



St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

Governance Survey 2019

Thank you to all the parents who took the time to complete our recent survey on governance. The results have been very illuminating and will really help us to increase our engagement with the school community. We would like to share a brief summary of the responses now we have reviewed them.

The areas for which governors are responsible were correctly identified by the majority of respondents: ensuring the Catholic ethos of the school is maintained; working with the school leadership to set the vision and strategy; providing challenge and support to the school leadership; and ensuring money is well spent. It's also instructive to note the areas for which governors are not responsible:

- Raising funds for the school. This is the role of the PTA, although governors do enjoy supporting the events when they can!
- Writing policies. These are written by the school leadership, and then reviewed and approved by the Governing Board or a delegated committee.
- Undertaking a health and safety audit. An independent company carries out an annual audit; the actions from this are monitored by governors, and a link governor will visit from time to time to see how the health and safety policy is being implemented.
- Observing lessons to assess teaching quality. This is the role of the school leadership, supported by external advisers, with reports reviewed by governors.

Several respondents asked for more information about how governors are appointed, and their accountability. Aside from the Headteacher, our constitution is as follows:

- 2 staff governors, elected by their peers.
- 2 parent governors, elected by their peers.
- 1 community governor, co-opted by the Governing Board.
- 8 foundation governors, appointed by the local Bishop, usually as a result of volunteering via their local parish.

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The governors are accountable, primarily, to two authorities:

1. As a Catholic school we are accountable to the local Bishop to ensure the ethos of the school is maintained and that RE is taught well. The Bishop has the right to visit us at any time to check everything is in order; however this is usually delegated to the Diocesan inspection service who conduct an Ofsted Section 48 inspection to review RE teaching and the Catholic life of the school.
2. As an academy we are accountable to the trustees and strategic board of the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust, and in turn to the Education and Skills Funding Agency from where our income is received. It is our responsibility to ensure that this public money is well spent, and delivers a high standard of education for our children.

However, aside from these formal aspects, we are also accountable to the whole school community: staff, parents and children.

One respondent asked why we had even asked the question on whether your child would feel safe talking to a governor about their school! However a small minority did answer “no”, which is a learning opportunity for us to address with the children. For parents, it is worth noting that all governors hold an enhanced DBS certificate.

Finally, a general theme from the responses and comments was that more communication from governors would be appreciated. To that end, in addition to the our termly blogs, we will try two new initiatives:

- First, a new Twitter account where governors can share more frequent updates about our work, and engage informally with the school community.
- Secondly, rather than just publishing an annual review of governance on the school website, we will also present this in person.

Thank you again to everyone who responded to our survey.

Governing Board

May 2019

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