

Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 17th May 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
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

Helen Brown (HB) - DSC Leah Paiano (LP) - Clerk

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

RO welcomed and led with a prayer.

2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

GB and PM. 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 meeting of 08.03.2024

Minutes of 08.03.2024 approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Minutes 08.03.24 approved

Decision /Action

4.2 Action Summary – March 2024

Updated on the Actions Summary.

- 23.32 HB confirmed Diocese needs to reach out to Deaneries to outline the support as the DES, a piece of work to ensure clarity. NJ report confirms JF will speak to HTs and NJ will speak to Deans and update in July with an action plan.
- 23.29 DE has sought assurance regarding websites and warnings due to user's settings.
- 23.25 Take to the Board Strategy Day.
- 23.17 KB provided an update on a transgender child and the legal requirements. Need to consider Admissions Policy. School leaders and the Trust were unaware.
- Q. Biological sex included in Admissions? Guidance from the CES and in line with the Teaching of the Catholic Church. Further work to be done. An ongoing action.
- Q. Retrospectively look compassionately but treat by exception? The legal position doesn't allow for that. KB's recommendation is that the child continues in the school.



Q. Why not being protected if move to another school? Identifies as a girl. KB asked the HoS to investigate and it has happened before.

ALN identified the difficult legal position. Directors recognised the difficulty of the situation and KB will manage this situation and update the Board as necessary.

Q. Previous child still in school? Yes.

KB has had assurance there are no transgender students for September.

HB will continue working with RCF, KB and Canon Mark, and the CES.

5. Chair's Business

Changes to today's meeting. Work required for the RD, discussion will be from today's meeting. Small group to meet following this meeting will be to decide on documentation for the RD.

Articles of Association.

RO thanked the Directors for their questions.

Q. Thanks to Rose for a clear explanation and summary of changes. Of the two significant changes to the 2021 version I agree with reintroduction of Executive Directors under 46c and 50b but not sure why Academy Directors have been reintroduced under 1d and 46d since appointment of Academy Directors under 51 and 52 is not used? RCF and AN to liaise on 2021 changes and RCF will seek legal advice.

RCF to update at Strategy Day

- Q. Go to Members for their sign off? Yes, for approval of changes.
- Q. Update at the Strategy Day? Potentially but depends on solicitors. RCF will update.
 - New Director

John Andrews will be an excellent appointment. HB and Canon Mark have confirmed the Board can ratify his appointment. Practising member of the Wimborne Parish. Solicitor since 1980. RO provided a synopsis of his CV. Positive interview with him.

JA to be invited to F&R

The Board approved his appointment. AN requested John is invited to F&R meetings.

Director Access to Paperwork

GB has access in his capacity as Chair of Audit and Risk. SH has access to E&S...

Concerned that this will increase work for SELT if Directors have access. RO proposed questions should be submitted to the Chair of each Committee for their response, and not SELT.

LP to update Director access

AN wouldn't expect a raft of questions, there for information only but questions should only be raised by exception. RO agreed with this, the work of the Committees.

NJ suggested a review within one year, to assess the impact. LP to provide access.



6. CEO Update

Q. The statistics are interesting and describe a difficult situation. Can you explain what is the cause of the reduced spending across the country in schools? Is it rising costs, falling rolls, reduced funding from government and local authorities and if it is a combination, where is the worst pressure?

KMB is happy to discuss in detail, all the above is impacting the finances. GAG funding, PP, UIFSM equates to 86% and went up to 2.3%, increasing by 1.9% from September. Sports Premium not increasing. Pay awards for teachers 6.5%, 8% for support staff, inflation 10.1% but coming down slowly. Falling rolls have been discussed, sector wide issue. Average primary pupil generates £5000 approximately.

Dedicated schools grant - Dorset £24.6m deficit, Torbay £12.8m, Plymouth £19.1m, Cornwall £11.7m, Devon £48.5m, BCP £92m all by end of 24/25. BCP was consulting with schools to see if schools and Trusts would delegate money back to their budget. SEND funding is the biggest issue.

Lack of funding on a per pupil basis is the biggest pressure. Drop in pupil numbers should be dealt with internally.

Q. Where we have falling rolls, especially in two form entry schools, would it be better to manage our availability down to one form entry, thereby accommodating potential diminishing demographic need and improving the school by placing demand higher than supply? (Relevant also to CFO report on census) Have explored previously in schools, reduction in PAN, have to work closely with LA and Diocese to ensure Catholic places, LAs don't like reduction in PAN to keep the capacity should things change. Always keep it under review and SELT consider schools and the PAN.

Nationally we know what is happening, 13% by 2028, LAs will need to accept that schools will have to change their PAN. Inclusive schools led by the Catholic mission, significant pressures around SEND and additional need.

Breathe in, breathe out policy in the city due to being a naval city, a lot of movement. Not as clear cut as reducing PAN, a strategic conversation with the LAs.

- Q. In the review of Ofsted, was any scrutiny undertaken of social media sites where parents freely converse about schools? If they didn't do this, how did they plan to take into consideration the views of parents? (I realise you may only be able to speculate here). Inspection handbook mandates a search of social media sites but will be treated cautiously. Parent View at each inspection for parents to respond to and is taken seriously. Anyone can respond if they have the link.
- Q. Were parents consulted in the review of Ofsted? Taken as a review by the Education Select Committee. Ofsted was asked to reconsider the single work judgements but refused. Parents can contribute to the Big Listen as can anyone else but it is complicated, time consuming, and the questions do not allow for a negative answer, and has accessibility issues.
- Q. Have we submitted evidence on the lag among boys? Is the significant minority of male role models at school and now, often at home a contributory factor? What are we doing about it? Studies over a long period of time, boys perform less well than girls, need to understand why, girls mature faster, teacher bias towards girls, antischool subcultures that boys are drawn into, access to languages and the difference in the ways boys and girls learn.

A benefit in having single sex schools. Project introduced in SBC called Taking Boys Seriously. The improvement project at SBC and feeds into the TWN report, MA is



working with another school - attitudes of staff, aspirations of staff and students, focus on attendance, staff mentors to work with identified boys and set up as teams, in a competition, relational aspects of children being valued and to feel safe.

School Bonding Survey, based on Trauma Informed, is being completed by every pupil and student in the Trust on how they feel in their schools. Working with DfE Attendance Advisor, need to identify barriers, PA action plans are mandatory in the Trust so teachers will sit with parents to mitigate the barriers.

Q. Do we know if there is a detrimental effect to applications for school places when a TWN is in place? Limited statistical evidence on impact of TWNs on school applications.

As previously reported, for SBC the Year 7 admissions applications for September 2024 for a PAN of 80 had:

71 – first place applications

33 – second place applications

24 – third place applications.

Can add to the list of ongoing Board actions to track this information.

TWN is about the Trust and not school. The Ofsted report is about the school.

Q. Will the 10th anniversary celebrations include a Mass or Masses? P7 in the CEO report details the plans and Director invitations.

Q. Recruitment - it is impressive to have three of four HT posts filled for the coming year. Where we haven't appointed a Catholic, did we have no RC applicants or none that proved suitable? High calibre people, three practising Catholics, one committed Christian who is open to exploring his faith further. HB and Canon Mark included. Committed to Catholic leadership and having the best people to lead our schools.

HB confirmed the Diocese is involved in the recruitment process from shortlisting onwards.

Q. When capital works are deferred, is there any indication of how long this will be? Is it unusual to turn capital funding into revenue funding? It has always been revenue funding but being used for capital purposes but switching back. DFC and Schools Conditional Grant £1.1m can only be used for capital purposes.

PS has a plan for next financial year which KMB thinks will change based on the earlier points discussed. Need to have a firm idea of the finances. Considered more in depth at the end of the financial year.

AN confirmed this was designed for the Salix bids which have been unsuccessful and moved into school improvement. Will be considered in terms of H&S and Estates.

Q. Staffing Consultations - Where other costs are being sought for reduction to defend front line teaching, what utilities and services are bought centrally, or could be to maximise effective use of funding? Where part posts are being considered, have we done any work with local parishes, who have historically come to the aid of schools, in fact, in most cases, built the schools? All costs are reviewed before staffing consultations are considered, produce various budget scenarios, finding it difficult to reduce cost of TAs due to the increase in EHCPs, teachers are linked to classes and pupil numbers.

12% of costs are fixed such as rates and the Apprenticeship Levy.

Track
admissio
n
applicatio
ns for
TWN
24/25



Don't officially GAG pool, try to consolidate contracts such as utilities, and Power Maths. Looking to make savings on broadband, IT and photocopier contracts across the Trust.

- Q. LCBs in the case of Wool, with no LCB in place, what action is being taken to establish a new Board to replace the IAB? KB recommends the IAB at Wool continues, need to show the Board oversight and this will be supported with a small focussed IAB.
- Q. Two-week autumn half term is it possible to simply take a week from the summer break and add to the autumn break? Given the lack of reliable evidence, is it possible to pilot the idea to develop some robust findings? Should we make a link with a research body (University Dept of Education) to ensure valid measurement? (I realise this is in the questions for discussion within the report) Schools are having discussions on this already, Trusts have revised the working week to reduce Friday afternoons for teachers to have PPA but under pressure for this, secondary schools are moving to two weeks for the October half term. The impact on staff of moving a week and their own children, consider extending the school day, consider the hub structure and may be a change too far.

KB felt taking a week from the summer is too contentious, adding 10 minutes to the school day doesn't replace a week's schooling, not sensible under current scrutiny. Sensible to bring the 5 training days together, not a great deal of research and is inconclusive. 6th Form at ND but children impacted through the Consortium with Devonport High Schools, missing hours of teaching if not aligned.

Q. Realistic to leave the Consortium? With predicted grades it may be that the Consortium changes.

Some primary schools have already taken this decision in the city, could potentially be the only provider in the city on the current model.

- Q. Impact on staff wellbeing, information/pressure from unions? Not as yet but will be a feature in the JCC meetings.
- Q. Do staff not have a say? Part of the process and has been outlined in the paper. The basis for the decision is for student outcome, attendance and welfare along with the staff needs, a body of evidence not just what staff would prefer. Starting point has to be the decision then the staff, parent, student, TU voice.

RO asked KB for his recommendation. Directly affects the future of the 6th Form if not aligning, lose 18 students and affect viability.

- Q. When do we have to decide? If looking at Autumn 2025, would need to consult from the second half of the summer term, go to parents and staff with a decision by early Autumn 2024.
- Q. If approve starting the consultation, bring back to July meeting? If starting and have all the information would be too tight, decision to proceed.
- Q. Consultation what are you consulting on, the intent? Consultation would be options two week half term in October, how the time is made up, where do we consult, SBC and ND or SBC, ND and Plymouth primaries, or all schools. Suggest ND and SBC and Plymouth primaries, then consider more widely at a later date.
- Q. 10 minutes on the school day as an option? Shouldn't be an option. KB's paper presented all options.

Board
approved
the
consultati
on of
Plymouth
schools,
update in
Autumn
term



The Directors approved consultation of schools in Plymouth, update in the Autumn term. KB and ZB to discuss with the RD at the next meeting.

Liaise with RD at next meeting

Q. What is NTP? National Tutoring Programme.

Q. How is the impact of the Marketing working party being monitored? Currently, it isn't being monitored. From September 2024, we can ask schools to supply COO with numbers of families attending tours / open days and compare the number of in-year admissions and applications for Reception and Year 7 places for September 2025 in comparison to recent previous year's numbers.

Website project in the last stages with only 4 schools to be completed. Providing updates to the Board, on the A&R tracker, PM is part of the Marketing Party.

- Q. Have been meeting with the Chairs of LCBs, discussing pupil numbers, wanting CAST help. SoDA responsibilities for marketing sits at school level, but children coming into the schools support the work of the Trust, HTs responsibility to report to the LCBs. Directors described different messages from their link schools on the responsibility for marketing. The Diocese and the Trust will support with marketing. The Trust has done a lot and have provided a marketing toolkit which is available on the Portal, the relational aspect brings children into the school. KB suggested highlighting this to HT at the next briefing.
- Q. Please can you explain the apparent conflict between the reports on Pupil numbers for St Joseph's Newton Abbot- The table shows a decline in numbers from 100 to 90 but the commentary states that the headcount for St Joseph's could be deemed as having a significant increase? Projecting a decrease to 83 pupils Autumn 2024 but expecting it to increase to 90 in September 2025. Significant percentage increase but not in pupil numbers themselves.
- Q. Potential move to two-week closure in October for ND and STB has there been any survey carried out with the teachers at these two schools. Discussed.
- Q. CEO report Governance can link directors have a copy of the governance review reports for their schools when they are sent to the Chair of LCB? A good idea.

7. Termination Warning Notice

TWN live for SBC.

RD Team had indicated monthly meetings but moving to a cycle of half-termly meetings. Have asked RD Team for the reporting required.

ZB provided an overview of the meeting to discuss and approve the SBC action plan and subsequent contact. Have to provide a Board view of leadership, capacity, and school improvement in the Trust. Meeting Friday 24th May.

Nationally there is a piece of work happening as second RI judgement, a policy paper to go to Ministers for approval to make it a Trust level process, possibly a pre-notice to improve. No confirmation that this paper has been approved. HB has liaised with the CES and, as it stands, cannot re-broker.

Q. Any mileage in bringing local MP into this? Not sure it would affect any change and could be a risk to the Trust.

HB meets regularly with the RD Team, and the potential policy is still being considered and not moved along.



The Board discussed the system and how a Trust could have outstanding and Good schools but be given a notice to improve on the basis of TWNs issued. School improvement is cyclical, the Trust needs to act promptly and appropriately.

Directors discussed the Ofsted judgement of a school and how the inspector noted the improvements, but the decision was RI.

- Q. Would there be sufficient evidence to mount a legal challenge? Have suggested maintaining a file for evidence.
- Q. The action plan of SBC is very good but is there a simpler way to produce the data? We have provided a RAG rating of the data, now have a guidance on the required reporting. Retaining the RAG rated data for Board oversight.
- Q. Review at E&S, the level of risk, do we have a regular Board item on our perception of risk, interrogate the Board on school improvement. At last E&S meeting agreed to have a separate meeting to discuss.
- Q. Does it need to be for Board scrutiny as potential for termination warning for the Board? Board agenda item and RAG rating the action plan, a collective focus at the Board to ensure that all are involved and considering all milestones.

HB highlighted that at each Ofsted feedback, inspectors are saying the Trust knows what is happening in schools.

Q. Need as a Board to submit an overview, go through and respond to those items? Trust overview - school improvement, leadership, and where there are risks.

Changes in schools from Inadequate/RI to Good and that is down to the Trust. A clear picture of school improvement as measured by Ofsted across the Trust.

Processes for how the Board monitors the work. The HeatMap is a key area of focus, Committees get the detail. RAG rated, can see process, has been refined to improve data.

Report from DoE details school improvement, concentrates on schools at risk and focus even before Ofsted, discusses SI work at those schools each term, reported to the Board by DoE and the Chair of E&S. This academic year have split the meetings to focus on academic outcomes, and attendance, Safeguarding and suspensions. Considering information on a multi-dimensional basis, including a future view of all schools, history, now, depth and future.

Financial change - protect education going forward. In F&R look at resource, and how to support school improvement.

Responsive to individual situations that arise - DoE report, SIO reports, Link Director visits. The Trust is responsive strategically, EY Reading, Maths, needs to be addressed strategically and holistically with the funding. Not just responding to the now, identifying trends. SF is part of this with SEND, Trauma informed.

PS reports on suitability to support education, to get pupils into schools and looking at their needs, H&S provision, providing the suitable environment for education. NA is the example of everything coming together.

A strong working collaborative relationship that has been built with the Diocese. An additional level of scrutiny.



External Review for Governance - leadership at Trust level, being open to external view, before the ERG had the STEP review, Tony Bloxom as SIO, Stewart Gale (ex-Ofsted), NPQ work, Ted Wragg.

HeatMap provides the Trust overview, clear evidence, how schools are performing over time, future projections, school level pages previously shared, the Board aggregated view and Committees to look at the depth. Link Director visits to triangulate the information.

Work with LCBs, new LCB reviews, better understanding of Trust's responsibilities.

Improvements in structures, effective leadership team. Capacity to evolve is important.

Leadership and reserves posts - recent successes. Respect for the process, collaboration and support of the Diocese. Structures in place in schools with EHT, collaboration with schools.

Risk Register and A&R Committee. Developed and is very helpful, RCF and Committee input. Advance warning to address areas.

Funding risks and external pressures beyond our control. Prudent financial decisions, proactive approach across all LA, looking at the projections going forward.

Schools previously advised to the Board - CtK, S Pauls, Keyham Barton. Thread around new leaders, school culture, SEND needs, staff absence, outcomes, what done to mitigate? Enhanced HR support, SBM support, DHT deployed to share leadership expertise, some out of our hands such as maternity. Know about them and working on them already. Vulnerable schools - resource is deployed to enhance school improvement, discussed at Feb E&S and reviewed.

Important to identify vulnerable schools and to provide evidence of what we have done and the impact of the team.

Leadership - appoint quality HTs in a marketplace that is bereft of applications, employer of choice, the culture of the Trust, links with Catholic faith, brings us together, makes us unique.

Succession planning, is that a risk? Discussed at the AGM, recent appointments have strengthened the Board, skills led.

Eco work to be included.

Meeting paused at 1.15pm Meeting reconvened at 1.39pm

8. Heat Map

- Q. Why does the Heat Map no longer show the individual school results as per the DEC23 version? Data presented aligns more closely with the previous style of heat map reporting. KMB has suggested a trend map for individual schools.
- Q. Recruitment to reserved posts is now stating 32 schools meet the std. in December only 22 schools met the std. Is this correct? Leadership standard has changed, all appointments are approved with the Diocese. The Bishop's Council still requires Catholic HTs but Canon Mark is open to the best Catholic leaders and then Christian leaders. Aspiration is to always appoint a Catholic leader.

Trend map for individual schools



9. Safeguarding

To discuss at the Board Strategy Day.

10. Diocesan Protocols

Thorough process of review with the Diocese. ZB gave her thanks to HB for her work and support. A good set of Protocols to guide everyone's thinking, and to further enhance the relationship between CAST and the Diocese.

Q. Protocol 4 states we must use the CES model articles and scheme of delegation – Do we, or have we modified them? If so have the CES approved the changes? The CAST 2013 Articles (still live) used the DfE / CES agreed model set of articles as available at that time. We are now proposing to adopt the current version of the DfE / CES agreed model articles, which have been available since 2019.

The CAST SoDA is based upon the CES Model Table of Roles & Responsibilities for a SoD, which is available on the CES website.

Q. Protocol 6 – Do we have any examples of our LCBs using the CES self-evaluation forms / skills? All LCBs use the CES Skills Audit forms.

In terms of self-evaluation, the LCBs use a similar document to that which the Board uses as implemented by Ann and confirmed by HB that it is a CES document originally.

- Q. Does the DSC have regular ongoing communication with each LCB? "Each Governing Board" relates to the Board. LCBs means Directors or the Board.
- Q. How do we ensure that the DSC is represented throughout the process of every appointment of senior leaders and teachers of R.E? For all senior leadership positions, the DSC attends shortlisting meetings, and the Diocesan team are represented on all interview panels.

For secondary school RE teachers, the personnel have been in post for c.10 years, and we will ensure that any future recruitment if the role becomes vacant involves the DSC in the same manner as for senior leaders.

- Q. Diocesan Protocols this is largely generic but have we confirmed that there is no conflict with the "MOU for a cohesive working relationship between CAST and DES"? HB confirmed now have Protocols, don't need the MOU, the Protocols are more accessible and supersede the MOU.
- Q. Two MOUs? Yes, not the property MOU.

HB In line with the CES, always says in alignment, have checked CAST policies, aligns has been with principles of Catholic teaching and the Catholic Church.

The Board agreed that the MOU is no longer in place.

Q. Diocesan Bishop, linked to the Articles, why removing it? RCF will pick that up.

RO thanked HB for her hard work.

11. RE and Catholic Life

11.1 Strategic Update from DSC

The MOU has been replaced by the Protocols



11.2 RE and Catholic Life Lead Director Report

HB asked for questions. Directors are welcome to attend any of the dates.

NJ has attended some of the training.

NJ met with JF (SIO). Two schools that achieved Outstanding in Canonical Inspections. A great achievement and still want to do more.

As part of the Diocesan Levy, provide training for all and there are sessions on the inspection for teachers, a new course to help teachers to form their theology around themes to feel more confident.

NJ to speak to the Deans to improve links.

12 Finance and Resources

12.1 Update from Chair of Finance and Resources

Minutes from 17th May.

Schools' consultation is ongoing, £500 000 moved, financial constraints and looking at the first budget draft not able to achieve the 2%, recommended to reduce to 1% for one year only and needs Board approval.

The Board approved the 1% target for one year.

The Board discussed the restructuring that is taking place currently, discussed at F&R, HTs responsibility to balance the budget and to work with the SBM to do that. The Board does not approve restructures as this remains operational.

All processes are defined in the Trust Redundancy Policy which is approved by the Board and is currently being reviewed by SELT and the JCC.

12.2 Management Accounts to March 2024

Information provided in the report.

Figures will be used for the budget return to the DfE in August. Overall position has decreased slightly since February 2024, keeping a close eye, budget monitoring takes place monthly. Supply and supply costs are the main concern but not just Plymouth CAST.

Looking at returning 1% surplus target, positive when considering all other factors.

13. Audit and Risk

13.1 Update from Chair of Audit and Risk

SH confirmed that GB was happy with all reports.

13.2 Risk Register

Q. Risk Register – Risk 1 – Why is the risk rating higher post internal controls cf. No controls? The risk rating is showing as higher post internal

NJ to speak to the Deans re links to schools

The
Board
approved
the
target of
1% for
one-year
only



controls because of the external risk of the RD scrutiny which is outside the scope of our internal controls.

RCF advised the Board that the Internal Auditor retender is in process and the offer is going out in the next few days.

14. Education and Standards

Meetings have been split to allow detailed discussions.

Safeguarding is becoming a bigger part of the work of the HT.

Bonding Survey will be presented to the full Board.

Disadvantaged gap has widened.

Secondary schools have a better data system and understanding of data.

Taking Boys Seriously and the importance of this work.

Separate meeting to discuss the progress of TWN and action plans.

- Q. Disadvantaged gap has always been a priority, not able to have an impact, why? Disadvantaged children form a massive array of abilities, to cope with that array, massive growth over the last two years, number of SEND children in our schools.
- Q. Disadvantaged children increased? Variable dependent on cohorts, focussed in E&S on KS1 Phonics, Year 6, on one year group at one point in time, at the end of the summer it might be better. Reason for the gap is the barrier to learning, relationships in schools, precision teaching, attendance action plans, School Bonding Survey. Using research to back up what is being done.

Seeing the work in SBC gain momentum, historical and having to go back using Trauma Informed work, how they feel about school, their attendance, increase in teaching.

Attainment has increased but non-disadvantaged has increased more than disadvantaged.

Focussed teaching is the biggest effort. Layers of complexity for disadvantaged pupils.

15. Governance and Management

Moved to Board Strategy Day on 7th June.

16. Policies

Q. Complaints procedure – Refers repeatedly to LGBs (pages 6,9,11,13,17,23) These Policies should be LCBs.

approved

Complaints Policy 4.1 – approved

V-C to be included

Q. Whistle Blowing. I don't think Ann Harris will want to be informed – Para 5.2.

Whistlebl



 $\begin{tabular}{ll} \textbf{Whistleblowing Policy} 6.1 - need to agree a role instead of a named Director. \\ Vice-Chair. Approved. \\ \end{tabular}$

owing Policy

17. Meeting Dates

Housekeeping – moved to 11th September.

RO thanks to all for attending and see all at Buckfast Abbey on 7th June.

18. Close

Meeting closed at 2.33pm.

Future Board Meeting Dates

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

Friday	7 ^₅ June 2024 – Strategy Day @ Buckfast Abbey	9.30am
Friday	19th July 2024	10.30am