

## **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 Peter's 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 formal duty to oversee the school in accordance with its Catholic character and
- (ii) our core functions (which are explained below) during the [2024-2025] academic year.

The Governing Board works closely with headteacher and senior leaders. The headteacher is responsible for day-to-day operational management whereas the role of the governing body is strategic. As such, governors are responsible for:

determining the mission, values and long-term ambitious vision for the school,

deciding the principles that guide school policies and approving key policies,

working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision

ensuring that parents, pupils, staff and the wider community are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate

ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum such that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life

setting the school's budget and ensuring it is managed effectively together with premises and other resources

agreeing the school's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy

ensuring robust risk management procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

A list of serving (and recently retired) governors is set out elsewhere on this website

As the Governing Body of a Catholic school, our principal responsibility lies in ensuring that the School life is conducted in accordance with its Catholic character at all times, and this duty (which is also a legal duty) is seen in everything that we do. Also, in accordance with our legal obligations, the Governing Body endeavors 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 organization, 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.

Our vision for the school, reviewed and approved annually by governors reads as follows:

**"We want our school to be a safe, inclusive and caring Catholic community where everyone is valued. Our school should develop thoughtful and balanced individuals with the skills, emotional resilience, and values to achieve their potential. Our school will be one where positive relationships and a calm, disciplined environment based on mutual respect will enable all to thrive. We will maintain a diverse and challenging curriculum and provide many opportunities for all pupils to succeed."**

We believe that this guides our decision making in all aspects of our work.

### **Scope of Governing Body's Responsibilities**

The Governing Body acknowledges that we have overall responsibility for ensuring that St Peter's Catholic High 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 7 Foundation Governors, 2 Parent Governors, 1 Staff Governor, 1 Local Authority Governor and the Headteacher. We also have 1 Associate Governor.

We currently have no vacancies.

The Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the school is situated. The Bishop not only appoints the 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.

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.

### **Diversity**

The Governors of St Peter's Catholic High School believe it is important that the Governing Board reflects the diversity of our school community. Diverse Boards promote inclusive school environments and provide diverse role models for our children and young people.

Data is currently collected on the diversity of the Board, which is used to inform our recruitment and training needs to ensure that there is always a diverse range of perspectives around the table to support robust decision making. However, due to our relatively small Board we do not publish this data online as individual Governors could be identified and we have a legal obligation to protect their personal data.

## **At St Peter's Catholic High School we have the following Committees:-**

### **▪ Finance, Premises and Personnel**

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

- To monitor and review all revenue and capital expenditure above £15k (as per SOFA delegations) in relation to school premises, maintenance, infrastructure and ICT and ensures value for money within the allocated budget.

#### 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.

▪ **Admissions**

The Admissions Committee is established by the Governing Body to ensure that all admissions to the school are conducted in accordance with the School Admissions Code, diocesan guidance, and the school's published Admissions Policy, while maintaining the Catholic character and ethos of the school.

▪ **Curriculum & Standards**

REMIT:

- To challenge and monitor educational, behavioral 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
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In addition, when required, governors are expected to serve on panels or committees in order to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders
- appraise the headteacher and make pay recommendations
- hear staff grievances and disciplinary matters
- review decisions to exclude pupils
- deal with formal complaints

## **Monitoring of Standards**

The Governing body continues to ensure that External Advisors and Improvement Partners are welcomed into the school to ensure continued improvement and progress, both to support our Leadership Team and to validate the ongoing school improvement work they undertake

Members of the Senior Leadership Team regularly attend Governing Body meetings to brief on their specific areas of responsibility, with Governors both supporting and challenging information given. Reports and presentations on a variety of subject areas allow detailed projections on future results, which remain very encouraging.

The School Improvement Plan and SEF (Self Evaluation Form) are also regularly reviewed at full Governing Body level, both to understand strategy and to evaluate progress against priorities. School policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated throughout the year, in accordance with new legislation, to ensure full compliance and of course to update nomenclature.

## **Engagement and Challenge**

As Governors, we are tasked to focus on the things that matter most for our school.

In support of this, our Headteacher and senior leaders regularly brief the board on current issues and underlying trends. We are given national benchmarks against which we are judged, and like all schools, we capture enormous amounts of data which this dialogue helps us understand and benchmark:

- Student progress.
- Trends over time both within subjects and across specific groups.
- Comparisons with national data and comparable schools.
- The match between predictions and outcomes.
- Ensuring not only those funds allocated for specific purposes (e.g. Pupil Premium) are being properly spent and that we are able to track impact and outcomes for the young people concerned.

This regular presentation and analysis of this data helps us engage with the underlying reality and agree with the Headteacher and other Senior leaders on the strategies and interventions necessary to ensure the success of all our students.

From time to time the Governing Body are required to be involved in disciplinary issues, especially where exclusion is deemed appropriate.

Equally, the life story of the school is told not only in academic statistics but also in the huge range of opportunities our staff create within all subjects and especially Sport, Music and Drama. Governors attend and support these events, we talk with parents (and potential pupils) at Open Days and Parent Forums, both to know and be known. In 'link' roles, Governors spend time as individuals in school meeting staff and pupils, ensuring Governance meetings are informed by first-hand knowledge and not just statistics.

With these visits we can validate the data we are given and see for ourselves the policies and plans being put into practice.

### **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 in its regular meetings along with all scheduled committee meetings. There have not been any meetings cancelled because due to insufficient or "quorate" numbers.
- Overall, Governors have excellent attendance at Governing Body meetings. Individual Governors' attendance during the year at Governing Body meetings can be found elsewhere on this website
- The Governing Body are satisfied that the Quality of Education provided for the pupils of St Peter's Catholic High School continues to be of a very high standard and that the pastoral care and support provided is also of an extremely high quality. This is evidenced by the most recent Ofsted report dated March 2024 which can be found here: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50245374>
- The management of the school budget is very well maintained by the School Business Manager who continues to provide the Finance, Premises and Personnel sub-committee with highly detailed and accurate budgetary figures.
- Governors have attended school events wherever possible throughout the academic year.

### **Governors' Future Plans for the School**

- Governors are aware that school funding continues to be an issue and in the present climate, it is important that decisions being made by the SLT ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the students. This will continue to be monitored through all committee meetings.
- Governors are involved in helping school prepare for the next Section 48 inspection carried out by the Archdiocese. The inspection will focus on areas like Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education, and Collective Worship.
- 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 Academisation programme from the Archdiocese has been launched and our school is set to join Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT which is scheduled for launch in late 2027.
- The 3-year School Improvement Plan (SIP) continues to be reviewed 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

Outstanding or equivalent under the new framework. Also, that the pupils continue to receive an excellent education and high 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 can be found elsewhere on this website

### **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 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. A Continuity plan is in place and is reviewed and updated annually.

### **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.

Self-evaluation is an on-going process that Governors undertake to identify their strengths and areas for development. It allows us to measure progress towards our targets throughout the year and highlights areas for improvement.

This year the FGB completed a group self evaluation and governors were invited to complete the individual CES self evaluations. In addition, an evaluation of the performance of the Chair of Governors was carried out by the remaining governors. Results of these processes will lead to a more effective governing board going forward.

### **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 by emailing school at [enquiries@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk)

This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Governing Body on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026 and signed on its behalf by

*Clive D Hough*

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Chair of Governors