St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School

Prepare the way of the Lord

Annual Governance Statement

Academic Year: 2025-2026

Purpose of this Governance Statement

This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Governing Body of St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High 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 [2025-2026] 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" 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 Edmund Arrowsmith CHS 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 [7] Foundation Governors ɬ, [2] Staff Governors (including the Headteacher), [2] Parent Governor(s), [1] Local Authority Governors(s), [2] Associate Members and [0] Co-opted Governor(s)*.

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.

ɬ 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. 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.

* 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.

At St Edmund Arrowsmith CHS we have the following Committees:-

- **Resources Committee (RC)**
  REMIT**:**
  Financial Reporting:
  - To monitor the budget throughout the year, authorising changes to the way the agreed budget is spent in relation to changes in priorities.
  - To receive an annual report on and ensure that delegated funds in respect of Devolved Formula Capital spending are appropriately utilised and ensure value for money.

  GDPR
  - To ensure compliancy under GDPR and to monitor breaches of data.

  Premises/Health & Safety
  - To monitor and review all revenue and capital expenditure above £20k (as per SOFA delegations) in relation to school premises, maintenance, infrastructure and ICT and ensures value for money within the allocated budget.
  - To ensure that an annual inspection of the premises and grounds is carried out; to approve the H&S policy including risk assessments (annually).

  Personnel Duties
  - To approve the school staffing structure annually for the fulfilment of the school's development plan and the effective operation of the school.
  - To consider staff well-being including a satisfactory work-life balance for leaders and teachers is achieved and to ensure steps are taken to reduce unnecessary workload.
  - To ensure that there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is appropriately trained.
  - To ensure the suitability of all adults working with children and young people on the premises at all times (including contractors, visitors and external groups as reflected in the Lettings Policy).

- To ensure the SENCO is a qualified teacher working at the school. A newly appointed SENCO who has not previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months must achieve the National Award in SEN Co-ordination within three years of appointment.
- To ensure that all Staff and Governors undertake the appropriate level of Safeguarding and Child Protection awareness training.

- **Headteacher Appraisal Committee (HT Appraisal)**
  REMIT:
  A minimum of 2 meetings per academic year should take place to focus on matters relating to:
  - To identify any staff requiring support or improvement and make recommendations.
  - To review the appraisal and remuneration of the Headteacher and set objectives in conjunction with the external advisor.

- **Standards and Effectiveness Committee (S&EC)**
  REMIT:
  - To challenge and monitor educational, behavioural and pastoral standards.
  - To consider, review and approve all related policies, and to monitor the implementation of these policies.
  - To feed into and implement the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
  - To monitor achievement towards the objectives of the SIP.

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

Governing Body's work this year and Governors' Attendance at full Governing Body meetings
[The Governing Body must set out the purpose of the work undertaken by the Governing Body as a whole as well as any particular issues they encountered and how they were dealt with.]

- The full Governing Body has met 5 times during the year. An extraordinary meeting took place on 09/06/2026 to consider the Headteacher's resignation and discuss the recruitment process for a replacement.

- Governors have had excellent attendance at Governing Body meetings. All meetings were quorate. Individual Governors' attendance during the year at Governing Body meetings can be found at **Appendix 2**.

- An Ofsted inspection took place on 3 March 2026. Governors were proud of the outcome, as the school met the expected standard and achieved a **'secure strong'**. The HMI agreed with the school's self-evaluation and stated that the school is well on its way to **Exception Standard** in Inclusion and Leadership & Governance. This outcome was a justification of everyone's hard work.

- The 2025-26 SIP contained 3 new objectives and Governors are satisfied that work towards the achievement of these objectives was on track for completion.
  - *"to demonstrate our Catholic faith by using the principles of the Mission Statement to enrich the word around us by using the principles of 'Luadato Si'".*
  - *"to modify assessment methodologies to ensure pupils receive timely, specific and actionable feedback, enabling them to clearly understand their strengths and next steps for improvement".*
  - *"to strengthen the approach of Quality Assurance to effectively monitor the key aspects of school improvement".*

- The Governing Body continue to be satisfied that the Quality of Education provided for the pupils of St Edmund Arrowsmith is of a very high standard and that the pastoral care and support provided is also of an extremely high quality.

- Students did exceptionally well in 2025 GCSE exams, although the achievement 8 figure was slightly down at 49.10 (from 51.47 in 2024). However, this is to be expected due to disruption caused to the learning for this cohort due to Covid. Nevertheless, SEACHS was in the top 3 schools within Wigan Borough.

- Attendance data continues to be above local and national average which is down to the excellent work of the attendance team and pastoral leads. Also, the school's NEET data is absolutely outstanding – in 2024 the number of pupils who were NEET was 1 out of 240. This means that the vast majority of students are getting to the relevant post-16 destinations, which is laudable.

- New sub-committees were created and agreed at the December meeting. This was considered necessary due to the removal of performance-related pay, which meant that the Pay Committee was no longer necessary. The new committees (Standards & Effectiveness / Resources / Headteacher Appraisal) are more aligned to their roles and responsibilities.

- The management of the school budget continues to be very well maintained. The closing balance to c/f into 2026-27 was £403k, which is a fantastic position for the school to be in and is down to the excellent work of the School Business Manager.

- Governors are pleased that the school building continues to be maintained to the best possible standard, however it is worth noting that many areas of the school building remain in need of modernisation.

- The concerns remain regarding the predicted reduction of baptised catholics and the impact that this will have on the school's PAN. This is despite the change to the admissions policy, which make it easier for non-baptised students to obtain a place at SEA. Moving forward, this may create a culture shift with a greater number of students attending from households that do not share any religious observance.

- The number of school trips being offered to students across all year groups has returned to 'normal' with trips in 2025-26 to Paris & Disneyland; Bletchley Park & Warner Bros; the Lowry Theatre; New York; Barcelona and Thackery Medical Museum.

- The school's Climate Action Plan has been used as an example of excellent practice within Wigan Borough. The school has been awarded £3k from 2 bids for climate sustainability projects which we are very pleased with.

- The attendance data has been consistently excellent, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Attendance Team and the wider school community to push this agenda. The attendance of SEA students continues to be above local and national average.

- Governors have attended school events wherever possible throughout the academic year.

Governors' Future Plans for the School

- The focus for the strategy meeting in 2026-27 will be determined at the first FGB meeting in September 2026.
- The Archdiocese have relaunched the academisation process and provided a framework and timescale for the introduction of academies. SEACHS will be in WAVE 5 phase of the process which is expected to be in 2031/32.
- Due to the Headteacher's resignation (leaving at Easter 2027), a Governor recruitment panel has been established. The recruitment process will commence in September 2026 to ensure that the most suitable candidate is appointed prior to 31 December 2026.
- The continuing crisis in teacher recruitment is impacting on the ability to recruit, especially in certain subjects. However, SEA have maintained staffing levels and there are no gaps in the teaching of specialist subjects.
- Governors will continue to be involved in the life of the school and carry out regular link visits to ensure that the strategies in place continue to meet the needs of the students. This is a crucial operation of the members and is integral to gaining a better insight into the key performance indicators of the school.
- The 3-year School Improvement Plan (SIP) will be reviewed and approved at the September 2026 meeting to ensure that the outcomes across all departments are consistent and raise progress and outcomes for all students.
- The Governing Body will seek to ensure that the strategies implemented by school leaders as outlined in the School Improvement Plan are successful, show evidence of progress and move the school towards further improvement. Also, that pupils continue to receive an excellent education and the highest levels of pastoral care.
- The meeting schedule will ensure that the Full Governing Body works cohesively with the sub-committees reporting into the FGB at the end of each term.
- The FGB will continue to follow the Agenda items provided by Wigan's Governor Services, as this ensures that all relevant items for discussion are incorporated into the process. The Clerk will also bring relevant matters of interest to the Chair's attention for inclusion when appropriate.
- Members of the FGB will continue to attend relevant training courses to enhance their knowledge and understanding of school governance.

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee Meetings

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents and if you would like to see a copy of the minutes you can ask The Clerk to Governors, Mrs Pamela Lennon (01942 728651 x 2223) PLennon@arrowsmith.wigan.sch.uk

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 value for money during the year by ensuring that the School Business Manager has been able to report with transparency, providing support and advice where appropriate. The school has been able to maintain the setting of a balanced budget for the forthcoming academic year 2026-27, which is remarkable given the current difficulties regarding school funding.

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, Premises & Personnel 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, Mr Stephen Westhead via email SWesthead@arrowsmith.wigan.sch.uk or via The Clerk to Governors, Mrs Pamela Lennon (01942 728651 x 2223) PLennon@arrowsmith.wigan.sch.uk.

This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Governing Body on 15 September 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

[SIGNED]



Stephen J Westhead
Chair of Governors

[SIGNED]



Mark J Dumican
Headteacher

Appendix 1 – Full Governing Body 2025=2026

Names of Governors	Type of Governor	Date First Appointed	Term Start Date	Term End Date	Appointing Body
Mark Dumican	Headteacher	N/A	01.10.2014	n/a	Headteacher
Jim Bryne	Foundation	01.09.2021	01.09.2025	31.08.2029	The Archdiocese of Liverpool
Clare Brophy	Staff	14.10.2019	14.10.2023	13.10.2027	Elected by Governing Body
Andrew Connellan	Foundation	22.02.2003	22.02.2024	21.02.2028	The Archdiocese of Liverpool
Joanne Farrimond	Foundation	08.12.2020	01.09.2025	31.08.2029	The Archdiocese of Liverpool
Paul Jensen	Local Authority	Not set	04.12.2018	03.12.2026	Wigan Council *(appointed by Governing Body)
Peter McGhee	Foundation	01.09.2021	01.09.2025	31.08.2029	The Archdiocese of Liverpool
Natalie Lowe	Parent	30.09.2025	01.11.2025	31.10.2029	Elected by parents
Julia Kirwan	Parent	30.09.2025	01.11.2025	31.10.2029	Elected by parents
Stephen Westhead	Foundation	01.10.2012	01.10.2024	30.09.2028	The Archdiocese of Liverpool
Peter Whitfield	Foundation	01.09.2020	01.09.2024	31.08.2028	The Archdiocese of Liverpool
Kath Lydon-Brown	Associate Member	01.09.2025	01.09.2025	31.08.2029	Elected by Governing Body
Lisa Boardman	Associate Member	01.09.2021 PG	01.11.2025	31.10.2029	Elected by Governing Body

Appendix 2: **Governing Body Meeting Attendance Record – 2025-26**

Name of Governor	16.09.2025		02.12.2025		24.03.2026		30.06.2026	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Stephen Westhead (Chair)	X		X		X		X	
Andrew Connellan (V-Chair)	X		X		X		X	
Mark Dumican (H/T)	X		X		X		X	
Clare Brophy	X		X		X		X	
James Byrne		X*	X			X	X	
Paul Jensen	X		X		X		X	
Julia Kirwan			X		X		X	
Natalie Lowe			X		X		X	
Peter McGhee		X*	X		X			X
Peter Whitfield	X		X		X		X	
Joanne Farrimond	X		X		X			X
Cate Woods (Associate Member)	X			X**		X**		
Lisa Boardman (Associate Member)		X*	X			X**	X	
Kath Lydon-Brown (Associate Member)	X			X*	X			X**
SEA: SLT/Observers								
Suzanne Chapman	X		X		X			
Amanda Moore	X		X		X		X	
Annemarie Doolan	X		X		X		X	
Ann Morgan	X		X			X	X	
Gillian Morris	X		X		X		X	
Dean Cullen	X		X		X		X	
Kirsten Westwell							X	

* Apologies received / ** Apologies not received

Name of Governor	Dates of Standards & Effectiveness Committee (S&EC)					
	07.10.2025		27.01.2026		16.06.2026	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Mark Dumican	X		X		X	
Clare Brophy		X	X		X	
Joanne Farrimond (VC)	X		X		X	
Peter McGhee		X	X		X	
Peter Whitfield (Chair)	X			X*	X	
Lisa Boardman (AM)		X	X			X
Kath Lydon-Bowen (AM)	X		X		X	
Observers						
Andrew Connellan	X		X		X	
SEA: SLT						
Annemarie Doolan	X		X		X	
Ann Morgan	X			X	X	
Gillian Morris	X		X		X	
Dean Cullen	X		X		X	
* Apologies received / ** Apologies not received						

Name of Governor	Dates of Resources Committee (RC)					
	11.11.2025		03.03.2026		28.04.2026	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Mark Dumican	X		X			
Jim Byrne	X		X			
Andrew Connellan	X			X		
Natalie Lowe	X		X			
Julia Kirwan	X		X			
Paul Jensen		X	X			
Cate Woods (AM)	X			X**	[redacted]	
SEA: SLT / Observers						
Suzanne Chapman	X		X			
Amanda Moore	X		X			
Ann Morgan		X		X		
Gillian Morris		X		X		
* Apologies received / ** Apologies not received						

Name of Governor	Headteacher Appraisal Committee (HAC)					
	21.10.2025		10.02.2026		19.05.2026	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Mark Dumican	X		X		X	
Andrew Connellan (Chair)	X		X		X	
Peter Whitfield (VC)	X		X		X	
Stephen Westhead	X		X		X	
* Apologies received / ** Apologies not received						