

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

ST BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

DATE: 17th NOVEMBER 2025

1. PURPOSE OF THIS GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Governing Board of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School (hereafter referred to as the Governing Board) 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 2024-25 academic year.

A full up-to-date list of our serving governors can be seen on our website: <https://www.stbernadetteschool.com/our-governing-board/>

2. ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

As the Governing Board 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 Board operates at a strategic level leaving the head teacher 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 Board are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and Strategic Direction.
2. Holding the head teacher 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 appropriately 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 Board is mindful of this requirement in all that we do.

3. SCOPE OF GOVERNING BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Board acknowledges that it has overall responsibility for ensuring that St Bernadette'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.

Although appropriately experienced Finance Leads provide monitoring and report to Board on overall performance, the Governing Board has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the head teacher for ensuring financial controls conform to the requirements of both propriety and good financial management.

4. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Composition of the Governing Board

The Governing Board comprises of 14 Governors: eight Foundation Governors †, Two Staff Governors (including the head teacher), two Parent Governors, one Local Authority Governor and one Co-opted Support Staff Governor*.

† 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. 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 Boards of Catholic schools and academies must always have a majority of Foundation Governors.

The Diocesan Bishop, Bishop David, 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 is fulfilling the objects cited in its Instrument of Government/Articles of Association and the trust deed under which the school was established.

* Co-opted Governors are appointed by the Governing Board and are people who, in the opinion of the Governing Board, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. On our Governing Body we have one Co-opted Governor.

4.2. Governing Board's work this past year and Governors' attendance at full Governing Board's meetings and the Board's actions

The Full Governing Board has held 8 Full Board Meetings over the past Academic year, including a Development Day in June.

There are specific key agenda items for each meeting, particularly focusing on the key areas of our responsibilities.

Pupil Performance continues to be a particular focus as is ensuring we spend our monies on our key objectives - particularly the proper use of monies for High Need, Disadvantaged Pupils and curriculum development.

These focused meetings ensure sufficient time is set aside for these critical areas.

Curriculum Visit reports in particular focus on the three areas of Intent;

Implementation and Impact.

During the year, Lead Governors for Safeguarding, Finance and Resources, Data Protection, Curriculum and Pupil Outcomes, Mental Health, SEND, Health and Safety, Sustainability, Teacher Performance Review/Pay Progression, Disadvantaged and P/LAC Pupils have all carried out monitoring visits and reported their findings to the Full Governing Board.

The standing committees have also met: Admissions Committee met on 10th March and the Headteacher Performance Committee met on 11/10/2024 to review performance of 2023-24 and set objectives for 2024-25 and 28/03/2024 mid-term review).

There is a strong ongoing emphasis on Safeguarding and to that end constant communication has been key.



ANNUAL Schedule
2024-25 for Governar

We have **not** cancelled a Governing Board meeting because it was not 'quorate' (the number of Governors needed to ensure that legal or representative decisions can be made).

Overall Governors have good attendance at Governing Board meetings.

Governing Board Membership and individual Governors' attendance during the academic year 2024/25 at Governing Board meetings can be found at **Appendix 1** and is published on the Governing Board page of our website: <https://www.stbernadettesschool.com/our-governing-board/>

5. KEY ACTIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR:

During the last academic year, the following activities have continued to be undertaken with the aim of ensuring an ongoing strong, focused and effective Board. There continues to be a strong emphasis not just on monitoring and evaluation, but also on support and encouragement.

Over the past year we have continued to:

1. Monitor the Implementation of the School Development Plan via head teacher reports, presentations, data analysis, Governor Monitoring Visits and external

professional quality assurance visits and reports. This helped to ensure that we consider that the school remains an *Outstanding Catholic School* (Section 48 inspection Nov 2021) under the new CSI inspection framework. It also ensured the Strategic Objective of a school that aspires to excellence in Teaching and judged at the highest standard across all areas by OFSTED

2. Monitor pupils' attainment and progress throughout the year, holding school leaders to account for pupil outcomes, including the positive outcomes of statutory assessments in summer 2025, with strong internal progress measures.
3. Review our Governing Board's Strategic Direction Plan to ensure it continues to be aligned with the current OFSTED Framework and any identified any regulation changes.
4. Appoint/Recruit Lead Governors for all Key areas thus ensuring we continue to focus on these critical areas:

Safeguarding; Mental Health and Wellbeing; RE; RSHE, Catholic Life & Mission and Prayer & Liturgy; Wider Curriculum; Pupil Performance; Pupil Premium & P/LAC; Early Years; EAL, SEND & Inclusion; STEAM as well as Statutory and HR ; GDPR; and Finance, Catholic Life, RSHE, Admissions and Appeals, The Arts, Early Years, Health & Safety, Sustainability and Board Development

5. Review and update our Accountability Framework to ensure we meet the requirements of the OFSTED Framework and best fit any new Governor skills
6. Complete our Annual Skills Audits to identify Training needs/skill gaps and arrange Training accordingly - as a result, the June Board Development day focused on school finance, Ofsted Proposals for New Inspection Framework and Catholic Schools Self-Evaluation (CSED).
7. Continue to hold all day Monitoring and Development days in June each year with sessions to meet identified training needs.
8. Carry out Lead Governor on-site Visits - with written Visit Reports of findings and recommendations to FGB. All Governor Lead Reports include recommendation for remedial action as necessary and triangulate with the Strategic Plan, SDP and SEF/CSED
9. Ensure Lead Governors continued to communicate with their "lead" teaching and office staff to monitor performance, understand concerns and provide support as appropriate.
10. Ensure signing of the Code of Conduct by all Governors so that Governors not only know the Values and Behaviours expected of them in their role but sign up to those Values.
11. All Governor Visits and Reports to Board including on-site Safeguarding and Mental Health and Wellbeing Visits where possible - and Reports to Board ensured that we have met those critical requirements. Mental Health visits have been particularly important not just for pupils but for assessing staff pressures.
12. GDPR Visits by the DPO and GDPR Lead Governor to ensure we continue to meet these requirements
13. Health and Safety Visits and Sustainability Reports to Board to ensure we meet our obligations in these areas.

6. GOVERNING BOARD - FUTURE PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL

The main focus of the Governing Board is to provide Strategic direction and focus to the school over the Strategic period, within a defined set of Laws and regulations and within a clearly defined set of Values.

The Board operates within the Nolan Principles, has clearly outlined Vision and Mission Statement, in keeping with British Values and the teachings of the Church, and puts safeguarding at the centre of all that we do.

We have four overarching or “umbrella” Strategic Objectives:

- 1) In line with the Bishop’s vision for catholic education - to work together in collaboration with other catholic schools, to ensure optimum access for catholic families to high quality provision of Catholic education
- 2) To continue to strive for excellence in teaching and learning and in all aspects of leadership and governance:
- 3) Continue to explore the issue of academisation as outlined in NDES “Developing Catholic Education” and on 1st Feb 2020 - the establishment of 2 MATs in the diocese
- 4) Maintaining financial viability

This overall Strategic Direction Plan, provides a Strategic Framework and “cascades” down through the organisation and is monitored at both operational and Board Level through the detailed Operational Plan (SDP) and self-evaluated via the SEF and CSED.

Please see the current Strategic Direction Plan on the Governor Page of the school website.

Both the SDP, SEF and CSED are monitored and updated by the school’s Leadership Team and presented to Board for review, discussion, amendment and approval at formal Board Meetings.

Following our successful inspections, (academic year 2021/22) and taking on board the recommendations from the Ofsted and Section 48 inspectors, our **Three Key Priorities for the current SDP 2022-26** are:

- 1) Identify and sequence the most important concepts and content for pupils to learn and remember, in order to ensure a continually improving inspiring and relevant curriculum for all pupils.
- 2) To accelerate progress to close the attainment gap and enhance the wellbeing of identified vulnerable children
- 3) To enhance provision for and promote Catholic education at St Bernadette’s and beyond

7. MINUTES OF GOVERNING BOARD

- Minutes of Governing Board meetings are public documents. **You can ask the school office if you would like to see a copy of the minutes.**

8. REVIEW OF VALUE FOR MONEY

The Governing Board 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 Board has continued to strive for value for money during the year by:

Appointing appropriately qualified and experienced Governors within its Accountability Framework who carry out on site visits and report to Board on the following:

- Ensuring the school investigates and applies for additional grants/charitable donations
- Ensuring the school works closely with colleagues in the local Catholic Cluster to provide staff development, peer review and opportunities for pupils at no additional cost
- Investing in human resources to ensure best possible outcomes for pupils
- Closely monitoring the budget - income and expenditure - bearing in mind its Strategic objective of focusing resources towards the core function of Education
- Ensuring contracts are reviewed on an annual basis
- Ensuring an up-to-date Asset Management Plan is in place so that capital expenditure is planned and budgeted for
- Reporting to the Finance Focused Meetings, outlined within its Annual Board Meeting Schedule - to provide an opportunity for in-depth Monitoring of the above, the annual and 3-Year budget plans, benchmarking exercises and the annual financial audit - in particular use of resources to underpin the Curriculum

9. 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 relation to Financial Controls it includes: -

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Governing Board.
- Regular Visits and reviews by the Finance and Resources Leads reports:
 - ✓ 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

In relation to Health and Safety and the management of risk is exercised through tight monitoring and control by its H&S Lead Governor. Frequent on-site visits are made by the H&S Governor and reported to the Full Board.

10. CAPACITY TO HANDLE RISK

The Governing Board 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.

The Board has a clear Accountability Framework within which Governors are clearly identified for Finance; GDPR and H&S - are required to carry out on-site Visits and provide to Board written Reports including issues and recommendations as necessary.

Governor recruitment is specifically targeted towards the recruitment of essential skills to meet its objectives.

Induction packs and training Programmes are provided/purchased to ensure Governors are up to date with the latest requirements of their role.

All Governors undertake an Annual Skills Audit which enables the Board Development Governors to identify Skills Gaps and the Chair to recruit and ensure training accordingly.

Review of Effectiveness in place with clear lead responsibilities for each Governor and with a recruitment Strategy that targets particular skills required.

These Governors carry out regular on-site Visits reporting to the Board against clearly defined objectives as outlined in the school SDP, the Strategic Direction Plan

11. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

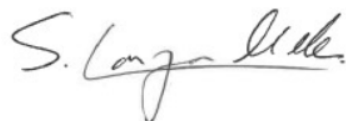
The Governing Board has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the systems in place in the School to identify and manage risk and plan to address any weaknesses (if relevant) and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

12. HOW TO CONTACT THE GOVERNING BOARD:

We always welcome suggestions, and feedback from parents, carers and the wider community - please do feel free to contact the joint Chairs of Governors Mrs F Lazzari and Dr S Lanzon-Miller via the school office.

This Governance Statement has been approved by the Full Governing Board at its meeting on Monday 18th November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

(SIGNED)



(Dr S Lanzon-Miller Chair of Governors)

(SIGNED)



(Mrs. Jane Zamora - Headteacher)

Appendix 1

Current Members of our Governing Board and Attendance for the Last Full Academic Year (2024-25)

Name	Committee membership / lead role	Date appointed	Term of office	Date stepped down	How appointed	Number of meetings attended in the last full academic year - to be completed at end of 2023-24	Interests		
							Relevant business and pecuniary	Other governing body membership(s)	Personal
Mr Augustine Amusan	UK GDPR - Data Protection Governor	1 Dec 2021 until 30 Nov 2025	4 Years		Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	8/10	None to publish	None	None
Mrs Charlotte Potter	Co-opted Staff Governor	17 Nov 2021 to 16 Nov 2025	4 Years	14/07/2025	Co-opted by Governing Board	3/3	None to publish	None	None
Mr Ali Reyahi	Finance, STEAM & Wider Curriculum	17th Nov 2021 until 16th Nov 2025	4 Years		Parent Governor Elected by Parents	9/10	None to publish	None	Child at school

Mrs Ima Ogbonna	Co-ordinator of Statutory Group - HR and Workload Lead Child Protection and Safeguarding Governor	1 September 2022 Until 31 August 2026	4 Years		Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	7/10	None to publish	None	None
Dr Chibuzor Edordu	Finance Group Admissions and appeals Committee STEM & Wider Curriculum Pupil Communication and Local Communication Governor	1 June 2019 until 31 May 2023 Renewed 1 June 2023 until 31 May 2027	4 Years (2 nd term)		Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	8/10	None to publish	None	Children at the school
Mrs Frankie Lazzari	Co-Chair from Sept 2023	1 September 2020 until	4 Years	10/02/2025	Foundation Governor	5/5	None to publish	None	None

	<p>Chair of Admissions and Appeals Committee</p> <p>SEND and Inclusion Governor</p> <p>EAL Governor</p>	<p>31 August 2024</p> <p>and</p> <p>1 September 2024 to 1 September 2028</p>			Appointed by the Diocese				
Dr Sandro Lanzon Miller	<p>Chair from Sept 2023</p> <p>Statutory Group - HR and Workload Lead</p> <p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Governor</p> <p>Behaviour and Attitudes (Pupils)</p> <p>Workload Governor (Staff)</p>	<p>1 June 2019 until 31 May 2023</p> <p>1 June 2023 until 31 May 2027</p>	<p>4 Years</p> <p>(2nd term)</p>		<p>Foundation Governor</p> <p>Appointed by the Diocese</p>	10/10	None to publish	None	<p>Daughter is a teacher at the school</p> <p>Grandchildren attend the school</p>

	Headteacher Performance Management								
Mrs Joanne Pughe	RE Leader	27 Nov 2017 until 26 Nov 2021 - re-voted by staff 27 Nov 2021 - 26 Nov 2025	4 Years (2 nd Term)		Staff Governor Elected by Staff	7/9	None to publish	None	None
Deacon Jon Walls	Statutory Group - HR and Workload Lead Admissions and Appeals Committee RE and Catholic Life Lead Governor Personal Development including Relationships	1 Sept 2022 until 31 August 2026	4 Years	21/10/2024	Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	1/2	None to publish	None	None

	and Sex Education Headteacher Performance Management								
Mrs Alison Upton	Co-ordinator of the Finance Group Pupil Premium Governor Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Governor	27 Nov 2017 until 26 Nov 2021 Renewed 27 Nov 2021 to 26 Nov 2025	4 Years (2 nd term)	14/07/2025	Parent Governor Elected by Parents	7/10	None to publish	None	Children at the school
Mrs Katherine Foulger	Curriculum Co-ordinator - Quality of Education including Overall Pupil Performance	23 Jan 2023 until 22 Jan 2027	4 Years		Local Authority Governor Appointed by the Local Authority - Milton Keynes	7/10	Deputy Headteacher at Milton Keynes Preparatory School	None	None

	Data, English and Maths Governor EYFS Governor								
Mrs Izabela Kocan	Health and Safety Governor until Feb 2025, then SEND/PP	1st Dec 2023 to 31st Dec 2027	4 years		Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	8/10	None to publish	None	Child at the school. Husband works at other local Catholic school
Mr Martin Muiru	Finance and sustainability	01.02.2025 to 31.01.2029	4 years		Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	4/6	None to publish	None	None
Mr Budge Wells	Health and Safety	01.01.2025 end 31.12.2028	4 years		Foundation Governor Appointed by the Diocese	5/6	None to publish	None	None
Mrs Jane Zamora	Headteacher	-	-		Head	10/10	None to publish	None	None

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