

## **Governors' Annual Review 2021-2022**

This school year marked a return to a more normal state of affairs, following the disruption caused by the impact of COVID-19. The return to school was a joyful occasion for all concerned. Our overriding priority is always the safety, education and wellbeing of the children and staff. Our other major priority has been to settle the children back into a normal school routine, assess where they are on their individual educational journeys and take all necessary steps to bring them back on track. The older children have made good progress but it will take a little longer for the EYFS children, whose early development has been most affected by the impact of COVID-19.

The governors' priority has been to ensure that Elaine and the staff have every resource they need to help each child get back on track.

No sooner had the term started when we were notified of an Ofsted inspection. This took place over two days 21<sup>st</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> September. As a result St Anthony's was graded Good in all respects. This was a great achievement and a credit to Elaine, staff, children and governors. The school was last inspected 15 years ago; the framework for inspection has changed considerably over that time, as has the standard required. The inspectors identified a small number of areas where we can further improve what we do. It was re-assuring that these included actions we were already planning and these are now in train, together with responding to the other observations in the report. The inspectors recognised that St Anthony's is a 'vibrant, happy place where children thrive and enjoy learning' and that we have high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour.

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

We had some sad news this year: Eileen Gallagher, one of our Foundation Governors, died in June. Eileen had been a governor for many years and as RE governor had joined the children on many retreats. Her funeral Mass was on 12<sup>th</sup> July and staff and governors were able to attend. Eileen was a great help to the governing body and the school – we will all miss her.

Governors and staff worked together on school development. This included an analysis of the attendance and engagement of children across all groups and categories during lockdown and partial re-opening of the school. This allowed staff to identify children where follow-up action was required. 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.

Governor visits to school have re-started and we are planning specific training for governors on how to realise the best value from visits to school.

Fr Alex has been a regular visitor to the school and celebrated Masses and the sacraments with the children. Fr Alex celebrated the Leavers' Mass with YR6 and parents in July.

Thanks to the generosity of the parents in raising funds we have been able to completely replace the Trim Trail during the summer holiday. Governors greatly appreciate all the support the parents give to the school.

Electronic gates have now been installed and commissioned at the Willow Walk entrance. A new porch and canopies are being fitted to the Early Years Unit which will enhance and shelter the outdoor play area for the younger children.

The school participated in a Diocesan energy management initiative: to reduce energy costs and consumption; to reduce dependency on fossil fuels; to generate a proportion of energy through renewable technologies. Governors took part in a workshop, following an energy audit of the school, and we are looking at our next steps and investment required to make us more carbon neutral and manage our energy costs.

We are only able to fund improvements and our contribution to major premises related works due to careful management of the school finances and the continuing generous support from parents and staff in many ways. 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.

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.

SATs took place this year – the first time since 2019. The results will not be validated until late in the autumn 2022 term, but early indications show a strong performance from the children. This is a credit to the children, staff and parents and shows that we are being successful in helping all the children to fill in the gaps resulting from the pandemic.

Governors have benefitted from various training courses including new governor induction, Ofsted, safeguarding, schools financial value standard, effective governance and briefings for chairs and governors. The majority of training courses and briefings are still being delivered online but some are now face-to-face.

Governors have also joined discussions and meetings on school organisational structures and academies. These will continue during the next school year.

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 schools in our immediate local area continue to work well.

We provide a considerable amount of support to help parents with their children's transition to school, their learning and behaviour.