



## **Annual Governance Statement**

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

**Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9DH**

### **Purpose of this Governance Statement**

This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Governing Body of St Mary's Catholic Primary School (hereafter referred to as the Governing Body) in compliance with our duty to report on the ways in which we have fulfilled our obligations and responsibilities relating to (i) our overarching duty to conduct the school in accordance with its Catholic character and (ii) our core functions (which are explained below) during the 2023- 2024 academic year.

A list of serving governors is set out in **Appendix 1**.

### **Role of the Governing Body**

As the Governing Body of a Catholic school, our overarching responsibility lies in ensuring that the school is conducted in accordance with its Catholic character at all times, and this overriding duty (which is also a legal duty) permeates everything that we do. Further, in accordance with our legal obligations, the Governing Body endeavours to operate at a strategic level leaving the headteacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to us for the operational day-to-day running of the school. It is by achieving these aims that we can be sure that our School has effective governance.

The three core functions of the Governing Body are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the internal organisation, management and control of the School, including performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

As an integral part of the vision for the holistic formation of children and young people Canon law (Church law) also requires that Catholic schools (which includes academies) are "...at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area" (806§2) and the Governing Body are mindful of this requirement in all that we do.

### **Scope of Governing Body's Responsibilities**

The Governing Body acknowledges that we have overall responsibility for ensuring that St Mary's has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve our objectives, and can provide only a reasonable (as opposed to absolute) assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Governing Body has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the headteacher for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management.

### **Governance Arrangements**

#### **Composition of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body is made up of 6 Foundation Governors, 3 Staff Governors (including the headteacher), 2 Parent Governor(s) and 1 Local Authority Governor(s).

Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the school is situated. The Bishop not only appoints his Foundation Governors because of their particular skills, but, more importantly, for the strict purpose of ensuring, on his behalf, the Catholic character of the School. Foundation Governors are also under important legal duties to preserve and develop the School's Catholic character. In order to ensure that the School's Catholic character is protected and that it is being conducted in accordance with the tenets of its Catholic designation, Governing Bodies of Catholic schools and academies must always have a majority of Foundation Governors.

The Diocesan Bishop is canonically responsible for his schools and academies. He ensures that the Catholic ethos of the school/academy is maintained, particularly through the appointment of Foundation Governors, but also through overseeing the appointment of members of staff and through Diocesan inspection, in order to ensure that the school/academy is fulfilling the objects cited in its Instrument of Government/Articles of Association and the trust deed under which the school/academy was established.

#### **Governing Body's work this year and Governors' attendance at full Governing Body meetings**

Governors confirmed link roles and areas of responsibilities following changes to the governing body. Through the Personnel, Finance and Premises committee and papers received and will the approval of the full governing body governors reviewed and approved the draft budget for the 2024/25 academic year. A social media strategy was agreed upon by staff and governor input to address the issue of a decline in pupil numbers which is linked to a fall in UK birth rates. Through the Teaching and Learning committee and the documents and evidence received, governors reviewed the quality of education at St Mary's. Policies are periodically reviewed and approved including the teaching staff pay policy for example. Governors continued to be regular visitors to the school.

The full Governing Body has met 4 times during the year.

We have not cancelled any Governing Body meeting because it was not "quorate" (the number of Governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

Overall, Governors have good attendance at Governing Body meetings. Governors who were not able to attend specific governing body meetings have provided reasons for non-attendance. These include work commitments or personal reasons and were unavoidable.

Individual Governors' attendance during the year at Governing Body meetings can be found at **Appendix 2**.

#### **Committees work this year and Governors' attendance at Committee meetings**

At St Mary's we have a personnel, finance and premises (PFP) Committee, which focuses on finance, premises and some personnel matters, a Learning and Teaching (T & L) Committee, and a newly created Pay and Performance Committee. The PFP undertakes the following type of work:

- It ensures the school is following the school's mission and vision statement appropriately.
- It asks challenging questions about the financial position of the school, for example, requesting changes to the frequency of budget monitoring reports to ensure alignment with best practice.
- Governors noted the school had taken on board and acted on requests to improve the way third-party contracts were recorded and presented to the Board.
- Robust discussions take place around the staffing of EHCPs and sustainability and how these affect the school budget.
- Governors received and discussed an update on the current staffing of the school.

The T&L undertakes the following type of work:

- Governor visits which ensure the data and information received from the Headteacher is properly evidenced
- Discussion of the school performance data to ensure pupils are on track
- Ensures pupil voice will continue to be heard via an easy-to-use questionnaires and reviews responses
- Notes the parent survey feedback and ensures any remarks made in the survey have been dealt with by the school
- Notes the deep dive into attendance and the processes undertaken by the school to ensure pupil attendance.

The purpose of the Pay and Performance Committee is to:

- Check that processes operate fairly.
- Be aware of the impact that pay decisions have on the school's budget.
- Make sure pay appeals are managed in line with the school pay and appraisal policies.

Individual Governors' attendance during the year at Committee meetings can be found at **Appendix 2**.

### **Governors' Future Plans for the School**

St Mary's has set out below an overview of their future plans and agendas for the Governors for 2024-2025

- Review the committee terms of reference
- Review minutes of previous meetings and review of actions
- Receive financial reports
- Receive an update on the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures
- Receive pupil admissions data
- Receive safeguarding and health and safety updates
- Review and approve policies
- Receive updates on Religious Education and British Values
- Receive updates on pupil and staff wellbeing
- Receive and monitor curriculum, teaching and learning updates
- Receive data reports from statutory and non-statutory assessments
- Receive updates on the Sports Premium and the Pupil Premium Grant
- Receive updates on the School Improvement Plan and the School's Self-evaluation (SEF)
- Discuss the school improvement partner reports
- Received Pupil attendance and behaviour updates
- Review Budget versus Actuals for the current year 2024/2025
- Receive an update on progress against the 3-year budget plan.

- Confirm arrangements to publish the Pupil Premium strategy statements by 31st December 2024
- Agree SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard) completion arrangements (submit by 31st March 2025).
- Receive termly Headteacher reports to governors
- Confirm term dates for 25/26 academic year
- Engage with governor development and training
- Approve residentials
- Audit the school website to check for compliance
- Please note – this list is indicative of the governing body duties and tasks but is not exhaustive.

### **Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings**

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents - you can ask the Headteacher if you would like to see a copy of the minutes.

### **Review of Value for Money**

The Governing Body has used its resources to provide good value for money during the academic year and has assessed where value for money can be improved including the use of benchmarking data where available. The Governing Body has delivered [improved] value for money during the year by taking part in the completion of the SFVS, and by reviewing contracts register and staffing levels.

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

The school's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability, where appropriate. In particular, it includes: –

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body;
- Regular reviews by the [Personnel, Finance and Premises Committee] of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecast and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- Clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- Identification and management of risks.

### **Capacity to handle risk**

The Governing Body regularly reviews the key risks to which the school is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks.

### **Review of effectiveness**

The Governing Body has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the systems in place in the school to identify and manage risk and plan to address any weaknesses (if relevant) and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

### How to contact the Governing Body

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents, carers and the wider school community – please contact the Chair of Governors, Simon Davis at [chairofgovernors@stmrc.uk](mailto:chairofgovernors@stmrc.uk) or contact the Headteacher at [head@stmrc.uk](mailto:head@stmrc.uk) and your communication can be passed on to the chair.

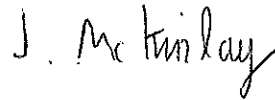
This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Governing Body on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

SIGNED



Simon Davis  
Governor

SIGNED



Janet McKinlay  
Headteacher

Appendix 1

Governing body of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

List of serving governors

<b>Governor details</b>	<b>Category of Governor</b>	<b>Term of office expiry date</b>
Simon Davies (Chair of Governors)	Foundation Governor	August 2026
Roy Davies (Vice-chair and chair of the Personnel, Finance and Premises Committee)	Foundation Governor	August 2026
Rev Father Peter	Ex-officio	August 2024
Chris Wells	Foundation Governor	August 2028
Janet McKinlay (Headteacher)	Ex officio	/
Ian Camacho	Foundation Governor	August 2025
Alison Pink	Foundation Governor	August 2026
Dave Coxon	LA Governor	November 2027
Anita Lear	Parent Governor	October 2027
Darren Preston	Parent Governor	October 2027
Tarranie Woolley	Staff Governor	September 2027