



Annual Governance Statement December 2017

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of the Board of Governors are:

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

Governance Arrangements

The Board of Governors of St. Matthew's Primary School is made up of 1 staff governor, the Headteacher, 4 elected Parent Governors, 1 Local Authority Governor, and 9 co-opted governors (of whom we have agreed 2 should be members of staff). We currently have 1 vacancy for a co-opted governor, and one vacancy for an elected parent governor. There are also 3 associate governors, who do not have voting rights, who are the assistant head teachers of the school.

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 says that "the 'board of governors' should operate at a strategic level, leaving the head teacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to it for the operational day-

to-day running of the school. The board should avoid its time being consumed with issues of secondary importance.”

The school development plan is the key document which focuses the work of the governing body.

The governing body carries out its responsibilities in a number of ways. These include:

- developing and reviewing a range of written policies and procedures to address both statutory requirements and local priorities
- delegating many of its responsibilities to committees and/or individual governors
- contributing to and reviewing the school development plan and using this document as one of the key resources for setting priorities and monitoring impact
- using a combination of reports, visits, results and other activities and information in monitoring the progress of the school

As well as our Full Governing Body Meetings, our governors also form the following sub committees:

- Teaching, learning and Outcomes Committee
- Resources Committee
- Salary Committee

Other committees and working groups are also formed as and when necessary.

Attendance Record of Governors

See the school website

(http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/meet_our_governors/89282) for a full list of Governors and their attendance record at meetings.

Governors have excellent attendance at meetings and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not “quorate” (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

Governor Recruitment and Retention

The governing body appointed a new co-opted governor in June who will serve for a term of four years. Suitable candidates were selected from the group of parents who had stood as candidates for parent governor roles but had not been elected. All four candidates were interviewed by a panel consisting of the Head, the Chair and the Chair of the Resources committee. All candidates were well qualified, and it was difficult to choose between such excellent and committed candidates.

We welcome the new governor warmly to our group. In line with best practice, the new governor undertook the NGA skills audit so that we can identify any further gaps within the governing to fill the remaining co-opted governor post. The new governor underwent training in governance and performance management, has been appointed as link governor for science, and has joined the head teacher’s performance management committee.

Governors spent some time formalizing the procedure for holding parent governor elections. This will be used for the first time next term, when the parent body will hold elections for a new parent governor early in the new year. After the new parent governor has been elected, governors will look to appoint another co-opted governor to fill any skills gaps.

After two years of service, the clerk to governors has stepped down due to pressure of commitments, and the governing body is seeking to recruit a replacement. The governing body wishes to thank the clerk for their excellent and highly skilled work over the last two years.

A co-opted governor who has served 36 years as a governor at the school also stood down at the end of the academic year. They have maintained a high level of commitment and to the school and have contributed in many areas – the school will miss them very much. They were presented with a long service award by the local authority but unfortunately were away and not able to attend.

In the Autumn of 2017, governors reviewed the Instrument of Governance, and agreed a proposal to increase the term of office of Co-opted Governors appointed from October 2017 onwards to four years from two years. This was felt to be necessary as a two year period of office is too short to guarantee continuity of experienced membership, but also too short for new governors to fully immerse themselves in the role.

In the summer of 2017, five co-opted governors whose 2 year term of office had ended applied for reappointment. Each member filled in an application form detailing their contribution to the governing body, and then left the room while the board discussed their applications individually. Some governors have served very long terms of office, but carry out vital roles within the board. All governors were considered suitable and reappointed by the board. The chair is looking to stand down in the next two years, and has invited applications from potential successors.

The work that we have done on our committees and in the Board of Governors

Each year, we are required to elect the chair and vice-chair and approve the terms of reference for our full governing body and the committees. We do this in the first meeting of each academic year.

One of the roles for the governors is reviewing and agreeing school policies, and this year we have considered a number of key policies, and significant work has continued on developing appropriate policies in the areas of Safeguarding and Child Protection, Child Protection Whistleblowing, eSafety, Sex and Relationships (SRE), Pay, Food and many more.

Governors have spent time examining the performance data for the school and considering where this shows that improvements can be made in overall attainment of pupils and in the progress they make year on year.

Governors conducted Performance Management of the Headteacher, together with our external advisor, and have set challenging targets for the future.

Governors have reviewed link governor roles and training needs of the whole governing body. Link Governor visits are scheduled for this year, the last year of the current school development plan. The following areas were identified as high priority: Literacy; SEND; Maths; Science. The introduction of character education has been delayed to September 2018. The Chair attended a very interesting staff training session in September 2017 about deciding which core values the school wishes to promote.

Governors have been very impressed with the continued widening of the school sports extracurricular activities. The sports day this year was again held on Parker's Piece. Governors expressed their warmest thanks to the PE coordinator who has stepped down from the role after many years. Under their leadership the school has gained the Sainsbury's Gold Games Award.

http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/st_matthews_sport/80226

Alongside school staff, governors received training from one of the assistant heads on homophobic/transphobic incidents from the Kite Trust.

http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/keeping_children_safe/275211

Gratitude Day

Governors were delighted to receive gratitude cards from children at St. Matthew's, sent as part of a Gratitude day organised by the PSHE coordinator. As part of the day, the children had been encouraged to think about Acts of Kindness. One suggestion had been gratitude cards and 2 cards were sent to the Governors with the following messages "Thank you for taking care of us" and "I like you having meetings".

Resources Committee

The Resources Committee looks at the maintenance and development of the school premises, and makes decisions about how the school should use its budget. The health and safety governor carries out regular checks of the premises with the school's business manager. Another governor carries out regular checks to the financial processes within the school. Another governor also reviews the staff performance management process and then reports back to the salary committee when decisions are being made about staff pay increases.

As in previous years, the committee reviewed the Schools' Financial Value Standard and found that the school practices were in line with expectations.

In the Autumn term meeting, the head brought the new School Contract regulations, Financial Regulations for Schools and Cambridgeshire's Scheme for Financing Schools to review Governor awareness of these regulations.

The schools financial benchmarking exercise was reviewed and our spending is roughly in line with other schools, however our funding is at the lowest level per pupil of all of our comparator schools.

Governors were also informed about how the pupil premium money is spent. This information can be found on the school website:

http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/expenditure_and_impact_of_pupil_premium/89314

The resources committee also examined the 2017/2018 budget plan for the school and recommended it to the full governing body, where the budget was approved. In a still uncertain financial climate, this budget aims to:

- 1) maintain a strong carry forward at the end of the current financial year
- 2) broadly maintain the current financial and staffing structures

At the end of the 2016-2017 financial year the school had a carry forward again. This represents an extremely positive turnaround of the school's financial position and vindicates two key strategic decisions that the governing body have made over the last two years:

- To maintain the existing staff structure
- To move the school out of a deficit budget position over a two year period

Nursery

The governing body unanimously approved the change in admission numbers for the Nursery from 26 to 29 per session.

Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee

Governors worked on the new assessment, feedback and marking framework - This is the document that outlines the practice in the school for monitoring and evaluating work against national standards e.g. use of Target tracker. This includes: Foundation subject assessment; Writing Assessments; Target tracker data; Assessment & self- evaluation calendar.

The Teaching, learning and outcomes committee has been kept apprised of the reports of the school's LA Advisor and has analysed the available data on performance and progress. We have remained focused on whether children are making sufficient progress year on year.

Link governors also visited different areas within the school such as numeracy and literacy, as well as SEND, early years, music, PE, science, and anti-bullying. We recognise the importance of carrying out regular visits to keep our knowledge of the school up to date. Some Link Governor roles will be reallocated this academic year, due to changes in personnel on the board.

Fair Funding for Schools Campaign

The head has been elected Chair of Cambridgeshire primary heads association, and as part of this role, has been involved in the Fair Funding for schools campaign. Governors have discussed the issue of school funding, and have written to local MPs to express their feelings.

http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/school_funding_campaign/272331

Governors also heard about the review of children's centres carried out by the local authority, and expressed their concern at potential loss of services locally and throughout Cambridgeshire. Governors wrote to county councillors to share their views.

Future Plans for the Governors 2017 - 2018

The Board of Governors is looking forward to the challenges which the spring term will bring. We will be monitoring the new School Development plan. We will also be overseeing the final phase of the expansion of the school from 2 form entry to 3 form entry. Our additional class is now in Year 6, so the school is now at full capacity.

Following the election of a new parent governor, we will be looking for someone to take on the role of co-opted governor with skills which best fit with the school development plan targets and fill any gaps.

We will be considering the new Ofsted inspection guidelines and preparing for an inspection of the school.

How to Contact the Board of Governors

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors, Dr. Thorn, via the school office. You can see the full list of governors; their attendance at meetings; minutes of Board of Governor meetings and more information about what we do, on the Governors' page of the school website at:

<http://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website>

Minutes of Board of Governors are public documents – you can either find them on the Governors' area of our website or you can ask at the school office if you would like to see any of the minutes of our meetings.