

# Syresham St James CE Primary School

## Annual Governance Statement 2017

This annual governance statement gives a brief overview of the activities of the Governing Body over the last academic year. It is intentionally brief, as we will aim to report significant activities as they happen throughout the year via the school newsletter and Governor section of the school website. This is a summary of the year's highlights.

The report is organised around the three primary objectives of the Governing Body, which are setting the strategic direction of the school, holding the school to account, and ensuring the financial well-being of the school.

### Strategic Direction

In November 2016, we published a statement describing the vision and aims for the school. The work of the Governing Body aims to ensure we take steps to realise this vision.

There have been three significant areas of activity around the strategic direction of the school;

- 1) Development of an integrated Nursery class for the children of Syresham and the surrounding area: Following the decision by the Governing Body last year to integrate a Nursery class into the school, work has been ongoing to secure funding for a separate, stand-alone building within the school grounds to allow for the provision of 30 hours of government funded childcare a week for 30 children aged between 2 and 5 years, as well as enabling the school to extend and improve the facilities currently used to deliver a broad-based curriculum and extra-curricular activities for all its pupils. In August, a bid was prepared by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and submitted to the Department for Education's Capital Fund. We were not successful in the first round of applications, but we were awarded funding in the second round based on a recognised need for Nursery school places in this part of Northamptonshire. The school is now working with architects and builders to finalise plans for the building, with the aim of having a new Nursery operational by November 2017 at the latest. This deadline has been implemented by the DfE.
- 2) Exploration of the options around conversion to academy status: Governors have been active in gaining an understanding of the political landscape and available options with regard to joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). We have attended training, made sure we are clear on the

priorities for our school and drawn up a list of key questions we need to ask. Having completed these preparations, Governors then met with two MATs already operating in the local area and asked all of our questions. We are now in the process of filling in the gaps and assessing the information gathered. The results of this activity are regularly scrutinised by the Governing Body. There is no deadline for a decision, since the Government scrapped plans for enforced academisation by 2020. However, the Governing Body feel that it is valuable to consider the options for our school from a position of strength and armed with as much information as possible.

- 3) Church School: In September 2016, Governors actively participated in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), preparing evidence on the role of governance in our church school and meeting with the Inspector to present our case. Governors were pleased and proud to have made a contribution to the Outstanding grade awarded to the school.

## **Holding the School to Account**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the Headteacher and staff are adhering to the school's policies and delivering the best possible outcomes for all children.

The governing body is responsible for setting and monitoring the aims described in the School Improvement Plan. Governors met in July 2016 to review the end of year data and the progress made against the priorities for development identified in last year's School Improvement Plan. The priorities for the current year were then identified and Governors asked the Headteacher and staff to develop an action plan to address those priorities. Governors monitor the progress and impact of the School Improvement Plan through regular challenge of assessment data and of the information on teaching and learning, pupil welfare, behaviour and safety they receive in the Headteacher's reports, and by carrying out regular monitoring visits linked to the key objectives in the Plan.

School policies are reviewed on a rolling programme throughout the year, and the Governing Body has statutory responsibility for some of these. We publish these policies on the website.

## **Financial Well-Being of the School**

Pressure on school budgets is greater than ever, particular for small schools. The Governing Body therefore believes it is to the great credit of Mrs Clough and Mrs Allee that the school finances remain strong in such challenging

circumstances. The Governing Body monitors the school's finances on a regular basis to ensure the best value for money is being obtained, and the long-term viability of the school is secured.