



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Governing Body Annual Statement and Impact Assessment
2023-24

St Joseph's strives to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children by maintaining a broad and ambitious curriculum and supporting their personal development and well-being whilst enabling children to deepen their relationship with Christ. We have a committed staff, strong leadership team and an experienced Governing Body.

Governors' Role

The role of the Governing Body is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school. This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Body articulates their role in school leadership and the impact we have had on school improvement. The Governing Body is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers, who invest a huge amount of good will, hard work and time for the sole purpose of improving the education of every child in our school. The Government expects us as your Governing Body to be a dynamic group of highly skilled individuals who focus on supporting the Head teacher and all the staff to shape the strategic direction of school. As Governors, we are accountable for the performance of our school and we are measured by three core strategic functions are to ensure:

- that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined
- that the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school
- the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

Governors work co-operatively with the Headteacher and senior management in the writing and monitoring the School Development Plan. The School Development Plan (SDP) sets aims for the forthcoming year. The current SDP is based on priorities identified from data, school self-evaluation and Ofsted priorities. The SDP is set out with clear aims, the key tasks that will be completed in order to achieve these aims and the success criteria in order to measure outcomes. The SDP is monitored and reviewed termly, with an evaluation overview being completed and presented to governors as part of the Headteacher report.

Following the 2018 Ofsted, the Governors invested in a new phonics programme, books and resources. This has now been thoroughly embedded with our most recent Ofsted (2024) stating: ***'Reading is at the front and centre of the curriculum. The school has purposefully created a reading spine that opens pupils' minds to the wider world. Older pupils enjoy reading and know that it is an important life skill. They strive to achieve the bronze, silver and gold reading badges, which motivates them to read on a regular basis at home. The importance of books and reading is interwoven throughout the school. The newly refurbished library, as well as interesting book corners in classrooms, keeps the reading profile high. Pupils in the early stages of reading***

learn phonics from the moment they start school. Skilled adults deliver effective phonics lessons. The school quickly identifies pupils who are at risk of falling behind. It ensures that these pupils receive the additional support they need to catch up. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. All of this helps pupils to develop as confident and fluent readers'.

The Governors have invested in specialist music teaching and Forest school which have enhanced pupils' personal development, judged to be strong by Ofsted (2024).

We have 16 governors, 9 of whom are foundation governors. A number of governors, including the Chair, have been in post over 20 years. Our Chair of Governors was previously a member of the Dorset Schools' Forum and is currently a member of the BCP Schools' Forum. She is an Admission Appeal panel member for Dorset and BCP local authorities. Foundation Governors are appointed specifically to ensure that the religious character of the school is preserved; that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed and that the religious education curriculum is in accordance with the Bishop's policy for the Diocese. Governors are clear about the aims and values of the school and prepared to work with the school, strategically as a "critical friend", recognizing and celebrating achievements, supporting and encouraging strategies to bring about improvements but also asking challenging questions to ensure objectives are met.

Training

All members of the Governing Body have received and continue to have significant training. The impact of this is that the Governing Body is kept abreast of their responsibilities regarding the latest requirements and expectations.

Recent whole governing body training has included:

- Governor Curriculum Learning mornings
- Diocesan briefings on academies
- Training via The Key's Governor Hub and through BCP.

Impact of Full Governing Body Meetings

Governors attend two full governing body (FGB) meetings each term. In addition, some governors meet 5-6 times a year as a Finance Committee, HR and Pay Committee, Premises Committee and Curriculum Committee. We also have an Admissions Committee. Governors are linked to areas of the School Development Plan and have Governor Learning Mornings, Monitoring and Evaluation Visits and meetings with staff to monitor progress against the SDP objectives. Governor visit reports, which are supported by an agreed report form to help Governors maintain and appropriate focus, are written and presented at full governing body meetings. The visits and reports impact greatly on the governing body's ability to effectively ask important questions, support but also hold senior leaders to account.

Governors provide strong support and effective challenge for the Headteacher. We have developed a strong senior leadership team, leading high quality teaching and learning throughout the school. The wellbeing of staff remains a priority for the Governors.

Impact of Finance, Premises and HR Committees

The school budget is scrutinised and reviewed in detail at these meetings. On these committees, we have governors with strong finance skills who review end of year budgets, attend pre-budget meetings and question deficit/surplus balances. Using benchmarking information, the committee scrutinise the effect of pupil numbers on the budget and how this impacts on staffing and resources.

Through working closely with the School Finance Officer and Headteacher, the Finance Committee and HR Committee have supported the school and held it accountable to ensure effective budgeting.

Careful monitoring and planning of the budget has impacted positively on subsequent years where budgets have enabled the school to have a strong and effective staffing structure to drive school improvements.

The Committees ensures 'best value' when purchasing items or services. The governors ensure that the school provides three quotes for items or services over £1000. Ensuring best value has seen the successful installation of our new IT equipment, updating the internal school environment and the revamping the outdoor Early Years area along with a new garden area for the children to use. Best value practices have also been used for photocopying contracts and cleaning contracts, again ensuring the school is getting a good service and good value for money.

This year also, Governors have overseen the implementation of a new Phizz Lab for STEM learning and Year 2 Space Camp. The Governors express thanks to Janice Walls for raising the profile of Science and her dedication to Science learning in the school.

Pupil Premium Funding

In comparison to other schools, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School receives a high percentage of Pupil Premium (PP) Funding. The Finance and HR Committees approve the planned spend of PP funding each year and challenge the Headteacher and senior leaders on the impact of the spending. Governors scrutinise evidence of impact on the outcomes for PP Children. Data and evidence show how the gap between PP children and non-PP children closes as pupils move through the school. Details of the impact of Pupil Premium spending can be found on the website.

Sports Premium Funding

Alongside the PP funding, the governors monitor how the school spends the Sports Premium Funding. The Primary PE and Sport Premium is ring-fenced and must only be spent on physical education and sport provision in schools. The funding aims to achieve improvement in all areas of PE, from the standard of physical education to introducing health focused physical activities and after school sports. At St Joseph's, the governors are satisfied with the positive impact that Mr Rickard has in leading sport and coaching in school, organising sports events, supporting staff, overseeing extra-curricular activities and enrichment. Details of the impact of Sports Premium spending can be found on the website under 'Information' tab.

Capital Projects

The Premises Committee is passionate about ensuring safe school buildings and grounds, and providing the best learning and working environment for the children and staff. The school works with the Diocese to fund such projects.

General Data Protection Regulation

Governors are responsible for ensuring the data protection policy is in place and being followed. Governors ensure the school has a Data Protection Officer (DPO) and that they attend regular refresher training. The DPO for St Joseph's is shared between some local Christchurch schools.

Safeguarding

The monitoring of safeguarding practices is a key priority for governors and is ongoing throughout the year. Along with the Headteacher and Deputy Head, governors conduct an annual safeguarding audit and monitor the actions identified from the audit. Safeguarding reports presented at FGB meetings provide an opportunity to challenge the safeguarding culture of the school and ensure robust procedures and practices are in place. The impact of this challenge and monitoring is a confidence in the strong safeguarding ethos at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, recently judged 'effective' by Ofsted (2024).

Recruitment

Members of the governing body have completed "safer recruitment" training and have contributed to the successful recruitment of staff.

Progress and Attainment

Governors have provided support and challenge around the implementation of a new phonics scheme across the school. Data is made available to governors through termly meetings with verbal and written presentations. Governors will ask questions to ensure the school's standards and expectations are high. Governors challenge the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team on the data, holding them to account. Particular scrutiny is placed on pupil progress across all ability groups including vulnerable groups and on the effective use of the Pupil Premium Funding.

School Policies

Governors review and approve policies annually. This takes place throughout the year in FGB meetings and Committee meetings. The Headteacher and staff are asked to give examples of how updated policies have been implemented, to ensure policy review is not just a paper exercise. Current policies are available on the school website.

Performance Management

Governors are responsible for undertaking the Headteacher's performance management review each year. Governors, supported by the School Development Partner, set annual targets, which are reviewed at points throughout the year.

The Headteacher completes an annual performance management report for the governors, evidencing that performance management has been completed for all staff and that staff have met performance management targets. Governors scrutinise the report and use evidence to approve pay recommendations given by the Headteacher. Pay recommendations follow Dorset and BCP recommendations.