

SSCA Annual Governance Statement For Academic Year September 2016 to August 2017

This annual governance statement gives a brief overview of impact of the governing body over the last year. It is intentionally a brief summary, as activities are reported as they happen throughout the year via the school newsletter, school website and publication of the minutes from Governors meetings in the governor section of the school website. The governor section also contains details of the governors during this period, their attendance at meetings and their pecuniary interests, if any. The statement is organised around the three primary objectives of the governing body – Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school, holding the school to account for the education performance of its pupils and ensuring the financial well-being of the school.

Attendance at Governors meetings during this period was 87% but it should be noted that the small numbers on the Governing Board can have a more disproportionate affect on the overall attendance percentage. ADMAT directors and the school are seeking community governors. If you feel you have something to offer, please contact the clerk on clerk2@andaras.org

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The governors been regularly informed by the Head of School about the vision and ethos of the school and how it is maintained and that the improvement plan takes the school in the right direction. The governors have provided challenge and support to ensure that social media is used positively and reduces the reputational damage to the school. They have continually challenged the communication with parents to ensure that every avenue is used to its full potential, this has included communication to parents of the risks of children using social media. The governors have monitored how the front desk staff have dealt with queries from parents to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, and they have been continually impressed with how this is achieved.

Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation of its pupils, and the performance management of staff

All governors visit the school as part of the monitoring of the Academy Improvement Plan and for specific subjects areas. Governors lead on specific subject areas so that they can form closer liaison with the subject leaders, teachers or pastoral staff. Feedback on all visits is given to the Head of School to be acted upon and/or briefed at the Governors meetings. In particular, they have monitored the function of the ARB and delivery of support for SEND children to ensure the staff have been able to maximise resources and SEND children are given every opportunity to shine. Visits have included looking at premises, safety, analysis of childrens' needs and acknowledgement of the cost & availability of external resources so that the Governors can support staff where it is needed. Visits to the pre-school have monitored the delivery of changes, monitored that staff are supported and have praised the strong links between pre-school and Yr F. Specifically the governors have learnt about the provision of learning and the planning behind it to ensure it is coherent. Other regular visits have included subject area specific visits such as math mastery and assessing the impact it is having across the school.

Governors have also spent time monitoring the progress of children throughout the school – this has been particular important because of the national change in assessment systems. Through the school performance data, Ofsted Dashboard and RAISEonline, the governors were able to see how the children are performing and where there are issues that may need support from the Governors to address. To improve their understanding, the governors attended a separate data meeting, provided by the Head of School, that has allowed them to provide more appropriate challenge regarding the provision of teaching and learning across KS1 and 2, and well as challenging what support there is for parents to ensure they can assist their children with homework.

The governors have also monitored and challenged discipline and behaviour, including the policies, to ensure they are consistent across the school and not disruptive to other students. There has also been challenge on the exclusion policy to ensure that it doesn't appear that children benefit from inappropriate behaviour. The governors have also monitored staff welfare and supported any concerns from staff. They have also challenged the behavior processes to ensure that provision for pupils who do not misbehave is not reduced. Governors were also involved in an exclusion meeting to ensure the process was followed properly and fairly, and the right outcome was achieved for the pupil and the school.

Regular safeguarding checks have been conducted to ensure the safety of the children, as well as support for the Right's Respecting School Award. The Governors challenged the work required for the L1 award to ensure that the benefits outweigh the financial costs and time commitment from the staff.

Policies have been checked and challenged to ensure they are fit for purpose on a rolling programme throughout the year. This included making an informed decision on not having a policy that was requested by a parent given that it was neither necessary nor mandated. The governors have challenged key policies such as homework policies to ensure that the feedback of homework is worthwhile and meaningful (from both a child's and teacher's perspective), and that parents have an opportunity to have homework requirements and subject matter explained to them.

Certain governors have taken the lead for monitoring staff performance management and appraisals, and being part of an interview panel that aimed to ensure the right staff are recruited.

Governors have become familiar with the Visible Learning initiative and insisted that it be added to the agenda as a regular item in order that they can ensure it is delivering results given the costs that are involved in training the staff. Early days, but it is having a positive impact on the childrens' learning so far.

Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Pressure on school budgets is greater than ever and as SSCA is part of the An Daras MAT, the central team completes much of the budget planning. While the governors have less control with setting the budget, they are still expected to monitor the spending and ensure it is spent appropriately for the school to deliver results within budget, as well as apply pressure when additional funds are required for key work such as infrastructure repair.

The governors have supported the proposals for building repairs and maintenance to ensure the school remained fit for purpose. This has included challenging the suitability of and heating in the ARB, and potential security issues with children. They have also monitored H&S issues to ensure funding is spent to rectify these and also clarified their responsibilities with regard to asbestos management to ensure it is being done correctly and nothing is being missed.

Governors have monitored the spending plans for PE and PPG to ensure the funds are spent appropriately. They have challenged the use of Gateway for school meals and activity payments, including the requirement for minimum payments and payments for siblings on the same account to ensure that the best possible service is provided to the parents, particularly those that cannot afford large up-front payments. They have regularly brought issues to the attention of Directors for support and decision making purposes.