



Dear Parents and Carers,

We are nearing the end of another school year – it has been a busy time for everyone and I'd like to thank you for your support in helping your child make the most of their opportunities at St Catherine's. The staff and Governors have worked hard to ensure that we deliver our Mission and allow every member of the school community to 'Be who God wants you to be and so set the world on fire'. There have undoubtedly been challenges along the way, but working together with a common focus, putting the needs of the children at the heart of what we do, will continue to drive our success. We are also very grateful to the tireless efforts of the PTA who have raised much needed funds that will be used to make a difference for every child.

*Governors have put this update together to outline some of the progress that has been made over the past year and to explain a little more about the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure St Catherine's School is as good as it can be. I hope you have a safe and happy summer break, **Helen West, Chair of Governors.***

Your Quick Guide to School Governance

What is the role of Governors?

School Governors have an important role to provide strategic input and to act as a 'critical friend', supporting and challenging the school leadership team.

All Governors are volunteers (receiving no payment) and must ensure that the wellbeing and development of pupils is at the forefront of discussions and decision-making.

What types of Governor do we have?

At St Catherine's we have four different types of Governor:

- **Foundation Governors** – appointed by the Diocese of Salford, their role is to uphold the school's Catholic ethos and mission.
- **Parent Governors** – elected by parents, they bring to the Governing Body their own views from the perspective of being a parent.
- **Staff Governor** – in addition to Miss Chwastek who is a governor due to her position as Headteacher, another staff member is elected by their colleagues.
- **Local Authority (LA) Governor** – one Governor represents the LA, although they are not obliged to vote in line with Local Authority policy.

We also have a number of **Associate Governors** (depending on need), who are people with specific skills who are co-opted to support in a particular area but who don't have full voting rights as Governors.

How many governors do we have?

We have 12 governors in total:

- 2 Parent Governors
- 2 Staff Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 7 Foundation Governors (the number of Foundation Governors must outnumber all other Governors combined by 2)

What do Governors do?

Governors attend meetings to discuss a wide range of issues relating to St Catherine's, including academic performance and progress, budgets, staff support and the school buildings. At least once a term all Governors meet and the minutes (when ratified) are available on the school website.

The Governing Body is divided into three Committees, which focus on specific aspects. These are:

- **Curriculum Committee** – considers all academic aspects, including pupil performance and progress, SEND issues, behaviour, etc.
- **Finance & Personnel Committee** - discusses and monitors the school budget and resources, staffing, including recruitment, performance management and staff welfare
- **Premises / Health & Safety Committee** – prioritises the school's building and maintenance projects according to risk, budget and school strategy.

In addition we have an **Admissions Committee**, which meets on a more ad hoc basis to deal with admissions arrangements.

The Governing Body at St Catherine's



Helen West, Chair of Governors, SEND Governor, Foundation Governor: I've been a governor for 7 years and as Chair of the Governing Body my role is to provide leadership and to make sure we focus on the right things.



Miss J Chwastek, Headteacher, Staff Governor: As Headteacher I am automatically a school governor. I strive to provide the very best for all our children in partnership with parents, staff and other governors.



Martin Whyte, Vice-Chair, Foundation Governor: As a former pupil of St Catherine's, I am delighted to support the children and staff and take a keen interest in their welfare and development. I'm a professional HR Manager.



Elly Plaskett, Parent Governor: I am a parent at St Catherine's and I work in Initial Teacher Training, following many years as a teacher. I blend the skills from my professional background with those as a parent to best support school development.



Catherine Bott, Foundation Governor: I'm a Lecturer in Education at Liverpool Hope University and my daughters attended St Catherine's. I'm the Pupil Premium governor and chair of the Curriculum Committee.



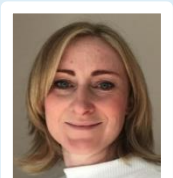
Raj Mehta, Parent Governor: I am the parent of a child in year 4 and I work in Human Resources. I am passionate about the education and wellbeing of all our children at the school.



Rachael Fallon, Safeguarding Governor, Foundation Governor: I'm a hospital pharmacist working in a leadership role where my focus is patient safety and governance. I'm also a parent at St Catherine's.



Miss L Cooper, Staff Governor: I thoroughly enjoy being a member of the St Catherine's family and feel that the position of staff governor allows me to contribute further to school improvement.



Jodie Tyrrell, Foundation Governor: I'm an active member of the parish and I am a pharmacist - my background is patient safety and clinical governance.



Father John Hitchen, Foundation Governor: I'm a Foundation Governor of St Catherine's through my position as Parish Priest. I seek to bring the values shown by Jesus Christ - love, forgiveness and care for others - into all that we do.



Richard Kilpatrick, Local Authority Governor: I'm the Local Authority representative at St Catherine's. I joined the governing body to contribute positively to Didsbury and grow the link between the school and the community.



Mark Chidgey, Associate Governor: I was a pupil at St Catherine's and I'm proud to serve on the Governing Body. I work in the NHS and want to support the school to continuously improve.

Vacancy, Foundation Governor



Martin Lochery, Associate Governor: I have spent the whole of my professional life involved with education. My daughters attended, and my grandchildren now attend St Catherine's.

What is our Vision for St Catherine's?

In the past two years the Governors and school leaders have worked together to produce a Vision for St Catherine's – this is the summary of our ambitions for the school and is the long term plan which is our focus for the next few years.

"Inspired by the Word of God, we continually strive to be the best Catholic School we can be. Within a stimulating and nurturing environment we welcome and support one another; reach out within our community and beyond; and work together to live out the Gospel values in every aspect of our life at St Catherine's"

We can translate this Vision statement into four separate 'pillars' which underpin school life:

Shape the whole person	Strive for excellence	Create inspiring learning spaces	Build community
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Our core values are central to fulfilling our Vision. In all aspects of school life we aim to demonstrate:

Love	Faith	Respect	Perseverance	Compassion	Inspiration
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Each year a **School Development and Improvement Plan** is produced, which is the 'operational' plan that the school follows to drive improvement. This plan includes specific initiatives and objectives which are intended to support the delivery of our Vision and these are tracked during Governor meetings.

Taking each of these four 'Pillars' of the Vision in turn:

Shape the whole person:

What does it mean?

- Recognise and nurture the talents, skills and strengths in everyone
- Appreciate our uniqueness as individuals and support our vulnerabilities
- Encourage growth in Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural terms
- Live and grow together in faith
- Look outside ourselves, seeing our role within the wider world
- Grow in confidence, inspiring each other

What progress has been made to date?

- Caritas team Ambassadors / Chaplaincy GIFT team for children in Years 5 and 6
- Embedding of our core values – including integration with behaviour management
- Development of Forest Schools programme
- Investment in counselling for children needing support and other interventions to address emotional needs
- Curriculum areas focusing on British Values
- Child-led learning and leadership
- Themed events eg. Healthy Schools Week

Strive for excellence:

What does it mean?

- Leading by example
- Passionate about continuous learning
- Ensure every single child achieves their fullest potential
- Deliver a high quality curriculum which results in high standards
- Support every member of the community to help them to flourish
- Never give up: building resilience and perseverance

What progress has been made to date?

- Results of SATs – higher than national / local authority averages
- Ongoing review and development of the curriculum to ensure breadth and depth, and that we are educating the whole person
- Targeted interventions where needed, designed to support learning for all
- Recruitment of Phase Leaders for each key stage in school to support improvement
- Proactive tracking and assessment of every child to ensure they are making progress
- Fostering resilient learners through curricular and co-curricular initiatives

Taking each of these four 'Pillars' of the Vision in turn (continued):

Create inspiring learning spaces:

What does it mean?

- Provide high quality, inspirational learning environments and facilities
- Meet the needs of the whole school community
- Listen to the needs of those who use our school
- Develop Stewardship - looking after what we have and respecting God's world
- Creative use of our resources

What progress has been made to date?

- *New library areas to further promote reading*
- *Continual investment in Early Years outdoor learning areas*
- *Refurbishment of classrooms, carpets, windows, boilers throughout school*
- *Regular input of School Council and Eco Team*
- *Removal of inadequate prefabs from parish land, leaving a grassed area we hope children can use*
- *Review of all playground areas to develop a longer term improvement strategy*
- *Submission of bids to secure funding to allow further development*

Build community:

What does it mean?

- Develop close collaboration with partner schools and other organisations
- Strengthen the links between home and school - working together and supporting each other
- Build strong relationships with our parish and broader community
- Reach out to those in need with compassion and love; becoming missionaries of the Word in action

What progress has been made to date?

- *Closer working relationships with other local schools for activities and staff development*
- *More opportunities for parents to come into school (eg. workshops, worships)*
- *Development of the Sacramental Journey for Year Three children*
- *Broad range of charity initiatives throughout the school year to focus on those less fortunate*
- *Working closely with the PTA to organise fund-raising around specific projects to benefit pupils*

Feedback and Communication

The role of Governors is to focus on strategic issues – that means the aspects like longer term planning and checking that the school is following its policies and that the children make good progress.

Miss Chwastek and her team oversee the day-to-day 'operational' running of the school in line with the school strategy. If you have any queries, these are best discussed with your child's class teacher, or if necessary, with the Phase Leader for that area of the school. St Catherine's welcomes feedback and Governors actively encourage parents to take up this opportunity to talk with the school team.

The school produces a regular newsletter which contains updates about what is happening and also highlights key dates for your diary. The school website is also packed with useful information and is where you can find out about our detailed policies. There is also a new Facebook site which

parents are encouraged to visit and get involved with – there is a direct link from the website Homepage.

Looking ahead

The specific priorities for the next school year are currently being finalised, taking into account the attainment progress of children throughout St Catherine's. There will be areas of academic priority but also actions which will address each aspect of the school Vision.

Governors are proud of our school and the opportunities it provides for our children. As the end of the school year approaches it would be helpful if you could give feedback via Parent View. This is an ongoing survey managed by Ofsted.

Please use the following link:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>