

St John's Church of England School, Church Street, Blackpool

Governing Board Annual Statement 2019-20

The following observation was recorded by OFSTED following their last visit to our school on 11th March 2020:

- “Blackpool St John’s is a warm and welcoming school. The pupils said that they are happy and love school. They attend regularly. They said that they feel safe and can talk to staff if they have a worry and staff look after them properly. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe online and when outdoors.”
- “Pupils achieve well because leaders and staff have high expectations.”
- “The headteacher, supported by a new leadership team and capable governing body, leads Blackpool St John’s very effectively. Leaders know the pupils well. Leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve further. Leaders’ plans for improvement are clear and precise.”
- “Leaders and staff focus clearly on developing pupils’ personal development, including their well-being and resilience.”
- “All staff enjoy working at Blackpool St. John’s. They value the help and guidance that the headteacher and governors give them.”
- “The arrangements for safeguarding are effective”

The following observation was recorded in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report 9th February 2017:-

- "The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blackpool St. John’s as a Church of England school are **outstanding.**"
- "The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is **outstanding** at meeting the needs of all learners."
- "The impact of collective worship on the school community is **outstanding.**"
- "The effectiveness of the religious education is **outstanding.**"
- "The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is **outstanding.**"
- "The Christian vision of the headteacher, senior leadership team and the governors drives the school forward."

In accordance with the Government’s requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of the Governing Board of St John's C of E 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 and for the performance management of the staff;**
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

This Annual Statement is prepared in accordance with current Department of Education guidance which states:

“It is good practice for the Governing Board to publish an annual governance statement to explain how it has fulfilled its responsibilities”

The Governing Board were delighted to appoint Miss Adele Johnston our new Deputy Headteacher who had already been in the post of Acting Deputy Headteacher for a number of months. She commenced her new post on 16th October 2019. The Governing Board would like to thank all the Governors, Diocesan Advisors and HR Advisors for all their hard work involved in the process.

Publication of Governance Arrangements

In the interests of transparency, a school/academy must publish on its website up to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible format.

This statement therefore is to explain how the Governing Board has fulfilled its responsibilities as defined by Government supported by the Local Authority and Blackburn Diocese.

Publishing Arrangements

Governors received the report to assure the Board that the school website is compliant with statutory requirements of information to be published on the website, including publication of governance arrangements. Arrangements were made to address any areas of non-compliance.

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Mrs Karen Blackburn (Chair) and Mr Gary Hope (Vice Chair) were re-appointed to office to start their two-year cycle.

Membership

Mr Dave Blacker was reappointed as Local Authority Governor on 01.09.19

Mrs Karen Blackburn was reappointed as Foundation Governor (PCC Nomination) on 01.09.19

Mr Antony Birdsall was appointed as Foundation Governor (PCC Nomination) on 13.12.19

Miss Adele Johnson's Term of Office as Staff Governor ended on 03.02.20 but continued to attend meetings in her role as Deputy Headteacher.

Mrs Julieann Shearman was appointed as Staff Governor.

Register of Business Interests

Governors completed the annual review of their business interest.

The Governing Board normally holds six full Governing Board meetings a year. This year we still carried on our work but during lockdown we had some virtual meetings. The impact of the Governors' role in the school ensures that the budget is managed effectively and improvements are effective and continuous. Governor expertise – the Governors bring a wide variety of expertise to the school and this helps to ensure the school is moving forward.

Church School Distinctiveness Action Plan

- To further develop church/school links by raising the school's profile and its activities in St John's Church

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- To further develop relationships with communities beyond the UK and engage with global communities to enrich our children's lives.
- Create an outside Prayer/ Reflection area, to further develop the faithfulness of the Christian environment and enhance the children's outdoor learning

School Development Action Plan (SDP)

We agree school development priorities that have been set from an analysis of data which highlights areas to improve. The SDP is shared with us and progress towards key milestones is checked every term. The 2019-20 targets for the school development plan were:

- Priority 1 Reading
- Priority 2 To improve language and communication in EYFS and KS1
- Priority 3 Developing an 'irresistible curriculum'
- Priority 4 Leadership and Management Learning Vision

Progress of the SDP is reported back to the Full Governing Body where it is closely monitored.

Safeguarding Annual Report

Governors received the annual report on safeguarding, to assure the Board that robust arrangements are in place and for them to support consideration of whether any additional training/amendment to policies and procedures is required.

Policies

Governors have reviewed and revised as necessary any relevant policies using the Governing Board Policy Review and Delegation Planner as recommended by the Local Authority. See below for the policies reviewed/revised in 2019-20:

• Complaints Procedure
• COVID-19 annex/addendum to the Safeguarding Policy
• Governor Allowances Policy
• Health & Safety Policy
• Internal Control Framework (Financial)
• Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
• Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Procedures
• School's Financial Value Standard (SFVS)
• SEND Policy
• Staff Capability
• Staff Grievance
• Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
• Teacher Appraisal
• Whistleblowing

We have reviewed the following documents and reference guides again this year which set out and aid how we operate:

- **Instrument of Government** - Outlines the constitution of the Governing Board, as agreed by the Diocese and Local Authority.
- **Code of Conduct** - this sets out the expectations on and commitment required from Governors and Trustees in order for the Governing Board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.
- **Procedures for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**
- **Delegation Planner/Scheme of Delegation** - this outlines the key roles and functions of the Governing Board, and determines where these have been delegated to a Local Governing Board/committee or individual in line with Governance regulations.
- **Policy Review Planner** - this details the statutory policies requiring consideration by the Governing Board, and where these have been delegated to a committee or individual in line with Governance regulations.
- **Committee Terms of Reference** - this outlines the procedures and functions delegated to Committees established by the Governing Board.
- **Committee Membership and Nominated Governor Roles** - this confirms the appointment of nominated Governor Roles and Membership on each established Committee of the Governing Board.

Nominated Governor Roles/School Visits

All governors have responsibilities delegated to them to act as a 'specialist' governor for certain functions. The Governors visit the school as part of their monitoring of the SDP and in co-ordination with their specific Nominated Governor Roles. These are a valuable opportunity for Governors to be able to work closely with staff members across all aspects of school. The Nominated Governors follow a yearly cycle and report back to the Full Governing Board Meetings with their roles and responsibilities being clearly defined. This is under review currently so that Nominated Governor Roles and School Visits link in to the School Development Plan.

Governor Development Plan

This enables the Governing Board to demonstrate its focus on the three core strategic functions as stated at the beginning of this statement, linking in with the School Development Action Plan, training requirements and any requirements arising from the Ofsted inspection.

We are developing a more personalised skills audit for Governing Board members to complete. The evaluation of this means that we can look for specific skills when recruiting new Governors.

We have completed a Governing Board Healthcheck to evaluate our effectiveness based on evidence/rationale. The recommended action areas for improvement will form our action/development plan for 2019-20. It is due to be reviewed in the Autumn term.

As part of our ongoing development this year we have had presentations from staff on Irresistible Curriculum and Tapestry (EYFS). Unfortunately, due to Lockdown we were unable to undertake book scrutiny and learning walks.

Governor Training

During this academic year Governors have received training in a range of subjects including:

- **Governing Board Healthcheck**
- **Modern Governor - Church Schools**
- **New Governor Induction**
- **NCTL Performance Related Pay Workshop**
- **NCTL Financial Efficiencies Workshop**

COVID-19 Pandemic/Lockdown 1

The Headteacher has circulated weekly newsletter, to ensure all Governors were kept updated with the school response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. All Governors confirmed they had been receiving the newsletter and thanked Mrs Galloway for the regular communication, dedication and hard work during this difficult period. We focused on Business Critical Decisions during this time.

Final arrangements for the phased reopening of school and risk assessments were sent to the Governing Board and agreed following a visit to the school by the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher has been an inspirational leader throughout the pandemic and supported the staff, children and parents of St John's and on behalf of the Governing Board we thank her for everything you she has done, and continues to do.

Contact us

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from staff, parents, carers and other members of the community.

You can contact the Chair of Governors, via the school office and find information about the Governing Board on the school website at: www.stjohnsblackpool.co.uk