

GOVERNING BODY FOR ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD

AT THE SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 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	31/8/25	Apologies
Francesca Giacon	Foundation	31/8/24	Apologies
Peter Moger	Foundation	31/8/25	Apologies
Peter Collins (Vice Chair)	Foundation	31/8/24	Present
Fr David Pember	Prospective Foundation	n/a	Apologies
Vacancy	Foundation		n/a
Gordon Fisher	Local Authority (LA)	13/1/25	Apologies
Julie Burke	Parent	6/3/23	Apologies
Liz Reeve	Parent	16/5/22	Apologies
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)	n/a	Present
Sheila Bennett	Clerk		In Attendance

PART I

The meeting opened in prayer.

21/78 WELCOME

Sylvia Lehrian, Vice Chair, thanked everyone for coming to the second autumn term Governing Body meeting. She would be taking the chair as Alessia Errico had been delayed.

21/79 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been submitted and were accepted from Father John, Gordon Fisher, Peter Moger, Francesca Giacon and Father Pember.

21/80 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN THE CURRENT AGENDA

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

21/81 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 2 DECEMBER 2021**

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 2 December 2021 were **CONFIRMED** as being a fair reflection of it.

21/82 **MATTERS ARISING**

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

21/57 Annual Register of Business Interests

Action: Clerk to check that all had been received.

21/60 Matters Arising: Pay Policy The Headteacher said that this policy had been discussed and approved in the last Resources Committee meeting. The changes to teachers' pay and conditions since 2020 had been incorporated in it.

Action: Clerk to check that the Pay Policy had been ratified.

21/60 Matters Arising: School Uniform Liam Fitzpatrick confirmed that he had forwarded the government guidance on school uniforms, which aimed to cut costs to parents. The working party would be meeting shortly to look at whether any changes needed to be made to the uniform.

21/61 Verbal Report of Headteacher: Return to School The Headteacher confirmed that she had passed on the Governing Body's thanks to the Caretaker for his positive and welcoming attitude to the children and parents each day.

Liz Costello joined the meeting.

21/64 Safeguarding, Online Safety & General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) All Governors had received and were familiar with the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document for 2021/22.

21/66 Annual Review of Committees & Terms of Reference It was confirmed that the terms of reference of all committees had been reviewed and ratified.

21/67 Ratification of Policies: Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2021/22 The Headteacher confirmed that this policy had been thoroughly checked, ratified and was now on the website.

21/73 Date of Next Governing Body Meeting Father David had been invited to the meeting and regretted that a clash of meetings meant he was unable to attend that evening.

Sylvia Lehrian is to meet Father David and speak to him about the governor role, as part of his induction to the Governing Body.

Alessia Errico joined the meeting and took the Chair.

This report had been distributed prior to the meeting. The Headteacher gave an overview, highlighting the key points and asking Governors for any questions.

School Roll & Admissions

School Roll The numbers of children in each year group was given. The total number on roll was 459. The Headteacher said that this high number and the full waiting lists were very pleasing, especially as many schools were experiencing falling school rolls at present.

Admissions The Headteacher was delighted to report that the 60 Reception places for 2021/22 had easily been filled from the waiting list, despite some parents who had accepted places informing the School of decisions to relocate to another part of the country or abroad. There were no appeals.

Catholic Life

The Headteacher thanked Mrs Yates, the RE Leader, for giving the children, parents and school community so many opportunities for reflection and spiritual development, despite the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The children in Key Stage 2 had attended Church for All Souls' Day Mass. Yr 6 had celebrated their Year Group Mass in school with their parents, for the first time in two years.

Preparations for Christmas included Advent Liturgies and rehearsals for Nativity plays. Diwali dance workshops across the School had been held to celebrate the Festival of Light.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols would be visiting the School to bless the new Performing Arts Hub at the opening ceremony on Thursday 3 February 2022 at 2 pm.

Attendance

Governors congratulated the Headteacher, staff, parents and children on the exceptional overall attendance figure for 2020/21 of 97.96%.

Achievement

There was no statutory data for achievement for 2020/21, due to the pandemic. The Phonics Screening test that Yr 1 should have sat in June 2021 would take place later this term. These children were now in Yr 2.

Governors were reminded that Ofsted were not looking at data during their inspections for this academic year. The focus would be on an ambitious, broad curriculum for all the children, clearly sequenced and building towards a clear end-point. Governors had received the Curriculum Policy with the agenda.

They needed to speak to Subject Leaders regularly to ensure they were completely familiar with the way this policy was being implemented.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) & Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

These two documents had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and the targets would continue to be discussed with them throughout the year in committee meetings.

Local Authority Review

The report of this review by Helen Morrison, Lead Ofsted Inspector, Katie Dawbarn Learning Network Inspector (LNI) and Executive Headteacher Andy Griffiths, on 22 October 2021 had been distributed to Governors before the meeting.

The Headteacher said that it had been very helpful to have the expertise of these three professionals. Following the review, she had graded the SEF as Good. Governors were aware that the last Ofsted inspection had been in April 2009. The School had then been graded Outstanding.

Governors heard that the grading of schools by Ofsted had now changed. To gain an Outstanding grade, a school would have to be exceptional. To achieve this, Ofsted would require triangulation between the teaching staff, subject leaders and children all saying the same thing about any given question.

The Headteacher went on to say that to grade an area of the School Good was not a failing; it was where the School was at currently with the present members of staff. The School was working on the areas of development noted in the review.

QUESTIONED on whether the areas for development were realistic and achievable, the Headteacher replied that they were. She reminded Governors that as there had been six new Subject Leaders since September 2021, they needed time to gradually develop the necessary skills. She gave an example that they were not yet in a position to talk about the sequencing of skills within the curriculum.

QUESTIONED on the total number of Subject Leaders, Governors noted there were eleven.

QUESTIONED on whether the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) coordinated the work of the Subject Leaders, it was confirmed that they did.

QUESTIONED on whether the Headteacher considered the review visit fair, the Headteacher replied that she did and that it had been a helpful report.

QUESTIONED on when Ofsted were likely to return once an inspection of a school had been carried out, the Headteacher said that Ofsted were expecting to work on a four-year cycle.

The Chair summed up discussion by saying that the School was on a solid footing. The Subject Leaders would grow and develop their roles over time.

Staffing

Governors heard that a teacher had been appointed for three days' a week. A Level 3 teaching assistant had also been appointed.

The new Forest School Leader would be taking children outside for two mornings each week. The Headteacher emphasised the value of the children going out into the natural environment after two lockdowns. This was a great experience for the children and helped improve their wellbeing. Parent Governors expressed their approval of this scheme, which they said had benefited their own children.

From September 2021 two tutors had been employed through Connex to assist the children with catch-up in both Key Stages. They were both experienced teachers who worked closely with class teachers. This initiative was partially government funded. The School paid 25% of the cost.

The Headteacher informed Governors that a teacher had recently given notice and the post was in the process of being filled. It was hoped that this would be possible before the end of December 2021 to enable a good handover and the chance for the children to get to know their teacher before the Christmas break.

Inclusion

Holly Evans had given an update on this area of the School in the report. She emphasised the lack of speech and language therapy (SALT). To counteract this, staff had been trained in language and communication skills to help them identify children not reaching age-appropriate milestones. Teaching assistants in Key Stage 2 were also developing skills to teach and embed vocabulary. A full list of inclusion training for staff had been given in the report.

The Headteacher updated Governors on the number of children with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), which now amounted to eight. Two more were in the process of consultation. This was higher than expected for the School. Holly Evans confirmed that professional help from outside agencies was in place. A full list of this support and the number of referrals that term was given in the report.

QUESTIONED on the increase in the number of children with an EHCP, and whether the teaching staff were getting enough support, Holly Evans replied that they were, but sometimes there was an unavoidable delay in putting dedicated support in place. She gave an example of a recent admission whose support would not be fully in place until January 2022. This had been explained to the parents concerned before the admission and had been accepted by them.

QUESTIONED on whether it was possible to refuse further admissions of children with an EHCP on the grounds that the School already had too many, Holly Evans replied that the School's case was always put to the local authority

(LA). Governors were informed that the application of a local Catholic child would of course take preference over someone who lived a long way away. Julie Burke spoke about the Barnet Fair Access Protocol, the purpose of which was to try to share admissions equally amongst the schools in the borough.

QUESTIONED on the number of children in the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) category, Holly Evans said that this amounted to 40 children, equating to 8% of the total number in the School. Staff were coping well at present. Extra support, resources and interventions were in place.

A Governor made the point that just because a child might come into this category, they may not present a problem, as high quality teaching could well meet their needs.

Looked After Children (LAC)

Governors noted there were now two looked-after children (LAC) in the School. Julie Burke was thanked for offering to be the Governor responsible for LAC.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

An update on EYFS, detailing changes for this year, had been given by Úna McAuley. Governors noted that the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) was now statutory and all the children had been assessed. This was designed to measure the children's progress from Reception to Yr 6.

The new EYFS statutory framework was now in place, with a greater emphasis on communication and vocabulary. Staff had received training on this. The recent learning walk by the Learning & Achievement Committee had reported back that the School's approach to the new framework and the updated curriculum had been considered and was being implemented consistently.

A new Phonics scheme called 'Little Wandle Letters & Sounds Revised', recommended by the Department for Education (DFE), was now in place. Staff had undergone training and resources had been bought for use across the EYFS and Key Stage 1. Governors were delighted to hear this new programme was being enjoyed by the children and had resulted in impressive progress.

Behaviour & Safety

Information on the number of multi-agency referrals was given in the report.

Governors were pleased that no exclusions or bullying incidents had been reported that term. There had been one racial discrimination incident which had been satisfactorily dealt with.

Parental Communication

Links to parents that term were listed in the report.

Household Support Fund

The LA was providing money to distribute to vulnerable and disadvantaged families. The School had identified 45 children who would benefit from this funding of four payments of £21.50 from October 2021 to January 2022.

IT & Computing

Mrs Grace had given an update on this area of the School, including the purchase of new laptops for the children.

Music

Information on how music was being taught in each year group, in dedicated weekly music lessons, was noted by Governors.

School Travel Plan

An update by Mrs Groom included the work by the Junior Travel Ambassadors (JTA)s with weekly meetings to discuss the promotion of active travel.

Health & Safety

An update on this area of the School was noted. Preparations were underway for the forthcoming Health & Safety Audit on 24 February 2022.

School Trips

Residential trips for Yr 6 and Yr 4 were planned in May and June next year.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

A list of staff training and INSET days was given in the report.

21/84 **PUPIL PREMIUM**

Peter Collins said that when Francesca Giacomini had returned from abroad, they would both meet Holly Evans, Pupil Premium Lead to consider the update of the Pupil Premium Strategy. This needed to be published on the website by 31 December 2021.

Holly Evans explained that the DfE had changed the date of publication of this strategy to the end of the year. A further recommendation was that future strategies should cover a three-year period, rather than having annual reviews. She welcomed this change.

Holly Evans added that Pupil Premium funding was being used to benefit as many disadvantaged children as possible across the whole school.

Liz Reeve had met Nicki Whatley, the Sports Premium Lead, recently. Nikki Whatley said that staff had been working on physical literacy in the past year, to help build up the children's stamina.

Governors noted that the funding was now in place over the school year, rather than the calendar year. The strategy, planning and impact of Sports Premium was reviewed regularly.

QUESTIONED on the replacement of the climbing frame, Liz Reeve said that a decision was currently being made on the type of surface to be installed underneath it.

Liz Reeve spoke about the success of the Forest School which all the children would eventually experience and benefit from.

Governors heard that new after-school clubs were planned for the New Year, including archery, dodge ball and golf. Taster sessions for the children would be given by the providers.

The Chair highlighted the importance of taster sessions for all children, as some would not otherwise have the chance to try different sports.

Governors praised the School for its exciting and varied offers to the children, which were not just confined to sport. The Headteacher said that karate and pilates had also been offered. She highlighted the importance of Sports Premium funding being used to fund opportunities for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged children, so that they did not miss out.

The Headteacher added that clubs would be swapped between year groups to try to expose as many children as possible to different sports. Governors noted that 50% of the children took part in an after-school club at present. The aim was to offer the greatest number possible a chance to join a club, rather than having one child signing up to six clubs, as this would have the best impact on the children overall.

QUESTIONED on whether the most popular clubs could be offered on two evenings a week, Nikki Whatley said that once there was more capacity, for example when the Performing Arts Hub was available, the space would be available to do this.

QUESTIONED on whether teaching staff were involved in the after-school clubs, the Headteacher replied that although generally different dedicated providers were used, some enthusiastic staff were prepared to make a commitment in areas such as football, netball and arts and crafts after-school clubs. It was confirmed that staff were not pressurised to do so.

21/86 **SAFEGUARDING, ON-LINE SAFETY & GENERAL PROTECTION
REGULATION (GDPR)**

Sylvia Lehrian, the Safeguarding Governor, said that there was nothing to report since the last meeting in September 2021.

21/87 **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Catholic Life

The minutes of the meeting dated 5 November 2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted. Sylvia Lehrian said that some of the work of this committee had had been covered earlier in the meeting under item 21/83.

Wellbeing was a focus and a comprehensive action plan had now been distributed to everyone on this matter. Governors were pleased to hear that staff were coping well. Senior staff were experiencing high levels of stress as they took on more responsibilities. These staff members helped each other and were being supported as much as possible. Staff were also being encouraged to leave early on one evening each week in an effort to improve their wellbeing.

A discussion had taken place on how Governors could assist staff. Sylvia Lehrian said that Governors should be mindful not to expect a quick reply to emails that they might necessarily have had to send in the evenings, due to their own workload.

The children's interventions and support plans had been discussed.

The Pupil Voice was a high priority, together with the School Council's regular meetings. Governors who had recently taken part in the learning walk spoke about the children's confidence. They were happy and enthusiastic in class, and what was being taught was clearly being understood by them.

QUESTIONED on whether the Pupil Voice had as high a priority in primary schools as it had in the secondary sector, the Headteacher confirmed that a whole-school commitment to listening to the children's views and experiences and placing a value on what they said was vital.

Learning & Achievement

Peter Collins said that there were no minutes this term as the meeting had taken the form of a learning walk across the whole school on 4 November 2021.

There was a focus on Reading, Behaviour & Safety and the Pupil Voice. The shoeless learning environment had been praised for its calm, noiseless ambiance, to which the children responded so well.

During the walk the members of the committee were listening and talking to the children. Peter Collins said that teaching across the whole school had been impressive and consistent. The children were engaged in their learning. He

made the point that he would not have known that a particular teacher was a supply teacher from the way the children were taught.

Sylvia Lehrian spoke about visiting the EYFS and Key Stage 1, with an emphasis on how the new Phonics programme was being introduced in each stage. She was delighted to say that the children's enthusiasm for reading was evident. Reading groups had been observed. Governors enjoyed speaking to the children, noting their keenness to show them their work and to talk about what they were learning. Sylvia Lehrian said it was a joy to see that they were so confident and willing to talk. She added that it was really interesting to see in practice what had been discussed in committee meetings. The displays around the School were also vibrant and impressive.

Resources

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Headteacher gave an overview of it:

School Budget Anita O'Neill, School Finance Officer, had gone through the forecast and adjustments made to the budget:

- A cost of living increase for support staff was being negotiated with the unions at present.
- Money had been spent on the new Phonics programme and associated resources.
- Benchmarking with three other schools had been discussed. An analysis had been made of comparisons and the different reasons for this.
- The Two-Year-Old Provision had not brought in the number of children expected. Costs had been cut by letting go of a Level 3 member of staff. The committee were disappointed that the LA Brokerage Team had not been pro-active in providing children to this facility and was looking at other ways to get the message out. Úna McAuley was in the process of setting up a Facebook page about this new provision soon.

QUESTIONED on how many children had been expected in the Two-Year-Old Provision, the Headteacher said that 12 had been anticipated, with six children being admitted through the LA. Úna McAuley reminded Governors that, since a member of the staff had now left, the capacity of the provision had been reduced to eight.

She was in contact with the Barnet Brokerage Team on this matter, but so far they had not been helpful. The website had been updated on the Two-Year-Old Provision, with a leaflet. Governors were pleased to hear that a recent tour by a parent had been promising and this application was expected before Christmas. It was hoped the situation would improve.

Performing Arts Hub The Headteacher said that the flooring for this provision had been ordered but was not expected to be fitted until the end of January 2022, due to difficulties in the supply of materials.

Car Park Governors noted that the surface of this was now considered to be dangerous. Tenders for this work would go out before Christmas.

Kitchen This had been designed and approved by Barkers and was expected to be fitted before Christmas.

Appraisals All teacher appraisals had been carried out within the statutory time.

Turn it On Discussions were taking place on whether to continue with Turn it On after March 2022, as progress had been so slow.

Policies The Pay and Whistleblowing Policies had been considered in depth and recommended for ratification.

E-Light Proposal This would be considered further with the Diocese and Barkers.

Safeguarding

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 had been discussed at the first autumn term Governing Body meeting. The next meeting of this committee would take place on 9 December 2021.

21/88 **RATIFICATION OF POLICIES**

There were none.

21/89 **GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP**

Foundation Governors

Reappointment Governors were delighted to hear that Father John McKenna had now been reappointed by the Diocese. He was thanked for his work and commitment to the School. His term of office would end on 31 August 2025.

Progress of Foundation Governor Vacancies Father David Pember was in the process of being appointed as a Foundation Governor.

There remained one further vacancy for a Foundation Governor.

21/90 **GOVERNOR TRAINING**

Liam Fitzpatrick, Training Link Governor, asked everyone to remember to let him know if any courses that had been attended.

Action: Liam Fitzpatrick to send Governors the training register for update.

The links for online training courses were as follows:

Diocese training: <https://courses.rcdow.org.uk>
Link to LA training: www.bels.org.uk
The link for any LA course queries: SDTUed.Admin@barnet.gov.uk

21/91 **BELS CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

This report, previously known as the Director's report, had been sent prior to the meeting.

1 Barnet Education & Learning Service (BELS) Chief Executive's Message

Governors were reminded that this LA service had been renamed. Ian Harrison thanked all school staff and governors for their efforts throughout the pandemic and in recovery planning.

2 Barnet & BELS: The Recovery, Reset & Renaissance (RRR) Project

Information was given on funding for the following initiatives:

- Language Enrichment Programme (LEP)
- Individual School or Partnership Bids
- Compass for Life
- Extra Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) Hours

3 Key Stage 4 & Post-16 Update

An update for governors of secondary schools.

4 Ofsted Inspections Resume

Ofsted had returned to a full programme of inspections from September 2021. Information on the changes to the Inspection Handbook and Framework were given.

5 Early Career Framework

A link explained that new teachers, from September 2021, would have a new training and support programme as early career teachers (ECT). This replaced newly-qualified teachers (NQT).

6 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Updates

An update on EYFS from September 2021 was given, together with the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). A link to training for Governors on 15 November 2021 at 6 pm was noted.

7 Governor Diversity Survey Results & Follow Up

Information from this survey was given, and the importance of induction training for new governors was highlighted.

8 National Leader of Governance (NLG) Reform

The DfE was in the process of reforming this role. BPSI Governance Reviews for Chairs would continue to be offered.

9 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Update

Information on the updated KCSIE document from September 2021 was given. The importance of all Governors receiving safeguarding training, updated every two years, was emphasised.

10 Governor Training Programme

Training for Governors would continue online for this term. It was recommended that governors use school-based email addresses.

11 School Admissions Code

A link to the updated new code and associated regulations from September 2021 was noted. Appendix 1 was attached showing the changes and actions needed to comply with the new code.

12 Safeguarding Alert

Safety issues relating to the use of social media were highlighted.

13 Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Monitoring

It was recommended that a dedicated governor for SEND should be appointed, and their training on this should be regularly updated.

14 What Maintained Schools Must Publish Online

A link to the guidance on what schools must publish on their websites was given.

15 Mental Health & Wellbeing Zone

Information was given on this zone and the virtual workshops to support children and young people, parents and staff.

21/92 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

21/93 **WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN?**

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

- The School was full with a high number on the waiting list. Attendance for the previous year had been exceptionally high, which emphasised that the children were very happy to come to school.
- The children had many opportunities to celebrate the Catholic Life of the School both in School and in Church, despite the continuing restrictions of the pandemic.
- The School was delivering an ambitious, broad curriculum that was being enjoyed by the children. Teaching staff were providing high quality teaching to help the children progress. Governors had seen this in practice across the whole school during a learning walk that term.
- The children were encouraged to use the Pupil Voice to express their views and talk about their particular interests and learning. Governors had enjoyed speaking to the children and had noted their confidence as they had conducted their learning walk.
- A very positive review of the School had been undertaken by the LA that term, with recommendations in place for further development and improvement.
- Children in the Pupil Premium, SEND and disadvantaged categories were being well supported by the School.
- A wide variety of opportunities to enhance the children's school experience and improve their wellbeing were in place, such as exciting after-school clubs, trips, music and the Forest School.

- The School's finances were rigorously and regularly checked by the Resources Committee, to ensure compliance and ensure that value for money was being achieved.

21/94 **DATE OF NEXT GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

The dates of the spring term Governing Body meetings were **CONFIRMED:**

Thursday 10 February 2022 at 7 pm

Thursday 24 March 2022 at 7 pm

21/95 **MOTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

Chair's signature: *Alessia Erica*

Date: 21 February 2022