

**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of St.  
Nicholas C of E Primary School West Tanfield  
September 2018**

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing boards, the three core strategic functions of St. Nicolas C of E School Governing Board are:

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

**Governance arrangements**

At the start of the last academic year 2017/18 the Governing body consisted of 10 governors including the Executive Head Teacher. We had successfully recruited a new parent governor to replace one who resigned the previous year and also now had a second Foundation governor. Our Local Authority governor was re-instated for a further 4 year term and our final board member took up the position as a Co-opted governor from September 2017.

This gave us:

- 1 Local Authority governor**
- 2 Parent governors**
- 3 Co-opted governors**
- 2 Foundation governors**
- 1 Staff governor**
- 1 Headteacher governor**

During this last academic year, our long-standing Foundation governor retired and we were again left without a second Foundation governor, until a recent appointment in July 2018, who will take up office starting in Sept. 2018.

One of our parent governors also came to the end of her term of office and was re-instated as an Associate governor, leaving space to recruit a further Parent governor.

This means that at the start of our new academic year, 2018/19 we now have 11 governors on the board:

- 1 Local Authority governor**
- 2 Parent governors**
- 3 Co-opted governors**
- 2 Foundation governors**
- 1 Associate governor**
- 1 Staff governor**
- 1 Headteacher governor**

**A well constituted governing body needs a wide range of skills, encompassing financial planning, contract and project management, personnel management and marketing, coupled with effective communication to all stakeholders and the wider community.**

**An annual governor skills audit is carried out and any shortfalls remedied by training or co-opting of new governors. Each governor has a personal responsibility linked to a specific area of the School Development Plan. Governors are required to understand, monitor and challenge evidence presented and to act as a 'critical friend' in holding the Headteacher to account.**

**The governing board has a programme of meetings throughout the school year that focuses on specific areas of governance.**

**In 2015 we re-structured our governor meetings so that both School Improvement information and Resources detail were amalgamated into the 9 scheduled meetings of the Full Governing Body, within the academic year. One of these meetings is a Joint FGB with governors from our partner school, Kirby Malzeard, with whom we are in collaboration. We also have Joint Strategic Development meetings with Kirby Malzeard, consisting of a sub-committee of governors, who meet on a regular basis.**

**There is a specific agenda focus at each FGB meeting covering the various aspects of work, which are relevant at certain times in the school year. This may include, for example; Financial review and budget management, Strategic development, Review of statutory committees and governing body systems, Special Educational Needs report and Performance Management.**

**Alongside these, every agenda includes Safeguarding, Health and Safety, the Headteacher's report, School improvement, Staffing, Governor Link roles and Policy reviews.**

**As and when required, extra 'Task and Finish' working groups also meet to discuss and further develop any actions, which have been agreed at the FGB. At the end of the Summer term 2018, it was also agreed that we would reduce the number of FGBs from 9 per year to 6 per year, plus 1 joint with KM, thus reducing the large workload and number of meetings, which our Executive Headteacher is required to attend for both her schools.**

**This will commence from Sept. 2018.**

#### **Attendance record of governors**

*A record is kept by the clerk to the governing body, of governors' attendance at meetings, details of attendance can be found for 2017/18 at the end of this document.*

*Meetings need to be 'quorate' to ensure that decisions can be made*

#### **The work we have done through the Governing Board meetings and Governor Link Roles**

**The Governing body continues to closely monitor and evaluate school improvement, in particular, pupils' progress and achievement where we regularly scrutinise data. We have the benefit of small class sizes and an**

**excellent pupil –teacher ratio and aim to educate the ‘whole child’ and to motivate each one to develop their full potential, both academically and personally. We have been working on ‘Growth-mindset’ to encourage children to develop greater self-confidence and to aim high in whatever they attempt.**

**Working in partnership with the Headteacher, we ensure that the school provides its pupils with an aspirational and exciting learning environment, which prepares them for their next steps in education and in the future. We encourage governors to access training opportunities and we regularly attend the Local Authority’s Governor School Improvement Network. Governors also take part in ‘self- review’ activities in order to improve performance, in their individual roles and as a team.**

**Each governor has a special link to a particular aspect of the School Development Plan and reports back to the Full Governing Body following any visit to school, whilst a record of the visit is made and kept in the ‘Governing Body File’ at school. Following a Local Authority School Review in November 2017, we are putting in place a more robust monitoring of pupils’ progress and achievement, by closely aligning monitoring with the priorities and success criteria within the SDPlan.**

**All governors place the highest emphasis on Safeguarding the pupils and all complete Safeguarding training, alongside current Prevent training. The school has an experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator ( SENCO ), who meets regularly with the link governor and presents detailed reports to the FGB. Each year an Annual Report to the Governing Body on Safeguarding Children is completed and presented. The Special Educational Needs and Disability [SEND] new code of practice is an integral part of teaching and learning and further details of this can be found on our website.**

**The School Financial Value Statement is completed annually demonstrating good fiscal practice. All financial accounts and the SFVS are verified and held by the Local Authority. We work closely with our LA Bursar, who provides us with the current financial details required throughout the school year.**

**Managing the finances of small schools has never been more challenging and this last academic year has been especially so. In 2017/18 we managed to maintain a 2 and a half class structure, in order to give more focused teaching time to our year 6 pupils.**

**However, our budget constraints and low pupil numbers for this forthcoming year 2018/19, does not allow us to continue with this arrangement and we have had to re-structure our classes further to be a 2 class system, with 2 x 0.5 teachers responsible for each Key stage class. To do this it has been necessary to reduce some teaching hours and also TA hours.**

**Unfortunately, at the very end of the Summer term, we learned that our independently- run Nursery provision, ‘Nicky’s’, was having to close due to lack of funds. This closure not only impacts on children moving up through to Reception class, but is also a further drain on our budget, through lack of their rental. We have met with the Local Authority and are currently looking at all options available to us.**

**We have carried out a review of our responsibilities under GDPR and are fully compliant.**

**School policies are continually reviewed and relevant changes communicated as necessary to all stakeholders.**

**Approved governing body minutes of all our meetings are retained and held in the Governing Body File in the Executive Head Teacher's office. These are available for viewing by arrangement with the EHT.**

### **Strategic Planning for the future**

**Collaboration with Kirby Malzeard school continues to support and enhance learning opportunities through many shared resources and activities. The governors have continued to monitor and support this partnership in delivering enhanced learning through collaborative working. The two schools also work with other local schools, the HART Alliance and the Ripon Village Cluster to provide the very best learning opportunities for all its pupils.**

**Sustainability is one key focus and governors are aware of the challenges facing small rural schools in North Yorkshire. Our collaboration benefits greatly from this partnership. We are able to share teaching experience and good practice across the two schools and we are led by a very experienced & capable Executive Head Teacher.**

**New educational requirements have been introduced, which include changes to the new curriculum and to methods of pupil assessment. Both of which are implemented and now well established. The governing body responds to all of these changes by rigorous questioning and close monitoring in order to assess their effect on raising standards and attainment.**

**In 'future proofing' our school, we have identified the need for additional marketing requirements to improve its profile. We recognise the problem of 'falling roles' and are encouraged by the new housing development taking place in West Tanfield.**

**We also recognise the need to engage parents and all stakeholders in raising awareness of the value of a good primary education to equip children for their future lives. We actively encourage their participation and involvement in every aspect of school life. We are fortunate to have good support from 'The Friends of West Tanfield school' who continue to plan and arrange social events and fund-raising activities, throughout the year.**

**We are delighted to have a lovely Forest School area, which is widely used and enjoyed by all the pupils.**

The formation of 'Allsorts' wrap-around care has provided a very useful addition to our extended school provision and has proved to be an asset for working parents.

Following the introduction of the Government White Paper, governors are aware of the greater changes which Academisation may bring. Governors have made it a priority to investigate all available opportunities for discussion and debate and have attended meetings run by the Local Authority, the Diocese and local schools to gather information. We are continuing to keep a close 'watching brief' on all developments and at present, governors have decided to postpone any decisions, so that when the position becomes clearer, we will then be able to respond appropriately to make the correct decision for our school and its pupils.

**How to contact your Governing Board**

*Information about the school's governing body is available on the governors' page of the school's website*

**The St. Nicholas C. of E. Primary School Governing Body**  
**current membership for 2018/19**

<b><u>Governor</u></b>	<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Term of office expiry date</u></b>
Andrea Peacock	Executive Head Teacher	N/A
Leonie Mandelson	Elected staff	31.08.20
Carolyn Brown	Local Authority	31.08.21
Susie Sanders	Co-opted	15.09.22
Angela Hatton	Co-opted	27.09.21
Edward Bryant	Foundation	19.07.22
Tim Marley	Co-opted	15.09.22
Ruth Smirthwaite	Associate	N/A
Michelle McNamara	Parent	10.05.21
Sarah Webster	Foundation	31.08.20
Elizabeth Goddard	Parent	18/01/22

**The St. Nicholas C. of E. Primary School Governors' Attendance record for 2017 – 2018**

<b><u>Governor Name</u></b>	<b><u>Number of FGB meetings attended</u></b>	
Andrea Peacock	9/9 FGB	3/3 JSDC Committees
Leonie Mandelson	9/9 FGB	Committees – N/A
Carolyn Brown	8/9 FGB	3/3 JSD Committees
Susie Sanders	7/9 FGB	Committees – N/A
Sarah Webster	6/9 FGB	3/3 JSDC Committees
David Parkinson	4/5 FGB	Committees – N/A
Tim Marley	8/9 FGB	1/3 JSDC Committees
Ruth Smirthwaite / Elizabeth Goddard	8/9 FGB	Committees – N/A
Michelle McNamara	7/9 FGB	Committees – N/A
Angela Hatton	7/9 FGB	Committees – N/A
Ruth Smirthwaite [ Associate]	N/A	

Overall there has been an 85% attendance at GB meetings.  
All meetings were quorate.