



## **Annual Governance Statement**

### **St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School**

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

*This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Governing Body of  
St. Vincent De Paul 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 2019-20 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 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 core functions of the Governing Body 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 well spent.
4. Promote the highest possible standards for safeguarding.

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 Vincent De Paul 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 Head Teacher 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 8 Foundation Governors †, 2 Staff Governors (including the head teacher), 2 Parent Governors, 1 Local Authority Governor and 1 Co-opted 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 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 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 the Co-opted Governor is a staff member.

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

Over the past year, the Governing Body has focused on continuing to improve outcomes for all of the school's community, in the light of the challenges to the curriculum and due to home learning and COVID-19. This has included evaluating the school's performance in relation to pupil results and the quality of teaching. We have continued to prioritise safeguarding and keeping our pupils safe. We have discussed school policies which are to be updated and then ratified by the Governing Body. The full Governing body met for a training day on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020 led by School Improvement Partner- Mrs Scott. Much of the Governors' work since March 2020 has been around COVID-19, home learning and risk assessment on wider opening.

Governors visit school as often as they are able and they support specific areas of the curriculum; they meet with different members of staff as appropriate; conduct the Head Teacher's performance management process; participate in recruitment and attend school events such as Christmas plays and school masses. Since March 2020 governors meetings have been via Microsoft Teams with occasional risk assessed visits to school.

The Curriculum Committee has discussed pupils' progress in Mathematics and English and each term there has been a special focus at each committee meeting to inform and update Governors regarding the many developments – this year emphasis has been on the updated Relationship and Sex Education Policy- RSE. Much of the committee's work also involves becoming more familiar with progress and attainment measures. Since March 2020 focus has been on home learning.

The Finance and Premises committee has been involved with the building of the Pre-School which was completed in February 2020. The building work has had a significant impact on the school's playground and surrounding areas. This matter will continue to occupy the work of the committee over the coming year as the refurbishment of the playground work is now scheduled to go ahead. The committee has carefully managed the school's budget and the carry forward that was earmarked for the works to be done in the school's playground and outdoor areas will be used. The governors were successful in gaining LCVAP to replace the final phase of the school roof, and this was done in Spring Term 2020. They have also been successful in securing LCVAP funding for the safety around the gate area and field.

The Personnel Committee has been involved with human resources policies such as whistleblowing, Equality statement and GDPR policy. The Child Protection policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the revised Government guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and to include appropriate information on internet safety, child sexual exploitation, peer on peer abuse and radicalisation. Safeguarding has continued to be a priority and child protection issues are reported to the committee and the appropriate measures are taken.

The Appraisal process and pay progression proposals have been monitored. The pay policy was updated and ratified by the Governing Body.

The full Governing Body has met 3 times during the year – twice via Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19.

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 excellent attendance at Governing Body meetings.

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

We have had extra full governors meetings due to COVID-19 and wider opening of schools and risk assessments.

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

At St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School we have 4 committees. We also have committees that meet if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

#### **Curriculum and SEN Committee**

Objectives :

- To review and monitor the quality of pupils' learning and achievement
- To ensure the school provides fully for pupils with additional needs
- To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered
- To review developments in the school's curriculum
- To ensure relevant policies are up to date
- Monitoring Pupil Premium achievement and progress
- Home learning due to COVID-19.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Objectives:

- Formulating, setting and approving personnel policies
- Reviewing staff grading and salaries
- Terms and conditions of employment including disciplinary and capability procedures
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the staff appraisal process
- To review safeguarding, GDPR and pupil welfare

#### **Finance and Premises Committee**

Objectives:

- Review and monitor the financial performance against the school development plan
- Submit the annual financial plan to the main Governing Body for approval

- Review the production of statutory accounts
- Review property maintenance and management (in conjunction with the Diocese of Shrewsbury)
- To monitor compliance with health and safety legislation and best practice
- To formulate and review policies relating to health and safety
- To monitor the maintenance and development of the premises
- To monitor the maintenance and development of the grounds
- The committee will receive a Health and Safety report at each of its meetings. This will be provided by the School Business Manager. Serious accidents will be reported to the committee.

The school has other statutory committees in place such as:

- Staff Pay Committee
- Staff Dismissal Committee
- Dismissal Appeal Committee
- Pupil Discipline Committee
- Staff Appointments Committee

### **Pre-School Committee**

Objectives:

- To oversee the operation and performance of the Pre-School set up by the parish of St. Vincent's, supported by the Diocese of Shrewsbury
- To hold the Supervisor and staff of the Pre-School to account regarding its educational, pastoral and financial work

Individual Governors' attendance during the year at Committee meetings can be found at **Appendix 3**.

### **Governors' Strategic Priorities for the School**

The Governors will continue their work, in line with the government agenda, to ensure that St. Vincent's is the best school it can be.

The Governors will uphold the Mission, Vision and Aims of St Vincent's and support the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in delivering the Strategic Priorities set out in the Annual School Development Plan.

The Governors will review the Governance arrangement, the skills mix and training of Governors to ensure that St Vincent's, its staff and pupils are properly supported.

The Governors will continue to monitor the educational performance and financial performance of St Vincent's, through regular meetings, visits and making appropriate interventions.

The Governors will oversee the implementation of best-practice in Safeguarding at St Vincent's.

### **Contact Details**

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

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents - you can ask our School Business Manager (Mrs Kate Watson) 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 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 Premises 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 Mike Dobson, at [mdobson@stvincents.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:mdobson@stvincents.cheshire.sch.uk)

This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Governing Body on 1st July 2020 and signed on its behalf by:

**Mr Mike Dobson**

**Governor**

**Miss Bernadette Groarke**

**Head Teacher**

## Appendix 1

### Governing body of St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

#### List of serving governors 2019-2020

<b>Governor details</b>	<b>Category of Governor</b>	<b>Term of office expiry</b>
Miss Bernadette Groarke (Head Teacher)		ex officio
Mike Dobson (Chair)	Governing Body	01/09/2023
Fr John Joyce (Parish Priest)	Foundation Governor	01/09/2020
Stephen Graham	Foundation Governor	01/09/2022
Mrs Helen Williams (Chair of Curriculum)	Foundation Governor	01/09/2023
Mrs Lisa Holland (Deputy Head)	Co-opted Governor	14/11/2020
Mrs Kate Watson	Staff Governor	04/10/2023
Mr Andrew Quicke	Parent Governor	14/10/2023
Mrs Clare Collins	Foundation Governor	26/11/2021
Mrs Clare Ward	Foundation Governor	01/09/2020
Miss Eve Smith (Chair of Personnel)	L.A. Governor	July 2023
Mr Dan Ross (Chair of Finance & Premises)	Parent Governor	23/03/2023
Miss Amy Hayes	Foundation Governor	01/09/2020
Mrs Evelyn Nichols (Vice Chair)	Foundation Governor	01/09/2023

**Appendix 2**

**Governing body of St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School**

**Governor attendance at Governing Body meetings for 2019-2020**

<b>GOVERNOR</b>	<b>FGB Meetings Attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Miss Bernadette Groarke (Head Teacher)	3	3
Mike Dobson (Chair)	3	3
Fr John Joyce (Parish Priest)	1	3
Stephen Graham	2	3
Mrs Helen Williams (Chair of Curriculum)	3	3
Mrs Lisa Holland (Deputy Head)	3	3
Mrs Kate Watson	3	3
Mr Andrew Quicke	3	2
Mrs Clare Collins	2	3
Mrs Clare Ward	0	1
Miss Eve Smith (Chair of Personnel)	3	3
Mr Dan Ross (Chair of Finance & Premises)	3	3
Miss Amy Hayes	3	3
Mrs Evelyn Nichols (Vice Chair)	2	3

### Appendix 3

#### Governing body of St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

#### Governor attendance at Committee meetings for 2019-2020

<b>GOVERNOR</b>	<b>Committee Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Miss Bernadette Groarke (Head Teacher)	9	9
Mike Dobson (Chair)	9	9
Fr John Joyce (Parish Priest)	2	6
Stephen Graham	6	6
Mrs Helen Williams (Chair of Curriculum)	3	3
Mrs Lisa Holland (Deputy Head)	7	9
Mrs Kate Watson	9	9
Mr Andrew Quicke	5	5
Mrs Clare Collins	3	3
Mrs Clare Ward	0	2
Miss Eve Smith (Chair of Personnel)	6	6
Mr Dan Ross (Chair of Finance & Premises)	3	3
Miss Amy Hayes	6	6
Mrs Evelyn Nichols (Vice Chair)	3	3