

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 7th March 2025  
in person from 10.30am**

Attendees:	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director
	Steve Hole (SH)	-	Foundation Director
	Deacon Nick Johnson (NJ)	-	Foundation Director
	John Andrews (JA)	-	Foundation Director
	John Cosgrove (JC)	-	Foundation Director
	Nick Baldwin (NB)	-	Foundation Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director

In Attendance:	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Karl Murphy-Barnes (KMB)	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	DoE
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk
	Helen Brown (HB)	-	DSC

**1. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

RO welcomed all to the meeting, thanking Directors for their time today and at the AGM.

**2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum**

PM, SA and ALN. Quorum met.

**3. Declaration of Interest**

NJ - Governor at St Edward's School.

**4. Minutes of previous meeting 13.12.2024 including confidential minutes**

Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**5. Action Summary – December 2024**

Updated on the Actions Summary.

24.17 Significant piece of work and will bring to May 2025.

24.10 Taken forward, Directors to email LP of any training needs. Good offer of training in house, SSS Learning, CST, DAG, Diocesan training. Link Director training to follow. LP to share training - courses to do, Formatio program online (HB).

SH highlighted the training that ZB led when he joined. NJ reinforced the importance of the mentor Director.

23.58 HB has met with JF and NJ. HB provided an overview of the report to be shared once agreed. Protocols for new HTs and interim HTs on the expectation on the role of the Parish Priest, Parish Secretaries include vacancies to teacher level, DES to provide bespoke meetings around Life to the Full for Priests, provision of education in joint schools and the Articles.

HB shared an example of how schools can support pupil numbers and being in the community and newsletters.

**Decision/  
Action**

Minutes  
13.12.2024  
approved

LP to share  
training

Q. Support from the marketing group? ZB confirmed that PLMR supports with reactive pieces but also works proactively to promote schools and share good news stories.

Diocesan website is being updated and includes a link to the schools within the Trust. HB confirmed there is a link to the Plymouth CAST website also.

23.53 Staff survey was run but a disappointing return rate. RCF is working with the Wellbeing Sub-Committee to relaunch the survey. Anticipate return provided by May 2025 meeting.

Q. Sharing the results from this survey? Feel the survey results were targeted and not an appropriate view of the workforce.

KB confirmed work was carried out at individual school levels as provided useful data.

Q. Reaction of the culture, would hope that staff would want to contribute. Some schools didn't provide any response so question if they received any request.

22.24 HB will provide an update at conferences.

Staff survey  
to May  
meeting

## 6. Chair's Business (including Chair's Action)

- **Teachers' Pay Policy**

Policy was approved at RemCom, but the Board version did not reflect all changes so RO has approved as a Chair's Action.

- **Behaviour Policy**

Policy was approved by the Board but links to other referenced policies were incorrect, so RO has approved as a Chair's Action.

- **RO - term of office**

Diocese has approved RO for a further 4-year term of office.

- **ALN - term of office**

Co-opted Director appointed annually; term of office ends in May. Approved.

ALN term of  
office  
approved

- **NB has been appointed by the Diocese**

The Board ratified NB's appointment to the Board. RO welcomed NB to the Board.

- **GB - term of office**

Appointed in September, renewal has moved to March. RO suggested reappointment to September 2025 to realign. Approved.

GB term of  
office  
approved to  
Sept 2025

- **Age range changes from 5-11 to 4-11 years**

St Joseph's, NA has the age range of 5-11 on GIAS and should be 4-11. It is a correction. RCF has St Peters, SMC, and St Catherine's in the same position so working with the DfE.

- **Real Living Wage**

Minimum wage is now called the minimum living wage. Previously passed a resolution for all staff to be on the real living wage but HR and Finance Teams worked through Harmonisation, but RO would like to have back on the agenda. AN highlighted the significant impact on the budget and to review at the F&R Committee.

Real living  
wage  
impact on  
budget to  
F&R  
meeting

- **Ofsted Complaint**

Received and has been dealt with.

## 7. CEO Report

Q. New Governmental Free Breakfast trial. Have any of our schools been selected to take part, and if so which? Will the funds meet the cost of food, staffing and heating? 2 schools and no, the funds will not meet the costs. St Peter's and St Joseph's, Plymouth. The schools had registered an interest but have been added to the pilot scheme. OLCS, Barnstaple has also been included. Financially unviable for St Peter's, and HT of St Joseph's wants to withdraw from the pilot. Plymouth LA is contacting the DfE to withdraw.

Q. What is the cost if the DfE insists it goes ahead? If all pupils attend would cost St Joseph's £9000 approximately, the costs would largely remain regardless of the numbers of attendees. Not designed to be an income generating scheme but to support parents back into work. A considerable loss.

HB highlighted that low-income families would have the opportunity to undertake additional work, could it attract more numbers into schools.

Q. There is a proliferation of acronyms, please can you explain RISE, SEMH, CAMHS

Q. Under the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE), do we yet know whether we will "benefit" from this and if so which schools?

RISE - Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence. Regional Directors (RD) Team will not be RISE Teams.

SEMH - Social, Emotional, Mental Health.

CAMHS Child Adolescent Mental Health Services.

RISE Teams are set up to meet DfE priorities under the Children and Wellbeing Bill. Trusts are expected to be high-quality, previous document shared with the Board set out the Pillars, being professionally generous and considering collaboration, focus on the vulnerable children and place-based strategies.

RISE Team has adopted own principles to give children the best start in life, skills offer and pathways into work, and family security (poverty and housing). Support offers will begin from September 2025. New Ofsted inspection framework and score cards will be in place. From April 2026 schools will receive the support.

Targeting schools that are double RI, Termination Warning Notice (TWN) is no longer relevant, funds will be released to schools and will provide a greater ownership to be effective but not sure how this will work in practice, potentially an assigned partner for 12-24 months.

Q. What is the process to prevent schools from coasting along, what sanctions for schools? Have recognised that support has been successful, very few cases where schools closed on receipt of a TWN, targeted meetings and held to account.

School improvement and targeted support when delivered in partnership can be successful, prime example is St Catherine's, Bridport which is a small school where staff are very capable but wear many hats. The support partner was not able to provide further guidance as already doing the right things.

Need to remember that although we are a business, we are dealing with children and their life experiences can impact on how well they do, have to be consistent, hold people to account, provide the training but cannot control all the factors.

NJ highlighted that schools don't see the child until they are four years old, SEND difficulties are in place prior to the child joining schools. DfE commitment to Early Years but no support for families prior to children reaching EY.

Q. Have we still to receive feedback from the meeting with the regional director (RD) team held on the 17th December? It became a 1:1 meeting between ZB and RD team member, as a pause in the process pending the RISE Team.

Q. What is the cost of the Supply Register? No cost, only the cost of any supply used.

Q. Higher than a salary? Yes, but lower than the cost of supply sourced outside of the Supply Register.

Q. I believe we should have target dates added to action tables such as Data Protection and GDPR audit. An action is not an action if it does not have a date. Actions do have dates and are included in the full Audit Tracker which is reported to the A&R Committee. GB confirmed this is the case and is reflected in the minutes. RCF provides an excerpt which doesn't include dates.

Q. Is the NZAP fully funded even if there are cost overruns? Yes, it is fully funded even if overruns.

Q. Principles of curriculum design – Why is numeracy not included? Is included and referred to Power Maths which is the numeracy package.

Q. SEND - I am not sure what central support is provided by CAST to schools in identifying SEND, contributing to the EHCP process and ensuring that the relevant LA meets the funding or other obligations set out in any given plan - this would be to ensure the optimum outcome for both student and school.

The Board previously supported the appointment of a Trust SEND Leader who is highly experienced and provides strategic oversight of SEND including support and challenge in schools. Developed pathways which set out what to look for to identify SEND needs. SENDCos are trained in all schools to oversee SEND and support teachers, SIO Team supports HTs to challenge LAs to secure appropriate funding, and work with local councillors to source funding from LAs. The SENDCos are critical to this but are under-resourced in schools, discrete protected time for SEND decreases, CFO finds additional resource where possible, network SENDCos across schools, a lot in place to support schools, working with Torbay to make better use of the offer. A good level of support provided by the Trust.

Q. P 38 "*There are widespread concerns that reductive scorecards will repeat the worst aspects of the current system and drive huge new and unnecessary workload, piling more pressure onto already overstretched school leaders.*" - is this borne out from our very limited experience so far? Proposed Ofsted changes for September, not experienced scorecards, one year interregnum where overall judgements have been removed but now effectively five single judgements which has increased pressure. Have had 7 inspections and anticipate a further 8 but will be graded under a dying framework.

Q. Formally responded to the consultation as a Trust? KB has responded but individual responses, Directors can respond. NAHT has provided a set of suggested responses. KB to share with Directors.

KB to share NAHT responses to Ofsted

Q. P.40 *"However, there are still a significant number of pupil assaults on members of staff in our primary schools."* This is of major concern as an employer - what level of tolerance is acceptable for this type of behaviour and have CAST policies/procedures found to be effective? Not acceptable for any member of staff to be assaulted. Relates to primary school children, children and staff being hurt when a child is dysregulating. Every case is considered individually. KB provided a recent example. Support suspension where a child deliberately targets a member of staff. Suspensions are due to historical and current unmet needs, challenging the school to improve the quality of provision for children. Permanent exclusion is exceptionally rare and would not happen as a result of unmet need. Suspensions are decreasing across the Trust, seeing the impact of Trauma Informed and relational approach, second Trauma Informed cohort for practitioners in schools, virtually all schools will have their own TI Practitioner by September 2025. Thresholds are correct but don't accept assaults on staff. Discussing recruitment of support staff and providing greater transparency on the risks and the support provided to staff. Do believe the Trust is taking appropriate and effective action to balance the needs of staff and pupils.

Directors highlighted the Trauma Informed approach has been transformational, suspensions are falling, nationally this is not the case and a rise of 40% which is a testament to the support and work that is ongoing.

### 1. School Improvement and Ofsted Challenges

#### Key Issues:

- Underperformance in several schools (Notre Dame, St Peter's, St Mary & St Joseph's Wool, Christ the King Bournemouth).
- SEND provision inconsistencies, safeguarding concerns, and poor student outcomes.
- Upcoming Ofsted inspections pose a risk of Termination Warning Notices (TWNs).

#### Questions:

1. What immediate actions are being taken to support underperforming schools?
2. What additional resources or interventions are needed to improve SEND provision and safeguarding?
3. Are we confident that upcoming Ofsted inspections will reflect progress made in struggling schools?
4. What is the Trust's contingency plan if a school receives a Termination Warning Notice?
5. How do we ensure consistency in quality across all schools in the Trust?

### 2. Recruitment and Retention of Catholic Leaders

#### Key Issues:

- Leadership vacancies remain, impacting school stability.
- Difficulties in attracting Catholic leaders, affecting ethos and governance.
- Joint Catholic MAT recruitment efforts are slow to progress.

#### Questions:

1. What are the current barriers to recruiting and retaining Catholic leaders?
2. What incentives or development programs are being used to attract Catholic school leaders?

3. How is the Trust collaborating with other Catholic MATs to strengthen leadership pipelines?
4. Are alternative leadership models (e.g., federations, co-headships) being considered to address shortages?
5. How are we supporting and developing our existing Catholic school leaders to ensure retention?

### 3. Financial Pressures and Estates Maintenance Risks

#### Key Issues:

- £30 million backlog of urgent capital repairs, with no clear funding strategy.
- Reduced capital budgets mean only emergency repairs are being funded.
- Compliance risks due to the ban on fluorescent lighting (RoHS Directive).

#### Questions:

1. What is the long-term financial strategy to address the estates backlog?
2. Are there any critical health and safety risks due to delayed maintenance?
3. What funding sources (government grants, partnerships, or lease models) are being explored?
4. How are we prioritizing the most urgent estate repairs across the Trust?
5. What is the financial impact of the lease funding model for replacing fluorescent lighting?

### 4. Persistent Absence and Attendance Issues

#### Key Issues:

- Persistent absence rate remains high at 18.6%, with secondary and special schools worst affected.
- DfE scrutiny is increasing, and poor attendance could impact future inspections.
- Unclear if enrichment activities are improving attendance levels.

#### Questions:

1. What are the main reasons for persistent absence, and how are they being addressed?
2. Which attendance intervention strategies have been most effective so far?
3. How are schools engaging with parents to improve attendance?
4. How do we measure the impact of enrichment activities on attendance levels?
5. What additional support is needed to ensure sustained attendance improvements?

### 5. Governance and Compliance Challenges

#### Key Issues:

- Governance review highlighted gaps in board training, record-keeping, and oversight.
- GDPR compliance risks related to HR data management and supplier due diligence.
- Articles of Association need updating to align with DfE requirements.

#### Questions:

1. What progress has been made in implementing the governance review recommendations?
2. How is board training being improved to ensure stronger governance at all levels?
3. Are we fully compliant with GDPR, particularly in HR data and supplier contracts?
4. What is the timeline for updating the Articles of Association, and what are the key changes?
5. How are we ensuring that governance structures remain fit for purpose across the Trust?

### **NB asked SELT to focus on the following Leadership and Attendance questions.**

1. What are the current barriers to recruiting and retaining Catholic leaders?

2. Informal ways, have supported leaders such as co-headships?
3. What incentives or development programs are being used to attract Catholic school leaders?
4. How is the Trust collaborating with other Catholic MATs to strengthen leadership pipelines?
5. Are alternative leadership models (e.g., federations, co-headships) being considered to address shortages?
6. How are we supporting and developing our existing Catholic school leaders to ensure retention?

Attended the Formatio conference this week to focus on shared challenges, need to do a data gathering exercise for shared commonality, continue to grow our own leaders, EHT models to benefit leaders and have enabled colleagues to step up into Head of School positions.

NPQs, work with CES and Church of England to ensure courses have a faith lens, training people well but the best help is doing the job. Secondments have been a good tool.

Federations don't apply when part of a multi academy trust.

Q. As CEO, doing everything to face this challenge? Yes, have to target many areas of focus all at the same time. Want to use the Apprenticeship Levy budget to have an online training program to train staff to support them to move into teaching, collaboration with CatColl on training, best practice, and education models in the Catholic world.

Q. Is there a KPI to measure this? Included on the Heat Map and will see this in May but impossible to provide a hard number.

HB Highlighted the relationship between the Trust and the Diocese, program a Formation program for any teachers who would like to find out more about the Catholic faith, innovative within Plymouth Diocese.

Initial Teacher Training (ITT) work closely to identify and train Catholic teachers.

## **Attendance**

1. What are the main reasons for persistent absence, and how are they being addressed?
2. Which attendance intervention strategies have been most effective so far?
3. How are schools engaging with parents to improve attendance?
4. How do we measure the impact of enrichment activities on attendance levels?
5. What additional support is needed to ensure sustained attendance improvements?

For children to attend school they need to feel safe and valued, transformational changes in schools and was picked up during this week's Ofsted inspection, strong Attendance Policy which sets out the expectation and responsibility for teachers who can have the greatest effect on pupils. School Bonding Survey carried out, using Trauma Informed questions, results were transformative for schools as they didn't know pupils felt this way and were able to address these areas.

Attendance has increased by 4% but PA has halved.

ND attendance is 89.4%, last year was 84%. PA is too high and SEND needs are not being met, picked up in Ofsted inspection. Improvement in attendance is as a result of the cultural change and the relational approach; adults have to change before students can.



SBC cultural shift has been over a longer period of time, brotherhood of SBC, above city average and almost in line with national averages. Boys feel welcome, valued, safe and that school is worthwhile.

A diverse group of schools which has a huge variance in attendance. More schools in line or above national than did last year. Individual schools that are failing are not following policy and are being challenged by the SIO Team.

P7 of CEO report to update to Minervia not Minerva and to include Portsmouth.

CEO report  
to be  
updated on  
P7

## 10. Estates Strategy

### PS arrived at 12.16pm.

Q. The size of the potential liability identified arising from the condition surveys etc and comments from the Lead Director for Estates in para 2 of the Annual Report reflect an urgent need for strategic review in this area to avoid unacceptable risk. How/when is it proposed this be initiated?

First annual Estates Report. Credit is largely due to PS.

SH as Estates Lead Director. Cannot underestimate the costs faced by the Trust. Strategy is set by the Board. Trust duty is to provide Catholic education and that includes the estate. Need to look at whether there should be an Estates Committee. PS and RCF outstanding work.

PS provided the headlines:

Leader in estates management. Last three years - reduction in carbon footprint and electricity costs. Credit to schools.

LED lighting. Not alone, this is a national problem, an aged estate with problems that need addressing. Have won £1m of funding, will talk to DfE over funding challenges, Diocese have a key stake in this.

Estates RIsK Register. Need to consider the potential loss of a building or partial loss.

PS is appreciative and thankful for the work of the schools.

RO thanked PS for his report, the dashboard was positive. Gives reassurance to the Trust.

Q. Condition survey of the 6 schools, how does that compare to the previous surveys which have driven decisions to date? What is the survey, a more granular focus, issues identified are worse and material costs have increased significantly, highlighted new additions, worsening issues, and inflation on costs.

Q. Some items picked up are the same and have got worse? Yes, but also some new areas. SEA funding only relates to compliance to fix issues, spending £928 000, DfE funding formula is wrong and should be challenged.

Discussed at the AGM, a national issue as £20 billion nationally, same as the SEND conversation, Government funded organisation and doesn't have the money to give to us, a CAST issue but a national issue, needs support from Diocese and Government.

The Board discussed options. Need to present to the Diocese. ZB confirmed there is a partnership group working with the Diocese, have a strategic estates meeting every quarter to focus on these issues. The Board made a resolution previously and decisions were taken regarding how to go forward.



Q. Now have a report that identifies £30m, suggest an Estates Committee to look at the strategy of provision of Catholic education going forward, it isn't enough and should be presenting to the Diocese. Not just a decision for this Board, not just for the Diocese, any school closure decisions are made by the LA not the Board or the Diocese. An Estates Committee is a duplication of work.

A recommendation by the Board or Diocese, the LA can overrule. Bishop responsibility regarding the Catholic places. RISE Teams emphasis on local based places. Not going to allow SELT to duplicate work.

Q. RCF work identifies the risk and the balance, have already agreed that any recommendations would be made at Board level, not for a sub-committee to address. Reporting for Estates has been tightened up and comprehensive, don't want work to be duplicated.

Q. Will this report be on the agenda of the conversation with the Diocese? All condition surveys are shared with the Head of Property Services. Reporting process between the Trust and the Diocese and this report would be part of that.

Q. Sensitive work and conversations will form discussions with LA, cannot force a school to stay open in deficit. ZB and HB confirmed the LA can.

In RD meetings it was discussed that places are in the LA area but are not interested in the estates, care about Ofsted, attendance, Safeguarding, admissions and outcomes.

Significant resource challenges identified, strategic conversations will continue, the Trust is trying to be creative to seek external grant funding where possible, investment strategy and savings to be reinvested in estates, relaxation under ATH around operating lease models, and a cultural shift in behaviour across the Trust which will be key to sustainability, stewardship, celebrate the strides taking forward.

Q. Don't want to duplicate work, interests are not aligned, need to focus on our interests, would be interested to see the MOU, who owns the other two sites, what governs the occupation? MOU to be shared with JA.

**PS left at 12.46**

## 8. Articles of Association

Briefing notes for Articles of Association – Point 4, last line "they mat service" needs amending.

i) The current articles as filed are the 2021 version noted as filed in Aug 2023 - I assume the concern is that a resolution approving those cannot be evidenced. That is an issue for a corporate lawyer and may be capable of being resolved e.g. by a confirmatory resolution assuming we wish those to be in place until a new version is finalised

ii) I assume it is proposed to pause the current review of the articles while there is consideration of joint schools joining CAST - is that right?

iii) I can see why the structure proposed by Rose has been proposed and might be used but I think it needs proper consideration - it does e.g. give Exeter and Salisbury Dioceses out-sized voting rights.

iv) The objects of CAST and those parts relating to the conduct of the academies may need to be revised depending on the expectations of all parties in the management of joint schools

v) It would be useful to see the contractual documents governing the current management of the schools with reference to iv above

Briefing note in the pack. Now using a specialised legal firm, PHP Law which has a long and established career working with Catholic and Anglican churches. Based in Exeter and Ivybridge so understand the local context.

Board hasn't recognised the 2021 Articles as can't evidence a special resolution was passed.

Review being paused, being reconsidered to ensure Articles includes the possibility for joint faith schools to join the Trust which was the position in the 2013 Articles.

Structure. When the Bishop is appointed will have 5 Catholic Members, one CofE would be Exeter, one Bishop for Salisbury. Anglican Diocese would need a Member but Catholic majority requirement would remain at Member and Board level.

Q. Can see why this would be offered, may become vital in the future but need to have our eyes open and voting majority may fall to someone from Salisbury.

Q. Don't know what the structure will be until had the conversations with the relevant Dioceses, cautious that it would delay the process and may have to amend in the future? Have to propose something, have to propose at least one Member and Director.

Q. Need to propose now? Need a starting point and without it would look like it hasn't been considered.

The Bishop needs to approve.

Q. Know what the amendment wants to be in the future, can you amend your Articles? Yes, don't know the picture down the line, can amend in the future.

Q. If a structure in place, if schools join that is the structure they join, can lead to a conversation that may not be positive, joint schools will mean the objects have to be changed which make provision for Catholic schools and in line with Canon Law so would have to be reviewed. Objects as 2013, which make provision for joint faith schools.

Another driver is to achieve compliance on the model articles with the CES and DfE model articles. Need to be updated to comply with the latest version.

Q. Without an updated compliant set of Articles that makes provision for Anglican representatives at Member and Director level the conversations can't go ahead? Yes, the potential for them to join as per 2013 is there, to update and not include seems disrespectful, 2013 are not compliant, writing schools/representatives out seems disrespectful. HB highlighted that an upset could be caused if changes are made without discussion.

Q. Member role is a corporate role, wouldn't expect the Bishop to attend and would delegate that to the Head of Education? Common in CofE, cannot progress without a Bishop but can have it ready.

ZB to liaise on contractual documents

Q. Contractual documents of management of two joint faith schools? ZB will take this forward.

Next steps - PHP Law has the latest proposed revision to 2013 to bring compliance to 2019 model. Look at the objects, the membership requirements, bring to May Board a revised proposal for further consideration by Directors. Members appeared to be supportive at the AGM, clear that approval would require a Bishop to continue interregnum. Share with Members for information and comment. Through lawyers seek permission from the DfE to approve, then provide to the Members along with a paper.

Q. Minimum of 2 PG on LCB includes vacant positions? Yes.

**Meeting paused at 1.05pm**  
**Meeting reconvened at 1.32pm**

**9. Admissions Policy**

Thanks to the Directors for responding. Policies have been determined. Ensuring all policies are uploaded by deadline of 15th March.

**11. Safeguarding Report**

RO thanked KB for the report, the format is informative and helpful. KB provided an update to the Board.

NJ highlighted the behaviour in school at a recent Mass and how positive it was.

Q. Is there a systemic problem that took so long for concerns to be raised? KB outlined the reasons for the delay.

Q. Is it worth flagging nationally as a concern? No central records for Safeguarding.

Q. Is the DBS the national database? DBS is high level concerns or criminal convictions, debarring would be considered if a member of staff was sacked.

7 inspections confirm Safeguarding is strong.

SG reviews - Ctk, OLSP, St Pauls, St Peter's, St Mary's, Bodmin. All effective apart from one and concerns are being followed up through SIO. A reactive review due to cultural concerns.

To carry out - Buckfast, Holy Cross, Keyham Barton, Priory and SMC, St J Poole, Dorchester, Marnhull, and Swanage.

Capacity is an issue. LP carries out all reviews as Trust Safeguarding Officer. Increasingly using DSLs from other schools, to add capacity and professional development for DSLs.

Safeguarding self-reviews introduced by enhancing the SG3 form which now mirrors the bulk of the SG review process. KB and LP are meeting next month to pull out areas of detail.

DSL Forum across the Trust every term. Bringing all DSLs together to bring all together, external speakers, looking at barriers to reporting, serious case review, Suicide Prevention Policy will be introduced. Alex and Deborah from Caritas to speak regarding migrant families and the risk of labour abuse/modern slavery.

Q. Any problems with LAs having complex systems or more complex? Yes, across SEND and Safeguarding. A huge variance in the quality of different LADOs. Have the most contact with Dorset but good relations, least contact with Cornwall but is positive.

**12. RE and Catholic Life**

HB report provided. RO thanked HB for her report. No questions were raised.

**13. Finance and Resources.**

AN drew out the key points for the Board, using his usual format.

### 13.1 Management Accounts to December 2024

KMB report provided.

Q. The much greater than anticipated ESFA income £750k for the year is good news. Will this give us the opportunity to review some of the school budgets. An example might be St. Joseph's Newton Abbot which needs to grow but having been reduced to 3 classes leaves almost no room to grow? Can't be reinvested, funding is offsetting the bulk of the teachers' pay award. When set the budget set 3% and the award was 5.5% but was funded through the ESFA.

### 13.2 Mid Year Budget Review

KMB report provided.

8 schools are forecasting an in-year financial deficit. 2 schools that weren't expecting a deficit but should be turned around. Leaves 6 schools

Q. Pay costs? In terms of supply and will help to be addressed by the Supply Register.

## 14. Audit and Risk

### 14.1 Update from Chair of A&R

Minutes from the last meeting and GB's report. GB thanked NJ for chairing the A&R meeting.

GB highlighted the delay in receiving the audit plan. KMB confirmed there was a meeting planned for last week, but he was on A/L. A further meeting is being arranged. Discussions around which schools to audit. Still waiting for the timescales and the plan for the next three years.

Directors expressed their disappointment at this lack of progress.

Q. Has it been escalated with the auditors? KMB confirmed it has. RO asked KMB to make further contact.

GB highlighted the difficulty in relating the Goals to the impact statement.

KMB to make further contact with auditors

### 14.2 SRMSAT

An annual ESFA requirement. A&R Committee has approved the return. RCF will submit by the deadline.

RCF to submit

### 14.3 Risk Register Review

Reported to A&R Committee in full. F&R Committee reviewed their areas. Only changes to wording.

GB has discussed with RCF the risks around Estates.

## 15. Education and Standards

### 15.1 Update from Chair of E&S

Chair of E&S shared the impact statement was not easy to use.

Monitoring and TWN schools. Only one school that received a TWN. Strong progress in SBC, St Catherine's, and St Joseph's. SMSJ, Wool focussed action plans in place.

KB provided an overview of the priority schools listed on SA's report. Only one school is considered inadequate.

Q. 10728 safeguarding concerns, what are you counting? Entries onto the system, one per child or 3.8 per school day.

Q. Different Chairs' reports, how do SELT feel? Needs a degree of consistency, Board needs to be able to demonstrate monitoring. Harder to match the 9 Goals. The impact statement template came from the NGA. Important to be consistent, showing impact, and linking to the Goals.

Q. Strategy discussions developed enough to have an impact on pupils? The environment impacts on pupils, no impact on discussions.

## **16. Trust Board Governance Update**

### **16.1 Link Reports**

Include CSI grade on the template.

Q. How are CAST viewed by the schools? It is a complex relationship, varies across the Trust, exceptionally poor previously, work hard and successfully with HTs and LCBs, strong culture and moving forward together, one family of schools.

RO highlighted the 10-year celebrations.

LP to include CSI grade on template

### **16.2 Lead Reports**

To May meeting.

Lead reports to May

### **16.3 Link Director Protocol and Terms of Reference**

Updated the Protocol, Directors and schools have had challenges understanding the role

The Link Director role is about the connection between Board governance and school level governance and not to hold HTs to account, that is the role of the SIO Team. Challenging the Chair over good governance and to ensure consistency.

Governance is evidenced through Link Director reports, Chairs' Forums, LCB Reviews, HT feedback. Important for the Protocol to reflect the role.

Wanted to streamline, in person visit in autumn term, online LCB meeting once, one strategic meeting with the Chair.

Q. Paragraph 3 - Remit is repeated. Key parts that we wanted to replicate but can address. May look like an error to an external viewer.

Review Paragraph 3

LP to advise Link Directors when the Chair changes and update the spreadsheet on GovernorHub.

LP to add action detail to summary

Link Director summary - action points - no indication on who is following up on actions. Link Directors to include who is taking an action forward and LP to add this detail to the summary.

Oversight/fulfil responsibilities to the Bishop's vision - include at the top. Approved.

Protocol to be updated

### **16.4 Attendance Lead Director**

Should be a Lead role?

Q. Is this covered by SA as Chair of E&S.

Q. How deliver this? Through meetings and discussions, monitoring.

Q. Feel more comfortable if had one? Focus in E&S Committee meetings.

The attentiveness of the Board, RISE priority. E&S meetings have been doubled so do address as a Board priority, should be someone from E&S. The Board needs to have a named person, a priority. Ask E&S to discuss and decide.

E&S  
Committee  
to discuss  
and appoint  
a Lead  
Director for  
Attendance

## 17. Policies

### 17.1 Curriculum Policy

Amendment to wording. Reference to the RED on P4. include Years 7, 8 and 9. Approved.

Policy  
approved

### 17.2 Unreasonable Behaviour Policy.

Empty bullet points in Section 3, tracked changes.

RCF to  
update

Less immediate threats on P5 - letter written and 5 working days to respond. Following written response or in the absence of. RCF to update.

Policy  
approved

### 17.3 Financial Procedures.

Take to F&R Committee.

Policy to  
F&R  
Committee

## 18. Close of Meeting

RO thanked all for attending.

**Meeting closed at 3.01pm**

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

Day	Meeting	Date	Start Time	Location
Friday	Board Meeting	16th May 2025	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth
Friday	Board Strategy Day	13th June 2025	9.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth
Friday	Board Meeting	18th July 2025	10.30am	CAST Office, Plymouth