

St Ann's School Governance Statement:

1st September 2023 - 31st August 2024

The 2023-24 school year was the first full year of school operations under Headteacher Timmy Holdsworth and a new Leadership Team. In terms of governance, St Ann's continues to have half-termly full Governing Body (GB) meetings and termly Committee meetings, which are held in person at the school with a remote option for attendance.

The Governing Body has formally met 6 times during the 23/24 academic year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Governing Body was as follows:

| <i>Governor</i> | <i>Meetings attended</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Arthur Batalona</i> | 6/6 | Chair of GB and Lead Governor for Safeguarding |
| <i>Shohaib Ali</i> | 2/2 | Joined in Summer Term 2024 |
| <i>Mandeep Bhamra</i> | 4/5 | Joined in Autumn Term 2023 |
| <i>Rosh Carter</i> | 6/6 | |
| <i>Joe Codrington</i> | 2/6 | Absence due to work commitment and a hospital operation |
| <i>Nicola Inson</i> | 6/6 | |
| <i>Kathleen Hau</i> | 4/6 | |
| <i>Dmitri Hall</i> | 5/6 | |
| <i>Julian Hillman</i> | 6/6 | Vice Chair of GB |
| <i>Timmy Holdsworth</i> | 6/6 | Headteacher |
| <i>Dr Nasrullah Khilji</i> | 3/6 | Absence due to work commitments |
| <i>Helena Martaki</i> | 1/1 | Appointed July 2024 |
| <i>Sallie Mercer</i> | 1/2 | Retired November 2023 |
| <i>Tsu Pin Huang</i> | 4/5 | Retired May 2024 as he moved to a new School |
| <i>Steve Miley</i> | 4/6 | |

The Governing Body (GB) has considered a range of business throughout the year and this is divided into key areas reflecting their statutory duties:

- Progress against strategic priorities as set out in the School Development Plan 2023-24, with detailed commentary from the Senior Leadership Team following termly review by the Committees.
- For the full Governing body, the key target in 2023-24 was:

Target 1 Leadership: To support the Leadership Team to manage roles and responsibilities with the highly experienced Deputy Headteacher being part-time.

- Sustain and improve the leadership and management of the school, with the aim of creating a positive impact on all the students. With effective leadership, the goal is to provide the highest quality education possible at St. Ann's School.

Other sections of the Plan are reviewed in detail by the Committees for inclusion in the composite report with progress and outcomes reported termly.

The School Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is regularly monitored and updated by the School Leadership Team and externally validated by the Local Authority Link adviser.

(1) Monitoring & Strategy

Each term, the GB received a detailed report from the Headteacher that covered, among other matters, the following key areas:

- A summary of recent notable events to keep Governors up to date with the very latest developments at the school.
- Budget overview and key data around student and staff attendance.
- Partnership work with other schools as well as EQUALS (a social enterprise for professionals working with pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (PMLD, SLD and MLD)).
- Update on the School Development Plan priorities on a section-by-section basis with a RAG rating.
- Safeguarding update including changes to the Governance of Safeguarding.

Other areas of school life considered by the GB in 23-24:

- Work with the LA on identifying the possibility of a satellite site for St Ann's provision, to be taken forward in 24-25 and further work on this with the Local Authority.
- Update on increased school roll and site remodelling at the school.
- Adoption of the updated Child Protection Policy.
- The School Budget 2024-25.
- Staffing updates including further changes to the Leadership Team structure and recruitment to key posts.
- Update on the school charity 'the St Ann's Foundation', which went from strength to strength in 23-24.
- Agreeing a response to the LA Action Plan relating to the Ealing Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy 2023-2028.

- Half-termly Governance reports from the Clerk to the Governing Body, including key national and local governance issues.
- Half-termly report monitoring progress with previous Governing Body decisions.
- The Governing Body Workplan 23-24.
- Reports from Ealing's School Effectiveness Service (St Ann's Link Officer) on school operations
- Arthur Batalona was elected Chair and Julian Hillman Vice Chair of the GB for 2023-24.

Governing Body meetings also contain a training element and in 2023-24 the Leadership Team delivered training on:

- The new 5 Year Curriculum Plan at St Ann's
- Review of School Ethos Statement

Details of Governors are on the school website

As always, the school greatly values the contribution and time commitment of its parent governors.

They undertake the role diligently, notwithstanding the great pressures they face as parents/carers in meeting the complex and changing needs of their young person at home and in other settings. They are also an important channel for parental engagement including participating at coffee mornings and assisting new parents of children joining in Year 7.

Parents/carers provide a unique perspective, particularly about the long-term outcomes they would like for all St Ann's students. The Governing Body will do everything possible to support parents'/carers' attendance at Governing Body meetings, e.g. meeting the cost of child care. Our staff governors (a teacher and a support staff member) provide a vital staff perspective.

Our co-opted Governors provide significant expertise in areas such as finance, health, project management, social care, school governance, premises management, human resources and education. The GB will continue to look at the skills/experience required to further strengthen its effectiveness and carries out a regular audit of skills and Governor contributions and this informed the recruitment of 2 new Governors and training priorities in 23-24. 2 new Teacher Governors will start in September 2024.

(2) Committees

(2.1) Finance & Personnel Committee

The Finance & Personnel Committee, chaired by Steve Miley, has met each term as a sub-committee of the main Governing Body and its main focus has been in the following areas:

- Budget setting for 24-25, its monitoring and liaison with the Local Authority including detailed work on descriptors for funding individual student cohorts according to their different needs.
- The Committee considered a series of detailed budget reports for the 23-24 financial year from the School Business Manager and Headteacher and its impact on delivering St Ann's unique curriculum. The LA was fully up to date on our financial position as the School Business Manager keeps them updated continuously and they have direct access to our financial records. At the start of the 24-25 financial year, a balanced budget was put forward for approval and this represented a significant improvement on previous years budgets in no short measure due to the work of the School Business Manager.
- Submission of School's Strategic Financial Summary to the LA in the summer term.
- Closing of 2023-24 accounts.
- The Committee also focused on 'Section D: Leadership & Management' of the School Development Plan.
- The Committee oversaw significantly improved data on staff sickness absence,

The Committee during the year looked at other key areas including:

- Income generation options.
- Hydropool refurbishment, including the long term solution and possible fundraising options.
- Arrangements for the performance management of teaching and support staff and the deployment of support staff
- Recruitment to key staffing posts including the replacement of the Senior School Social Worker who retired after many years at the school and who made a significant contribution to St Ann's.
- The review of key policies within their remit including pay and appraisal and Equality Objectives.
- Governor training priorities.
- Termly updates on key operational areas such as energy costs/school transport/banking/ICT.

- Internal audit reports from the Local Authority and actions arising therefrom.
- The Committee have reviewed the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)/ financial procedures/annual insurance arrangements and all matters relating to good financial management, including audits carried out by the Local Authority.
- Annual review of GDPR compliance at the school.
- Update on the St Ann's School Charity and staff wellbeing.
- Committee formally reviewed the scheme of delegation and financial procedures.

(2.2) Premises Committee

The Premises Committee, chaired by Nicola Inson, focused on the following areas:

- Target D of the School's Service Development Plan and specifically: *'To facilitate the agreed remodelling of St Ann's to accommodate an increased roll from 110 to 125 whilst maintaining high-quality provision for current students on the school site.'* The proposal for expansion of St Ann's School has been prompted by Ealing Council in response to a further significant rise in pupils born in the last 10 years seeking special school places in the borough. There has been a specific rise in pupils with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties, many of whom also have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

A Key outcome identified was to develop school buildings to be more efficient, helping to provide an appropriate education for the changing cohorts. The Committee received termly reports on progress with site remodelling and a focus on the completion of phase one and moving onto the second phase.

The Committee also discussed, amongst other things:

- The vacation and clearance of the former Caretaker's house.
- Ongoing monitoring of the TELSTAR building and outstanding snagging issues.
- Review of the 3 Year Premises Plan. Committee agreed as the key focus for the school for 24-25 will be on site remodelling, a more meaningful plan can be developed thereafter.
- Termly composite building reports from the Facilities Manager, including plans for and review of works carried out to the site during school holidays.
- Committee reviewed progress with the Tree Management Plan.
- Review of Health & Safety policy and school's compliance with Health & Safety regulations and the annual Health & Safety audit.
- General update on site issues including a 'live' risk register identifying key risks and mitigating actions.
- The Chair of the Committee undertook an inspection of the school site In Spring Term 2024 .
- A new focus on sustainability at St Ann's.

- Hydropool and boiler provision
- Further review of the Governance role of the Committee, including possible satellite site provision
- Policy review.

(2.3) Safeguarding Governance

The Governance of the Safeguarding function at St Ann's changed in 23-24. GB in January agreed that this committee should be reviewed when the social work team is appointed following the retirement of the Senior Social Worker. The key priorities reported to and monitored by the Governing Body were as follows:

- To maintain a strong commitment to supporting students particularly when addressing challenging behaviours to ensure the school maintains its positive atmosphere and drives to help reduce student anxiety
- Develop and deliver pro-act training targeting various audiences both within and outside of the school.
- To develop and improve St Ann's behaviour support trainers.
- Positive behaviour support policies will be published in school following the ProACT Script, creating a safe environment for everyone.
- To react to incidents across the school in a timely fashion.

The Chair of Governors Arthur Batalona assumed the role of lead governor for safeguarding.

The school entered into a contract with Judicium from 1/4/24, following the discussion at January GB. The Headteacher reporting any Safeguarding issues direct to the Chair and Vice Chair of the GB. This contract will include an audit, safeguarding advice and training to develop the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL team). The DSL has worked hard to monitor and track the CPOMS system.

- The Headteacher will be reviewing the DSL structure for 24-25 and the role of any safeguarding committee and whether a Governor is required to attend.

The following key actions were undertaken in 23-24 :

- Former Governor Sallie Mercer conducted an inspection of the Single Central Record in Autumn Term 2023.
- GB reviewed attendance data and received updates on behaviour management including the use of the CPOM system (online child protection software),
- A termly review of the School Development Plan (Behaviour and Attitudes) 23-24 with progress monitored.
- The Pro Act SCIPR UK after-school training session has concluded, marking another successful step forward. These included sessions, aimed at supporting Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and new teachers.

The GB reviewed the Child Protection Policy which is up-to-date and will be transferred to the Judicium template from September 2024. GB was assured by the school's proactive management of its safeguarding responsibilities, including children currently not attending school.

(2.4) Development Steering Group (DSG)

The DSG, chaired by Professor Hans Haenlein, has continued to meet each term and its cross-discipline membership - including former Headteacher Gillian Carver - accorded it growing influence.

The DSG and the Leadership Team drew up its key priorities for 23-24 and particularly focused on post-19 provision for St Ann's students. Examples of the priorities include:

- To consider how to develop a communications strategy which shares our vision, both in terms of the existing individualised curriculum and the need for that curriculum to continue in a post-19 setting.
- To enhance our exposure to businesses and the corporate world so that new fundraising partnerships can be created and with appropriate guidance exploit in house funding opportunities.
- Researching other post-19 educational services and how the provision was set up and how it is financed and governed.
- Further work on the needs and numbers so we scope the likely demand as effectively as possible. This data research needs to be applied to students coming into the school and to the numbers of students in each cohort who will need post-19 provision. Also, the need to track outcomes for students who have left school.
- The school's partnership with the Local Authority and its adult provider staff continues to be important in order to establish what they would wish, and are able, to commission for St. Ann's leavers and how the views of parents and young people will be taken into consideration
- The Governing Body need to work with the Council on the possibility of a satellite or off-site provision to increase the school's capacity, but also need to think through what it would take in terms of staffing and equipment and how it might be integrated within the existing school and its activities.

In 2023-24, the DSG has also focused on the following specific activity:

- A project led by former Deputy Headteacher Mary Kelly and supported by Governor Dmitri Hall on post-19 provision. This project encompassed former and the most recent student leavers and included powerful parental testimony on the challenges families face in securing suitable educational provision post-St Ann's.
- The project also covered needs assessment and projected need, case studies, models of successful provision in London and nationwide and main project proposals and benefits. DSG noted the aspiration for 'a road map to a fully inclusive post-19 high quality provision for our students where they are part of their local community and have the same learning opportunities as their non-disabled peers'. The final project report will be considered by the Governing Body at their first meeting in the autumn term.
- Update on LA Plans for satellite provision and key discussions between the Governing Body and the Local Authority.

- Engaging with Council Adult Services Team and update on post-19 provision. DSG and the Governing Body worked on and sent a formal response led by Gillian Carver to the Action Plan for Ealing's Learning Disability Strategy
- Regular progress reports on site remodelling plans for the existing site to accommodate more students
- National and local strategic developments on SEN including partnership working with the primary feeder schools, Post 19 colleges and on a national level with EQUALS a not for profit Charity specialising in Special Education .In the summer term meeting DSG discussed Key issues raised and at a SEND Summit which was organised by Children and Young People Now and attended by Hans Haenlein
- DSG considered their future role in July and believed that the GB need to focus on those issues the school can control and influence but agreed the Leadership Team should continue on monitoring and following up on the post 19 issues with support to parents. However the priority for 2024-25 remained the school expansion.

(3) Summary of Governance of the School in 2023-24

Governors were asked to describe how they have contributed to the school over the past year and below are some key examples:

'Helping the GB and St Ann's leadership team with supporting changes to the organisation , particularly the school leadership team utilising my skills in stakeholder management, communication, negotiation and finance/business.'

'I feel I have been engaged with most of what has happened using my 20 year plus experience of St Ann's to track progress and see forward. Promoted and supported the strategic direction of the school.'

'Promoted a constructive relationship with providers.'

'Supported and encouraged the Head with positive feedback.'

'Organised and led several successful fundraising events, such as Hanwell Carnival, which not only raised significant funds but it is also raising awareness of the school and charity. The events also fostered a sense of community engagement and garnered the attention of Ealing's Mayor.'

'Assisted with interviews for a teacher position.'

'Working across various departments has allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of St. Ann's offerings and identify opportunities for enhancing our teaching practices and student support.'

'Collaborating with the school's multidisciplinary team has been particularly enlightening, as their expertise has enriched my teaching approach and deepened my knowledge of St. Ann's systems and operations.'

'I am actively participating in the St Ann's School Board of Governors' scheduled meetings to overview the school academic, development and future strategic drive .I would like to remain an active Committee member sharing my academic know-how from UK and international Higher Education.'

'Shared my experiences and other parents' views towards school services, including issues raised at parental coffee mornings.'

'Over the past year, I feel one of my most significant contributions to the Governing Board has been working alongside the Deputy Headteacher on the Post-19 Provision Review and Recommendation document. This project involved regular check-ins, gaining a solid understanding of the current post-19 provisions, and doing some in-depth research to explore the next steps. My project management skills played a key role in keeping things on track and ensuring we got the document completed in a timely manner.'

'I provided valuable input into the satellite expansion project for the school. This involved analysing the potential benefits and challenges of expanding our provision and ensuring that any plans were aligned with the school's overall strategic objectives. My experience in strategic planning and risk management helped to identify potential issues early on and propose solutions to mitigate them.'

'Finishing my teacher training and carrying on with ECT I feel has provided me with the most up-to-date forms of teaching, what's new and that is being implanted in classes which I strive to be able to apply into our classes.'

'I have given my views and experiences as a parent Governor in meetings.'

'Supporting the headteacher and GB to understand the process associated with the school expansion plans and building works. Liaising with the LA project manager and architect to help improve communications with the school in relation to the building works and the individual programme phases.'

Governor Aspirations for 2024-25

'There are challenges currently in expanding numbers and developing the site and maybe another site and I am playing my part in trying to focus us as governors.'

'I aim to expand our fundraising efforts by introducing new and innovative events, such as online fundraising campaigns and community engagement initiatives, to reach a wider audience while increasing our fundraising capacity for local charities.'

'To work closely with the LA to further their goal of providing sufficient and appropriate school places for students with additional needs.'

'To assist school with Technology developments.'

I'm pursuing a PGCE in the upcoming academic year. The knowledge and skills I'll acquire through this program will undoubtedly enhance my teaching practice, allowing me to deliver even more effective and engaging lessons that align with St. Ann's mission.

I am using my leadership, team dynamic and management skills and knowledge within the primary school system for special education curriculum as well as experience of the Information Systems and Knowledge management expertise. I bring my academic and research expertise from undergraduate and postgraduate level i.e., strategic portfolio management, team dynamics and leadership, consultancy and technology innovation, managing change and innovation etc.'

'Carry on sharing my experiences as a parent of a St Ann's student.'

'Looking ahead to the next year, I aspire to continue leveraging my skills in project management and strategic planning to support the Governing Board in achieving its goals. I'm particularly interested in getting more involved in other strategic objectives for the school, perhaps by taking on a bigger role in the satellite expansion project. This initiative is close to my heart, and I believe my experience can help navigate some of the challenges and opportunities that come with it.'

'I aim to use my experience in recruitment and HR to help the board in future.'

'I plan to focus on mental health and the importance of supporting staff and their mental wellbeing.'

'I would carry on listening to and communicating parental views where necessary'

'I have a PGCERT in medical education, and have experience of volunteering in the special school setting. I am keen to apply these skills to my role as a Governor.'