MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING OF ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, ON TUESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT THE SCHOOL AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

Name	Governor Type	Other Information	Term of Office	Present/Apologies/ Absent
Alessia Errico	Foundation	Chair	01.11.2024-31.08.2028	Apologies
Sylvia Lehrian	Foundation	Co-Vice Chair	01.09.2024-31.08.2028	Present
	Foundation			
Francesca Giacon	Foundation		01.10.2024-31.08.2028	Present
Peter Moger	Foundation		01.09.2021-31.08.2025	Present
Peter Collins	Foundation	Co-Vice Chair	01.09.2024-31.08.2028	Apologies
	Foundation			
Liz Reeve	Foundation		01.01.2023-31.08.2026	Apologies
Liam Hourican	Elected Parent		06.06.2023-05.06.2027	Present
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	Present
Non-voting attendees				
Holly Evans	SLT			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 Sylvia Lehrian took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 Consent was recorded to apologies for absence submitted on behalf of Alessia Errico, Peter Collins and Liz Reeve.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4.1 No business or other interests were declared for this meeting.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2024 AND MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

5.2 Arising from the minutes:

5.3 **ASKED** whether all governors had now completed their declaration of interest forms, the Clerk undertook to confirm this.

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. It was highlighted that the report also contained the annual Subject Leader updates.

6.2 Arising from the report:

6.3 Roll It was noted that the numbers on roll remained healthy.

6.4 Catholic Life of The School The Headteacher said that the school was grateful to Fr Jude who had celebrated St Catherine's Day mass and the Year group masses for Year 3 and Year 1 last term. The children had been excited to see him in their classroom when he came to visit. The Year 6 children were looking forward to restarting their meditation sessions with him in February. Last term, the children had prepared for Christmas with Advent liturgies and reconciliation. The Headteacher was grateful to Anita Hammond from St Gregory's who had arranged for Fr Carlos and Fr Enrique to hear the children's confessions along with Fr Jude.

6.5 RE Update The information was noted and the Headteacher praised the fantastic work of the RE Leader, who had recently given an excellent presentation to the Catholic Life Committee.

6.6 Travel Plan The information was highlighted.

6.7 The Headteacher explained that the school was currently in the process of finding suitable high visibility jackets for the children and quotations were being sought.

6.8 **ASKED** how many were required, it was reported for the whole of Key Stage 2.

6.9 PE and Sports Premium It was highlighted that, from July 2025, all schools must complete the digital reporting form for Sports Premium. The digital form outlined how the school had used its PE and sport premium and the impact it had had on achieving the aims and objectives of the funding. The digital form would go live during May or June 2025, and would remain open until 31 July 2025.

6.10 Inclusion The data was noted.

6.11 Academies The Headteacher reminded Governors that, on behalf of the governing body, the Chair and her had applied to the DFE for St Catherine's to explore the opportunity to join All Saints Academies Trust, (ASCAT). Applications needed to be submitted before 20th December so that the school could access the DFE funding which the government would no longer be granting as of 1st January 2025. The DFE had made contact with the Local Authority and the Diocese, so the school should expect to receive their academy order by the end of February 2025. The academy working party would be meeting with ASCAT's Trust Board throughout this year to create a new Barnet Hub which would meet the needs of all Catholic Schools in Barnet.

6.12 Staffing The Headteacher was delighted to report on the appointment of a substantive Deputy Head for September 2025. Jayne Pemberton, an experienced senior leader from Pope Paul School in Potters Bar, would be visiting the school throughout the year to support her transition to this new leadership role.

6.13 Governors were reminded that the caretaker would be retiring at the end of March, and a new caretaker had not yet been successfully recruited. The Headteacher said that this was a unique role, and it was important that the correct appointment be made.

6.14 **ASKED** whether the role was being offered as a split shift how it currently operated, the Headteacher said that the school was offering flexible arrangements.

6.15 Premises The information was noted.

6.16 Finance It was highlighted that the SBM was currently in the tender phase for an upgrade project for the playground entrance and nursery pathway, to improve gate security and pathway widths, together with new fencing. She was also getting quotes for playground lighting and for more flexible Arts Hub lighting.

6.17 EYFS The report was noted.

6.18 The Headteacher informed governors that there had been 166 applications to Reception for 60 places in September 2025. 66 of these applications had been first choice which was positive. Offer emails from Barnet local Authority go out to parents in April.

6.19 Progress and Attainment The data for Reception to Year 6 had been shared for information. This had been analysed in detail at the recent Learning & Achievement Committee meeting.

6.20 Maths Update The report was noted.

6.21 It was highlighted that the Maths Leader had attended the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCTEM) to embed previous learning on how to enable staff to teach mastery of maths.

6.22 Computing and AI The Headteacher reported that, as well as the online safety policy, progress had been made in developing the school's AI policy. In this policy, it was outlined how AI should be used to support the work that staff members were doing, which platforms could be used and how staff could maintain online safety when using AI. The school had continued their subscription to TeachMate, the AI platform, which teachers used for a range of tasks, from supporting report writing to creating quizzes. TeachMate was highly regarded by teaching staff and had been a huge asset in reducing workload and improving wellbeing.

6.23 Music The information was noted and the Headteacher praised the provision and the opportunities it presented the children.

6.24 Forest School The Headteacher was pleased to report that Forest School was now back up and running following Miss Grace's return to school following her injury.

6.25 **ASKED** when governors would be meeting the new Deputy Headteacher, the Headteacher said that this would be after the Easter break. The new Deputy Head will attend committee meetings first and will then attend the GB Meeting in the summer term. She will also have a full induction day in July.

7. UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

7.1 The school continued to develop innovative ways of supporting staff wellbeing such as PPA at home, staff training online at home, changing corridor displays once a year.

8. SAFEGUARDING

8.1 The minutes of the safeguarding meeting which had taken place on 12th November 2024, copies of which had been previously shared, were received and noted.

8.2 Arising from the minutes:

8.3 Wellbeing It was highlighted that there were no issues to report.

8.4 Staff continued to really benefit from the practice of doing their PPA at home.

8.5 The annual staff survey had gone out in January and the findings shared at the recent Catholic Life committee meeting.

8.6 It was noted that the children continued to be very active with pupil voice and as Caritas Ambassadors finding great benefit in helping others.

8.7 The annual pupil survey had been completed in class.

8.8 Safeguarding The information was noted.

8.9 Governors were reminded of the need for them to update their Level 1 safeguarding training annually.

8.10 Consideration was given to the best way of organising this and it was agreed that the Headteacher will contact the local authority Safeguarding Officer Liam Foote to deliver a one-hour safeguarding update session for governors. It was suggested that this be linked to a full governing body meeting.

8.11 The Headteacher reported that Liam Foote, LA Safeguarding Officer, will be booked to carry out a safeguarding audit in school. He would be checking the SCR as part of this visit.

9. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

9.1 **Catholic Life Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2025, copies of which had been previously circulated, were received and noted.

9.2 Arising from the minutes:

9.3 Spiritual Life Update It was noted that Fr Jude came into school the previous week to celebrate Mass with Year 6. Fr Godfrey and Fr Jude would share the Masses for all year groups in the coming year. This year, Ash Wednesday would fall in the school term so Years 3 and 4 would go to Mass at St Peter's (with music led by Ms Draper) and Years 5 and 6 would go to Mass at St Gregory's (with music led by Ms Groom).

9.4 Year of Jubilee 2025 It was highlighted that all Catholic schools launched the Year of Jubilee, which was celebrated every 25 years. Pope Francis was asking schools to celebrate a year of hope. The children had an assembly, during which they had watched a short video explaining what this was all about, and this was shared with the governors in the meeting. The school would come together and pledge actions for the year. This was to be in place by June 2025.

9.5 RE Curriculum It was reported that this was due to be rolled out by September 2025 but had now been extended to September 2026. St Catherine's had been ahead of this timetable and was already teaching the new content to Years 1 and 3 (started last year) and Years 2 and 4 (started last September). Next year it would be rolled out to Years 5 and 6. There was a strong focus on Catholic Social Teaching – understanding that CST was not just raising money for charity and that the children could take their learning from the classroom out into the world to make a difference. The new curriculum was more challenging, instead of simply retelling bible stories, children got more in-depth, comparing different versions of stories from the bible, responding through art, poetry, drama etc.

9.6 A new prayer and liturgy directory was also being implemented from September 2025. The teachers were always looking for less well-known representations of saints, tableaux, stories etc which were more reflective of the diversity in the school, and got very positive responses from the children when they used these.

9.7 Wellbeing It was highlighted that the January INSET was held at home, with the staff receiving online training on internet safety and behaviour & classroom management in the morning; and PPA in the afternoon. The PPA was in addition to their weekly PPA time and the feedback from the staff was that it was very helpful being able to have the INSET at home.

9.8 Fr Jude had promised to start meditation for Year 6 pupils. This was important for all the children's mental health and the Headteacher had commented that this was particularly beneficial to the boys.

9.9 Mental Health week had taken place on the 3rd to 7th February 2025.

9.10 **ASKED** whether there were any displays on mental health within the school, the Headteacher reminded Governors that as part of supporting staff workload and wellbeing they were now only required to create school displays once a year, which were then maintained and kept tidy.

9.11 Work on wellbeing was evident in the pupil books and was discussed during circle time in the classroom.

9.12 Surveys It was reported that there had been 173 returns to the parent survey out of a total of 335 families. The responses had been mainly consistent with last year's figures and the extra comments had been read and discussed by the Chair and Vice Chairs with nothing requiring action.

9.13 The children's survey was carried out by Ms Sonenfeld using the 'heads down thumbs up' method so that their responses were anonymous, and they weren't influenced by their peers.

9.14 The staff survey had a 50% response rate. Some of the questions were difficult to answer for some staff if not relevant to their area of work.

9.15 Attendance Governors were reminded that the rules around the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices had changed. Now FPNs were only issued if a child had been absent for ten sessions over a period of ten weeks. The school would monitor whether this had a negative impact on attendance figures. The figures for the Autumn term had not appeared to have been affected at 97%, which was slightly up on Autumn 2023. There were no discrepancies or trends between the different groups.

9.16 SIP/SEF The documents had been shared with governors for information.

9.17 It was highlighted that in the SIP there was a focus on dysregulated children and how they were progressing. This was difficult to quantify but looking at reading progress was one way of measuring

progress of these children, as progress in reading required the children to be engaged and focussed in class. Figures suggested that all of these children appeared to be making progress.

9.18 The date of the next Catholic Life Committee meeting was confirmed as Friday 2nd May 2025 at 11.00am. This would be a learning walk looking at the RE teaching and learning provision in Year 1 and Year 4.

9.19 **Learning and Achievement Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2025, copies of which had been previously circulated, were received and noted.

9.20 Arising from the minutes:

9.21 The committee had reviewed the autumn term progress data and noted that outcomes were similar to the previous academic year.

9.22 In the Nursery, 35% of pupils were already on track to make a Good Level of Development (GLD).

9.23 In Reception, the performance was similar in that 37% of pupils were on track for GLD.

9.24 However, a gender gap was showing in Literacy, where Girls had 76% (ARE) with Boys on 47%. A consultant would be coming in to review the learning environment and provide staff with strategies to develop the children's physical literacy through strengthening activities to support fine and gross motor skills. This had been effective in the past.

9.25 At Key Stage 1, Writing was this year's focus. A gender gap was noted in Year 2 Maths, with boys on 70% and Girls on 58% (ARE). There was no gender gap in Reading and Writing. 69% of all pupils in Year 1 had already passed the Baseline Phonics Screening Check. The Maths leader was working with the Year 2 teachers to narrow the gap.

9.26 At Key Stage 2, there was a gender gap in writing in Years 3,4,5 and 6. In all the years, Girls were outperforming Boys. The data was similar at this time last year and was a typical statistic at St Catherine's at this time of year. Handwriting seemed to be the reason why many boys were not on track. A discussion took place as to when children were awarded with a pen licence and perhaps Teachers were being too stringent with their assessment in this area, therefore reducing the numbers of children at Age Related Expectations (ARE).

9.27 The committee had looked at some writing books from every class. Handwriting had been the focus. A lot of beautiful and clear handwriting had been noted.

9.28 In English books, it was noted that cross curricular geography and history topics were included in the children's writing.

9.29 The updated SEF and the SIP had been shared with governors. The SEF had been tweaked, but on the whole, it still reflected the provision for St Catherine's. The Autumn data was similar to this time last year. Staff commented that significant progress had already been made since the last data drop.

9.30 SEND and Equalities was discussed. It was noted that St Catherine's worked with a lot of external professionals with whom the school had developed excellent working relationships.

9.31 Wellbeing and the mental health of staff had been discussed. Staff must be valued. In this respect, PPA time at home was very much appreciated. Staff being allowed to go to events at their children's schools was also very important. It had been recognised that the retention of staff was vital.

9.32 It was reported that the Chairs of the Committees would be meeting at the end of February to discuss the responses to the consultation regarding the extension of the October half-term holiday. They would then report back to the full governing body and parents and staff.

9.33 It was noted that the date of the next Learning Walk was Friday 21st March 2025 at 9.30am, where the focus would be Maths. This was in response to the data and also to ensure Maths was not "taking a back seat" whilst writing was the focus on the School Improvement Plan. This would consist of visiting two lessons for 20 minutes each and a 20-minute discussion with a pupil panel.

9.34 **Resources Committee** The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2025, copies of which had been previously circulated, were received and noted.

9.35 Arising from the minutes:

9.36 The Q3 budget forecast had been reviewed in detail and the work of the school's finance officer was praised.

9.37 The school had received its Local Authority audit visit in December 2024 and had been given 'reasonable' assurance with two medium and two low priority areas flagged for attention. These were being addressed.

9.38 Gordon Fisher and Peter Moger undertook to work on the setting up and maintenance of the asset register.

9.39 The committee had discussed the challenges trying to recruit a suitable new caretaker.

9.40 **ASKED** what the school could do in the interim, the Headteacher said that agency staff would be used.

9.41 **ASKED** whether other schools could be contacted to see whether they could resource share some caretaker hours, the Headteacher said that other local schools were also struggling with this area of recruitment.

9.42 **ASKED** about the account used for parental contributions and Gift Aid, it was explained that this was an RBS account separate to the school account. The school business manager and Vice Chair were currently reviewing the uptake of parental contributions as these had reduced.

9.43 A brief discussion ensued about the possibility of using Parent Pay for this purpose and the Headteacher undertook to contact a local school who were already doing this to seek further advice.

Item		**Action**	**Who?**	**Deadline**
9.38		Set up and maintain asset register	**PM & GF**	**May 2025**
9.43		Contact local school using Parent Pay for parental contributions	**MK**	**May 2025**

10. UPDATE ON ACADAMISATION

10.1 Information on the academisation process had been shared on GovernorHub for information.

10.2 As discussed earlier in the meeting, the school should be receiving its academy order by the end of February 2025.

10.3 The Headteacher said that information would then be gathered on what the Barnet Hub would look like.

10.4 A brief overview was provided on the current Barnet schools interested in joining ASCAT.

11. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

11.1 There were no policies to review.

12. GOVERNOR TRAINING

12.1 Governors were encouraged to regularly attend training.

12.2 Francesca Giacon was booked to attend curriculum training on 26th February 2025.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 There was none.

14. WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN

14.1 The impact of the Governors' work 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.
- Pupils' academic outcomes continued to be strong.
- Close financial monitoring meant that the budget remained healthy enabling focussed spending for the benefit of the children.
- The Catholic Life of the school was visible throughout and pupils were engaged with this.

15. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

15.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **Tuesday 6th May 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed.