



The Federation of St Helen's Alveston and St Mary's Yate Governors' impact statement, January 2025

Introduction

The federation of St Helen's Alveston and St Mary's Yate is focused on supporting and developing every pupil to achieve their potential and become independent learners and thinkers. The role of Governors is to support and challenge the school. Our responsibility is for strategic planning and oversight.

In this statement, we detail the responsibilities of the Governing Body, outline the priorities for the current academic year. We hope this report helps parents and other school stakeholders understand how governors contribute to life at St Helen's and St Mary's schools.

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1. The role of the Governing Body (GB)

The GB plays a crucial part in improving and developing the school's by providing effective support and challenge. It is responsible for:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, values and strategic direction for the schools and federation as a whole;
- holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent.

2. Governance structure

The GB consists of 16 appointed and elected governors:

- 8 Foundation (Church) Governors;
- 1 Executive Headteacher Governor;
- 1 Staff Governor;
- 2 Parent Governors;
- 1 Representative (Local Authority) Governor;
- 3 Co-opted Governors.
- 2 associate members (no voting rights) – Heads of both schools

At the time of writing the governing body has the following vacancies

1 local authority governor

3 foundation governors

3. Full Governing Body meetings

Full GB meetings are held six times a year, once each half term. Parents and staff are always welcome to attend and observe the first section (Part 1) of these meetings. A wide variety of business is conducted at full GB meetings such as:

- Governors receive a written report from the Executive Head Teacher at each Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting, and a report from each Head of School at the Standards Committee meetings, including an update on issues such as progress in all areas of the School Development Plan (SDP), pupil attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and staff training. Governors discuss



these reports and ask questions to challenge all aspects of the schools' performance.

- Each of the GB committees (detailed below) reports back on their meetings which provides an opportunity for other governors to ask questions or discuss any aspects.
- School policies and key statutory documents are reviewed, both those agreed by committees and those that need to be ratified by the full GB.
- The GB will review progress against its near term and longer-term strategic objectives, which are set out in the appendix of this document.
- Governors review progress against both School Development Plans (SDP) and may select particular aspects that they want to scrutinise in more detail, for example, Early Reading or developing outcomes in writing.
- The FGB receives reports from Governors (see later) who update all governors on the priorities and progress for each specialist area of responsibility, for example inclusion, Health and Safety and safeguarding.

Commented [RH1]: This is slightly confusing - which report includes the SDP updates - I thought that was EHT report at FGB?

4. Committees

The GB is split into smaller committees that also meet throughout the year. Below is an outline of the typical remit of each committee as well as specific highlights from work carried out in the last year. A more detailed understanding of the work of the individual committees can be found in the committee Terms of Reference on the Federation Governor Teams platform.

4.1 Standards Committee

This Committee is responsible for following pupils' progress and achievement, ensuring the schools provide a high-quality teaching and learning experience and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum in keeping with the schools' aims, ethos and national curriculum requirements. Governors in this committee:

- analyse school performance data and review both internal and external data reports allowing them to track all groups of children within the schools and against other local schools and nationally.
- ask about the comparative progress and attainment of different groups including those targeted by the pupil premium grant, children with special educational needs (SEND) and the different ethnicity, gender and ability groups.



- ensure that the pupil premium grant is used to make a positive impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- monitor the provision and progress for children with SEND, assessing the effectiveness of interventions and outcomes and ensuring that the schools fulfil their responsibilities.
- receive and reflect on input from our School Improvement Partner, who conducts external reviews of all areas of provision.
- contribute to and evaluate the School Development Plans.

4.2 Finance Committee

Governors on this committee are tasked with detailed monitoring of the schools' finances; they hold the Executive Headteacher to account for the financial performance of the schools. The governors bring a wide range of professional expertise and this helps to ensure that budgets are effectively scrutinised and managed, and appropriate steps taken to plan for the future. Governors are joined by the School Business Managers (SBM), who work with the Executive Headteacher on day-to-day financial management. They also receive input from a local authority finance officer on quarterly finances and budget setting. Governors in this committee:

- ensure that the schools operate within the financial regulations of the Local Authority;
- monitor adherence to school finance policies and procurement codes;
- ensure compliance with DfE and SFVS (School's Financial Value Standard) requirements.
- respond to any issues arising from the audit of the schools' accounts or SFVS review.
- review the staffing structure (teaching and non-teaching) at least annually with the school development plan
- Support the executive head with the wellbeing of staff across both schools
- oversee recruitment of senior staff and the adoption, implementation and review of staffing policies and procedures to ensure that all principles of good and fair employment practice are adhered to and legal requirements fulfilled
- The Finance and Staffing committee is also responsible for health and safety, overseeing the maintenance and development of both school



sites and premises. This includes site visits and monitoring checks to ensure the site is safe and fit for purpose.

Like many schools across South Gloucestershire and nationally, the federation is facing financial pressures. In addition to the broad duties outlined above, this year governors are also actively:

- Supporting the Executive Head to lead strategic discussions with the Local Authority about the school's financial position;
- Writing to the local authority about the inadequate level of funding to support children with special educational needs
- Reviewing and agreeing recommendations regarding staffing options to reduce the deficit

4.3 Pay Committee

This sub-committee of the Finance Committee meets at least once a year, to review proposed changes to pay and authorise any recommended revisions in line with the National teacher pay awards and local authority support staff pay awards. The last Pay Committee met on 28th November 2024.

4.4 Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Strategy committee

This committee has been set up for the 2024/25 academic year to explore the option of both schools joining a MAT. Its remit is to work with the Executive Headteacher and explore the potential options available to both schools. This includes engaging with potential trusts to determine the viability and alignment with the ethos & identities of both schools. Its goal is to present the advantages and disadvantages of joining a MAT to enable the GB to make a strategic decision by the end of the academic year.

5. Strategic direction and School Development Plan (SDP)

Setting the strategic direction of the school is a key function of governors. They support and challenge the Executive Headteacher and senior leadership teams in both schools in agreeing the priorities, strategic direction, success criteria and monitoring plans.

Governors monitor the resulting SDPs regularly during the year. They receive reports from the Executive Headteacher and Heads of Schools on progress against the SDPs, both at full GB and committee meetings. They evaluate the progress towards achieving targets and goals using internal and external data, discussions about children's progress and attainment and through external validation. External validation includes visit reports from our School Challenge Partner, liaison with other



schools in The Unity Hub and through governor training. This information along with questioning and analysis of data helps to set the SDP for the following year.

5.1 St Mary's School Development Plan 2024/25

The SDP is developed and reviewed by Governors on the Standards committee in the Autumn term and following feedback and amendment, is then taken to the full GB for approval. It is also scrutinised by our external School Improvement Partner. **The key priorities for 2024/25:**

- **Priority 1: Executive Function**
- **Priority 2: Reading for Pleasure**
- **Priority 3: Writing**

5.2 St Helen's School Development Plan 2024/25

The SDP is developed and reviewed by Governors on the Standards committee in the Autumn term and following feedback and amendment, is then taken to the full GB for approval. It is also scrutinised by our external School Improvement Partner. **The key priorities for 2024/25:**

- **Priority 1: Maths, particularly Greater Depth**
- **Priority 2: Spelling**
- **Priority 3: Subject leadership development**

6. Ongoing review

Each year the GB reflects on its practices to ensure that the schools are supported and challenged effectively. For example, this year:

- some committee meetings were held in person and some remotely, to make the best use of governors' time and availability
- FGB meetings have moved to 5pm to avoid staff members having to work late into the evening so they can attend
- The committee structures and attendees have been reviewed to ensure they remain aligned to the needs of the school and oversight of key strategic objectives



7. Governor attendance

Attendance at full GB and committee meetings remains extremely high and no meetings have had to be cancelled because they were not “quorate” (i.e. the number of governors needed to ensure decisions are legally made). Attendance data for governors is captured in the minutes of each meeting and is available upon request.

8. Governor involvement

In addition to the visits governors make to the schools for GB and committee meetings or their link reviews, they also make numerous informal visits to attend carol services, school productions and PSA events such as the Christmas fair. Our Church governors also visit regularly, conducting assemblies and collective worship.

8.1 Link governor responsibilities

As well as sitting on committees, some non-staff governors have individual responsibilities or working party responsibilities, which, wherever possible, have some connection to their professional skills, expertise and/or committee membership.

For areas such as Health & Safety, Safeguarding, SEND and Inclusion, the review visits are more frequent and are aligned to checks pertinent to those areas.

In addition, governors make general visits to school to meet with staff and review progress with the school leadership.

8.2 Link Governor roles

Area of responsibility

Specific governors are appointed to oversee subjects across both schools:

- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding
- SEND

9. Policies

Governors review all policies at appropriate committee meetings on a scheduled basis to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements, and that all guidance is relevant and up to date. Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list.

The full list of school policies can be found at:



St Marys:

<https://www.stmarysyate.org.uk/our-school/policies/>

St Helen's:

<https://www.sthelensprimary.org.uk/our-school/policies/>

10 Training

The governing body use the Integra service to ensure all our governors have the appropriate level of training to perform their roles. This provides governors with access to a range of training modules across the year. Governors are encouraged to attend any training that is relevant to the SDP or their particular Governor responsibility, in the first instance. Governors may also attend any training that is of particular interest to them. Over the last year, members of the GB have attended training on:

- Safeguarding
- School finance
- New governor induction training
- The Diocesan Annual Conference

11. Broader contributions to school improvement

The Federation GB is committed to engaging proactively with the wider education agenda and to contributing to school improvement across the LA.

The Executive Headteacher is a co-chair of the Cluster Three SEND group which oversees the provision of SEND in the cluster three area.

The Executive Head Teacher and Heads of Schools complete peer reviews with head teacher colleagues in The Unity Hub.

12. Contacting the GB

Suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents and carers are always welcome. Governors can be contacted through the school offices via telephone, email, letter or in person. Emails can also be sent directly to the Chair of Governors at David.gordon@sgmail.org.uk.

David Gordon Chair of **Governors** January 2025



The Federation of St Helen's Alveston and St Mary's Yate

STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR MISSION: Support our leadership team to provide a high quality of education for all our children, uphold our core values and build a sustainable future for our schools.

OUR ENDURING STRATEGIC GOALS

<p>1. Raise educational standards</p> <p>Focus on continuous improvement of teaching quality and student outcomes, ensuring high academic achievement across all areas</p>	<p>2. Ensure safeguarding and child welfare</p> <p>Prioritise policies and practices that guarantee the safety, well-being, and mental health of all our children</p>	<p>3. Oversee financial management</p> <p>Monitor the school's financial health, ensuring budgets are used efficiently and resources are allocated to support key priorities</p>	<p>4. Support Leadership & Staff Development</p> <p>Provide strong oversight of school leadership and promote professional development opportunities for teachers and staff</p>
<p>5. Promote equality diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Focus on continuous improvement of teaching quality and student outcomes, ensuring high academic achievement across all areas</p>	<p>6. Enhance parental and community engagement</p> <p>Foster strong relationships with parents and local communities, ensuring their voices are heard and they contribute to the school's success.</p>	<p>7. Support well rounded pupil development</p> <p>Encourage a balanced approach to education that values not only academics but also extracurricular activities, character development, and life skills</p>	<p>8. Ensure regulatory compliance</p> <p>Maintain compliance with educational regulations, laws, and inspections, while ensuring governance practices are transparent and accountable</p>

OUR 2024/25 PRIORITIES

<p>1. Agree and execute plan for long term school structure</p>	<p>2. Support sustainable plan for SEND provision</p>	<p>3. Ensure the financial sustainability of both schools</p>	<p>4. Develop robust structures for the federation</p>
<p>Assess the landscape of MATs in the LA area and engage all credible options</p> <p>Target Date: Nov '24</p>	<p>Maintain regular oversight of the SEND provision in both schools</p> <p>Target Date: Ongoing at least once a term</p>	<p>Support the EHT in the development and approval of financial recovery plans</p> <p>Target Date: Ongoing through 24/25 AY</p>	<p>Define measures to evaluate the benefits and efficiencies of the federation</p> <p>Target Date: Feb '25</p>
<p>Formally decide on whether our schools should joint a MAT</p> <p>Target Date: 20th Dec</p>	<p>To hold the Local Authority to account for its statutory responsibility to provide adequate resources and appropriate school places for children with SEND.</p>	<p>Ensure budgets of both schools enable us to join a MAT within an agreed timeframe</p> <p>Target date: July '25</p>	<p>Maintain a regular cadence of visits to both schools to oversee delivery of goals and priorities</p>
<p>Agree MAT that is most suitable for our schools and a agree plan for joining</p> <p>Target Date: 20th Dec</p>	<p>Target Date: Ongoing through 24/25 AY</p>		<p>Target Date: Ongoing through 24/25 AY</p>
<p>Plan joining and consultation period</p> <p>Target Date: Feb '25</p>			