

St Helen's CE Primary School

Greenhill, Alveston, Bristol, BS35 2QX



St Helen's Governing Body Report to Parents - April 2018

A lot of information about the school and pupil results is reported in detail on the school website so this document focuses on the practical ways in which we as a governing body have endeavoured to fulfil our functions. The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

The 3 core functions of the governing board at St Helen's are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Composition and attendance of the governing board

This year we were very sorry to see Helen Bellis (parent governor), who was Chair of Pay Committee and HT Performance Management, leave the governing body. Jenny Rimmer (foundation governor) has left due to work commitments, as has Maggie Tyrell (LEA Governor). All three had served for many years and their combined help and experience has been much valued and appreciated. We have welcomed Ana Tsoucalas as an associate governor, Diane Ponting (Co-opted governor) and Kate Masters (parent governor). We also welcomed our new vicar Revd David Moss. We are a very well supported governing body both in terms of numbers and experience. An outline of some of the work done this last year is summarised in the commentary below.

	Name	Governor Type	Elected Position	Curriculum & Standards	Finance & Staffing	Strategic Working Group	Link Governor	Other Roles
1	Jim McLaren	Co-opted	Chair	Y	Y	Y		HT Performance
2	Anne Straw	Parent	Vice - Chair	Y		Y	EYFS SLT	HT Performance
3	Christine Casey	Co-opted	Chair - Curriculum & Standards Committee	Y		Y	Literacy, Data	Curriculum Team link For Art, Music, DT
4	Jo Martin	Parent	Chair - Finance and Staffing Committee		Y	Y		Pay Committee Website
5	Jo Chambers	Co-opted	Vice Chair - C&S	Y		Y	SEND	PHSE
6	Andy Smith	Co-opted	Chair - Pay Committee & HT Performance Mgmt		Y			Website
7	Tracey Holford	Co-opted	Safeguarding & e Safety	Y		Y	Safeguarding SEND	Curriculum Team link For Tech, Sport, French
8	Sarah Brown	Parent	Health and Safety		Y		Health and Safety	Training Pay Committee
9	Julia Macgregor	Foundation		Y		Y	Data, RE & Maths	HT Performance Data Analysis
10	Ian Barnett	Co-opted			Y		Maths	
11	Zoe Clark	Parent		Y			Attendance	
12	Diane Ponting	LA			Y		EYFS	
13	Kate Masters	Parent		Y			Literacy	
14	Andy Spens	HT		Y	Y	Y		
15	Gemma Beech	Staff		Y				
17	Rev David Moss	Ex-Officio						
18	Ana Tsoucalas	Associate			Y			
	Current Totals			10	8	8		

Governors' attendance at meetings is excellent and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not 'quorate' (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

Committees & Prominent Lead Roles

Finance & Staffing

It's been a busy year for the Finance Committee overseeing the budget in what is a challenging financial climate for schools across the country. At the time of writing this the school is still waiting for 2018/2019 budgets from the LA despite the financial year already having started! The committee monitor all financial activity throughout the year and have confirmed that spending for the year 2017-2018 was largely in line with budget.

The new funding formula for schools announced last year will provide us with a little additional funding each year, but unfortunately it fell short of what we were really wanting which was parity with other local authorities in the country. South Gloucestershire remains one of the lowest funded L.A.'s per student in the country. With the help of the Friends of St Helen's, the committee have approved the provision of a suite of digital whiteboards to replace each classrooms projector. We are planning on doing this in stages and aim to deliver within a two year period.

Curriculum & Standards

St Helen's had an excellent set of KS results at the end of 2016/2017. In KS2, the school secured 81% of students reaching expected standard across Reading, Writing and Maths, which is in the top 11% of schools nationally, and 22% achieved the higher standard in the three subjects, which is in the top 6% of schools nationally. Most pleasing is the progress that our pupils made between KS1 (Year 2) and KS2 (Year 6) with Reading and Writing which was in the top 10% of schools nationally and our progress scores saw us third out of 108 primary schools in the Local Authority.

The pupil premium is used to support and enable disadvantaged children across the school to diminish the difference both academically, socially and in areas such as behaviour and attendance. This can be seen clearly in the last 3 years achievement of disadvantaged pupils at KS2, where the gap has closed. In 2017, progress of disadvantaged children rose above the rest of the school and national.

We need to congratulate the staff and of course the children for doing so well, but we must build on what has been the third straight year of improving attainment. For 2017/2018 the committee support the Headteacher in focussing on Maths, Phonics and the wider curriculum, whilst of course maintaining the strengths we have in the other subjects. Subject lead governors continue to monitor and challenge through visits and data analysis and teaching staff have been allocated as subject leads for the wider curriculum subjects and a governor has been appointed as lead governor for each.

Strategic Working Group

This committee works closely with the Headteacher to discuss and agree the strategic direction of the school in terms of academia and ethos. The governors on this committee agree the school's three year strategic plan and from that the annual development plan. All governors, in their capacity as links to specialist areas, monitor the schools progress, which is reviewed by this committee.

We were very pleased recently when the school had the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) and were judged to be 'outstanding'. The inspection, which typically occurs every five years, evaluates the distinctiveness and effectiveness of a school as a church school, and particular praise was given to the way the school has embedded and uses our Christian values and links them to all that they do. In order for children to achieve their best they need to be in the best environment to do so. As a Church of England School our values are rooted in the Christian faith, but shared by people across Britain, of all faiths or none, and provide the backbone of school life.

Health and Safety

The governor lead on Health & Safety meets with the Headteacher once a term and conducts a thorough inspection of the school. On the agenda to address currently is the after school club entry and exit gates, to ensure only known and trusted persons are able to enter the grounds.

Safeguarding

Over the past year the school has built on what was already a very comprehensive programme to cover all angles relating to safeguarding. The school has robust and effective systems in place for keeping children safe. The safeguarding governor and school leadership are committed to ensuring that safeguarding runs as a golden thread throughout school life. Over the last year the school has purchased an online system to further develop recording, reporting and monitoring of children at St Helen's, and there are robust background checks on all adults who come into contact with the children. Staff, volunteers, governors and visitors are clear on safeguarding personnel and procedures.

The school has introduced the 'Jigsaw' PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) scheme of work to ensure that the curriculum is fully up to date and children have opportunities to discuss important issues such as online safety, sense of worth and the way that others treat and perceive them. E-safety is also taught as the first unit each year on the computing curriculum.

There has recently been a report which has outlined how nationally children in Year 7 are ill-equipped to cope with the sudden increase in use of social media. Our Chair of Finance and safeguarding governor are leading an initiative to get all the local primary and secondary schools together for a conference and to discuss how we can work together to mitigate some of the risks our children will face when they leave us and continue their journey through education.

Conclusion

Thanks in no small part to the dedication, foresight and professionalism of the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and all staff there have been many highlights this last year which help us as governors to keep focussed on what is important through everything we do – to ensure that all pupils are supported and enabled to reach their full potential and that St Helen's continues in its aspiration to provide the very best possible Christian environment, enabling excellence, enjoyment and achievement together.

Jim McLaren
Chair of Governors

