

Governors' Review 2014 - 2015

This school year was overshadowed by the death of Willow Roberts, one of our Year 2 Lisbon pupils. The whole school community came together to offer prayers for Willow and her family and to offer their support. The school was closed on the day of her funeral as a mark of respect and to allow those who wished to attend the opportunity to do so. An area named Willow Walk has been established in her memory in the school grounds as a place of quiet and reflection for the children.

We attended a Diocesan training session on reconstitution of governing bodies and skills audits for governors last September. All maintained schools have been obliged to reconstitute before September 2015. Reconstitution means the review and agreement of the structure of a school's governing body. The structure of the governing body is recorded in its 'Instrument of Government', agreed by the Foundation Governors and then approved by Diocese and County. Our structure comprises: seven Foundation Governors, appointed by the Bishop; two elected parent governors; one staff governor; headteacher; one local authority governor, appointed by the local authority (so 12 in total). Our new Instrument of Government was duly agreed and then approved by Diocese and County.

We also undertook a skills audit and identified areas for governor development which have been, or are being, addressed.

Governors and staff worked together on school development. The school development committee has regular briefings from subject co-ordinators during the year and this additional face-to-face communication between staff and governors is invaluable. The committee has worked on updating and reviewing policies in line with latest legislation and guidance on good practice. Governors have also been involved with, and briefed on, keeping the SEF up to date.

Performance management continues to work well and positively for all staff at St. Anthony's.

Governors with a particular focus visit and work in school in accordance with our code of practice and Monitoring Policy. Maths, English and IT are good examples. Our SEN and RE Governors maintain close liaison with our INCO (Inclusion Co-ordinator) and RE co-ordinator. Canon Paul is a regular visitor to the Early Years Unit.

During the school year the full Governing Body met three times; the Resources Committee (which deals with Finance, Premises and Personnel matters) met four times; the School Development Committee (which deals with the School Development Plan and curriculum matters) met four times; the Admissions committee met on two occasions to consider Nursery and Reception admissions.

We commenced work on the 'Link Classroom' project to join the St Francis building to the main building. This was completed during the Summer term. Parents were able to see the new classroom during the 'Open Afternoon' on 1st July. Governors were also on hand during the Open Day as parents and children were able to explore the classrooms and layout throughout the school.

A great deal of time and effort has been required to finish and commission the new areas to make them ready for use. We would like to thank the contractors and our premises staff for

their sterling work throughout the project. The Governors also wish to record their thanks to the parents, children and staff for their patience and understanding during the upheaval.

We are continuing to submit bids relating to the condition of the fabric of the school building to the DfE - and are more optimistic of those proposals eventually receiving the priority necessary for funding.

After consultation with parents and assessment of available electronic payment systems St. Anthony's has adopted the SchoolComms ePayment system which has successfully been put into use. Initial feedback has been very positive and we will monitor and promote its use as time goes. This will reduce the administrative burden on the school and provide a modern convenient payment option for parents.

Our admissions policies have been subject to further revision this year in order to: reflect latest legislation and advice on best practice from both Diocese and LEA; clarify and make explicit the way in which the policies are applied. St. Anthony's was again heavily over-subscribed this year for Reception and Nursery. There were no admission appeals. We participated in an admissions co-ordination meeting with local Catholic schools and the Diocese.

We have had meetings with Diocese and County to confirm the boundary between St. Anthony's and its playing areas/pitches and Westfield in preparation for the permanent boundary fencing which is to be erected as part of the Westfield Academy building project.

Our 2015 SATs results and value added were very good indeed and clearly demonstrate the value and progression we add to each and every child as they move through the school. The results are a credit to the children, staff and parents. The results also show, regardless of all the changes to the school; the new curriculum; changed methods of assessment of the children's progress, we continue to successfully prioritise the children's education and development.

Priorities for Governing Body development this year have been the new curriculum, methods of assessment and Finance. We held an in-school INSET training session on Finance and Audit. Governors have also benefitted from various training courses including new governor induction, electronic payments and briefings for chairs and governors. Governors from St. Anthony's attended the 2014 Annual Hertfordshire Governors' Conference (the theme was "Your role in Team Governance - Pupils, Progress, Potential").

The November 2014 financial audit (carried out by County's Internal Audit Service) was successful. We gained a high level of assurance in all areas with a very small number points which merit attention. These are already in hand. The Governors wish to record their thanks to our admin staff for all the effort and preparation which made the audit successful.

Investment in IT has continues to ensure we remain up-to-date and computers replaced on a rolling basis.

Receipt of an excessive water bill triggered an investigation which showed significant underground water loss from our mains supply pipe. Prior to remedial action being taken agreement over boundary and responsibility had to be reached between St Anthony's, HCC (including Highways) and the water company. We then had to replace the supply pipe from

Croxley View to the School Gate. We made a successful insurance claim which minimised the cost to the school. We now closely monitor our water consumption as the meter reading may be the only indication of an underground pipe problem.

The Chair of Governors and Headteacher continue to foster and improve the profile of the school as part of the parish. Children from the school take an active part in a number of parish events and services. A special Ruby Anniversary display was put up in the Percy Road entrance of Holy Rood Church last Autumn. The children also prepared a lovely large Easter display this year for the back wall of Holy Rood church.