

GOVERNING BODY FOR ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2021

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

| Name | Governor Type | Term End | Present/Apologies/Absent |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Alessia Errico (Chair) | Foundation | 31/8/24 | Present |
| Sylvia Lehrian (Vice Chair) | Foundation | 31/8/24 | Present |
| Fr John McKenna | Foundation | 31/8/21 | Apologies |
| Fr James Fasakin | Foundation | 31/8/24 | Present |
| Francesca Giacon | Foundation | 31/8/24 | Present |
| Peter Moger | Foundation | 31/8/21 | Present |
| Peter Collins | Foundation | 31/8/24 | Present |
| Vacancy | Foundation | | n/a |
| Gordon Fisher | Local Authority (LA) | 13/1/25 | 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 |
| Non-Voting Attendees | | | |
| Marc Boucherat | Associate Member (Committees) | 24/11/23 | n/a |
| Holly Evans | (Interim Deputy Headteacher) | | Present |
| Nicki Whatley | (Interim Deputy Headteacher) | | Present |
| Lydia Pavlou | (Interim Deputy Headteacher) | | Present |
| Sheila Bennett | Clerk | | In Attendance |

PART I

The meeting opened in prayer.

21/01 WELCOME

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the first spring term Governing Body meeting, via Zoom.

21/02 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been submitted and were accepted from Father John, due to internet connection difficulties.

21/03 GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

Local Authority (LA) Governor Reappointment

Following confirmation from the LA, and full consideration by the Governing Body, it was **RESOLVED** that Gordon Fisher be reappointed as the LA Governor for a further four-year term, ending on 13 January 2025. He was thanked for

continuing in the post and for so generously giving his time and expertise over the past twelve years.

Foundation Governors' Ends of Terms

The terms of office of Father John McKenna and Peter Moger would end on 31 August 2021. They were thanked for being willing to be reappointed. The Clerk would be in touch with them in due course.

Action: Clerk

Foundation Governor Vacancy

There remained a vacancy for one Foundation Governor.

21/04 **DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN THE CURRENT AGENDA**

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

21/05 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 14 DECEMBER 2020**

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 14 December 2020 were **CONFIRMED** as being a fair reflection of it.

21/06 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair checked through the action points in the minutes not yet completed or dealt with elsewhere in the agenda.

20/97 Matters Arising: Parental Questionnaire Peter Collins would be sending out a Governors' Questionnaire for completion soon.

Action: Peter Collins

20/101 Safeguarding, Online Safety & General Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Vice Chair would contact those Governors who needed to renew their Level 1 safeguarding training with a link to an online course.

Action: Vice Chair

Julie Burke had recently completed the Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) course. She would send the certificate for this to Kim McKenzie, School Business Manager, for the records.

Action: Julie Burke

21/07 **REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER**

The Headteacher's report had been circulated to all prior to the meeting. Governors had also received the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and information on remote learning, wellbeing and Catholic Academy Trusts (CATs) with this report.

The Headteacher gave an overview of her report.

School Roll

A breakdown of the numbers on roll, amounting to 454, which was lower than usual, was noted.

Governors were aware that pupil numbers were falling nationally, as some families moved away from London or returned to their own countries. The Headteacher said that normally, each term, one or two families might leave and the places would have been filled at the start of the new term. This had not been possible due to the further lockdown in place, due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.

Once schools were fully reopened again, which was expected to be from Monday 8 March 2021, families on the waiting list would be contacted. School tours, home visits and the induction of new children would then resume.

Reception September 2021

The Admissions Committee would meet next term to consider applications for the next academic year, in accordance with the Admissions Policy.

Governors were delighted to hear that 178 applications had been received so far, which was very good during this period of falling school rolls. The Vice Chair was pleased to note the high number of Catholic families in the list.

Catholic Life

The Headteacher was delighted to report that the lively and vibrant Catholic life of the School continued despite the lockdown. She thanked Úna McAuley and Eloise Yates, Religious Education (RE) Leader, for their work in ensuring that the children had plenty of opportunities for prayer with their families and each other.

The weekly Gospel Assemblies continued, and home prayer packs had been sent out to parents for use at home. Teaching videos, blogs and the Lenten Journey Calendar were being shared with families and many children were carrying out their liturgy journeys at present.

Catholic Academy Trusts (CATs)

Governors noted the information on CATs received with the Headteacher's report, including correspondence between the Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese) and the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT).

Autumn Term Data

The data relating to progress in Reading, Writing and Maths for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and Key Stages 1 and 2 were included in the report. The Learning & Achievement Committee had considered these statistics in detail at their recent meeting. The strengths and areas for development across all year groups were noted.

Teachers had been very cautious in their assessments during the autumn term and had been pleased with the children's progress, attitudes to learning and resilience once they had started school again.

The present lockdown and the closure of schools for most pupils, due to rising cases of coronavirus, had then begun from Tuesday 5 January 2021. The Headteacher was optimistic that when schools reopened fully on Monday 8 March 2021 and the children were welcomed back, they would recover as quickly again.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Headteacher had included in her report further information on the EYFS. Governors heard that the youngest children especially had been the most adversely affected during the last lockdown and vulnerable children had missed out on referrals and health appointments.

The information given on children who needed extra support relating to health issues was noted. EYFS staff were supporting these children's needs and were undergoing specialised training to assist them. Appropriate interventions to help the children make progress would be carried out once the School opened fully again.

Parental Questionnaire

The results of this online questionnaire had been circulated with the agenda and were published on the website. The Headteacher was delighted to report on the overwhelmingly positive response from the 107 parents who had replied.

She was pleased with the feedback from 46 parents; almost all comments being very good.

Governors noted that one parent had complained about the Shoeless Learning Policy, and another had raised an individual request relating to her child's reading, which was subsequently addressed.

Wellbeing

Information on the Wellbeing Audit and Action Plan, which had been distributed with the report, was noted. The Headteacher said that she and Nicki Whatley, Interim Deputy Headteacher, had produced this following their attendance at a wellbeing training course. These documents had been shared with the Learning & Achievement Committee. Governors were thanked for their feedback.

Remote Learning Provision

A PowerPoint on this provision, together with the Remote Learning Policy and Risk Assessment, had been circulated to Governors with the report and were available on the website.

Behaviour & Safety

Multi-Agency Referrals The Headteacher had given information on these for the autumn term 2020 in her report.

Exclusions & Discrimination Reports It was noted that one child had been excluded for a fixed term of five days during the autumn term 2020. Two discrimination incidents had been reported and dealt with. Governors were pleased to note that no bullying incidents had arisen.

Attendance Governors congratulated the Headteacher and all staff on the excellent attendance figure of 97.94% at the end of the autumn term 2020. This demonstrated that the children felt happy and safe in school.

Absence had increased at the very end of that term due to illness and parents isolating due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that the new lead on attendance was Ms Martin, Learning/Pastoral Mentor.

Inclusion Update

The Headteacher thanked Holly Evans, SENCO/Inclusion Leader, for her wonderful support of the 51 children with additional needs and their families. This included phone calls and doorstep visits, as well as learning packs for those children not suited to online learning.

It was noted that there were seven children with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place, two under assessment and two at the application stage. There were 47 disadvantaged children in the School; four families had recently been identified. Governors were aware that these children were often more greatly affected by lockdowns and might well need extra support on their return to school.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2020-21

The Learning & Achievement Committee had considered the SIP in depth. Governors were reminded that it had been based on the children's achievement and progress during the autumn term 2020. Once all the children had returned in March 2021, it would be necessary to undertake a new audit to see where they were emotionally as well as academically. The SIP would then be updated with new targets which would be shared with Governors.

Staffing

Governors noted that the Resources Committee had discussed the Deputy Headteacher vacancy. A decision was made that it should not be filled until candidates could be welcomed safely into the School. The Interim Deputy Headteachers were thanked, in the meantime, for so ably covering this post.

Teaching assistants would be recruited to replace those who had left and to support children with an EHCP.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Governors noted the increased training staff had been able to attend during the lockdown, since it was all online. Much of the training undertaken related to support for children with additional needs.

Term Dates 2021/22

The draft term dates for the academic year 2021/22, which were considered by Governors, were **RATIFIED**.

21/08 **PUPIL PREMIUM**

Francesca Giacon, Pupil Premium Governor, spoke about the disadvantaged children and gave an overview of each year group. She was pleased to report that all had made progress in the autumn term. She confirmed that the biggest gap between children in the Pupil Premium category and their peers was in the Reception classes. Governors were aware that this gap lessened as the children moved up the School.

Extra tuition would be provided for some children in Yr 2 and Y5 under the National Tutoring Programme, with a focus on Maths and Reading. All families had been contacted during the lockdown to offer resources such as books and laptops, if needed.

Governors were reminded that up to Yr 2 all children were entitled to free school meals (FSM).

QUESTIONED on the number of Pupil Premium children that also had a special educational need (SEN), Holly Evans replied that this was almost 50% of the total number of children in this category.

A discussion ensued on the higher than average number of children in the School with an EHCP and whether more finance was needed to support these children.

Holly Evans explained that this funding was not ring-fenced and the emphasis was now on Quality First teaching with children in this group being prioritised.

Funding was also spent on staff training and supply provision to cover staff who were being trained. Holly Evans highlighted that a limited vocabulary and poor handwriting hindered the children's learning and it was important to try to address these needs. Staff had undertaken training prior to the lockdown on supporting children who required help to widen their vocabulary. This training would have to be revisited. The focus on developing the children's cultural capital through interesting online learning experiences would also continue.

Governors heard that an online spelling platform had been highly effective during the lockdown. It would be continued, together with an online times tables resource that would benefit all the children.

The Headteacher spoke about concerns that the lockdowns had emphasised the disadvantages for Pupil Premium children to a greater extent and the gap between these children and their peers had widened.

QUESTIONED on the number of children in the Pupil Premium category who had attended school during the lockdown, Holly Evans replied that all vulnerable children at risk or those who had a social worker had attended, as well as those with an EHCP.

21/09 **SPORTS PREMIUM**

Liz Reeve, Sports Premium Governor, spoke about the replacement of the climbing frame, which was planned to be surrounded by a trim trail and artificial grass. The intention was to make this equipment much more challenging and exciting for the children of all ages.

Nicki Whatley said that three quotations had been received and were currently being considered. The cheapest one did not include a maintenance plan. A decision had to be made, if this option was chosen, on whether to buy into a separate maintenance plan or whether the maintenance could become part of the Caretaker's duties. Nicki Whatley had spoken to other schools about this and highlighted that a maintenance company would do an annual check whereas the Caretaker would check much more frequently.

The Resources Committee would look carefully into these matters and make a decision shortly.

Action: Resources Cttee

21/10 **SAFEGUARDING, ON-LINE SAFETY & GENERAL PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

Vulnerable Children Sylvia Lehrian, the Safeguarding Governor, said that the key focus of the Safeguarding Committee had been the vulnerable children, those with an EHCP and what levels of support were being given. Individual cases had been discussed and the special programmes to meet particular requirements had been considered.

Wellbeing The wellbeing of both children and staff was a priority at the present time. The wellbeing audit and action plan, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting under item 21/07 had been looked at thoroughly.

Wellbeing Week had taken place on 1 February 2021. Support to improve the mental health of both staff and children included Wellbeing Wednesday, a mainly screen-free day each week. This had been greatly welcomed by everyone and it was hoped would continue after the lockdown.

The committee had been very mindful of the need to support the wellbeing of parents, especially in regard to the impact of home learning on their family and working life.

Resilient Schools Programme The School had been invited by the LA to join this initiative. It was designed to promote resilience in the children and try to identify and address any mental health problems early on.

Safeguarding Issues relating to safeguarding had been covered in the Headteacher's report and individual incidents had been dealt with as they arose.

Governors were informed of a serious safeguarding incident in Yr 6 which had occurred during a live Zoom session. This had resulted in intervention by the police and the local safeguarding team.

It was noted that, as a consequence, Zoom classes were not being resumed at present with that particular year group. This was due to the serious nature of the incident and concerns for the safety of the children and staff. The School was working with the parents explaining why this action had been taken, listening to them and answering any questions they had. The Headteacher said that teaching staff had worked hard to produce pre-recorded lessons for the children.

Medical Records/Single Central Record (SCR) The Safeguarding Governor had checked through the medical records to make sure that the system was working well and that appropriate actions were being taken. She had also shared screen data relating to the SCR with Kim McKenzie to ensure that it was in order.

The Safeguarding Governor would visit the School as soon as possible to physically check the files.

21/11 **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Catholic Life

There was no report as this committee had not yet met.

Learning & Achievement

A meeting of this committee was held on 23 February 2021, for which minutes were not yet available. Peter Collins, the Chair of this committee, gave an overview of the meeting.

Autumn Term Data An analysis of the autumn term data showed progress across all year groups, including information on children in the Pupil Premium category. This had been considered in depth.

Peter Collins reminded Governors that the small numbers of children in the disadvantaged/SEN categories had the effect of skewing the statistics.

Good progress had been made across all year groups in Reading, Writing and Maths during the autumn term 2020. Some discrepancies between boys and girls were noted. On closer analysis it was evident that more boys than girls were included in the SEN category in Yr 5 and Yr 6.

Holly Evans highlighted that the School was taking part in the National Tutoring Programme for Yr 2 and Yr 5. The reasons that these year groups had been chosen was that Yr 2 was a transition year and the Yr 5 children would be taking the SATS next year.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) This document had been discussed, especially in relation to the wellbeing of pupils and staff. Wellbeing Wednesdays had been welcomed by all. Lessons had been reduced to three per day to assist with staff workload, and regular phone calls were made with a view to improving mental health. Each member of staff came into School on one day a week to speak to other staff and children. It was noted that risk assessments were being updated regularly, as necessary.

Remote Learning This provision included a minimum of four activities per day. The children had access to the same curriculum as if they were in school. Peter Collins, as a parent, spoke about the excellent PE sessions and the very useful PHSE lessons. He felt that the Purple Mash feedback was very helpful. He highlighted that the children were missing the company of their friends and social contact with others that had been part of their daily school experience.

The committee had noted that the monitoring of teaching and learning continued as normal during the lockdown.

Pupil Premium & Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) The committee had discussed in detail the needs of the vulnerable children in these categories.

QUESTIONED on testing for Covid-19, the Chair said that rapid lateral flow tests for children and staff would be taking place twice a week, to improve accuracy.

Resources

School Budget Peter Moger said that this committee had met twice since the last Governing Body meeting; most recently earlier that day to consider the Year End Forecast. Governors heard that at present there was a small surplus of £2,138. The LA would be informed of this the following day. It was noted that the budget for 2021/22 could now be ratified by 31 May 2021 instead of 31 March 2021.

Performing Arts Hub Peter Moger regretted to report that the Planning Officer was only working part-time at present. The decision on the updated plans recently submitted, which had been expected the previous week, had not happened. Barkers had followed this up and a decision was expected by the end of this week. Governors heard that it was important this decision was granted as the caretaker's house was due to be demolished during the Easter break. A notice period had to be given for demolition.

Governors noted that the Resources Committee had declined an offer to go ahead with the demolition without planning permission being in place. This was because the School could be liable for costs, which could amount to £20,000.

Peter Moger said that once the planning permission had been granted, everything was in place to get this project moving forward.

Future Technology Provision Peter Moger reported on a recent meeting with IT consultants, Inspire, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Kim McKenzie to consider improving the School's computer systems. The aim would be to facilitate information sharing between staff, enhance communication and further develop the remote learning experience for the children. A full discussion ensued on the merits of different apps such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams.

The Headteacher said that, although the children had not suffered by using the current IT provision, as remote learning would continue as part of blended learning, it needed to be kept updated. Technology was moving forward quickly and she wished to update the systems with the necessary equipment and resources, so that everyone could increase their skills in this area and all aspects of school life would benefit.

Peter Moger highlighted that the computer hardware would have to be updated to support new software, and this would be expensive. An audit of the current IT provision would have to be carried out to see what would be needed.

Úna McAuley made the point that care needed to be taken with the School's choices. Many schools had been encouraged to invest in iPads, only to discover they were not compatible with certain software. It was also noted that some computers sent by government during the lockdown had not been very good.

Julie Burke gave the benefit of her experience of new technology recently successfully installed in the secondary school where she worked. She reminded Governors that staff professional development had been essential. Peter Moger would discuss this further with Julie Burke.

Action: Peter Moger/Julie Burke

Safeguarding

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 had been distributed prior to the meeting and were noted. The focus of this committee had been discussed earlier in the meeting under item 21/10.

21/12 RATIFICATION OF POLICIES

Pay Policy

The Headteacher confirmed that the Pay Policy was fully in place. Advice was being sought on an amendment regarding which Governors would be informed in due course.

Action: Headteacher

21/13 **GOVERNOR TRAINING**

Liam Fitzpatrick, Training Link Governor, was keeping a record of Governor training:

| Date attended | Attendee(s) | Course | Course provider |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| March 2021 | Francesca Giacon | Diocesan Inspection for Governors | Diocese |
| February 2021 | Julie O'Dwyer | Safeguarding DSL Level 3 Training | Education Child Protection |
| January 2021 | Francesca Giacon | Guidance on Employment Procedures | Diocese |
| December 2021 | Maureen Kelly & Una McAuley | RSE Twilight Session | Diocese |
| November 2020 | Liam Fitzpatrick | Introduction to Governorship (three parts) | Diocese |
| June 2020 | Liam Fitzpatrick | Educational Improvement | Govern Ed |
| June 2020 | Liam Fitzpatrick | Effective Governance & Financial Oversight | Govern Ed |
| June 2020 | Liam Fitzpatrick | Strategic Leadership | Govern Ed |

The links for training courses, which were only online at present, were as follows:

Diocese training: <https://courses.rcdow.org.uk>
New Link to LA training: www.bels.org.uk

The link for any LA course queries: SDTUed.Admin@barnet.gov.uk

Francesca Giacon gave a brief overview of the useful course she had recently attended on Employment Procedures.

21/14 **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & LEARNING'S SPRING TERM REPORT**

This report had been distributed to Governors prior to the meeting:

1 Covid-19 Lockdown Update

Governors noted the information on the following:

- Funding for Covid-19 Outbreak Managements, together with a letter from the Director of Resources, Barnet (Appendix 1).
- Opening of nursery classes and funding of places.
- DfE guidance on the national free school meals' voucher scheme.
- Testing for primary, school-based nursery and maintained nursery school staff.
- Serial testing of close contacts.
- Reporting positive cases.
- Vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers.
- DfE attendance form (re-named Educational Setting Status Form).
- Staff attendance.

2 Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Update

Governors noted the additional guidance from the DfE, which related to special schools and remote provision for SEND pupils.

3 Education Strategies

The education strategies which had been considered and approved were available to view on Barnet council's website.

4 Governor Training Programme Spring 2021

It was noted that online training would continue for this term, with a blended programme once circumstances normalised.

5 Governor Hub

This communications tool was available for those buying into the LA's Governor Support Programme for an extra £197 per year.

6 What Maintained Schools Must Publish Online

The DfE had updated its guidance on what maintained schools should publish on their websites. This information could be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online#governors-information-and-duties>

7 Prevent Updates

Information on Igfl online safety sessions for parents and Prevent Duty training was noted. A link to ensure that schools' filtering was satisfactorily up to date was also given: <http://testfiltering.com/>

21/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

21/16 WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN?

This meeting had been focused primarily on the needs of the children:

- The large number of families that wished their children to join the School in September 2021 was celebrated. The positive results from the Parents' Questionnaire was also been very encouraging.
- The Headteacher reported on the strength of Catholic Life. This was flourishing and benefiting the children and their families, despite the restrictions of the lockdown.
- Information on the children's progress, with a special focus on the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children, had been discussed throughout the meeting. Analysis of the data had taken place and extra tuition and support would be put in place to assist all the children in their learning.

- The remote learning provision continued to improve. The need to purchase new technology to increase the effectiveness of the School's systems and to further develop the IT skills of the children and staff would be pursued.
- The spiritual wellbeing of the children, staff and parents, throughout this unprecedented time had been another priority at this meeting. The Wellbeing Action Plan was in place to help improve the children's physical and mental health.
- The Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor maintained a constant dialogue throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety and welfare of the children. Governors' safeguarding training was being kept updated. Attendance had been outstanding in the autumn term, which showed that the children were happy and felt safe to be in school. It was hoped this excellent attendance would continue on their return in March 2021.
- Quotations were being sought to install the new climbing frame and trim trail to improve the children's physical activity and playground experience. The exciting Performing Arts Hub project was awaiting final planning permission and was expected to be ready by September 2021.
- The LA Governor, who had been reappointed, had been congratulated on twelve years' service to the School.

21/17 **DATE OF NEXT GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

The next meeting of the Governing Body, at which the budget for 2021/22 would be ratified, was noted:

Wednesday 19 May 2021 at 7 pm.

21/18 **MOTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

It was **RESOLVED** that, because of its nature, the business to be transacted be treated as confidential and not for publication.

Chair's Signature: *Alessia Errico*

Date: 19 May 2021