**REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE, Sept 2016 to Sept 2017.**

**External views of governance.**

“The governing body are committed to driving the school forward. They have defined priorities and developed a greater level of scrutiny and accountability in their work of leaders.” Ofsted July 2026.

“Inspectors rightly recognised the governing body as a strength at the last inspection. Governors continue to be knowledgeable and admirably committed to the school, its staff and pupils. They developed their own action plan after the last inspection to ensure they were best placed to address the areas for improvement effectively.

Governors have broadened their skills through additional training, They have actively contributed to the development of middle leaders, for example through meeting with them regularly and ensuring they have the insight, skills and knowledge to ask leaders the right questions to drive further improvements. A governor meets regularly with the school business manager to ensure safeguarding records are kept up to date.” Ofsted Monitoring inspection May 2017.

At a full governors meeting in June 2017, all governors agreed that these were accurate statements with nearly half “strongly agreeing.”

After the Ofsted Inspection of July 2016 the governors agreed an action plan that had 4 priorities

1. To further improve the expertise and skills of the governing body.
2. To be more effective in supporting and developing middle leaders.
3. To challenge and support the school to achieve good and outstanding teaching in all areas of learning.
4. To challenge and support the school to insure all groups of pupils are succeeding.

At the first full governors meeting of the school year 2017/18 on the 10th October 2017-10-15 governors added the priority of;

1. To manage the school deficit budget so that the school moves into credit while not significantly compromising the raising of standards and the drive for improvement.

**Priority 1. To further improve the expertise and skills of the governing body.**

**Action .** From Sept 2016 to July 2017 the governing body took park in The Bishop’s Governor’s Certificate organised by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education. This involved governors attending 11 training sessions of 2 hours each at the Diocesan Headquarters spread over 8 months. Modules included; Ethos, Admissions, Self Evaluation, The Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, School Building. R.E. Collective Worship and Staffing. 12 governors attended at least one session and for every session at least two attended. At the end of the course the governors were awarded the Bishop’s Certificate.

Governors attended other training such as Chairs briefing with Croydon LA, financial bench marking, and special needs.

**Impact.** A widening of the skills base of governing body resulting in greater and more effective scrutiny of our work. For example after the governo’rs responsibilities for the building module governors asked more detailed questions about the job description of the new premises officer. Other results included the creation of a Faith Group to monitor the church school governance of responsibilities of R.E. and Collective Worship allowing the Teaching and Learning Committee to be more focused on monitoring the standards in the other curriculum areas.

**What next?**

**-** To continue to develop our scrutiny of the work of the school through grounding our questions in our new knowledge of the required responsibilities of governors.

- To match this training on how it has improved the individual competency expectations of governors as defined by the DFE.

-To receive training on the new Raise on Line structures

- To support new governors by identifying appropriate training.

**Priority 2.**

**To be more effective in supporting and developing the role of middle leaders.**

**Action since September 2016.**

The governors have used each of their termly morning visits to the school to meet with middle leaders. At the first meeting the phase leaders. including early years, with the subject leaders for English and Maths, and the leader for Inclusion met with groups of governors. Staff outlined their leadership job descriptions, how they carried out their roles and priorities. This was followed up in the Spring Term when the same leaders with the additional leaders for, special needs, music, drama, P.E. and games met governors. A number of these conversations were observed by an H.M.I.

The third visit in the summer term focused on meeting the leader for R.E. and Collective Worship.

**Impact.** The growth in confidence of middle leaders and having a grip of the appropriate priorities was significant by the second meetings. Leaders were clearly more pro-active in improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, had clear records of actions taken and were enthusiastic about what was being achieved. Staff considered that this process was giving them confidence in articulating their work. The H.M.I, who observed these conversations reported that the governors asked appropriate probing questions and showed a good knowledge of the challenges facing the school.

**What next?** To continue with these dialogues with a clear focus on how middle leaders are using data in leading in the improvement of teaching and how progress is being encouraged in under performing groups and classes.

**Priority 3.**

**To challenge and support the school to achieve good and understanding teaching in all areas of learning.**

**Action.** The Governors Performance Review Committee in the Autumn received reports on the outcome of the teachers annual appraisals which have a regular teaching focus. This has given governors an insight in the teaching strengths of the school. For other governors their knowledge of the teaching strengths and challenges has been gained through the discussions with middle leaders. It was noted that at the Spring meeting with middle leaders governors focused many of their questions on how middle leaders were developing teaching strengths, answers included; developing teacher knowledge and confidence in subjects, particularly in maths, how leaders observing lessons and modelling good practice, sharing and celebrating good practice. and using data to target priorities for particular groups and the monitoring of children’s work.

**Impact.** Through greater knowledge of the range of teaching standards across governors are more skilled in questioning senior leaders. For example at the Teaching and Learning Committee governors probed the reasons for the difference level of standards between classes in the same year. Also when looking at samples of children’s books governors have gained expertise to make judgements on the outcomes of children. For example when looking at R.E. books governors could identify when work was focused on either AT1 or AT2. For some time governors when have received data have noted that reading in many classes is not as strong writing. Governors questioned about the quality of reading books available to children and the lack of a central resource such as a library. Governors were very pleased to note that during the summer holidays of 2017 the ICT suite had been converted into a library with a class timetable for its use. Also on a visit to the school by the chair in September 2017 and a visit to all classes virtually every class was following a timetabled reading lesson.

**What next.** To continue with this priority with a strong focus on years 5 and 6. This will be done by an experienced governor regularly supporting and working with these years.

**Priority 4.**

**To challenge and support the school to insure all groups of pupils are succeeding.**

**Action.** As the year progressed the Teaching and Learning Committee gained greater knowledge and clarity on the performance in the core subjects. Key to this was the membership of the committee being enhanced by Diane George, the deputy head teacher, who has overall responsibility for gathering progress data and presenting it so priorities are clear. As the year progressed the greater quality of data brought to the committee gave the committee a more deeper understanding of the standards and progress of children across the school and enabled the committee to be more effective in its questioning of how this data is used and which strategies were having an impact. By Diane George working closely with Shelisha Bent, the committee chair, the committee now have a very clear picture of each of theyears and the groups of children who are making good progress and those who still are falling short. In response governors have been able to discuss with greater knowledge of how the school is seeking to “close the gaps”.

Governors have also gained greater understanding of the challenge of “closing the gap” through their discussions with middle leaders.

**Impact.** Now that many more governors have a better understanding of the challenges facing the school the quality of challenge and support has become more effective. For example the H.M.I who sat in on the governors meeting middle leaders noted the good knowledge of governors and their questioning. Also the feedback from middle leaders was that meetings with governors gave them greater confidence in explaining how they provided challenge to teachers to make sure they were doing their best to raise the standards of all groups of pupils. By having up to date information from Diane George on the standards and progress of the children the Teaching and Learning Committee have been able to focus on the strategies used by teachers to raise standards and gained skills in judging their effectiveness.

**Governors own self-evaluation of their work.**

At the full governors meeting in June 2017 governors assessed their work against the Ofsted criteria of effective governance.

Governors considered that we were particularly effective in working with leaders in providing the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and providing a balance of support and challenge.

They also considered that they were effective but with more to develop on how the school makes decisions about teacher’s salaries regarding pay and performance, including the headteacher’s performance, that they received effective information from leaders to make probing questions, and understood the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of the school.

Governors considered that further work needed to be done on ensuring that the school’s finances were properly managed and were more transparent in their decision making with staff, and parents.

Governors also recognised that they need to improve their communication with parents. Many parents are uncertain about the role of governors and what they actually do. The need to have a new parent governor will be one way of making parents more aware of what governors do.

Governors at their full governors meeting of the year on 10th October 2017 governors added the priority of addressing the projected deficit of £237,000. Governors will seek to do this while not compromising the drive to raise standards and the provision of a broad curriculum that seeks to give every child the opportunity to do “their best”.