enhance the wellbeing and mental health of both staff and pupils. Towards the end of the school year we were delighted to see the school's efforts recognised by the achievement of the Boarding Schools Mental Health award at Gold level (the highest possible). St John's was assessed as 'outstanding' in every category. We are very proud of this.</p> <p>Despite the pandemic, the school has remained open, at least in part, throughout the entire school year and enormous efforts have been made to continue to provide quality education to all our pupils and to identify and seek to fill any gaps in learning. The school has enabled a number of new students, who had previously been school refusers, to reintegrate happily into school life. Governors are proud to note that all our leavers have moved successfully onto the next stage of their learning or career and have continued their journey towards taking up their rightful place in society.</p>

	<p>The Teaching and Learning Committee has scrutinised and updated policies within its remit. The committee has looked at developments made to the curriculum and scrutinised the teaching and learning action plan following an Ofsted inspection in Feb 2019. The curriculum has been redesigned and the teaching and Learning committee have reviewed the developments made. The careers lead has explained and shared the developments surrounding the careers provision in school and the Teaching and Learning committee have scrutinised the outcomes and next steps for the students who have moved on from St John's in July 2021. The PSHE lead has shared information with the teaching and learning committee around how we are ensuring our PSHE curriculum focuses on peer on peer abuse and has an emphasis on the vulnerability of the students at St John's.</p> <p>The School development plan has been shared with the teaching and learning committee and a summary of the developments made during 2021-2022 has been discussed. The committee have completed a work scrutiny which focused upon the impact of the implementation of talk 4 writing. The committee found evidence of the impact the talk 4 writing approach has had on the length, stamina and use of vocabulary students were using in their writing.</p>
	<p>The Premises, Grounds and Health and Safety committee oversaw improvements to the school premises (in as much as was reasonably possible during the challenges of the last 12 months including "Covid19 restriction").</p> <p>The committee addressed specific challenges related to the running of the school during the national Pandemic (with regular monitoring and updates from the Head and School Nurse etc.).</p> <p>All policies within the remit of the committee have been reviewed and updated; with more specific attention to Fire Drills/procedures in the event of fire.</p> <p>The agenda has been dominated by large strategic reports and action planning, especially relating to Covid19 and the implementation of the requirements/standards to be achieved in order for the school to open/function.</p> <p>The committee thanked the Head, Senior Team, staff and students for the incredible efforts that were taken (still taken) so the school can continue to operate.</p>

	<p>The HR committee continued to focus on the Health and Safety of Staff during the Covid Pandemic and endorsed the many detailed measures and covid-safe arrangements made by senior staff. Members received the results of a staff wellbeing survey and were pleased to note the positive results.</p> <p>A range of relevant policy statements that were due for re-consideration and updating were reviewed and approved.</p> <p>The Committee arranged the Head teacher's annual review and monitored the operation of the staff appraisal system. Proposals for changes to pay and grading including those resulting from the potential impact of the NHS Agenda for Change for school staff were carefully examined. Members noted new national arrangements for supporting early career teachers and arrangements for their implementation at St John's. Staff absence records were carefully scrutinised and measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on staff numbers and pupil experience were considered.</p> <p>The Care committee has reviewed and updated all policies within its remit. It has considered the half termly unannounced reports of the Independent Visitor and ensured that all recommendations have been applied in full. Members of the committee, including the Safeguarding Governor, have recently carried out a detailed safeguarding audit. An inspection of the residential accommodation has also been conducted and governors have noted the improvements already made whilst identifying some areas for further enhancement.</p> <p>The head of care has introduced a number of initiatives in the last year to further develop our residential provision. These have been communicated to Governors on a regular basis and discussed in detail at meetings. Governors have been pleased to view a number of innovative approaches to pupil engagement including the production of pupil friendly versions of key policies and the introduction of 'Cook with Care' where individual staff members from throughout the school cook and share their favourite meals with pupils so they can learn new recipes.</p> <p>Progress has been made in fully embedding staff and pupil welfare into everything we do at St John's and there has been a focus on up-skilling staff to increase their knowledge of safeguarding generally and of self-harm in particular. The first editions of the St John's Safeguarding newsletter have been circulated to all staff.</p> <p>The committee was delighted to receive the report of the latest OFSTED inspection which described our residential provision as 'outstanding in all areas'.</p>
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	<p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee has worked with the Diocese of Leeds to review capital expenditure plans and to ensure we maintain the fabric of the buildings in a cost-efficient manner whilst also considering the long term condition and usage of property assets.</p> <p>Detailed surveying work has been undertaken as part of a longer-term plan to ensure we fully understand where to prioritise expenditure.</p> <p>The Committee has continued to closely monitor the cash inflows, operational reserves, investment income and pupil numbers, and maintain financial forecasts to ensure appropriate planning is undertaken for the longer term good of the School. These are updated termly and ensure that the Committee has relevant and up to date information. End of year accounts were reviewed and approved by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee has carefully considered priorities for capital expenditure, authorising this as appropriate whilst challenging all areas of expenditure to ensure best practice and value. Continuing from 2020/2021, and into 2022 the Committee rightly focussed on the financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the school's cashflow situation. The longer term impacts of Covid 19 along with the current high inflationary environment have made expenditure review and cost control more important, and the committee continue to prioritise mandatory expenditure.</p> <p>Policies under the remit of the Committee were discussed and updated as required.</p> <p>Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents – you can ask at the school office if you would like to see any of the minutes of our meetings.</p>
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<p>Governors' future plans for the school</p>	<p>The Teaching and Learning committee will closely monitor progress made towards the outcomes stated upon the school development plan, including the implementation of talk 4 writing, developments in the curriculum provision for reading, writing and maths and how we are implementing appropriate support for those students who are autistic. The committee will, in conjunction with the care committee oversee further developments to enhance the health and well-being of both staff and pupils through the implementation of the thrive approach across school.</p> <p>The care committee, in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning committee, will continue to monitor the development of measures to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of pupils and staff. A whole school approach will be taken to enhancing staff knowledge and skills in relation to safeguarding including domestic violence. More pupil friendly policies will be developed and the Cook with Care initiative will be expanded.</p> <p>The Human Resources committee will continue to review and monitor the implementation of relevant policies and procedures and to scrutinise risk assessments and absence data. It will maintain a particular focus on the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils by carefully considering the results of surveys and promoting initiatives to address any concerns.</p> <p>The Premises, Grounds and Health & Safety committee will focus on the following areas :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post COVID19 action plan for the school – review and oversee management response. • Capital expenditure – working within diocesan guidelines • Continuing to monitor building maintenance and safety • Strategic review of all spaces so as to identify areas which can be 'mothballed', so as to use the premises as a whole in the most cost effectively manner; and ensure proposed actions/decisions relate to teaching and learning priorities and the school development plan. <p>The Finance and General Purpose committee will monitor the school's financial forecasts and performance, and work with the Trustee by continuing to get best value for the school from the investment portfolio, whilst ensuring we consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Longer term forecasting and review will look to secure the longer term future of the school, whilst in the short term careful prioritisation of spending will ensure we look after the pupils and the school.</p>
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How you can contact the Governing Body	We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents, carers and the wider school community. Please contact the Chair of Governors, Mrs Clare Brookes chairofgovernors@stjohns.org.uk
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Appendix 1 List of Serving Governors

Chair of Governors	-	Mrs C Brookes (Foundation governor/Safeguarding Governor)
Vice Chair of Governors	-	Mrs B Auty (Foundation governor/Child Protection Governor)
		Mrs A Bradbury (Head Teacher)
		Mr T Forbes (Foundation governor)
		Mr V McNicholas (Foundation Governor)
		Jill Tarr (Foundation Governor)
		Andrew Morley (Foundation Governor)
		Cllr N Harrington (LEA representative)
		Mrs J Peacock (non-teaching governor)
		Mrs K Pirie (teacher governor)
		Mr G Riley (parent governor)
Clerk	-	Mandy Dowson

The Finance and General Purposes Committee

Members :

Mr T Forbes
Mrs C Brookes
Mr A Morley (Chair)
Mrs A Bradbury

Business Manager (in attendance)

Teaching and Learning Committee

Members :

Mrs J Tarr
Mrs A Bradbury
Mr V McNicholas
Mrs K Pirie

Mrs N Slorach (in attendance)

Strategy Group

Members:

Mrs C Brookes (Chair)
Mrs A Bradbury
Mrs B Auty
Cllr N Harrington
Head of Care
Business Manager

Premises, Grounds and Health and Safety Committee

Members : Mrs J Peacock
Mr G Riley
Mrs K Pirie
Mr V McNicholas (Chair)

Human Resources Committee

Members : Mrs A Bradbury
Mrs B Auty
Mr G Riley
Cllr N Harrington
Business Manager (in attendance)

Student Care Committee

Members : Mrs B Auty (Chair)
Mrs A Bradbury
Mr G Riley
Cllr N Harrington
Head of Care (in attendance)

Appendix 2 Governors Attendance Record for 2021/2022 academic year

Governor	Full Governing Body	Premises Grounds and Health and Safety Committee	Teaching and Learning Committee	Finance, Property and General Purpose Committee	Human Resources Student Care Committee
Clare Brookes (Chair)	Attended all meetings	N/A	N/A	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	N/A
Barbara Auty (Vice Chair)	Attended all meetings	N/A	N/A	N/A	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings
Ann Bradbury Headteacher	Attended all meetings	N/A	Attended all meetings	Attended all meetings	Attended all meetings
Terry Forbes Foundation Governor	Attended all meetings	N/A	N/A	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	N/A
Vince McNicholas Foundation Governor	Attended no meetings	Attended all meetings	Attended all meetings	N/A	N/A
Andrew Morley Foundation Governor	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	N/A	N/A	Attended all meetings	N/A
Jill Tarr Foundation Governor	Attended all meetings	N/A	Attended all meetings	N/A	N/A
Cllr Norma Harrington LA Governor	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	N/A	N/A	N/A	Attended all meetings
Geoff Riley Parent Governor	Attended all meetings	2 out of 3 meetings	N/A	N/A	Attended all meetings
Kate Pirie Teacher Governor	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	Attended 1 out of 3 meetings (term of office began Nov 2021)	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	N/A	N/A
Jackie Peacock Non-teacher Governor	Attended 2 out of 3 meetings	Attended all meetings	N/A	N/A	N/A