

STA Board Minutes 14/12/2020

▶ virtual by teams ▶ Monday, December 14, 2020 ▶ 4pm ▶ Chair: Sarah Noon ▶ Clerk: Jennifer Barnacle

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Teams link to follow

Governors Attending: > Christopher Reynolds, Sarah Noon, Brian Underwood, Paul Chipchase, Terry Smith, Mary Delahunty, Philip Bateman

Governors Apologies: >

Non Governors Attending: > Jennifer Barnacle, Antoinette Bouwens, Neil Lockyer, Mary Robson, Paula Cooper, Martin Fitzwilliam, Marcella Gillespie, Mike Hobbs, Ruth Hurcombe, Tom Shannon

Non Governors Apologies: >

Agenda Item 1 ▶ Welcome

MINUTE The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Agenda Item 2 ▶ Opening Liturgy

MINUTE TS delivered the opening liturgy.

Agenda Item 3 ▶ Minutes of last meeting, matters arising and conflicts of interests and business and pecuniary interests

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

There were no declarations of interest for the purpose of this meeting.

Matters arising

Confirmation that the staff survey re RE and Collective Worship was completed will be sought from LLC. It will be circulated once completed. NL Done. See agenda item 4

MINUTE Directors to complete self evaluation and let SN have availability. ALL Done

SN will discuss with PC which committees he could join. SN/PC See Agenda item 7

Directors to complete their profiles by 30/9. ALL Done

Set up working group re Board and LGB development. Recruit chairs. SN Done . See agenda item 14

Forward Employee assistance report to HR committee. MR To go to HR Committee in January 2021.

Arrange meeting with HR to discuss wellbeing. MD Carry Forward and complete before HR Committee in January.

NL to get permission to undertake a 3rd party transaction. NL has written to ESFA and response awaited. Schools have begun fundraising for The Briars..

Arrange safeguarding training for Board and central team. MG Completed.

Arrange safeguarding training for governors. MG Completed and catch up session to be offered in January.

Arrange meeting to review RED schools and recovery curriculum. BU Done . See agenda item 12

Arrange meeting to review sec schools with RH. CR Done. See agenda item 12

Finance committee to comment on the draft structure of the Trustees report.SN/PB/TS Done

Chair to write to members re pooling. SN Done. Members gave permission for pooling from 1.9.21

Set up group of heads to discuss pooling. NL NL met with 3 School Improvement Heads to discuss potential pooling. A positive response was received. It was acknowledged that some schools with significant reserves may be unhappy with the decision but generally there was a feeling that it was in the best interests of all the schools and the pupils.

Send letter to The Franciscan Sisters Minoress . Confirm if ESFA approval needed. AB Done. A response is awaited from ESFA.

ACTION

Employer Assistance report to HR committee in Jan21. MR
MD to meet with HR re wellbeing. MD/PC

Agenda Item 4

Governance & Correspondence

MINUTE

1. The Board noted the resignations of Fr Daley and Mike Cummins in September/October 2021. The Chair and CEO had written to thank them for their service.
2. There is a vacancy for a director on the HR Committee. TS agreed to sit on the committee.
3. SN reported that there were 2 potential new directors going through the process of recruitment. If appointed the membership of committees can be reviewed.
4. The terms of reference of committees were noted and approved. SN asked all chairs of committees to review the terms before the next committee meetings in January to ensure that committees are covering everything within the terms.

ACTION

All chairs of committees to review the terms of reference before the next committee meetings in January to ensure that committees are covering everything within the terms.

DECISION

Terms of reference of committees approved.

Agenda Item 5		▶ Legal and Regulatory
MINUTE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board approved the admissions policy 2022-23. It will be uploaded to the website and distributed to schools for their website. 2. It was noted that the approval of Scheme of Delegation, Code of conduct for Governors, Code of conduct for Directors, NRCDES Complaints policy were all approved by the directors by email in October. 	
ACTION	Upload Admissions policy to website. Send to all schools for website. AB	
DECISION	Approval of admissions policy 2022-23. Note approval of Scheme of Delegation, Code of conduct for Governors, Code of conduct for Directors, NRCDES Complaints policy by email in Oct 2020.	
Agenda Item 6		▶ CMAT Risk Register
MINUTE	The Audit and Risk Committee will meet to discuss the CMAT risk register in detail on 25/2/21. All Directors are asked to consider the document and email their comments to the Chair prior to that meeting. The committee will report back at the March Board meeting.	
ACTION	All Directors are asked to consider the CMAT Risk Register and email their comments to the Chair prior to 25/2/21. ALL	
Agenda Item 7		▶ Catholic Life & Chaplaincy
	The Lead Lay Chaplains reports were noted.	
MINUTE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prayer Partnerships were made at the Feast Days with the intention that the schools would make links with each other. C19 has affected progress and further work is needed to develop partnerships. All schools were given lists with ideas of how to develop the relationship. The LLC will be taking more of a lead in helping to develop partnerships and will talk to Chaplains and Heads. The pupil chaplaincy teams could get involved in developing relationships between schools. The area will be revisited at the next Feast Day in January. 2. The LLC is working with heads in respect of the Chaplaincy website. The aim is to have at least one response per school each week, eg a response to a challenge, liturgy, school mission. Once this is in place then it can be expanded so that comments and responses can be put on other schools work, 3. Generally, Collective Worship requires strengthening in schools, although there are some schools who provide outstanding Collective Worship. Restrictions imposed by C19 have impacted on collective worship. Collective worship is evaluated and the evaluation should inform working practices. 4. DCI inspections will not take place until at least after Easter 2021. Training for governors in RE, Collective Worship and Catholic Life will be arranged before then, to be delivered by Directors of Performance and Standards, the Lead Lay Chaplain and the CEO respectively. 5. The Team Spirit Website was very informative and well used. 6. It was proposed that a Catholic Life Committee is formed and this was unanimously agreed. Fr Chipchase will chair and SN and PB will be members. Dates for meetings to be agreed 	
ACTION	Agree dates for Catholic Life Committee. PC/SN/PB	
DECISION	Form a Catholic Life Committee (PC/SN/PB)	
CHALLENGE	How can the links established between schools at Feast Days be strengthened? How can pupils get involved? See 1 How effective is Collective Life in schools? See 3 Is training going to be made available for governors re RE, Catholic Life and Collective Worship? See 4	

Agenda Item 8	▶ Safeguarding
MINUTE	<p>The reports were noted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The total safeguarding referrals to DSL's since September 2020 are 6314. This is all concerns, minor and major. It is difficult to compare to national figures. Incidents can happen in any school. A comparison can be made with similar schools across the city. 2. Online safeguarding incidents tend to occur out of school. Schools have robust systems in place. Parents have been given information about keeping pupils safe online. 3. Safeguarding training was well attended by the Board and governors. 4. DSL's, along with all staff, have had a challenging return to school. There is a need to ensure children are safe in the school and also when at home. DSL's that are teaching too are under considerable pressure and it is possible the the role of the DSL will change in the future making it difficult for them to also be teaching. The CMAT and schools are doing much work in supporting the DSL's. 5. MG stated that she feels well supported by the CEO. Caseload is high and there are some difficult cases to be involved with but support is good. 6. BU and MG had discussed the mental health of pupils caused by trauma in the home and at how best they can be supported.
ACTION	Compare number of incidents with similar schools in city. MG
CHALLENGE	<p>How do the number of safeguarding concerns compare to National figures? See 1 Are the online incidents outside of school? See 2 How are DSL's coping since the return to school? See 4 Is the Director of Safeguarding supported? See 5</p>
Agenda Item 9	▶ Business Services
MINUTE	<p>AB presented the report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. De Lisle would like to use their reserves to bring their current IT provision up to the standard needed for learning and teaching. An independent IT consultant has assessed their current IT provision and has suggested a total cost in the region of £300k. Their current IT provision is very poor. The consultant was invited in by the CMAT to assess need. She has been used in other schools. The company is just assessing requirements and will not be tendering for any of the supply or work. It is not considered necessary to obtain another consultants report. Procurement would follow the CMAT policy of three tenders. None of the other schools in the CMAT need such extensive IT work undertaken, Any future capital projects are some years in the future and it is considered that the IT requires updating more urgently, rather than waiting for long term plans to be finalised. The board approved the use of reserves and agreed that the process should move to the next stage of procurement. 2. The compliance software will provide a list for all schools in respect of all health and safety and maintenance checks, eg, PAT testing, water tests etc and provide a dashboard for the school and the CMAT to ensure compliance. Documents and reports will be able to be uploaded to it. It will give greater transparency and control to AB. It can be shared with LGB's so that they can ensure they fulfill their role re health and safety compliance monitoring. It will be rolled out in the Lent term.
ACTION	Ensure LGB's have access to compliance software. AB
DECISION	The board approved the use of reserves at DL and agreed that the process should move to the next stage of procurement for the IT upgrade.

CHALLENGE	<p>Is the independent consultant truly independent? Would the company be tendering for the work? Is another consultant report needed? Do any other schools IT need upgrading thus enabling economies of scale to be achieved? If the work is undertaken will it need redoing if future capital plans go ahead? What reports will the compliance software provide? See 2</p>
Agenda Item 10	<p>► Finance</p>
MINUTE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Audit and Risk Committee had received a presentation from the auditors on the accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020. The accounts had also been reviewed by the Finance committee. The Committees recommend that the accounts be approved and signed. The accounts had been presented to the Members who had requested a typo correction which has been done. The accounts do not currently reflect a historic PAYE rebate which should be refunded shortly (£115k) and it was agreed that auditors should be made aware of the refund to see if they wish to adjust the accounts. Subject to this clarification, the Board approved the accounts and an electronic signature will be added before submission to ESFA and Companies House. 2. The Board considered the need to register for VAT. The threshold has not yet been reached but it is close and some areas are grey areas which could be considered to take the CMAT over the registration limit if interpreted in a certain way. The implications of registering were noted including the impact on schools. Only a few schools will be directly affected and the finance team will work with individual schools to advise them. VAT will need to be charged on sales invoices eg sports lettings and room hire, and this will raise the cost to those customers if they are not VAT registered. It was unanimously agreed that the CMAT should register for VAT asap. 3. The DfE have launched a VFMI tool and three webinars will be run in January. Details will be sent to directors. It was agreed that directors should attend webinars before deciding on what level of access they will require. 4. The Board formally recommend to the Members that Forrester Boyd are re-appointed for 2020/21 external audit. SN stated that she has already informed members. The Audit and Risk Committee will consider retender of auditors next year. 5. There are several apprenticeships within the CMAT schools, including senior leaders and chaplaincy. Head teachers are encouraged to use apprenticeships, if applicable, to utilise the £125k that is paid into the apprenticeship levy each year. The CMAT is meeting government targets for apprenticeships. C19 has stalled the apprenticeship agenda somewhat, making it difficult to offer training. Some of the levy can be used for upskilling and training existing staff. Two staff are following the chaplaincy apprenticeship pathway and it is hoped that more staff will follow this in the future. Consideration is being given to see if the levy can be used for staff to achieve approved teacher status. Two members of the finance team are undertaking training via apprenticeships. The lack of public transport to head office has been a barrier to young apprentices applying for positions. 6. The management accounts for November were noted. Management accounts are sent to the finance committee monthly for review and comments and a record kept of these reviews. The accounts are uploaded to TG to allow all Board members to access. A summary of review points and comments raised by the Finance Committee will be presented at the next Board meeting.
ACTION	<p>Clarify with auditors treatment of PAYE refund. MH Register for VAT. MH Send details of webinars for VFMI to directors. SN Prepare a summary of review points and comments raised by the Finance Committee for next Board meeting.MH</p>

DECISION	<p>Accounts for the year ended 31/8/20 approved, subject to clarification of PAYE refund treatment. Register for VAT asap. Recommend to the Members that Forrester Boyd are re-appointed for 2020/21 external audit.</p>
CHALLENGE	<p>Should the PAYE refund be reflected in the accounts? See 1 Are there any plans to utilise the apprenticeship levy? See 5</p>
Agenda Item 11	<p>▶ HR / Mental Health and Wellbeing</p>
MINUTE	<p>The HR Directors report was noted including progress against HR strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leadership academy is in its second year. There are currently 3 staff at advancing level and 4 at developing level. Numbers are lower than anticipated and there had been some drop outs due to the programme not being suitable for staff that had enrolled on the programme. Work is ongoing to look at adjusting the selection process and/or adjusting the course content. Due to C19 no staff were recruited to the programme for the current year. 2. A bid has been submitted to become a teaching school hub and a decision is expected in January. 3. A proposal to recruit an additional HR advisor was discussed. HR currently has staffing of a HR manager, a part time advisor and a part time administrator and is underresourced. Heads have indicated that additional HR support would be welcomed. Original staffing plans had indicated the need for two advisors. Costing indicates that the role is affordable and has been included in the budget. Two advisors would split the schools between them and deal with recruitment, sickness, disciplinarys, capability issues etc in their schools, freeing up the HR Manager to do strategic work. The Board approved the recruitment of a full time HR advisor with effect from 1/2/21. 4. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for schools was noted. The aim is for every school to have trained staff who can identify mental health issues in pupils and can support those pupils. The strategy was put together by the CMAT designated Mental Health Lead, an experienced staff member at the Training school, who undertook intensive training. The strategy is ambitious and would lead to designated leads on mental health and wellbeing in all schools along with designated governors on the LGB's. It was noted that progress on strategy should form part of the remit of the performance and standards committee, given the impact on pupils attainment that mental health and wellbeing has. Work will continue on developing the strategy. 5. The Board reviewed a paper on staff wellbeing and benefits. The aim is to be a caring Catholic employer who looks after staff well. It was recognised that looking after staff improves mental health and wellbeing, productivity and ultimately is better for pupils. It would build a reputation as a good employer which would aid recruitment and retention. The CMAT has worked with an Employee Benefit Company who proposed a number of benefits and enhancements. The cost in the first year would be around £120k which could be funded from the HMRC PAYE refund. STA is the only Trust that is considering these enhancements at present, although the other Trusts have access to the Employer Assistance programme. Some KPI's could be created to measure impact of the benefits, eg a reduction in short term sickness absence and staff surveys could help to assess its impact. The benefits would apply to all staff. The Board agreed the Executive Team should further explore and develop this plan, on the basis of the likely costs indicated, for a potential roll out during 2021.

DECISION	<p>Approve recruitment of HR advisor. Mental Health and Wellbeing to be remit of Standards Committee The Executive Team should explore and develop the wellbeing and benefits plan.</p>
CHALLENGE	<p>How is leadership academy progressing? See 1 Who has put together the mental health strategy? See 4 How would impact be measured in respect of staff wellbeing? See 5</p>
Agenda Item 12	<p>▶ Recovery Curriculum and Catch Up Update</p>
	<p>BU had met with MF to look at primary schools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The restrictions on visits means that there is greater reliance on what headteachers are reporting to the DPS rather than the DPS observing for themselves. 2. Most schools will have caught up by the end of the the Advent term. A number of schools have been identified that require additional support to catch up but MF remains confident that all schools will achieve catch up by the end of the academic year. 3. School reviews have looked at the curriculum in depth. A small number of schools have been identified that require additional support and monitoring to ensure they deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. Non-negotiables and pace of roll out have been discussed with these schools and follow up meetings arranged. 4. The school improvement heads have offered excellent support to schools. They are attached to 7 schools and their impact is noticeable. In the majority of these seven schools the processes they have introduced are now embedded in the school but in two of the schools further work is needed to embed further.
MINUTE	<p>CR had met with RH to look at secondary schools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The process of internal assessments had been reviewed given that it had replaced examinations in 2019-20. 2. Mock exams had taken place in December and once available the data will be reviewed to identify areas that require additional support. It was noted that mock exams had been affected by pupils having to self isolate and some schools had had to sit multiple versions of exams to ensure no cheating could take place. Some exams have had to be delayed until January. 3. Baseline reading tests had been carried out for year 7 and results were better than had been experienced nationally. 4. Year 12 will be carefully monitored to measure impact of lost schooling. 5. Year 10 are the biggest area of concern across the schools. Much work continues to help pupils catch up in preparation for year 11 exams. 6. All schools are working incredibly hard to support pupils to catch up. 7. SEN pupils are being well supported but there remains a considerable gap in attainment. 8. There are 9 Covid catch up teachers working across the CMAT schools. Some schools have been able to secure Teach First mentors for specific subject support. 9. Limited marketing of sixth forms has been undertaken as actual open evenings have not been possible. There has been a focus on recruiting own students. A sixth form network has been set up and will reach out to alternative schools. Marketing will be revisited after the pandemic. <p>It was noted that the pay committee had not met. Due to the challenges posed by C19, it was confirmed that all staff had proceeded in the pay scale unless they were under capability review.</p>

CHALLENGE What is being done to promote 6th forms? See 9

Agenda Item 13 ▶ **Next Meeting**

25 March 2021 at 4pm

Feast Day (online) 28 January 2021.

MINUTE The Chair expressed the Board's thanks to all of the staff at the schools who are working in difficult circumstances, for the support that the central team have provided over the year and for the leadership shown by the executive team. She reported that many of the LGB's had expressed gratitude for the support that had been provided by the CMAT over such a challenging period.

Agenda Item 14 ▶ **Director Only item**

- MINUTE**
1. CR and MD had completed the CEO performance appraisal. New objectives had been set and will be circulated to all Board members for reference. Going forward it was agreed that one member from each committee should meet to look at progress against objectives. It was noted that the CEO receives some mentoring from a Diocesan approved mentor and they have a good working relationship. SN will contact MR in respect of outcome of the performance appraisal (see separate addendum).
 2. Online training is available for Directors. Needs had been identified from the self evaluation questionnaires that directors had completed. Any additional needs should be identified to the Chair.
 3. SN will send directors feedback received from the governance self evaluation session. Further work will be undertaken in the Pentecost term.
 4. Good progress has been made with LGB's. Six chairs representing 7 schools have met with SN to form a consultation working group. Work will continue and impact monitored.
 5. Agendas have been set for the Lent term and shared with Chairs at the symposium. Focused questions will be sent to LGB's, not to be discussed in detail at the meeting but to arrange visits to discuss.

ACTION Circulate CEO objectives to Board. CR
Inform MR of outcome of CEO appraisal. SN
Distribute self evaluation feedback. SN

DECISION One member of each committee to be involved in review of CEO objectives.

Agenda Item 15 ▶ **Closing Prayer**

MINUTE The meeting ended with a prayer.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

STA Board *dated:* 14/12/2020
Minutes approved by Jennifer Barnacle