

Governance Report

St John Bosco College 2023-24

The last academic year, 2023-24, has continued with a more stable educational environment where we have had a settled academic year. The recent change of Government may lead to change in the months ahead, and 2024 is the last year where we will publish Progress 8 data before there is a break to accommodate the pandemic years going through their exam years. Our P8 for this set of exams is expected to be around zero (national average) and exam results were steady. We are delighted to congratulate Ikram Ahmed who is the first student from SJBC to be accepted on an Oxbridge course and is off to Fitzwilliam College Cambridge.

We have had no formal educational inspections this past academic year although we expect an inspection from the Catholic Schools Inspectorate early in the new academic year as we were last inspected under Section 48, in May 2019.

The Governors continue to support the staff and recognise the hard work and dedication of staff to provide a first-class education.

SJBC continues to grow its student numbers which indicates a more stable and thriving school. Our year 7 intake is projected to be over 130. We number over 850 and but with the school population falling in London there will be continued competition with neighbouring schools to maintain our intake. Our Sixth Form numbers grew last year and we hope that will continue with the introduction of a second, new T level in Media and Broadcast in 2024-25. We have facilitated the Compass programme during the 2024 summer term where Year 12 students have followed a programme to immerse themselves in the Travel industry and gain both work experience and tools to help them forge a career in years to come.

We now have a brand-new Chaplaincy building at the heart of the school beneath the original atrium from our legacy school. Fr Greg, our Chaplain, has energised the use of this space which was created in partnership with the local authority as a result of the previous provision being used for the expansion of our ASD resource bases.

There has been a significant turnover of staff this year, many due to natural progression but several due to staff leaving the profession. Teaching remains a challenging career. Governors continue to work with SLT to implement robust staff performance reviews and the Governors are involved in the pay review meeting held each Autumn. We want to provide a progression path for staff but also need to ensure those who are moving up their scales have provided value to the whole school with the implementation of promotion projects.

Governors have continued to closely monitor the Budget. Whilst we have set a manageable deficit budget for the next academic year, 2023-24 finished in a small surplus. Because of our significant reserves from previous years, we are on a good position. Contingency has to be built into the budget as there are many unknowns, including any Public Sector pay deals, the movement of utility costs and student number fluctuations. Each year Governors produce a

Schools Value Financial Statement which is available online where we scrutinise our processes against the guidelines. With our new Director of Business and Operations implementing considerable rigour and review of the budgeting process Governors are more confident that costs can be controlled. The school had an External Audit conducted in April 2024 and the results of this are awaited.

The Trustees of the school have resolved the legal dispute with the building contractors regarding the heating and ventilation systems at school. This battle has taken 9 years. The contractor relinquished sixty percent of the retained defects fund to assist the school and School trustees in the costs we have incurred both getting help with our system and getting advice on pursuing recompense. I have represented the Governors throughout this battle and am relieved for all parties that this is now behind us. Due to appointments in the Facilities department, we are confident that going forward we can get the best out of the system and the environment for learning and working is much improved.

There continues to be pressure on Pastoral Support services throughout the school community and many of our students thrive even though their family backgrounds provide many challenges. We have a robust safeguarding structure in place but the Governors are aware that the volume of work in this area will continue to dominate.

There is no better representation of what our school is all about than this fantastic end of year video montage. It shows the vibrancy of our community, its happiness, its variety and diversity and the pure joy of being part of the Salesian family. I urge you to take a look:

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGK7YMDxTs/BFAGLQK9mnUTZi_2p4fuTQ/watch?utm_content=DAGK7YMDxTs&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor

There has been some turnover on the Governing Body and we say goodbye to an Andy Robertson who has been with us for the last six years. I would like to thank him for all the time he has spent assisting the school.

I would again like to thank all the Governors for their time and effort supporting SJBC. We are all volunteers and hope that our time as Governors is effective and supportive.

Jane Hargrave JP
Chair of Governors, September 2024

Please see below the summaries from our three Governor sub committees:

Resources – chaired by Allan Gardiner

After a relatively normal year, the past academic year was a bit more challenging as we had had to set a deficit budget. The cost of living crisis and particularly energy bill had made this last year a potentially difficult year. That said we finished the year in a healthier financial situation than we had forecast. We have welcomed a new Director of Business and Operations and whilst there has been some disruption during the recruitment process we are now seeing significant improvements in reporting and procedures. We have set a another deficit budget for the coming year but have sufficient reserves to keep us in a good position for the coming years. We have also been thinking about options should we also start to be affected by falling pupil numbers like many other London schools already are.

We had planned to be much more strategic this year and have structured our committee meetings and agendas to help us to do this. This has stood us in good stead as the school now has a comprehensive estate plan which is already helping us with budgeting for things we need to do over the coming few years. It has also meant that, as we are looking ahead more, we are having to spend less time dealing with urgent things that have just popped up at the last minute.

We have continued to review and change our staffing structure to support the growing pupil numbers and to try and expand our curriculum. We are very pleased that our pupil numbers have held up, despite the general trend of falling rolls across London generally. Our additional income from lettings has continued to rise, and we have further plans for the coming year. We have started to get into the detail as to what we need to do to upgrade the school's IT infrastructure and equipment as well as to look ahead and plan for some of the equipment we will have to replace and renew over the coming years.

We have also started to think about the opportunities and challenges that academisation could offer the school. This work will continue this year.

And, as usual, last but by no means least is the ongoing saga of our heating and ventilation system. I am pleased to say, that whilst not yet perfect, the temperatures in much of the school have improved further and we are hoping that this is last year that this topic will have to feature in the end of year resources committee report.

Quality of Education - Chaired by Mrs Moira Bennett

The Quality of Education committee are tasked with ensuring that the quality of academic education provided by SJBC is outstanding. The aim of the committee is to provide support and challenge for the school in terms of: Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact. The key areas to note for the academic year 2023-2024 are as follows:

Summer 2023 External Examination Results

In the autumn term the committee reviewed the Summer 2023 external examination results. At GCSE level results were in line with predictions but not yet back to pre-covid levels however it was pleasing to note that our Pupil Premium and EAL students exceeded the national averages. At A level a 10% improvement in A*-C grades was encouraging.

Literacy strategy

A Literacy Lead member of staff was appointed in September. The committee reviewed and approved the new Literacy strategy which aims to close the gap for students who struggle with basic literacy; to promote good literacy practice (with access to quality texts, explicit teaching of vocabulary, support for extended writing); and to develop an environment where reading and writing are celebrated and encouraged. The committee noted that the challenge of a significant number of Year 7 pupils joining with a reading age of 9 remains.

T Levels

The committee kept a watching brief on the progress of the school's first T level in Digital Production, Design & Development which is an exciting addition to our qualification offer.

Teaching & Learning

The committee supported the focus on Teaching & Learning as part of CPD which includes collaborative planning and subject knowledge enhancement. It was noted that the number of learning walks has increased significantly this year and staff reported that feedback has been thorough and constructive. The committee supported the school's initiative to engage with an external company specializing in raising the quality of Teaching & Learning in schools and to work towards a Gold Award in this area.

Governor Visit Day

In the Spring term, in place of a formal committee meeting, the governors once again attended a whole school Governors' Visit Day which has now become an important part of the governors' information gathering process. As always the governors particularly welcomed the opportunity to speak at length with students and staff about their experiences and views on school life. The governors are extremely grateful to the Headteacher and the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) for the warm welcome and unrestricted access that is afforded to them on these visit days.

SEND

The committee seeks to ensure that SEND students maximise their potential at all stages in their school career and reviewed the progress of these students throughout the year; it was particularly pleasing this year to note that a small number of Y11 students with EHCPs were progressing to the sixth form and also in Y13 a small number had conditional offers for a place at university.

Personal Development

The Personal Development Committee has responsibility for ensuring that the Personal Development and the Behaviour & Attitudes of students at SJBC is outstanding. The aim of the committee is to provide support and challenge for the school in terms of how leaders and staff create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment in the school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils; how leaders and staff provide a curriculum

that provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents; prepares learners for future success in their next steps and for life in modern Britain. The key areas to note for the academic year 2023-2024 are as follows:

Attendance

The committee were extremely encouraged that the school's focus on tackling attendance levels has begun to show signs of an improvement in this area. At the time of the summer committee meeting the attendance levels had risen by 1.9% compared to the previous year; putting the school just 0.4% below the national average.

Behaviour

The committee reviewed the behaviour logs in detail at each committee meeting and were encouraged to note that although the number of exclusions has been rising over the past three years this is in part due to the school's determination to address persistent or general disruptive behaviour, which make up 50% of the exclusion reasons. From the start of this academic year a new 1:1 tuition programme has been implemented that provides on-site tuition by school staff in place of some suspensions. Feedback to date has been extremely positive from both the students and the staff.

Personal Development Curriculum

The committee noted that the PD curriculum continues to provide a full and varied offering to our students. The vertical tutoring system continued to be the primary vehicle for delivery but it is now also embedded and linked through teaching and learning by relevant subjects within the whole school curriculum. A particular strength this year has been the assembly programme which was mapped to the school's character virtues of Respect, Understanding, Affection, Humour, Independence & Resilience. The committee were delighted to note that the delivery of the full programme over the course of the year has enabled the school to establish Character as a core component of what it means to be an SJBC student.

Mental Health & Well Being

The MH&WB Link Governor met with Ms. Motiwala, who has now completed a certificate in Senior Mental Health Leadership, to update the Governors' MH&WB Audit. This document provides the full governing body with a complete picture of the wide ranging initiatives across the school that support the mental health and well being of our students. Student MH&WB surveys are now circulated termly and have been adapted over the year to encourage students to respond.

Careers

Governors continue to be aware of the need for pupils to have quality careers advice and work experience opportunities during their final years at school. Members of the committee particularly enjoyed attending the presentations by the Y12 students who participated in a Compass Project initiative with Mundy Cruising that aims to enable sixth-form students from socially diverse backgrounds to learn more about travel and associated career opportunities.

RUAH Committee – chaired by Professor Dr John Lydon

The Governors' RUAH Committee has responsibility for: ensuring that St John Bosco College (SJBC) is an outstanding Roman Catholic, Salesian school. The aim of the committee is to provide support and challenge for the school in terms of:

- Catholic Life and Mission of the school
- Religious Education in the school
- Collective Worship in the school
- Scrutinizing and agreeing the school's admissions policy each year.

Catholic Life, Mission and Chaplaincy

The Religious Education (RE) Department and the Chaplaincy Team continue to build on the Outstanding judgement achieved in the Section 48 inspection in May 2019 and to prepare for a Catholic School Inspection which will be carried out under the National Catholic School Inspection (CSI) Framework introduced in September 2022. St John Bosco College, having been judged Outstanding in 2019, is scheduled to be inspected in 2024-25.

In my last report I signposted the appointment of Fr Gregory Echegwo SDB by the Salesian Provincial to the role of Chaplain of St John Bosco College. I can report that, during the school year 2023-24, Fr Echegwo continued to lead a range of initiatives both within and beyond the College community. In addition to leading liturgies and celebrations of the sacraments, "the core business of chaplaincy", Fr Echegwo introduced new initiatives including a gathering of parents and students representing a range of religious faiths, thereby making a significant contribution to inter-religious dialogue. His leadership of a Sponsored Lenten Walk in Richmond Park (CAFOD) involving 48 students, 3 staff and one parent is worthy of special commendation.

As I reported in 2022 and 2023, I believe that the following OUTSTANDING grade descriptors in relation to chaplaincy are reflected in the chaplaincy provision at St John Bosco College:

- Pupils highly value the school's chaplaincy provision, willingly taking leadership roles within it. They actively participate in and contribute to opportunities provided by the school. (p.28)
- The chaplaincy provision is a central and celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school. It witnesses to the school's commitment to the flourishing of every member of the school community, to the education of the whole person and to helping each discern their own unique vocation. As a consequence, the school has a dynamic and well-planned

chaplains programme that provides extensive, creative and high-quality opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. (p.32)

- Leaders, including chaplains, are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy. As a consequence, pupils and staff are able to provide prayer and liturgy opportunities that are engaging, of a consistently high quality and are accessible, meaningful and relevant for the whole community. (p.71)

Fr Echegwo has now embarked upon completion of the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme. Chaplaincy provision during the school year 2024-25 will be built upon his outstanding legacy. In this context, the contribution of the wider Salesian community to SJBC cannot be overstated. The interface between St John Bosco College and the Salesian community continues to constitute a particularly positive characteristic and has developed with significant support from several members of the Salesian community in a range of contexts including governance, chaplaincy, ethos, spiritual formation and support for pupils with learning disabilities.

Religious Education in the school

In regard to Religious Education, the judgement of the 2019 Section 48 Report that outcomes in Religious Education have consistently improved and, from attainment levels below the national average on entry, almost all pupils make at least good, and often outstanding, progress in Religious Education” remains the case. The following constitute headlines for RE GCSE in 2024:

Quality of Education in Religious Education (RE)

Once again, the Headteacher noted the outstanding results in the summer exams, summarised below:

- 119 out of a cohort of 136 pupils sat Religious Studies of whom 12 pupils achieved grade 9, the first time so many pupils achieved the top grade.
- 70% of pupils achieved a grade between 9 and 4.
- RE was the top performing GCSE subjects.
- Given the similarities in examination assessment, the fact that RE outperformed English constitutes compelling evidence of the Headteachers reference to the outstanding nature of the RE GCSE results..

Fr Andrew Ebrahim SDB, the Head of Religious Education, confirmed the exemplary range of interventions/enrichment:

- 7 intervention sessions a week including two on Saturday and one on Friday after school.

- Monday after school for Ukrainian and Spanish students
- Easter Holidays – three mornings GCSE/A Level
- Summary document for each student indicating progress
- Over 100 AI quizzes generated
- A wide range of Speakers/trips focused on enrichment
- All pupil premium students get free revision text books for the GCSE.

Leadership of the RE Department

This performance in GCSE examinations, together with the acuity of the his and the Department's response to suggestions following my annual Governance visit, reflects the outstanding leadership of Fr Andrew Ebrahim SDB.

The Catholic School Inspection Framework details the following Outstanding Descriptor in relation to the Head of Religious Education:

The subject leader [Head of RE] for religious education has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. These are used effectively to improve teaching and learning in religious education, resulting in teaching that is likely to be outstanding and at least consistently good. The quality of subject leadership is recognised beyond the school and the subject leader willingly shares this expertise to the benefit of other diocesan schools.

This descriptor summarises appropriately the nature and scope of Fr Ebrahim's leadership of the RE Department.

GOVERNORS AND CSI

Finally, I would like to reiterate my comment on the enhanced emphasis on the role of governance in the latest Catholic School Inspection documentation, illustrated by the following

- 8 references to 'Governor', 124 references to 'Governors'
- 21 with reference to **How the School will be Inspected**
- 111 with reference to **How the School will be Judged**
- Governors' active involvement in both the completion of the school's **Catholic Self Evaluation Document** and its on-going evaluation. (#46)
- The chair of governors and/or chair of directors, or any link governor of religious education should be invited to explain:
 - 1) how the governing body or board of directors fulfils its responsibility as the guardian of the mission of a Catholic school
 - 2) the vision and priorities for the Catholic life and mission of the school, religious education and prayer and liturgy (#.48)

J J Lydon

**Professor John Lydon KC*HS
Link RE & Chaplaincy Governor
St John Bosco College
Chair of the RUAH Committee**

September 2024