

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 18th October 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
	John Cosgrove (JC)	-	Foundation Director
	Alison Nettleship (ALN)	-	Co-opted 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)	-	Director of Education
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk

**ICFP Presentation**

KMB delivered his presentation to the Board. Slides will be added to GovernorHub.

**1. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

RO welcomed all to the meeting.

All introduced themselves for the benefit of JC.

**2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum**

PM. Quorum met.

JC was welcomed to the meeting and appointed to the Board. RO invited JC to join the E&S Committee.

**3. Declaration of Interest**

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

**4. Minutes of previous meeting 11.09.2024**

Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**5. Action Summary – September 2024**

Updated on the Actions Summary.

24.02 HB confirmed permission from the Diocese to remain in post for a further 12 months. RO offered thanks to SA and HB on behalf of the Diocese.

**Decision/  
Action**

Minutes  
11.09.24  
approved

23.58 Meeting date agreed with NJ and JF, support for new HTs, attended a Deanery meeting and liaised with a parish priest, HB hoping to attend all Deanery meetings. December 2024 slip date. Arrival of a new Bishop will support this.

23.52 Discussed at SELT, no easy way to ascertain data. FSM take up and some PP data. Take to E&S but complete as Board action.

23.46 Completed. KMB will move to the October Board meeting folder.

23.44 HB to follow up. December 2024 slip date.

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

- **Contact Information**

On GovernorHub for Directors to access.

- **PM update**

Agreed sabbatical for six months due to work commitments. RO to contact in the new year.

Q. New SG Director? ALN has taken the role. RO thanked ALN.

- **New Directors**

JC present today. RO has met with two potential Directors. Still require someone with experience of secondary education. New year advert to be shared with parishes for their newsletters. GB will share his network of contacts with RO/ZB.

Q. Foundation? Could be co-opted if have the right skills and the right ethos.

- **OLSP and St Mary's Marnhull. Extend age range - extend nursery to include 2 year olds.**

Exploratory piece, have school-run nurseries, accept 2-year olds, subject to financial viability modelling, SIO support in principle.

OLSP working with EY Advisor who has expressed support, only school that doesn't take 2-year olds.

Marnhull meeting with LA Advisor in November to explore capacity.

To extend the age range would require a significant change process with the ESFA so seeking Board approval subject to financial viability. HB confirmed the Diocese would support, in principle.

Q. DfE funding available? Yes, a good time to do this.

The Board approved this exploratory work, subject to financial viability.

## 7. CEO Update

TWN update. Process nationally has changed. RD Team have discussed with ZB. TWN for SBC no longer exists and will be removed from DfE website. No other TWNs are in scope.

Board approved the potential to increase the age range at OLSP and Marnhull

ESFA from January 2025 will be operating as a combined team. Awaiting the new powers and the relationships with Trusts and their Boards. Monitoring schedule has been pushed back to three-monthly. There will be a focus on vulnerable schools but details are currently unknown.

Q. CST briefing this week discussed Government control over Trusts? Monitoring of Trusts through RD Teams, ESFA, and auditors. Consider MAT level reviews to be brought in, dip testing Ofsted scrutiny of schools, removal of single word judgements from Ofsted but receives grades in five areas of focus, from September 2025 moving to a scorecard system but thought will still cover the five areas of judgement, deep dives removed and focus on classroom practice but inspection doesn't feel any different.

ALN confirmed that back to back inspections are happening, a focus of all schools within a Trust.

Q. With regards to the removal of the TWN, making progress, how far away from the RI scale? No overall grade, current grade would be RI but another year to shift to Good, attendance in line with city average and close to national, GCSE outcomes are low but everything is aligning, suspensions have been reducing. May not be the same pattern of monitoring but the level of scrutiny will remain. An improving picture.

The Board discussed the time required for school improvement and the effect on pupils. KB confirmed the amount of repair required has taken longer, but areas are aligning, a positive outlook. Current leadership structures are only in place for one year. The additional resource provided to the school is an ongoing commitment from the Board.

LP to share document on GHub

Governance reporting template in the CEO report. LP will share the document on GovernorHub. Following governance review, streamlining reports, the template will give Committee Chairs the template to capture the details of each meeting.

Directors to review the new template and provide feedback to ZB.

Directors discussed how the template would work for various Committees. Want to work consistently, ZB will review based on feedback received from Directors.

Q. Directors should be reading the Committee meeting minutes, the summary would repeat the minutes? Helpful to draw out the key points from the meeting and show evidence of Board impact on decision making and its subsequent impact on children. Also linked to the Board's Strategic Goals.

Q. Purpose of the template to report to Directors, or report activity for inspection? Will do both, how do we evidence the work, how to draw out the key challenges and the impact of the meeting, relating back to the children.

Q. Ensuring items are brought to the attention of the Board? Highlighted in the governance review, ensuring best practice and streamlining.

Q. At the end of the meeting, minutes contain the reflection on the impact on pupils and against the Trust Strategic Goals.

Review governance template at December meeting

Q. Submitting questions evidences that papers have been read, demonstrating understanding, every Director should read and question everything, a clear picture? The role of the Board is not to redo the work of the Committee meetings. Bring back to the December Board meeting.

Role of the Link Director. Working with the Chair of the LCB to ensure quality of governance, must ensure it doesn't become operational, LCB reviews are highlighting the link and oversight of the Board.

LP to add LCB review to GovHub for Directors to access.

Q. When is that activity being completed? Rolling program and all completed by the end of this academic year. LP to add the audit template to GovernorHub.

Teacher turnover rates and comparative data. Cumulative data would be broadly in line national. This was useful data for Directors.

Q. PAN reductions, where is the discretion to oversubscribe, at what level? Plymouth CAST is the admissions authority, in line with policy, numbers would be delegated to SELT and HT to review the school position and structures, a dynamic management conversation. In KS1 classes can't go above 30, a local determination and SIO.

Q. A parent can appeal and go above PAN, need to set up a process for all schools or carried out locally with Governors? The LA runs the appeals process, and the school would present the case.

CSI - HB highlighted that Sacred Heart was outstanding. KB reads the reports and schools are doing well, supported well by the Diocese with focussed work, pleased with the success.

In the SW, new CSI framework with two outstanding inspections, a rigorous process. First target of HT is linked to Catholic mission along with preparation for CSI inspection.

KB provided an overview of inspections, leadership updates, the decline in pupil numbers and the loss of income. The Board discussed the challenges faced by schools that are below PAN.

KMB confirmed the year-end process is ongoing.

## 8. Review of SEF and One Year Operational Plan

Under the TSGs, the operational plan drives the work, looking to constantly improve, link key priority areas to funding streams, priorities the areas that teams are working on and are realistic.

Q. Board training is mentioned, dates identified? RO and LP will review Director training.

## 9. Articles of Association

Some legal aspects to check, need to seek more specialised legal advice. Bring back to the Board in December 2024.

Q. Seeking specialist advice from who? PHP.

Q. An understanding of canonical law? Yes.

Q. Where based? Ivybridge and one up north. JA suggested an alternative, if required.

## 13. Finance and Resources

### • Committee Update

Minutes are in the pack. AN voted in as Chair, JA voted in as Vice-Chair.

Key issues - year end forecast surplus is slightly higher, approx £800 000 but subject to year end adjustments. Capital expenditure budget will be reviewed in November once the year end is finalised. MFD tender outcome was approved subject to finalisation of due-diligence checks, will give efficiencies and save money.

### • Terms of Reference (ToR)

Approved by the Board.

### • Management Accounts to August

RO and LP  
to Review  
Director  
training

Articles  
update to  
December  
Board

F&R ToR  
approved

Accounts are to be audited, uploaded to auditors on Tuesday, will be on-site for two weeks from 28th October, may have year-end adjustments. Waiting for pension fund and deficit currently.

23/24 financial year. F&R given school level data, £2.6m more income than planning, due to additional EHCPs, funding for nursery places, additional income for Teachers Pension Employers Grant but has been paid to the pension scheme, income for catering and trips. Off-set against expenditure and required resource including teaching assistants, and supply costs which is an ongoing focus.

Q. Teachers' budget line is paid, why is supply so high? Two areas - supply line is for all supply (teachers and TAs), had 38 vacancies and were unable to recruit but needed the posts filled so had to use supply.

Q. Why not in the teaching staff line? In-year movement, set the budget for teaching requirements.

Q. After setting the budget have approved an extra 38 teacher posts? Responses to changes.

Discussed at F&R, AN has asked KMB to separate out the supply costs.

Q. Why £900 000 not in the top line, budget monitoring will show changes from the budget that was set in July, but things change. To be discussed at F&R in November.

Q. TPS increase in employers' rate, funded indefinitely? Budget setting process figure is an assumed figure, but we never assume it will be funded, always try to be prudent, anticipating 3%, have to use 5.5% but is being funded.

Pay awards are paid as a separate grant for one year and then goes into the GAG, won't assume that any further pay awards will be funded.

Q. Same assumption for TPS? Yes.

## **10. Safeguarding**

Started the year with a letter of assurance for the DfE for two schools. No further action required.

Managing allegations against staff - 1 referral to LADO which didn't meet threshold, investigations were carried out.

One senior leader is subject to a process, not suspended but off with ill-health. LADO process triggered but due to home context, potential transferable risk in school. Being managed by KB and HR Team.

Q. Any reputational risk? Yes, but not pertaining to own behaviour.

Historical cases remain live. Managing difficult situation.

Q. Using the capability of the Diocese Safeguarding Team? KB gave thanks for the suggestion.

KB updated the Board on the current Safeguarding position across the Trust and provided assurance to the Board that any concerns are being responded to and dealt with.

Q. Support and resource for KB to deal with? Team that works on Safeguarding, looking at compliance areas.

Q. Duty of care? Always meet that expectation.

**Meeting paused at 12.58pm.**

**AN left the meeting at 1pm.**

**Meeting reconvened at 1.22pm**

## 11. RE and Catholic Life

New documents have been shared with RO and ZB for their review, prior to seeking Bishop approval.

Seek Ye First course is on theology to understand the RE curriculum. Good attendance.

Directors are invited to attend all sessions.

## 12. Education and Standards

- **Committee Update**

Results were disappointing but if we remove five lowest schools' data is closer to national. Struggling financially, large number of primary schools, large geographical area, declining pupil numbers. Need to change in a substantial way. Income in future years is lower than expenditure. Should be discussing the structure of the Trust.

Strategic meetings have been held with the Diocese, awaiting the Bishop, must chime with the Bishop's vision, need to regroup with the Diocese. This is an ongoing piece of work for SELT.

The SI focus can always improve, and staff will be supported to improve. Five schools have had a negative impact on the data, reasons for the outcomes and being addressed, by removing those five schools are in line with national, but a lot to be done.

Directors highlighted the amount of data; HB thanked the SIO Team for their support with CSI inspections.

- **Terms of Reference**

ToR approved by the Board.

ToR  
approved

## 14. Audit and Risk

- **Committee Update incl minutes 27.09.2024**

Key items. GB - Chair and SH as V-C. Minutes show that pensions are in hand. [SSS BMV to be added to the Risk Register.](#)

- **Terms of Reference**

ToR approved by the Board.

ToR  
approved

- **Internal Auditor Appointment**

Internal Auditor Appointment. Going out to tender, A&R Committee interviewed 4 prospective firms. Discussion between two companies. £15 000 difference. Decision was made to continue the appointment of PKF.

Good presentations by both, big factor was the price difference. Letters will go out next week.

## **15. Annual Health and Safety Report**

### **PS joined the meeting 1.46pm**

H&S Lead Director comment on P4. Three areas to bring to the Board focus:

Violent behaviour on staff.  
Reporting timescales.  
Audit on off-site trips.

PS provided an overview of the Report.

VATB incidents have increased but carried out by a small number of pupils.

Q. Children identified as not being able to manage in mainstream education, what impact for our insurers and the Trust? Catholic mission drives us, we care for all children in our care, to meet their needs should ideally be in a specialist provision.

Q. Two children identified and shouldn't be in mainstream education? Linked to the language used. Need to be mindful of the Catholic mission and the Equalities Act.

Reporting requirements within 24 hours, incidences are being highlighted appropriately.

Q. Why say 24 hours if it's not happening? Risk management is taking place, the important cases are being reported.

Off-site visits, 17% are approved after the event. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being created including one for Evolve.

All schools achieved above 95% for DCC H&S audits.

The Board recognised the hard work and due diligence of all staff having improved the position.

The Board thanked PS for his report.

### **PS left at 2.05pm**

## **16 Governance Update**

- **Link Director Allocation**

Have tied the EHT schools together for the same Link Director.

- **Link Director Visit Reports**

To be carried out.

- **Lead Director Reports**

Statutory Grants report. Decline in PP attainment. Lot of work done in Maths which is now showing. Decline in PP at SBC which is disappointing.

## 17 Policies

- **Equal Opportunities**

Reviewed by SELT and JCC. Approved.

- **Recruitment Policy and Procedure**

Reviewed by SELT and JCC. Approved.

- **Unreasonable Behaviour Policy**

New proposed policy, a rise in unacceptable behaviour in schools, want to protect our staff, in line with the revision of the Complaints Policy, benefit of having a standalone policy.

Q. Thought related to pupil behaviour, but is linked to the Complaints Policy, have a pupil policy? Yes, behaviour policies in place.

Q. Vexatious complaints policy was the next step up from the complaints policy, if being unreasonable would then be vexatious.

Q. Going beyond the process, have to draw the line and have done everything possible. Clearly spells out that if this continues cannot have you on site.

The policy shouldn't sit at school level, is the DoE on behalf of the Board.

Remove reference to appeals.

RCF to make suggested changes and bring to the Board in December, along with the Complaints Policy.

As a Catholic Trust we do extra for children, have to love the pupils to be able to turn the behaviour around, children in our care.

- **Finance Policy**

November F&R and December Board.

## 18 Admissions Update

2026/27 admission round. Working with HB and DCC. Had the recommendation to build in a further oversubscription point to give priority to local children. HB suggested using Deanery boundaries and is seeking the maps.

Q. TDA maintenance is back to Torbay Council, do we have a way forward? In contract until March 2026, novated back to Torbay Council, would have to re-tender at that point, need to agree specification to consider ongoing delivery standards, seek assurance on contract commitment, do recognise that it may not be able to replicate the current offer so may need to look different.

## 16 Close of Meeting

RO thanked all for attending.

**Meeting closed at 2.25pm**

Equal Opps Policy approved

Recruitment Policy approved

RCF to update the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

November F&R, December Board



**Future Board Meeting Dates**

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

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
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