More Governors News

What is a School Governor?

Dear Parents,

I would like to introduce myself to all parents and carers. I am no stranger to the 'world of education' having had a 38-year career as both teacher and headteacher in five Catholic secondary schools, retiring in 2011 after 17 years as headteacher of St Mark's, Harlow. As a family, we moved to Great Chesterford in 1994 when I took up the latter position and all three of my daughters attended St Thomas More with all proceeding to university. They still cherish their time at primary school. My wife is also a teacher and is a head of department at Saffron Walden County High.

I have been a Governor at St Thomas More for eighteen months now and last year was Vice-Chair, supporting Mrs Bailey; our roles are reversed for this academic year. I have been a Chair of Governors at a Catholic primary school before, when I was a deputy headteacher in Kent, so I understand the responsibilities and demands placed on Governors nowadays. However, my background and experience has given me a clear insight into the day-to-day workings and business of school, and I hope to utilise this in the service of the pupils, parents and teaching staff.

David Brunwin
Chair of Governors

School governors (the governing body) are a team of people who work closely with the Headteacher to make key decisions vital to the successful running of the school. Governors appoint the Headteacher and make decisions that directly affect the education and well-being of the children.

School governors are people who wish to make a positive contribution to children's education. No special qualifications are required, but enthusiasm, commitment and an interest in education are important qualities to bring to a governors post. It is a serious commitment, but an incredibly rewarding one. The term of office is four years. School governors are responsible and accountable for all major decisions about the school and its future. The Head is accountable to the governors for the management of the school and regularly gives reports to keep the governors informed of progress. They set strategic direction, objectives, targets and policies for the school; approve the school budget; review progress against budget, plans and targets to ensure accountability; they provide support, challenge and evaluation to the Head Teacher.

At St Thomas More, the governing body is divided into committees – Finance and General Purposes, Pupil Related, Personnel and Pay. Governors also monitor a subject area within the school, i.e. literacy, numeracy, art, etc. and visit the school to see the work in progress. A report is written for each of these visits and circulated for the other governors to read.

Membership of the Governing Body

Foundation Governors: Members of the local Catholic community appointed by the diocese.
Parent Governors: Elected by parents.
Staff Governors: Elected by school staff.
Associates: Not a governor, but a person appointed by the governing body to assist with a particular project.

Who are we?

David Brunwin is Chair of Governors, joined the governing body as a Foundation Governor in March 2017 after a career in teaching, latterly as Head teacher of a Catholic secondary school in Harlow. His three daughters all attended St Thomas More.

Eleanor Bailey (Pupil Related/Finance) is a Foundation Governor and Chair.
Eleanor has been a governor for 7 years. She has three children, who attended the school.

Mary Jo Hall is Headteacher and a Foundation Governor. She has worked at the school for nearly 20 years in that role. Mary Jo also is a Governor representative on the Board of Trustees for the Pre-school. Mary Jo sits on all the Committees.

Father David Clemens (Personnel/Pay) is our Parish Priest and has been a Governor of the school since moving to Our Lady Of Compassion Church in Saffron Walden.

Sarah Potter (Pay & Personnel) is a Foundation Governor. Following over a decade in teaching, she was most recently a Governor of St James' Catholic Primary School in Twickenham. Sarah has two sons, the eldest is in Year 2.

Walter Poulter (Pupil Related) has been a school governor since 1985 serving also at St. Mary's Primary, Tottenham, St Antony's Primary, Woodford, Ursuline High School, Ilford, and St. Helens Primary School, Canning Town. Three of his grandchildren have attended St Thomas More.

Andrew Page (Pupil Related) joined as Foundation Governor just over a year ago. He works in medical research and has 2 sons currently in the school.

John Chambers (Personnel) is now in his sixth year as a Foundation Governor and his wife, Charlotte, is a former chair of the PSA. Both his children attended the school.

Andrew Oliver (Finance) is a Foundation Governor and has been on the Governing body for two years. He works in the Financial Services industry and has one son left at the school.

Elaine McNally (Pupil Related) is the Deputy Head and Year 6 teacher. She has taught at the school for 28 years and has served as a governor for 17 years. Both of her daughters attended St Thomas More.

Tom Scarborough (Finance) is a Foundation Governor and has been on the Governing Body for 10 years. His daughter attended the school and his wife Katrien works in the School office.

Catherine Davis (Pupil Related) was elected as a Parent Governor just over three years ago. She is an Deputy Head at SWCHS and has responsibility for KS2/3 transition. Catherine has a son currently in the school.

Who are we?

Rachel Meichen (Pupil Related) has been a Non Teaching Governor for five years. Rachel has worked at the school for 22 years; presently she works as the Year 6 Learning Support Assistant and in the office on pupil related matters. She has also been on the PSA committee for 26 years. Both her son and daughter attended the school.

Charlie is a Foundation Governor appointed in 2018. Charlie and his wife's three children attended the School . Charlie is a Partner at a law Firm.

Claire Gregory (Personnel) was elected Parent Governor three years ago. Claire has three children, one is still in the school. She is following the family tradition as her mother was also a governor of the school.

Anna Davies is Clerk to the Governors.
If you would like to get in touch with Anna, here is her email address anna@stmsw.co.uk