

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023-2024

Purpose of Annual Governance statement

It can be difficult for parents and carers to know what the school Governing Board is and what it does. Therefore, it is good practice for Governing Boards to provide an Annual Governance Statement explaining its role, how we operate and an assessment of effectiveness.

Scope of responsibility

The Governing Board of Connaught School for Girls works with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team at a strategic level. It has three main roles:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent.

Governance arrangements

At Connaught our full Governing Board is currently made up of twelve positions. The full Board meets 6 times per year and is supported by two sub-committees; Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and Curriculum Committee, which both meet 4-6 times per year. Additionally, the Governors have spent a full day in school to undertake training on key areas, to discuss strategic priorities and to meet with children to hear their views on the school.

Individually, each Governor takes responsibility for a 'link' area. This role is to act as the liaison between the Governing Board and a specific subject, curriculum area or aspect of the school.

We plan out the year based on school priorities and on the statutory requirements of the Governing Board to ensure all topics are covered in a timely fashion.

Attendance record and skills analysis

Governors make a commitment to attending a regular schedule of meetings. This is crucial to ensure we have consistency and we get a range of expertise and skills on each item. We are pleased to have good attendance at our Governing Board and sub-committee meetings.

There have been several new governors who have joined the Board over the last year. We will use a skills audit to inform us of any training and development needs in future and to help identify gaps that we can fill when recruiting to vacancies. A governor's term of office is typically 4 years before it is reviewed. Governors are also encouraged to develop their own skills and understanding by attending relevant courses run by the Local Authority. We also undertake annual safeguarding update training sessions.

Effectiveness and impact

The Governors work with the school to challenge and support the Senior Leadership team. Governance is one of the key areas looked at by Ofsted. Last year, September 2022, saw a new Headteacher in post and the Governing Board have worked closely with her to clarify the current position and needs of the school.

The Governing Board works with the school to set its priorities each academic year and regularly monitors progress against those priorities. This academic year, the school priorities included:

- *A review of assessment procedures to support improved student feedback, tracking of student progress and provision of targeted support*
- *A review of the behaviour policy and the introduction of a clear staged approach*
- *A curriculum review to ensure it meets the future needs of the students*

Governors regularly discuss reports from the Headteacher and senior staff, they visit the school and meet with staff and students.

We approve the school's budget each year, ensuring it reflects the priorities set out in the School Development Plan, and monitor income and expenditure against budget regularly throughout the year. These are increasingly challenging times for education funding, Governors have recently introduced a register of potential risks to the budget and regularly look for ways to reduce risk and build in opportunity to secure the financial sustainability of the school. This year we have also been working closely with the Schools Funding Department.

As you will know, we have also spent time looking at Multi- Academy Trusts which operate locally and are now in the process of Stakeholder Engagement around the one we have identified as providing the best opportunities for Connaught School for Girls.

Priorities for 2023-24

The School Development Plan for next year will outline the key priorities for next year. Several will involve moving forward on the areas identified from the reviews of Assessment and Curriculum this year. The smooth transition to the Multi- Academy Trust will also be an important priority as will working with the budget for future sustainability. The well-being of the community will remain a major focus.

On behalf of the Governing Board, we would like to thank Connaught staff for their ongoing hard work and commitment to the high standards of education for our pupils and also the parents and carers for their support in this.