

HANDBOOK FOR GOVERNORS

School Mission:

Loving to learn, learning to love, like Jesus

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St Monica's Catholic Primary School Mission

Loving to learn, learning to love, like Jesus



Share and love one another
Together work to be like Jesus

Make people smile
Only teamwork can make dreams happen
Never stop trying
Include everyone in all we do
Care for others around the world
Aim to be the best we can be



2. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Governance is a voluntary process that brings tremendous rewards, not least because we hope to make a difference. It requires, above all, a commitment in time and energy. We work as members of the leadership team, alongside senior staff, in developing the strategic direction of the school.

St. Monica's governing body has a constitution made up as follows:-

- a) 7 Foundation Governors, appointed by the diocese.
- b) 2 Elected Parent Governors.
- c) 1 Local Authority Governor, appointed by the L.A.
- d) 1 Teaching Governor, representing the teaching staff.
- e) The Head Teacher, permanent member
- f) Opportunities for Associate Governors as required

All except the head teacher are invited to serve a four year term which can be renewed. This is to ensure time to understand the role and gain in confidence, enabling each governor to make an effective contribution.

The full governing body meets up to five times a year in the evening. The three working committees (People, Education and Resources) meet at least once a term or more often if required, usually on a Tuesday evening at 6pm in school. Each committee has terms of reference which are there to help new members to choose a committee where they feel they could be most effective. Other committees meet annually or as required.

Any serving governor would be very happy to share their experiences with you. The current members are from very diverse backgrounds, both personal and professional which provides for interesting discussions.

We work in a very collegiate way, using all the talents available to us and all contributions are welcomed and valued. We act in the role of "A Critical Friend" supporting the head teacher and all the staff in ensuring that each child in their care is enabled to reach their own potential, in a caring environment, where teaching and learning can flourish. It is our job to question and to challenge. It is the responsibility of the Foundation Governors, in particular, to ensure the spiritual welfare of the children is met through prayer, worship and example.

In summary being a governor is a very rewarding and enjoyable commitment to school and parish but the role does need to be supported with time and energy as well as expertise.

Louise Barker - Chair of Governors

3. What does a Governor do?

This is an extract from Welcome to Governance 6th Edition – the essential guide for newly appointed governors of state schools, published by the National Governors' Association ©2014.

The National Governors' Association (NGA) is an independent charity that aims to improve the educational standards and well-being of children and young people through supporting and promoting outstanding governance in all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools.

Role of a school governor: To contribute to the work of the governing body in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

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

Activities: As part of the governing body team, a governor is expected to

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body meetings which determine:

- the vision and ethos of the school;
- clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
- that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
- the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
- the principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies.

2. Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:

- agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
- considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
- asking challenging questions of school leaders;
- ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
- ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
- acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing body on the progress on the relevant school priority; and
- listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.

3. Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders;
- appraise the headteacher;
- set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff;
- hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters;
- hear appeals about pupil exclusions.

The role of governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does **NOT**:

- Write school policies;
- Undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience;
- Spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other voluntary valuable roles within the school;
- Fundraise – this is the role of the PTA – the governing body should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks;
- Undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing body monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources;
- Do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing body need to consider and rectify this.

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (e.g as a chair of a committee). This document does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice-chair and chairs of committees.

In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including by visiting the school occasionally during school hours, and gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events;
- attend meetings (full governing body meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting;
- act in the best interest of all the pupils of the school; and
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing body's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

Time commitment: Under usual circumstances, you should expect to spend between 10 and 20 days a year on your governing responsibilities; the top end of this commitment, which equates to about half a day per week in term time, is most relevant to the chair and others with key roles, such as chairs of committees. Initially, we would expect your commitment to be nearer 10 days a year. However, there may be periods when the time commitment may increase, for example when recruiting a headteacher. Some

longstanding governors may tell you that they spend far more time than this on school business; however, it is fairly common for governors to undertake additional volunteering roles over and above governance.

Under Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, if you are employed, then you are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. 'Reasonable time off' is not defined in law, and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

Expenses: Governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor, and NGA recommends that a governing body should have such an expenses policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

This document can be adapted for use in recruiting new governors.

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4. Committees and their purpose

Full Governing Body

The Full Governing Body meets once a term, chaired by the Chair of Governors.

There are two extra meetings:

- 1) to formally adopt the committee structure, held in September
- 2) A ring fenced meeting to discuss a corporate agreement on financial management, chaired by the Chair of Finance Committee.

These meetings last no longer than two hours.

There are a number of elements to a good governing body:

- 1) The right people around the table.
- 2) Understanding the roles and responsibilities.
- 3) Good Chairing.
- 4) Professional Clerking.
- 5) Good relationships based on trust.
- 6) Knowing the school - the data, children, parents, staff and community.
- 7) Committed to asking challenging questions.
- 8) Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the pupils.

The role of the Full Governing Body is strategic.

The operational running of the School is the responsibility of the head teacher and the senior management team.

This relationship needs to be well understood.

Resources Committee

Core function: Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

The main purposes of the Resources committee are;

- to provide support to the Head Teacher in managing the schools' finances, assisting in setting and approval of the budget,
- regular monitoring of spend against budget and making decisions on expenditure in light of recommendations of the other sub-committees of the Governing body
- To review work required on school premises and how funding can be obtained to cover the costs. Due to the size of the school and the low number of children on pupil premium it is always a challenge to balance the needs and the budget.

The Resources committee meet as often as required which will usually be half termly.

People Committee

Core function: Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The People committee are responsible for anything people related - staff, pupils, parents and visitors to school. Members of the committee review various policies relating to staffing, salaries, appointment procedures and performance management. We also focus on communication to parents and the parish. The People committee normally meet once a term unless there is a need for an additional meeting.

Education Committee

Core function: Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils

The Education committee meet at least once a term. Our role is to consider and advise the governing body on standards and other matters relating to the school's curriculum, including statutory requirements and the School's Curriculum Policy. These are reviewed by the governors on a three year cycle. They are then approved by the Full Governing Body at the next meeting. We also consider curricular issues which have implications for Resources and People decisions and we make recommendations to the relevant committees or the Full Governing Body. We oversee arrangements for individual governors to take a leading role in specific areas of provision, e.g. R.E, Literacy, Numeracy, SEN. We receive reports from them and advise the governing body. We also oversee arrangements for educational visits.

4a. Minutes of meetings

Minutes are made up of Part One and Part Two items. Part One items are general discussion items and all Part One minutes are available for parents and any member of the public to view. Part Two items are confidential items and staff members (with the exception of the Head Teacher) must not be present during these items.

All minutes (especially part two) should be anonymised so would say "a child" or "a member of staff" rather than naming individuals.

The Clerk for each committee does the minutes and circulates them to all members of the governing body within one week of the meeting. At Full Governing Body meetings, the Chair of each committee outlines the main points that have arisen in meetings since the last FGB meeting.

5. The role of committee members

Committees

Each year at the first FGB in the autumn term we appoint the committee members. At the first meeting of each committee the Chair and the Clerk are nominated and the terms of reference agreed. It is good practice for different people to take these roles. For a governing body to grow in experience and be thinking about succession planning, older members should allow and encourage newer members to take on these roles.

Below is a reminder of the roles of each committee member for reference.

Clerks

- Responsible for sending out the meeting agenda one week in advance of the meeting. Seek input from HT and the Chair plus any standing agenda items
- Minutes are the only thing Ofsted know about what went on in our meetings. Governors are supposed to hold the HT to account, therefore questions should be asked and be evident. So, when producing minutes please ensure that questions raised by governors are noted and easily evident in this format **"A governor asked...."**
- Part one minutes are publicly available so should not contain any names e.g. A teacher, and not Mrs Smith. If it is necessary to name someone then this should be in Part two minutes.
- Part one minutes are circulated by e mail within one week of the meeting to ALL members of the governing body (not just those on the committee). This is how the FGB are kept up to date with what is going on in the school.
- Part two minutes are confidential and not shared outside the governing body. Teaching and non teaching staff do NOT see part two minutes

- Part two minutes are circulated to all members of the FGB except the teacher governor and/or non teaching governor
- All minutes should be saved on dropbox in the relevant folders.

Chairs

- Responsible for setting the agenda with the clerk to allow it to be distributed one week in advance of the meeting
- Keep the meeting moving and ensure the whole agenda is covered in a timely manner
- Ensure that all attendees of the meeting contribute. The fact they are there means they should have something to say, so invite them all to participate
- Ensure that any staff members (except the HT) leave the meeting after part one items of the agenda as they cannot be present for part two items
- Ensure that all relevant points are minuted by the clerk. If it is not in the minutes other members of the FGB or Ofsted will not be aware of it
- At FGB meetings outline any main points since last FGB meeting

Attendees

- Responsible for preparing in advance of the meeting – by checking the agenda, reading any policies that are to be signed off at the meeting (and bringing notes of any comments on them), checking the previous minutes to ensure all action points allocated to you are completed
- When reviewing minutes of the previous meeting if you feel something was discussed that is not clearly documented then you must say. Other members of the FGB, and Ofsted, only know what went on in a meeting by what they read in the minutes
- The role of all governors is to hold the HT to account. They do this by asking questions at meetings, attending training that will help them understand things better, reading minutes of meetings from the other committees, making sure they understand these and any other documents they are provided with – and if not asking someone
- Need to contribute to the meeting. You have made the effort to be there – your views are important. You are part of the governing body of the school and this is your job in that role

Link Governors

- As a link Governor you must commit to making at least one visit to school in the academic year

- To meet with the subject leader and discuss their subject leader folder with them
- To review the subject policy
- To discuss standards in that subject i.e. how all children are doing
- It is not about reviewing performance of any teachers in the subject – that is covered by their performance management

6. Governor Profiles

Annette Norman – Head Teacher

I have been teaching for almost 30 years, with almost 20 of those being at St. Monica's as Deputy Head Teacher and currently Head Teacher. I have special interests in Religious Education, maths, PE and music, and have enjoyed being a subject leader for those areas. I have worked with 3 Head Teachers and many wonderful colleagues and families in my time at St. Monica's and this has helped me to gain an in depth picture of the school, and a strong commitment to it. My future ambitions are to see the school community move forward as a united community to a period of growth and a sense of our shared Catholic Mission renewed by the teaching of Pope Francis.

Louise Barker – I was an Elected Parent Governor for 4 years in 2008 and then stayed on as an Associate Governor as we had a number of new Governors at this time, before becoming a Foundation Governor. I am currently Chair of Governors. I am married to Tim and have 2 children, both of whom have attended St Monica's school (then Cardinal Newman Catholic High School). My faith is very important to me and I am very involved in both Parish and School activities. My background is in Customer Service and I am also a qualified NLP Coach currently working as a Consultant for an IT software provider.

Gaynor Twiss - Support Staff Governor from December 2012 and became Associate Governor when the constitution changed.

Trained as a hairdresser after leaving high school and then became a Childminder for 15 years whilst I stayed at home with my own two children, Ben and Beth.

Started as an MDA at St Monica's in 2009 then moved into the school office in 2010.

Love walking my dog, cooking for my family, music and reading.

Clare Wadsworth - I have been a governor for St Monica's for the past eight years. I am a parishioner from the parish and my sons – Adam and Peter -attended St Monica's Primary School when they were younger. I am a primary school teacher and teach at Palace Fields School in Runcorn. I currently teach in KS2 but have taught KS1 as well. Prior to being a primary school teacher and having children I was a medical representative with Glaxo pharmaceuticals. I have a BSc in pharmacology but chose to train to be a teacher when my sons were young.

Marie Martin - I was appointed as a foundation parent governor in 2014. I have three children. My two older children have finished at St Monica's and are now at St Ambrose College and Cardinal Newman High School. My youngest child will start in reception in 2018. I work as a GP and have completed a medical education module at UCLAN. My parents, sister and husband are all teachers so I have a good understanding of the challenges in education.

Eileen Diakun - I am a Foundation Governor at St Monica's appointed by the Diocese of Shrewsbury. I am married to Greg and we have three sons who attended both St Monica's and subsequently Cardinal Newman Catholic High School in Warrington. My background is in Research & Development, Technical Marketing and Business Development. I currently work for an international Chemical Company as a Global IBusiness Intelligence Manager. In my spare time (very limited as I travel a lot in my current job) I do 'power' yoga, go to the gym and check up on our sons to unwind! In the Parish I am a member of the 6.00pm greeting rota with Greg and I normally try to read at church in the Easter and Christmas periods..

Mary Ainsworth – Local Authority governor. I was born and educated in Liverpool. I went to teacher training college in Newcastle upon Tyne and have an honours degree in Education from Manchester University. I have recently retired after a teaching career in primary education spanning over 30 years. I have worked as a class teacher in both key stages, a support teacher of children with special needs and teaching booster classes. I was a teacher governor. I am married with four sons. My husband is a retired primary school teacher and a governor. I am a committed Christian and I look forward to being part of a committed governing body.

Amanda Lawrie-Simmons

Sarah Spencer - My name is Sarah Spencer and I have recently been appointed as Parent Governor at St Monica's Primary School. I have worked in a Catholic primary school for 12 years and in my role as a School Business Manager I deal mainly with school finance and health and safety. Prior to this I worked in accountancy.

I am married and our youngest son is in Year 3. We also have two older sons aged 14 and 18. I will endeavour to do my very best for the school and, most importantly, for the children.

Daniel Burn - I joined the governing body in Summer 2017 as an elected Parent Governor. I am married to Louise and we have two children, Imogen (Yr 5) and Tom (Yr 3), both of whom are thoroughly enjoying life at St Monica's.

I settled in the area after leaving university and am now a chartered surveyor working for a small development company specialising in commercial property.

In my spare time, despite being a long suffering Coventry City supporter, I enjoy watching most sports and have recently completed my third half marathon.

7. ROLE OF THE LINK GOVERNOR

INTRODUCTION

Link governors oversee, monitor and report on specific areas of the school curriculum which feed into the School Development Plan. They inform and enhance the whole governing body's understanding of a particular area and as a consequence they contribute to sound decision making.

They help the governing body to develop positive links with staff to enable governors and staff to have a good understanding of their respective roles.

They also support the governing body in special areas such as Child Protection, Special Educational Needs and Health and Safety.

WHAT DOES A LINK GOVERNOR DO?

- * take a particular interest in their special area of responsibility
- * meet with the team leader responsible in order to become informed about current policies, practices and plans for development.
- * liaise with team leader to obtain information on:
 - staff development
 - resources
 - curriculum
 - special needs provision and equality issues
 - planning, assessment and recording procedures
 - pupil progress and standards of achievement
 - how well policies are operating and any barriers to implementation.
- * talk to the head teacher about their area of responsibility
- * attend any appropriate training
- * observe learning in order to understand how subject/curriculum is taught and any particular challenges.
- * talk to pupils about the curriculum area
- * support parental involvement and understanding of the curriculum
- * report back verbally and in writing to the FGB

VISITS TO THE SCHOOL

- * aim for at least one visit per year
- * ensure the visit will involve discussion and classroom observation
- * avoid observing in their own child's class

PROTOCOL FOR VISITS

- * Agree the focus, purpose, date and time of the visit with the head teacher and class teacher
- * Be aware teachers can be apprehensive when observed
- * Show sensitivity if making notes, inform the class teacher beforehand
- * Save questions till later, avoid any interruptions
- * Talk to the children about the lesson if appropriate
- * Thank the teacher and the children for having you with them
- * report back to the head teacher before leaving, discuss impressions and ask questions around the visit
- * Prepare a short, written report and discuss with the head teacher and chair before presenting to the FGB.

GOVERNOR GUIDELINES

Their role is to support, ask questions and understand more about the issues. Link Governorship offers opportunities for governors to get to know the school and staff in depth, enhancing communication. Governors are not inspectors. The report should not identify pupils or staff.

SOME QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

- * How is the subject taught?
- * How does the school cater for the children's different learning needs?
- * Are there sufficient resources in school to teach the curriculum effectively?
- * what continuing professional development is available to staff?
- * What monitoring arrangements are carried out in the school?
- * Are the policies and initiatives that are in place making an impact on children's achievement?
- * What are the plans for the future

Link Governors can be found in the September FGB minutes each year

The following link governors are in place in our school; English, Maths, RE, Safeguarding, IT, H&S, EYFS, SEND & PP, PSHCE/SMSC, British Values, Pre-School

8. Subject Co-ordinators

All subjects listed have an allocated subject co-ordinator. Mrs Norman allocates them at the beginning of each year. Sometimes the same teacher continues with the subject, but as there are staff changes then it may be necessary to rearrange. Each subject co-ordinator is responsible for completing a report throughout the year with a specific focus each term. Every subject that has not been allocated a link governor has one governor who will read the report and feedback to the relevant subject co-ordinator with any comments. If there is any cause for concern it should be raised with the Education committee.

Religious Education

English

Maths

ICT

Science

PSHE

History and Geography

MFL

PE

SENCO

Art and DT

Music

9. Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)

This is a replacement of the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check. Is now done electronically from school, the disclosure is usually back within a week of application. All governors MUST have a DBS check.

10. Pecuniary Interest

Collected at least annually for all staff & governors, all are expected to sign that they have no beneficial business interests in their dealings with the school.

11. Performance and Development

Information Summary Sheet for Governors (April 2015)

Ofsted School Data Dashboard can be found at

<http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/dash.php?urn=111322>

Questions for Governors:

- Are standards rising in reading, writing and maths at KS1 and KS2?
 - Standards in English grammar, punctuation and spelling at KS2; and in Phonics in KS1 are falling.
- What actions are being taken to improve standards and are they making a difference?
 - Attainment in both these areas is being closely tracked, teaching methodology has been reviewed, and training has been undertaken by all staff involved. According to our tracking the Y1 children are now on track for the standards to improve this year. The tracking shows the Y6 children's grammar work still needs attention.
- How is your school performing compared with other schools with a similar intake of pupils?
 - The school is performing on a par with similar schools except in the two areas identified above and in very able children achieving Level 6 in KS2.
- Are there differences between groups of pupils?
 - Disadvantaged pupils are not performing as well as other pupils, and the gap is largest in writing. Improved intervention recording and evaluation is being used to improve their attainment and progress.
- Has attendance improved over the last 3 years?
 - In 2014, the attendance rate at this school was 97.1%. The attendance rate has increased by 1 percentage point since 2013. The attendance rate is in the top 20% of all schools.

The main priorities in the School Development Plan are:

- To improve standards of attainment in phonics.
- To improve standards in writing.
- To improve standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- To secure good progress for more able children in upper KS2 in reading, writing and maths.
- To offer inter and intra school sporting competition, an active playground, 2 hours high quality curriculum PE for all children, and at least 2 after school clubs involving physical activity every half term.
- To secure good progress for children in the EYFS, KS1 and 2 through improved tracking and linking of assessment to planning.
- To develop the way in which the views of parents and carers are gathered and taken into account in the school's development planning.
 - School are planning a series of surveys of parents' views to cover the following areas in the next couple of years: RE, e safety, academic progress, enrichment.

- School is developing a programme of termly workshops for parents covering for example: Phonics (which took place in March 15), E safety with the involvement of the NSPCC, maths.

12. GLOSSARY

APS – Average Points Score

ARAs – Assessment and Reporting Arrangements

ARE – Age Related Expectations

CAF – Common Assessment Framework

CLA – Copyright Licensing Agency

CLASP – Care, Learning, Access and Support Planning

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

CT – Class Teacher

DFC - Devolved Formula Capital - allocation can be used for buildings, ICT and other capital needs. 10% of liability contribution is required

DHT – Deputy Head Teacher

DSG - Dedicated Schools' Grant - government grant to LA

EAL – English as an Additional Language

EHAT - Early help assessment tool

EP – Educational Psychologist

EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage - Reception

FFT – Fisher Family Trust

FOSM - Friends of St Monica's

FSM - Free School Meals

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

G&T – Gifted and Talented

GLD – Good level of Development

GLD - Good Level of Development (applies to EYFS and children have to have achieved an expected level in the first 12 areas of EYFS)

H&S – Health and Safety

HLTA - Higher Level Teaching Assistant

HT – Head Teacher

KS1 - Key Stage 1 - Years 1 and 2

KS2 - Key Stage 2 - Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
LA - Local Authority
LCVAP - Local Authority Coordinated Voluntary Aided Programme - for capital expenditure
LTP - Long Term Plans
MDA - Mid Day Assistant
MFG - Minimum Funding Guarantee
MFL – Modern Foreign Language
MTP - Medium Term Plans
NC – National Curriculum
NOR - Numbers on roll
NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher
Outturn statement - The actual outcome of a year analysing Resources (income) and Expenditure
PP – Pupil premium
PPA – Planning, Preparation and Assessment
PSHE – Personnel, Social and Health Education
Pupil Premium - Additional money paid to school to benefit children on free school meals
RA – Risk Assessment
ROL – Raise on Line
SACRE – Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
SALT – Speech and Language Therapy
SARA – Statutory Assessment and Reporting Arrangements
SATs – Standard Assessment Tests
SDP - School Development Plan
SEF – Self Evaluation Form
SEN – Special Educational Needs
SENCo – Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SFVS - Schools Financial Value Standard - to assist schools and governors with assurance around financial
SIMS – School Management Information System
SLA – Service Level Agreement
SLT – Senior Leadership Team
TA - Teaching Assistant
TLR – Teaching and Learning Responsibility
VA – Voluntary Aided School