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**Chair’s Report**

**To**

**Parents & Staff**

**(Spring & Summer**

**Terms 2024-25)**

**Dr. A. J. Wilkinson**

**July 2025**

**St. Oswald’s Catholic Primary School**

***As set out by the Department for Education, the three core functions of governance remain:-***

1. *Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*
2. *Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school’s pupils, and for the performance management of its staff*
3. *Overseeing the financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent*

In our role, the governors bring a broad mix of professional expertise and community representation to support and challenge the school leadership. As of 16 July 2025 we have eleven governors, and we are all committed to the governance principles outlined above. It is through these principles that we act as a “critical friend” in both supporting and challenging the school leadership, and help to ensure an ethos of continual school improvement. We do this through regular meetings, committee work and link governor visits. We are also always very happy to hear about the experiences of parents and pupils, and can be contacted via the school office. We are all wholeheartedly driven by our school’s Catholic ethos, our commitment to safeguarding and inclusion, and a relentless focus on the wellbeing and success of our pupils and staff.

During the Spring and Summer terms of 2024–25, the Full Governing Body met on four occasions. In addition to these meetings, governors participated in a strategy day held in school, and carried out a number of visits and monitoring activities.

**Meetings of the Governing Body**

* 12 February 2025 – this meeting was held face-to-face in school. This meeting focused on several strategic and operational matters. We received an update on PTFA (Parent, Teacher & Friends Association) fundraising, which continues to provide invaluable support in resource procurement for school activities and enrichment. Governors reviewed feedback from our Strategy Day held on 8 January, during which we explored the RE curriculum and reviewed the school’s Risk Register in detail (see below for further details). The meeting included a presentation by the school’s RE lead teacher, who outlined the transition from the previous curriculum to the new RE framework. It was important for us to understand how the academic subject of RE is being delivered across the various phases of school, and how delivery of this curriculum content is being monitored and assessed by middle and senior leaders. In addition to the curriculum aspects of RE as a taught subject, governors expressed appreciation for the depth and integrity of the school’s religious life, and we discussed the importance of collective worship in the school’s life, as well as the broader faith mission of the school. The governing body also formally approved the school’s updated admissions arrangements for the forthcoming academic year and received a school budget monitoring update.
* 7 May 2025 – this meeting was held virtually, and concentrated primarily on financial matters. Governors reviewed and approved the 2025–26 school budget as well as the three-year projections. This formed part of our statutory responsibility to ensure financial sustainability and to make sure all resources are directed to support the best outcomes for children. We acknowledged that there needs to be a strategy of reducing costs without impacting on the quality of education the children experience, as the school’s budget is coming under increasing pressure. We also discussed the recent Wigan Governors Forum, which included a helpful session on staff wellbeing—a key area that is a standing concern for governors in light of the challenges faced by the sector nationally. An update on RE and collective worship was shared by the headteacher, including plans for staff development and further enrichment of the faith life of the school.
* 11 June 2025 – this meeting was held face-to-face in school, and included a valuable presentation from the lead teacher for writing, with a focus on how curriculum progression and assessment standardisation are achieved across the school. Governors explored how writing is taught and assessed and the strategies in place to support all pupils in developing their skills and creativity. We also reviewed the school’s estate management strategy, with a view to both long-term planning and more immediate issues such as health and safety and site security. Budget monitoring continued, and governors reviewed a number of other matters, including updates on archdiocesan admissions protocols and SATS monitoring visits undertaken by governors. The faith life of the school, including its mission and values, also remained central to our discussions, and the work with Deacon Justin Malewezi was particularly highlighted.
* 16 July 2025 – this meeting was held virtually, and as our final meeting of the academic year it provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements and review key priorities. We reviewed the school’s financial position and recognised the ongoing budgetary pressures facing the sector, as well as discussing actions taken to mitigate these pressures. A verbal report was presented on governor visits undertaken during the latter part of the year, with a notable emphasis on the RE curriculum and collective worship. The headteacher presented the end-of-year Headteacher’s Report, which included: a detailed review of pupil attainment and progress data, a demonstration of curriculum delivery and oversight across core and foundation subjects, a description of a broad range of curriculum enrichment activities, and a full range of evidence regarding the school’s success in nurturing its identity as both a faith school and as an active contributor to the local community. The Chair and Vice Chair election took place, as is the case on an annual basis, with the result as follows for the forthcoming school year:-
  + Chair – Dr. Andrew Wilkinson
  + Vice Chair – Mr. 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, including scrutiny of statutory areas such as SEND provision and safeguarding. These are a vital way for governors to understand firsthand how policies are being implemented, and allow us to be both very supportive of school staff, and also challenge and question as we are required to do.

**Strategy Day – January 2025**

Our Strategy Day in January offered an in-depth opportunity for governors to consider long-term priorities and reflect on how we can support school leaders in shaping the future of St. Oswald’s. The key areas that were discussed at the session included:

• RE Curriculum Transition – Governors reviewed how the school is implementing the new RE curriculum, replacing the former “Come and See” model. We discussed how the school leadership ensures the new intent is understood, and how attainment and progress in RE is monitored and methodology standardised. A key discussion point was how the Governing Body could contribute directly to the Catholic Self Evaluation Document (CSED), which underpins the inspection of Catholic schools. Governors offered input on the articulation of mission and evidence presented in the document, and committed to ongoing engagement in this process.

• Staff Wellbeing – Recognising national pressures on school staff, governors discussed strategies already in place, including workload review and mental health support, and explored additional ways to demonstrate our support as a governing body.

• Risk Register Review – Governors examined the school’s Risk Register and considered RAG-rated risks across domains such as finance, staffing, physical estate, security and cyber. We agreed to revisit the register at annual intervals and to ensure robust mitigation planning is always in place.

**Governing Body – Membership Updates**

The Governing Body has confirmed the following membership updates:-

• Mrs. Emma Hart was re-elected as Staff Governor on 2 July 2025.

• Mr. Chris Beaney will be retiring from the governing body in October 2025. We extend our sincere gratitude for his service to the school, and for the wisdom and commitment he has brought to the role.

**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 heartfelt thank you to Mrs. Hassan and all the staff at the school for their hard work and dedication, all our parents for their support, and of course the children who are our entire focus. We are very proud of the children, and are always particularly impressed by the way they live out the school’s mission. We are also immensely grateful for the breadth and depth of experience that the children receive, and for the thriving school community of which we are all part. On behalf of the governors, I wish everyone a happy and restful summer break.

Dr. A. J. Wilkinson