

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023**  
**In person from 10.30am**

Attendees:	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Andy Nicholls	-	Foundation Director
	Sandy Anderson (SA)	-	Foundation Director
	Steve Hole (SH)	-	Foundation Director
	Polly Montague (PM)	-	Foundation Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Alison Nettleship (ALN)	-	Co-opted Director
In Attendance:	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Karl Murphy-Barnes (KMB)	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	Director of Education
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk

**1. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

RO welcomed and led with a prayer.

**2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum**

AH, AC, HB and NJ apologies. Quorum met.

**3. Declaration of Interest**

None

**4.1 Minutes of previous meeting of 09.09.2023**

The Minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were approved.

**4.2 Action Summary – September 2023**

Updated on the Actions Summary.

Q. Have the 'Come and See' resources mentioned been overtaken by newer materials?

22.41 HB provided an update to LP to confirm that EYFS and Year 3 are using the new Directory, by 2025 this will apply to all year groups. Come and See resources are accessible through the Diocese and will be shared on the Portal in the future.

22.08 Task and Finish Group for branding. PM will represent the Board, have SIO, SELT, primary and secondary representative. Dates to be fixed. A big piece of work to include branding, identity, and marketing. The SIO's background is in marketing and has extensive contacts in this area.

Q. Does the remit include removing Plymouth from the name? We understand and respect that we represent the Diocese of Plymouth, we will need to discuss this.

**Decision/A  
ction**

Minutes app  
09.09.2023

Q. Will we target all primary schools that feed into ND and SBC, or begin with the primaries, and then follow with the secondaries? Relies on the marketing intelligence, need to target people, GDPR considerations. The transfer of primary students to secondaries is an ongoing piece of work, improved numbers this year, relationships between schools and local communities.

Q. Will any potential name change have to be approved by the Members; can we do that without a Bishop? Directors discussed the involvement of the Diocese and the Members.

21.34 SBC funding is moving forward, a question over the CAST occupation in the building, are liaising with solicitors.

## 5. Chair's Business

- **Careers Guidance Lead Director**

Governance review identified the need. RCF is creating a ToR. Have identified a Director for this role.

RCF to create ToR for Careers Lead Director

- **Link Director Role**

All have their link schools, please read the protocol, and set up the meetings with your schools. Reports must be strategic and not operational, looking to make the reports more structured, concentrate on the governance and the role of the LCB, and in line with protocol.

- **Marketing and rebranding**

Already discussed. PLMR is the media company being used. The company is experienced, and the location should not be an issue, come with good recommendations.

- **Confidential minutes**

Advice by Companies House is that all Directors should have access, NGA evidence is that if you don't attend you shouldn't see the minutes. LF (ERG) confirmed all Directors can access the minutes. The Board approved sharing all minutes.

Q. Hard copy? Directors have a hard copy and then shred, share on GovernorHub.

Q. Share with a password, it is a long time before the next meeting to review minutes? LP to share on GovernorHub password protected, password to be sent via email. This approach was approved by the Board.

**Chairs Action** – SMSJ, Wool. ZB contacted RO regarding the governance as the LCB is very small and is not currently constitutionally compliant and lacks capacity to undertake each of the 5 new lead roles, plus the Chairs more broad role. KB has contacted Canon Mark regarding the governance within the school, the FG has stepped down as Chair, two Governors only on the LCB. Chairs action to instal an IAB, small, focussed, number of Catholic Governors, should have gone to E&S but needed an urgent decision. The Diocese are aware of the situation. IAB is being formed with relevant people. Resignation of the Chair was not connected to the IAB.

## 6. CEO Update

Some of the questions are operational so the response will be brief to these questions, as per Lynne's report.

Q. DE Regions (5 pillars) - can you explain the relative role of this compared to Ofsted and the local authority and diocese and each's ability to apply sanctions and which should the Board be paying most attention to? I saw just three mentions of pupils and not a single mention of child/children - really? The Board should be aware of the pillars, they all relate to the lived experience of the children and improving the quality of education for all children. Canonical inspections also do the same but have a specific lens on the quality of RE, Catholic Life and Mission in the school. The Ofsted agenda more closely mirrors the pillars. All are important and all must be a focus.

Q. Is there an explanation for the transfer of the HT from Bridport to Wool? Operational, covered in E&S, a professional decision based on the School Improvement Team and SELT. Strategic as the right person at the right time, a SEND expert, effective at managing behaviour. Strategic but unable to recruit. Two-year fixed term arrangement and will then begin recruitment again. SA confirmed it was covered in the E&S meeting.

Q. Weymouth - Is the HT role vacant? Is this, followed by the health issues of the Deputy HT reported, going to cause a leadership vacuum? Discussed at E&S.

Q. RIDDOR - What happened to the pupil who kicked the agency worker? It is not appropriate for Directors to be asking questions about individual pupils. KB provided an example of a SEND child dysregulating, the teacher acted appropriately, followed policy, and the school has taken a child centred approach in line with policies and the Equalities Act.

ZB attended a meeting with SEND for Change, focusing on inclusion and attendance in Plymouth, along with a representative from the LA who used to be the SENDCo for ND. SBC and ND fared well, a high level of mobility, heartening to hear the LA talking positively about our schools.

Primary schools in Torbay have compared well to other schools in the area.

Directors recognised places at AP settings are being reduced, have to be Home Educated which leads to Safeguarding concerns, there are no more places.

Q. TSG 7 - PLMR - Have the company got an adequate insight into the nature of the whole MAT e.g., if the balloon goes up a hundred miles away, are they ready for it? Already discussed.

Q. Budget Position - Is there a (national) benchmark to which we should be linking other than internal measures? Yes, but the ATH states all Trusts must set a balanced budget in 23/24 which we do. Budgets must be reliable and appropriate. Benchmarking is carried out through ICFP, a key school resource management for all schools to use, 12 key metrics with DfE thresholds that all schools and Trusts would like to meet. Already report on some of those metrics through the Heat Map, we now have the ICFP data and will collate and share with F&R and the Board. Don't have to meet the metrics but the DfE ideal.

Q. CFO report. Was there any additional funding from the Government toward the 6.5% pay award? The Teachers' Pay Additional Grant, TPAG, announced in July. The grant is enough to cover 3% for teachers, Government stated increase in the GAG funding equates to the 3.5%. Guaranteed for two years and think will form part of the new GAG funding two years' time. Budgeting for 5% so the funding was positive.

Q. DoE Report Table 2 - Is there a point to excluding schools with disappointing results from data lists to make them look better? This was discussed at E&S. This was a troubling question and KB would never manipulate the data. Limited information has resulted in this question, 76-page report to E&S, overall data was presented and then sliced to understand the data, needed to understand if there was something wrong systemically or whether the data was affected by a small number of schools. Ran the data for the Trust and then re-ran the data with a small number removed, presented as parallel data. Not done to gloss over the data, overall Trust data can give false positives, report to E&S on the levels but also the number of schools in line with national averages. The detailed E&S meetings would have highlighted any gloss on the data. SA confirmed that the E&S Committee challenge KB robustly.

Q. How did the secondary schools perform across the GCSE Exams in the following measures?

- Indicative P8 for 2023 using the 2022 estimates?
- Basics 4 + English and Maths, Basics 5 + English and Maths, Basics 7 + English and Maths?
- Pupil Premium and Special Educational Needs children across the above measures?

Q. How did our secondary schools 2023 performance compare with:

- Their previous performance in 2019 and 2022?  
**Note:** I understand P8 is on average 0.3 grades worse across all schools when compared to 2022 P8 estimates.
- Other schools in the Southwest in 2023?
- Their own predicted outcomes?

Q. What was the percentage +ve or -ve variance against the secondary school's own predictions?

Q. Did any of the following factors affect attainment and progress in the 2023 Examinations:

- Attendance
- Suspensions
- Mental Health Issues

If so, how?

- Were these factors predicted / allowed for in the projected outcomes?

Q. How did the A Level results compare to predictions?

- Previous year's results?

Secondary outcomes were predicted to be poor, didn't trust the data, was worse than predicted but not worse than anticipated. Comparisons to previous years, presented to E&S in great detail, issues with data at ND and SBC over many years played a part in shortcomings of teaching and learning, teaching can't address the learning gaps, systems and structures

not in place to know what the data is telling them. In September, E&S discussed highly analytical data produced by Matt Hegarty at St Edwards, Poole who has been seconded to the Trust to address these issues. Closer to what is predicted for this year.

Indicate P8 for 2023 ND ranges -0.3 and -0.71, hoping for -0.3. Changes in SISRA metrics. 0.11 ND in 2022, ND P8 is poor for this year, V-C discussion with KB, school didn't have the leadership or the resilience to cope, staff absences and recruitment issues, two student deaths, two ex-colleague deaths, EHT moving to retirement. Believe that last year's outcomes are a blip but not for the students, P8 overtime has been neutral, will be back up next year.

SBC -0.49 for P8 last year, -1 this year. Achieve on average one grade less than other schools. Don't think that is a blip for SBC, basics had been improving, close to ND, in terms of P8 but don't think we will see a transformation, SBC underperformance is built on teaching, behaviour, leadership issues but is a significantly improving school, there is a data lag, Years 7 and 8 are part of the new culture, a renewed feeling for staff and the community. Parents Evening last week, choosing SBC due to what is being said, outcomes are low, but it is building.

Attendance impacts the outcomes. Discussed at E&S and reported the different attendance groups, a national picture also. Direct relationship with attendance, attainment and progress.

Suspensions didn't affect overall figures, no exams missed. If suspensions are high, it can affect the attendance.

MH issues are less so at SBC and more so at ND. Significant MH issues with girls following the pandemic, large number of girls that were not in school or have low attendance, impacted the figures but also on their own outcomes.

SA highlighted the attendance and how this affects the grades achieved and was shocked at the information shared with E&S. Good to have the data. Attendance and PP children are in both categories and affects their future.

#### **KMB left the meeting at 11.50am.**

Hannah Woodhouse, Regional Director, contacted ZB this week and invited the Trust to be part of a focus group looking at attendance nationally, an external advisor to look at strategies in place, using creative ways to support pupils who are school refusers or have barriers to accessing learning, or access agency support where is available.

Q. Government setting up Attendance Hubs? Two hubs, not yet established but aligned to demographics currently. Can work with the Hub.

Q. Lots of shared experience on what schools are doing to bring pupils into schools. Primary schools have always been creative, a difficult position for secondary schools. Parents want children to be in school but not always easy.

Q. In CEO report, bottom almost nationally is a concern, girls perform better than boys. The Directors have taken exceptional action to address

the decline in ND and the SBC, the new EHT and the structure below has already had a transformational impact on ND and SBC. An independent school improvement officer was in school last week for a review of ND, exceptionally positive at what has been put in place, areas being addressed and by the right people. Review at SBC by external SIO, positive about the improvement. From a strategic point of view, decisions taken have been transformational.

Q. Bridport - Does the RI outcome mean the school must leave the MAT. If so, where might it go? Covered in an earlier discussion, follow the process, having a good track record of turning RI schools around, report recognises a cusp school, lodged a complaint regarding the inspection, TWN will be automatic but different expectations.

Q. Safeguarding - Could you explain 'Dysregulating' and how policies on physical intervention are applied? Dysregulation is non-self-regulated behaviour, child's behaviour in a way to other children. Physical intervention policy stipulates only trained staff are to intervene and only as a last resort to protect child or others, training is specific. The Trauma Informed approach is crucial in the Trust, led by Suzie Franklin, one of the Directors of TI approach. Transformational for behaviour management. Two launch days in September, brought together by the Plymouth CAST Principles documents, by January every school will have had whole school training, launching a TI Diploma for 18 members of staff. September 2024 every school will have access to a TI practitioner. Understanding why a child dysregulates, how to manage and support, related to ACEs and trauma experienced by these children in early age, matches with the Catholic ethos and how to manage the behaviour through relationships and not punitive.

Q. CEO report section 4 contains a listing of SIO's which is slightly different to the listing Leah sent out with the annual review forms. Please confirm the correct allocation and contact email address especially for external SIO's. Will confirm the allocation and will include the email addresses. Will be added to the document that LP is creating.

LP to Confirm SIO allocation and add to contact list

## 7. Strategic Documents

Trust Improvement Plan (TIP). Skeletal plan taken to the Strategy Day; Director feedback was incorporated. Easier document for the Board to keep abreast of, relates to the SEF and One-Year Operational Plan.

Have robust plans. SEF is a self-owned document and will be reviewed as the focus changes.

TIP – approved by all.

The Board approved the TIP

## 8. Safeguarding

Information in the CEO report, suspensions of staff:

1 TA, 1 Admin, 1 SLT teacher. 2 are related to DA, additional teacher suspended pending outcome of police enquiry of non-CAST allegation. Actively managing. Disciplinary action is being taken where appropriate.

Sports Coach removed from a school, contacted the employer, asked for reassurance in terms of vetting processes and suitability of staff.

DA – nationally there has been a huge increase, seeing it with staff in terms of CP processes that are starting, and disciplinary processes, if the member of staff is a victim of DA it is extremely uncomfortable.

1 in 5 children live in a household with DA, know staff will be experiencing this themselves, staff will also be perpetrators. Developing a DA strategy across the Trust, signposting all staff to the DA training on SSS Learning, gives information to those who may be perpetrators and victims, will extract and display in schools, support groups and agencies info in schools, DSL network will be entirely focussed on DA, looking at Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews to see what triggers and recommendations, what the Trust is doing, looking at the concept of transferable risk into Safeguarding into our schools. A sad situation but exciting to confront in this way.

Q. How does this match with other Trusts? Broadly similar.

Q. Not surprised by the numbers? Horrified. September 2023 Dorset LADO have had twice as many referrals as last year, think due to people being willing to come forward and ask for help.

**9. RE and Catholic Life**

ZB highlighted the update from NJ submitted regarding an update from Jo Flower.

RE and Catholic Life has previously been a verbal update, RO has requested a short, written update at each meeting.

Board to receive a written update by RE and Catholic Life Lead

**10. Health and Safety Update**

Meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup>, minutes have been provided for information. The Committee met to review the Annual H&S Report which is also included.

**PS joined at 12.25pm**

PS provided a summary of his report.

Increase in VATB incidents.

Q. All objectives, include a status “maintain 95%, currently at 90%” as an example. PS will take this forward.

Q. Pupil attacks on staff, discussed at H&S and ties in with attendance. Trauma Informed approach is part of the strategy to reduce that. National context, 1 in 10 teachers, 1 in 2 TAs. Reflect the national picture and taking action to address it.

Q. Appropriate action in two schools, concern over repetition, involve PS and will support, still a concern over a series over the same type of incidents. The nature of the children involved, it is likely to be repetitive but reducing, key is reporting it, not always reported, about having a greater consistency, Suzie Franklin is a leader in this area, to work with the schools, don’t want to exclude students, support schools with exclusion where everything else has been tried and hasn’t worked. Some pushbacks from schools to say there can’t be consequences for students

but there must be and must be considered. SF deployment by the Board two years ago.

Assurance to the Board, to look at an appendix in the Behaviour Policy on steps and process for students that sit outside the usual pattern, where repeated incidents take place there is a process. Behaviour Strategy and SEND Policy creates a bespoke plan and picks up the H&S aspect.

The Board discussed the importance of all schools implementing Trust policy.

GB thanked PS for his report and that H&S is well reported within the Trust.

Q. Any RAAC? Not that we are aware of, process being followed, do not believe there is RAAC.

Q. By when? End of November. Considering the structure of the schools, confirming the quality of concrete.

RCF offered her thanks to PS for his work in this area.

**PS left the meeting 12.42pm**

**11. Estates Strategy**

Reporting proposal – considered how to address reporting gaps, conferred with AN as Chair of F&R.

Directors read the proposal and approved the reporting structure.

Objectives in the Strategy document, 2, 3 and 5 to revise.

Objective 2 – to change the suggested reporting approach.  
Objective 3 – reworded to align with TSG5 to target £1m in reserves.  
Objective 5 – reworded to align with suggested updates to Sustainability updates.

Directors approved 2 and 3.

Objective 5 later in the meeting.

Q. Update whole document? RCF confirmed yes, approve in December.

**Meeting paused at 12.45pm**  
**KMB returned at 1pm**  
**Meeting reconvened at 1.10pm**

**12. Education and Standards**

**12.1** E&S minutes are in the Board papers.

**12.2** Q. Ed Stds. terms of reference - Will amendments to the TOR be agreed by the board? SA TofR should reflect Statutory Grants and SG Lead Directors should be on the Committee. Wrong for Link Directors to be involved in projects in schools. LP to update and share out of Committee.

The Board approved Objective 2 and Objective3

LP to update and share E&S ToR



**13. Finance and Resources**

**13.1** Responsibilities – F&R to share for approval. RCF to make the change.

Went through Management Accounts, a healthy position. Discussion around GAG pooling, agreed to implement this year, review of ICFP and the timing of the implementation is under review, updated proposal at November F&R and then Board in December.

Allocation KPIS reviewed and no change.

Reviewed areas and reflected in the minutes.

**13.2 Management Accounts.**

KMB provided an overview of the Cashflow position. Reports are subject to change between now and the December Board meeting.

Year End figures variance of £32 000 teaching staff. Large overspend on educational support staff due to Harmonisation and SEND staff being recruited.

£173 000 adverse position compared to budget but includes unexpected inflationary figures.

£781 000 surplus but over £3m but huge variance due to additional income. F&R have requested more information and KMB is meeting with PS. Anticipate ending the year as per the budget.

**14. Audit and Risk**

GB confirmed the minutes were in the Board pack. A new area for A&R relates to GDPR, Data Protection and Online Safety. Next meeting will include the Annual Report and Accounts and the Chair's Report.

Q. TofR for Board approval. LP to share.

**15. Governance and Management**

**15.1 Governance Action Plan**

This acknowledged areas of the review and highlights things we are doing and things that are planned. We have added the last column to give the Board assurance on actions taken or the planning of actions.

KPIs that are referenced in the report, AN as Chair of F&R confirmed they have been reviewed, want to roll out for each Committee to ensure the KPIs have been reviewed and are appropriate to give the Board assurance. The Heat Map in December, April, and July.

**15.2** Link Director role is crucial. One Link report shared for this meeting.

Q. Current template to use? Yes, for now. Ensure meetings focus on LCB governance and not into operational matters. Governance and key priorities are crucial for the school. In the first meeting of the year, governance structurally across the Trust. SIOs work educationally.

RCF to update responsibilities

KPIs to be reviewed by each Committee.

LP to add KPI review cyclically to each committee meeting

Q. HT often raises an issue, signpost to ZB/KB. HTs have received guidance.

An auditing sheet has been created to look at website compliance, frameworks, to support Link Directors and provide the Board with a consistent review of the governance work.

Q. When will this be shared? Have created and not yet rolled out.

Q. Share as a draft? Being used after half term and can share.

Q. Link Director report, what happens with the follow up actions? Need to attend to potential actions, the new structure will support with this. LP review includes actions, but they are not followed up.

Q. Frequency of monitoring, at each Board meeting as an agenda? Due to be done by December but can provide an updated action plan to show actions.

Q. Will the reviewer see this? The review work has ended due to funding, but a question to consider is whether we pay to have the plan reviewed.

RCF clarified with GB to add these actions to the A&R action tracker. GB confirmed it should be.

**Articles update.** LP has been asked to contact the Diocese solicitors to obtain a copy of the Special Resolution.

**Evaluation of Committee and Lead Director reporting.** During RCF 1:1 session, reviewed the reporting style, Chair of the Board approved RCF to trial at this meeting, require an impact statement to highlight the key points addressed at the meeting which will support the Chair of the Committee to provide an update at the Board.

**Lead reports.** Early in the academic year. SA is Statutory Grants Lead and the report should be included in the Board Agenda for December. Lead Directors will be asked to provide a verbal overview of their reports. GDPR and H&S report through to A&R, covered when reporting on A&R minutes.

**16. Policies**

**16.1** 25/26 Admissions Policy – RCF has proposed to continue to use the DCC model as can demonstrate compliance. The Board approved this approach.

RCF confirmed that some LAs include maps – exclude maps? Approved.

RCF to draft a policy statement on Admissions to single sex schools. Need to have a policy statement defined, DCC advisor recommendations. RCF has found a definition on CES website as talks about exceptional circumstances.

Q. Admissions. I am confused by the CES policy. Does it mean that as a Biological boy because I am self-identifying as a girl I am an exceptional case and can therefore be admitted to Notre Dame? I would not agree that children of differing biological sex to that of the school can be

LCB Review document to be shared by LP

RCF to add Governance Action Plan to the Audit Tracker

LP to contact solicitors

Lead Directors to provide written reports

Approved DCC model policies

Approved maps to be excluded

admitted. I would exclude that prohibition for all children of the opposite biological sex for specific courses.

Set a precedent with boys in the sixth form as same Admissions Policy. HB will liaise with the CES.

Q. Merger of the sixth form, distinct difference with allowing boys/girls in ND. Transgender children have been admitted already.

The Board has to make a decision and then take a legal judgement. Transgender is protected under the Equalities Act, illegal to discriminate on gender, schools have an exception to admit on sex which is different to gender.

Await  
CES/HB  
advice on  
policy  
statement

Guidance from HB is critical, will have the test cases in law. Content to wait a further update from RCF/HB.

**16.2 Governors Code of Conduct.**

Governors'  
Code of  
Conduct  
approved

Review to align with Resources Library and content is the same. The Board approved the Code of Conduct.

**16.3 Sustainability Policy.**

Sustainability  
Policy  
approved  
following first  
steps  
approach

TSG9 towards net zero, encouraging a focus on sustainability for two years. Paper written to accompany the Strategy, retain an aspirational view but acknowledged the Team capacity, a schedule, and key areas of focus. HTs are on board and are looking to Eco Schools and Green Flag compliance. Eco Schools complies with the CSI framework and complies with social teaching.

Funding – July 2022 £100 000 approved. Funding available of £80 000.

Proposal – first steps approach and approve the Policy. The Board felt this was a sensible approach and approved.

Q. Suggestion - Buckfast Abbey Meeting 7 June 2024. Can an invitation be extended to the Members, to attend the last hour of the meeting. The intention being to give a brief summary of what CAST has covered over the year including successes and any potential issues going forward. This could be in the form of a short 5 – 10-minute presentation by the CEO, followed by the Chairs and Lead Directors for: A&R / Finance / Education Standards and Remuneration and giving a brief explanation of how their respective committees work supports CAST and Catholic Education. (The format to be decided if this proposal is accepted). The interface with the Members is at the AGM, which does follow this format. The Board Strategy Day is a separate day for the Board to get together, socialise, and to exchange ideas, plan strategic priorities.

Q. AGM is online? No. Pandemic previously meant we had to move to an online meeting and last year due to the adverse weather conditions. Planned to be F2F.

Q. Appointed as Foundation Directors and welcome the opportunity to speak with Members. This will happen at the AGM, this is the correct governance process- important from a compliance perspective that the lines of governance in the Trust remain distinct and separate as per the

AFH and Governance Handbook. The Chair of the Board, CEO and CFO will present the Trustees Annual Report and Stat Accounts. Members can question Directors as appropriate.

LP confirmed the AGM will be held at Buckfast Abbey.

**RO thanked those present for attending the meeting.**

- 17. Close**  
Meeting closed at 2.10pm

**Future Board Meeting Dates**

**2023-24 Board Meeting Dates – All to be held at the CAST Offices**

Friday	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	10.30am
Friday	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	10.30am
Friday	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	10.30am
Friday	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 – Strategy Day @ Buckfast Abbey	9.30am
Friday	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	10.30am