



Annual Governance Statement

St. Jude's Catholic Primary School

Purpose of this Governance Statement

This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Governing Body of St. Jude'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 2024/25 academic year.

A list of serving governors is set out at **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. Jude's Catholic Primary School 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, 2 Staff Governors (including the headteacher), 2 Parent Governor(s), 1 Local Authority Governor(s) and 0 Co-opted 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.

Co-opted Governors are appointed by the Governing Body and are people who, in the opinion of the Governing Body, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school/academy. On our Governing Body, there are currently no co-opted governors.

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

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

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

Overall Governors have excellent attendance at Governing Body meetings.

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. Jude's Catholic Primary School we have a system where all governors form a part of the Finance Committee which focusses on finance, premises and some personnel matters. All governors also form the Strategic Management Committee which focusses on standards across school. There are separate committees to make decisions linked to performance and pay, exclusions and complaints.

Individual Governors' attendance during the year at Committee meetings can be found at **Appendix 3**.

Governors' Future Plans for the School

During the academic year 2023/24 the Governing Body of St. Jude's Catholic Primary School plan to ensure that robust financial management continues. There will be a focus on continued recovery of standards post pandemic as well as the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils. Governors plan to challenge leaders to raise standards in writing across school and to ensure that the non-core curriculum is appropriately sequenced.

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents - you can ask our clerk, Mrs D Feeney (contactable via the school office) 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 completing the School Financial Value Standard.

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 [Finance and General Purpose 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, D. Thompson, via the school address.

This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Governing Body on 19th September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Mrs D Thompson
Governor

Mrs B Smith
Headteacher

Appendix 1

Governing body of St. Jude's Catholic Primary School

List of serving governors

Governor details	Category of Governor	Term of office expiry date
Mrs Samantha Casey (SEND, Data Protection and Staff Care)	Foundation Governor	05/12/2026
Miss Natalie Cole (Pupil Voice and Wellbeing)	Parent Governor	12/11/2027
Fr Toby Duckworth (RE, Catholic Life and Liturgy, Academisation and Staff Care)	Foundation Governor	19/12/2027
Deacon David Fairbotham (Vice Chair, Finance and Academisation)	Foundation Governor	03/02/2029
Mrs Marianne Keeling (Safeguarding)	Parent Governor	12/11/2027
Mrs Maria Laugharne (Curriculum Standards and Pay Committee)	Foundation Governor	25/11/2027
Mr Damien McGarrigle (IT)	Staff Governor	10/02/2027
Mrs Bernadette Smith (Link Governor, Mental Health and Academisation)	Head Teacher	-
Mrs Dawn Thompson (Chair, Curriculum Standards, Pay Committee, Pupil Premium, Staff Care)	Foundation Governor	26/09/2023

Appendix 2

Governing body of St. Jude's Catholic Primary School

Governor attendance at Governing Body meetings for 2023/24

Governor	Full Governing Body meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mrs Samantha Casey (SEND, Data Protection and Staff Care)	3	4
Miss Natalie Cole (Pupil Voice and Wellbeing)	2	3
Fr Toby Duckworth (RE, Catholic Life and Liturgy, Academisation and Staff Care)	3	4
Deacon David Fairbotham (Vice Chair, Finance and Academisation)	4	4
Mrs Marianne Keeling (Safeguarding)	4	4
Mrs Maria Laugharne (Curriculum Standards and Pay Committee)	4	4
Mr Damien McGarrigle (IT)	4	4
Mrs Bernadette Smith (Link Governor, Mental Health and Academisation)	4	4
Mrs Dawn Thompson (Chair, Curriculum Standards, Pay Committee, Pupil Premium, Staff Care)	3	4