

## **Governance Structures and Responsibilities**

**St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School** is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It converted to academy trust status on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

The school's governance is outlined in the Articles of Association and Memorandum for the academy trust.

### **The Governing Body:**

The governing body's responsibility is to approve the strategic vision for the school working in partnership with the Headteacher promoting continuous improvement in the performance of the school whilst adhering to the Catholic ethos of the school. This involves the following: establishing a development plan; setting challenging, but achievable targets; interpreting information to assess progress and to determine appropriate action; and, to support Christ-centred and Christ-like teaching and learning for all.

The governing body has statutory responsibility for overseeing the school's financial viability.

The governing body is the employer of all of St Thomas Becket staff.

Aligned to its improvement role, the governing body is there to be a 'critical friend' providing the right balance between supporting and challenging the performance of both the Headteacher and the school.

The role of governor is a voluntary one: it is unpaid.

### **The Headteacher**

Under a **scheme of delegation**, approved by the full governing body, the Headteacher is delegated total responsibility for the running of the school and all associated operational matters. Governors are not involved in the day to day operation of the school.

The Headteacher is appointed by the governing body in co-operation with the Archdiocese of Southwark and the trustees.

### **Governor's responsibilities**

Because of the legal status of the school as an academy trust a governor is also a director and a trustee as the academy has charitable status.

The key responsibilities of the governing body include: -

- Ensuring the quality of the educational provision;
- Challenging and monitoring the performance of the academy;
- Ensuring good financial health and probity;
- Supporting the SLT in management of the staff.

### **Governor Categories**

As a governor of an academy trust one is a school governor, a company director and a charity trustee. These are not different positions as the terms are interchangeable, but reflect the origins of the various legal duties.

The types of governors are stipulated in our Articles of Association. The main types and those represented on the current governing body are as follows: -

- **Foundation governors:** these are appointed by the Archbishop to ensure the school's Catholic character is preserved and developed.
- **Local governors:** these are appointed by the governors.
- **Staff governors:** two individuals, who are employed by the school, are selected by election by the teaching and support staff. Volunteers are not eligible.
- **Parent governors:** these are two parents of children at the school who are eligible to stand for election to be governors by other parents and carers. Parent governors are 'representative parents' rather than 'representatives of the parents', and in common with other governors, are concerned with the welfare of the school as a whole.
- **Associate members** can also be appointed. They are not governors but are able to attend committee meetings and full governing body meetings because of the particular skills or experience they possess. They can only vote on certain issues and only if the governing body gives them the power to do so.
- **The Headteacher** is a full member of the school's Governing Body.

**The Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors** are elected annually by the governing body.

At St Thomas Becket we currently have a total of 14 governors places, supported by a Clerk:

- 8 foundation governors; (currently 2 vacancies)
- 2 parent governors;
- 2 staff governors;
- 1 Local governor; and,
- The Headteacher.

Governors of any category are eligible to serve a term of four years and for a maximum of three terms in total. At the end of each term of office a Parent or a Staff governor must stand for re-election. At the time of conversion, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012, those governors in place as governors of the voluntary aided school and willing to continue as governors of the academy trust began their terms of office afresh.

When a parent governor vacancy arises, this will be communicated to parents and an election will take place for which any parent with a child at the school will be eligible in accordance with the relevant Articles. Similarly, if a vacancy for a staff governor arises members of staff will be advised and an election held.

Training is available to governors, to ensure they have the right knowledge and skills to be able to carry out their duties.

In accordance with the Articles of Association the governing body meets at least once each a term as a full governing body. Each meeting has an agenda and associated papers distributed at least a week before the meeting.

Standard items are likely to include a report from the Headteacher, updates from the main committees, items from the DfES and issues raised by any correspondence received by the chair of governors.

For binding decisions to be made a full governing body meeting must be quorate. Associate members do not count towards the quorum.

## **Committees:**

Committees are set up to deal with specific areas of responsibility, such as curriculum and standards, Resources (encompassing personnel, Finance and buildings and Health and Safety).

Committees are designed to help the governing body cope with the wide range of duties and responsibilities by spreading the workload, allowing issues to be examined in detail.

The governing body agrees the “terms of reference” for each committee, i.e. the committee’s purpose, its powers and its operation.

Committee arrangements are reviewed every year to make sure they are working in the best interests of the school and the governing body.

The governing body includes the following committees:

- The **Curriculum Committee** is concerned with curriculum, standards, SEN and pupils
- The **Resources Committee** is responsible for the areas of finance, budget, pay policy (within the constraints of nationally agreed settlements), personnel, premises, health and safety and audit;
- The **Admissions Committee** meets as and when required to consider admission applications to the school

The Curriculum and Resources committees meet on a regular basis, usually three times each year.

Minutes of committee meetings must be submitted to the full governing body for consideration and approval of recommendations, formal receipt, etc.

The Governing body can also set up working parties to undertake particular tasks and report back to the full governing body.

Individual governors can take on particular tasks and/or make decisions on behalf of the governing body, but only when specifically given this responsibility by the governing body.

Only certain functions can be delegated. The Articles of Association set out what powers the full governing body can give to committees, the Headteacher or individual governors.

## **Other Matters:**

Most decisions the governing body makes relate to the strategy of the school. However, there are a number of instances where governors will need to make judgements on other issues, including such matters as:

- Staff disciplinary matters
- Exclusion of pupils
- Participation in the escalation stages of the Complaints process
- Staff, employment and disciplinary matters
- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Capital & Investment