



Villa Real School

together we achieve

GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Responsibility: J.Bowe

Date: October 2024

To be reviewed: October 2025

Introduction

Overall, there is effective governance in place. Governors continue to offer strong strategic leadership, oversight and challenge. There is an effective decision-making and scrutiny structure in place.

The Finance and Premises Sub Committee continues to ensure the ongoing financial stability of the School; and this is supported by strong expertise at the strategic level. Governors are effective in holding leaders to account. Assurance is provided that the financial performance of the School remains strong. Regular reporting, robust risk management and internal and external audits provide assurance to Governors. Areas to develop include effective succession planning for key roles and support and capacity for the Governance function, including to ensure that governance remains strong.

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The School benefits significantly from the effective governance arrangements that ensure and support the School's vision, ethos and strategic direction, and offer an effective challenge.

Work is currently in progress to strengthen succession planning and ensure that all committees have Vice-Chairs who are part of the succession planning strategy and receive relevant hands-on training including introducing 2 new governors from the clergy and education. Work continues with relevant stakeholders to ensure the school has a diverse range of people around the table, representing the communities we serve. We are working to ensure new Governors receive the support they need to transition into their new roles smoothly. Progress has also been achieved on updating the Register of Interests and providing advice on this duty and responsibility.

Progress has been achieved on ensuring Governors have a good mix of skills to enable them to undertake their role effectively.

A Key Priorities and Strategic Governance Plan has been developed, which includes key actions agreed at the Strategy Day (see Appendix 1)

workstreams such as, for example: continued review of governance as a whole.; review of committee structure and membership; continued work on resolving vacancies; essential training plans; succession planning; review of committees terms of reference; review of committees effectiveness; skills audit; a resource library; an improved induction programme and a comprehensive training offer for our Governors.

Overseeing the financial performance of the School

Financial oversight remains strong. The School benefits significantly from its skilled Governors on the Finance and Premises Committee; and work is in progress to strengthen these functions further.

Governors receive regular Financial reports from the School Business Manager, to comply with the government requirements and ensure a continuous oversight of the financial performance of the School.

The School has a robust risk management framework and is supported by internal and external audit programmes, which provide assurance over compliance.

Holding leaders to account

The School's governance structure is effective in discharging the duty of holding the Headteacher to account. Overall, good working relationships are observed between the Governors and the Headteacher and school leaders, which promote a sense of teamwork and instil trust.

Governors continue to set challenging but fair expectations for the School. Scrutiny remains strong and Governors continue to ask challenging questions. Items such as Key Performance Indicators and Risk Registers are reviewed regularly.

Whilst, overall, there are clear lines of accountability, a further review and fine tuning might be required on the School's Scheme of Delegation and committees' Terms of Reference to enhance clarity around the responsibility for the decision-making on various levels and related scrutiny, and this forms part of the Strategic Governance Plan.

Well-being

Policies are reviewed regularly at committee and Full Governing Body levels. The School is dedicated to ensuring that policies, approaches and procedures support the School's effectiveness, promote the staff's well-being and impact positively on culture and staff retention.