

## **Annual Statement from the Governing Body of St Gregory's RC Primary School**

**2015/16**

We, the Governing Body of St Gregory's RC Primary School, work alongside the Head Teacher and Staff at all levels to ensure that our school serves our Catholic and wider community well. We seek to promote and maintain high standards of educational achievement for all of our children regardless of the challenges they may face within a caring and supportive setting, where all know that they are valued and cherished.

### **Our Governors:**

We have seven Foundation Governors:

- Mrs W Horwood (Chair);
- Mr M Puech ( Vice Chair);
- Rev Father M Weymes;
- Ms N Coltman;
- Mr G T Moad;
- Mr P Scott;
- Mrs J Valente.

Two Parent Governors:

- Mrs C Grabham;
- Mr I Farrar.

One LA Representative:

Cllr. M Walsh

One Staff Governor: Ms K Wilson.

And the Head Teacher, Mr K J Smithson.

### **The Core Functions of the Governing Body are encapsulated as follows:**

- Upholding and strengthening our Catholic Mission;
- Maintaining clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance of staff, plus;

- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its budget is used wisely to benefit our children by providing the resources and experiences they need to succeed;
- We also seek to liaise effectively with parents and carers and work with everyone to ensure that our successful and happy school maintains its current "outstanding" status.

**Key areas of focus 2015/16 have included:**

We have worked in close partnership with the Head Teacher and the Senior Management Team in developing and monitoring the School Development Plan, a comprehensive living document that is regularly updated across the year as targets are progressed and sometimes amended to reflect priorities or strategic changes.

In our school we plan our SDP around the financial year as so much is budget driven. This means that the plan itself can bridge two academic years and therefore needs to be a flexible document.

The plan is organised into three sections:

- Firstly, the key pupil progress / teaching and learning priorities for the year;
- Secondly, the management elements of the school: Deployment of staff, Budget, Governance and Environment;
- Thirdly, a section covering individual subject coordinator targets;
- All within the context of our Catholic Mission and Pastoral Vision

Each section comprises of the target focus, resourcing and funding and a detailed section outlining the background behind why this area is to be a focus for the year. Clear goals are set out; tasks allocated and timetabled, alongside specific success criteria.

As noted, the SDP is updated and annotated across the year with the HT taking the initiative in the first two sections, assisted by the SMT and Senior Governors, with individual coordinators taking full responsibility for progressing their own subject priorities as the year unfolds. The core subjects, English, Mathematics and Religious Education are always key foci with additional subjects taking precedence over time. Across 2015 /16 we completed work on Design Technology and progressed Science. In 2016/17, Science and Maths remain priorities, though our key area of focus will be Religious Education.

## **Setting Targets:**

Pupil progress and the quality of teaching and learning across the school are constant areas to consolidate and improve. Careful analysis of school performance across a wide range of indicators pin point areas where we can do better. Performance in National Tests are an important driver and whilst any combination of cohort strength, aptitude and ability, allied to teaching quality across a pupil's primary schooling, will influence a year group outcomes, we are vigilant against any sort of pattern emerging, such as weaker performance in Reading when compared with Writing, or Boys fairing consistently less well than girls in Mathematics, or Looked After children not meeting national targets. So whilst we are always looking at progress and achievement, targets can and do vary from year to year and sometimes across the same SDP year as data results in July can impact upon priorities from September.

The HT keeps us fully informed as to progress against the SDP targets in his termly reports and there are opportunities taken to explore more deeply within the meetings and to take on board input from other key staff and governor colleagues. Within the Curriculum Working Party for example, we have a number of governors who work through the DFE's "Raise on Line" document with the Head Teacher every year. This is a very detailed document that looks at all sorts of data and performance indicators relating to pupil progress, achievement and attainment across the school with a particular focus on performance in tests, attendance and how our children's progress compares against that made by children nationally. It is a very complicated but interesting and informative document and it is our job as members of this committee to cascade this information to our fellow governors at our meetings and then to discuss the implications and future actions this analysis will generate. Mr P Scott and Mr M Puech, more recently lead the way with this, but over time a series of governors, including the Chair, Mr Farrar, Mr Moad and Mrs Valente have made effective contributions.

## **Across 2015 / 16 our key targets were as follows:**

Specific targets arising from performance analysis were:

1. Improve End KS2 performance in Spelling and Grammar, especially for boys;
2. Improve End KS2 Performance in Mathematics, especially for girls;

3. Narrow the gap between the performance of Disadvantaged Pupils across the school and nationally.
4. Build on the success of the Peer Reading / 1-1 Tuition initiatives and extend the focus to include a practical maths / puzzles format at half termly intervals across the year (Our Maths focus was also extended for a further year);

Targets driven by Local and National Priorities also rank highly:

5. Embedding the new National Curriculum alongside our established Creative approach, thus ensuring that Excellence and Enjoyment remains at the heart of our curriculum offer;
6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting without levels (which involved devising our own system and beginning to see this embedded across 2016);
7. Successfully introducing the agreed scheme for Baseline Assessment for our youngest pupils, ensuring accuracy and readiness for early acceleration;
8. Reviewing School Self Evaluation practice in the light of changes to the Ofsted model for good and better schools;

RE / Pastoral Care is always a focus for our school and we have had a busy schedule to work through with a parallel Assessment and School Self Evaluation focus similar to targets 5 and 7. We also closely look to Diocesan Priorities such as the "Forward Together in Hope" agenda and forging ever closer links between school and parish.

One target that evolved from September 2015 and is currently ongoing was a new approach to early intervention and support, which resulted from both data analysis (we know if our intervention actions are actually impacting positively because we measure progress carefully) and the will to strengthen day to day partnerships between our teachers and classroom assistants. This of course impacts every day and is a major driver in supporting pupil progress for all of our children but particularly those who are most challenged. So this new approach impacted on targets 1, 2 and 3 and then, given the good progress we have made, on pupil performance across the curriculum. This

particular target is ongoing across 2016/17 so that this good practice can be embedded.

Supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs is always a priority for Governors and we worked closely with the HT and SMT to ensure that the school was operating in line with the new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) including the transition from Statements of Educational Needs to Education and Health Care Plans. In doing so the Governors look to prioritise that skilled staff and resources are available to help meet the complex needs of some of our pupils. Mr P Scott and Mrs W Horwood are most active in this area and the Board see SEN provision as a long established strength of the school and seek to maintain this high standard.

We fully support the school's drive to encourage and enhance healthy lifestyles and unanimously approved the Pastoral Council's Healthy Packed Lunch policy. In addition, Mrs Grabham was instrumental in securing Lottery Funding for our fitness trail in the yard and governors took part in cycling initiatives with Mr I Farrah, accompanying pupils on a marathon cycle excursion to the Diocesan Youth Village in Consett.

Finally, we look to ensure that all of our policies and practice reflecting the crucial Safeguarding agenda are up to date and relevant. Cllr. Walsh keeps us up to date from the Local authority perspective and also supports on Health and Safety. Key Governors have attended Child Protection Training and more recently WRAP training as part of the Prevent initiative. Our Chair, Mrs W Horwood is lead governor, ably assisted by Mr Puech in this vital area and both liaise very closely with the HT on what is, or can be,

### **What was the impact of the Governing Body on the school across 2015/16?**

The governors met frequently across the year for all key meetings such as Finance and the Full GB Meetings that take place each term. Attendance is almost always, excellent. In addition, there were further meetings, for Admissions in particular, and the Curriculum Working Party, who scrutinise data and target setting meet in the Autumn and often the Spring Terms. The RE team meets termly and consists of two key governors, the Chair, Mrs Horwood and Father Weymes alongside the HT, DHT, RE Coordinator and School /Parish Coordinator.

As well as coming together for official meetings, governors attend in their Class or Subject Link Governor roles once per term during a specific week set aside every term with the Chair, Parent Governors and Governors with children in the school, very regular visitors across the year. These well-established links enable Governors to liaise with staff and see how they are integrating the New National Curriculum alongside our

creative approach, including our successful language links that saw the school secure "The International School Award", with Ms Coltman having a long standing interest in this area. Equally crucial was how our new system of Assessment, Recording and Reporting has been introduced and embedded as this year has progressed. Mrs Valente has worked very closely with Mrs Wilson over the years as Assessment and Reporting methods have evolved into this latest school specific template. Mr G Moad has also expressed a keen interest in data analysis and brings a very secure knowledge of transition between Y6 and Y7 which proves invaluable. Mrs Horwood reported on the 2015 Baseline Assessment programme and how this reflected the profile of our youngest pupils.

The Chair, Vice Chair (Mr Michael Puech) and Mr Ian Farrar have accompanied the HT to meetings to explore the question of Academy status and how this could be rolled out across the Diocese. At the minute, governors are comfortable with the school as it is but it is important that we keep abreast of developments both now and in the future. Mr Puech and Mrs Horwood attend almost all LA briefings across the year.

Governors are especially visible during School Masses and celebrations. Mr P Scott regularly plays the guitar at school Masses and celebrations at both Holy Rosary and St Gregory's churches. A selection of governors visited school to attend morning Liturgies in Y1 and Reception and parent governors attended Class Assemblies across the year and were able to report back to colleagues as to how they had enjoyed these experiences. Several of our governors have extremely strong parish links and help our school to strengthen our role and place within the parishes of Holy Rosary and St Gregory's.

Governors have also joined in with the Peer Reading and Mathematics initiatives that have been introduced 2014/16 and look forward to attending the Maths Puzzles and Problem solving sessions again this coming year.

Several have assisted on trips and visits. Mrs Valente was a member of the team that supervised the most recent Y6 trip to Belgium in 2015. Parent governors are in the yard on almost a daily basis and make every effort to be available for parents and carers - they offer a vital line of communication.

Talking of communication, our parent governor, Ian Farrah, has worked closely with the school Information Technology team to help develop the school website, which is an excellent window into the school.

As a result, governors are very familiar with our school and make every effort to keep our finger on the pulse as it were. By visiting school regularly we can help monitor the SDP, school attendance and behaviour and safety, by getting updates from the HT,

Senior Management Team and our designated partner teachers. We can also support the staff in monitoring and evaluating the school self-evaluation processes that take place across the year including the Head Teacher's performance management (two governors are assigned to this task).

The Governors have provided support and challenge to ensure high standards in all aspects of education have been maintained throughout the school. We work with the HT to analyse key data to shine a light on school performance, highlighting our successes and those areas where we would like to improve. As this is our first annual report we would like to share some of the key analysis with you:

**Key Stage 1 Results were:**

- Consistently High across the last three years and prior to this period;
- Reading and Writing were our strongest areas in 2015. Mathematics dipped slightly from the 2014 high to the NA;
- Performance of higher ability children was good in Writing but closer to the NA in Maths and Reading;
- This was an average to good cohort that performed to expectations;
- Y1 performance in the Phonics test was very good, well above the local and national average as is the norm;
- Performance against EYFS goals was very good well above local and above national figures despite pupils' low starting points;
- School Performance against all Performance Indicator's over time is very strong;
- Analysis of "Closing the Gaps" data can fluctuate because of the low numbers of children and 2015 data reflected this again: excellent as the two Disadvantaged Pupils outperformed Other Pupils both within the school and nationally at EYFS but one of three DP / SEN pupil performed to expectations but impacted negatively on DP comparative data at End KS1. (Last year 2DP at End KS2 scored well above the NA and 2013 saw 3DP score less well as 2/3 had SEN)

**KS2:**

**Test Results:**

- Another challenging cohort with a number of SEN issues and transfers, performed to expectations in 2015 BUT performance was comfortably above

national performance at almost every indicator and target areas for improvement (SPAG and Maths) did improve;

- Performance in APS terms over the previous four years and prior to this period was almost always Significantly Above National figures;
- SPAG was our strongest area in 2015, followed closely by Reading, Writing and Maths;
- Mathematics and Reading were our weakest areas by 0.1%: Girls performance in Mathematics improved to comfortably above the NA with all other areas the same. SPAG was the highest area for Girls. Boys did well in Reading and Writing with SPAG their weakest area but up on last year;
- SEN pupils AND DP scored well above the NA in their categories and also above the NA - good performance.

#### **Progress:**

- Expected progress in Mathematics, Reading and Writing combined at 94% was SA the NA in 2015
- Expected progress in Reading at 91% was our weakest area but still in line with NA;
- Value Added Progress was strongest in Writing and weakest in Reading this year, with targeted improvement in Mathematics secured;
- VA as targeted, improved overall in 2015, though dipped very slightly in Reading and Writing, Maths improved as targeted. VA performance over time, despite very high End KS1 results, is good;
- Level 5 achievement across all subjects in 2015 was either Above (Reading) or Comfortably above (All, Maths and Writing and SPAG): Good performance;
- Three Levels Progress data is challenging because of the high proportion of L3's achieved in KS1 over time and the challenge of converting these to L6: This year Pupils making more than expected progress was strongest in Writing at 41%, 28% in Maths and 25% in Reading;
- L6 performance in 2015 dipped from 2015 but this was cohort related - fewer high fliers;

### **Narrowing the Gaps:**

- These narrowed across the board in 2014 but remain a target for improvement;
- DP at End EYFS and End KS1 performed really well in 2014 but DP at End KS2 improved against 2013 scores but still performed poorly in stark terms with SPAG at L4 and Reading and Maths at L5, lagging. We have work to do here;
- Low numbers of pupils across cohorts are problematic as data swings can result and longer term analysis is hampered;
- Narrowing the gaps remains a whole school target for every class teacher and every cohort across the school with early intervention a priority.

This detailed analysis is translated into new and revised targets for the coming year and these are encompassed within the 2016/17 School Development Plan.

Our governors attend relevant training provided by the school, the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and South Tyneside Council, ensuring that they keep up to date with all current developments in school governance.

We are here to serve and see ourselves as part of a thriving and vibrant school community where our children are cared for and supported to achieve their best.

The Governing Body: July 2016.