

Introduction:

In July 2023, St. Michaels Governing Board (hereinafter 'the board') consisted of ten governors. They were:

- Jenny Jones (headteacher) and Alan Jenner (chair of the governing board)
- Kevin Davies and Kevin Walters (parent governors); Isabel Berry and Alwyn Pereria (foundation governors); Rachel Woodhouse (staff governor); Lucy Purdy, Gareth Morgan and Jonathan Porter (co-opted governors)

The board decided not to set up any committees during the year, apart from the statutory headteacher's performance management and pay committees. Instead, the full governing board met eight times in total.

During 2022-23 the board carried out its three statutory core functions with enthusiasm, diligence and no little skill. These functions are to:

1. Work strategically with the headteacher and other senior leaders to set the educational direction of the school;
2. Hold the headteacher to account for improving the educational performance of the school;
3. Ensure the school's finances are well-managed and its money is well spent.

Governors also took on link roles. These included governors monitoring how pupil premium money is spent and what provision is being made for specific groups such as pupils with special educational needs and English as not their first language. Governors have reviewed the impact of the new behaviour policy and monitored closely the attendance of pupils. Governors have also looked at how learning about different cultures is part of the curriculum and how the school supports children to be more independent, resilient and develop greater confidence.

The Successes:

The most important achievement last year was that the school was externally inspected by both Ofsted and SIAMS. Both agencies judged the school to be *good*. These external validations have already had a positive impact on the school roll. Two year groups are full, Years 4 and 5, and, indeed, there is a waiting list for both.

The governing board has had a successful year too. Its main achievements are as follows:

1. **Worked strategically with school leaders.** Examples of this include:
 - Helping to formulate then regularly monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school improvement plan;
 - Agreeing the school's vision (*Be the very best we can be*) and values (*respect, courage and resilience*). Governors reviewed these three values and considered that they are reflected well in our practice;

- Reviewed our duties under the Equalities Act and will appoint a link governor for diversity, equality and inclusion;
 - Carrying out our statutory duties efficiently. These include: appraising the headteacher's performance; ensuring all policies and practices around safeguarding are regularly reviewed;
 - Reviewing and updating regularly, where necessary, all other school policies.
2. **Held the headteacher to account** by regularly and consistently having discussions about key aspects of the school's work and thereby asking questions that seek clarification but importantly also to challenge. The board has also made some decisions. This year these have included:
- Ensuring all meetings focus on what leaders are doing to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that all children are on track to meet if not exceed national standards;
 - Encouraging the senior leaders to develop a broad, rich curriculum, accessible to all pupils but which also expands, excites and stimulates;
 - Changing the school uniform;
 - Challenging the school's self-evaluation of itself;
 - Triangulating what governors are told and have read by carrying out termly monitoring visits focusing on the key priorities in the school improvement plan.
 - Additionally, link governors have also monitored other key aspects of the school such as safeguarding, health and safety of the site and the school's budget.
3. **Ensured the financial probity of the school:**
- Monitored regularly the monthly budget forecasts to ensure spending is in line with forecasts;
 - Have examined key financial management information, data and reports.
4. **Worked Together Effectively:**
- The full governing board met eight times during the year. In this way, all governors are familiar with all the work of the board;
 - We updated our induction processes for new governors by allocating a mentor for each governor;
 - At every governing board meeting, we contribute actively to discussions, ask questions and challenge routine practices;
 - Governors develop their skills and increase their knowledge by attending training. All new governors this year have attended the induction training organised by the local authority; all governors updated their knowledge of how to use data when monitoring aspects of the school;
 - The board has also evaluated its practice and impact. Every meeting concludes with members reflecting on what has worked well and what could be better next time.

Next Steps

The governing board is responsible for setting the school's vision and the strategy to achieve that vision. What will St Michael's Junior School look like in three years' time. The intention for 2023-24 will be:

- The areas of focus for the coming year will be: raising attainment for all pupils; increasing the levels of attendance for both pupils and staff; and engaging more effectively with the school's community to increase participation, attendance and attainment;
- The governing board is constantly mindful of the many and various contextual challenges, both local and national, which are relevant to the future of the school. The main challenge is financial for expenditure is forever increasing. The school is always looking to ensure that we get good value for money.
- The governing board firmly believes that parents can work closely in partnership with the school and can support it to achieve its strategic aims. The board will conduct surveys of the pupils, staff and parents/carers to ascertain what the community thinks of the school and how it might improve.
- As well as being supportive, the governing board is committed to asking challenging questions of school leaders. It believes that it needs to develop further its ability to have those courageous conversations in the interests of the children.
- The governing board is also keen to build networks with other schools and boards to share good practice.

Finally, if parents would like to provide feedback to the governing board then please contact the Chair by completing the form on our website (below this document)

Alan Jenner
Chair of Governors
November 2023