# MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING OF ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, ON TUESDAY 30TH JANUARY 2024 AT THE SCHOOL AT 7.00 PM

**PRESENT:**

| Name | Governor Type | Other Information | Term of Office | Present/Apologies/ Absent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alessia Errico | Foundation | Chair | 01.11.2020-31.08.2024 | Present |
| Sylvia Lehrian | Foundation | Co-Vice Chair | 01.09.2020-31.08.2024 | Present |
| Fr John McKenna | Foundation | | 01.10.2021-31.08.2025 | Present |
| Francesca Giacon | Foundation | | 01.10.2020-31.08.2024 | Present |
| Peter Moger | Foundation | | 01.09.2021-31.08.2025 | Apologies |
| Peter Collins | Foundation | Co-Vice Chair | 01.09.2020-31.08.2024 | Present |
| Fr David Pember | Foundation | | 01.04.2023-31.08.2026 | Absent |
| Liz Reeve | Foundation | | 01.01.2023-31.08.2026 | Present |
| Liam Hourican | Elected Parent | | 06.06.2023-05.06.2027 | Apologies |
| Serena Horgan | Elected Parent | | 07.10.2022-06.10.2026 | Present |
| Fiona Winters | Elected Parent | | 26.01.2024-25.01.2028 | Present |
| Maureen Kelly | Staff | Headteacher | Ex-officio | Present |
| Una Turner | Staff | | 08.06.2022-07.06.2026 | Present |
| Gordon Fisher | LA | | 14.01.2021-13.01.2025 | Absent |
| **Non-voting attendees** | | | | |
| Holly Evans | | | | In attendance |
| Nicki Whatley | | | | In attendance |
| Caroline Winston | Clerk | | N/A | In attendance |

## PART ONE

**1. OPENING PRAYER**

1.1 The meeting opened with a prayer.

**2. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

2.1 The Co-Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending a special welcome to newly elected parent governor Fiona Winters.

2.2 The Co-Vice Chairs would arrange a date to meet with Fiona Winters as part of her induction process.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3.1 Consent was recorded to apologies for absence submitted on behalf of Liam Hourican and Peter Moger.

3.2 Gordon Fisher and Fr David Pember were absent.

**4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

4.1 None of the Governors present declared a pecuniary interest in the business to be discussed.

**5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th OCTOBER 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS**

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

5.2 Arising from the minutes:

5.3 Item 8.1 Complete skills audit and return to clerk This was in progress.

5.4 Item 12.11 All Governors to complete online safeguarding training It was suggested that a safeguarding refresher session be organised for Governors as a refresher session was recommended annually.

5.5 Governors were reminded that staff Level 1 safeguarding training had to be completed every 2-3 years, with an annual refresher session.

| | | Action | Who? | Deadline |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12.11 | *a.* | Organise a safeguarding refresher session for Governors | **SL & MK** | **April 2024** |

**6. HEADTEACHER'S VERBAL REPORT**

6.1 The report of the Headteacher, copies of which had been previously shared on GovernorHub, was received and noted.

6.2 Arising from the report:

6.3 School Roll It was reported that there were now 487 children on roll, and the school was in the process of filling a space in Year 3.

6.4 Catholic Life in School It was highlighted that, during this academic year, the school had provided rich opportunities for children to encounter God and to deepen their relationship with Him. The Year 5 and Year 6 children had had weekly meditation with Fr. John which they thoroughly enjoyed. Fr John celebrated the beginning of school year mass with KS2 in the hall with the newly installed air-conditioning unit, which made it comfortable for everyone. Children also celebrated the Harvest with a traditional festival in a packed school hall full of smiling parents and held Advent liturgies in the year group phases in the lead up to Christmas. The Nativities were well attended again this year with a successful Carol Concert in St Gregory's. The staff were very grateful to Fr John for the time to practice in the Church and for having permission to reorganise the pews. Many commented on how this contributed to a stress-free concert which was always the highlight of the year.

6.5 It was noted that the weekly Gospel Assemblies had taken place online every Monday morning at 9am. Children from Year 1 to Year 6 were genuinely keen to join in and participate as they watched the slides and the videos which created opportunities for children to reflect, meditate and pray together.

6.6 The Headteacher reported that this term the school would welcome Anna Morris from the Catholic Children's society who would talk to the children about the purpose of Lent and how they could contribute to children and families who were less fortunate. Laura Ouseley, CAFOD's World News Officer, would be coming to St Catherine's to talk to the Chaplains about the work CAFOD did. The Chaplains were then going to support Laura in delivering a presentation to KS1 and then KS2 about CAFOD and the school's commitment to joining them in this year's Big Lent Walk.

6.7 RE It was highlighted that during the Autumn term the school had introduced the new RE scheme of learning, The Vine and the Branches, into Year 1 and Year 3 to ensure readiness to implement the new Religious Education Directory in full over the next few academic years. The RE leader had worked closely with the Year 3 team to ensure that the scheme was appropriately adapted to suit the needs of the pupils. She had also attended the Diocese EYFS new RED planning workshop and shared resources and curriculum guidance with the EYFS teachers. They had begun to implement the new RED into their current RE planning.

6.8 Wellbeing The Headteacher reported that since October half term, the school had been trialling PPA time (planning, preparation and assessment) at home for Teachers. For those who had their PPA in the morning they could come in at 11.00am. Those who had the afternoon session as PPA could leave at lunchtime and did not have to return to school. So far, the teachers had been appreciative of this time in the week where they could work without distractions. The monitoring had not shown any change to the standard of teaching and learning. The teachers seemed happy with this format

and had said they get more work done. The Headteacher said that this provision should hopefully have a positive impact on staff retention and staff recruitment which in turn would benefit all the children.

6.9 **ASKED** how often staff had PPA time, the Headteacher said that this was a statutory requirement and happened once a week.

6.10 Household Support Fund It was noted that the LA were providing schools with money to distribute to vulnerable and disadvantaged families. The school had identified 44 children who would benefit from this fund. They received a payment for October 2023 of£21.15 and December 2023 of £42.30. It was anticipated that there would be a further payment for April. The school had also distributed Sainsbury's vouchers worth £20 donated by the Chipping Barnet Food Bank. An anonymous parent had also donated food and household items to six vulnerable families in the school. They had received 4 bags each.

6.11 PE and Sports Premium The information was noted.

6.12 The School's current wooden sheds which housed the PE and playtime equipment were rotting and needed replacing. They had researched different types of sheds and were currently looking into purchasing two aluminium framed sheds with skylights to store the equipment in. It was hoped to have this installed during the Spring Term.

6.13 Inclusion There were currently 56 children on the SEN profile, nine of whom had an EHCP.

6.14 Pupil Premium Numbers Approximately 9% of the school population were disadvantaged, which was well below the national average.

6.15 Academies The working party had met with Peter Sweeny and Adrian Leggett in October 2023 to discuss the Diocese plans for St Catherine's. At the time, the school was the only school in Barnet to have successfully completed the due diligence tasks and they were invited to write a letter to the Diocese panel requesting their permission to join an existing academy in another authority. A response to this communication was still awaited and the Headteacher had chased up this matter.

6.16 Staffing The information was noted.

6.17 The Headteacher said that having stable support staff for vulnerable children was important.

6.18 Premises The information was noted.

6.19 The Headteacher said that she hoped the boys' toilets could be redeveloped as proposed, but plans for this might change, with the removal of urinals. This would be discussed at the next Resources Committee meeting.

6.20 EYFS It was noted that, since January, seven new starters had joined the 2-year-old provision. Three of these children were funded twos, and four were fee-paying. In the 3-year-old provision the school welcomed nine new starters, and seven of these would be staying for five terms. They had all settled in well to the routine and were happy and animated when in Nursery.

6.21 The Headteacher reminded Governors that, from April 2024, the Government would be changing the existing childcare entitlement for families. Parents were now able to go online and check their eligibility. From April 10 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds would be able to access 15 hours of free childcare a week. Currently, 2-year-olds received funding for their hours if they were from a low-income family, were a looked-after child, or had a statement of SEN. From September 2024, eligible working parents of 9- month-olds – 3-year-olds would be able to get up to 15 hours of free childcare a week. From September 2025, eligible working parents of 9 month- 3-year-olds would be able to get up to 30 hours free childcare a week. The government would fund the school £6.47 per hour for the 3- and 4-year-olds, and £9.34 per hour for the 2-year-olds.

6.22 **ASKED** whether the school had the staffing capacity for increased numbers on roll in the Nursery, this was confirmed.

6.23 Progress and Attainment Data The information was noted, this had been reviewed in detail at the recent Learning & Achievement committee meeting.

6.24 English This year the School Improvement Plan was largely focussed on the English Curriculum, particularly spelling, grammar, writing and handwriting. The SLT had implemented a programme of professional development for the staff, who had been trained to deliver No Nonsense Spelling, No

Nonsense Grammar, and the St Catherine's Approach to Writing. This had streamlined the English Curriculum so that spelling, grammar, writing and handwriting were being taught consistently and with fidelity across the school.

6.25 Maths The information was noted.

6.26 Computing The information was highlighted.

6.27 Governors heard that, during this half term, the school had invited parents of children from Years 2 to 6 into school to join their children for their Safer Internet Day workshops. These began on Monday 22nd January and would continue through until half term. These were virtual workshops tailored for each year group and provided by Education Child Protection. Joining their children for the workshop would provide the parents with an opportunity to see how their children were learning to be safe whilst online. This would hopefully provide parents with an opportunity to continue the conversation at home. The Headteacher said that she would review the parental attendance figures at the end of the half term.

6.28 Music It was highlighted that Music continued to go from strength to strength at St Catherine's. It was received enthusiastically and the engagement within the lessons was excellent. The curriculum was contextualized to St Catherine's and where possible it reflected the work being done in the topic curriculum.

6.29 This year, Year 6 were involved in a Project provided by the English National Opera. The Headteacher said that this was an opportunity to follow on from the excellent work they did on colour last year. The project involved a class composition, which would be recorded and then sent to the ENO. This was a nationwide project and many schools were participating.

6.30 PSHE The information was noted.

6.31 The Headteacher reported that the previous evening teaching staff had attended a mental health webinar.

6.32 Governors were reminded that it was children's mental health week the following week.

6.33 SEF and SIP These documents had been shared for information and it was reported that they were being reviewed in detail by the committees.

6.34 Local Authority School Evaluation Visit Katie Dawbarn, Local Authority Network Inspector, had carried out a monitoring visit last term. She supported some of the subject leaders in effective monitoring of their subjects and accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses with their subject across the school.

6.35 The report following this visit had been reviewed in detail by the Learning & Achievement Committee.

6.36 **ASKED** whether SEND numbers on roll were continuing to rise, this was confirmed, particularly in EYFS and Key Stage 1.

6.37 **ASKED** whether this was still as a result of the ongoing impact of the Covid lockdowns, it was explained that there were a range of reasons for increasing SEND numbers in mainstream schools, with pupil demographics changing and a lack of special school places affecting this.

6.38 **ASKED** whether parents were supportive of identified needs, it was reported that the school worked to build positive relationships with parents in order to work collaboratively.

6.39 **ASKED** whether there was a limit to the number of SEND pupils a school could admit, it was reported that there was not. Governors were reminded that if a child had an EHCP the family had the right to choose the School they wished their child to attend. The SENDCO reported that the number of LA consultations was continuing to increase, which meant a significant increase in paperwork to evidence why the School could or could not meet a child's needs.

6.40 A brief discussion ensued about two children on roll in Key Stage 1 who needed placement at a special school. The Headteacher informed Governors that waiting time for places could be incredibly long.

**7. UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

7.1 This had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

**8. SAFEGUARDING**

8.1 The Safeguarding Governor would be attending a meeting in school the following week, the minutes of which would be shared on GovernorHub.

**9. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

9.1 **Catholic Life Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2024, copies of which had been previously shared on GovernorHub, were received and noted.

9.2 Discussion at the meeting had focussed on:
- A presentation from Miss Fielding on the new RE scheme of work in EYFS and Key Stage 1.
- Staff wellbeing and the success of the new PPA arrangements.
- DBS checks for visiting priests to the school.
- Attendance was currently 96.64% which was way above the national average.
- Sports Premium funding had been reconfirmed in June 2023 and governors had discussed how this was being allocated in school.
- A new RE advisor had visited the school on 24th November, and this had resulted in an outstanding feedback report.
- The SIP had been reviewed in detail.

9.3 The next meeting would be a learning walk on Catholic social teaching.

9.4 **ASKED** when the next RE inspection would be, the Headteacher said that this would be in 2025/2026.

9.5 **Learning & Achievement Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2024, copies of which had been shared on GovernorHub, were received and noted.

9.6 Discussion at the meeting had focussed on:
- The Autumn term data had been analysed in detail and the gender gap in some year groups had been discussed.
- The SIP had been reviewed, and there would be a focus on English in the current academic year. The Tales Tool kit was being used to help children to develop their vocabulary and story writing.
- The SEF had been reviewed in detail.
- The school Chaplaincy programme was in place and was considered.
- Wellbeing continued to be a high priority and the PPA arrangements had been discussed and were working well.
- The staff survey responses had been positive, as had the pupil and parent surveys.
- A discussion had focussed on SEND and equalities.
- The report following the recent visit from Katie Dawbarn had been reviewed.

9.7 The next committee learning walk would have a focus on spelling.

9.8 **Resources** The committee would be meeting on 8th February 2024.

*Fr John McKenna left the meeting at this point.*

**10. UPDATE ON ACADEMISATION**

10.1 There were no further updates.

10.2 As discussed earlier in the meeting, the Headteacher was awaiting further information from the Diocese.

**11. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

11.1 There were no policies/documents to review.

**12. GOVERNOR TRAINING**

12.1 The links to the Diocese of Westminster and Barnet training programmes were noted.

12.2 The co-Vice Chairs would support the new Governor in the selection of some suitable training.

12.3 Governors were asked to update the training tab on their GovernorHub profiles if they attended any sessions.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

13.1 Highways Proposal The School had received a consultation letter about proposed changes that the Highways Department were proposing for Vale Drive. The Headteacher would be sending a formal response on behalf of the School.

13.2 A brief discussion ensued about the challenges faced by drivers in Vale Drive. People were receiving parking fines on the yellow zigzag lines when they were manoeuvring their cars to allow other cars to pass by.

**14. WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN**

14.1 The impact of the Governors' work on the children was as follows:

- The Safeguarding of children remained a high priority in school.
- The Governors continued to monitor and implement strategies to ensure the wellbeing of staff and children.
- The school had provided rich opportunities for children to encounter God and to deepen their relationship with Him.
- The Household support Fund was supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.
- Maintenance work to the premises meant that the children were working in a safe and pleasant environment.

**15. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

15.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **TUESDAY 7TH May 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed.*