



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Governors' Annual Report 2014-15



Introduction

As governors we are answerable to pupils, parents and carers for St Joseph's for all aspects of its life and work. We believe that achievement embraces spiritual, social and personal development as well as academic learning. Our first duty therefore is to ensure that there is a clear, school-wide focus on all of these aspects of our pupils' learning. Our continuing goals are to:

- develop and maintain a well led, enthusiastic, professionally competent and motivated staff team
- provide a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment in which pupils can grow personally and succeed educationally
- support the school's leaders and managers in their commitment to the pupils' welfare and to providing opportunities for them to experience pleasure and success in learning;
- review regularly our own work and contribution to the school so that we can be as effective as possible
- be judged outstanding by Ofsted

A Growing School

In the school year 2014 – 2015 St Joseph's has continued to expand and by the end of the next school year we expect there will be just short of 200 pupils here. New classrooms built for the expansion are increasingly in use. After three years of temporary appointments a new permanent Deputy Headteacher has been appointed. Increasing pupil numbers mean that new staffing arrangements need to be put in place annually so that parents and carers can continue to have confidence that their children's needs are being appropriately provided for. In 2014- 15 this involved creating an extra 'morning only class' so that children could be taught in smaller groups for Maths and English. It is essential that parents and carers have confidence in the school and we would encourage you to get in touch with us if ever you have a concern

School Improvement Goals

Every year we agree with the Headteacher and staff areas that we judge need to be further strengthened and establish an action plan for the year, detailing how these priority areas are to be addressed. For 2014 – 2015 these were:

- to maintain a school-wide commitment to St Joseph's as a Catholic community where everyone is equally valued
- to improve all pupils' achievement in Mathematics
- to improve all pupils' achievement in English, especially Writing
- to develop new whole-school approach to marking, so that pupils have consistently good feedback on their work and a clear understanding of how to make further progress
- to make good use of information gained from pupil assessment, so that their progress is monitored accurately and appropriate next steps are planned for each child
- to provide good teaching of computing skills

Outcomes

- Greater pupil involvement in leading worship has been a feature this year. Parents and members of the local community have attended our special liturgies where pupils take leading roles, such as during Holy Week, and say how much they appreciate them.
- Pupil achievement in Mathematics improved on the previous year. In Key Stage 1 5% more of our children achieved the desired level 2b+ than children nationally. Our Average Points score for this age group improved by 0.2 on the previous year but is still considerably below the national average figure. In Key Stage 2 we were 5% less than the national figure for achieving level 4 but our Average Points Score improved by 0.5 from the previous year and was 0.8 above the national average. Our Value Added score for maths improved from 99.0 to 99.9. 94 % of children made at least expected progress in maths as opposed to 70% the previous year.
- Pupil achievement in English also showed signs of improvement with our percentage of level 2b+ being better than the national figure in both reading and writing. Our Average Points Score in reading improved by 0.7 points and in writing by 1.4 points. Both of these scores are still below national averages. In Key Stage 2 Average Points Score dropped in reading by 0.5 and in writing by 0.1. However our Value Added score in both of these areas increased by 0.5. In writing our percentage of children making at least two levels of progress increased from 80% to 88% but in reading the percentage dropped from 90% to 88%. In both reading and writing we were below the national percentage of children achieving level 4 by 1% and 10% respectively.
- A new marking policy is in place and governors and school leaders have monitored its use; all teachers use the system consistently. As a result, pupils know where they have been successful and how to improve where they have been less successful.
- We have invested in a new IT system to enable pupils' progress to be tracked accurately. All staff have been trained in its use. Teachers and governors are now able to see on a half-termly basis how individual pupils and groups of pupils are progressing. This enables better planning for the next steps in learning.
- The IT technician's role has been reshaped to concentrate on computing in the classroom. We have invested in Chrome Books for pupils to use in the classroom and governors have seen how confidently even the youngest pupils are able to use these.

How do governors know about the progress made?

Governors monitor work on all the agreed priorities in a range of ways. These include: requiring and receiving written progress reports and/or presentations from the Headteacher and teachers at every governors meeting; rigorous questioning; close analysis of in-school and government data showing how our pupils are achieving, including comparisons with other schools in Plymouth and all schools nationally; specifying action to be taken if a concern is identified; making additional funding available where necessary.

The priority areas for 2015 – 2016

These will include:

- reviewing and evaluating the school as a catholic community in preparation for the diocesan inspection
- leadership and management - development of the governing body, the new leadership team and new subject lead teachers
- guided reading in Key Stages 1 and 2
- mathematics - continued improvement through improving basic number skills and their application
- Writing – continued improvement through consistent application of Read Write Inc and Talk for Writing strategies
- embed expectations and processes for teaching and learning through the document “ The St Joseph’s Way”
- assessment – consolidate the use of Target Tracker to ensure that assessment informs planning for future learning

Governor Visits

Governors have visited the school throughout the year. Some are link governors for particular subject areas and after each visit they write a report for the next meeting. All of us take part in periodic ‘learning walks’, seeing the school in action, with a focus on a particular aspect. This year we have focused on assessment, teacher appraisal and school trips. Governors helped staff to develop an agreed vision by joining them for an INSET day in September. In addition to these visits, all governors spent a day in school in July, part of which was spent visiting classrooms and observing at first hand the children’s enjoyment, the work in their books, the good relationships in the classroom and the quality of the learning environment.

Data Analysis

School data about pupil progress is a prominent feature of every governors’ meeting. We ask detailed questions about what the data tells us; our questions and the answers are recorded in the minutes of the meeting. We also spend a lot of time looking at the annual Ofsted analysis of our pupils’ progress which enables us to identify strengths, areas for improvement and groups of pupils who may be doing less well than others. It also enables us to know how the progress and attainment of St Joseph’s pupils compares with other Plymouth schools and schools nation-wide. Working on the data in this ways helps us to establish high expectations of teachers and pupils and to clarify our improvement priorities.

School Policies

Governors review, update and approve the required school policies on a regular cycle, making sure that all policies comply with Department for Education requirements and that they also reflect St Joseph’s Catholic ethos of ensuring justice, fairness and equality for all.

Financial Management

School finances are reviewed at every meeting to ensure that spending remains in budget and that value for money is achieved. Governors spending priorities in the year 2014 – 2015 included:

- employment of additional teaching and learning support staff
- provision of new resources for the teaching and learning of writing and mathematics
- funding the secondment of an experienced Deputy Headteacher from another school to support school leadership and management, pending the appointment of a permanent Deputy Headteacher
- budgeting for the new permanent post of Deputy Headteacher

Staff Recruitment

The Headteacher and one governor are trained in safer recruitment.

Governors are involved in the recruitment and selection of all staff and ensure that high quality staff who share St Joseph's Mission Statement are appointed. All governors participated in the day-long process for the appointment of the Deputy Headteacher.

Governors' Meetings

During 2014 – 2015 the governing body consisted of 9 members, including the Headteacher and staff governors. There were six meetings of the full governing body during the year as well as four others for each of the two committees. Most of our governors have family and work commitments but despite this, attendance was generally good. All absences are recorded, explained and approved by the governing body.

Developing Governance

I. In addition to meetings, governors attended training sessions on the following topics:

- Safeguarding of children
- Ofsted for new governors
- Getting to Good
- Headteacher appraisal
- Understanding data
- Budget planning
- New governor induction
- Working with parents
- Safe recruitment
- Ofsted – new inspection framework
- Introduction to child protection
- Health and safety risk assessment

2. In April we commissioned an external review of how we work as a governing body and as a result of this have revised both our work structure and our meetings schedule. We are a small governing body and having 5 or 6 full meetings a year, plus at least a further 6 committee meetings focusing on either pupils and standards or finances and premises was proving unsustainable. So this academic year we have moved away from committees, having instead 9 full meetings covering all aspects of the school.
3. In July we spent a day in school self-evaluating our own work. This led to us identifying areas in which we felt we could be more effective, which included:
 - building better links with parents and pupils
 - improving our monitoring of standards by further developing the role of link governor
 - having a development plan for governance, to ensure that we meet our responsibilities as effectively as possible
 - improving the school website as a communication channel

These have been incorporated into a governors' action plan and progress is reviewed at every meeting.

What impact have we had?

- We have challenged the school to account through our visits and questioning
- We have monitored pupil progress closely
- By recognising our own training and development needs, we have increased our effectiveness
- We have made money available for important improvements in staffing and the curriculum
- We are a visible presence in the school
- We have ensured that the school meets all requirements in relation to safeguarding of children
- We have formed good relationships with the CAST Multi-Academy Trust officers to mutually enable improvements to occur
- We have formed the majority on the Enhanced Monitoring Group. This is a group organised by CAST in schools who are vulnerable to an Ofsted judgement of less than good. The group analyses in detail the impact of planned improvements.
- We have offered support and challenge to individual members of staff through our link roles
- We have contributed to the identification of school development priorities and to core documents such as school policies and the School as a Catholic Community Self Evaluation Form

Conclusion

The staff and pupils make St Joseph's a warm and happy community. We would like to thank all staff for their dedication and hard work, which governors see on a regular basis.

If you have any queries or comments about this annual report, please contact the Chair of Governors at the school. We would like to remind parents and carers that the minutes of governors meetings are published on this website and also available in the school office.