

**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of St. Nicholas C of E
Primary School West Tanfield
September 2017**

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

Following reconstitution in 2014 and restructuring in 2015 the governing body of St. Nicholas C of E Primary School West Tanfield for 2016/17 was made up of:

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

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

We now have:

- 1 Local Authority governor**
- 2 Parent governors**
- 3 Co-opted governors**
- 2 Foundation governors**
- 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 is 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 parties also meet to discuss and develop any actions which have been agreed at the FGB.

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 2016/17 in 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. 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 work in partnership with the Headteacher to ensure that the school provides its pupils with an aspirational 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 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.

All governors place the highest emphasis on Safeguarding the pupils and all complete Safeguarding training alongside Prevent training. The school has an

experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator, who meets regularly with the link governor and presents detailed reports to the FGB. The Special Educational Needs and Disability [SEND] new code of practice is now an integral part of teaching and learning and further details of this can be found on our website.

Managing the finances of small schools has never been more challenging, but as a result of class reorganisation and staffing, with careful financial controls, we are managing to stay within our financial allocation.

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.

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

Approved governing body minutes of 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.

This last academic year has seen increased challenges in the form of new educational requirements. These include changes to the new curriculum and to methods of pupil assessment. These have now been implemented and are 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 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 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.

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.

We also benefit from having 'Nicky's Nursery' on our school premises, giving the opportunity to educate children from 2 to rising 5s in an attractive rural school setting, with the added bonus of our Forest School facility.

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 2017/18**

<u>Governor</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Term of office expiry date</u>
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	16.09.18
Angela Hatton	Co-opted	27.09.21
David Parkinson	Foundation	04.03.18
Tim Marley	Co-opted	16.09.18
Ruth Smirthwaite	Parent	21.11.17
Michelle McNamara	Parent	10.05.21
Sarah Webster	Foundation	31.08.20

The St. Nicholas C. of E. Primary School Governors' Attendance record for 2016 – 2017

Governor Name	Number of FGB meetings attended
Andrea Peacock	9/9 + 3/3 JSD Committees
Leonie Mandelson	9/9
Carolyn Brown	7/9 + 3/3 JSD Committees
Susie Sanders	6/9
Sarah Webster	9/9 + 2/3 JSD Committees
David Parkinson	6/9 + 3/3 JSD Committees
Tim Marley	9/9 + 3/3 JSD Committees
Ruth Smirthwaite	9/9
Michelle McNamara	2/3

**Overall there has been an 89% attendance at GB meetings.
All meetings were quorate.**