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**Chair’s Report**

**To**

**Parents & Staff**

**(Spring Term 2022-23)**

**Dr. A. J. Wilkinson**

**March 2023**

**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. At the present time we have nine 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.

This term we have had one meeting of the governing body in February, which was held face-to-face in school. In this meeting our discussion involved the following issues:-

* Safeguarding – we discussed the school’s policies and procedures in order to ensure it is meeting its statutory obligations
* Governor training and development – we discussed this in light of the risk management session planned in our previous meeting (see below)
* Monitoring the school’s spending in relation to the budget – we have almost completed the first full financial year following the move away from using the services of a peripatetic LA bursar. As governors, we have found it very useful to have the school business manager attend meetings, and we feel it has enhanced our ability to scrutinise the budget. We also discussed the most recent school financial benchmarking data.

**Risk Management**

We have started to develop a risk management register for the first time. This is an area of governance activity that governing boards have been advised to look at, and it involves evaluating the internal and external risks to the school. These are then given a severity grading and mitigating activities are considered and put in place. We are currently in the early stages of developing our register, but once complete this will further strengthen our governance of the school and will also bring together many policies and procedures that do currently exist, but which are sited in disparate locations.

**Governing Body Membership Changes**

We have the following news in relation to the past term:-

* **DEATH OF A MEMBER OF THE BOARD –** Mrs. Susan Blinston, Associate Member of the governing body, has sadly died. She was a longstanding friend of the school who contributed much to school life over the years, both as part of its governing body and also in the many visits she made to school. She was well known by many of the children for all the work she did in supporting the religious life of the school, and we hope her husband Deacon Paul can find some solace in the many tributes that have been paid to her.
* **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE –** Mrs. Katy Callan left the governing body on 06/02/23

We currently have two vacancies for parent governors, which we will advertise in due course. We had intended to advertise our single vacancy in the Spring term, but given the changes detailed above, we decided to take some time in order to issue more information about the role before running the election. We are hoping to stimulate interest from a variety of high quality candidates, and plan to outline more details about the role to hopefully encourage people to consider putting their names forward. It is a very fulfilling role and I would strongly encourage anyone who is in the least bit curious, to please arrange a meeting via the school office and I would be very happy to answer any questions.

**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. The governing body would particularly like to acknowledge the recent OFSTED inspection, which resulted in the school’s grading continuing to be “Good”. We are very aware of the immense pressures on the education sector and were gratified that, in spite of these, the school continues to perform very strongly. On behalf of the governing body, I would like to give everyone my best wishes for Easter.

Dr. A. J. Wilkinson