

St. Columb Minor ACE Academy Governors' Impact Report 2017/18

Context

The Governors of St. Columb Minor Academy form a Local Advisory Board (LAB) which, in turn, is part of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence (ACE) Multi-Academy Trust. We work in partnership with the Headteacher and school leaders to improve the school and are accountable to the ACE Board of Directors.

Effective governance is based on six key features:

- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy;
- Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance;
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity;
- Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements;
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

This statement aims to summarise the work of St. Columb Minor's LAB over the last 12 months. Although by no means exhaustive, it does illustrate how the Governing Body (LAB) is contributing to our three core functions as outlined in the *Governors Handbook, January 2017*:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher and school leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

What we have done this year:

- As Governors, we fully support the school's aims to promote the highest expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour, respect for all individuals and equality of opportunity in a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment. Governors were involved in an annual review of the school's vision, values and aims.
- We have done a lot of work to define and understand our strategic role this year, from finding out what each of us is good at and what we need help at getting better at to upskilling ourselves to refining what our monitoring roles are.
- We conducted an annual skills audit which identified areas of strength and development. We assigned individual governors with identified strengths to oversee key areas of the school's provision and completed training and other development activities to strengthen our understanding in other areas. Throughout the year, governors have attended school and Trust-wide training events which have addressed issues central to our strategic roles.
- We have conducted a thorough self-evaluation of our LAB with respect to our core functions and the features of effective governance, and the action plan arising from this has guided our self-improvement over the year. We have completed virtually all the actions we set for ourselves this year.
- There have been monthly, well attended, LAB meetings throughout the school year, which have revolved around carefully crafted agendas which focus closely on the quality of teaching and learning at the school. Governors are regularly informed about strategic decisions made by the ACE Board of Directors and discuss what these will look like at school level at LAB meetings.
- We have ensured that our governor monitoring activities have focussed specifically on the priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan and the statutory governor monitoring roles such as safeguarding.
- We have implemented a more frequent, regular programme of school visits and participation in school activities; governors have involved themselves in pupil conferencing, pupil data conferencing, staff and governor development days, etc.

The impact of these actions has been that:

- We understand more clearly and can fulfil more successfully our oversight roles; we think and act more strategically.
- Each of us contributes clearly to the LAB's strategic role; we are a better team.
- We both support and challenge the school more effectively to make improvements in pupils' outcomes;
- We know the strengths and weaknesses of our school's provision and outcomes.

Holding the Headteacher and school leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils

What we have done this year:

We have developed and refined how we monitor the educational performance of the school this year. Strategies we have employed this year include:

- Ensuring that teaching/learning is a key agenda item at each monthly meeting;
- Preparing and minuting questions and challenges about school performance for the termly Headteacher's Report to Governors;

- Focussing governor monitoring visits and activities on priorities contained in the School Improvement Plan;
- Contributing to termly reviews of progress of the School Improvement Plan;
- Monitoring the review of teachers' performance and reviewing the Headteacher's performance over the year.

The impact of these actions has been that:

- We are better able to validate school leaders' judgements about the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes and about the improvements the school is making.
- We ourselves know the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement at the school. We know how our school has improved this year and where it needs to improve further.

Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

What we have done this year:

- Although the financial responsibility for the school sits centrally with the Trust's Business Team, our role is to monitor how the school is spending its money and ensure that the school is getting good value for money. Our LAB skills audit revealed that our collective financial expertise was moderate, so governors participated in focussed school finance training.
- We scrutinise termly finance and premises reports and minutes show that we question and challenge expenditure.
- We compare Headteacher's Reports and finance reports to monitor how the school spends Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and SEN funding.

The impact of these actions has been that:

- Governors are confident that school spending on teaching and learning, Pupil Premium and Sports Premium is having a beneficial impact on pupil outcomes.
- Governors are more able to challenge high expenditure in certain areas.