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**Chair’s Report**

**To**

**Parents & Staff**

**(Autumn Term 2021-22)**

**Dr. A. J. Wilkinson**

**December 2021**

**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*

**Introduction**

The governing body of St. Oswald’s is composed of a group of twelve volunteers from a variety of work / life backgrounds. People become governors through a number of different routes. As a faith school, we have seven governors appointed by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. In addition, we have two parent governors (elected by parents), the head teacher, one staff governor (elected by staff) and a Local Authority governor (approved by the governing body but provided by Wigan Council). In addition to these governors our board also has associate members who provide insight into the governance process, but who have no voting rights when decisions are being made.

We hold regular meetings throughout the school year and our focus is centred around the three core functions of governance listed above. In practice, this means learning about the school and its senior teachers, listening to their plans for the curriculum our children follow, and ensuring that they have all the correct procedures in place for the safe running of the school. It also means scrutinising the budget on a regular basis.

**Meetings – Autumn Term 2021-22**

This term we have had three meetings of the governing body: in September, November and December. These meetings have been held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In these meetings we have discussed the following issues:-

* Safeguarding – including the school’s policy and reading national guidance
* Monitoring the school’s spending in relation to the budget set
* Pupil premium spending, and how this has an impact on children
* Progress and attainment of pupils, including an update on SEND pupils
* School Premises – including discussions of building work completed and areas where work will be required in the future
* Health and Safety – ensuring the correct policies and procedures are in place
* Head teacher appraisal and staff pay
* Governor training and development
* Discussion of the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan
* OFSTED

**Visits – Autumn Term 2021-22**

Most governors have “link roles”, where they are allocated a specific area of school life that they take particular interest in. We are required to have governors allocated to Safeguarding and SEND in particular, but various other areas are also covered. These can be found on the “Governors” page of St. Oswald’s website. During the Covid-19 pandemic, visits to school were severely restricted, but this term we have been able to restart these and hope to reach our usual level of regular visits over the course of this year if possible. So far this term we have had the following visits into school:-

* Neil Holding – Health & Safety / Premises
* Deacon Paul Blinston – RE & Collective Worship
* Andrew Wilkinson – Mathematics, Key Stage Two

After governors have visited the school, they present a report to the rest of the governing body on their findings, which helps us when we are reviewing all of the areas listed above in our meetings. We feel it is a vital part of being a governor and have missed this aspect of our work over the period of the pandemic.

**Personnel Changes – Autumn Term 2021-22**

We have had a number of changes in personnel over the past few months:-

* **RESIGNATIONS –** Julia Allen, Catherine Fletcher
* **NEW GOVERNORS –** Chris Beaney

This leaves us with an imminent vacancy for a Local Authority governor, which we will be looking to fill in the Spring term. We intend to complete an audit of the skills possessed by the current governors, so that we can recruit someone who complements the current governing body.

**Conclusion**

This is the first “Chair’s Report to Parents & Staff”, and I am planning to write one every term, in the hope that we can open up governance to the rest of the school community. I think it is important everyone knows about this aspect of school life, and I would be very happy to answer any questions about the governing body’s role. I would like to encourage people to contact the school office with any queries, which can then be forwarded to me, and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have. Over the course of the coming year I will try to use these reports to highlight what our role involves, and hopefully demonstrate that we are always working to make sure that our children learn in an environment that aspires to the highest standards. I would like to take this opportunity 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 patience and support. For our whole school community, I would also like to give my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Dr. A. J. Wilkinson