

# Annual Governance Statement



**2022/2023**



***'Never settle for less than your best'***

**Our school motto**

Never settle for less than your best.

**Our Vision**

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, each member of our community will flourish as resilient, respectful and adaptable individuals prepared for life's journey. Along the way we will encourage and inspire each other to continue growing as beacons of light in our own lives and the wider world.

**Our Mission Statement**

St. George's Central seeks to provide quality education rooted in the Christian faith, serving the spiritual, moral, and educational needs of the community of which it is part.

**Introduction**

At St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery, the governing body recognises the importance of identifying the effectiveness and impact of its governance. The [Governance Handbook](#) defines the three core functions of governance as:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

The governing body also ensures that the school complies fully with statutory safeguarding procedures and works with the safeguarding lead in school to complete an annual safeguarding self-assessment.

The aim of this impact statement is to share the strategic work of the governing body in relation to school improvement and the discharge of statutory duties. The day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the Headteacher and senior leadership team.

**The composition of the governing body**

To comply with statutory requirements ([What maintained schools must publish online](#)) our school website has a page with information about our governance arrangements including our structure, responsibilities and committees and attendance of governors at meetings.

There are currently 2 vacancies on the governing body. We have had no new governors join this academic year. However, governors that were new to the role last year have attended induction training to support them in understanding the strategic nature of the role and the responsibility of challenging and monitoring aspects of school. We would like to record our thanks to those governors who left the governing body during the last year for the contribution and commitment they gave.

**Meetings of the governing body**

The full governing body meets six times a year, once per half term. All meetings are clerked by a trained professional clerk. Both curriculum and financial matters are included within the format of the full governing body. There are committees for Pay and Headteacher Appraisal which meet yearly and have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the governing body. They are also professionally clerked. Committee membership and the committee structure is reviewed at the beginning of each academic year. Governors have good attendance at meetings overall. Apologies for non-attendance are considered on an individual basis and governors are aware through our code of conduct that repeated non-attendance will result in removal from the governing body. Governors are also linked to classes and key curriculum areas. The chair of governors takes responsibility for safeguarding leadership with the Designated Safeguarding Leads within school.

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### The focus of our strategic oversight

The senior leadership team completed a self-evaluation of the school. This took into account SATs results, the school's internal monitoring of pupil progress and attainment, the school curriculum and the most recent Ofsted report. This was reviewed by the governing body and informed our school impact plan for 2022 – 2023 which prioritises the following areas:

- To ensure that the implementation of our curriculum is consistent and the quality of education: meets the needs of all learners, continues to have the expected impact, develops long term learning skills and embeds subject knowledge.
- To ensure that high expectations for positive behaviour and attitudes to learning are in place, through having a consistency of approach that is known by both children and staff and supports high quality, positive relationships.
- To further enhance pupils' character development through provision for mental, physical and SMSC well-being throughout school life including within the curriculum and the community.
- To ensure that leaders have a clear ambitious vision for providing high-quality education for all learners through making use of our excellent facilities and through having consistent, strong, shared values, policies and practices in place to support staff at all levels.
- To promote Communication and Language development in the indoor, outdoor and Forest School environment through purposeful interactions, high quality experiences and all Early Reading teaching.

Additionally, the process as described above has already occurred for 2023 – 2024 and the key priorities for our school impact plan for 2023 – 2024 are as follows:

- To ensure that the implementation of our curriculum is consistent and the quality of education: meets the needs of all learners, continues to have the expected impact, develops long term learning skills and embeds subject knowledge
- To ensure that high expectations for positive behaviour and attitudes to learning are in place, through having a consistency of approach that supports high quality, positive relationships and promotes attendance at school.
- To further enhance pupils' character development through provision for mental, physical and SMSC well-being opportunities throughout school life including within the curriculum and the community.
- To ensure that leaders have a clear ambitious vision for providing high-quality education for all learners through making use of our excellent facilities and through having consistent, strong, shared values, policies and practices in place to support children and staff at all levels.
- To ensure the environment, approaches to teaching & learning and conversations within high quality continuous provision enable children to deepen their knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning.

The work of the governing body includes termly monitoring activities, the purpose of which is to triangulate information provided to governors. This includes monitoring the progress of the school improvement priorities listed above as well as numerous statutory duties, which include safeguarding and provision for pupils with additional needs. In addition to monitoring visits the governing body regularly invites teachers and school leaders to present at meetings so our sources of information are not restricted to the Headteacher. Governors also meet with leaders at all levels at various points throughout the school year to gain updates and feedback about their linked areas which also feed into the monitoring activities that take place. This is reported to the full governing body for further challenge and scrutiny. Our monitoring also takes into account external reports and feedback from stakeholders including pupil, staff and parent surveys.

### The impact of the governing body

Whilst this is not an exhaustive list of our work over the past year, the governing body has worked together in our strategic role on:

**Vision, ethos and strategic direction:** Before making any decision we ensure proposals align with our vision for school, its ethos and strategic direction.

- The governing body recruited a new Deputy Headteacher in March 2023.
- The governing body have regularly reviewed the progress of actions in the School Improvement Plan through monitoring visits and discussion in meetings. We have been delighted with the progress made despite the challenges facing schools nationally and will continue to receive reports from staff leads to determine if actions have had the expected impact.
- The governing body held a development session specifically focusing on the next three years and strengthening its focus around academy status and developing its strategy document.

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- We continue to support school in gathering and acting on feedback from stakeholders. Results from parent and pupil surveys were shared with governors and discussed within meetings.

**Christian distinctiveness:** We have been working with the Headteacher as he continues to lead the school in its core values, embedding these into all aspects of day-to-day school life, and have gathered evidence from our visits to school and attendance at school worships of how the Christian ethos is visible, shared and understood by pupils of all ages.

- Rector Martin and Reverend Cath have been involved with many events throughout the school year both in school and at Church and we are grateful for their involvement and support within these events. The role of Rector Martin as incumbent and ex-officio member of the governing body has been further understood during this year for its unique contribution.

**Pupil attainment:** Pupil attainment is a continuing focus of the body, being directly linked to the priorities in our School Impact Plan, and this has been monitored as part of governor meetings. SATs results for our Year 6 children have improved for spelling, punctuation and grammar and maths with a slight decrease in reading and writing when compared with the previous year. Performance in all areas within Y6 remains ahead of national performance. The attainment of our Y2 children also improved across all areas when compared with the previous year and was broadly in line with national performance.

- The governors received internal assessment data after assessment points during the year. Governors questioned the apparent low percentages of pupils in year 3 making expected progress in maths compared to other years. Governors were satisfied that appropriate interventions were in place to meet the specific needs of this cohort which were identified initially as a result of their performance at the end of KS1.
- 35% of pupils at school are entitled to pupil premium (funding for disadvantaged pupils). A very detailed action plan, which is available on the school website, has ensured the school and pupils are supported to make continued improvements. The governor with responsibility for this area has met with the lead within school on various occasions and the pupil premium leader has also fed back to governors about this area within governor meetings this year.
- Maths – Plans to improve maths performance in Y3 and Y5 were discussed and leaders were questioned over this. Maths training for all staff is booked for the coming year and Maths Recovery based intervention strategies are being utilised within interventions in this area of school.
- Reading - Continuing to improve phonics attainment and develop a love of reading will remain a key improvement priority. Regular updates via the Headteacher report are received from the Phonics and Early Reading Leader. Governors have also agreed to prioritise funding to further support training and resources within this area.
- The link governor for Early Years has met with the Early Years leader and spent time within Early Years on multiple occasions. An external report completed by Wigan Council, after their visit to our Early Years provision, was received and discussed by the governing body and the Early Years leader also gave a presentation to governors about the report and their vision going forwards.
- Termly SEND reports have been presented at meetings providing governors with assurance that provision meets regulations. The governing body have also received copies of the SEND Information Report and the SEND Policy and the Inclusion Leader has also presented updates to the governing body. An external report focusing initially on this area, which was completed by our Consortia Improvement Partner, was also considered by the governing body.
- Governors received a presentation on Forest School and there are plans for governors to be involved with the blessing of the Forest School to mark its official opening.

**Attendance:** Ensuring pupils attend and enjoy school, and feel valued and part of the school community is a priority for the governing body. We have monitored the rates of pupil attendance, recognising this is a national priority, and we are satisfied the procedures in place maximise attendance and thank school for all their hard work in this area.

**Staffing:** Ensuring staff are supported and developed and the staff structure is appropriate to meet the needs of pupils at school is also part of the governing body's work. This year governors were:

- Involved in the appointment of three new class teachers for 2023/2024 academic year.
- Involved in the appointment of the Deputy Headteacher.
- Involved in the appointment of the Pastoral Mentor.

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**Performance management:** Governors are holding the Headteacher and teaching staff to account for their performance.

- Pay progression is directly linked to performance targets. The Pay Committee reviewed the Headteacher's recommendations for pay progression for teaching staff and have overseen the operation of the school's appraisal policy considering the results of appraisals carried out by the Headteacher and agreed appropriate salary progression for eligible staff.
- A panel of governors, who have undertaken training, supported by an expert external advisor, carried out the Headteacher's annual appraisal, which is reviewed at points throughout the year. The appraisal process allowed the governing body to look closely at the Headteacher's performance, identifying areas of strength and areas for development. New targets have been set, linked to school improvement priorities, on which the Headteacher's performance will be evaluated.

**Policies:** Governors have approved policies and procedures and publish statutory policies on the school website.

- To support compliance; all statutory policies are recorded on a review schedule which indicates the date of the last review and next scheduled review. We have audited the school website for assurance that all statutory policies are available and up to date.
- Following governor training and feedback the governing body have reviewed the process around approving policies and this is now more effective.
- Admissions: As a VA school the governing body is responsible for admissions. The admissions policy was revised this year and we worked closely with the Headteacher to ensure that it complied with the admissions code and was accurate. Admissions continue to be an area that we are all focussed on, recognising that our school is a great place to learn.

**Safeguarding:** Safeguarding covers health and safety in the classroom and physical and emotional wellbeing in school, and at home.

- We have regularly monitored processes and procedures to ensure all school staff have been safely recruited; made sure that training of staff is up to date and procedures followed to maintain a safe environment for our children including checks to ensure that volunteers and visitors to the school are suitable.
- The governing body has a specified link lead for safeguarding who liaises with the DSLs within school on a regular basis and reports are fed back to the governing body as part of meetings.
- We reviewed the safeguarding self-assessment completed by school which provided assurance to the governing body of the robustness of systems and procedures, with termly governor monitoring to confirm that procedures are in place and being followed to keep children safe.

**Financial management:** We ensure school funding is spent in the best interests of children and financial management procedure are robust.

- The governing body allocate funding for improvements to school buildings on an ongoing basis in the best interests of the children as well as utilising diocesan funding as appropriate. New furniture has been purchased which supports the development and improvement of the learning environment and learning provision. Any work completed within school is discussed with the governing body and then the link governor checks that it has been completed to a high standard.
- The School Business Manager reports to governors as part of every meeting and reports relating to finance are considered half termly. The governing body has worked closely with the School Business Manager and the Senior Leadership Team to monitor income and costs against the budget which we approved at the start of the year. All this activity ensures that our financial resources have been best utilised for the benefit of pupils. We have carefully reviewed some areas of spend, particularly staffing, and those related to the School Impact Plan and ensure that we remain within budget.
- The governing body have agreed a three year financial plan which incorporates the priorities of the School Impact Plan. The governing body noted the continued challenge on finances due to increasing costs and extends its thanks to the Headteacher and School Business Manager for their continued efforts in reviewing contracts and reducing costs wherever possible.
- Governors reviewed and completed the School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) to provide assurances that school meets the standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. Actions were identified as a result of the audit and are being monitored by the governing body.

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### **Premises, health and safety:**

- Over the course of the year, there have been various changes around school to maintain and improve the overall look and feel of the classrooms and buildings and to ensure a safe learning environment for all. The governing body has worked with the School Business Manager to bring these various projects together, monitoring costs and adherence to health and safety procedures, with no issues identified.
- The report from the annual Health & Safety inspection of the premises has been reviewed and governors are happy with the proposed priorities for maintenance and development, which will be monitored in our governing body meetings.
- Governors have been involved in safeguarding/health and safety spot checks around school.

### **Community work**

- School has been heavily involved in the local community, particularly with supporting local community groups such as For Tyldesley. School also were heavily involved in the creation of the mosaic near to the guided busway.
- We have also been involved with the local nursing home with children visiting the home to promote positive mental well-being.
- School have also taken part in regular litter picks within the community to promote a pride and love for the local area within children.
- As a school we have also supported events within the community involving our school choir such as the Christmas lights switch on.
- We have also supported the Church at various events such as Harvest Festival, Christmas carol services and Mothering Sunday.
- Our work to support the local community is ongoing and is integral to our values as a school and governing body.

### **The effectiveness of the governing body**

The most effective governing bodies have governors with a good mix of skills and experience and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The governing body completed a review of governance in July 2022 facilitated by Governor Support Service, following this the body undertook the annual NGA Skills Audit and in the summer of 2023 consolidated this work into our three year strategy. From this there are four strategic aims:

- To ensure high quality of education is front and centre of the work with our children.
- To develop the governing body in line with the future needs of the school.
- To be an active pastoral participant, particularly with church and our mission in the community.
- To explore school development opportunities in light of national policy direction.

All members of the governing body are committed to their own continued development so they have the knowledge to support school and ask appropriate and informed questions. Individual training needs identified are addressed through in-school development or formal courses. Development undertaken by governors during the last year includes induction training, finance for school governors, Ofsted readiness and pupil premium and diocesan training where relevant. The governing body receives regular updates regarding governor training and development and governors cascade information accordingly.

### **What we plan to do next**

Governance is an annual cycle. Whilst making the improvements to our own effectiveness, as detailed in the section above, the body will review the latest self-assessment and support school in identifying priorities for the year ahead, which the governing body will monitor.

The pupils and staff will remain at the forefront of our decisions as we endeavour to provide the best educational and pastoral environment for them. We will continue to closely monitor the school budget, which is affected by reduced funding and rising costs, to ensure that staffing levels and resources do not suffer and children's learning and development continues to be of the highest standard.

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