

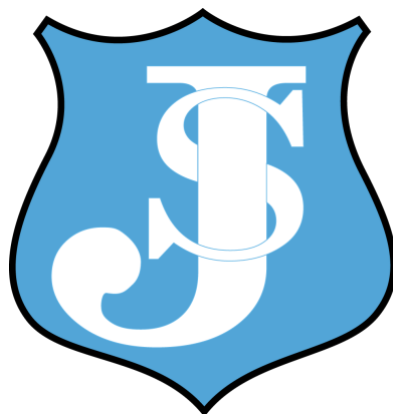
St John's CE Primary School

'High standards – through a caring community'

Review of Governance

Report for parents and carers

Academic year 2019/20



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Contents

1. Introduction from the Chair
2. Who are the governors of St John's?
3. What do governors do?
4. Summary of governance activities 2019/20
5. What has been challenging this year?
6. What has been encouraging this year?
7. How else do governors fulfil their role?
8. What were the governing board objectives for 2019/20
9. How were they met?
10. Meeting the 3 strategic objectives
 - 10.1 Setting the vision and strategic direction of the school
 - 10.2 Holding the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school account for the performance of the school
 - 10.3 Ensuring financial resources are well spent
11. Meeting statutory requirements
12. What are the governing board objectives for 2019/20?
13. What are the longer term plans of the governing body?
14. For further information

1. Introduction from the Chair

Welcome to a review of the governance activities of St John's CE Primary School for the academic year 2019/20.

While a "report to parents" is no longer a statutory requirement in England, the governing board agreed that an annual report for parents and carers would be a useful way to share information and ensure that the whole school community are aware of the board's role, objectives and responsibilities, as well as being able to read how we have fulfilled these during the last academic year.

Minutes of our governing board meetings are available to view through the school office. We also allow observers at our meetings, albeit at present they are virtual. Our meeting dates are included in the Headteacher's letter and the school calendar on the website. If you wish to attend a meeting, or discuss any aspect of this report, contact the Chair by email: gov.andrew.moore@st-johns.stockport.sch.uk or through the school office.

2. Who are the governors of St John's?

The governing board is made up of the following governors:

- 3 parent governors – Lynsey Williams, Andrew Moore (chair from June 2020) and Richard Penberthy

- 3 foundation governors - Rev Marcus Maxwell (retired in October 2019, position since then vacant), Keith Ross and John Hodgkinson
- 1 Local Authority governor – (position vacant for the academic year, but filled for 2020/21)
- 1 Head teacher - Patrick Rayner
- 1 member of staff – Lynne Ingham (until January 2020), Rachel Allen (from January 2020), elected by staff.
- 3 Co-opted - Richard Valentine, Annie Harrison (chair until May 2020, retiring from the board at the end of the academic year) and Peter Smith.
- 2 associate governors – Andy Clerc and Louisa Iqbal

Each of the governor posts has a term of office of 4 years.

The attendance of each governor at board meetings is published on the school website and updated each academic year.

3. What do governors do?

The principle roles of the governing board are to:

1. Ensure the financial stability of the school and that funds are spent appropriately. This involves agreeing budgets and setting financial priorities.
2. Support and challenge the school's senior leadership team. Governors hold the leadership of the school to account to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. This is done through ongoing monitoring and evaluating during visits to the school and reviewing performance data, for example.
3. Ensure that the strategic direction of the school is maintained and implemented. This involves deciding upon aims and objectives around how the school will develop and improve further.

In practice this involves attending 3 termly meetings of the full governing body, one with a resources focus, one with a teaching and learning focus, and one to deal with other business matters. Additional meetings are held if required, which was necessary during this year in response to Covid-19.

In addition we have a steering committee which consists of the Headteacher, the Chair of governors, the Vice chair and development governor. The steering committee meets at the beginning of each term to identify the priorities for the term, identify any deadlines and decide upon the agenda items for each of the 3 full governing body meetings, as well as identifying areas of development for the governing board.

We also have a "presentation to governors" twice a year to review whole school data. The staff present the progress and attainment data of their class to the governors. Governors take part in learning walks around the school and feedback their findings to the rest of the board. Governors also look for opportunities to take part in school life, for example being at school assemblies, concerts, and meet the teacher evenings.

There are also a number of delegated roles which are given to individual governors in line with their knowledge and skills.

The governing board also ensures that their statutory duties are fulfilled.

The governor role has had to adapt through the academic year to respond to the limitations the pandemic has placed on us regularly visiting the school building and meeting together in person.

4. Summary of governance activities 2019/20

Changes to the governing board

There have been a number of changes to the governing Board this year:

- Annie Harrison stood down as chair in May 2020 and retired from the governing board in July 2020.
- Andrew Moore was elected chair in June 2020.
- Lynne Ingham retired from the board in January 2020
- Rachel Allen was elected to the board by staff in January 2020
- Rev Marcus Maxwell retired from the board in October 2019 following him retiring from his role as Rector at St John's church. His foundation governor role shall remain vacant until a new rector is appointed at St John's church.

We still had one vacancy for a Local Authority governor (since filled by Cllr Dena Ryness in October 2020).

Supporting the school through the implications of Covid-19

Governors considered, discussed, and signed off the risk assessment for the gradual reopening of the school in June 2020, and thereafter a further risk assessment in preparation for the full reopening in September 2020. This was undertaken at full governing board and standalone meetings, as required. Governors also adapted their approach to monitoring, evaluation, and supporting the school in response to the pandemic to ensure they could continue as best they could to perform the principle roles as summarised in box 3 above.

e-Safety

All governors have a school email for use for governor duties and business.

Edubase

The data required for the national database has been collected for governors at St John's.

New Build

Governors continued to work with the school, the council and the ESFA to support the school in the completion of a successful new build, opening in September 2019, and thereafter with other infrastructure projects and 'snagging' connected to the build.

Safeguarding

Our Board complies with the requirement for all governors and associate members to have a DBS check. The school have developed a safeguarding team which includes governor representation.

Training and development

Governors have attended training throughout the year provided by Stockport MBC and GOVAS (local governor association). In the latter half of the academic year our focus turned to ongoing training being met online. Training monitoring and skills audits are performed by the development governor.

Attainment and progress of pupils

Throughout the year governors have received detailed information on the progress and attainment of pupils of all ages, to enable them to monitor progress against the standards of the national curriculum. Governors have had both class and subject link roles as set out at box 7 below.

Health and Safety

Regular Health and Safety monitoring and audits were carried out around the school by the health and safety governor prior to the closure of the school in March 2020. The results of those inspections were reported back to the governing board.

The 'Managing Medical Needs' group meets regularly to ensure that the school is abiding by the latest SMBC guidance, that all the staff First Aid training is up-to-date and we are confident in our storage, management and delivery of medication to children as required.

Finance

There have been regular budget monitoring meetings throughout the year to ensure that the school remains financially sound following the rebuild process and the associated costs with continuing to develop the school grounds. There has been an additional focus this year due to loss of income from FABS as well as applying for monies from various funds/grants to support the continued development of the school during the pandemic.

5. What has been challenging this year?

This year has been a story of two halves.

The Autumn term and first Spring half term was very much focused on post-build 'snagging' and further expenditure, including looking for solutions around school gates, for example. The school has a very tight budget and investigations and discussions were required to fully understand whose responsibility it was to meet the costs of work still required. As the school opened there was unfortunately still some ill feeling from a handful of local residents given the relocation of the school within the grounds (and therefore closer to surrounding houses), and disruption caused during the rebuild. Supporting the school with community cohesion was a key focus for the governing board and a community meeting was held with local councillors to answer questions from residents.

In the second half of the year the focus has understandably been on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the support of all students, whether they are continuing to be schooled at home, or returning to school in the final half term. This involved a huge amount of input from all staff and the governing board. The governing board have had to adapt quickly to performing our roles remotely when previously we have been frequent visitors to school.

6. What has been encouraging this year?

The incredible hard work by all members of staff in supporting the post-rebuild process whilst also maintaining high standards of learning and development of the pupils. The focus on themed weeks in the first part of the year, including STEAM week, have been well received.

How quickly and effectively the school was able to resource and implement home learning in the Spring upon closure of the school. The availability of online learning tools and website subscriptions was impressive and as the academic year went on, and in to academic year 2020/21, it is clear to the governing board that the school has a clear understanding and focus on its IT infrastructure to support learning both in the classroom and at home.

The support Mr Middleborough has provided to children who needed additional support with their learning and engagement during lockdown deserves a specific mention.

That our 2020/21 reception children were still able to take part in and enjoy settling in sessions, albeit virtually.

The continued upskilling and training of all teaching assistants to an advanced grade scale in furtherance of higher quality teaching and support to class teachers and ensuring, with the senior leadership team, that classes are covered when required. This has negated all supply teaching costs and ensured children have been taught by adults they know well and vice-versa.

The amazing support of the wider school community in raising funds to support the school's development post rebuild.

The continued development of the forest school area.

7. How else do governors fulfil their role?

The work of the governing board is a collective responsibility. However individual governors have particular areas of responsibility delegated to them. They remain accountable to the governing board for the role they perform and report back to the sub-committees or Full Governing Board meetings.

ST. JOHN'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD STRUCTURE 2019/2020

CHAIRPERSON
Annie Harrison (one year term of office)
VICE-CHAIRPERSON
Keith Ross (one year term of office)
DEVELOPMENT GOVERNOR
Keith Ross

LINK CLASS GOVERNORS	CURRICULUM LINK GOVERNORS	STEERING GROUP
Reception – John Hodgkinson Year 1 – Annie Harrison Year 2 – Andy Moore Year 3 – Lynsey Williams	Art and DT- Lynsey Williams Computing- Richard Penberthy Maths- John Hodgkinson Science – Keith Ross Music - Annie Harrison	Chairperson Vice Chairperson Development Governor Headteacher

Year 4 – Richard Penberthy Year 5 – Keith Ross Year 6 – Richard Valentine	Geography and history - Andy Moore RE & collective worship - Marcus Maxwell PE -Richard Valentine PHSE - Louisa Iqbal LPPA - Lynsey Williams Wellbeing & MFL- Peter Smith	
ATTENDANCE GOVERNOR	SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR	HEALTH AND SAFETY
Keith Ross	Louisa Iqbal	John Hodgkinson
PUPIL PREMIUM GOVERNOR	EDUCATIONAL VISITS GOVERNOR	INCLUSION GOVERNOR
Richard Valentine	Richard Valentine	Annie Harrison
PAY REVIEW	PAY APPEALS	HEADTEACHER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
Keith Ross Richard Penberthy Peter Smith	Annie Harrison John Hodgkinson Andy Moore	Chairperson Vice Chairperson SIA

8. What were the governing board objectives for 2019/20?

1. Ensure the financial stability/income of the school.
2. Continuing to develop governor link roles with emphasis on intent, implementation and impact.
3. To continue to develop community cohesion and collaboration.

9. How were they met?

1. Continuous monitoring, reviewing and approving of budgets and financial plans linked to the school priorities. In the first half of the year our focus was on new sources of income being established to benefit the school, with the focus from March 2021 being on minimising the financial impact of Covid-19 on the school's budgets.
2. Training and support provided by Tom Gadsby on data to allow clear questioning and challenge at board meetings.
3. Engaging closely with local councillors and members of the general public in relation to ill feeling around the school rebuild. This included the holding of a community meeting, chaired by Jon Hodgkinson, at which all governors and local councillors attended to take questions from local neighbours, and to provide a tour of the school.
4. Regular meetings and updates at FGB meetings.

5. Implementation of link governor roles and ensuring that there was ongoing contact between governors and subject leads.

10.Meeting the 3 strategic objectives

10.1 Setting the vision and strategic direction of the school

This year, the Governors have:

- Been part of the annual school vision day which reviews the academic year and agrees objectives for the next.
- Focused on creating a 'One Voice' document for the school with the senior leadership team. This has ensured the curriculum reflects our school, its setting and its community, building on prior knowledge, skills and understanding AND ensuring that school ethos is maintained and developed in the new school building. We have also ensured that the school's core values of, life skills, wider opportunities, Christian values, core standards, and community at the heart of all we do.
- Reviewed a wide range of data and feedback for the school to identify areas of both strength and weakness, and ensured that these are fed into the school development plan.
- Set, reviewed and monitored performance targets for the Head Teacher, and ensured that these link to school improvement.
- Considered and approved a number of new policies and reviewed and updated key existing policies.
- Adapted as necessary to consider and discuss how limitations to learning imposed by Covid-19 could be minimised.
- Had regular meetings with the Inclusion governor and SENDCo to provide updates on special educational needs (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL) children and their progress throughout the school.
- Continued development of Strategic plan with a 3 year focus.

10.2 Holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school

This year, the Governors have:

- Performed regular and detailed analysis of all school data to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses (in particular those raised by Ofsted at the last visit), and actively challenge the Head Teacher to ensure robust systems are in place to address areas of weakness. This has included laser focus on improvement on gender gaps (although lesser of the gender groups always met the national average or above), monitoring the consistent application of maths across the school, as well as greater challenge and writing skills being shown in science, history, geography, and elsewhere in the curriculum.
- A presentation from the School Improvement Partner on the analysing school performance system.
- Actively questioned the Head Teacher on details of the School improvement plan.

- Reviewed and discussion of the school Evaluation Form (SEF), ensuring it is up to date with the new Ofsted framework, and school's strategic plan.
- Been involved in the Head Teacher's annual performance review.
- Taken part in discussions and received feedback on the key priorities set by the school. We have not been able to complete learning walks around the school to look closely at these being carried out in practice but have engaged with teachers virtually to understand more.
- Carried out regular Health and Safety monitoring where permissible.
- Regularly received in-depth information from senior leaders regarding Curriculum and Attainment in the core subjects. This has ensured that the Governors have a clear and broad understanding of the context of their work and helped shape strategic questions and decisions. The focus on class and subject link roles has continued to be built upon.

10.3 Ensuring financial resources are well spent

This year, the Governors have:

- Reviewed documentation in advance of the audit by SMBC of our financial processes and received and noted the audit report.
- Set and monitored a budget which demonstrates spending choices are made in line with school priorities. This continued to be reviewed in response to changes in income and spending for reason of Covid-19.
- Approved financial delegation scheme.
- Reviewed the buybacks from the LA.
- Discussed and investigated alternative funding arrangements and quotes to ensure that the school funded infrastructure that it was required to do so, with Stockport MBC and EFSA meeting those costs they were responsible for.
- Looked at benchmarking data comparing our school expenditure.
- Ensured that all spending is in line with 'best value' principles.
- Ensured the strategic planning for the spending of grants such as the Pupil Premium and PE grant is robust, with a strong focus on the impact for pupil outcomes (reports on school website).
- Reviewed pay recommendations for teaching staff in line with the appraisal and pay policies.

11.Meeting statutory requirements

This year, Governors have:

- Continued to have a specific Safeguarding Governor (associate member) to ensure that all safeguarding responsibilities continue to be met.
- Continued to roll out a robust schedule for monitoring compliance of our statutory duties in respect of policies with link governors completing an initial review.
- Ensured that we continue to have a specific Governor with responsibility for Health & Safety ensure the school is compliant with all requirements.

12. What are the governing board objectives for 2019/20?

1. Ensuring the financial stability of the school when income streams have been impacted upon but still funding ongoing development of the school grounds and ensuring IT infrastructure for remote learning, for example;
2. Continuing to develop the role of the governor in the current pandemic situation, including remote / virtual performance monitoring and engagement with subject leaders, and
3. Continuing to promote community, cohesion and collaboration through profile raising of the board and its role, and continuing to work with range of stakeholders on various aspects of the school development.

13. What are the longer term plans of the Governing Board?

To continue to support the school in completion of various infrastructure and landscaping projects post-build.

To continue to support the school with its strategic plan (2019 – 2022).

We will continue to support the school and its very positive work through continued discharging our various roles and responsibilities in pursuit of an 'outstanding' rating when Ofsted visit St John's. Our next inspection is overdue.

14. For further information

The school website has pages for Governance which include pen portraits of the governors, as well as details of the current GB composition, terms of office, and attendance at meetings. There is a governors notice board in the reception area of the school with names and photos of the governors. Please do stop to talk to any of us if you have any questions or encountering any issues with school life.

In addition, PP report, PE grant report, key policies, school calendar and term dates are also published on the school website.