



ST. OSWALD'S  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**Chair's Report**  
**To**  
**Parents & Staff**  
**(Spring & Summer**  
**Terms 2023-24)**

**Dr. A. J. Wilkinson**

**July 2024**

# **ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## ***Three Core Functions of Governance:***

- 1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*
- 2. Hold executive leaders to account for educational performance and performance management of staff*
- 3. Oversee financial performance and ensure money is well spent*

The governing body encompasses a variety of work / life backgrounds and we are appointed as governors through various routes. As of 18 July 2024 we have eleven governors, and we meet regularly as a board in order to act as a critical friend in both supporting and challenging the teaching staff on any aspect of school life. In addition to the reports we receive from the teaching staff, we are always very happy to hear about the experiences of parents and pupils, and can be contacted via the school office. In order to help us to be effective as governors, we ensure our meetings centre around the three key areas of governance listed above.

On this occasion my report covers two terms, and during that time we have had four meetings of the governing body as detailed below. It should be noted that there are always overarching themes of scrutinising the finances and curriculum, as well as discussing safeguarding at each meeting:-

- 14 February 2024 – this meeting was held face-to-face in school. We welcomed two new governors, Jamie Boyle and Lynne Cronin, who were elected by the parent body to each serve a four year term as governors. We discussed a visit a group of governors had undertaken to look at delivery of the Mathematics curriculum in school. In the meeting we also had presentations from the lead teachers for Art, Design & Technology and Mathematics and reviewed a sample of the children's work across school in these subjects, as well as questioning subject leads on the curriculum design. We also noted a letter received by the school from Damian Hinds, Minister for School Standards, recognising the achievement in phonics results. We also discussed various aspects of the religious life of the school, as well as a number of items relating to the school estate.

- 24 April 2024 – this meeting was held virtually. The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing school finances, although other major areas of discussion included safeguarding and also an update on the School Improvement Plan report.
- 12 June 2024 – this meeting was held face-to-face in school. There had been two governor visits into school in relation to SATS (KS2 external assessments), one to look at security arrangements for handling of the papers, and the other to look at administration of the assessment on one of the days it was running. Curriculum presentations and discussions took place on Geography, History and RE, and the lead teachers from these subjects attended the meeting.
- 17 July 2024 – this was a hybrid meeting, with five governors meeting in school following other commitments at school, and the remainder of the governing body joining virtually. We discussed the Wigan Chairs Forum that had recently taken place, which is part of the support and development network for Chairs of Governors in our Local Authority, and which I had attended. We discussed the religious life of the school, and had presentations and scrutiny of the Sports Premium and Pupil Premium spending, with the relevant staff members attending the meeting. We also discussed the school staffing structure for the forthcoming year, as well as the budget and how this is going to be monitored. We also recognised the achievements of the school in a variety of external assessments. The Chair and Vice Chair elections took place, as is the case on an annual basis, with the result as follows for the forthcoming school year:-
  - Chair – Andrew Wilkinson
  - Vice Chair – David Hughes

All Governor meetings are supported by a Clerk from the Local Authority clerks service, and the meeting minutes are held in the school office.

In addition to attending meetings, there have also been a number of governor visits to school, and these are a vital way for governors to understand how policies are being implemented, including the school's curriculum. They are also a way for governors to fully understand all aspects of school life, as well as how the school fits in and has a relationship with the local community. We are very supportive of school staff, but also challenge and question as we are required to do, and this is only possible by us having a clear understanding of what is happening in the school.

## **Governing Body – Previous Chair**

The Governing Body wishes to acknowledge the death of Ken Stout, who was previously Chair of Governors at St. Oswald's, and whose funeral took place at St. Oswald's Church last week. We send his family our condolences and are immensely grateful for his service to the school community.

## **Governing Body – Forthcoming Plans**

In addition to continuing all of the activities above, we have a number of areas for development that we will be concentrating on in the Autumn term, in particular:-

- Risk Register – we have developed a Risk Register for the school, and will be looking at the ratings for various possible risks and how to manage / mitigate these
- Strategy – we will be holding a strategy meeting as part of our role examining the strategic direction of the school

I will be able to share any progress on this work in future reports.

## **Final Thoughts**

As always the governing body is very happy to hear from staff, parents and pupils, as this helps us to better understand what is happening in the school community. I am also personally very open to meeting anyone who has deeper queries about the work the governors do, and am happy to be contacted via the school office to answer questions. We try to have a model of governance that is open and active, so please do contact us via the school office if there are any queries.

I would like to finish on a really big thank you to Mrs. Hassan and all of the staff at the school for their hard work and dedication, all of our parents for their support, and of course the children who are our entire focus. The governing body celebrates the fact the school has had really good results in the external assessments. We are also very grateful for the breadth and depth of experience that the children receive, and for the thriving school community of which we are all part.

Dr. A. J. Wilkinson