

**GOVERNING BODY FOR ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2020**

**GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Governor Type</b>	<b>Term End</b>	<b>Present/Apologies/Absent</b>
Alessia Errico (Chair)	Foundation	31/8/20	Present
Sylvia Lehrian (Vice Chair)	Foundation	31/8/20	Present
Fr John McKenna	Foundation	31/8/21	Apologies
Fr James Fasakin	Foundation	31/8/20	Apologies
Francesca Giacon	Foundation	31/8/20	Present
Peter Moger	Foundation	31/8/21	Present
Peter Collins	Prospective Foundation		Present
Vacancy	Foundation		n/a
Gordon Fisher	Local Authority (LA)	13/1/21	Present
Julie Burke	Parent	6/3/23	Present
Liz Reeve	Parent	16/5/22	Present
Liam Fitzpatrick	Parent	17/12/23	Present
Maureen Kelly	Staff (Headteacher)	n/a	Present
Úna McAuley	Staff	7/6/22	Present
<b>Non-Voting Attendees</b>			
Marc Boucherat	Associate Member (Committees)	24/11/23	n/a
Mary Ainger	(Deputy Headteacher)	31/8/20	Present
Sheila Bennett	Clerk	n/a	Present

**PART I**

The meeting opened in prayer.

**20/35 WELCOME**

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance at this summer term meeting of the Governing Body via Zoom. She hoped everyone and their families had been well during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**20/36 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been submitted and were accepted from Fr John and Fr James.

**20/37 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN THE CURRENT AGENDA**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests in the business to be discussed.

**20/38 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING DATED 16 MARCH 2020**

The minutes of the Extraordinary Governing Body meeting held on 16 March 2020, in response to the global outbreak of Covid-19, were **CONFIRMED** as being a fair reflection of it.

20/39 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair drew attention to the addendum in these minutes which stated that, on Monday 23 March 2020 all schools in the UK were closed by order of the government, in an effort to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spreading more widely. The children of key workers, those with a social worker or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and the most vulnerable would continue to be educated in a few selected schools. It had also been confirmed that the SATS would not take place for this year.

The Chair checked through the action points not completed or dealt with elsewhere:

*20/34 Future Governor Meetings & Communication* The Chair said that the WhatsApp group had not been set up as not all Governors had responded.

20/40 **VERBAL REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER**

**Update on School Closure**

The Headteacher said that on the Thursday and Friday prior to the nationwide closure of schools on Monday 23 March 2020, all staff had taken part in training on Purple Mash as part of the delivery of home learning. The School opened for childcare on the Monday morning. Initially 60 – 70 children were signed up for childcare by their parents. A decision was made to prioritise children where both parents were key workers. The School now had 10 – 13 children on a daily basis, mostly children whose parents worked in hospitals.

**Home Learning**

The Headteacher said that the expectation was that the children from Yr 1 – Yr 6 should engage fully with the learning for their class. Reception children could dip in and out of Purple Mash but the parents and teachers would mostly use Tapestry to set tasks and to record children's learning. Fifteen 'to do' tasks were set each week for every class. Completed tasks were to be handed in on Purple Mash, where staff would provide feedback to the children. A teachers' blog had been created to explain concepts or misconceptions to the children as necessary, using a whiteboard, PowerPoint or written on paper. Parents had requested a timetable to give a structure to the day, and this had been provided on the website.

In addition to the 'to do' tasks every year group had a page on the school website which contained their current curriculum maps and a huge amount of activities with which the children could become involved. Parents had been asked to take photographs and upload Word documents onto the class blogs on Purple Mash for the teachers, teaching assistants and the rest of the class to see and comment on. A variety of teaching assistants also gave feedback, encouragement and comments on the children's work on class blogs.

A list of useful educational websites was given on the School's website, all of which had been checked by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to make sure they were robust and safe.

Staff were providing videos, reading stories and prayers, setting tasks and talking to the children on Tapestry. This enabled Reception children to see their class teacher on a regular basis.

Governors were pleased to hear that very few parents had decided not to engage with the tasks. The Headteacher said that this was acceptable as long as the child was learning and evidence of this was uploaded each week.

Parent Governors reported that the feedback to children was very good. The varied content and activities on offer were much appreciated by parents.

### **Vulnerable Children**

Governors heard that three members of staff, the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator (SENDSCO), the Learning Mentor and the Welfare Assistant made regular weekly contact with those children who had an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or a social worker or were considered to be vulnerable.

At the beginning of the crisis the Headteacher had delivered food parcels to families in the Free School Meals (FSM) category. Governors noted that these families received vouchers now under the National Voucher Scheme. Kim McKenzie, Business Manager, was thanked for her invaluable help with organising the vouchers and the food parcels for disadvantaged families.

Parents had been reminded to get in touch if their circumstances changed, to check if their children were eligible for Pupil Premium.

Governors were pleased to hear that the Headteacher had taken up the Catholic Children's Society offer to give £60 to families with one child and £100 for two children, where there was a concern about the family's financial circumstances.

The Headteacher was grateful that, in these difficult times, families were thinking of others. They had thanked the School for the help by email. One family had very kindly returned some assistance as their circumstances had improved, and they wanted it to go to a more needy family.

### **Parental Computer Access**

The Headteacher spoke about the SurveyMonkey questionnaire carried out prior to the lockdown, to check whether any families would have difficulty in accessing online learning for their children.

Only three families did not have computer access. However since the survey all of these families had taken part in the online learning through Purple Mash.

Three children who are in childcare full time at school have been provided with laptops to complete the tasks in school. One family with a large number of children had been given a supply of English and Maths Activity work books to complete. The School is in weekly contact with this parent and is offering support where it can.

### **Safeguarding**

Staff were communicating and feeding back to children in their classes regularly. The Headteacher said this was a most important safeguarding obligation. A class email had been set up so that parents could get in touch if they had any questions or requests.

If a teacher had not heard from a child within three days, this was flagged up and an email sent to the family concerned. If no reply was received, the teacher would make a telephone call to the family just to make sure that everything was all right, asking if the School could do anything to help. A home visit would be made if there was no answer to the telephone call. The Headteacher confirmed that so far this had not been necessary.

The Headteacher said that the School had been recognised by the local authority (LA) for its excellent standard in home learning provision, parental communication and the safeguarding of the children and families during this lockdown period.

### **Yr 6 Transition**

**QUESTIONED** as to arrangements for a farewell to the Yr 6 children, the Headteacher had spoken to Parent Representatives to explain that although this might be delayed, it was expected to be arranged on a Saturday at the School. A mass would be held and staff leavers would also attend. The Headteacher would take advice from the Public Health England guidelines to ensure that the group of 60 children and their families and staff would be managed safely.

The Deputy Headteacher gave information on the transition of Yr 6 children. She had emailed all the secondary schools concerned. Governors were pleased to hear that they would be getting in touch with parents earlier to alleviate any worries they might have and Zoom calls were planned to familiarise the children with their new teachers.

### **Staff Wellbeing**

The Headteacher carried out weekly staff and parental virtual meetings. The SLT met every day via Zoom between 1.30 pm and 2.30 pm to share information. Everyone was encouraged to join regular wellbeing meetings to help them through this exceptional time. A staff communication meeting took place every Friday.

The School had been open during the Easter break. This was possible because staff had worked on a rota basis and took their holiday at different times.

Governors were aware that inevitably this way of working was taking a toll on staff. The Headteacher wished to pay tribute to the SLT, her teachers and teaching assistants for all their hard work in making sure that the home learning programme was such a success. They were all communicating really well with the school community to ensure that there was a constant connection to the School for the children.

The Headteacher said that the home learning facility would be shut down over the half term holiday to give staff a proper rest.

Governors heard that teaching assistants had a virtual meeting every Tuesday. The Headteacher praised the response from these staff members, which she said had been brilliant. They had enjoyed seeing what the children were achieving, had provided encouraging feedback as well as volunteering lots of help. She praised these members of staff for being such a strong team.

The Staff Governor gave Governors an update on how the staff were feeling and coping during this pandemic. She spoke about their worries initially in managing the new workload and live streaming lessons. Some members of staff had home responsibilities and concerns, such as no access to childcare because grandparents were in lockdown.

Governors heard that staff joined in with wellbeing meetings and a weekly, light-hearted staff quiz via Zoom was much enjoyed.

### **Phased Return to School Plan**

The Staff Governor explained that, although staff were eager to get back to normal, a major concern was how they would be able to meet the children's needs when they returned to School. They were also anxious about their own safety. The Staff Governor pointed out that, under the Employment Rights Act, Section 44, staff could withdraw their labour if they felt their workplace was unsafe. Unions would be supportive of this.

The Chair replied that these concerns were not unexpected. She asked the Staff Governor to relate back to staff that the Governing Body understood their concerns and they should try not to worry. The situation on the return of schools was being monitored and no decision would be made at the present time until the proposed date drew closer. Schools would wait for guidance and clarity from the government.

The Chair reminded Governors that, as the School was voluntary-aided, the Governing Body did not have to follow the LA line but would use its own discretion. The Headteacher would consult with the Chair and Vice Chair. It was emphasised that the School would ensure that any decisions would take full consideration of the wellbeing of children and staff.

The Headteacher said that only two families had expressed concerns about the proposed return to school. If parents did not want their children to return then

home learning for those children would continue. Governors emphasised that it would be important to check that staff were not being over-worked.

The Headteacher gave an overview of future planning relating to the protection of staff, the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing measures and school dinner arrangements. She expected that children would only play outside their classrooms in small groups at different times.

The Headteacher spoke about the next steps towards a recovery plan. She would have a virtual meeting with the LA on 12 May 2020 to see how the LA would be supporting schools. She would like to have a risk assessment of some kind as a guide for schools.

There was also a meeting on this matter with the Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese) on 12 May 2020 that the Deputy Headteacher would attend.

The Chair summed up discussion by confirming that the School would continue to do its best for staff and children. She asked the Staff Governor to convey the Governing Body's thanks to all members of staff for their dedication to the children at this very difficult time.

### **Staffing from September 2020**

**QUESTIONED** on staffing for the next academic year, the Headteacher explained that no firm decisions could be made until after 31 May 2020. This was the last date on which teaching staff could give notice.

## 20/41 **RATIFICATION OF THE SCHOOL BUDGET 2020/21**

Peter Moger gave an overview of the Consistent Financial Report Framework (CFR) report. Governors heard that this had been the most challenging budget the School had ever had, with a carry-forward of zero. He highlighted that, to avoid setting a deficit budget, item 19 Donations and/or Voluntary Funds had been listed at £15,107. He emphasised the need for the School to save money or generate income to cover this figure.

Peter Moger said it would be essential to consider overall income and expenditure. He stressed that staffing costs amounted to over £2,036,000. As 83% of the School's expenditure was staff related, savings in any other areas would make very little difference to the budget.

Although it was hoped that more funding would be coming from government, this was not yet known.

The Headteacher said she had been buying items related to the pandemic, such as PPE equipment, signage, anti-bacterial gel and sprays. She had kept a list of these purchases as she understood that these costs would be refunded.

Following full consideration, the School Budget 2020/21 was **RATIFIED**.

20/42 **TWO-YEAR-OLD PROVISION & PERFORMING ARTS HUB UPDATE**

Two-Year-Old Provision The Chair was delighted to report that this project was now taking shape. The building was completed and the furniture had been installed. The Headteacher said that the best furniture for the purpose had been chosen, and the set up of the classroom had been decided.

The Headteacher would be getting in touch with Debra Davies, the Early Years Strategic Leader at the LA, who was on holiday at present.

Creative advertising for this new provision on the website, together with a leaflet, was being planned. The Headteacher would be discussing the final design and photographs for this with the Barnet Brokerage Team.

*Action: Headteacher*

**QUESTIONED** on the difficulty in accessing information about the Nursery on the website, the Headteacher agreed that there was far too much information on it and the navigation of the site would have to be improved.

*Action: Headteacher*

The Headteacher spoke about the need for an Admissions Policy for this new provision. Governors heard that she had been advised to produce one policy for both the Two- and Three-Year-Old Provision. Parents would then use the current Admissions Policy to apply for their child to be admitted into Reception.

*Action: Headteacher*

The Chair confirmed that the Two-Year-Old Provision would be a standing item on both the Resources Committee and Governing Body agendas.

*Action: Chair of Resources Cttee & Clerk*

Performing Arts Hub The Chair asked Peter Moger for an update on this project. He was pleased to report that planning permission was going through. No objections had been received so far. The bat report had been sent to the LA but this was still pending. He confirmed that no bats were present on the site.

**QUESTIONED** about Local Authority Coordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP) funding for this project, the Headteacher undertook to find out from the Diocese when this would be received.

*Action: Headteacher*

20/43 **SAFEGUARDING, ON-LINE SAFETY & GENERAL PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

Sylvia Lehrian, the Safeguarding Governor, said that the Headteacher regularly updated her on safeguarding matters. She explained that, at the start of the present crisis, the online safety of the children had been checked very thoroughly. The safety of the children at home was also being considered carefully. The Headteacher had already given an update on the safety and

wellbeing of the staff. Sylvia Lehrian was pleased to report that she had no safeguarding concerns in all these areas.

**QUESTIONED** on how staff who were working remotely raised any safeguarding issues and how these were being recorded, the Headteacher replied that the School had already bought into the excellent MyConcern safeguarding software and records system. This allowed any member of staff to instantly report and record any concerns. The SLT checked this regularly in relation to staff wellbeing. The Deputy Headteacher added that it provided a chronological time-line record of incidents.

#### 20/44 **PUPIL PREMIUM**

Holly Evans, Inclusion Leader, had been contacted by Francesca Giacon recently. She was satisfied that the children in the Pupil Premium category were being well looked after during this challenging time, and that the Pupil Premium budget continued to be well spent.

The autumn term data had shown a slight dip for children in this category, which the School was aware of. It had been expected, prior to the lockdown, that an improvement would be seen in the next set of data.

Francesca Giacon wished to record her thanks to Holly Evans for her commitment to the children in the Pupil Premium category.

It was noted that the Pupil Premium budget for this financial year would present a challenge, as it had been reduced from £86,000 to £64,000.

#### 20/45 **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

##### **Catholic Life**

The minutes of a virtual meeting held on 5 May 2020 had been circulated with the agenda. The Deputy Headteacher gave an overview of the meeting:

Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy Governors noted that this policy needed to be updated by September 2020 in line with statutory requirements.

*Action: Headteacher*

Ten Ten training had been arranged for staff on 14 September 2020 and any interested Governors were also invited to attend. Fr John was currently taking part in training as the Link Governor for RSE. A workshop for parents would be available in the autumn term 2020. Resources for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and SEND were expected to be on line in September 2020.

Spiritual Life Update The First Holy Communion masses had been postponed until October 2020. Online streaming of masses were available and parents were praying together via Zoom. The Deputy Headteacher said that a creative RE activity was available to the children each week.



Attendance Governors noted that attendance continued to be monitored despite the lockdown.

The Deputy Headteacher reminded everyone that attendance had links to the safeguarding of the children, which was paramount. She gave an example of a concern raised by a teaching assistant that had been checked to ensure that all was well.

## **Learning & Achievement**

The minutes of the Zoom meeting held on 6 May 2020 had been previously distributed prior to the meeting. Julie Burke gave an overview of it:

Home Learning The meeting had begun with an in-depth presentation of Purple Mash and Tapestry, which was available for Nursery and Reception children.

Childcare The provision of childcare for children of key workers had been discussed.

SEND & Inclusion It was noted that four EHCP assessments were going ahead. Meetings with the Educational Psychologist continued to be held by the Inclusion Leaders.

Wellbeing of Staff & Children Concerns relating to staff coping during the pandemic had been considered.

The Headteacher had spoken of a very positive initiative with Yr 6 children sharing their lockdown experiences with children in an Italian school.

## **Resources**

The minutes of two Zoom meetings had been distributed with the agenda.

Arising from the minutes of 30 March 2020:

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Update The SLT was thanked for giving the committee an update on the school closure, remote teaching and learning and staff wellbeing at this meeting. Governors had found this very informative.

Arising from the minutes of 30 April 2020:

Redundancy Costs Peter Moger regretted to report that the LA was not prepared to cover these costs as the previous budget had been in surplus. Anita O'Neill, the Finance Officer, would be following this up with the LA to try to get a refund.

Governors expressed their displeasure that the School should be penalized by the LA for rigorous attention to its financial responsibilities. Anita O'Neill was thanked for her excellent work in managing the School's finances.

Fire Alarm The planned works to bring the fire alarm up to standard had started and would be completed by the end of half term.

20/46 **RATIFICATION OF POLICIES**

The Headteacher confirmed that the new Admissions Policy for the Two- and Three-Year-Old Provision would be ready for the next Governing Body meeting.

*Action: Headteacher*

20/47 **GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP**

**Forthcoming Ends of Terms**

The terms of office of four Foundation Governors would end on 31 August 2020. Each of these Foundation Governors indicated they were happy to continue.

*Action: Chair/Clerk*

**Peter Collins' Foundation Governor Application**

The Headteacher would follow this matter up with the Diocese when possible.

*Action: Headteacher*

20/48 **GOVERNOR TRAINING**

Liam Fitzpatrick had signed up for some webinars on Leadership Training for Governors run by Govern-ed, a contractor of governor training by the Department for Education (DfE).

Governor training by the Diocese and the LA had been suspended at present because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

20/49 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Admissions**

The Chair asked the Headteacher for an update on admissions for September 2020. The Headteacher replied that 60 children had been accepted and there were no appeals so far. She regretted that some siblings had not been successful. A waiting list was in place. Governors noted that a date for any appeal and a Panel had been arranged if needed.

The Headteacher was pleased to report that 55 of the new admissions were of the Catholic faith.

Governors thanked the Headteacher and all members of staff for their work in maintaining the success and popularity of the School.

## **Praise for the Headteacher & Staff**

On behalf of all Governors, the Vice Chair wished to record special thanks to all members of staff for their hard work and dedication to the children over such a stressful time.

## **Committee Membership**

The Chair would get in touch with Liam Fitzpatrick after the meeting to see which committee he would be interested in joining.

*Action: Chair*

## 20/50 **WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN?**

The Deputy Headteacher gave an overview on how this meeting had been focused on the children:

- The LA had recognised the School's robust home learning programme in place for the children. Staff had been trained prior to closure on Purple Mash; feedback to the children; class blogs and the number and variety of tasks to be set each week.
- The website had been updated with year group pages containing curriculum maps, grids and activities. Additional links to trusted educational websites had been put on the website. The children were encouraged to upload their work on Purple Mash or a blog.
- Children of key workers had been allocated places at the School during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Headteacher had outlined the safeguarding procedures in place during the lockdown. The fire alarm had been upgraded to ensure safety.
- Vulnerable families and children were being supported. Assistance given to families included food parcel delivery, food bank, vouchers, Caritas and donations from the Catholic Children's Society.
- The School had maintained communication with parents daily via year-group email, and on Fridays from the Headteacher. Regular staff communication also took place.
- The suggested return to school was being considered. Staff and parents' concerns would be considered carefully and addressed.
- The Two-Year-Old Provision and Performing Arts Hub projects were moving forward very well.

20/51 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Headteacher would be in touch with Governors to arrange another meeting towards the end of the summer term.

*Action: Headteacher*

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

Chair's Signature: *Alessia Errico*

Date: 4 June 2020