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Governor Focus Newsletter

It is our time as Governors to report back to you all. The focus for this Governor newsletter is looking at all of the things that we know we do so well at our school - sometimes, we all enjoy a bit of praise, yet we often forget about all of the brilliant things that are happening at St Michael's. The below are all quotes taken from external people/organisations - we wanted to showcase these and more importantly demonstrate to parents and carers how, as Governors, we are ensuring that these things are happening - it makes a wonderful read!

Our Governors meet within the school every half term to discuss progress and challenges, working collaboratively with staff, parents, and the wider community to foster an inclusive environment. Our legal duties, powers, and responsibilities underpin the effective governance and success of the school.

Acting as a 'critical friend', we monitor the school's performance, scrutinising attainment, budgetary management, and curriculum effectiveness, thus ensuring that St Michael's remains committed to providing a purposeful and enriching education for our children.



Mrs Jo Feltham Chair of Governors & Mrs Juliette Craven Vice Chair of Governors

"Pupils chat with enthusiasm and confidence about their work. They particularly highlight that their teachers are experts, talking animatedly about recent lessons that they have enjoyed."

This quote, taken from our most recent OFSTED report, is one of the things that makes me so proud to be a Governor at St Michaels - yet how do we ensure that this continues to happen?

The school values the feedback from pupils. This is supported with a very special weekly celebration afternoon tea with the Head Teacher. This is a vital opportunity for leaders to see what the children have been learning, chat to the children and listen to them talk about all things school with juice and cake - and trust me, that 30 mins is definitely the most honest feedback leaders will get!

As Vice Chair, I am very lucky to often come into school and conduct this. In the middle picture, this was me with 7 wonderful pupils who spoke with immense positivity about their work. They are very proud and talk with confidence about what they have been learning and always love to show their work to me with pride. As one little girl said to me at the last session I attended, 'I love to learn here...' and I think that says it all!



Vice Chair of Governors: Mrs Juliette Craven

"The school is a welcoming and friendly place to learn."

This sentiment was brought to life recently when we welcomed new families who will be joining St Michael's in September. It was a pleasure to meet parents and carers, many of whom brought their children along to explore our Early Years provision.

Seeing the Reception classroom through the eyes of these young visitors was a joy—curious, excited, and eager to get involved. The activities quickly captured their attention, and one little girl even asked, "Can I come again tomorrow?"—a wonderful testament to the inviting atmosphere our staff work so hard to create.

Evenings like this are a source of pride. They give us the chance to share the warm, friendly spirit that defines St Michael's—something I've experienced myself over the years as a pupil, a parent, and a governor.

Our recent SIAMS inspection in March echoed this, noting: "A powerful culture of welcome and acceptance exists here. This creates a deep sense of belonging for pupils and adults to grow as the unique people they are."

At St Michael's, that sense of belonging is at the heart of everything we do. I continue looking forward to my visits in to school where I know I will always be welcomed with warmth.

Chair of Governors: Mrs Jo Feltham

"The school's Pre School and Reception class provide secure foundations for children's future learning"

At the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in seven key areas of learning and development. At St Michael's, EYFS attainment has been consistently above the national average for the past three years.

In 2024, 72.2% of pupils achieved this, compared to the national average of 67.7%. These results reflect the high quality of teaching and learning in our Pre-School and Reception classes to ensure that our youngest pupils make a strong start and develop the key building blocks they need to be ready for Key Stage 1 and beyond.

I recently visited Reception class to talk to them about keeping safe. It was a pleasure to talk to a very enthusiastic and welcoming group! They told me how people in their school are kind and that they help them. When I first arrived, they had been tidying up together from outdoor play. They told me that they are so good at this – which they were- because they have been friends since pre-school where they all learnt how to work together.

Governor - Mrs Kate Lambert



"The school's core values, which include respect, resilience and cooperation, are woven through all that the school does. They are seen as values for life"

Wherever you go within the school, the values of respect, responsibility, resilience, confidence, compassion and cooperation are promoted on displays on the walls, in the hall, the classrooms and the corridors. From pre-school through to Year 6 they are embodied in teaching, collective worship, sports, projects, school trips etc. The children not only know what the values are, they appreciate them and do their best to live up to them. They are proud of what their school stands for.

Pupils are taught not to be afraid of failure and not to worry about making mistakes. On a recent visit to school, when I was asking children in Year 1 how they felt about getting things wrong, their response was that if you make a mistake you just try again until you get it right! They had no concerns about taking on new challenges.

Confidence and resilience are also hallmarks of the school visits to centres such as Newby Wiske where children can try out lots of new and challenging activities. These activities often need good teamwork and the children make good use of what they have learned about cooperating with each other.

Children at St Michael's care for one another. When I was asking Year 1 children what they would do if they were worried another pupil had problems I expected them to reply that they would tell their teacher. Their first reaction was "I would help them". They knew that telling the teacher was the right thing to do but they wanted to offer their help first.

The values learnt at our school enable pupils to go out into the world with confidence and to cope with the challenges life brings them with resilience. They learn to be good team players, respectful of others, compassionate and responsible members of society - the weekly celebration worship also sees teachers rewarding our pupils around our core values....they permeate the entire school.

Foundation Governor: Miss Janet Hallows



"The school is well led. School leaders, including Governors, understand the strengths of the school and have appropriate plans to help it improve further"

As a school we receive feedback from several sources including Ofsted, the diocese, attainment data and our parents and children. School leaders and the governing body assess all this information to make sure we're clear on our strengths and where we want to be even better.

With our strengths we don't rest on our laurels. We ask ourselves why and how is this a strength, how do we make sure it remains a strength and can we make it even better. For example, SIAMS described our school as "a welcoming and inclusive community, where pupils and adults experience being loved and a sense of belonging". We are incredibly proud of this feedback and work hard every day to make sure our community continues to feel the same.

When we have an area we want to improve, we ensure there's a plan to do that; that we are clear on what success looks like and that we track progress. For example, we have a plan to improve writing. As governors we have been into school and looked at all of the information to see if we can see progress. We spoke to the children and to the teachers to get confirmation that recommendations have been put into practice. As ever, we found that staff and pupils are very focused and working hard, the children are very proud of their progress.

Governor: Mrs Glenda Raistrick



"We deliver a progressive and engaging curriculum"

At St. Michaels, we take pride in the range and quality of our curriculum. Whilst we have well developed lessons covering the core academic subjects, we also invest in the creative subjects. Music, in particular, covers a wide range of styles and origins, including learning Madina tun Nabi (Saudi Arabian), Samba (Brazilian), and a full year on the ukulele. This variety reflects our progressive approach, celebrating global cultures and encouraging children to explore new perspectives through music.

As children explore these musical traditions, they naturally connect with wider topics like Geography and Religious Education. By forming these links, we can keep the children engaged, helping them to experience the world not just through textbooks.

On top of this, our range of extra-curricular clubs gives children even more opportunities to discover new passions, build confidence, and enrich their learning beyond the classroom.

Governor: Mr Chris Armitage

