



Blessed
Christopher Wharton
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

GOVERNOR HANDBOOK



**FOR LOCAL ACADEMY
COUNCILS
2025 – 2026**

Blessed Christopher Wharton

Catholic Academy Trust

Local Academy Council Handbook

2025-2026

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Welcome

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to you and hope you're enjoying your role on the Academy Council within the Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust. This welcome pack is intended to support your induction by offering a brief overview of what you can expect as a Councillor at your academy and as a member of The Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust.

Trust Mission Statement

Live faithfully with hope and love

Inspired by the Light of Christ, we learn in the belief that we are all special and loved by God. Each day, our faith helps us grow in relationship with God and each other to become the best we can be.

Grow together, serving others

Guided by the Light of Christ, we learn to strive for justice and compassion in our world. Each day we use the gifts that God has given us to serve others.

Be courageous in all we do

Encouraged by the Light of Christ, we learn self-confidence and resilience to be courageous in always seeking what is right. Each day we recognise God's promise that He is with us.

Trust Prayer

Written by Fr Paul Grogan

Almighty, ever-living God and Father,
enable us, through your grace, to become witnesses to Jesus Christ, your Son,
the Truth, whom all people seek, the Life,
who has conquered death,
so that, supported by the prayers of your martyr, Blessed Christopher Wharton,
and strengthened by the Mass, the
teaching of your Catholic Church
and the fellowship of all Christians with one another, we may
give ourselves generously to the task
of educating the children and young people entrusted to our care.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

Trust Vision

You are the light of the world.

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works

and give glory to your Father in heaven.'

Following the example of Blessed Christopher Wharton, we seek to grow in the virtues of Faith, Service and Courage so that our schools may be a light to the world. Together in the Light of Christ, our family of schools will strive for educational excellence, creating thriving Catholic learning communities where each person can fulfil their God-given potential.

Blessed Christopher Wharton

Christopher Wharton was born remarkably close to Myddelton Grange in 1542 and eventually studied at Oxford. During this time, influenced by others, he converted to Catholicism and left the country to study for the priesthood in 1583. He was ordained in Rheims in 1586 and returned in great secrecy to Yorkshire where he worked as a priest. Always 'on the run', he was given shelter by Mrs Eleanor Hunt at Ripley, near Knaresborough. They were both caught and arrested in 1599 and condemned to death in 1600 at York. Mrs Hunt was reprieved and died in prison. Fr. Wharton was hung, drawn and quartered on 28th March 1600. Attempts were made to make him abandon his faith, but he maintained that he came back to England to offer his life for the Faith and to save souls.

His severed head was put on one of the gates of York, but was rescued by Catholics, who kept it safe in Knaresborough. Later, this area was served by Benedictine priests who eventually took the skull into safe keeping at Downside Abbey near Bath. 402 years after his death, Blessed Christopher's skull was returned to this place by the Abbot of Downside, at the dedication of the chapel of St. Mary & St. Margaret Clitheroe.

Prayer to Blessed Christopher Wharton

Loving and Merciful God, you raise up men and women in every age to give witness to your love.

Through the intercession of Blessed Christopher Wharton, priest and martyr,

may I learn more each day of your great love for me, and in so doing, may I never be afraid to offer the same witness of love to my sisters and brothers. By the prayers of this holy martyr, grant my heartfelt prayer and open my heart that I may recognise my sanctity as your child.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed Christopher Wharton Trust Board

Directors

Mrs Sarah Martin - Chair

Dr Duncan Martin – Vice Chair

Mr Mark Dalton

Mrs Clare Bussingham

Mrs Roxanna Drake

Dr Duncan Martin

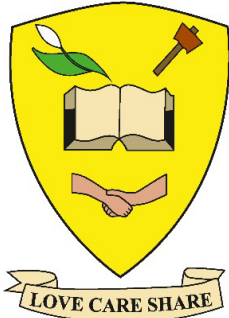
Caroline Handley

Independent member of Audit Committee Mr Curtis Ledger

BCWCAT Family of schools

Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust comprises of 19 schools across the Bradford District. Two are secondary schools which both have sixth form and 17 primary schools, of which 9 have nursery provision.

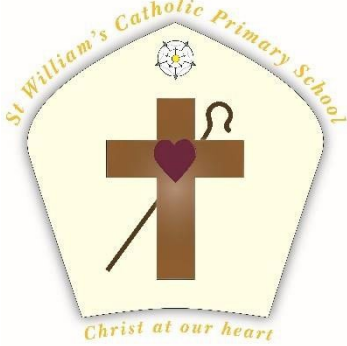
	St Clare's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Roxanne d'Arcy Chair of AC: Michael Moriarty Fagley Road, Fagley, Bradford, BD2 3JD Telephone: 01274 637841 Email: office@stclares.bradford.sch.uk Website: www.cla.bcwcacat.co.uk
	St Anthony's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Sarah Kenyon Chair of AC: Sharon Langford Bradford Rd, Clayton, Bradford. BD14 6HW Telephone: 01274 414761 Email: office@stanthonysclayton.org.uk Website: www.stac.bcwcacat.co.uk
	St Anthony's Catholic Primary School a Voluntary Academy Headteacher: Ashley Wilkinson Chair of AC: Kath Spillane High Busy Lane, Shipley, BD18 1HD Telephone: 01274 592738 Email: office@sas.bcwcacat.co.uk Website: www.sas.bcwcacat.co.uk

	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School a Voluntary Academy Headteacher: Louise Robinson Chair of AC: Liz Firth Crownest Road, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 4HQ Telephone: 01274 564883 Email: office@sjb.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.sjb.bcwcat.co.uk
	St Francis Catholic Primary School a Voluntary Academy Headteacher: Andrea Haines Chair of AC: Hannah Keefe Myers Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD2 4ES Telephone: 01274 638520 Email: office@fra.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.fra.bcwcat.co.uk
	St Matthew's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Paul Whitehead Chair of AC: Linda Scott Saffron Drive, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD15 7NE Telephone: 01274 541737 Email: office@stm.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.stm.bcwcat.co.uk

	The Holy Family Catholic School Headteacher: Sharon Mather Chair of AC: Rob Pritchard Spring Gardens Lane, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 6LH Telephone: 01535 210212 Email: office@holyfamilyschool.uk Website: www.holyfamilyschool.uk
	St Winefride's Catholic Primary School Executive Headteacher: Ben Lavin Head of School: Rebecca Coventry Chair of AC: Karen Naik St Paul's Avenue, Wibsey, Bradford, BD6 1SR Telephone: 01274 677705 Email: office@win.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.win.bcwcat.co.uk
	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Executive Headteacher: John Devlin Head of School: Andrew Arnold Chair of AC: Nick Watson Queens Road, Keighley, BD21 1AR Telephone: 01535 605880 Email: office@sjk.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.sjk.bcwcat.co.uk

	St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School Executive Headteacher: Ben Lavin Head of School: Caroline Ramsden Chair of AC: Karen Naik Beacon Road, Bradford, BD6 3DQ Telephone: 01274 679030 Email: office@sje.bcwcacat.co.uk Website: www.sje.bcwcacat.co.uk
	St Walburga's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Elizabeth Fearnley Chair of AC: Kath Spillane Victoria Park, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD18 4R Telephone: 01274 531102 or 01274 593634 Email: office@wal.bcwcacat.co.uk Website: www.wal.bcwcacat.co.uk
	St Bede's and St Joseph's Catholic College Headteacher: Lawrence Bentley Chair of AC: John Shaw ARDOR UPPER SCHOOL SITE Highgate, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD9 4BQ IGNIS LOWER SCHOOL SITE Cunliffe Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD8 7AP
	Telephone: 01274 941941 Email: info@sbsj.co.uk Website: https://sbsj.co.uk

	St Cuthbert and the First Martyrs' Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Catherine Varley (Acting) Executive Leader: John Devlin Chair of AC: Sarah Cartins Scotchman Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD9 5AT Telephone: 01274 543445 Email: office@stcuthberts.bradford.sch.uk Website: www.scfm.bcwcat.co.uk
	St Anne's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Naomi Atkinson (Acting) Chair of AC: Nick Watson North Street, Keighley, West Yorkshire .BD21 3AD Telephone: 01535 210600 Email: office@sta.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.sta.bcwcat.co.uk
	Our Lady of Victories Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy Executive Headteacher: John Devlin Head of School: Katie Mitchell Chair of AC: Nick Watson Guard House Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire. BD22 6JP Telephone: 01535 607149 Email: office@olv.bcwcat.co.uk Website: www.olv.bcwcat.co.uk

	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Bradford Headteacher: Sarah Tolson Chair of AC: Mary Connor Park Lane, Bradford, BD5 0RB Telephone: 01274 727970 Email: office@stjosephsbradford.bradford.sch.uk Website: www.sjbr.bcwcacat.co.uk
	St William's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Fiona Parker Chair of AC: Andrea Pritchard Young Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD8 9RG Telephone: 01274 545743 Email: office@stwilliams.bradford.sch.uk Website: www.wil.bcwcacat.co.uk
	Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Sarah Delany Chair of AC: Becky Creighton Bank, Bradford. BD10 0QA Telephone: 01274 611992 Email: office@olsb.bradford.sch.uk Website: www.olsb.bcwcacat.co.uk
	St Columba's Catholic Primary School Headteacher: Judith Kelby Chair of AC: Mary Hymas Tong Street, Dudley Hill, Bradford, BD4 9PY Telephone: 01274 681961 Email: admin@stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk Website: www.col.bcwcacat.co.uk

Academy Council

Effective Governance

Strong and effective governance underpins the most effective academies. BCWCAT is committed to supporting the highest quality of governance in all its Academies.

Three core functions of Governance:

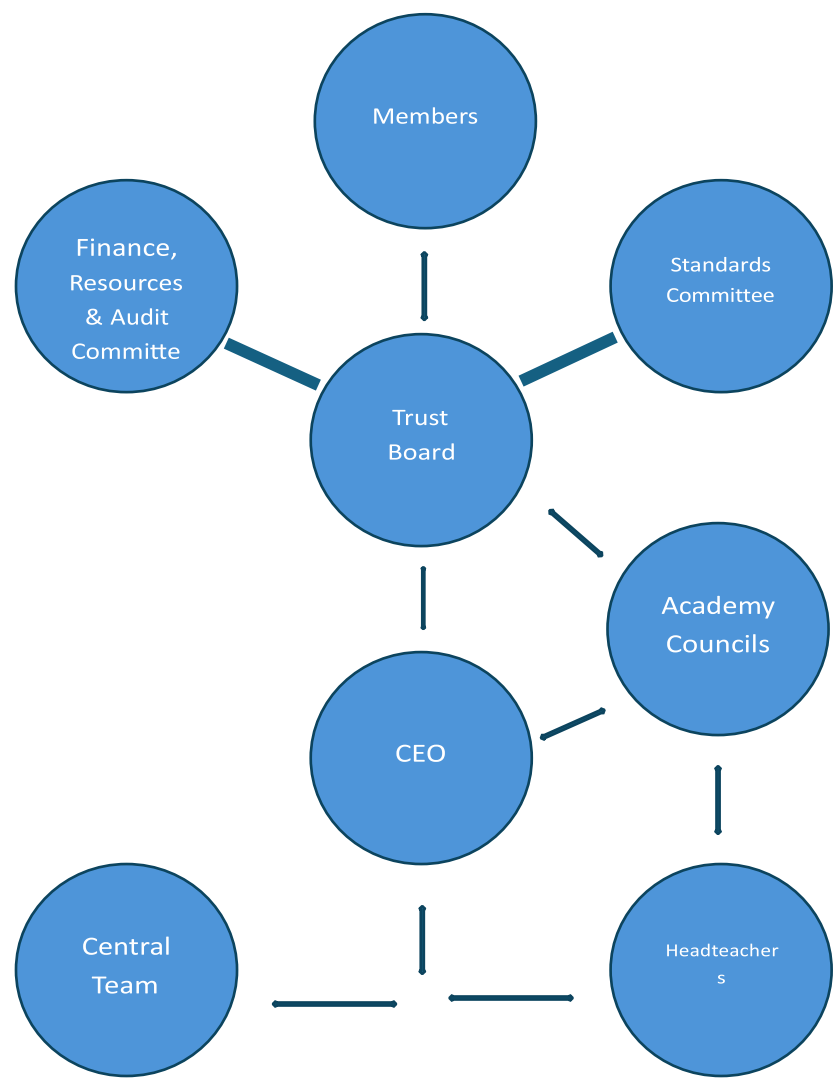
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction at Academy level and with reference to the Trust
- Holding the leadership at all levels to account for the educational performance of the Academy and its pupils and the performance management of staff

The Academy Council should ensure that the school has a medium to long-term vision for its future and that there is a robust strategy in place for achieving its vision. This strategy should address the fundamental questions of 'where are we now?', 'where do we want to be?', and 'how are we going to get there?'

The strategy should provide a robust framework for setting priorities, creating accountability and monitoring progress in achieving the school's vision. The strategy should include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-limited) targets and key performance indicators (KPIs). The focus should be on significant strategic challenges and opportunities for school improvement.

The work of our Academies, and the Academy Councils, is governed by Trust-wide and individual school policies. These take precedence over details within this Handbook, as they are revised as legislation and practice change. They need to be consulted regularly.

Governance & Accountability Structure



Role of Academy Councils

The Trust Board delegates some of its academy level monitoring and scrutinising functions to the Academy Councils, and uses these to:

- Promote the vision of BCWCAT
- Promote and develop Catholic Life
- Monitor the school development plan
- Support and challenge the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher
- Maintain and develop relationships with staff, parents, and the parish community
- Ensure arrangements for safeguarding pupils and staff in the academy are fully compliant with statutory requirements.
- Trust Director may attend Academy Council meetings, but they are not required to sit on Academy Councils.
- The CEO and The Board will report regularly to the Academy Chairs of Governors on BCWCAT development and progress against the core objectives for the Trust.

The constitution of an Academy Council is:

- 6 Foundation Governors
- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Staff Governor
- Headteacher / Executive headteacher
- Head of School (observer)

Foundation Governors are appointed in the name of the Bishop and form the majority of the governing body of a Catholic school. They have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and to ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed. Governing boards have three core functions:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The ministry of Foundation Governor is an important one, because the Catholic character of our schools depends on committed Catholics being willing to undertake this service. Bishop Marcus is therefore very appreciative of all those who offer to assist him in this vital task.

Staff Governors are nominated by the staff body. The staff must be paid employees of the school. Where there are contested posts then the school will hold an election by a secret ballot.

Parent Governors, including carers of students registered at the school are eligible to stand for election. The parent members will be appointed following an election by parents of those students registered at the school.

Term of office

The term of office for any person serving on the Academy council is 4 years, this does not apply to the Headteacher. Foundation Governors may only serve a maximum of 3 consecutive four-year terms (other than with the consent of the Bishop).

Governor Hub

Governor Hub is an online secure system which the Trust and all Academy Councils within the Trust use to communicate with their governors. The platform enables all governors and Directors to have easy access to meeting dates, agendas, and minutes.

Governor Hub also supports training for governors and records all training completed. The clerk to the Academy Council can also send out information, notices and signpost training to all governors using the noticeboard facility.

The following information provides some helpful information of how to log onto the system. Following your appointment as a governor you will receive a welcome email to log onto the system.

Please use the following instructions to log into the system. Governor Hub is also available as an App which supports up to date notifications and updates on the go.

How to log on – Getting started

- On the welcome email, click on set up my password link and follow the steps to set up your account.
- In Step 1, users can change to a preferred email address and in Step 2 choose a password.
- In Step 3 the user can choose whether to share contact information with the Academy Council and decide whether to receive email updates from Governor Hub.
- In Step 4, read the terms and conditions and then confirmation is required by ticking the box ☐ Finally, click let's get started! button to confirm registration.

Users will then be redirected to their personal profile page which needs checking and amending as appropriate

Using Governor Hub for the first time

- Go to <http://governorhub.com> and click on sign in
- User signs in using the password which was used to create the account and their new password. If the user selects keep me signed in, they will not need to enter details these details in future.

The following link can be used to provide users with short videos of how to navigate and understand the system [New to Governor Hub? | governor Hub Help Centre](#)

Issues with logging in should be reported to the Trust Governance Lead (contact details at the back of this document).

Training and Development

Governors within the Trust will be contacted about a range of training and development opportunities. These are free, for all governors.

Local Academy Council Meetings – What to expect.

Academy Councils will meet at least six meetings each academic year (2 per term). The Academy Council meeting format is:

- a) Full Academy Council Meetings 6 (terms of reference in appendix I)
- b) Admissions, Pay and Performance Committee – 1 per year

It is important that all members of the Academy Council make every effort to attend the meeting they are allocated for. There must be three members of the Academy Council, or, where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of persons holding office on the Academy Council at the date of the meeting for the meeting to be quorate and decisions implemented.

Each Academy Council is supported by a Clerk who will circulate the agenda and will take accurate minutes of the meetings and upload them to Governor Hub. The Clerk will upload the agenda and papers to Governor Hub at least seven days in advance of each meeting. However, less notice may be given if the Chair decides to call an urgent meeting. Your academy should set out its timeline of meetings annually at the end of the previous summer term.

The Clerk is an invaluable resource for any Academy Council and often provides advice and guidance. If a clerk does not attend a meeting, then the Chair can elect someone to take minutes (this must not be the Headteacher). If this situation occurs, then the Chair of the Trust needs to be informed.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

At the first meeting of the school year the Academy Council must elect a Chair and Vice-Chair: neither of these can be a person employed at the school. Additionally, the Chair must be a Foundation Governor. A contested election must be held by secret ballot.

Nominations for Chair should be made in writing to the Clerk prior to the distribution of the agenda of the first meeting of the year. A quorum of two-thirds of Academy Councillors in post (i.e., not counting vacancies) is required for this election. If there are no nominations, names can be put forward at the meeting.

The role of the Chair of the Academy Council

The Chair liaises regularly with the Clerk to ensure that agendas and reports are circulated at least one week ahead of the meeting. The Clerk liaises with the Headteacher and Link Academy Governors to ensure that the necessary reports have been undertaken. The Chair has responsibility to Quality assure the work of the Clerk and the Link Governors. Being the Chair of the

Academy Council is a key role in the leadership and Management of the school, the position of Chair can only be held by a Foundation Governor.

Specific role of the Chair:

- Works with the Headteacher to promote and **maintain high standards** of educational achievement.
- Is a 'critical friend' to the Headteacher, offering support, challenge and encouragement whilst holding them to account.
- Ensure that the Academy Council sets a **clear vision, ethos and strategic direction** for the school.
- With the Academy Council, holds the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the Performance Management of staff.
- Ensures **oversight of the effective use of the school's resources** to achieve the aims and targets within the school improvement plan.
- Ensure that all Academy Governors understand the role and responsibilities of the Academy Council.
- Gives the Academy Council a clear lead and direction, ensuring that the Academy Councillors work as an effective team and understand their accountability and the part they play in the strategic leadership of the school and in driving School Improvement.
- Helps to attract Governors with the **necessary skills** and ensuring that tasks are delegated across the Academy Council so that all members contribute, and feel that their individual skills, knowledge, and experience are well used within the 'team.'
- Ensure that **School Improvement** is the focus of all policy and strategy and that Governors scrutiny, monitoring and challenge reflect School Improvement priorities.
- **Leads the governance** of the school, ensuring that statutory requirements and regulations are met, that the school provides value for money in its use of resources and that Academy Council business is conducted efficiently and effectively.

The Chair of the Academy Council has an independent relationship with the Board. In other words, while it is the norm to expect that the Chair of the Academy Council and the Headteacher will work together on Academy Council matters, it is perfectly acceptable for the Chair to contact members of the Trust's Central team outside of his/her relationship with the Headteacher for advice or about any concerns.

In the event of a disagreement that cannot be resolved with the support of the Trust's Central Team, the Chair is at liberty to take the matter of concern first to the Chair of the Trust Board and, thereafter, to the Diocese. If, after these avenues have been exhausted and there still is no resolution, then the Bishop can be involved.

The Chair plays a crucial role in setting the culture of the Academy Council and is 'first among equals', but, has no individual power. The Academy Council is a corporate entity and its power and authority rest with the Academy Council as a whole.

On occasions, the Chair may need to take Chair's action in an emergency, but any such action must be reported to the whole Academy Council at the earliest opportunity.

Chairs are encouraged to delegate some responsibilities to Vice-Chairs, to benefit from their support in what is an extensive role.

Declaring an Interest

Governors are asked to complete and sign a 'declaring of interest' form. This form must be completed and signed to confirm declarations of interest on individual profiles in Governor Hub. Even if a Governor does not have any interests to declare it is still important to complete the confirmation on Governor Hub. This information is then stored on the system and must be available for inspection. This item should be on every agenda throughout the year for meetings. This allows Governors to state whether they have an interest in any of the items on the agenda and it will be minuted accordingly

Safeguarding

The Trust works in partnership with Bradford Education Safeguarding Team who provide advice, support, and monitoring of school to ensure that safeguarding systems and policies are robust.

All schools should protect children and promote their welfare by:

- Providing a safe environment for pupils to learn in
- Create a culture which recognises and understands the importance of safeguarding, including listening to and discussing with pupils.
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare, including identifying instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare, and initiating or taking appropriate action to keep them safe.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Ensure that staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues
- Ensure that systems and procedures are in place to prevent unsuitable people working with children.
- Have systems and processes that ensure pupils are kept safe and allow for poor and unsafe practice to be challenged.
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing safeguarding services for children.

Single Central Record (SCR)

It is a requirement that all schools undertake robust safeguarding, and recruitment checks for anyone involved in the school e.g. staff and Governors and that it maintains a record of these checks, this forms part of any OFSTED inspection. All Governors are expected to present identity information for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be undertaken, this is a legal requirement to ensure that Governors are eligible to conduct their role.

Safer Recruitment

Governors may be involved in staff recruitment. All organisations in England that work with or provide services for children and families have a duty to protect their welfare. From January 2010 it has been a legal requirement that recruitment panels appointing paid school staff and volunteers into the children and family's workforce should include at least one person who

has been trained in safer recruitment. Ofsted will request evidence that each recruitment panel meets this requirement as part of their inspections. Training/support will be provided to Governors who are invited to assist with the recruitment of staff.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Each year an updated version of the KCSIE document is released by the DfE. It is important that Governors read this document, this is a statutory requirement. On Governor Hub under declarations Governors will find a section for KCSIE and a link to the latest version. Governors are required to read and then press confirm on Governor Hub so that an up to date record that Governors have read the document is available.

Academy Information and Documentation

Each school or clerk will provide Governors with a range of documents at the first meeting, these will include but are not limited to:

- A list of all future Academy Council meetings.
- Staff organisation chart. This should include a list of the Leadership Team and their responsibilities.
- A copy of the school's improvement plan and key priorities for the current year.
- A copy of the Trust's strategic plan.
- The school may also provide:
 - A copy of the most recent Ofsted Report and Section 48 Report
 - A copy of the latest performance data
 - School and Trust policies (as appropriate)

Roles within Local Academy Councils

Link Academy Governors

The Lythe School offers this concise explanation of Link Academy Governors.

Simply, a link governor is one appointed by the Academy Council to act as the link or liaison between the governing body and a specific subject, curriculum area or aspect of the school's work. The development of a good working relationship based on mutual trust with all staff is essential if the link governor is to be effective in this role. Link governors must understand that their role is as a source of support to the school and a source of information for the governing body.

Link Governors Roles include:

- Catholic Life of the School
- Safeguarding
- Teaching & Learning
- Behaviour & Attitudes
- SEND

What can you do as a Governor

Effective Governors should:

- Prepare well for meetings
- Develop good relationships with other Governors and members of staff
- Increase knowledge of the context of the school
- Understand how a Governor's specific skill can support the Academy Council

Some useful tips:

- Arrive at every meeting in good time
- Read agendas and supporting papers before the meeting
- Send apologies in advance of the meeting if you are unable to attend
- Ask questions, to clarify points made by those presenting or to provide a fresh perspective
- If there is an issue or concern that a Governor is keen to explore, the Governor should speak to the Chair or Headteacher in advance of the meeting.
- Governors should always respect confidentiality in meetings and after meetings. (All Governors will be expected to read and sign a Code of Conduct)

Induction Process

School Visit

All Governors are encouraged to visit the school by making an appointment to look around. Governors can use this opportunity to get a feel for the school and how it operates daily and ask further questions or queries if the Headteacher or members of the Senior Leadership Team.

School website

Governors will be able to gain a lot of information by visiting a school's website:

Looking on the site is a good way to get to know the school.

It will include information about the school, the curriculum they offer, news, events, along with a range of school and Trust policies.

Schools are expected to publish key school information online. This will include:

- Details of the school's pupil's premium allocation (sports premium/Year 7 catch up) and plans to spend it in the current year; and, for the previous year, a statement of how the money was spent and the impact that it had on educational attainment of those pupils at the academy in respect of whom grant funding was allocated.
- Details of the schools' curriculum, content, and approach.

- Timings of the school day
- School results and performance.
- Details and links to the academy's admission arrangements, including its selection and over subscription criteria, published admission number and the process for applications and appeals.
- Details of the school's policies on behaviour, charging and SEN and disability provision.
- Links to the school's Ofsted reports, section 48 reports and DfE School Performance Tables and details of the school's latest Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 4 attainment and progress measures.
- A Statement of the school's ethos and values.

All schools will need to ensure that they continue to comply with any separate requirements that apply in respect of any specific school and Trust policy.

Code of Conduct

All members of the Academy Council have a duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the academy. Governors are also expected to have the commitment required to carry out the role, provide the right balance between support and challenge, understand what can and cannot be communicated beyond the Governor meetings and how to develop effective relationships. BCWCAT adopts the Catholic Education Services (CES) model code of conduct, all Governors must read and sign this document. The code of conduct form can be found on Governor Hub.

Diocesan Protocols

These Protocols in general explain the relationship Governors must have with your Diocese. In particular, it sets out specific protocols with an explanation of Diocesan requirements and expectations and the support the Diocese can provide in the areas covered by these protocols. The basis for this document is to ensure the preservation and development of the Catholic character of the academy through Governor's relationship with the Diocese in compliance with the schools governing documents. There is therefore a commitment to the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. It is important that all work together in achieving an effective working relationships to ensure benefit to all within the school, the Trust, the Diocese, and the wider Catholic community

Declarations of Interest

BCWCAT is required in accordance with the requirements of section 177 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Trust's articles of association, to establish a register which lists for each member of the Academy Council, any business or personal interests they or any member of their immediate family have which could conflict with the academy or the Trust's interests; to keep the register up to date with notification of changes and through annual review of entries, and to make the register available for inspection by councillors, staff, parents and the Directors. The register will also be inspected by the Trust's external auditors. The Academy Council declaration of interest form can be found on Governor Hub, Governors will need to confirm their interests by filling out the form and pressing the confirm button.

Understanding school Inspections

Ofsted Section 5 or Section 8 Monitoring Inspection

Routine school inspections of maintained schools and academies are done under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Further information on inspections is available on the Ofsted website.

The quality of school governance is central to the inspection judgement on the overall leadership and management of a school. Every inspection report contains an explicit comment on the quality of governance.

OFSTED has published the criteria that inspectors will use to judge the effectiveness of Leadership and Management of which Governance forms a part (see below):

- Inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of the board of governors or the board of trustees.
- The www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts sets out the purpose of governance, which is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight, and assurance for educational and financial performance.
- Inspectors will explore how governors/trustees carry out their functions. For example, the clarity of the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction will significantly impact the decisions leaders make about the curriculum. Inspectors will consider whether the work of the board of governors or the board of trustees in this respect is supporting the school to provide a high-quality education for its pupils.
- In addition, the board of governors or the board of trustees are responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. The board of governors or the board of trustees are also expected to exercise strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding. When inspectors consider whether the board of governors or the board of trustees are fulfilling this responsibility, they are not expected to construct or review a list of duties.

Governance in academies

In an academy, the board of trustees is responsible for governance. Inspectors will speak to the chair of the board of trustees (or their delegate) and as many other trustees as are available.

Section 48

All Catholic schools have an inspection undertaken by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate usually once every 4 years. This inspection is both a diocesan and a statutory responsibility.

In the organisation of the Church, the bishop is the 'first teacher' in the diocese with responsibility for the formation and education of his people, with responsibilities schools. The inspectors working for the Inspectorate act on his behalf to fulfil this responsibility.

The purpose of inspection is to report to and advise the bishop on the quality of the Catholic life and mission of the school, of religious education and of collective worship. Of course, it also stands to inform parents and the wider Catholic community.

Inspectors will observe learning and acts of worship, talk to staff and pupils, Analyse data, and discuss emerging issues with the school's leadership.

The following is taken from the published Inspection Handbook regarding the part of Governors during the inspection [2.- Inspection-Handbook-March-2024-v2.3.pdf \(dioceseofleeds.org.uk\)](#) (page17 &18)

Discussion with the chair of governors and/or chair of directors

The formal discussion with the governing board is the point at which representatives from the academy trust or company would be included. The chair of governors and/or chair of directors, or any link governor of religious education should be invited to explain:

- How the governing board fulfils its responsibility as the guardian of the mission of a Catholic school.
- The vision and priorities for the Catholic life and mission of the school, religious education and prayer and liturgy.
- How aware governors and/or directors are of the strengths and development needs of the Catholic life and mission of the school, religious education and prayer and liturgy.
- How governors and/or directors are involved in the completion of the school's record of self-evaluation and its on-going evaluation.
- How they are involved in monitoring these.
- To what extent the school understands and relates to its Catholic identity and charism.

This will often be achieved by discussing appropriate sections of the school's record of self-evaluation, particularly about the leadership and management of the school. Final responsibility for the school's record of self-evaluation rests with governors and/or directors.

The inspector will need to establish whether governors and/or directors are holding the head teacher to account for the leadership and management of the Catholic life and mission of the school and ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the diocese.

Appendix 1

Glossary and Acronyms

Alternative Provision (AP)

Refers to a suitable full-time education that is arranged for a student

Articles of Association

The Articles of Association is the formal governing document for an academy and sets out its rules for operating, including the composition of the governing board. The Department for Education has a set of model articles, and each academy trust will have a tailored version of the models for themselves

ASP

Analyse School Performance – a service providing schools and other existing user groups with detailed performance analysis to support local school improvement.

Attainment 8

A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. Measures the achievement of a pupil across English, Maths and six further qualifications (three of which must count in the EBacc measure).

Attainment Targets

These establish what children of different abilities should be expected to know and be able to do by the end of each key stage.

Baseline assessment

Assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to year 1 – it is not statutory, but many local authorities encourage schools to carry it out. Schools may now decide to conduct baseline assessments in reception, but again this is not a statutory requirement.

CAMHS

Children and Adult Mental Health Service

Capital Funding

Spending on projects, improvements, and extensions to the school's land and buildings.

CPD

Continuous Professional Development for school staff or the councillors.

CSED

Catholic Self Evaluation Document

DDA

Disability Discrimination Act

DfE

Department for Education

DHT

Deputy Headteacher

Directed Time

Time when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the headteacher – a maximum of 1265 hours in a school year.

DPO

Data Protection Officer. The external data protection adviser, who takes responsibility for monitoring data protection compliance. For BCWCAT this is Richard Lewis-Ogden DPO@bywaterkent.co.uk

DSL

Designated Safeguarding Lead This is a senior member of staff who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

EEF

Education Endowment Foundation

EAL

English as an Additional Language

EBacc

A school performance measure based on achievement of GCSEs in 'core academic subjects' of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences, and a language

EBD

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

ECT

Early Career Teacher Formerly known as NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher).

EIF

The Education Inspection Framework Document that sets out the overarching principles that Ofsted inspectors apply to their inspections for all school types. It includes the categories that inspectors will judge schools against.

ESFA

Education and Skills Funding Agency – a single funding agency accountable for funding education and training for children, young people, and adults (formerly the EFA and SFA).

EH

Early Help

EHCP

Education, Health, and Care Plans – the document which replaces statements of SEN and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children and young people with special educational needs.

ETA

Educational Teaching Assistant. Sometimes referred to as 'TA'.

Ex officio

Able to attend meetings by virtue of holding a particular office.

Exclusion

Permanent removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy.

EYFS

Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The statutory framework for all early years' providers. It "sets the standards that all early year's providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well".

FSM

Free school meals – pupils are eligible for FSM if their parents receive certain benefits.

Funding Agreement

The document which sets out the relationship between an academy/MAT and the Education Funding Agency (EFA)/Department for Education (DfE).

GAG

General Annual Grant The main source of revenue funding for academy trusts. Academies are expected to meet their day to day running costs from the GAG.

GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

HLTA

Higher Level Teaching Assistant

HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector

HR

Human Resources

KCSIE

Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory guidance setting out what schools and colleges should do, and what they must comply with, in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

KS 1-5

Key stages 1-5. The four stages of the national curriculum: KS1 for pupils aged 5-7; KS2 for 7-11; KS3 for 11-14; KS4 for 14-16. KS5 applies to 16–19-year-olds but is not part of the national curriculum.

CLA

Child Looked After – a child who is looked after by the local authority. It means they're subject to a care order (interim or full care order) or who are voluntarily accommodated by the local authority.

Memorandum of Association

Sets out the name of the academy trust and provides details of the people/organisations who wish to form the trust and become its members under the Companies Act 2006.

Ofqual

Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Register – the regulator of examinations and qualifications.

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – the body which inspects education and training for learners of all ages and inspects and regulates care for children and young people.

PA

Persistent Absence / Persistent Absentee (attendance below 90%).

PAN

Published Admissions Number – the number of children the LA (or governing board of a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy trust) determines must be admitted to anyone-year group in the school.

PE and Sports Premium

Funding for years 1 to 6 to provide additional PE and sport beyond that already provided in the curriculum.

PGCE

Post-Graduate Certificate of Education

PPA

Planning, Preparation and Assessment – 10% guaranteed non-contact time for teachers.

Progress 8

A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. It aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4.

PRU

Pupil Referral Unit – alternative education provision for pupils unable to attend a mainstream school or special school. Maintained by the local authority.

PSED

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

PSHCE

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education

PTA

Parent Teacher Association – or PSA (Parent Staff Association)

PP

Pupil premium Funding allocated to schools to support pupils eligible for FSM, in care, or who have parents in the armed forces.

QTS

Qualified Teacher Status

RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete)

RAAC is a lightweight, 'bubbly' form of concrete commonly used in construction between the 1950s and mid1990s. It is predominantly found as precast panels in roofs (commonly flat roofs, sometimes pitched) and occasionally in floors and walls. There are concerns about the integrity of RAAC panels.

RIDDOR

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs)

Civil servants that act on behalf of the Secretary of State. Their responsibilities include intervening in underperforming academies and free schools, making decisions on conversion to academy status, and encouraging and deciding on applications for academy sponsors. There are eight RSCs serving different regions, reporting to the Schools Commissioner.

RSHE

Relationships and Sexual Health Education.

SATs

Standard Assessment – used for national curriculum assessment in Year 2 and Year 6.

Scheme of delegation

A document defining the lines of responsibility and accountability in a MAT, sometimes referred to as a Roles and Responsibilities document.

Schools Conditions Allocation (SCA)

Money which is paid to the Trust for maintaining school buildings.

School census

A statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms. Maintained schools and academies should take part in the census.

School Development Plan (SDP)

The operational document describing how the school will work towards the strategic priorities set by the Academy Council. May also be referred to as a 'school improvement plan' (SIP).

SCR

Single Central Record. A record of employment and suitability checks a school has carried out on staff. The SCR should be kept up to date by staff in the school, while the governing board or academy trust must make sure it's being monitored. A statutory requirement for all schools.

Section 5

Full Ofsted inspections. They normally last for two days and are the only inspections that can change schools' Ofsted grades.

Section 8

Ofsted inspections conducted in three main circumstances:

- For 'good' and 'outstanding' schools to confirm whether they remain good or outstanding
- Monitoring inspections for schools judged as 'requires improvement', having serious weaknesses, or needing special measures.
- No formal designation inspections. Ofsted can carry out inspections to follow up concerns about schools that have been brought to their attention but are not in a category of concern.

Section 48

Schools with a designated religious character are responsible for organising section 48 inspections on top of standard Ofsted inspections. The purpose is to inspect the school's ethos, content of collective worship and denominational religious education.

SEMH

Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SEND

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – learning difficulties for which special educational provision has to be made.

SENDCO

SEND Co-ordinator – the teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the school.

Service level agreement (SLA)

A contract between a service provider (the local authority or another private sector provider) and a school that defines the level of service expected from the service provider.

SIP

School Improvement Plan. A document created by your board and the headteacher that sets out the school's priorities for improvement over the coming year(s). May also be referred to as a 'school development plan' (SDP).

SPaG

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

SLT

Senior Leadership Team

TLR

Teaching and Learning Responsibility – payments made to teachers for an additional responsibility.

TUPE

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. Regulations designed to protect employees against unfair treatment as a result of a transfer of employment, for example, when a school converts from a maintained school to an academy

Useful Websites**Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust**

The Trust website for information and for access to all individual school websites within the Trust.

The Diocese of Leeds: www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk

For information and guidance from the Diocese of Leeds.

The National Governors' Association www.nga.org.uk

General information and advice for all Governors. The Trust has bought a corporate membership package so your Clerk will provide you with their discrete login to be able to allow you to access the members' area and ELearning Link section.

Governor Hub www.governorhub.com Department for Education

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education