



## Annual Governance Statement

### Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust

#### Purpose

In this governance statement the term 'Governing Body' is used to describe the board of directors of the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust. The term 'Director' is used to describe a member of the Board of Directors of Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust who will be an individual registered at Companies House as a director of the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust.

This governance statement has been prepared and published by the Board of Directors of the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust 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 Academy in accordance with its Catholic character and (ii) our core functions (explained below) during the 2015-16 academic year.

A list of serving governors is set out at **Appendix 1**.

#### Role of the Board

As the Board of Directors of a Catholic Multi Academy Trust, our overarching responsibility lies in ensuring that the Trust 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 Board of Directors endeavours to operate at a strategic level, leaving the Head teachers and the Academies senior leaders responsible and accountable to us for the operational day-to-day running of the Academy. It is by achieving these aims that we can be sure that our Trust has effective governance.

The three core functions of the Board are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the Academy and its pupils, and for the internal organisation, management and control of the Academy, including performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the Trust 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 Board are mindful of this requirement in all that we do.

### **Scope of Board of Directors’ Responsibilities**

As Directors we acknowledge that we have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust 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 business objectives, and can provide only a reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Board of Directors has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to Mrs Clare Humble (Headteacher of St Patrick’s Catholic College, a Voluntary Catholic Academy) as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreements between the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. The Head teachers of the individual academies are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Directors any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

### **Governance Arrangements**

#### **Composition of the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is made up of 8 Foundation Governors\*\* and 4 Staff Directors (including the Head teachers of the 4 schools, 0 Parent Governor(s), 0 Local Authority Governors(s) and 0 Co-opted Governor(s)\*.

\*\* The term Foundation Governor is used in this document to describe those academy directors appointed to the board by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Academy is situated. Elsewhere these individuals may be referred to as Foundation Directors. 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 Trust. Foundation Governors are also under important legal duties to preserve and develop the Trust's Catholic character. In order to ensure that the Trust's Catholic character is protected and that it is being conducted in accordance with the tenets of its Catholic designation, Boards of Directors 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 8 of the governors are Foundation Governors the remaining 4 are Head teachers of the four schools within the trust. There are two co-opted vacancies and the board is seeking to recruit skilled and experience governors to fill the positions.

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

### **Board of Director's work this year and Directors attendance at full Board meetings**

During the first year the Governing Body has established itself as a Trust Board and has set up a committee structure with appropriate terms of reference. The Governing Body agreed levels of delegation which had been cascaded down to the Local Management Boards (LMB) of each of the four schools. This dictates the decision making for the Board and also decisions which are delegated to the LMBs. A strategic plan was produced to work towards and statutory policies were reviewed and agreed as a trust board. The Board has also had to consider proposals to expand one of the primary schools and increased the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for Christ the King to 45 with a view to this becoming 60 in September 2017.

The full Board of Directors has met 7 times during the year.

We have not cancelled a Board meeting because it was not "quorate" (the number of Directors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

Overall Directors have excellent attendance at Governing Body meetings.

Individual Directors' attendance during the year at Board meetings can be found at **Appendix 2**.

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

At the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust we have three different committees, these are as follows. The Finance/ Audit (Resources) Committee which focuses on finance, premises and some personnel matters; a Standards Committee, focusing on matters relating to Teaching & Learning and progress and attainment across the schools; and a Catholicity Committee, focusing on the Catholic Life of the Trust, incorporating Admissions, PSHE and RSE amongst other aspects.

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

### **Minutes of Board and Committee meetings**

Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents - you can either find them on the Governance page of the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust website ([www.ololcat.org](http://www.ololcat.org)) or you can ask Mrs Lucy Emmerson, Company secretary, if you would like to see a copy of the minutes. Mrs Emmerson can be contacted at: [Lucy.Emmerson@Stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Emmerson@Stockton.gov.uk)

## **Review of Value for Money**

The Accounting Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy delivers good value in the use of public resources. The Accounting Officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The Accounting Officer considers how the Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where available. The Accounting Officer for the Academy has delivered improved value for money during the year by starting to look at the economies of scale provided in Service Level Agreements subscribed to by the academies in the Trust. The Accounting Officer, as a serving Headteacher has also been involved in looking with the other Head teachers, into ways in which the staff resources and physical resources can be shared more efficiently between the academies in the Trust.

## **The purpose of the system of internal control**

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurances of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Academy's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust for the period 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

## **Capacity to handle risk**

The Board has reviewed the key risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Resources Committee of the Trust with findings reported and recommendations made to the Board.

## **The risk and control framework**

The Trust'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. 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 General Purpose 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.

The Board has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided that Evolution Accountancy Firm be appointed to carry out internal checks and the nature of the work that they have been engaged to perform, for example:

- To appoint Jessica Smith (Evolution Accountants) as internal auditor.

The internal auditor's role involves performing a range of checks on the Trust's financial systems. The internal auditor checks that the Trust is following the Financial Policy that was agreed after conversion to academy status. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included

- Accounts and reconciliations
- Risk Management
- Testing of control account/bank reconciliations
- Purchasing
- Management of data
- Corporate Governance

On a termly basis the auditor prepares a statement that is reported by the Chief Financial officer to the Board, through the Audit /Finance Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Governing Body's financial responsibilities.

The auditors have delivered their schedule of work as planned. All risks found across the Trust Academies were deemed to be 'low risk' and have been remedied throughout the financial year by close working between the Chief Financial officer and the School Business Managers and the Accounting Officer working alongside this team.

### **Review of Effectiveness**

As the Accounting Officer has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:

- The work of the internal auditor
- The work of the external auditor
- The financial management and governance self-assessment process (if relevant)
- AVEC support services – budget setting

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance/Audit Committee and a plan to address weaknesses (if relevant) and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

### **How to contact the Board of Directors**

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents, carers and the wider school/academy and Parish communities – please contact the Company secretary, Mrs Lucy Emmerson, on [Lucy.Emmerson@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Emmerson@stockton.gov.uk) or Mrs Peggy Swinhoe, Vice Chair of the Board on [contact-us@stpatrickscc.org](mailto:contact-us@stpatrickscc.org)

This governance statement is approved by order of the members of the Board on 30 September 2016 and signed on its behalf by:



**Mrs Peggy Swinhoe**  
**Vice Chair of Directors**



**Mrs Clare Humble**  
**Accounting Officer**

**Appendix 1**

**Governing body of Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust**

**List of serving governors**

<b>Governor details</b>	<b>Category of Governor</b>	<b>Term of office expiry date</b>
Mr S Conway	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.20
Mr J Cuthbert	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.20
Mr W Edwards	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.20
Mrs J Gerrard	Foundation Governor	15.03.16 to 14.03.20
Mr P Hart	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.16 (resigned 29.02.16)
Canon P Hartnett	Foundation Governor	Ex officio
Mrs C Humble (Accounting Officer)	Headteacher of St Patrick's Catholic College	Ex officio
Mr K Kilmartin	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.16 (resigned 01.03.16)
Mrs M Metcalfe	Headteacher of Christ the King RC Primary School	Ex officio
Mr M Ryan	Headteacher of St Patrick's RC Primary School	Ex officio
Mr E Sherrington	Foundation Governor	15.03.16 to 14.03.20
Mrs C Stott	Headteacher of St Therese of Lisieux RC Primary School	Ex officio
Mrs M Swinhoe (Vice Chair)	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.16
Mr G Wilson	Foundation Governor	01.09.16 to 31.08.16

**Appendix 2**

**Governing body of Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust**

**Governor attendance at Governing Body meetings for the Academy Trust Board**

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Full Governing Body meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr J Cuthbert	6	7
Mr W Edwards	5	7
Mrs J Gerrard	3	3
Canon P Hartnett	7	7
Mrs C Humble (Accounting Officer)	7	7
Mrs M Metcalfe	5	7
Mr M Ryan	6	7
Mr E Sherrington	3	3
Mrs C Stott	7	7
Mrs M Swinhoe (Vice Chair)	7	7
Mr G Wilson	6	7



Appendix 3

Governing body of Our Lady of Light Catholic Academy Trust

Governor attendance at Committee meetings for 2015/2016

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Committee meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
<b>Resources Committee</b>		
Mrs J Gerrard	4	4
Mr P Hart (resigned)	2	2
Canon P Hartnett	6	6
Mrs C Humble (Accounting Officer)	6	6
Mr K Kilmartin (resigned)	2	2
Mrs M Swinhoe (Chair)	6	6
Mr G Wilson	5	6
<b>Standards Committee</b>		
Mrs C Humble (Headteacher)	2	2
Mrs M Metcalfe (Headteacher)	2	2
Mr M Ryan (Headteacher)	2	2
Mrs C Stott (Headteacher)	2	2
Mrs S Swinhoe (Chair)	2	2
<b>Catholicity Committee</b>		
Canon P Hartnett (Chair)	1	1
Mrs C Humble (Headteacher)	1	1
Mrs M Metcalfe (Headteacher)	1	1
Mr M Ryan (Headteacher)	1	1
Mrs C Stott (Headteacher)	1	1
Mrs S Swinhoe (Headteacher)	1	1