

St Mary's Special School & College

The Role of the Governing Board

Background

- The purpose of this presentation is to set out the governance structure, which is fully focussed on the requirements of the School. This structure is in line with best practice and the governance structure followed by most other non-maintained schools.
- The Governors of the School are company directors and charity trustees of The Talking Trust which owns St Mary's School. The Governors are ultimately responsible for any actions of the School.
- Existing Governors appoint new Governors so that the Governing Board has a range of experience and diversity. The School is also required to have procedures in place to appoint an elected parent governor, an elected teacher governor and a governor who is a representative of a local authority.
- All Governors have a legal responsibility to always act in the best interests of the School, regardless of their own individual situation or personal conflicts that may arise.



Corporate Structure

- The actions of the Governors are regulated by UK legislation and the Articles of Association of the Talking Trust. The Articles are the governing document that sets out how the School is to be managed by the Governors.
- Governors are “non-executive”, meaning that they are not involved in the day to day running of the School. All operational matters are formally delegated to the Headteacher. This is a standard procedure amongst not just schools, but many commercial companies as well.
- However the Governing Board has ultimate responsibility for all actions of the School, so the Board reserves all rights over anything that, simplistically, could have a material impact on the School.
- This is set out in a formal governing document called the Schedule of Matters Reserved for the Board, which ensures that the Governing Board have prime responsibility for:
 - Setting the school’s vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the School and the pupils
 - Overseeing the financial performance of the School
- Further detail on these three key areas is provided overleaf.



Strategy

The Governors have responsibility for the strategic direction of the School, including:

- The vision, ethos and character of the School. This includes:
 - approval of the School's aims, objectives, values and standards
 - review of the School's performance in pursuing and implementing the strategic direction
- Approval of all business plans and any material changes to them, with the aim that all pupils:
 - have access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum and therapies for their individual needs
 - are cared for and maintained safe at all times
- Human resources management. This includes:
 - succession planning of the Headteacher Senior Leadership Team and Governors
 - appointment of the Headteacher Senior Leadership Team and professional advisers
 - approval of the school's staffing structure
- Reviewing the School's overall corporate governance arrangements and undertaking a formal and rigorous periodic review of its own performance, that of its committees and individual Governors, and the division of responsibilities.



Accountability

- Responsibility for ensuring that the School is managed competently by holding the Headteacher to account for:
 - the quality of education, therapies and appropriate extra-curricular activity
 - the safeguarding of residential and non-residential pupils
 - planning and internal control systems
 - accounting and other records
 - compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations
- Ensuring the Headteacher has arranged for regular audits and reviews to be carried out on key accountabilities, and receiving the results of those audits.
- Approval of the educational policies and procedures, and reviewing the systems for ensuring compliance with those procedures.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the School's business systems, risk management and control processes.
- Responsibility for holding the Headteacher to account for maintaining a satisfactory dialogue with parents, members of staff and other key stakeholders.



Financial Performance

- Responsibility for ensuring that the School's finances are effectively managed by approving, and holding the Headteacher to account for:
 - the annual budget, financial statements and management accounts
 - any capital expenditure or non-budgeted operating expenditure.
 - any high value or long-term contracts.
- Determining the remuneration policy of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the School's fundraising strategy and implementation.



Governance & Committees

- Meetings of the full Governing Board are held at least once a term, chaired by Mary Briggs.
- Certain actions are delegated to Governor Committees. These committees are:
 - Children & Learning Committee, chaired by Catherine Baart
 - Finance & Marketing Committee, chaired by Andrew Hodson
 - Resources Committee, chaired by John Cooper
 - In addition there is a Pay Committee and a Headteacher Appraisal panel

