



Chair of Governors: Anne-Marie  
Eden

## **GOVERNORS' IMPACT STATEMENT 2020 - 2021**

The community of St Teresa's strives to be a clear witness to the Gospel message, and to root all aspects of school life into the teachings of Jesus Christ. The beautiful depth of our Catholic faith shines through the academic and personal achievements of our staff and students. As a Governing Body, we are deeply proud of the way our school lives out its Catholic faith, and this same faith also underpins every aspect of our work as Governors.

We have legal rights and responsibilities to ensure that we safeguard and promote the Catholic character of the school. Six of our nine governors are directly appointed by the Bishop and are charged with ensuring that the school serves as a witness to the Catholic faith. We work to ensure excellence, helping the school to build a foundation for its pupils that will enable them to meet their potential now and in the future.

School governors are often described as 'unsung heroes' including by Government ministers. Although our work is largely hidden from view, we work tirelessly for our community. This statement highlights some of the work we have achieved during 2020 – 21, which will forever be remembered as the year of lockdowns.

### **Introduction**

The Department for Education sets out three core functions of the Local Governing Board:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. Hold executive leaders to account for the school's educational performance and the performance management of its staff.
3. Oversee the school's financial performance, ensuring money is well spent.

The Board has fulfilled all three core functions during this academic year. The impact of the Board can be measured against six core principles that must be in evidence through the work of the whole Board, and through individual Governors.

**Strategic Leadership** – Governors support the future direction of the school, ensuring its culture, values and ethos remain strong. Governors make decisions and strategically manage risks to support the operational work of the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Board must ensure that work is collaborative with all stakeholders of the school community.

The strategic impact of the Board was significantly impacted by Covid implications during 2020 - 21. The Board held extraordinary meetings as required alongside its usual calendar, to make decisions and manage the risks associated with lockdowns, online learning and reopening the school. Governors regularly received risk assessments, updates and plans to understand how families and staff were being supported, and to ensure the success of online learning.

The school's post-Covid response was another area that needed focus. To support the children who had been worst affected by the pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, the Board approved the proposal for the next academic year. This created two new classes for years three and four, introducing smaller class sizes that allow greater support for these children. The Board also supported the proposal to create a new Foundation Unit to address the social, emotional and academic needs of our youngest students.

The second significant project undertaken by the Board was a detailed review of the school's Published Admission Number (the number of children who can be accepted per year). This review was undertaken in the light of a local situation with increasing primary provision and decreasing birth rates resulting in unfilled spaces. This piece of work is ongoing and has been carried over into the next academic year.

Throughout the year the Headteacher has presented regular Headteacher's reports to the Board, alongside regular reports from the SEN lead, Safeguarding lead and all subject leads. These have enabled the Board to deliver against their core responsibilities whilst maintaining a 'whole school' picture.

**Accountability** – *Through its sub-committees, the Board rigorously analyses educational and financial data to monitor performance. The Board holds the SLT accountable in identifying trends or areas of concern, and ensures that proportionate interventions are in place to mitigate any concerns.*

This year, the **Curriculum & Standards committee** concentrated on data about students' academic and social progress, working to mitigate the impact of lockdowns upon progress. Governors received regular updates about the interventions and support being provided to students, all of which produced positive results.

The **Finance & Premises committee** made financial decisions and oversaw the school's situation during a very challenging year. With the introduction of a robust new Health & Safety report, the nominated Governor worked with the relevant staff members to ensure that all identified issues were rectified by the school.

The **HR & Strategy committee** supported the changes required for lockdown and online learning, including reopening the school into 'bubbles' and staff members having to isolate. The school also had a number of staff leaving and this committee supported the Headteacher to ensure that appropriate staffing levels were in place for academic year 2021 - 22.

The **Admissions committee** ensured that the school had followed correct procedures around the offering of school places.

**People** – *The Board must oversee and guide team effectiveness, firstly among individual Governors, and secondly within the school's SLT. Governors are involved in the Headteacher's appraisal and monitoring SLT performance.*

This year, we welcomed four new Governors; two elected Parent Governors and two Foundation Governors. The expertise and support they bring has been very valuable. Although we were not able to access any training as a Board due to Covid restrictions, some training has been booked for the next academic year.

**Structure** – *Governors must have clearly articulated roles and responsibilities. Each Governor must sit on the full board and at least one sub-committee. Nominated Governor roles exist to govern particular areas including RE, IT, Special Educational Needs, Safeguarding and Health & Safety.*

The Board has a clearly articulated structure, and each Governor sits on at least one sub-committee based upon their area of expertise and experience. Nominated Governors were identified following the appointment of the new Governors, and all have provided valuable support to the school in their particular areas.

**Compliance** – There are numerous statutory and contractual requirements that the Board is required to fulfil. Furthermore, the Board must ensure the school fulfil the legislative and statutory requirements placed upon them.

A new Clerk was successfully appointed in June 2020 to support the Board. We have worked hard to approve policies, and through the rigorous analysis highlighted above, we have ensured we remain compliant in all areas. The work of our Nominated Governors is particularly important in making sure we fulfil compliance requirements, and Governors have been supporting the school to prepare for an anticipated Diocesan RE Inspection.

**Evaluation** – Monitoring the Board's effectiveness is a key element of good governance. Each Governor is responsible for reflecting on their contribution and for keeping their training and knowledge up to date. This evaluation and reflection helps the Board to remain as efficient as possible, supporting a school that values and nurtures its pupils.

This year, Covid has prevented training from taking place, and has required the Board's focus to remain on the changing situations. Although Governors have reflected on their work individually, the Board was not able to formally dedicate time to reflection and evaluation. This will be a point of focus in the upcoming year.

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## **Reports from Our Governors**

### **Foundation Governor Anne-Marie Eden (LGB Chair)**

*Chair – HR & Strategy committee, Curriculum & Standards committee,  
Finance & Premises committee  
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding*

I have been a Foundation Governor for five years, more recently taking on the role as LGB chair in February 2020. As Chair I am expected to give clear direction to the governing body to ensure we work as a team to challenge, support and contribute to the strategic leadership of St. Teresa's. The last year has seen unprecedented challenges for the school due to the Covid pandemic however as a new governing body we have adapted well to the challenges, I have worked alongside the SLT in particular our Headteacher Mrs Peters to support her and her team during these challenging times.

I chair the HR & Strategy committee, the role of this committee is to ensure compliance with employment legislation, HR policies including, recruitment, staff development and appraisals and also to ensure the retention of a strong Catholic ethos. I also sit on the other sub committees as I believe it is important to have a comprehensive overview of the vision, performance and management of St. Teresa's.

Finally, for a number of years I have been the governor responsible for Safeguarding children, this requires me to play an essential role in ensuring children are kept safe from harm. My role is to ensure the Safeguarding agenda and culture is embedded in the ethos of our school. To carry this out effectively I work closely with the Designated Safeguarding lead, meeting regularly and providing updates to the Curriculum and Standards committee.

**Foundation Governor: Fiona Hayward (LGB Vice-Chair)**

*Chair – Admissions committee, Curriculum & Standards committee*

I am a Foundation Governor and Vice-Chair with responsibility for the Admissions Committee. As Admissions Governor I lead a small team that focuses on our Published Admissions Number (the number of available spaces we have in Reception each school year), Marketing with a focus on our Catholic Ethos, and support of our Parent Open days. Our Catholic Ethos is very important to me so I complete a number of Ethos walks in the school every year.

I also sit on the Curriculum and Standards committee where we work with the Headteacher to monitor and evolve our learning focus areas within school, including Reading, Writing, Maths and Phonics.

In my capacity as Vice Chair, I get involved in many tasks in the school for instance reviewing Risk Assessments and our Covid Contingency Plans. I also manage and analyse the pupil and staff questionnaires with future responsibility for Parent Questionnaires. I spend time in school doing Pupil conferencing to ensure the Mental Health and well-being of our pupils is strong during these tough times. I recently completed Exit Interviews with our exiting teachers with the objective of ensuring all learnings are adapted so we are continually striving to grow and develop our school. I also support the school where possible to help improve Parent Communication, we are always striving for improvements.

**Foundation Governor: Anne-Louise Doe**

*Chair – Finance & Premises committee, HR & Strategy committee*

The last two years have been particularly challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result, the Governing Body has had to adapt to new ways of working in order to fulfil their responsibilities.

This has made visiting and spending time in the school somewhat challenging, but with the use of online resources, it has still been possible to remotely attend all Governing Body and Committee meetings.

As Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee, I work closely with the School Business Manager, with regular reviews of the finances, agreeing the annual budget and ensuring it supports the School Development plan – specifically the resources dedicated to raising standards and meeting the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve. A recent example of this is a review of finances to support a key strategic decision to create an additional Key Stage 2 classroom in order to better support Years 3 and 4 in their return to school following lockdown.

I also sit on the HR & Strategy Committee, which enables me to keep track of resources and therefore be able to support key decisions on staffing – for example the recent appointment of a member of the SLT to take on the role of staff training, which directly feeds into one of the objectives in the School Development Plan regarding the development of Subject Leaders.

**Foundation Governor: Brian Finnegan**

*Chair – Curriculum & Standards*

*Nominated Governor for RE*

I have been a Foundation Governor for approximately one year and a co-opted governor for around two years previously to this. As a Foundation Governor, I have been appointed Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee. In this important role, I have led the vital meetings that take place to support and constructively question the Headteacher and other senior members of staff on areas such as the curriculum, teaching and interventions following assessments and data drops. The aim of these conversations is to help support the students who require it most and to aid the Senior Leadership Team in areas such as the development of Subject Leaders and the strategies being put in place to improve writing across the school. I am fortunate to be able to draw on my professional experience as a Deputy Headteacher of a Catholic secondary school to help me in this role.

As RE Governor, I have been able to support the school with both the RE curriculum and wider Catholic life of the school. As our Diocesan Inspection moves ever closer, I will be involved in our committee preparing for a 'Section 48' RE Inspection, and will help shape preparations and areas for development with worship, faith in action and RE teaching. My experience as a Westminster Diocesan Inspector has and will continue to help me and with this role.

As a Governor in the wider sense, I am always ready and willing to support the Chair and Headteacher in any way I can. An example of this was when staff and students at St Teresa's were returning to on site education after lockdown. As I was leading the Health and Safety preparations and support for staff at my own school, I was able to help the Headteacher with aspects of this at St Teresa's.

**Foundation Governor: Nickson Nwahiri**

*Finance & Premises committee, HR & Strategy committee  
Nominated Governor for Health & Safety*

As Health and Safety Governor, it is my primary responsibility to ensure that the whole school (including the entire school premises) is safe, and that all staff and pupils feel safe whenever they are on the school premises. I am able to do this by working closely with the Head Teacher and the school Business Manager by carrying out onsite school Health and Safety inspection visits each term. During the inspection visit, I inspect the whole school premises and review the Health and Safety visit checklist with the school Business Manager. I also make notes of potential Health and Safety issues observed or reported during the visit and discuss plans to mitigate them.

In addition to my role as Health and Safety Governor, I also sit on the Finance and Premises committee as a committee member. The role of Health and Safety Governor falls under the Finance and Premises committee. During these meetings, I present the Health and Safety inspection visit reports, and also discuss potential Health and Safety concerns. I also sit on the HR and Strategy committee. During the HR and Strategy committee meetings, I contribute towards the agenda of the committee meetings.

**Staff Governor: Caroline Robins**

*Admissions committee, Curriculum & Standards committee*

I have been a staff governor for two terms and a member of the Curriculum and Standards committee throughout my time.

Within the Curriculum and Standards Committee we analyse the data and ensure that all children reach their maximum potential within the school. I have been privileged to be able to assist within the school by reading on a weekly basis with individual children to help support their reading and see their progress over the year.

Within my staff governor role, I ensure that the staff are represented at meetings and oversee the annual staff questionnaire and follow up any feedback.

As part of the Admissions committee, I have been involved in the review of the Published Admission Number and looking at the marketing for the school. I am also involved with the Open Days and school tours within the school.

As a member of staff at school on a day-to-day basis I am able to support and assist the Head Teacher and leadership team in whichever way I can.

**Parent Governor: Matthew Sullivan**

*Curriculum & Standards committee  
Nominated Governor for Special Educational Needs*

I have been a governor at St. Teresa's for just over one year, and this is my first experience as a school Governor. It has been a frustrating year due to COVID as I have not been able to get into the school as much as I would have liked.

At the end of the Summer term, I conducted exit interviews with departing staff, consolidated their feedback and reported to the head teacher and Chair. I have read and understood all relevant policy documents and attend all Local Governing Body committee meetings. As a member of the Curriculum & Standards committee I attend all committee meetings, using my professional consultative experience to analyse data and Headteacher reports, asking relevant questions as appropriate.

As the nominated Governor for Special Educational Needs, I am expected to ensure SEN remains a critical part of the broader LGB focus and embedded within the school values and ethos. As lockdown restrictions

have eased, I have started getting into school on a regular basis, having face to face meetings with the SENCo and SEN team, observing interventions and spending time with the staff and pupils.

**Foundation Governor: Canon Simon Thomson**

*Parish Priest of Corpus Christi; School Chaplain; HR and Strategy Committee*

For eighteen of my twenty-three years as a parish priest, I have served as a Foundation Governor in both Primary and Secondary Catholic schools. I have always considered my chief role to be that of close liaison between the parish and the school community alongside my obligation as a Foundation Governor to uphold the Catholic ethos of the school and to oversee the highest standards of education and human and spiritual development. I have also made it a priority to develop a good working relationship with the Headteacher in all the schools where I have been a Foundation Governor and certainly in the case of all the Primary Schools where I have been the Chaplain to the school as well as Parish Priest.

Throughout the first year of the pandemic like other governors I was unable to interact in person with the children - apart from waving over the fence at them. However, I was able to take part in several Zoom liturgies and Q and A sessions with various bubbles. I was very conscious throughout the pandemic of the need to give moral and spiritual support to the staff and in particular to the Headteacher at a time of enormous strain. As the situation improves, I am glad that I can now go back into classes and that we can resume school Masses in the church.

**Parent Governor: Daniel Zini**

*Admissions committee, Curriculum & Standards committee  
Nominated Governor for IT*

I have been in a Governor role at St Teresa's since December 2016 growing my governor skills. I am the Nominated IT Governor and also sit on the Curriculum & Standards and Admissions committees.

I have brought my passion for the school's Catholic ethos to help students get ready for the future, and my IT background has allowed me to bring value to the school also supporting the school's IT team to meet home learning needs caused by Covid-19.

As part of the Admissions committee, I have been working on short-term and long-term projects to increase the number of applicants to our school whilst setting the right expectations. This has included improving how accessible and visible the school is for prospective parents.

As much as I could during these difficult times, I visited the school and constructively challenged school leaders to hold them accountable for the school's educational performance.