
St Catherine of Siena Primary School Annual Governance Statement for 2023 - 2024

(30th September 2024)

As chair of the governing board, I am pleased to present our 2023-2024 Governance Statement on behalf of the Full Governing Board. The board has a collective responsibility to our whole school community to promote and enhance the Catholic education provided for all of our children.

THE FOCUS OF THE BOARD IS TO FULFIL OUR FOUR CORE FUNCTIONS, Which are :-

- Ensuring clarity of Catholic vision, ethos, and strategic direction of the school.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance and Catholic character of the school and its pupils; and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, including performance management of the staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure it's money is well spent.
- To ensure the voices of Stakeholders are heard.

To enable the Governing board to fulfil these functions, the governors have attended meetings throughout the year. The Full Governing Board, Curriculum Committee and Finance Committee have met each term to consider many aspects of the school in detail. For example: The school improvement plan, staffing (this year particularly, because three of our long standing members of staff were retiring) and RE provision (because our Catholic School Inspection was in December). The meeting attendance logs can be found on the Governor pages on the school website and the committee's 'Terms of Reference' / Full Governing Board meeting minutes are available from the school office.

The board membership has a four year term, so new members are recruited as vacancies arise. Information about our board formation, remit and individual responsibilities can be found on the governor pages on the school website. Two new parent governors have joined our board this academic year along with a new staff governor. They are all encouraged to complete induction and ongoing training and offered support to understand their governance responsibilities going forward. The full compliment of the board consists of 12 governors: 7 Foundation Governors (appointed by the Archdiocese), the Headteacher, 1 staff Governor (elected by the staff), 2 Parent Governors (elected by the parents), and 1 Local Authority (LA) Governor (appointed by the Local Authority). Unfortunately, our LA Governor had to step down

for personal reasons in January, so along with our two foundation governor vacancies, we are hopeful to recruit these three governor positions to our board in the near future.

As governors of our Catholic school, we have the responsibility to ensure school provides an education with Gospel values central to all learning, in partnership with the Archdiocese Schools Department. Along with the school community, we are involved in setting our mission statement and vision & values for the education we provide for our children. We encourage & promote our Catholic ethos in every aspect of school life and receive termly reports on the RE provision within school. We attend school Masses, 'stay and pray' events and class and school assemblies throughout the year. We support the children's charities, 'school council' and 'eco warrior' activities as they demonstrate striving to make our school and world a better place. (E.g. fundraising for CAFOD, work to achieve the 'Live Simply Award' and being involved in 'Care of Creation' themes).

Although the Governing Board makes decisions collectively, each of our school governors has a specific responsibility assigned to a particular area, for example : monitoring progress or a key area of responsibility such as Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Health & Safety. (Governor role details are on the governor pages on the school's website) The governors attached to these specific responsibilities /monitoring areas have been able to meet with their senior leads over the school year to discuss provision, compliance, resources and outcomes in detail, allowing us to carry out our strategic monitoring effectively. The Governors compile reports about their particular area of responsibility and presents these to the Full Governing Board during the termly meetings so that all governors are kept informed of the strategic monitoring oversight. We carefully scrutinise the in-depth report the Headteacher compiles for us each term so that we are able to provide support and challenge to the school leadership team, promoting ongoing school improvement which is our continuous aim.

The governing board is supported by Liverpool Archdiocese Schools Department, Wigan Local Authority and Wigan Governor Services. We purchase an annual service level agreement (SLA) from Governor Services which includes efficient clerking of the board to enhance our compliance and proficiency. To ensure the board is equipped to fulfil our role, governors complete a skills matrix annually and access training events held both locally and nationally. It is important that we have the correct knowledge and understanding to provide effective and efficient governance for our school.

[The Following Training Has Been Completed By The Governing Board During The 23/24 Academic Year:-](#)

- NGA Safeguarding : How to fulfil the Governance role.
- ABC of Trauma training.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education- on line training.
- NGA- The effective governance of safeguarding: Culture, Context & Compliance.
- Attendance, Children missing Education & Elective Home Education.

- Health and Safety Responsibilities for school governors.
- Wigan Governor's Conference : Mental health & wellbeing.
- NGA Stakeholder Engagement: The governance role.
- NGA Safe Schools, Sound Futures, Estate Management for Governing Boards.
- Children Looked After Training.
- Governors Forum / Chair's / Vice Chair's Forum
- Effective Monitoring of School Budgets.
- HR Workshop for school governors.
- Strategic Monitoring of SEND.
- Succession planning for governing boards.
- E- Safety- NSPCC.
- Prevent Training.
- Safer Recruitment training.
- New to governance training.
- Headteacher performance management training.
- Safer working practices training.
- GDPR training.
- Mental health and Wellbeing training.
- NGA Greener Governance, setting the whole school approach.
- Climate change & sustainability: Curriculum, Careers, Culture, Community & CPD.
- Environmental Sustainability: The Governance role.
- Improving governing boards / Self evaluation.
- The local Authority's Educational Briefings.

This last year, the board has worked closely with Mrs Leck and the senior leadership team, in our strategic role, to ensure continued progress and improvement of our school. We have reviewed and monitored the 'school improvement plan', concentrating on writing and maths subject development across school particularly. We have overseen and approved policies and procedures, for example : Health and Safety, risk management, performance review and safeguarding. In conjunction with our School Business Manager, we have overseen and approved the many facets within the school budget, for example: meeting the School's Financial Value Standards, monitoring budget and grant spend and supporting curriculum resources. Most importantly, we have continued to strive to encourage best outcomes and for our whole school community to gain a positive experience within the ethos of our Catholic school. We were very happy that the December '23 Liverpool Archdiocese Catholic School Inspection confirmed St Catherine's is a 'Good School' with a number of 'Outstanding' aspects. We are also delighted that the school is ready to submit the evidence required to achieve the 'Live Simply Award' after much work by our 'Eco-Warriors' led by Mrs Bennett. In July, after hard work each year by our year 6 pupils and our dedicated staff in school, we are very pleased to confirm that the Key Stage 2 results were again above the National level. To promote ongoing success, we

continue to scrutinise outcomes through both educational key stages and will continue to encourage school improvement.

Part of our remit is to oversee the structural integrity of the school building in partnership with the Archdiocese. The repairs to the school drainage system have been completed this year, along with installation of the Electronic security gates at the school entrance. Roof maintenance and plans for enhancement of the school premises including improvements to the main entrance is in ongoing discussions with the archdiocese and will be completed when the finances are in place going forward.

This academic year we said “Goodbye” to Mrs Jones, our ‘Pastoral Lead’ in October and to Mrs. Mercer & Mr. Clegg in July, as they retired after many years of dedicated service. We supported Mrs. Leck in staffing decisions: recruiting Mrs. Penn to the ‘Pastoral’ role in January and Miss. Eckersley who takes up her post as Year 1 class teacher at the start of the new 24/25 academic year.

We are very grateful to our parents and families who support school throughout the year. The partnership between home and school is vital to ensure good outcomes for all our children. We are also very grateful for the fantastic work that the PTA do to raise funds to enhance the children’s experience in school. This year, we have been able to purchase more IT equipment, some new books and a new overhead projector for the hall from the funds raised. These crucial items will definitely help to promote a good learning environment for all our children in school.

School attendance has been and remains a focus for school. The Governing Board has continued to support the attendance strategies put in place to ensure our children succeed in reaching their full potential and don’t have gaps in their knowledge & learning because they have stayed at home or been taken on holiday in term time. The Department of Education (DfE) has recently announced that from the start of this coming academic year there will be an increase in fines for families where the children have unauthorised school absence and we will have to abide by this from September 2024.

This 23/24 academic year has been a very busy school year again and each class has had the opportunity to be immersed in many new exciting learning activities and experiences. The new play equipment that was purchased for the playgrounds has been greatly enjoyed by the children. The lunchtime play opportunities and also the after school activities have encouraged the children to be more physically active which is essential for health and wellbeing. Our football, cricket and rugby teams have represented the school and themselves admirably this year. We were very excited and proud that our rugby team won the ‘Ben Woods Trophy’ in the cup final in July.

We are very grateful to Mrs Leck and our dedicated staff in school for their continued efforts and dedication for all our children and families. The Governing Board will continue our strategic

oversight throughout the new academic year and we will continue to encourage the ongoing success our school.

Christine Henshall
Chair of Governors.

