

Dear John and Kevin

5th November 2021

Thank you for allowing me to support your governing board earlier this week, to review and improve how they govern the school. I hope that your governors and colleagues found *Shaping Governance*® useful in allowing them to explore aspects of the school and governance further, and understand where they could improve practice. As promised, I have written up the product of the conversations on the table below as bullet points. These cover the write-up of the Green Leaves (what you know and do as a school and governors), and the Yellow Leaves (areas for action or improvement). I have also added below recommendations based on my experience.

All that remains now, is for the board to create a plan to implement your ideas for improvement.

At the end of the session, you in two groups 'Diamond-ranked' your confidence in the nine areas, and these were very similar with Pupil and Parent Voice, Strategic Vision and Direction, in the bottom three for both groups, and one group with Quality of education and the other with Holding the HT to account. As I indicated this was not a measure of how good you are as a board, and we reflected that these had been placed at the bottom of your confidence diamond due to actions that you wanted to implement.

I have been keeping statistics on the Diamond Prioritisation Activity across the many schools that I have supported to date, and Strategic Direction, and Pupil and Parent Voice regularly featuring within the bottom three; indicating a trend and a difficulty for many governing boards in these areas.

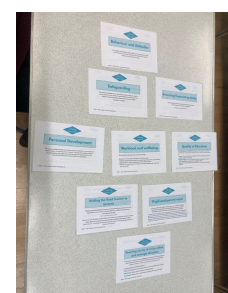
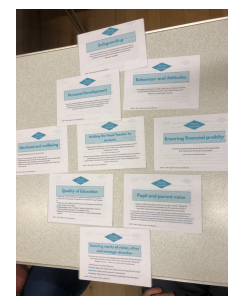
Whilst the discussions that took place were quite wide-ranging, the nature of the *Shaping Governance*® session means that conversation only just scratched the surface, and it will be useful for you to revisit some or all aspects again, particularly as part of an annual review - which is included within our contract.

Insight to Impact recommendations

It was a delight to work with you and I have written below some of the suggestions that I made on the night.

Strategic Vision and Direction

Whilst all governors knew that the school has a values driven approach and could cite the values, they were less clear on articulating the vision / mission. You agreed that it would be timely to review the vision to ensure that it is ambitious for the school.



images from
the session

Pupil and Parent Voice

From our conversations, you acknowledged that this was an area that needed developing. One of the main ways for governor to triangulate what you are told by staff, is by hearing direct from pupils about their experiences of the school. Whilst this can be tricky to regularly build into your board's work; one way that I have developed is by the creation of a set of key questions. So I would recommend:

- Creating a basket of 12 questions that you ask of children across the year, and every year. Broken down to 2 per half term, these can then feed into your board meetings, embedding pupil voice in your discussions. Questions should reflect the breadth of the school or your priorities; or both.
- Considering a variety of ways that you could speak with parents - this could be attendance at parents evenings, on the playground (when allowed), or by developing a Parent Forum.
- Consider establishing a way of reporting out to the community - such as additions within a newsletter or an annual letter.

Quality of Education

A great deal of work had been undertaken by staff in this area - however, this was less clear to governors. You acknowledged that the curriculum intent needed simplifying, and that governors will need to understand before they can understand how it is implemented. I would suggest using the questions that I displayed on the screen during the session to explore your understanding of the curriculum.

Intent: Curriculum design, the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage;

- *How does the school create a curriculum that is as broad as possible, reflective of local context and builds knowledge and skills?*
- *How does the school respond to individual needs and talents and provide increasing opportunities for choice and responsibility?*

Implementation: How it is adopted, taught and assessed;

- *How does teaching in your school ensure pupil's learn well?*
- *How does the school use internal assessment to improve its teaching and learning?*
- *What systems are in place to record the quality of teaching?*

Impact: The outcomes that pupils achieve as a result of the education received

- *Do children achieve well against end of year expectations / national measure?*
- *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the school (inc groups of children)?*
- *Do you have link roles and how do these evaluate the quality of provision and outcomes?*
- *Always ask - are you too reliant on the Headteacher for information?*

Summary and next steps

It was a great pleasure working with you and I wish your Board every success going forward.

Shaping Governance® Workshop write-up
StAlban's Primary School 2nd November 2021

Shaping Governance® is now a recognised way for Board to self-evaluate on an annual basis, helping to create an annual improvement plan. You have purchased a minimum of two-years package, and therefore I will return at an agreed point to review your actions and use Shaping Governance® to continue your improvement journey. Can I suggest that I return on the anniversary - this being Tuesday 1st November 2022?

I look forward to hearing from you, please get in touch if you feel that I can help to refine any of the areas for improvement that you identified. As promised I will send through separately examples of link roles that you could consider adopting. I will also send a link for the dedicated membership Facebook group.

Kind regards

Su Turner, Director

	What Governors / school do	Improvements?
Providing strategic vision and direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of change since HT came in to post • Shared values are clear • Governors are now embedding in the fabric of the school • Covid has impacted on strategic nature of governance • All governors are being asked to champion an area • School not just about academic - whole school ethos and inclusive - children with disabilities supported • three priorities for the year agreed at the first meeting • Governor fog is beginning to rise • Read Director of Education report to keep up to date • Vision and values is clear in the admissions literature • Communication between parents and staff helps shared vision • Policies and procedures • More inclusive • Developed website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure the right people are on the right committee • Tighten up on all link governor reporting • Streamline the agenda to focus on what you need to • Revisit mission statement and vision • Create role descriptors - for links and for links to middle leaders • Improve governor involvement in the creation of the SDP - not operational but to aid understanding • Training and understanding - SEF judgements • SOAP - School on a page - to help governors be cited on key pieces of information
Holding the HT to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data shared with staff openly • SIP and Diocese visits undertaken • Governors challenge in meetings • Allocated Link Roles • Reports from subject leaders provided for governors • PM - 3 whole school targets shared • Pay committee of 3 plus HTPM • HT report - open to all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data to 2019 - but nothing reported to governors since - need to report on teacher assessments • Share SIP reports with governors • Begin to visit the school following covid

	What Governors / school do	Improvements?
Financial Probity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have governors with financial expertise • Assets committee get good information • additional funding spent on staffing and interventions • Assets Com refined the way they review finance • Sports Premium - essential • Bursar - period 6 reports • Maths Wizz - for catch up • Pupil's needs analysed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Education Endowment Foundation guide to review PP • Governors need to understand impact of spending of additional premiums • Report on additional funding for LAC • Financial training for governors • Review the SFVS across the year in the committee - to make a tool for improvement not just an annual task
Quality of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much work has been done on the design of the curriculum - early stages • Reflects local aspects such as the water tower and its history • The intent is values driven • Progression and sequencing the curriculum • Intent on the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors need to review the intent and discuss - you stated that you are around 2 years behind other schools • Address consistency across teaching • Simplify Curriculum Intent
Behaviour and Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance data reported and actions to improve - covid and beyond • School supported vulnerable families during lockdown - food parcels and also supported attendance • DOJO used to communicate - provided squid games information for parents • Behaviour for learning - needs to show above and beyond not just what's expected • RAG behaviour system • Used pivotal but want to renew behaviour policy • Whole school improvement for behaviour not just teacher to child • Need to reward good behaviour more consistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to revise the behaviour policy in the spring - Paul Dix approach - ready respectful and safe • Behaviour focuses on the bad behaviour not on those that are out of sight in the middle • Conduct a parent / pupil questionnaire to monitor behaviour

	What Governors / school do	Improvements?
Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afterschool clubs more involved and creative • Celebrating individual child's greatness not just academic • Christmas charity shoeboxes • Climate change champion • Oracy - primary talk - voice 21 years 5 & 6 • Extra curricular activities run by staff • Dates for new activities - charity days etc • Values taught and upheld in school • RSE consultation with governors - updated regularly • Work with outside agencies • further linkage with the community promoting wellbeing within the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High aspirations • Build in more diversity - such as black history month • Use of homophobic language - raise awareness • Consider teaching financial responsibility / literacy
Workload and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular item on the FGB meetings - to check about staff • School invested in flu vaccine for staff • Pulse staff survey every 2 weeks • No expectation for staff to work beyond their hours of work • Staff are supportive and support each other • Mental health rep to check in • Governors check in on HT • HT feels he can ask governors for support if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a Link Governor for Wellbeing
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Link governor experienced background • All Governors trained • All Governors read KCSIE • Prevent training • DBS - governors ensure that this is regularly reviewed - now using Update service • Single Central Record checked • Scholar pack - any incident recored and flagged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tighten up on Lin Governor report - not just at meetings. <p>Su to provide feedback form</p>

Shaping Governance[®] **Workshop write-up**
StAlban's Primary School 2nd November 2021

	What Governors / school do	Improvements?
Pupil and parent voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent survey RSE• Zoom parent and teacher meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for governors to ask questions of governors - postcard etc• 12 questions• Come back into school to talk to children and their feelings• Governors to attend parent evenings• produce Annual Governance statement to parents• Look at more social media channels• Make an opportunity for us to talk to staff face to face• Clear priorities and values on the website for parents