

**ARCHDIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM**  
**Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**  
**St. Modwen's Catholic Primary School**



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### **Purpose of this Governance Statement**

This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Governing Body of St. Modwen'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 2023/24 academic year. A list of serving governors can be seen on the school's website. [St Modwen's Catholic Primary School - Home \(st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk\)](http://st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk)

### **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, Catholic ethos and strategic direction.
2. Holding the headteacher to account for safeguarding and the protection of our pupils, 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.
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. Modwen'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 7 Foundation Governors †, 2 Staff Governors (including the headteacher), 2 Parent Governor(s) , 1 Local Authority Governor(s) and 1 Co-opted / Associate Governor\*.

† Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the school is situated. The Archbishop 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 / Associate 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 we have 1 Associate Governor appointed this academic year who is the Deputy Headteacher.

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

In addition to the routine and ongoing responsibilities of the governing body, as detailed in the 2024/25 programme set out below, during this academic year we have been implementing the governance action plan for 2023/24 and reviewed preparations for visits by the Catholic Schools' Inspection (CSI) team and our expected OFSTED inspectors. In addition, we have advertised for the parent governor vacancy.

The full Governing Body met 5 times (twice in the Autumn term, once in the Spring term and twice in the Summer term). 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 good attendance at Governing Body meetings. At the start of the academic year, Sept 2023, there was one parent governor vacancy. We currently have 1 parent vacancy, we will be advertising again in Sept 2024. Individual Governor attendance during the year at full Governing Body and sub-committee meetings can be seen on the school's website. [St Modwen's Catholic Primary School - Home \(st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk\)](http://st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk)

## Committees' work this year and Governors' attendance at Committee meetings

At St. Modwen's Catholic Primary School, in addition to the full governing body we have a number of sub-committees to focus on specific aspects of school governance, as follows.

- **Curriculum and Standards:** focuses on the curriculum, pupil progress, subject reviews and teaching and learning resources.
- **Personnel and Finance:** focuses on personnel matters and staff planning, finance and financial planning, value for money and
- **Premises, Health & Safety:** focuses on premises, maintenance, improvement and development and health and safety risk assessments and compliance.
- **Pay Review:** focuses on staff performance review process and pay (inc. headteacher pay)
- **Admissions:** focuses on setting the admissions policy and approving pupil start of and in-year admissions.
- **Headteacher Performance Review:** focuses on the headteacher performance, setting objectives and targets, monitoring progress and headteacher pay recommendations to the Pay Review Committee.

Governance sub-committee meetings and frequency are listed below:

Sub-Committees Meetings	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Curriculum & Standards	1	1	1
Finance & Personnel	1	1	2
Premises, Health & Safety	1	1	1
Pay Review	1		
Admissions - plus as necessary	1		1
Headteacher Performance	1		1

**NB** Safeguarding / child protection and Catholic Life are standing items on the agenda of all governing body meetings. A more detailed breakdown of the terms of reference for each sub-committee and individual Governor attendance during the year at sub-committee meetings can be seen on the school's website. [St Modwen's Catholic Primary School - Home \(st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk\)](http://st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk)

## Governors' Future Plans for the School

The St. Modwen's Governors' programme for the academic year 2024/25 is as follows:

- Continue the implementation of the Governance action plan, resulting from the external audit of governance practice conducted in the 2022/23 academic year.
- Monitor implementation of the key priorities for the 2024/25 school development plan and assess outcomes.
- Engage in staff recruitment and appointment of staff, as appropriate.
- In consultation with the headteacher set and review personal performance targets.
- Monitor staff performance management process and approve staff pay recommendations
- Review and approve future admissions policy, pupil admissions for Sept 2025 and in year pupil admissions.
- Prepare for and set the 2025/26 financial year (Apr 25 to Mar 26) school budget.
- Recruit a parent governor.
- Monitor:
  - Safeguarding and child protection provision.
  - Catholic life, worship and religious education curriculum provision.
  - The school development plan's key priorities.
  - Behaviour and attendance data.
  - Academic performance and achievement.
  - SEND provision.

- Focus subject reviews.
- Risk assessments and health and safety compliance.
- School budget 2024/25, inc. pupil & sports premiums.
- Staff wellbeing.
- Identify the key priorities for the 2025/26 school development plan in consultation with the school's leadership and senior management team.
- Continue with our engagement with the Diocesan academisation process.
- Continue to pursue the development of the school's nursery capacity and provision.
- Continue to pursue the development of further school facilities. e.g. a multi-use games area

## **Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings**

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents - you can ask 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 ensuring that competitive tenders for contracts are reviewed regularly, i.e. the provision of school catering and wrap around care.

## **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 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 Jerome Emery, via the school office 01283 247560 or [Office@st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:Office@st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk)

This governance statement has been approved by St. Modwen's Catholic Primary School Governing Body and signed on its behalf by:

**Mr J A Emery**  
Chair of Governors

**Mrs A Sherratt**  
Headteacher