



St Mary's Catholic School
Impact of the Local Governing Committee
September 2021

For details of the trustees of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust please see here:
<http://www.bishopbewickcet.org/trustees>

The Governors of St Mary's Catholic School play a vital role in ensuring the school delivers effective leadership and management, effective support and care for the welfare of staff and students and exceptional standards/outcomes across all areas, fully in keeping with the Catholic/Christian ethos of the school.

The **Local Governing Committee** of St Mary's Catholic School:

- Miss E Patterson, Headteacher, Staff Governor
- Mr M McGhee, Chair of Governors, Foundation Governor
- Mr M Donnelly, Vice Chair of Governors, Foundation Governor
- Ms A Ness, Foundation Governor
- Mr A McDyer, Non-Foundation Governor
- Mr A Woods-Waters, Foundation Governor
- Mrs N Taylor, Foundation Governor
- Mrs L Douds, Non-Foundation Governor, Staff/Parent Governor

The Local Governing Committee provides an excellent level of support and challenge for the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team in all areas. They help to drive forward sustained performance in school by their ongoing evaluation of all areas via Local Governing Committee meetings, working groups and in-depth review and evaluation with the Senior Leadership Team on areas such as Safeguarding, SEND and the Quality of Education.

The Local Governors, Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team at St Mary's are focused on maintaining the outstanding quality of education offered by the school. Since the school's 2009 Outstanding Ofsted judgement, the school has continued to sustain exceptionally high performance in all areas. Leaders and Local Governors are always looking for ways to further improve, never standing still, and they have further developed exceptional standards in all areas of school life, including but not limited to, teaching and learning, curriculum planning, academic achievement, pastoral care and support, safeguarding, school improvement and leadership and management.

The school benefits greatly from the expertise of Local Governing Committee. The Chair of the Local Governing Committee is Director of Site Services for HMRC buildings in the North-east and brings valuable expertise and knowledge on a range of issues including finance, health and safety and issues involved with the management of a PFI school. A retired Primary Headteacher is St Mary's Designated Governor for Safeguarding and his wealth of experience supports robust standards in this area, as well as in all other areas of personal development, behaviour and pastoral care. Our Designated Governor for SEND is Head of Inclusion across a neighbouring Local Authority, Northumberland, bringing a wealth of expertise and experience to support excellent provision for our SEND students. A new Designated Governor role for 2021-2022 is in the area of Quality of Education and a current serving Primary Headteacher has taken on this role, bringing current and widespread experience of teaching and learning, achievement and curriculum planning. Also serving on the Local Governing Committee are a retired Assistant Chief Constable, Humberside Police, and Governors who are a Senior HR Manager, Chief Executive of Building Futures East and a Director of Finance and Support Services. This breadth of expertise ensures robust support and challenge for Senior Leaders, as well as ensuring that the school is continually moving forward and further developing all areas to sustain exceptional standards.

As well as our regular programme of Local Governing Committee meetings, which all Local Governors attend, the 3 **Designated Governors for SEND, Safeguarding and Quality of Education** visit school regularly to review and our work in these areas. Their monitoring of these areas includes visiting lessons, meeting with leaders, teachers and support staff, talking to students and parents, as well as reviewing school policies and documentation in these areas. The Designated Governors ensure very effective and robust support and challenge in these areas.

We also have **two working groups** led by Local Governors focused on Finance/Health and Safety and Staffing, as well as **Local Governing panels** to lead on aspects of Admissions and the review of any permanent exclusions:

- The **Finance/Health and Safety working group** reviews school finances throughout the year and approves the School Budget in the summer term, supporting the Headteacher in submitting the budget to the Bishop Bewick Trust for formal approval. They also approve any significant capital expenditure and oversee expenditure more generally, ensuring the school works within its budget and implements the Trust’s risk and financial management policies. The group also regularly reviews all aspects of health and safety, including from March 2020 to date, all aspects of the school’s health and safety response to COVID-19.
- The **Staffing working group** supports the Headteacher/SLT in the performance management of the staff team, reviewing the school’s appraisal recommendations yearly. Additional to this, Local Governors are very involved in the recruitment process of staff, including the recruitment of the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team posts and other ‘protected posts’ such as Head of RE and School Chaplain. Most recently the Local Governors were involved in the appointment of two additional Directors on the SLT for April 2021 and three additional Assistant Headteachers for Sept 2021. The Local Governors support the Senior Leadership Team in developing and ensuring an appropriate staffing structure.
- The **Governors in the Admissions panel** review all in-year admission applications throughout the school year, to support the school in ensuring a robust and fair process. This group also meets to review and agree the oversubscription criteria categories for all new Year 7 applications. The full Local Governing Committee also review and agree the school’s Admissions Policy annually.
- The **Governors in the Permanent Exclusion panel** review the decision of the Headteacher to permanently exclude any students from the school. The Panel consider whether the exclusion was carried out fairly, lawfully and in accordance with the DfE Exclusion Guidance (2017) and associated relevant legislation.

Senior Leaders and Local Governors have a detailed and accurate awareness of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Frequent monitoring and evaluation lead to the identification of the most important priorities for improvement. The Local Governing Committee also completes regular training on all aspects, including training in the Diocesan Scheme of Delegation, to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities fully. A summary of key delegated governance responsibilities from this Scheme of Delegation is below:

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE: BISHOP BEWICK CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST - SUMMARY OF KEY DELEGATED GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Members	Directors/Trust Board	Local Governing Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine constitution and religious character • oversee the Directors • recognise any strategic partnerships • delegate governance and management responsibility to the Directors (formally appointing and removing the Directors where necessary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold governance accountability • determine strategic vision and overarching strategic plan • provide strategic leadership and governance • provide challenge and support to senior leaders • undertake the recruitment and performance of any chief executive officer • develop and decide strategic and operational policies • facilitate collaboration • co-ordinate and oversee shared services and resources • develop and oversee the implementation of Trust development plan • approve of performance benchmarks • approve overall Trust budget and approve School budget parameters • monitor expenditure in accordance with appropriate authorisations • oversee financial governance and risk management • determine the Trust’s reserves/contingency policy • ensure appropriate insurance or risk cover is put in place • undertake recruitment of headteachers and facilitate the performance management of senior leaders • develop shared staff training programmes and opportunities for professional development • support the development and building of leadership and governance capacity at School level • approve of site and asset management strategy • oversee any significant capital expenditure and building projects ensuring compliance with Trust finance policy • approve of all funding applications • decision maker for all appeals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decide the School’s strategic vision and uphold the School’s distinctiveness and unique character, in harmony with the Trust’s strategic vision and ethos • support senior leadership team generally and with specific emphasis on target setting, pupil monitoring and analysing progress data to inform curriculum & budgeting priorities • approve of School development/action plan • approve of School budget and support the head teacher in submitting the budget to the Trust Board for formal approval • approve any significant capital expenditure • oversee expenditure ensuring the School works within its budget and implements the Trust’s risk and financial management policies ensuring probity, prudence and efficiency • play an active part in the recruitment of the headteacher • support the senior leadership team in the development and review of an appropriate staffing structure • support the head teacher in the recruitment and performance management of personnel • responsible for staff welfare and well-being, supporting the senior leadership team in monitoring absence and sickness • promote collaboration with other schools in the Trust • develop and review delegated school policies (e.g. admissions, pupil behaviour, safeguarding) • provide advice and feedback to the Directors, ensuring the School is meeting the needs of its community • undertake all and any appropriate community consultation • provide a point of contact for parents, carers and other members of the local community, maintaining an effective link to the wider community • evaluate its performance ensuring appropriate training and development so that knowledge, skills and behaviour are appropriate for a dynamic education environment

The Local Governing Committee also review and agree a wide-breadth of delegated policies within the school, including Safeguarding, Behaviour and Admissions policies, ensuring further impact on all areas of school life.