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**Chair’s Report**

**To**

**Parents & Staff**

**(Autumn Term 2024-25)**

**Dr. A. J. Wilkinson**

**December 2024**

**St. Oswald’s Catholic Primary School**

***Three Core Functions of Governance:***

1. *Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*
2. *Hold executive leaders to account for educational performance and performance management of staff*
3. *Oversee financial performance and ensure money is well spent*

The governing body encompasses a variety of work / life backgrounds and we are appointed as governors through various routes. As of 17 December 2024 we have eleven governors, and we meet regularly as a board in order to act as a critical friend in both supporting and challenging the teaching staff on any aspect of school life. In addition to the reports we receive from the teaching staff, we are always very happy to hear about the experiences of parents and pupils, and can be contacted via the school office. In order to help us to be effective as governors, we ensure our meetings centre around the three key areas of governance listed above.

In governors’ meetings, we always spend some time scrutinising the finances and curriculum, as well as discussing safeguarding. Meetings take place in the evening, and this term we have had three meetings of the governing body as detailed below:-

* 18 September 2024 – this meeting was held virtually. At this first meeting of the academic year, we generally spend time setting out our programme of meetings for the subsequent year, as well as allocating roles and responsibilities.
* 6 November 2024 – this meeting was held face-to-face in school. There was extended focus on RE and Collective Worship in this meeting, with a presentation from the RE curriculum lead teacher. We discussed the rollout of the new RE curriculum in school, including how this is being implemented in KS1 at present. We also discussed the wider faith life of the school and the school’s mission as a Catholic school, including a new link with Deacon Justin Malawezi from Malawi. There was also a finance focus in this meeting, with a number of issues discussed in relation to the school budget and related matters. We then discussed the link governor SEND visit that had recently taken place, as well as receiving a report from the school SEND lead, Mr. Goulding, who then answered questions about SEND provision. School performance data were reviewed, including those from external assessments, and pupil and staff wellbeing was discussed in detail.
* 11 December 2024 – this meeting was held virtually. Particular themes included the school self evaluation form and improvement plan, as well as a full update from the Mrs. Hassan on the breadth of school activities across the Autumn term. School finances were again discussed in detail, including a recent audit by the local authority that takes place to ensure diligent record-keeping and financial management.

All Governor meetings are supported by a Clerk from the Local Authority clerks service, and the meeting minutes are held in the school office.

In addition to the full governing body meetings listed above, additional work has been carried out by the governing body at the following meetings:-

* Headteacher performance management – this is an annual appraisal meeting with a committee of three governors, that ensures the headteacher has met the previous year’s objectives, and to set objectives for the year ahead. We are supported at this meeting by an external advisor who provides impartial advice to guide the analysis.
* Pay committee – this is an annual meeting with a committee of three governors, that ensures oversight of pay progression for teaching staff. This includes scrutinising personal statements from staff where necessary.

There have also been a number of governor visits to school, and these are a vital way for governors to understand how policies are being implemented, including the school’s curriculum. This term visits have particularly focused on RE, school finances and SEND provision.

**Governing Body Membership Changes**

It was *‘Vale!’* to Mr. Ode this term, after many years of service on the governing board of St. Oswald’s, most recently as an Associate Member. We thanked him for his dedication and hard work over the years, his service coming to an end as he moves job to St. Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School. We wish him well for the future, and he will continue to update governors on fundraising activities on an ad hoc basis, as part of his role in the PTFA (Parents, Teachers, Friends Association) at St. Oswald’s.

**Final Thoughts**

As always I would like to thank Mrs. Hassan and all of the staff at the school for their hard work and dedication, and all of our parents for their support. On behalf of the governing body, I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Dr. A. J. Wilkinson

A close-up of a christmas bell

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