

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 21st July 2023
at Plymouth CAST Office from 10.30am**

Attendees:	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director
	Ann Harris (AH)	-	Foundation Director
	Deacon Nick Johnson (NJ)	-	Foundation Director
	Steve Hole (SH)	-	Foundation Director
	Polly Montague (PM)	-	Foundation Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Alison Nettleship (ALN)	-	Co-opted Director
In Attendance:	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Karl Murphy-Barnes	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	DoE
	Helen Brown (HB)	-	DSC
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk
	Lynne Fletcher (LF)	-	NGA External Reviewer

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

RO welcomed those present to the meeting, with LF on Zoom, and PM.
The agenda order has been amended slightly.

2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

Apologies from SA and AC. Quorum met.

3. Declaration of Interest

NJ – wife works for Trust
Nothing further declared.

Move to Agenda Item 6.

6. External Review of Governance

The NLG program has ended.

LF gave her thanks to everyone for their openness, honesty and engagement. She will give the headlines and asked for feedback that can be included to the report.

LF commended the Board for their work. Having reviewed the documents and 1:1 interactions, LF highlighted the three core functions of governance.

Clarity of vision and ethos. So much good governance taking place. Clear vision, ethos and strategic aims. Catholic Life – Articles line up, delivering Catholic Life in the schools, embrace everyone, model for school improvement but won't be able to continue with this pace. Receive report, take a breath, and see where you can consolidate ways of reporting, by streamlining and being more succinct. Recommendations will be in the report. Agendas are the biggest and most

**Decision
/Action**

thorough LF has seen, consider how it is delivered, so much to take in, is it effective? Are you leaving enough time for deeper discussions and in-depth work e.g. policies to Board meetings, only required to approve the statutory policies, can be delegated to Committees and SELT, have a central repository and receive an update, GovernorHub alert for example, would give time back in preparation and in meetings. An annual planner of what is expected to come up in meetings, data drops, school improvement. Ofsted inspections and concentrate on feedback section in meetings. Scale down in short spaces of time. 34 schools and 7 LA.

Holding leaders to account. Good evidence, questions raised, work in Committees and work at the local level. Tracking educational performance, take document and enhance, Directors are volunteers, consider workload, can it be captured more in a format of KB's data dashboard and put together for a group of schools, have discussions with the Chair and the school, need to have the strategic view and not move into operational matters. Local level discussions highlight more work to be done, how they hear from the Trust, understand the work of the Trust, and how to triangulate the information. Consider the Chairs' Forum and Link Directors. Cross section of schools (7) in different areas and different stages of progress. Local Chairs and Clerks were included, support for staff and ensure information is cascaded down. New paperwork to be trialled and interesting to see the feedback on it, could be a tendency for two sets of minutes, have encouraged to have a conversation with LP to ensure the set format is followed. LP can monitor the minutes and highlight to Directors. One school highlighted doing their own minutes. Tracking is positive, SoDA and ToR for LCBs are in place, how to ensure they are fulfilling their responsibilities, seeking assurances they are doing it. How do Directors know that everything is being fulfilled, return to the delegated responsibilities and everything is feeding up including minutes and evidence. Lots of information through reports, school information, finance information, report through exception, be more succinct to allow more time for questioning and discussion. Consider the workload of SELT and how to be more streamlined, have identified that duplication is taking place and cover in Board meetings, from observation – for example, SG was covered in three areas, SG Lead, KB and RCF. Work together to prevent duplication of work and reporting. May be the same in Finance areas, how to bring it together. New SELT working through the history, look back with pride on how things have been brought together and are moving forward. Documentation is fine. Question to ask – how do we know and verify that this is being done, reports from SELT, how do you ensure independent verification, how do you know?

Oversight of financial area. Well-presented and consolidated accounts, circulated in a timely manner, ensure sign-off of accounts is captured in the minutes, receive the CFO report, confirm the accounts have been received, reviewed and signed off. Can sign off minutes and reports in GovernorHub. 3–5-year plans are produced, updated, is good. Next step in this area? Moving forward with ESFA and ATH, external benchmarks and ICFP, lot of resources on DfE website, benchmark guidelines where income/expenditure is benchmarked, 12 metric calculations in key areas, carry out on a school-by-school basis, know how much of your income against benchmarks is being spent, the amount of spend and the area. No right or wrong, need to know the reasons why you are over in an area, temporary or permanent, and how affects the longer plans. Staffing and non-staff information on monthly accounts, what is the recommended benchmark, how much can you spend, more uncertainty when talking to people. Not many schools overspending on staffing with the 80% benchmark, what is happening, why and is it being spent elsewhere? Consistency of the approach and lines up with the educational journey, react to schools that may require more support. About spending the money on the children in the schools now, but also need to future proof, know what decisions to make where and when. Committee level discussions. Succession planning, self-reviews, 20 questions to ask a Board, bring

together and add to a succession planning document, need to move on, are we shadowing one another, what if someone leaves, reaching end of office, triangulate that into local level, are there people aspiring to be Directors? Work with them, bring them along, good to have people who know the Trust, bring new ideas.

Non-compliance areas. New Articles lodged with Companies House, should have lodged within 15 days of agreement, biggest area of non-compliance. Tweaks to ensure correlation throughout the documents, identify make up of Board and LCBs, website, GIAS, Companies House. Website is fine, all information is included.

Ofsted experience this year. EDI focus, be abreast of that at Board and LCB level. ZB has confirmed that it has featured a little in inspections.

LF highlighted the good relationship with the Diocese. No Bishop yet.

Reflective piece at the end of the meeting, prayer at the start, gives time to reflect for the meeting to go forward, do it as a group or a personal "what difference did we make to the children today?" item.

Take a lot of pride in what is being done and look after yourselves.

RO thanked LF for her positive feedback, 1:1 conversations were supportive, critical friend and feels caring, constructive suggestions. A positive experience for all.

LF has been in touch with LP and KB. The report is in the QA process, will go to ZB and RO in the first instance, finalised and issued to the Trust. Main report, recommendations, and suggested action plan. Will dovetail nicely in the Governance action plan, needs to be owned by the Board and not ZB.

LF wished the Trust well.

LF left the meeting at 11.10am.

The Board discussed LF's presentation being a verbal update only. It was highlighted this was due to circumstance and the end of DfE funding.

The report will be received in due course. Nothing immediate other than Companies House. Will review in new academic year.

Q. Didn't see all Directors? A sample of Directors were spoken to.

Will update once report is received.

4.1 Minutes of previous meeting of 19th May 2023 and Part II minutes

Minutes of previous meeting of 8th June 2023 and Part II minutes

Directors discussed the opportunity for all to discuss confidential minutes. The governance guidelines were explained. Directors felt they should be aware of all content.

LP to review the confidential minutes process and seek NGA guidance from LF.

The minutes from the 19th May 2023 Part I and Part II were approved.

8th June – LP to check that it notes that AN left.

The minutes 19th May 2023 and 8th June 2023 were approved
LP to check

4.2 Actions Summary

Updated on the Actions Summary

22.41 Come and See – HB clarification on legality. HB and LP by next meeting

22.39 Canonical inspection data – none this term, ongoing.

22.33 Link schools – ongoing, revise

22.24 Diocesan guidance trans-gender – no national guidance, further delays, JS is preparing guidance on diversity in line with Catholic teaching and will share with KB and Canon Paul, diversity in general. October meeting.

22.08 Task group – October meeting

21.34 SBC funding – ongoing. Q. Any issue? No issue, going through process

5. Chairs Business

- **Update on letter to Regional Director**

Further letter, despite response, RD have decided to issue a Termination Warning Notice. Meeting on 27th July, will discuss this.

Letter came yesterday. Standard practice is issued to coasting schools, SBC had second RI judgment, following procedures, agreed with the Regions Group Team to focus on this letter and the next steps. Possibility of a period of time, prior to the TWN being issued, think will be given a period of time with a clear action plan with objectives that must be met. Will know more next week.

Q. Warning letter doesn't give any timescales? Warning Notice will come, concerned a letter may be published at the start of the summer holidays, TWN will come, issued in the Autumn Term, preparatory work with the staff to understand the implications. ZB highlighted the last sentence in the letter along with the need to continue to invest heavily, keep the focus, enhanced leadership structures, more resource to the school.

Q. Not the first letter that has been issued by the RD, what is the history of Trusts that have met this criteria? Not the first, learning if this is a pre-letter, individual academy and Trust can make the required improvements.

Q. What learning? Pull out all the stops, address all actions and priorities but don't know yet what these will be. Trust action plans are not published.

Q. Worst case scenario? Rebrokerage or closure.

The RD was clear, approach across the SW, not in favour of automatic closure, wants school and MATs to improve.

The Board discussed the impact and potential outcomes of this letter being published.

- **Update on OLOTA Safeguarding letter**

Responded to DfE, happy Safeguarding concerns have been met.

ZB thanked KB for his work and RO echoed this.

- **Foundation Director appointment (PM)**

17.4 resignations from SB (personal) and JV (work commitments).

RO has written to both Directors to thank them for their time and commitment.

PM was welcomed to the Board. She provided an introduction of her skills and experience. Those present introduced themselves to PM.

RO welcomed PM to the meeting. A mentor to be allocated.

PM to be given a mentor

7. Estates Strategy

Document was circulated to the Board. Have benefitted on the Working Party from PS' knowledge and experience.

Estate vision - five points being put forward.

The Board was happy with the visionary statements.

RCF highlighted the key objectives and strategic objectives.

Some familiar objectives, a new approach for using performance data to focus on estates, F&R receive data but with a finance lens.

Q. Targeting £1m, an aim? Targeting is the new wording, previously was 'ensure'.

Q. An objective for F&R, Estates Group cannot approve as not within their remit, duplication and conflict, good information in the paper and not a Committee.

Q. There isn't a strategic view across the board, F&R deals with the finances, an opportunity to take away, strategy is not focussed.

Q. Why is F&R taking guidance from this strategy? More operational, can't set direction.

The Board discussed the proposal of creating an Estates Committee, to pick up on the reporting gap, a strategic gap which isn't being reported, but may be viable to consider additional reporting to existing Committees as opposed to a creation of a new Committee. Increased focus in ATH for estates data.

Q. Could reword to say the Trust will make use of the finances made available in accordance of the capital program.

The Board discussed the Board and F&R Committee recommendations and responsibilities.

Q. Estates aims, should be inclusive of the Diocese? SELT meets with the Diocese, Directors don't.

Q. Not a way in the current model to discuss the rebuilding of a school. Operational discussion takes place, strategic meeting with the Diocese, route to have those conversations, more bureaucracy.

Q. The strategy is set at Board level and currently this doesn't take place, changes in 2025, setting this up looks at the overall estate and feeds into F&R, A&R and the Board, then discuss with the Diocese.

RCF suggested the reporting on estates matters feeds into existing Committees.

Q. Overview of estates but can't obtain this information as a Director.

RO highlighted her surprise at the proposal of an Estates Committee and has discussed with RCF.

Another Committee and don't need a Committee to fill the gap. There is a gap in reporting which RCF can fill, data is available, transferrable to a report, PS reports are detailed, finance is dealt with at F&R, A&R deal with the concern. There will be duplication. Strategic, and will rapidly become operational..

The Board discussed being part of a Working Group

Q. Concerned that all estate is owned by the Diocese, should there not be a 25-year plan, Diocese should hold this, we are the contractor.

Discussions with CAST, work is ongoing, recognised at SELT level, positive going forward, Estates has been recognised as needing more communication between Diocese and CAST, striving to work collaboratively.

Q. Working Party has made a proposal and Board needs to decide.

RCF confirmed the positive work of the Working Party, can use data as a springboard for decision making.

ZB reiterated the NGA Governance Review comments shared by Lynne, regarding duplication, we have identified a reporting gap and have a Committee structure that can be reviewed, create reports for the Committees that cover Estates and see if that supports decision making.

Directors on the Working Party hoped that the work carried out wouldn't be wasted and highlighted concerns for the future as feel this is not covered.

AN The Board discussed how budgets overrule strategy, the Board sets the strategy.

RO lot of good information, not a waste of time, has identified a reporting gap.

Q. What happens to the Working Group? Put together to bring this document together and this has been completed. Have good quality information on Estates, Diocesan colleagues recognise a gap, strategic meetings for the last 12 months, there is oversight, ongoing conversations, Diocese want to work collaboratively for oversight of the Estates.

Q. Diocese on the Working Group? No, operational meetings.

Q. As owner of the estate, can't set strategic direction.

Q. Should be discussed with the Diocese, policy is set by the Board, strategy work should be done outside. Termly meetings have previously been held between CAST and Diocese - included the Chair of the Board, keen to return to this, a structure that will be back in place, strategic conversations.

Expertise is the running of the schools, on behalf of the Diocese, we have the detail in the needs of the school buildings.

Work is through SELT, overarching strategy, in conjunction with Diocese, deal with operationally.

Q. Facing a risk of burnout, consolidate, bringing an enormous task, who will do it? RCF provided assurance of the Diocese oversight of the Trust, MOU signed by the CAST Board and Diocese in 2017 which clearly stipulates the level of reporting, regular reporting has reignited, Plymouth CAST annual report, haven't yet got one as not established a strategy, April 2023, Diocese is aware that the report was not produced, will be provided.

Q. How will this be amended given the doubts expressed? Amendments required to reporting? SELT or Working Party? Back to Board for sign off? How the reporting gap is filled, how the Diocesan interface works, then can decide how best to deliver going forward.

Q. Objective 1 rewritten and Objective 4 rephrased regarding £1m to ensure it doesn't conflict with any other statement.

31st July is the next Diocesan meeting and will ask for agenda item on how this is to move forward.

Q. Working Party to meet again?

Vote on Estates Committee or extension to reporting? GB suggested the F&R Committee taking full responsibility, A&R felt this was not part of their Committee remit.

Propose it sits with F&R Committee. Produced a document, lot of work, needs to be reviewed and come back to the Board.

Working Party? No-one from F&R. Objectives need attention, and becomes F&R. RO document produced is valuable. Not a F&R document, a Board document

Gaps filled first, have the discussion, decide if need a Committee. Bring back in September. Document to be revised by Working Party and re-present in September? Needs to be reviewed by SELT. Present to the Board at the October meeting.

Estates Strategy Objectives to be reviewed by SELT, present at October Board meeting.

8. Sustainability Strategy

Two years' work. July 2022 presentation from EnFrame to proactively consider sustainability.

RCF provided an overview of the Strategy. Approval of the Strategy will require a substantial investment including in staffing. Budget is likely to be £100 000 every year. Need to consider if budgets will enable this piece of work.

Q. Where is this reported? Through all areas of Trust operations, a Lead Director and LCB level working with school councils, reporting to LCB, procurement to F&R, Estates reports, annual report to the CAST Board, and through the CEO report.

Q. Oversight of the Board, feed into Estates, where does the overall strategy to monitor fall? Sustainability was never going to be through Estates, reports would go to Committees, CEO report to cover sustainability, E&S reports. Annual report to the Board and LCBs to have an annual report, publish on websites, Link Directors could report back.

Q. Are we going to adopt this, Board Day discussions, SG9 would be the last priority, what pace can it be delivered, enormous amount of SELT time? Can sign off as don't think it can be delivered.

Q. Great report, governance is governance in every sector, where is this in the new curriculum, pupils to be fully aware of what is going on?

Q. Everything we do has to do with curriculum, have to get a grip on this, it will come at a price, requires a Government funding stream, should have an aspirational strategy even if we can't achieve it, doesn't have enough children in the report, high on the agenda even if we can't achieve it, what is the impact?

Q. If sign this off, implies actions on SELT, difficult to deliver, need to be realistic.

Two options – either fund it or don't.

Q. Concern of where it is reporting – could be a scattergun approach and no central monitoring.

If adopt and can't fund, must aspire to support this. Taking stock of what we are already doing, what will simultaneously be achieved with Estates, fantastic work in our schools on sustainability, Eco-Schools and awards such as Green Flag status.

Q. Annex A needs reviewing.

Q. Consideration of financial implications, demonstrate the commitment but as a phased approach.

HB -Diocesan perspective aligns with Laudato Si and Catholic principles.

The Board requires a supplementary document of reviewed priorities and where they fit in. For October.

9. CEO Update

Q. What is the staff turnover at our schools?

RCF action for October.

Q. If the turnover approaches the National rate, are there actions that the SLT would like to be taking to address this problem? As I understand it as a MAT, we have the authority to change many of our conditions of employment we don't have to wait for the DfE. We could for instance make it easier for teachers to work more flexibly.

RCF action for October to research the national rate.

ZB review conditions of employment. CEO report suggested that a factor to support retention and support teachers by PPA being taken flexibly, could take a whole day, have that already, don't centrally mandate how that time is taken or the cover arrangements. This is an individual school decision and is for the Headteacher to decide as must also work for school and within confines of staffing model and budget. As a Trust we work closely with Trade Unions and JCC on T&Cs and would make any changes without proper consultation.

Q. The loss of revenue resulting from the shortfall against PAN is approx. £8,000,000 per year. Each pupil that starts in reception is worth about £35,000 to the school. What more can be done to improve the pupil numbers, should this be

RCF to review Annex A

RCF to review priorities and provide a supplementary document for October Board meeting

RCF to provide staff turnover figures to October Board including the national rate

a special responsibility of a member of the SLT? I understand that demographics indicate a declining number of children, however that just means we have to be more attractive than the competition!

Joint responsibility of the HT, the school, and the LCB, responsibility with parish and local community. Also, a SELT responsibility, not one person, don't have the local relationship. The Trust supporting the schools with local projects but also a national footprint.

SIOs talk about pupil numbers, reports to LCBs, challenged on school visits. SELT are asked about recruitment, number of classes, pupil numbers, finance. KB provided an example of Priory, 21 children have been brought into the school following the Good inspection, increase the number of classes to prevent an educationally unstable picture. Excellent work being done by HTs, all revolves around educational outcomes, less focus on the school building.

Q. Shareholders are the Diocese, should be talking to them about their view, predicted numbers to fall, vision for the future? Those structures are in place, the meetings are taking place.

Q. Where do I find that information? CEO reports, DoE reports.

Q. Want to know the Diocesan view? HB, SELT meet, it is ongoing.

Q. What is the vision of the Diocese going forward? Catholic education. SELT and Directors to ensure the Bishop's vision is in each school. Permeates everything we do. HB is happy to share the Bishop's vision and give examples of how it is working in estates, education along with SELT input. CAST are aligned with the Bishop's vision and values.

Q. Safeguarding. At my last training by a LADO (May 2020) I was given the following statistics for primary children in Devon.

- 1 in 20 suffer from sexual abuse
- 1 in 14 suffer from Physical abuse
- 1 in 10 suffer from neglect
- 1 in 5 experience domestic abuse

Given the impact of COVID the situation is likely to be worse. Do our statistics reflect these very worrying ratios? Whilst I along with other directors have "done" the safeguarding course I believe that we as Directors should have a safeguarding course that poses these sorts of questions. Could that be arranged?

Incidents of abuse, not reported necessarily in schools, analyse incidents on CPOMS of reported or anticipated abuse through the SG4, report through E&S, our data from latest forms would suggest we are not identifying that. DSL briefings focus will be domestic abuse, look at two CSPR, one will relate to domestic abuse, single biggest indicator of risk to children in the home. Incidents reported by the Police – 62 Autumn term 65 Spring Term, Operation Encompass reports, 120 and 86 in the previous academic year.

Safeguarding incidents approx. 5000 per term. 1200 on SG records of concern, 17%. Schools excel in this area. Core training on domestic abuse through SSS Learning, schools also do their own work to focus on this.

Focus in primary schools over the years, but biggest increase is 16-18 for mental health in ND, significant increase across the country. Specific input into ND, Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) diploma level training.

Q. Where do these statistics come from, concern about anxiety and mental health, concern over girls that never fail? Though the question was around cognisance of our schools, two detailed submissions to RD Group.

Q. The school can only do so much, responsibility from 9am to 3.30pm, services around schools have been depleted, someone has to pick up the family relationships, TAs picking up responsibility, food being repackaged to support families, not our responsibility but schools picking this up.

Q. More of our responsibility in Catholic education? SG responsibility, phone call from teacher, Social Services would pick up, but this doesn't happen anymore.

Where local services are weak, statutory expectations on schools to mitigate for that, questioned by HMI. At what point does a school become unsustainable. HT is HT, DSL, SENDCo, questions for SELT regarding resource.

Safeguarding reviews identify governance at LCB level, management of medical conditions in schools.

Appropriate for the named Lead Director, covered within SSS Learning modules. All Governor and Directors have training, but the Lead Director has a greater focus. Previously JV as Lead Director met half termly to discuss SG. Training plan has been created to give oversight for September. Not all Governors and Directors require that level of training.

KB to present SG training in Autumn Term to Directors

SSS Learning has a facility for presentation, in Autumn Term, KB can present a training module and then contextualise for the Trust, can switch off the presentation option before completing the assessment.

Meeting paused at 13.25
Meeting reconvened at 13.48

LP to collate contact info

Q. Please can we have a contact list somewhere on the Governor hub which gives the following info: (if this already exists, apologies!)

- School Name, Phone number, Head, email for the head, Chair, email for the chair, Lead Director, SIO, SIO email
- Board member, email address, phone number,
- SLT member, email address, phone number.

LP will collate and upload to GHub but without telephone numbers.

10. TIP End of Plan RAG Rate

SELT have reviewed. Ongoing priorities will be rolled forward.

Q. School behaviour question, any comment on the figures? What does calm look like for the children, a subjective survey, need to consider behaviour and unpick what children are experiencing. Sometimes a small incident can unsettle and seem a bigger issue.

Q. Confusing as using the old initials, plan was written three years ago, didn't revise as the strategy had been set, with personnel at the time. New interaction of the TIP will be more concise, less detail and strategic in nature, using roles and not initials.

Q. Director Training. As part of the TIP, we as directors should be observing other MAT boards, are we supposed to organise this ourselves or who should be organising these exchanges? In a fortunate position, 4 Directors do sit on other boards, a healthy experience of governance in other MATs, mindful of being

unpaid volunteers, previously an aspirational target, naturally bring expertise, if want to join other Boards speak to ZB.

11. Heat Map

Data reported in May and again in July. Lag before the Ofsted report is published.

Operations Team data changed on current school level due to a dip in achieved H&S audit score but didn't affect the Trust view. Reviewed the pupil numbers but only a marginal change.

Finance school level slightly less red on budget positions but didn't affect the Trust level.

Educational outcomes are complex, statements within each area, detail reported to E&S.

Q. Financial position reflect the building costs? School revenue budget.

Q. Overall costing of a school? Do have the data but not in the Heat Map, bring together in the TIP. SBMs have started to use ICFP to aid budgeting.

12. Safeguarding

- **Safeguarding training across the Trust**

Information in CEO report.

HT at OLOTA received a distressing letter. December 2021, child killed in a RTA in the road outside the school. Panel following the death, outcome letter. LA requested the school paid £4000 towards a crossing patrol in 2019, didn't pay along with other schools, the letter strongly suggested the refusal to pay the patrol costs led to the death.

Q. Align with the driver found to be driving safely? Hard to make excuses when a child death, letter is with our solicitors, letter states the need for a crossing patrol but didn't put one in place. The outcome will become public, link with the Torbay press team. The HT has tried to allocate the money from her budget. Meeting with solicitors on Monday.

The Trust is dealing with this matter on behalf of the school.

Q Who constitutes the panel? Multi-agency panel.

The HT was working with the child's family to campaign for a crossing despite the child not being a pupil at OLOTA.

Teacher suspension update. Historical allegation. Teacher resigned. Police investigation is still ongoing. Significant implications for the Trust.

LADO reporting. Suspended a teacher due to a historical allegation of rape of a minor. Not related to our schools. Disciplinary process to be considered.

LADO referral. Investigation has found to be a non-malicious fabrication. LADO and family are satisfied.

Parent asked to leave school premises as wasn't allowed to be on the premises due to court orders. Police were called. Children taken into school whilst parent was forcibly removed by the Police. Now banned from the premises in line with DfE guidelines.

Q. Child on premises at the time - are they ok? Yes, safely inside the building.

Serious non-accidental injuries to a child at home. Parents were arrested. SG Rapid Review taken place this week. Child has survived, multiple fractures, identified by the school when notified facial swelling. KB has offered support to the school and HT.

Directors praised the good work of the schools.

13. RE and Catholic Life

Strengths of this year. Staffing at senior leadership level, collaboration between CAST and Diocese, two year positions for non-Catholic HTs for stability, recruitment of strong Catholic HTs in the Plymouth area. Starting September with people in the right place. Thanks to CAST for the work.

Privilege to be invited to Ofsted feedback. Joy within the painful inspections, schools vision and determination of looking after the child.

Adult Formation has been a success. Fantastic outcomes and will ask to present to ECTs. Strength of relationship of staff in schools and the Priests.

Diocesan Conference Days 2023. Catholic life being considered.

Practice inspection at St Mary's, Buckfast, a great contribution by the school. The Diocese will support schools. NJ met with JF prior to each Board meeting. NJ asked Directors for highlights and lowlights of Catholicity in schools, dilemma of recruiting Catholic teachers and leaders.

14. Education and Standards

Trust at 78% capacity and the impact on the budget and schools, high level of exclusions and what the Trust is doing about it, and Trauma Informed Schools, CAST Principles of Personal Development.

Safeguarding – concerned the Board need to understand the challenges faced.

The meeting didn't fall at a data window and gave a different focus for the meeting.

15. Finance and Resources

Minutes of 11th July are in the pack. Budget discussions and recommended to the Board, thanks to KMB, his Team and the schools, surplus across three years.

Teachers pay award is not known but fully approved. F&R out of Committee review of amended budget. The Board approved this action.

15.1 Management Accounts to June 2023

June accounts haven't been produced, May has been provided for this meeting. Looking at returning £148 000 compared to budget of £781 000, capital spend approved by F&R. Can't describe end of year position as awaiting the pay award funding.

Q. Change to reporting of monthly accounts in ATH which requires the Chair to see and not going to the Board every month? A Committee needs to see management accounts for each month but not the full Board.

RO thanked the Finance Team for their prudence and the difficult conversations.

15.2 Approval of Budget and 3-Year Forecast

Copies of what the budget could look like if the pay award is funded. 6.5% pay award from September 2023. Not fully funded but Unions are recommending it.

Approve the information included in the pack. £637 000, 1.5%, target 2%, 7 schools next year returning a deficit and have discussed at F&R and previous Board meetings.

Reasonably healthy position for the Trust. £781 000 surplus projected at this time last year. Going forward, the picture looks better, key budget assumptions are highlighted in the Executive Summary.

Additional 69 pupils in October 2023, secondary school level. Primary schools have seen a slight decrease.

Additional pupils at secondary levels, structure reviews, looking at retuning £1.1m 24/25, a really healthy position.

Q. SBC is going to make a loss even if full, using ND additional funding to maintain the schools together, educational standards at ND would be a concern, would there be any overview of this to Ofsted, and sustaining a school? Changes to ATH, funding body is ESFA, previously been vague on GAG pooling to meet need, a clear statement on amalgamating funds has been included. The Board needs to work on the mechanism for any appeals process.

Q. Know we have the legal right for GAG pooling, educational standard has reduced, can inspectors link the money to keep another school open? Ofsted don't look at budgets, have access to accounts, may delve into resource allocation, additional funds haven't been directly ploughed back in, the structure is interlinked, the schools need to be considered together. Same staff, more support, the quality of the people, teaching and learning, and leadership.

No inherent deficit in the teaching, but through leadership being able to maximise what they have got. Improving picture, capacity to improve is good. RI is still a risk.

Don't GAG pool funding but pool reserves. The money for ND remains at ND apart from the central contribution. Must account by individual school.

Year 3 25/26 looking at a surplus. Retuning a surplus for three years, not for Years 4 and 5 but a lot of unknown information.

6.5% pay award (7.1% for MPS1), budgeted for 5% so only have to cost out 1.5%. Pay award coming in at 5%. TPAG is a bonus for the Trust. 23/24 £250 000. The Board were very pleased with this. ASCL suggested 4.3%.

Overall surplus of £886 000 next year, 2.1%. Increasing costs, decreasing pupil numbers, premises costs. Other Trusts spoken to are looking at returning a deficit next year.

Q. If Trusts do not take recovery action until next year, their reserves will be lost.

Q. Approve in September at F&R? Can't miss the return date of 31st August. Out of cycle for approval.

16. Audit and Risk

GB thanked SH for chairing the last meeting.

GB highlighted from the minutes. Normal meeting. Francis Clark audit. Payroll transfer. Westcott's produced their Statutory Audit Letter and has new areas.

H&S Committee meeting. Dichotomy between Violence and Threatening Behaviour and Safety at Work Act, two legal requirements and are at odds with each other. 40+ incidents for two pupils reported.

If multiple VATB incidents, would face a claim under the Safety at Work Act.

Need the Board to determine the position to include the thresholds, time taken, may have to go to court, seek legal action, potential litigation, and prosecution.

Q. Have I missed this paper in the pack? No, meeting only last week.

H&S at Work protecting staff. Came through a Link Director visit, support from KB, parents demanding their child were returned to the classroom.

Q. A lot of information to take on board. Two legal elements have always existed, school leaders always consider this, the key is the risk assessment, recognise challenges, try to mitigate, rarely hear the HSE prosecuting schools, where risk assessment is in place, training in place. A national issue in schools, TIS approach is a very important part of our work, investment in our staff, not about excluding children, school workforce approach, duty of care to the child and our staff, best working conditions, focus on de-escalation, reduced number of incidents, school leaders are best placed to have difficult conversations with parents, trying to manage the situation. Good practices in place, work with young people, they have difficulties, and how we deal with it.

Suzie Franklin is fantastic as SEND Lead, all schools have TIS training, 18 diploma trained practitioners to follow, all policies have been reworked in light of Trauma Informed practice, CAST Principles, physical training includes MAPA training, appropriate physical intervention. Practice in schools is really good, but also have the training and policy in place.

The Board heard from a Director who provided more information on why this has been raised.

16.1 Risk Register

Executive summary provided. Instances reported to the Board are less.

Exception report. 1 update to be aware of RR6 recruiting critical personnel, proactively recruiting in secondary and primary settings.

17. Governance and Management

17.1 Link Director Reports

14 reports submitted this term. Small number of schools that have not been visited so please book them in. Summary shows the focus on governance, tweak to cover the aspects of governance.

Link Directors to carry out visits

17.2 Lead Director Reports

Reports are there for Directors to read.

17.3 Governance Lead Update

AH is non-operational for Governance.

17.4 Director Membership

Discussed

17.5 Lead Director Roles

Estates Lead Director.

H&S and Data Protection reflected previous discussions.

Q. IT Monitoring and Filtering Director? GB has picked this up under Data Protection. RCF to make explicit in the document and allocate to GB.

Need to consider the roles, RO will stand in as SG Governor over the summer. RO to follow up with Directors.

RCF to update GB's role

RO to agree lead roles with Directors

17.6 Draft Board Meeting Dates

8th September – NJ and HB apologies, 60th anniversary of St Edwards.

July 2024 – RO Board meeting, leave early.

17.7 RemCom TofR Updated

Section on the make-up of the Committee – approved.

RemCom TofR approved

18. Policy Review

The Board discussed the need for all policies to be approved at full Board and questioned delegation to Committees/SELT/Chair. Consider policy review cycle at the annual Housekeeping meeting and check which are statutory.

Q. When there is a change, please highlight the change. Summary of changes included.

RCF and LP to consider the Policy Review for the Housekeeping meeting

18.1 #1 Release HR Policies & Summary of Changes

- Probation Policy
- TOIL Policy
- Absence Management Policy & Procedure
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Pay Policy - Teacher

Policies approved

Recruitment Policy
 Secondment and Transfer Policy

APPROVED by the Board

18.2 #2 Release HR Policies & Summary of Changes

Policies approved

Early Career Teachers Policy
 Family Friendly Policy
 Fixed Term and Temporary Workers Policy
 Grievance Policy – new policy. Since Covid, shared experience of education colleagues, rise in grievances, SAR, FOI, lot of low-level complaints, existing policy was CES model, lived experience of the process is onerous under the policy, have to commission paid resource to support staff capacity, focusses on informal resolution, TU views sought and were accepting of the policy.

Q. Have the CES policy been updated? ZB didn't think it had. There are examples of where CES policies are not always fit for purpose and some grey areas.

Q. Any examples of this being used as a weapon? Not received grievances that were proven to be vexatious, the process is the issue.

Sabbatical Policy
 Salary Overpayments Policy

APPROVED by the Board

18.3 Behaviour Policy

Policy approved

In line with Trauma Informed approach. KB talked through the CAST Principles of Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes.

APPROVED by the Board

18.4 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy approved

Updated in light of KCSiE 2023, no significant changes. Monitoring and filtering of school IT has an increased focus, requires an LCB Lead Governor and Lead Director responsibility. Policy updated on the use of school premises by others. An added section on the action to take when allegations are made against school staff.

The Board APPROVED the Safeguarding Policy for September 2023.

18.5 Curriculum Policy

KB to amend
 ESM to SIO

ESM referred to. KB will amend. KB highlighted the areas where sustainability is embedded.

APPROVED by the Board

Policy approved

18.6 Health and Safety Policy

Policy to be reviewed in September 2023

RCF explained the Policy is produced by Devon H&S Team, the policy update takes place during the school summer shutdown. The Policy review would be better positioned at the September Housekeeping meeting.

The Board APPROVED the H&S Policy review to be carried out in September 2023.

18.7 SEND Policy

The Policy has been considered in line with the Trauma Informed approach. Plymouth CAST SEND Identification Pathway is a guidance document for schools to use.

The Board APPROVED the SEND Policy for September 2023.

Policy approved

18.8 Risk Management Policy

First time under the two yearly-review. RCF provided an update, the Risk Register exception report goes to A&R for all risks, F&R finance risks only, report to Board on high score risks only.

The Policy has been amended to fully align with the Risk Register.

APPROVED by the Board.

AOB – St Mary’s, Axminster.

School have been working with SELT to consider the potential expansion, bulge in first place admission requests for September 2023. PAN is 20, first place requests received are 35. Can admit over PAN as part of the Admissions Policy, CAST is the admissions authority.

All classes are mixed year groups, need to consider the organisation of the bulge year throughout the school. PS commissioned a survey which RCF talked through.

The LA have taken the decision to expand the other local primary school.

Q. Can there be a temporary structure used? Parish land? Could look at temporary accommodation for capital funding, doesn’t alleviate the funding?

Q. Would lose money? Recommendation is not to proceed? A difficult decision, want children in our schools, one family are Catholic and have applied four times.

Q. Diocese support in the way of a limited grant?

The options are to keep the PAN, increase PAN for one year, or to increase PAN year on year.

Directors highlighted the Bishop’s vision to have places for Catholic children.

RO asked the Board to vote on the options - Keep PAN – 4, Increase for one year – 1, to Increase every year – 0.

The Board highlighted the sadness of making this decision.

RO thanked Directors and SELT for their support and work.

Policy approved

The Board approved the PAN to remain the same

Meeting closed at 3.50pm