

## The Governing Body

***"Governors are supportive and fulfil all their statutory duties. They focus on providing a varied curriculum and ensuring pupils' wellbeing."***

***"Governors are very involved in the life of the school, supporting and challenging. They discharge their responsibilities very effectively and are very much appreciated."***  
**OFSTED 2008**

St James' Catholic Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school and its Governing Body consists of both appointed and elected governors.

### **Foundation Governors**

Foundation governors at the school represent the interests of the Diocese of Liverpool who are trustees of the school. The role of the foundation governor is to ensure that the school is clearly recognisable as Christian in its ethos and that its role is seen in the provision for Catholic children of the Diocese.

### **Parent Governors**

Parents of pupils registered at the school are eligible to stand for election as a parent governor. They are elected by other parents at the school. The school has one elected parent governor.

### **Staff Governors**

The Headteacher is automatically eligible to be a full member of the Governing Body by virtue of the office. Headteachers have the choice of being a governor. Both teaching and support staff who are paid to work at the school are eligible to stand as staff governors. They are elected by other members of the staff at the school. The school has two staff governors.

### **Local Authority Governors**

Local Authority governors are appointed by the Local Authority of Lancashire. There is one Local Authority governor at St James' Catholic Primary School.

### **Associate Members**

Associate members are able to attend meetings of the Governing Body at St James' Catholic Primary School. Their presence provides valuable expertise in a variety of areas. Associate members, however, do not have the right to vote at meetings. At The moment there are no associate members of the Governing Body at St James'.

### **What Do Governors Do?**

Governors generally hold their office for a period of four years at a time. During this time they have the opportunity to attend training courses and workshops on a comprehensive range of topics provided by the Local Authority, SHARES and the Archdiocese, and receive updates on salient issues from a variety of sources. The governors, together as a body, have a range of legal responsibilities, so being a governor is an important commitment and new governors should be willing to attend training to help them learn what is entailed.

Governors provide guidance and support. The role of a governor is that of a 'critical friend', who is there to give direction and focus to the school leadership. The management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher. They are expected to be in touch with the local community and to help guide the school to meet the community's educational needs. They are also expected to help the school explain to the community what the school is trying to achieve for their children.

Meetings of the full Governing Body are usually held once a term throughout the school year. Topics covered in meetings may include planning the school's long term vision through the School Improvement Plan, target setting and monitoring, and the school budget. Much of the work, however, is devolved to a series of committees to ensure the workload is dealt with effectively.

### **Do Parent Governors have Special Responsibilities?**

No. Parent Governors do not have 'extra' duties. All governors are equally responsible and discharge their responsibilities as a body, not individually. The Parent Governors speak as parents: they can't speak for all parents.

**Are there any restrictions which could disqualify parents from becoming Parent Governors?**

Yes, but they are unlikely to apply to most parents considering becoming a parent governor. The restrictions are contained in the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003, Schedule 6 and subsequent amendment Regulations. A copy of these is available from school. Parents putting themselves forward for election will be required to sign a statement form and return it with a nomination form when an election occurs. If any of the restrictions apply you should not proceed with your nomination as a governor. Also, you are disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if you are an elected member of the local authority (or if you are paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any twelve month period commencing on 1 August and finishing on 31 July).

**How are Parent Governors Elected?**

Parent Governors must be people (aged at least 18) who have a child(ren) at the school when they are elected. Nomination forms are available from the school. Each form must be signed by the candidate. Candidates can also make a short statement about themselves – a maximum of 50 words will be allowed and this will be rigidly applied. A simple form for this purpose will be provided with nomination forms.

If more nominations are received than there are places to fill, there will be a secret ballot and the Headteacher will send to each parent, ballot forms (1 per parent) and envelopes for their return. The form explains how votes may be cast.

If the number of nominations received is the same as the number of places to be filled, then those people will be declared elected. If there are fewer, those nominated will be declared elected and it will be for the governing body to fill any remaining vacancy by appointing a parent governor.

**The rules for the election** are written down in Procedures set by the Local Authority, and these can be inspected at the school.

Correspondence for the Governors may be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body at the school.