

Annual Governance Statement 2019 - 2020

for the Governing Board of St Mary's (Endowed) CE VA Primary School

'At St Mary's we take care of each other, aim high, enjoy learning and achieve success within the family of a church school.'

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing boards, the 3 core strategic functions of St Mary's governing board are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction,
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils,
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance arrangements:

The Governing Board of St Mary's is made up of 2 staff governors (including the Headteacher) 2 Parent Governors, 1 local authority, and 7 Foundation Governors. During the year Mrs Morison and Rev Janet Frymann have come to the end of their terms of office and we thank them for their contributions. We have welcomed 3 new governors: Mrs Louise Skillman - Local Authority Governor, Mrs Alex Hannah – Parent Governor and Mrs Lizzie Searjeant – Staff Governor.

The full Governing Board plans to meet twice per term and we also have committees to consider different aspects of the school in more detail and report back to the full Governing Body: Teaching and Learning, Finance and Personnel and Learning Environment (including Health & Safety). In September we formed an additional committee, Ethos and Community, to focus on the ways that the school's Christian values are at the heart of all that happens at St Mary's. Early in the year we continued our discussion about what makes St Mary's special and you may have noticed the three words which we agreed summed up the St Mary's approach to learning and life – Encourage, Aspire and Flourish. We also have working groups as required. Minutes of the Governing Board are public documents. Once they have been agreed and signed you can find them on the website or you can ask at the school office.

This year there has not been the annual questionnaire but Governors have noted the appreciative comments made by parents/carers during the lockdown.

The number on roll has continued to rise, anticipated to be 91 in September, as the school continues to be a popular choice for Roughton parents and others in the local area.

Attendance Record of Governors.

The board has a good attendance record – details on the school web-site.

The national lockdown in March and closure of the school for most children has had a big impact on everyone - friendships have been interrupted, activities and special whole school occasions enjoyed by the school community have ceased and learning has been a very different experience. The innovative ways that staff have kept in touch with pupils and parents and promoted a sense of community as well as learning, have been impressive. From the beginning of lockdown until June the school remained open for key groups of children and since May, Miss Jackson and the whole staff team have worked tirelessly to enable as many pupils as possible to return safely to school. It is good that at the end of this term there are a total of 43 pupils attending. During this time Full Board meetings, Teaching and Learning, and Finance and Personnel Committees have been conducted via Zoom. On these occasions, as well as in weekly conversations with Miss Jackson, staff and pupils' wellbeing has been an important aspect of our discussions.

Teaching and Learning Committee

For the first half of the year we looked in detail at the wider curriculum including the ways in which St Mary's is special in the opportunities that pupils have to learn, to develop socially and contribute to school life in short to Encourage, Aspire and Flourish. Since the break in our regular meetings, Governors have gained an insight into the life of the school and monitored its work through zoom meetings and looking particularly at the class sections on school website.

For the first half of the year we considered pupil attendance figures half-termly and were pleased to note that there was an improvement until lockdown. Thank you for recognising the importance of high attendance and helping the school to meet the Local Authority and Ofsted expectation.

Finance and Personnel Committee has continued to monitor the effect of the fourth class – this year with two teachers sharing the responsibility as Miss Jackson has had responsibility for Happisburgh school as well as St Mary's. The fourth class has continued to be beneficial and vital to all pupils as our numbers have increased over the year, despite the practical difficulties of classroom size. Just like the children, the staff and parents, we were all most disappointed when the new classroom was delayed. Together with the Learning Environment committee we have considered proposals and financial implications for the future development of the school site.

Learning Environment Committee has looked at ways in which the buildings and the outdoor environment contribute to our overall aims, and phases 1 & 2 of the planned internal decoration should be completed during the Summer holiday. Our Health & Safety Governor carries out random checks as well as regular checks of internal and external safety. We have a nominated Governor for Safeguarding.

Ethos and Community Committee began with an informative learning walk to see how clearly the school Christian values are evident in its daily life.

School Community

We recognise the continued involvement of the Robert Brown Trust and its commitment to supporting the school. We also value tremendously the contribution of The Friends: their sustained involvement in the life of the school through the events which they organise. Their very successful fund raising contributes greatly to a variety of learning opportunities for our children and is very much appreciated. Collective Worship has been enhanced by the Open the Book team for the first half of the year. Sincere thanks to all of these groups.

We would also like to thank parents, family members and carers for all the help and support so readily given to all our children at the various school activities throughout the year, and, particularly during lockdown, in assisting with their communication with school, their friends and their learning.

Governors believe there is a great staff team and numerous volunteers at the school, superbly led by our Headteacher Miss Jackson, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their hard work and dedication throughout this particularly challenging year.

Future plans

It was a very special day when at last work began on the new building which will not only be a fully equipped classroom but also has additional storage – I'm sure you will agree this is currently quite a challenge as our number on roll increases. The new classroom will release a much needed small-group and meeting area and Special Needs base which we will be equipping appropriately.

The trim trail and outdoor play area, much enjoyed by many children over a number of years, had to be removed for the new building but we will be installing a new trim trail and equipment. In the Autumn the children will be able to help in planning this new play area.

The formal partnership with Happisburgh School has developed despite this difficult year and governors have agreed that it should continue for a further year. Although it has not been possible for the children of both schools to work together, staff have been able to share planning and St Mary's has benefited from Mrs Adams and her specific commitment to Special Educational Needs & Disabilities and Mrs Mejri as a part time class teacher.

During the year we have continued to think about the bigger project to improve the safety and security of the access to the school and the limitations imposed by the size of the hall, but priority has been given to the new classroom.

How you can contact the governing board

We welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents - please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office. You can see a full list of governors, minutes of meetings and more information on the governors' page of the school website.

Thank you for your continued support for St Mary's and I do wish everyone an enjoyable summer break.



Chair of Governors