

GOVERNING BODY FOR ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 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	Apologies
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)		Apologies
Nicki Whatley	(Interim Deputy Headteacher)		Present
Lydia Pavlou	(Interim Deputy Headteacher)		Present
Sheila Bennett	Clerk		In Attendance

PART I

The meeting opened in prayer.

21/21 WELCOME

Sylvia Lehrian was asked to take the Chair, as although Alessia Errico was present throughout the meeting, her internet connection was a little unclear.

Governors were thanked for attending the first summer term Governing Body meeting, via Zoom, the main focus of which would be the ratification of the School Budget 2021/22. It was noted that the closing date for budget ratification had been extended by the local authority (LA) until 31 May 2021.

21/22 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been submitted and were accepted from Father James, Father John and Holly Evans.

Liam Fitzpatrick apologised in advance as he would have to leave the meeting early.

21/23 **DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN THE CURRENT AGENDA**

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

21/24 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 25 FEBRUARY 2021**

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 25 February 2021 were **CONFIRMED** as being a fair reflection of it.

21/25 **MATTERS ARISING**

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

21/06 Matters Arising: Parental Questionnaire Following a short discussion, it was decided that this questionnaire would not be distributed at present as the annual Governance Audit, recommended by the local authority (LA), was due to be completed. This would be an item on the next Resources Committee meeting agenda.

Action: Chair of Resources Cttee

21/06 Matters Arising: Safeguarding, Online Safety & General Protection Regulation (GDPR) It was noted that all Governors had now completed this training and Kim McKenzie, School Business Manager, had updated the records.

Training for Father John on the role of the Safeguarding Governor was being arranged.

Julie Burke was reminded to send her Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) course certificate to Kim McKenzie.

Action: Julie Burke

21/09 Sports Premium Peter Moger gave an update on the trim trail. He was delighted to report that this was now installed and looked very good. The post-installation inspection had been carried out and the Fit for Use Certificate was awaited.

The Headteacher hoped that, after half term, the bubbles of children could be enlarged to enable more children would be able to enjoy this new facility together.

21/11 Reports of Committees: Resources Peter Moger reported on the plans for future technology provision. Julie Burke regretted that she had been unable to attend the first meeting with Turn IT On the previous week. She hoped to be involved to assist the School in 'lessons learned' from her experience of similar new technology being installed in the secondary school where she worked.

Peter Moger said that at the initial meeting discussion had centred on what would be needed to update the School's computer systems. He had been impressed

with the professional and thorough approach taken by Turn IT On. This company specialised in providing ICT support to schools.

21/12 Ratification of Policies: Pay Policy The Chair explained that as the amendment to this policy needed further discussion, it would be considered at the next Resources Committee meeting.

Action: Chair of Resources Cttee

21/26 **VERBAL REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER**

The Headteacher gave Governors an overview of the highlights since the beginning of term.

Turn IT On

The Headteacher was pleased with the progress made so far in considering how the School's computer systems should be improved. She had been impressed with the support from Turn IT On.

She thanked the PTA Committee for two very successful meetings to discuss future fundraising. The PTA had agreed to make IT provision their new project, with a series of fundraising events planned from Tuesday 25 May 2021 until the end of the school year. The PTA Committee had confirmed that £20,000 was expected to be available for the first stage of the IT project. Governors heard that this would be £4,500 short of the total funding required.

To make up for this shortfall, there would be a display of fundraising progress in the School to encourage parents to add a little more when paying for items such as school meals or clubs. A section was planned in the newsletter to highlight how much money had been raised each week. The Headteacher was delighted to say that everyone was very enthusiastic and determined to reach the target by the end of May. It was hoped that enough money would have been raised to provide laptops by September 2021, which was the date when this new project was expected to begin.

Parent Representatives would be contacting parents in their year group to consider fundraising ideas between now and the end of the school year.

Staffing

Governors were reminded that the deadline for teaching staff to give notice was 31 May in each academic year. The Headteacher gave an update on new appointments:

- Two Level 2 Early Years practitioners had been successfully appointed for the Two-Year-Old Provision.
- A Level 3 appointment had been made but unfortunately this person had withdrawn on receiving a better offer from their present employer. Interviews for this post were planned on 28 May 2021.

QUESTIONED on the level of interest for this position, the Headteacher was pleased to say this had been good.

QUESTIONED on when these new appointments would begin, the Headteacher confirmed that this would be from 1 September 2021.

Admissions

The Headteacher explained that 60 children would be admitted for the next academic year. Although there would inevitably be some movement, Governors were pleased to note that there was a waiting list. There had been 177 applications in total, which was very high in comparison with other schools in this period of falling school rolls. The Headteacher was confident that all places would be filled for September 2021.

QUESTIONED on whether all 177 applications had been first choice, the Headteacher replied that she did not have this information to hand.

Safeguarding

Governors heard that the School had requested a Safeguarding Review to confirm that all its systems in this regard were robust. Jane Morris, School Exclusions & Safeguarding Lead at the LA, had conducted this review on 18 May 2021. Her report was awaited and would be shared with Governors as soon as it was received.

Action: Headteacher

National Tutoring Programme

The Headteacher was pleased to report that this programme, in which Yr 2 and Yr 5 pupils were taking part, was going well. She was pleased to say some good quality teaching was being delivered, and the children were responding very happily.

IDL (Interdisciplinary Learning)

This online learning tool, to develop spelling, had resulted in excellent progress being made by the pupils taking part. Parents were being contacted to encourage them to help reinforce this learning at home. Although each session only took ten minutes, it had resulted in a very good improvement being made by those children who completed it.

Early Intervention Programme

An early intervention programme pilot scheme, to improve the language skills of Early Years children, was being carried out in Reception. It had proved successful and the Headteacher understood it would be rolled out across the country.

The Headteacher wished to record thanks to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff for their enthusiasm in carrying out the training for this pilot programme. It was hoped that the children concerned would show good progress on moving up to Yr 1.

Covid-19 Risk Assessment (RA)

The Headteacher had spoken to the Chair and Vice Chair to explain that she wished to continue with the RA after half term. She hoped to make certain changes, such as combining some bubbles for more socialisation at lunchtimes and to improve the children's other play experiences. She reminded Governors that so far this RA had kept the School open and the children and staff safe.

QUESTIONED on whether the changes to traffic movement in the road outside the School would continue once the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted, the Headteacher replied that this was a contentious issue. The LA had asked the School to cease putting its own signs and barriers up to indicate that the road was closed at certain times. Cameras were due to be installed and fines were expected to be imposed. The Headteacher very much regretted that this action would not help the School's profile with the local community.

QUESTIONED on whether this matter was part of a public consultation, the Headteacher replied that it was and that Kim McKenzie had put forward a submission on behalf of the School.

21/27 **RATIFICATION OF THE SCHOOL BUDGET 2021/22**

The Chair asked Peter Moger, Chair of the Resources Committee, to lead on this. It was confirmed that everyone had received the Consistent Financial Reporting Framework (CFR) document and the minutes of the Resources Committee, meeting dated 4 May 2021, prior to this meeting.

Peter Moger said that although the 2020/21 outturn showed a surplus of £72,000 this was not a realistic figure. This was because this sum had already been committed to pay for grants and projects being carried forward to 2021/22.

Governors heard that Anita O'Neill, the Finance Officer, had gone through the School Budget 2021/22 in detail with members of the Resources Committee. Challenges had been made and the members of the Resources Committee were as comfortable as they could be with the budget as presented. A very low cumulative surplus of £1,684 on a budget of £2.6m was noted. Peter Moger emphasised that this budget was therefore extremely tight and would have to be managed very carefully over the next financial year.

QUESTIONED on item 105, Pupil Premium, which showed a drop in this income from the previous year, it was noted that this reflected the big drop in the number of children in this category this financial year.

QUESTIONED on item 108b, Other Income from Facilities & Services, Peter Moger gave examples of the sources of this income, which included the

breakfast and after-school clubs, as well as the Nursery provision. It was noted that this sum of £271,500 was gross income, not profit. It was below the amount the School would normally expect to receive due to the effect of the pandemic restrictions and the current financial situation. It was emphasised that Anita O'Neill ensured that the School at least covered its costs and made a small profit from these facilities.

QUESTIONED on item 118D, Additional Grant for Schools, it was explained that this related to the Covid-19 Catch Up Grants. This sum was pro rata because at times during the pandemic the School had not been able to open.

QUESTIONED further on this, as to why this had not been included in item 118C, Other Covid-19 Related Grants, the Headteacher said that the government had decided on grants to schools in response to the pandemic at different times of the year; these payments had not been planned.

QUESTIONED for examples of item E07, Other Staff, Peter Moger said that this referred to staff such as employees for clubs.

QUESTIONED on item E10, Supply Teacher Insurance, it was explained that this related to insurance that was taken out against having to employ supply teachers. When this happened claims were made against the policy.

QUESTIONED on how the School compared with other schools on energy costs, which was item E16 amounting to £20,790, it was explained that the LA arranged for the best price and recommended companies each year to schools. Benchmarking was also carried out and the School had been found to have reasonable energy consumption compared with other similar settings.

QUESTIONED on E18, Other Occupation Costs, it was noted that this referred to Covid-19 health and safety costs relating to the opening of the School and the recommended safety measures that had been put in place.

QUESTIONED on item E24, Special Facilities, this related to the after-school club that had not been used very much due to the pandemic. It was hoped that all clubs would be able to resume fully during this financial year.

Peter Moger went on to say that these account headings in the CFR were historical. Although the descriptions of these could be changed to be more clear, they were useful because using the same items made it easier to check changes on a year-by-year basis. He also confirmed that it was not in the School's remit to make any changes to the format of this document.

The Chair thanked Governors for their questioning. She wished to record gratitude to Anita O'Neill for being able to set a balanced budget, and for her forensic work throughout the year on ensuring that it was monitored correctly. Peter Moger and Gordon Fisher were also thanked for their constant scrutiny of the budget at each Resources Committee Meeting.

Peter Moger pointed out that the high costs of staffing meant that managing a very tight budget presented difficulties. There was very little room for manoeuvre. He added that everything had been done to avoid setting a deficit budget, as this would involve LA intervention, including a three-year recovery plan and the possibility of redundancies.

Governors were reminded that the School had been liable for recent redundancy costs because it had funds available from the prudent management of the budget. If this had not been the case, the LA would have paid for this expense.

Gordon Fisher reiterated that it was difficult to manage the budget at present. It was necessary for the School to keep as tight a rein on spending as possible as well as trying to maximise income to cover costs. He hoped that the budget would remain balanced at the end of this financial year.

Following this lengthy discussion, and confirmation that the Resources Committee had recommended the School Budget 2021/22 to the Governing Body for ratification, a vote was taken.

It was unanimously agreed to **RATIFY** the School Budget 2021/22.

Liam Fitzpatrick left the meeting.

21/28 **SAFEGUARDING, ON-LINE SAFETY & GENERAL PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

Sylvia Lehrian, the Safeguarding Governor, said that a safeguarding meeting had taken place recently. She was pleased to say that nothing of any concern needed to be brought to the attention of the Governing Body.

As had been discussed earlier, under item 21/26, the School had been proactive in arranging for a Safeguarding Audit by the LA.

Governors had also been made aware in item 21/25 that all training for safeguarding was up to date for both staff and Governors.

21/29 **GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP**

Foundation Governors' Ends of Terms

The terms of office of Father John and Peter Moger would be ending on 31 August 2021.

The Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese) now required reappointments to be made through GovernorHub. Father John and Peter Moger were asked to access this so that their reappointments could be processed. The Clerk undertook to send the link to them: [GovernorHub](#).

Action: Clerk

Foundation Governor Vacancy

A vacancy for a Foundation Governor existed at present. The Chair said that, while the Resources Committee was considering the Governance Audit, any gaps in expertise or experience on the Governing Body could be identified to assist with the filling of this appointment.

21/30 **GOVERNOR TRAINING**

Liam Fitzpatrick, Training Link Governor, was thanked for keeping a record of Governor training. Everyone was reminded to let him know of any courses attended and to give a brief update on their training at Governing Body meetings.

The links for training courses, which were only offered 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

21/31 **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & LEARNING'S SUMMER TERM REPORT**

This report had been distributed to everyone prior to the meeting. Governors commented on the interesting and informative content.

1 Ofsted Update

From 4 May 2021 Ofsted had resumed limited inspections, with the aim of moving to their full tariff in September 2021. Information on inspection priority was given in the report. A link to the new School Inspection Framework and a link to register training in this on Wednesday 9 June 2021 were also given.

2 Curriculum Update

It was emphasised that Governors needed to be aware that a strong and robust curriculum was needed for all schools. This would be the focus of any Ofsted inspection. A link to curriculum training for Governors on Wednesday 9 June 2021 was noted.

3 Return to School

The statistics on the return to school across the borough, which compared well with national figures, was noted.

4 UK Reading Road Map 2021/22

Details of the four Reading Road Maps available to schools from autumn 2021, together with the link for further information, was given.

5 School Governors & Conflicts of Interest

This item gave useful guidance on applying and interpreting governors' conflicts of interest.

6 Local Authority (LA) Governor Nomination Process

An update on this process was noted. It was emphasised that nothing had changed, in that the Governing Body had final approval of any person put forward by the LA for this post.

The Governing Body could reject a nominee if it did not feel that the person put forward had the experience or skills required. In this case, it would be necessary for a written submission to be sent to the LA explaining the reasons for its decision.

7 Governance Audit

This document accompanied the report. It was recommended that the annual audit should be completed by Friday 16 July 2021 by either the whole Governing Body or a sub-set of appointed Governors.

This matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting under item 21/25.

8 Renaissance Project

An update on the LA's support for schools with the Recovery, Reset & Renaissance Project was given. The future recommendations from the recent Renaissance Conference, for headteachers and senior leadership teams, was noted.

9 Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

From September 2021 changes to the statutory duty for the EYFS and the EYFS Profile would come into effect, together with the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which would provide a baseline measure for that cohort.

10 Exclusions Update

Data was given on exclusions across schools in the borough. Any interested Governors were invited to attend an Exclusions Conference on Wednesday 22 September 2021.

11 Autism Pathway

This new pathway, which would contain detailed information for parents and schools, would be part of the Local Offer.

12 Combined Care Pathway for Children & Young People with Down Syndrome

Information on the Combined Care Pathway, launched by the Barnet Down Syndrome Leading Edge Group, was given.

13 Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Support for Schools – Ongoing Support during Pandemic

A report on SENCO training and the conference to be held on Thursday 29 June 2021 was noted.

14 Barnet Community Paediatrics Team: Going Virtual

Details of how this team was developing new ways of assessment for children under seven years of age was noted.

15 Mental Health & Wellbeing Zone

Information on this Zone and the virtual workshops to provide support for children, young people, parents and staff, was noted.

21/32 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

21/33 **WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN?**

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

- Safeguarding training had been updated and a review of safeguarding had taken place. The Risk Assessment would remain and would be adapted for as long as necessary to keep the children and staff safe in school.
- The trim trail had been successfully completed and would soon be ready for use. The bubbles of children would be altered if possible to enhance their play experiences.
- Exciting plans to greatly improve the technology used by the children to further develop their IT skills had begun.
- Various intervention programmes were in place and good quality teaching continued to assist the children in catching up on their learning following the lockdowns.
- Sixty new children were expected to be welcomed to Reception in September 2021.

- Despite financial difficulties and reduced income caused by the pandemic, the Governing Body had been able to ratify a balanced budget for 2021/22.

21/34 **DATE OF NEXT GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

The second summer term meeting of the Governing Body was **CONFIRMED:**

Tuesday 29 June 2021 at 7 pm

Chair's Signature: *Alessia Errico*

Date: 29 June 2021