MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING OF ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, ON TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 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	Present
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	Present
Serena Horgan	Elected Parent		07.10.2022-06.10.2026	Apologies
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	Present
Non-voting attendees				
Holly Evans				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 Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 Consent was recorded to apologies for absence submitted on behalf of Serena Horgan.

3.2 Father David Pember was recorded as 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 30th JANUARY 2024 AND MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

5.2 Arising from the minutes:

5.3 Item 12.11 Organise a safeguarding refresher session for Governors The Safeguarding Link Governor said that there were two proposed sessions which would be discussed later in this meeting.

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 highlighted that there were currently 486 children on roll, with two applications pending. One family had left the school due to relocation.

6.4 There was one space available in both Year 1 and Year 4.

6.5 22 children were on roll in the 2-year-old provision and 44 in the 3-year-old provision.

6.6 Attendance It was noted that whole school attendance was currently 96.75% which was way above the national average.

6.7 The Headteacher reported that the school continued to use fixed penalty notices for term-time holidays.

6.8 Parents were also regularly reminded about the school's policy on attendance and this information had been included in the minutes of the recent parent partnership meeting and would be shared again in the next school newsletter that week.

6.9 Nursery Open Morning The Headteacher reported that a successful open morning had been held at the Nursery on Saturday 18th May 2024. 30 people had attended including some families whose child had not been born yet but who were interested in using the 2-year-old provision.

6.10 The contact details had been taken from all attendees.

6.11 Reception 2024 The Headteacher said that the SLT had spent time that day dividing the new cohort for September into two classes, taking into consideration the individual needs of each child.

6.12 A meeting for new parents would be taking place on 6th June 2024. Sylvia Lehrian undertook to attend on behalf of the Governing Body.

6.13 The Headteacher said that she was delighted that Reception would be full, despite the current national trend for falling Reception rolls.

6.14 **ASKED** whether there was a waiting list at present for Reception, this was confirmed. The Headteacher provided an overview of how some places were allocated in terms of the admissions criteria. She added that there had been no appeals for places.

6.15 Catholic Life It was highlighted that the children in Year 5 and Year 6 continued to participate in meditation with Fr John each week. They also received confession before the Easter break.

6.16 Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 celebrated their year group masses.

6.17 Year 1, 3 and 4 led their phases in a Prayer Service.

6.18 The Headteacher said that these occasions were all very well attended by parents.

6.19 RE Curriculum The information was highlighted.

6.20 The Headteacher explained that promoting Catholic Social Teaching had remained a top priority in the Spring Term. The Pupil Voice survey completed by the Catholic Life Committee on 8 March showed the clear development of CST knowledge across the school as the children moved from Key Stage 1 into Key Stage 2.

6.21 Spring Term Data and Assessment The data was highlighted and the Headteacher said that this had recently been analysed in depth at the Learning & Achievement committee meeting.

6.22 Moderation of assessments would be taking place on Monday 10th June to look at the gaps in outcomes in Writing for boys and girls.

6.23 PSHE & Wellbeing The school had hosted a meetup with a range of different Barnet schools where school council members from Y3-Y6 had taken part in discussions about mental health and the importance of it. They had also debated different questions and planned to create a poster promoting how to look after our own mental health.

6.24 EYFS Curriculum and Provision A full update had been provided.

6.25 Subject Leader Reports The detailed information provided by subject leaders was noted.

6.26 Forest School The information was highlighted and noted.

6.27 The Headteacher informed Governors that a Tepee had been installed in the school grounds for the children to use as a sheltered area.

6.28 A Forest Fun session for children up to three years old would take place on Tuesday 11th June.

6.29 **ASKED** about the use of AI by teaching staff and whether they were fully trained and prepared for using this, a full overview was provided on how this was used for lesson preparation, creating model text and for supporting the social needs of some children. Governors were assured that Miss Grace had provided training for this for the whole staff and directed them to use AI as an additional tool, but which should be carefully checked for accuracy.

6.30 The Headteacher said that AI was not used for the writing of school reports as these were personalised.

6.31 PE, Sports and Pupil Premium The Headteacher highlighted that Miss Grace had taken over this role temporarily whilst Mrs Whatley was on maternity leave.

6.32 Athletics training had commenced this half term with Mr Reilly in preparation for the Barnet Athletics Championship. Following trials, the children were selected and had participated in weekly training at The Totteridge Academy.

6.33 Music The information was noted.

6.34 School Visits Year 6 had been on their residential trip to Tolmers Camp in Cuffley and the Headteacher said that, despite lots of rain in the first part of the week, the children had had an excellent time and had been exceptionally well behaved. She recorded thanks to all members of staff who had taken the time to manage this trip.

6.35 The Chair also recorded the thanks of the Governing Body to the members of staff who enabled this trip to go ahead.

6.36 Governors heard that staff were given on day of additional leave as a goodwill gesture for participating in the residential trip.

6.37 Inclusion It was reported that Holly Evans continued to engage with a wide range of external professionals to support the needs of the SEND pupils.

6.38 Pupil Premium It was noted that the proportion of PP pupils on roll was low at 9%.

6.39 Staffing The Headteacher reported that there had been no teacher resignations for the end of the academic year.

6.40 Congratulations were recorded to Mrs Whatley on the arrival of her baby in April.

6.41 Mrs Turner had been appointed as substantive Assistant Head from 15th April 2024. She continued to lead and develop EYFS and English throughout the school, in addition to her Assistant Head duties. Mrs Turner was also covering some of Mrs Whatley's responsibilities whilst she was on maternity leave.

6.42 Mrs Georgiou was appointed substantive Maths Leader as of April. All TLR posts in the staffing structure were full.

6.43 Governors were reminded that TAs could resign at any time in the year and could therefore chose to do so during the summer break.

6.44 Premises It was noted that during the Easter holidays major refurbishment to the Key Stage 2 toilets had been completed. Following the drafting of a detailed specification by Barkers Surveyors, the tendering process awarded the contract to Messrs Dalco Construction Ltd. The results were a modern, hygienic and welcoming installation, designed to be easily cleaned and maintained.

6.45 Further improvements had been made to the lighting in the school, with the installation of fifteen new light fittings around the premises, including four new LED lights in the main hall. It was estimated that something over one third of all lights, both inside and out, had now been changed to modern LED units. These provided much improved lighting at a reduced running cost compared to traditional fluorescent fittings, and with longer lifespans.

6.46 The Headteacher regretted to report that, despite work to the flat roofs recently, two leaks had again started in the staffroom and main corridor. The site manager was currently dealing with this.

6.47 It was noted that, following the removal of four wall heaters from the hall, the walls had since been replastered and painted.

6.48 The Headteacher said that the new sensory room was a great facility for the children and staff.

6.49 **ASKED** whether staff accompanied children inside the room, it was explained that this was dependent on their needs.

6.50 Academies The Headteacher highlighted that the Chair had responded to Canon Michael Dunne, the Chair of the Diocese Academy Board, to express disappointment with their instructions to join the BHFAT in Harrow. The Headteacher had received an email from the Chair of the Trust, James Coyle, explaining that the CEO Geraldine Higgins would be contacting her after half term to arrange a meeting with them both to discuss their experiences to date and plans for the future. She had received this email and arranged a visit to St Catherine's.

6.51 A brief discussion ensued about this suggestion to join an out of borough MAT and why this would not be a sensible direction to follow.

6.52 The last academy meeting of the year with the Catholic Barnet Schools was scheduled on Wednesday 19th June at 9:30am.

7. UPDATE ON SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7.1 The document had been shared on GovernorHub for information. This had been analysed in detail at committee level.

8. UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

8.1 This had been discussed in depth at the recent Catholic Life committee meeting.

9. SAFEGUARDING

9.1 There had been two safeguarding meetings since the last full governing body meeting.

9.2 The minutes of the meetings held on 5th February and 23rd May 2024, copies of which had been shared on GovernorHub, were received and noted.

9.3 Safeguarding Training Sylvia Lehrian reminded Governors to complete their annual update training on safeguarding. The Diocese session would be taking pace on 25th June and BELS session 8th July.

9.4 Further training links would be shared by the school as and when they became available.

9.5 Governors were reminded that the Diocese closely monitored training attendance when considering reappointment of Foundation governors.

9.6 Liz Reeve reported that she had attended safeguarding training on 3rd April 2024.

9.7 Critical Incident Training It was reported that new government guidelines had been published on the handling of critical incidents in schools. The school had a Lockdown policy and evacuation procedures were in place and this was discussed at the INSET day at the start of each academic year. Lockdown procedures could not be practiced with the children, but scenarios and actions were discussed in the staff training. Whole school evacuation procedures were carried out termly, the last one on 26th March, where the school had been evacuated in an impressive 1 minute 55 secs.

9.8 Wellbeing it was noted that in the Autumn term, the school bought into the Education Support service for the benefit of staff. The latest report from the service indicated that only 2 staff members had accessed the service, 1 for a financial enquiry, 1 for clinical services. The Headteacher and Sylvia Lehrian had discussed the need to once again promote the service to staff as it was not financially viable if it was not being used.

9.9 **ASKED** how much this cost, this was reported to be £500.

9.10 Parents The SLT were having to work with a number of parents to build resilience in their children. The school had received a few very lengthy emails from parents over very small incidents which could be handled with a conversation with the class teacher.

9.11 An incident of a parent intimidating a member of staff had been reported and this was being handled by the Headteacher.

9.12 SCR This had been reviewed and had all been in order.

10. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

10.1 **Catholic Life Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2024, copies of which had been previously shared on GovernorHub, were received and noted. Arising from the minutes:

10.2 Miss Fielden had provided a very comprehensive update on the new Catholic Social Teaching curriculum. The new curriculum directory needed to be implemented by September 2026, material for this was being shared and staff were attending conferences/meetings to develop their understanding.

10.3 The committee had met with children to discuss Catholic Social Teaching.

10.4 Leaders were being trained in the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory which was expected to be in place in schools by September 2025. There were significant changes to the way prayer services were to be carried out and the vocabulary used. Miss Fielden, RE Leader, attended the conference on Monday 20th May and would share updates with the staff.

10.5 The Caritas ambassadors had visited Westminster Cathedral that week.

10.6 The Big Lent Walk had reportedly been very successful, with the whole school taking part. Well over £1000 had been raised for CAFOD.

10.7 53 members of staff had registered to use the Employee Assistance Programme. Staff continued to have PPA time at home, assisting with overall wellbeing.

10.8 It was reported that two new storage sheds had been ordered for the playground using Sports Premium funding. However, when they had arrived the quality was not as described, and these were returned and new more suitable sheds had been ordered and installed.

10.9 **Learning & Achievement Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2024, copies of which had been shared on GovernorHub, were received and noted. Arising from the minutes:

10.10 An analysis of the Spring Term 2024 data had been made. It was noted that a gender gap existed in the Nursery cohort, where in Literacy, girls outperformed boys in the percentage at age related expectation (ARE) by 20 percentage points, ie 76>56. It was noted that Nursery staff were targeting boys during child-initiated time to engage them in planned purposeful play across the environment and particularly indoors.

10.11 **ASKED** whether it was normal to find this type of gap between boys and girls, this was confirmed to be common particularly in the younger years.

10.12 It had also been established that there was a gender gap in Reception class Maths. The boys had outscored the girls by 12 percentage points ie. 100>88 at % good + progress. Both scores were very high. However, Reception staff had audited their provision to ensure that there were opportunities for Maths across all areas of the classroom.

10.13 It was noted that at KS1, there was a gender gap in Yr2 Writing. The girls outperformed the boys at ARE by 36 percentage points, ie. 77>41. To address this the TA timetable had been amended to provide more support in Year 2 for Reading and Writing. Children in Year 2 had been identified and interventions had started for The Little Wandle Catch Up Phonics Programme. Before and after school interventions were amended to target boys.

10.14 **ASKED** why this gap existed at Year 2, the Headteacher explained that some teachers might be being overly cautious in end of term assessments and in general marking which were components of the overall grade. In response to this, there would be a whole staff moderation exercise soon. A staff governor added that handwriting also had an impact and it was common for there to be disparity between girls and boys in this.

10.15 It was highlighted that at KS2, the boy/girl gap in Writing was persisting in Years 3 and 6. This had been discussed with teachers at pupil progress meetings and many pupils were making rapid progress. Internal moderation would take place to ensure that final judgements were accurate and intervention timetables had been reviewed

10.16 It was noted that in Year 4, the boy/girl gap in writing had reduced by 10 percentage points.

10.17 EAL children were achieving broadly in line in Reading in years 3,4 and 5, Writing in Year 5 and Maths in Year 3.

10.18 90% of children in year 6 were on track to meet their target for Reading.

10.19 The School Improvement Plan had been reviewed and the targets were being met.

10.20 The remaining pupil data was noted.

10.21 Through the virtual school, St Catherine's received training and resources focusing on mental health and wellbeing. The programme was called Hamish and Milo. It retailed at £1000. The pastoral mentor and selected TAs had attended the training and would be able to carry out interventions to support children's mental health. Currently around 40 children were accessing various aspects of the programme.

10.22 **Resources** The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2024, copies of which had been shared on GovernorHub, were received and noted. Arising from the minutes:

10.23 The committee had reviewed the proposed budget for 2024-2025 and three-year plan.

10.24 Governors heard that there had been a healthy carry forward of £93,000, but lots of this funding was already ring fenced for projects.

10.25 Staff salaries remained the highest expenditure for the school.

10.26 Support staff employer contribution reductions had been forecast and teacher 5% increment built in, as were teacher salary increases of 4%.

10.27 Overall expenditure was also forecast to increase 4% on the previous year, and schools were only receiving a 2% increase on their funding allocations.

10.28 The year-end surplus forecast was therefore predicted to reduce to £7,000 by the end of this financial year.

10.29 It was hoped that following the general election, the school funding crisis would be addressed.

10.30 It was highlighted that the deficit in the three-year and five-year plans was predicted to increase significantly.

10.31 2-year-old income had moved codes as it was now mainly funded with new working parent hours and less private hours. Additional uptake requests were considered but there were not enough to cover expansion with the cost of an additional member of staff.

10.32 The school had subscribed to the FSM checking service this year as PP children were not coming forward as there was no reason to now that all meals were free due to the Mayor's grant.

10.33 Governors noted the suggestions for improving income over time, which included:
- ASC Year 6 break out or 'common room' to allow for SATS revision and a more grown-up environment.
- Forest Fun for toddlers (18 to 42 months) – trial run on Tuesdays this term, 40 min session, £10 per week, using tepee. A suggestion was made for £5 first session to try it out, remaining 5 sessions for £50.
- Changing facilities – using 2YOP shower room (key held with Forest School Leader)

10.34 A brief discussion ensued about the funding crisis in schools and governors heard that a high proportion of Barnet schools were already reporting a deficit budget this financial year.

10.35 It was acknowledged that the school leadership needed to be conscious of the aging building and any unexpected costs this might incur.

10.36 A lack of SEND funding also continued to be an issue for schools.

10.37 The committee recommended the budget for ratification by the Board.

11. RATIFICATION OF THE BUDGET 2024-2025

11.1 After full consideration the budget 2024-2025 was **RATIFIED** by the Governing Body.

12. UPDATE ON ACADEMISATION

12.1 As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was decided that a Governor would attend the meeting with the CEO concerning the proposal to join a Trust based in Harrow. Governors expressed views that this would not be a right fit for the school when working in partnership in this Trust would be hampered by distance.

12.2 It was agreed that further discussion was required with the Diocese concerning their approach to academisation, seeking clarification on their strategy and plans for the protection of Catholic education.

12.3 The next meeting with the other Barnet Catholic schools was the following week. It was agreed that no further meetings would be attended after this date.

13. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

13.1 There were none.

14. GOVERNOR TRAINING

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

14.2 Alessia Errico reported that she had completed the following training on 30th May 2024:

- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Data Protection
- Dignity at work (Bullying & Harassment)
- Safety, Health & Welfare
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Information Security
- Ethical Framework for decision making

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 There was none.

16. WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN

16.1 The impact of the Governors' work on the children was as follows:
- the new sensory room was a great facility for the children and staff.
- the children continued to have the opportunity to attend enrichment trips including a residential.
- 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 embedding of Catholic Life was visible throughout the School and pupils were engaged with this.
- Close financial monitoring meant that the budget remained healthy enabling focussed spending for the benefit of the children.

17. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

17.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **TUESDAY 8th October 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed.