

Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 19th July 2024
In person from 10.30am

Attendees:	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director
	Sandy Anderson (SA)	-	Foundation Director
	Steve Hole (SH)	-	Foundation Director
	Deacon Nick Johnson (NJ)	-	Foundation Director
	John Andrews (JA)	-	Foundation Director
	Alison Nettleship (ALN)	-	Co-opted Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
In Attendance:	Karl Murphy-Barnes (KMB)	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	Director of Education
	Helen Brown (HB)	-	DSC
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

RO welcomed all including JA to his first Board meeting and led with a prayer.

2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

ZB and PM. RO to leave at lunchtime. Quorum met.

3. Declaration of Interest

NJ - Governor at St Edward's School and his wife is a school employee within CAST.

None declared.

4.1 Minutes of previous meetings 17.05.2024, 07.06.2024, and 07.06.2024 Confidential Minutes

17.05.2024 – typo on P3 – add 'word'. Approved.

07.06.2024 Part I. Approved.

07.06.2024 Part II. Approved.

Minutes approved as accurate records of the meetings.

4.2 Action Summary – June 2024

Updated on the Actions Summary.

23.43. KB contacted by a primary school and included information in the Board report. KB reported an abusive phone call which had been received at Notre Dame regarding transgender students. KB highlighted the driver in these cases must be what is right for the child. The Trust is following the non-statutory guidance.

Decision /Action

Minutes
17.05.24
and
07.06.24
approved

<p>SH highlighted the importance of Diocese support, HB ultimately in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church, CAST, two other joint faith schools and Diocese to link.</p>	<p>SEND ToR approved</p>
<p>Q. Doing damage to the child in allowing them to consider changing sex? Will be mindful and work with Safeguarding partners if feel it is inappropriate and work with parents, legal constraints to consider, need to consider in terms of Safeguarding and will be picking up at DSL briefings.</p>	
<p>23.41 Edited as agreed. SEND Lead Director needs approval. RCF shared the suggested wording which was approved.</p>	<p>Link with Deans – October</p>
<p>KB left 10.47am</p>	
<p>23.38 Actioned. Report to be shared with October Board meeting.</p>	
<p>23.37 KMB has uploaded a trend analysis to GovernorHub but work is ongoing. Housekeeping meeting.</p>	<p>Trend analysis – September</p>
<p>23.17 From Admissions Policy. Can reconsider as part of September 2026 work. CES advice is not to change the wording.</p>	<p>Business Cont. Plan approval – October</p>
<p>23.04 RCF to work with GB. October 2024</p>	
<p>5. Chair’s Business</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Parties forms 	
<p>All completed.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential New Directors 	
<p>Have been contacted by potential new Directors. RO to meet over the summer. Optimal number is 12 Directors, good that new Directors will be Foundation. Canon Mark and HB to meet.</p>	<p>Meet with potential Directors</p>
<p>RO will review the Link Director schools to reallocate to consider schools with EHTs and geographical areas.</p>	<p>RO to review Link Director schools</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director invite to event on 04/10/2024 	
<p>Celebration event as part of 10-year celebrations. Celebration of the Word. SA gave his apologies.</p>	
<p>GB highlighted that Exmouth is 100 years old this year, is there anything planned? At local level, the school should organise.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAN reduction strategy 	
<p>Ongoing budget work and strategic work has identified 18 schools that have not reached their PAN which applies to the Reception intake, leads to expensive staffing models but limited pupil numbers and impacted by pupils being placed by the LA.</p>	
<p>5 schools beneficial to lower PAN for September 2025. ESFA significant change process, consult with LA and start imminently and finalise by November 2024.</p>	
<p>St Peter’s current PAN 30, reduction to 15 Priory current PAN 30, reduction to 10 Bridport current PAN 30, reduction to 15 Marnhull current PAN 25, reduction to 10 Wool current PAN 30, reduction to 15</p>	
<p>RCF requested approval to proceed and to present the business case to the LA. Admissions advisor has confirmed that a financial business case will be sufficient.</p>	

Q. What about the other schools?

Q. Wool potentially receiving 5 children in September and other local school will receive 12, at what point do we work together with other schools, pre-school looking for a new home? Not been a strand of conversation previously but can be, work with HB and the Articles does allow joint faith schools.

HB lowering the PAN understand, wider strategic meetings regarding the viability of the schools as the buildings are owned by the Diocese. Could be a joint faith but would need to consider the Diocese. Need to consider the governance arrangements and the Catholic element must be maintained.

Q. Why hasn't the pre-school already moved to the school, need detailed work at each school to ensure children come to our schools, don't think we have done enough, every school should have a pre-school? Longer term strategies can always increase PAN if need to.

KB returned 11.06am

We need to make certain that we have done enough. Reducing PAN is not irreversible, being under PAN allows the LA to place children.

Q. HT asked Link Director regarding the advertising toolkit which was promised to the school? RCF confirmed it is available on the Portal and the HT who asked the question sits on the Marketing Working Party.

The Board approved the 5 schools identified. Consider as part of the Hub model.

Remaining schools September 2026, conversations via the Admissions process.

Q. CAST to send a statement to be read for Education Sunday in parishes where we have a school, previously had HTs talking in Church, LAs are not promoting Catholic schools so require the Church to promote the schools. Falls under the Bishop's Vision.

8th September is Education Sunday.

- **Parental letter from Holy Cross.**

Generous letter to send, a positive message.

6. CEO Update

Q. I am fully supportive of Zoe spending time as a Canonical Inspector – will the MAT receive payment for the time she spends as an inspector? Yes.

Q. Are there specific action plans in place for those schools where pupil numbers are more than (say) 10% below PAN? Discussed.

Q. Is there a limit to the time that staff who have been suspended receive full pay?
No time limit.

Q. Anything can do? Directors discussed whether a time limit could be introduced but recognised the need to discuss with Trade Unions and employment law to be considered. RCF will seek advice and share with F&R Committee.

Q. School workforce - Teacher turnover - in round figures - 10% leave within 1 year, 25% at three years, 33% at five years and 40% at ten years. How does CAST compare and is there any comparative data for similar professions e.g. nursing, police to know where we stand? RCF will take as an action for October 2024.

PAN reduction for five schools listed approved

Time limit for pay when staff are suspended

Teacher turnover data to be provided at October meeting

Q. SEN/EHCP etc - Is there any data or explanation for this massive rise from 2016? We do not appear to have been funded to cope, so that TAs' generally, who began their careers helping a teacher to sustain focus in the classroom, in many cases are doing high intensity 1:1 behaviour management, often outside the classroom, denuding the mainstream capability? Funding has not kept up with demand, High Needs Block is massively overspent, a BBC FOI request to all LAs confirms £926m deficit, a broken system, localised arrangements but need a standardised national funding formula, needs more funding.

ALN left the meeting 11.23

What the schools do is the important factor, matching the need of the child, funding is diagnosis driven, schools are trying to meet the needs of the child.

Q. Diagnosis will assist the school eventually, lack of understanding of the root cause? Knowledge in school through existing staff and Trust SEND Lead, specific conditions will require something more bespoke, can put things in place while waiting for diagnosis.

Q. A new version of "**Working together to improve school attendance**" will come into force on 19 August 2024 as **statutory guidance**.

This gives rise to three questions for the Trust Board to seek answers on :-

1. How will we know if this policy is working?

2. How did you decide on which attendance improvement strategies to follow?

3 . How do you know staff will understand their responsibilities regarding attendance .

Attendance will increase and absence will decrease. KB provided information on the attendance review carried out, comparing to previous data and the national average. Focusing on individual year groups.

ALN returned 11.30

Interrogating the data will confirm if the policy is working. KB provided data to show a positive trend for Reception to Year 3, but something changes from Year 4.

Q. Is this linked to Covid? Don't do well against the national average. Need to do more work to support and challenge school leaders.

Q. Data in school, poor attendance skews the data? Need to consider the whole data, need to get better at meeting the needs of the pupils, the Bonding Survey will support this.

The Attendance Policy, action plans in place dovetails with the new framework. The Board discussed how staff go out to collect pupils to bring them to school.

SA confirmed that attendance is discussed every term as part of the E&S Committee meetings, which have been split to allow focussed discussions on attendance, and academic outcomes.

7. Termination Warning Notice

Update provided in the CEO report. Two live TWNs.

SBC. Four milestones into the Action Plan, regular meetings with the HoS and EHT to review with good progress being made, apart from the data. Attendance Advisor agrees we are making

the right decisions for attendance which has improved for the whole cohort, SEND and Disadvantaged are disproportionately represented.

Q. How many children are we talking about? Not many, school is doing the right things.

Monitoring inspection with HMI recently, ungraded, taking effective action and making progress towards to Good but flagged attendance. Summer outcomes won't be good but should be better than last year.

St Catherine's, Bridport. Milestone 1. Making good progress with the action plan, example of capacity in the school, small school with EHT and EDHT, support from SIO and DoE. Will hit the milestones but capacity is the issue, high needs' children is a big factor.

Q. How is morale in those schools and any issue with staff retention? SBC morale has never been higher due to school leaders, TWN is directed at the Trust which protects the staff. St Catherine's, Bridport morale is good, staff are under pressure but being supported by SIO, some frustrations in terms of micro-management for improvement.

Two schools are pending – not waiting for the TWN to be issued so have started the action plan at one, second school was due to an incorrect Ofsted judgement.

Don't know what will happen with TWNs in the future, White Paper was not enshrined in law. New Education Minister so have to wait and see.

One school RI last year due to incorrect judgement. Strong outcomes this year, school has challenges such as falling pupil numbers, and SEND funding, grade as Good at inspection next year.

Q. Impedes the school if it is misjudged? The only RI school locally and have managed to hold their market share.

One other RI school to be inspected next year, outcomes are not going to help.

8. Articles of Association

Paper shared in the Board paperwork. No revised draft produced as want to review the ongoing queries. RCF talked the Directors through the paper.

RCF asked did the Board want to amend the title of Article 57 to Executive Director? Approved.

Q. What happens to ZB? Return to this.

The Board's intention was always the CEO would be a Director. The CEO is a member of the Board and not to be confused with Executive Directors. HB agreed with this.

Q. Expectation that the CEO will be a Director or their choice? Existing Articles gave the option, 2021 version took that away.

Q. The CEO would have voting rights or not? As a Board member would have voting rights, unless there was a conflict of interest.

The CEO would remain as an Executive Officer. Approved.

To enable the Board of Directors to appoint the Chief Executive Officer as an Executive Director, should the Board wish to do so. The CEO will be a Director as per the Articles.

Article 66 gives the authority to remove an Executive Director but incompatible if expecting the CEO to be a Director. Intention to allow the CEO to be a Director. RCF confirmed the Board has

Article 57 to Executive Director approved

CEO remain as an Executive Director approved

to appoint the CEO as a Director, and could remove under Article 66. Need to ensure the words are reflected in the Articles.

No service contracts with Directors. Referred for further legal advice.

Q. Not proposing to amend the Articles but to deal with it as a separate issue? Approved.

RCF to request final draft to share

RCF to request a final draft being produced and circulated, for September Housekeeping meeting, to Members and then the DfE. HB Confirmed a Member has been involved in the discussions. Directors were grateful to RCF for her work.

9. TIP Annual Review

Current version remains live to 2027. No changes required. Actions are no longer RAG rated but extrapolated into the SEF and One Year Operational Plan.

10. Review of SEF and One Year Operational Plan

Has been reviewed by SELT for this meeting, RAG rating has been revised.

National averages to be added

Q. Contextual Information table – please could national figures be added to this table to give Context? National averages likely to be available, SELT will build into 24/25 version of the plan. SA asked for SELT to share with the Board.

Q. Trust Self Evaluation - Trust Dividend - I know I have asked this before but I recall that the Trust Dividend we assert is of our making; the statements are written by us. Do we do anything that verifies what we say from the 'customer/beneficiary' point of view? Don't have verification against each point, planning to run an expanded staff survey in October 2024. SELT to consider and bring to October 2024 Board meeting but need to encourage staff to respond but anonymously.

Staff survey results to October Board

Staff Wellbeing meeting, staff survey is run through a third party, so the Trust only receives the reports and not the individual staff responses. Need to be mindful of the number of surveys staff are being asked to complete. SELT need to consider the validation.

Feedback is the entire staff team, we are all CAST. The customer is ultimately the family, communication strategy to include parents would be beneficial.

RCF to ascertain who updates the website

GB highlighted the news section of the website was last updated as January 2022. Press release drafted to the 10th anniversary, PLMR wanting to work with Schools Week.

Q. Who is responsible for keeping updated? Need to ascertain who is responsible.

Q. CAST news added to school websites to increase awareness and communication? A good idea.

Consider how CAST communicates with parents

Q. Action for a recommendation for how CAST communicates as a whole with parents?

11. Heat Map

Score	Dec-23	May-24	Jul-24
St Joseph's, Plymouth	71	80	86
Holy Cross, Plymouth	75	87	84
St Mary's, Bodmin	79	84	81

St Augustine's, Weymouth	46	62	74
St Mary's First, Dorchester	68	80	74
St Mary's, Marnhull	59	71	74
St John the Baptist's, Dartmouth	64	62	68
Our Lady's, Barnstaple	73	61	67
St John's, Camborne	71	67	67
St Mary's, Axminster	56	63	66
Sacred Heart, Paignton	59	66	66
St Mary's, Falmouth	57	64	64
St Mary's, Swanage	70	60	60
St Nicholas, Exeter	51	51	57
St Mary's, Penzance	66	63	57
Our Lady of the Angel's, Torquay	67	69	57
St Joseph's, Exmouth	52	61	55
Our Lady & St Patrick's, Teignmouth	58	61	55
Cathedral School, Plymouth	65	48	54
St Margaret Clitherow, Brixham	55	51	54
Priory, Torquay	51	54	54
St Peter's, Plymouth	60	42	51
St Catherine's, Bridport	46	52	49
St Joseph's, Poole	72	48	48
St John's, Tiverton	44	44	44
Keyham Barton, Plymouth	32	33	42
St Mary's, Buckfast	41	40	40
St Joseph's, Newton Abbot	26	35	35
Notre Dame	49	40	34
St Mary's, Poole	40	41	32
St Mary & St Joseph's, Wool	14	25	31
St Paul's, Plymouth	25	13	28
St Boniface's	-5	4	7
Christ the King, Bournemouth	36	15	-6

Q. Looking at the trends two schools stand out as having very negative trends and two with poor trends. How are we going to reverse these trends? Links to the trend analysis being created by KMB. Looking at the data sets for individual areas, conversations are joined up but do not have a document which encapsulates everything. SIO work is enabled by KMB and RCF's areas of responsibility.

Directors know that trends are picked up, schools are discussed but important to have a document to show this, individual Committees are aware.

Q. A local template to be used at school level? Useful to have a scorecard. Intention of the Heat Map is to provide contextual information for all Committees to work on.

12. Safeguarding

DSL briefings in June. KB provided an outline of the topics covered: sextortion, escalation, and Managing Medications in School.

Reviewing the Policy, second incident in schools of mal administration, taking legal advice, worked with Devon H&S to revise and improve the Policy. Schools need to manage effectively. In one school the Policy was not followed, reviewing with the HT and taking advice. Need to consider designated staff who will administer medication, lack of local services, a big responsibility for staff in schools.

Q. Worth looking at other places where medication is key? Policy includes Individual Health Care Plans and Allergy Plans which are constructed with medical staff. Issue for this complaint was non-prescribed medication. Policy has been released to schools, any queries to RCF, take advice and share response Trust-wide, includes new record keeping mandates. Trying to produce a consistent template but workable for all schools.

Chair of A&R highlighted he was aware of the situation.

Q. Are staff volunteers? Yes, not mandated.

KB provided an update on Ofsted complaints.

Meeting paused at 12.54

RO left 13.05

Meeting reconvened at 13.19 with AN as Chair

13. RE and Catholic Life

13.1 Strategic update from DSC

Report was from the Diocesan Education Service.

HB highlighted the positive attendance at events, British Values/Gospel Values/other faiths included in conferences. First year of CSI inspections, 2 schools were outstanding and highest across the southwest.

13.2 RE and Catholic Life Lead Director Report

Report provided to the Board. Jubilee year next year, Diocese will provide symbols for the schools. World-wide jubilee.

14. Finance and Resources

14.1 Update from Chair of Finance and Resources

Minutes from 5th July included in the Board paperwork. Key points shared with the Board.

Thanks to RCF, Finance and HR Teams for a smooth process with staff consultations.

Q. What was the outcome of the meeting with Orovia on the 11th July? Progress has been made, didn't lift the breach, meeting on 25th, making progress against the actions and formally review on the 25th.

Q. Happy they are a solution to future needs? No, a potential third-party solution so pursuing that.

14.2 Management Accounts to May 2024

KMB provided an overview. Period 9. £725 000 surplus, 1.5% which is better than budgeted position.

Supply costs and EHCPs. Supply budget was spent by December and the trend has progressed throughout the year due to additional TAs that have been required, difficult to recruit, also maternity cover. Ongoing work on staff absence scheme.

F&R Committee discuss individual school positions:

OLOTA, Tiverton, Buckfast, Dorchester, Wool and CtK (hoping a one-year blip which has been addressed).

Cash. £8.9m at the end of May.

Q. Small variances but year-end position? Yes.

14.3 Approval of Annual Budget and 3-Year Forecast

Discussed in detail at F&R Committee. 24/25 looking at returning the revised target of 1% overall for the Trust, previously 2%.

Most challenging year in school budgeting in 25 years. Of 35 schools, 8 returning an in-year deficit, £257 000 total, Bridport has a small deficit, but all others are significant. Schools and reasons for those deficits are in the report. 27 schools looking at returning in-year surplus £698 000 total.

Q. F&R discussed errors in secondary budget, has this been corrected? Have identified errors but still reviewing, an improving position.

Q. Investing in schools, allowing the deficit, such as Wool, differentiation between poor management and investment. In accountancy terms is a deficit, need to consider the ongoing picture.

Q. Schools within ongoing deficits, what is the plan? SELT discussions and will be picked up in the Hub model, the wider restructure reporting in the Autumn. There is a wider piece of work around estates, October 2024.

HB highlighted the hard work of the HT and vibrancy of a particular school. May help to improve the relationship with the parish.

24/25 1%
25/26 surplus
26/27 lack of information for realistic budget planning.
Don't need to report to DfE on years 4 and 5.

Q. 26/27 reporting figure? Deficit £289 000, 0.6%

Q. Prudent budget which doesn't take account of future grants? Correct. Savings on non-pay become finite, increasing trend in staff costs, need to consider the restructure and hub model work.

Requested HT provide potential projects for grant income, consider applying for grants for multiple schools.

Trust IT Manager is reviewing IT across the Trust and has identified projects to save money and improve services.

Hub model
informatio
n to
October
Board

Budget monitor on a monthly basis apart from year end processes.

Q. Who supports Catholic MATs who are struggling? Not the Diocese, can set an in-year deficit budget but consider the reserves, and would have to apply for a loan from the ESFA.

The Board approved the budget.

The Board approved the three-year budget

15. Audit and Risk

15.1 Update from Chair of Audit and Risk

Minutes provided along with the summary from the Chair of A&R.

At last A&R meeting, training on ICFP for Directors and KMB would lead. KMB to provide a 15-minute overview, LP to liaise with RO on the agenda.

LP to liaise with RO on agenda for ICFP

16. Education and Standards Committee

16.1 Update from Chair of Education and Standards

Concerns for Notre Dame. Suspensions have increased, not taken lightly but is concerning. Data released yesterday for last year. National picture is suspensions are increasing since the pandemic.

Q. Disproportionate amount and lack of funding are driving figures? A national increasing trend, for many issues, cultural picture at Notre Dame is also an issue and the speed of impact, demanded that suspensions and exclusions are reduced for this year but it has not been the case, operational management, concerns KB.

17. Remuneration Committee

17.1 Update from Chair of RemCom

Second meeting of the year. SA provided an overview.

18. Governance and Management

18.1 Link Reports

Q. Director visits – include current CSI grades. LP to amend template and share.

Q. Strategic meeting review template – more emphasis on question around Catholic Life? Question around the relationship with the parish. HB will review and share with LP.

Visit template - CSI grade Strategic meeting - Catholic Life

18.2 Lead Reports

- Safeguarding
- Statutory Grants
- SEND
- Health, Safety and Data Protection
- Careers
- Estates

Statutory Grants. To the next meeting.

Estates. RCF confirmed ongoing work for viability and discussed earlier.

19 Policies

19.1 Allegation of Abuse Against Staff

Approved.

19.2 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Q. Provision for individual schools to tailor aspects, do they have to be approved? No, requirement that only highlighted areas are amended. Any further changes would be operational and for SIOs to review.

Approved.

19.3 Curriculum Policy

Approved.

19.4 Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy

Approved.

19.5 Domestic Abuse

Approved.

- 20.** RCF highlighted that during academy conversion 2014, funding agreement is incorrect as nursery not included for St Mary's. Not limited to CAST, but only school we need to update. Board approved.

KB highlighted that under Ofsted inspections, St Augustine's was declining good, new grade Good. OLSP previous declining Good, new grade Good. CEO report to update.

Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 2.08pm.

All policies on the agenda approved by the Board

Board approved funding agreement update

Update CEO report

Future Board Meeting Dates

2024-25 Board Meeting Dates – All to be held at the CAST Offices

Day	Date	Start Time	Location
Wednesday	11th September 2024	10.30am	By Zoom
Friday	18th October 2024	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth
Friday	13th December 2024	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth
Friday	7th March 2025	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth
Friday	16th May 2025	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth
Friday	13th June 2025	9.30am	Buckfast Abbey
Friday	18th July 2025	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth