



# **Governors' impact statement, April 2023**

## **Introduction**

The last year has been a significant one at St Aidan's. We said goodbye to two wonderful members of staff, our Deputy Head/Inclusion Manager who retired at Easter (after more than 20 years at the school), and our Headteacher, who left in the summer after nine years as Headteacher, to take up a leadership role in school improvement in Haringey.

Change is always hard but it also brings with it new opportunities. Governors worked to review the leadership structure and appoint outstanding candidates to key roles to lead the school going forward. Our new Deputy Headteacher and Inclusion Manager both joined at Easter 2022 and our new Headteacher took up her post in January 2023. These new members of SLT have brought considerable experience, skills and energy to the school and are absolutely committed to our vision for every child at St Aidan's to 'inspire and prepare for life in all its fullness'.

2022/23 has also seen more of a return to 'normal' in all schools and this provides an excellent opportunity to look back at the work of the Governing Body over the last year, detailing how we have supported and challenged the school and evidenced the impact. We hope this report helps you to understand how governors contribute to life at St Aidan's.

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## **1 The role of the Governing Body (GB)**

The GB plays a crucial part in improving and developing the school through providing both effective support and effective challenge and is responsible for:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, values and strategic direction;
- holding the Headteacher 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.

## **2 Governance structure**

The GB consists of 15 appointed and elected governors:

- 3 Foundation (Church) Governors;
- 1 Headteacher Governor;
- 1 Staff Governor;
- 5 Parent Governors;
- 1 Representative (local authority) Governor;
- 4 Co-opted Governors.

Currently all positions are filled.

## **3 Meetings and committees**

Over the last year, the GB has been able to return to a more 'typical' model of business but it has retained some elements of the practice developed during lockdown:

- Staff wellbeing is an agenda item at every Care & Communication committee meeting and at every meeting between the Chair of Governors, Vice Chair and Headteacher.
- Meetings between the Chair, Vice Chair and Headteacher have remained more frequent as Governors have supported the Acting Headteacher, and now a new substantive Headteacher, in taking up their posts.
- The full GB has returned to meeting in person but some committees meet remotely to make best use of time and governor availability.
- The Link Governor roles were reviewed again to ensure they reflected key priorities as the school emerged from lockdown.

## **4 Full GB meetings**

Full GB meetings are held six times a year, once each half term. Parents and staff are always welcome to attend and observe the first section (Part 1) of these meetings.

A wide variety of business is conducted at full GB meetings such as:

- Governors receive a written report from the Headteacher at each meeting, including an update on issues such as progress in all areas of the School Development Plan (SDP), pupil attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and staff training. Governors discuss this report and ask questions to challenge all aspects of the school's performance.
- Each of the GB committees (detailed below) reports back on the work they have undertaken which provides an opportunity for other governors to ask questions or discuss any aspects.
- School policies and key statutory documents are reviewed, both those passed by committees and those that need to be ratified by the full GB.

- The GB receives presentations from curriculum leaders for English, Maths and Science and uses these sessions to ask questions about the priorities for those subjects and progress being made towards them. Governors also receive presentations from subject leaders linked to particular areas of the SDP that they want to scrutinise in more detail, for example, developing outcomes in writing, progression in the science curriculum.
- The GB also receives reports from Link Governors (see later) and has the opportunity to ask questions on the priorities and progress for each of the Foundation subjects or other specialist areas of responsibility, for example inclusion, use of pupil premium, safeguarding.

## **5 Committees**

The GB is split into smaller committees that also meet each half term. Some schools use the 'circle model' of governance where all governor business is conducted through full GB meetings. However, at St Aidan's we have found that smaller individual committee meetings allow for more time to drill down into key areas of committee oversight, and provide a better opportunity for all governors to contribute and challenge.

Below is an outline of the typical remit of each committee as well as a number of specific highlights from work carried out in the last year. A more detailed understanding of the work of the individual committees can be found in the committee Terms of Reference in the Governor Section on the school website.

### **5.1 Standards**

This Committee is responsible for following pupils' progress and achievement, ensuring the school provides a high quality teaching and learning experience and delivers a broad and balanced curriculum in keeping with the school's aims and national curriculum requirements. In this committee, governors analyse school performance data and review both internal and external data reports allowing them to track all groups of children within school and against other London schools and nationally. Governors ensure that they ask about the comparative progress and attainment of different groups including those targeted by the pupil premium grant, children with special educational needs (SEND) and the different ethnicity, gender and ability groups. They ensure that the pupil premium grant is used to make a positive impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. They also keep the SEND policy under review, monitoring provision and ensuring that the school fulfils its responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs and with disabilities.

The Standards Committee is also responsible for staffing, which covers the quality of education and the professional development needs of staff; reviewing the staffing structure (teaching and non-teaching) at least annually in relation to the school development plan; reviewing the appraisal/performance management policy and how staff objectives and CPD are linked to school development priorities; performance management of the Headteacher; recruitment of new staff and the adoption, implementation and review of staffing policies and procedures to ensure that all principles of good and fair employment practice are adhered to and legal requirements fulfilled.

This year, governors on the Standards Committee have:

- led the recruitment of a new Headteacher and supported in the recruitment of other staff;
- scrutinised and contributed to the School Development Plan;
- reviewed pupil progress through discussions with school leaders, data from internal and external assessments and input from our School Improvement Partner;
- evaluated gaps in learning, the impact of them and strategies to mitigate them;
- met with pupils for book reviews and discussions about safeguarding;

- participated in an extensive review of Early Reading;
- reviewed our Anti-Racism action plan and worked with Governors on the Care & Communication committee to work on implementation;
- reviewed progress against the HEP humanities curriculum introduced at KS2;
- reviewed the provision and progress for children with SEND, assessing the effectiveness of interventions and outcomes
- worked with school leaders to revise the SEND information report for parents;
- supported the Inclusion Manager in representing the School's position to the Local Authority, on children with Education Health and Care Plans;
- reviewed teaching profiles to ensure all children are receiving high quality teaching;
- retained a strong commitment to funding CPD for staff to ensure that their skills and learning continued to be strengthened and monitored uptake;
- reviewed deployment of the pupil premium grant through termly reports to the GB by the link governor and scrutinised our pupil premium impact statement and funding plan;
- conducted the Headteacher's Performance review with support from our external School Improvement Partner.

## 5.2 **Resources**

Governors on this committee are tasked with detailed monitoring of the school's finances. They ensure that:

- the school operates within the financial regulations of the local authority;
- adheres to school finance policies and procurement codes;
- complies with DfE and SFVS (School's Financial Value Standard) requirements;
- responds to any issues arising from the audit of the school's accounts or annual SFVS review.

Governors hold the Headteacher to account for the financial performance of the school and scrutinise the draft and final school budgets. They are joined by a School Business Manager (SBM) who works with the Headteacher and an external finance consultant who works with the SBM on the quarterly finances and budget setting.

The governors bring a wide range of professional expertise to the school and this helps to ensure that budgets are effectively scrutinised, managed and appropriate steps taken to plan for the future.

This committee is also responsible for health and safety, overseeing the maintenance and development of the school site and premises (with sustainability in mind) to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose.

This year brought an unexpected challenge for the Resources committee (and the broader GB), when our SBM, Helen Hutchings, died very suddenly in November 2022. Governors on the committee worked quickly to support the Acting Headteacher and to liaise with the LA School Finance team to put support plans in place. Helen was a valued colleague and we are extremely grateful for all that she did for the school and for her close work with the governors on this committee.

This year, governors on the Resources Committee have:

- worked with the Headteacher and SBM on regular financial monitoring;
- put interim financial management arrangements in place following the death of the SBM;
- led strategic discussions with the Local Authority about the school's financial position;
- applied to the LA authority for a cash flow advance to ease cash flow pressures;
- reviewed and agreed recommendations regarding staffing options to reduce the deficit;
- agreed budget assumptions and parameters for budget-setting;
- scrutinised the budget and presented it for approval to the full GB;

- worked with the Headteacher and SBM on submission of an application for a Licensed Deficit from the LA;
- participated in consultations with Haringey about managing falling rolls;
- conducted on-site health and safety reviews;
- reviewed planning for relevant audits and actions required;
- supported the recommendations of the Standards Committee through budget commitment to high quality CPD for staff.

### 5.3 **Pay**

This sub-committee of the Resources Committee meets as required, typically twice a year, to review proposed changes to pay and authorise any recommended revisions.

### 5.4 **Care and Communication**

This committee is concerned with the health and wellbeing of the children and staff and with maintaining good communications with the school community, taking responsibility for the maintenance and promotion of parental and community engagement. Governors on this committee monitor the school's contribution to pupil wellbeing, their behaviour and safety, including promotion of healthy lifestyles and contribution to the wider community.

Governors regularly review policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline and monitor their implementation and outcomes. They also monitor pupil attendance and evaluate strategies designed to maximise it. They undertake an annual review of safeguarding procedures including the child protection policy, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of them and making recommendations to the GB to address any emerging issues. They also monitor and evaluate the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This committee is responsible for reviewing the way in which the views of all stakeholder groups (pupils, parents/carers, staff and the local community) are taken into account. Governors evaluate the opinions of parents, pupils and staff through surveys including an annual parent questionnaire. They ensure compliance with statutory requirements such as the publication of information on the school website, publicising the complaints procedure, privacy notices and home-school agreement. They monitor parental engagement, community links and community use of the school and evaluate the school's contribution to promoting community cohesion.

This year, governors on the Care and Communication Committee have:

- regularly reviewed the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils;
- scrutinised pupil attendance and discussed actions to address any concerns;
- led the production of the governors' annual report to parents;
- regularly reviewed safeguarding in partnership with the Safeguarding Link Governor;
- reviewed the school website and fed back on changes to improve access/usability;
- oversaw annual surveys to parents, pupils and staff and reviewed the outcomes;
- ensure governor representation at relevant opportunities to engage with children (e.g. school council) and parents (parent consultation evenings)
- appointed two new parent governors;
- appointed two new co-opted governors with specific skill sets;
- governors from the committee contributed to the anti-racism working party;
- worked on implementation of the anti-racism plan;
- reviewed a raft of policies ranging from nursery admissions to medical needs etc.

The full list of school policies can be found at: <https://staidansprimaryschool.org.uk/our-school/school-policies/>.

### 5.5 **SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) working party**

A team of governors responsible for the religious character of the school (St Aidan's is the only Voluntary Controlled Church of England school in the London Diocese) meets to review the impact of the school's Christian character on the provision to pupils and on the daily life of the school. This group of governors is also responsible for writing the SIAMS SEF (self-evaluation framework). They also attend relevant training given by the LDBS.

## **6 Governor attendance**

Attendance at full GB and committee meetings remains extremely high and Governors have never had to cancel a meeting because it was not "quorate" (i.e. the number of governors needed to ensure decisions are legally made). Attendance data for governors is published on the school website.

## **7 Individual governor responsibilities**

As well as sitting on committees, non-staff governors have individual link governor roles or working party responsibilities, which, wherever possible, have some connection to their professional skills, expertise and/or committee membership. The schedule of Link Governor visits, and their scope, is reviewed annually.

Link Governors typically meet with the school leader for their relevant area at least once a year. These visits focus on evaluating the subject against the subject School Development Plan and other relevant planning documents. For curriculum subjects, Link Governors assess the scope of and sequencing of the curriculum; how the subject is enhanced beyond classroom learning and identify key points to report back to the GB. Core subjects (English, Maths and Science) are reviewed by the whole GB through presentations and Q&A sessions at full GB meetings.

For areas such as Health & Safety, Safeguarding and SEND/Inclusion, the review visits are more frequent and are aligned to particular checks pertinent to those areas.

## **8 Link Governor roles**

Area of responsibility	Governor(s)
Health & Safety	Lead: Nicolas Simbault (from April 2022) Elaine Gutzmore
Safeguarding	Helen Froggatt (from Sept 2022)
Inclusion	Bryony Howe
Pupil Premium	Bryony Howe
Racial Equity	Bryony Howe
EYFS	Helen Froggatt
PSHE	Martin Bishop (from March 2023)
Humanities (History & Geography)	Torsten Bell
More able pupils	Helen Froggatt
MFL	Father Ben Kerridge
RE	Father Patrick Henderson
Music	Nick Buzzard
Computing	Marie Tulloch (from March 2023)
Art & DT	Sophia Jones
PE	Owen Sloman

## **9 Other governor involvement**

In addition to the visits governors make to school for GB and committee meetings or their link subject reviews, they also make numerous informal visits to attend parent consultation evenings, school council meetings, carol services, music concerts, school productions and PSA events such as the summer fair and quiz evenings.

Governors are delighted to be back in school more regularly and our Church governors visit weekly, conducting regular assemblies and collective worship.

## **10 Strategic direction and School Development Plan (SDP)**

Setting the strategic direction of the school is a key function of governors. They support and challenge the Headteacher and senior leadership team in agreeing the school's priorities, strategic direction, success criteria and monitoring plans.

Governors monitor the resulting SDP regularly during the year. They receive reports from the Headteacher on progress against the SDP, both at full GB and committee meetings. They evaluate the progress towards achieving targets and goals using internal and external data, discussions about children's progress and attainment and through external validation. External validation includes visit reports from our School Improvement Partner (most recently in history, science and early reading), liaison with other schools in the NLC and through governor training. This information along with questioning and analysis of data helps to set the SDP for the following year.

### **10.1 The School Development Plan 2022/23**

The SDP is developed and reviewed by Governors on the Standards committee in the Autumn term and following feedback and amendment, is then taken to the full GB for approval. It is also scrutinised by our external School Improvement Partner.

The headline priorities for 2022/23 are:

- **Priority 1:** Ensure St Aidan's has highly effective curriculum provision by ensuring that there is ongoing review.
- **Priority 2:** All pupils to achieve high standards across the curriculum with the aim of closing the gap and being in line with the London Top Quartile (LTQ).
- **Priority 3:** Develop outstanding practitioners by applying research to evolve our thinking and best practice.
- **Priority 4:** During a period of transition due to changes in the leadership team, ensure there is clarity in responsibility in key roles and effective handover.

## **11 Policies**

Governors review all policies at appropriate committee meetings on a scheduled basis to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements and that all guidance is relevant and up to date. Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list.

There is a nominated governor (the Vice Chair) who oversees all policy development and compliance. The Vice Chair is a member of Standards, Resources and Care & Communication committees to ensure good oversight across all areas.

## **12 Training**

St Aidan's buys into the Haringey Education Partnership (HEP) governor training package for our whole GB. This provides governors with access to a range of training modules across the year. Additionally, all governors can access e-learning through The Key for School Governors.

External specialists are also sometimes invited to train the whole GB together – E.g. around Climate Sustainability in schools (November 2022). Governors are encouraged to attend any training that is relevant to the SDP or their Link Governor responsibility in the first instance. Governors may also attend any training that is of particular interest to them.

Over the last year, members of the GB have attended training on:

- Safeguarding
- Safer recruitment
- Emotional health & wellbeing: The Anchor Approach
- Equality
- Staff and pupil wellbeing
- School finance
- HT performance management
- Risk & audit
- Health & safety
- Early years for lead governors
- BAME for lead governors
- SEND briefing for mainstream governors
- Updates on the Ofsted framework
- SIAMS inspection training
- Developing the Primary Curriculum
- New governor induction training
- HEP half termly governor briefings
- HEP Annual Governor Conference

### **13 Broader contributions to school improvement**

The St Aidan's GB is committed to engaging proactively with the wider education agenda and to contributing to school improvement across the borough.

The Chair of Governors is one of four Local Leaders of Governance and is the Chair of West Haringey Primaries Forum. She was previously a Non-Executive Director on the HEP board. She now sits as a governor representative on the Model for Change Delivery Board, responsible for Alternative Provision within the borough and also as a Primary Governor on Schools Forum.

The Headteacher is a member of the Hornsey & Stroud Green Network Learning Community, which provides an excellent opportunity for schools to collaborate and share best practice.

### **14 Contacting the GB**

Suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents and carers are always welcome. Governors can be contacted through the school office via telephone, email or in person. Alternatively, emails can also be sent directly to the Chair of Governors at [chairgovernors@staidansprimaryschool.org.uk](mailto:chairgovernors@staidansprimaryschool.org.uk).

Helen Froggatt  
Chair of Governors  
April 2023