

St Anthony's: Governors Review 2019 - 2020

The second half of this school year has been overshadowed by the impact of COVID-19, lockdown and the necessary new working arrangements. St. Anthony's remained open throughout, including weekends and over the Easter holiday, for the children of key workers, where alternative childcare arrangements were not in place, and since 2nd June for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Staff provided regular worksheets and updates for all year groups via the school website. The amount of planning, preparation and dedication to make this possible was immense and the governors would like to express our great thanks to all the staff who have made this work for the children. Planning is already well advanced for a full return to school in September aligned with latest government guidance and advice. The annual update of the School Development Plan is well advanced and will reflect the additional steps and priorities needed to ensure gaps in the children's development are progressively filled. The first priority will be to ensure the wellbeing of the children and staff and provide reassurance and support to children and parents after this unprecedented break in the children's schooling.

As a result of the lockdown some of the governors meetings were held online, using MS Teams. During the overall school year the full Governing Body met four times, two of these were online meetings; the Resources Committee (which deals with Finance, Premises and Personnel matters) met three times, one of these was online; the School Development Committee (which deals with the School Development Plan and curriculum matters) met three times; the Admissions committee held a policy review by email consultation and then met on two occasions to consider Nursery and Reception admissions.

Governors and staff worked together on school development. The school development committee received a significant number of briefings from subject co-ordinators during the year. This additional face-to-face communication between staff and governors is invaluable in keeping us up to date on teaching, learning, assessment and attainment across the curriculum. (Of necessity this interaction has been limited during the last few months.) This is a very important aspect of our strategic and critical friend roles as governors. The committee has also 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, current judgements in our SEF and RE SEF.

Governors with a particular focus visit and work in school in accordance with our code of practice and Monitoring Policy. During the first half of the school year this included Computing, Literacy and Safeguarding. Our SEN and RE Governors maintain close liaison with our INCO (Inclusion Co-ordinator) and RE co-ordinator. Prior to lockdown, Fr. Joseph, our school chaplain, was a regular visitor and celebrated Masses with the children, with the liturgy tailored to suit the occasion and the age range of the children. Parents were also welcomed and attended a number of these celebrations, including class Masses. During lockdown, children in school were able to participate in streamed Masses and celebrations, including a special Mass led by Cardinal Vincent.

We met with our building consultants and submitted a bid for replacement of the school roof. The bid was successful and funding allocated. The tendering process was duly completed and the chosen contractor is due to commence work at the start of the autumn term. We are only able to fund improvements and our contribution to major premises related works such as these due to careful management of the school finances and the continuing generous support

from parents and staff in many ways, including PFA and other fund-raising events. A number of other premises related improvements have been carried out as part of our normal asset management process.

Maintaining the fabric of our school buildings is one of our key responsibilities and we have recently joined the new diocesan asset management scheme.

Our annual compliance return against the Schools Financial Value Standard was completed and returned to County. This is part of the process of demonstrating responsible use of all funding received by the school.

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

Our 2019 SATs results and value added clearly demonstrate the value we add to each and every child, and their progression, as they move through the school. The results are a credit to the children, staff and parents. The results also show that regardless of the various changes to curriculum and methods of assessment of the children's progress, we continue to successfully prioritise the children's education and development. By the end of KS2 our children are significantly above national and county in terms of progress and attainment. We received a letter in January 2020 from Nick Gibbs, Minister of State for School Standards, congratulating Pauline and the school on the very high level of progress children made between KS1 and KS2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The results place St Anthony's amongst the top 3% of primary schools in the country.

Governors have also benefitted from various training courses including new governor induction, Ofsted, safeguarding, effective governance and briefings for chairs and governors. In recent months all training courses and briefings have been delivered online.

Governors from St. Anthony's attended the Annual Hertfordshire Governors' Conferences and Diocesan Conferences in November 2019.

Our admissions policies are reviewed and revised annually. Any changes are subject to consultation with the Diocese, County and, in the event of any significant change, with the local community.

The Chair of Governors and Headteacher continue to foster and improve the profile of the school as part of the parishes we serve. Children from the school take an active part in a number of parish events and services. The children prepare church displays from time to time and spend retreat days at Holy Rood and St Bede's.

Links with St. Joan of Arc, St Michael's and other schools in the Deanery, specifically St. Josephs, and local area continue to work well.

We provide a considerable amount of support to help with their children's transition to school, their learning and behaviour. Up until lockdown we also provided a breakfast and after school club.