

## STA Board Minutes 30/03/2023

▶ Cossington ▶ Thursday, March 30, 2023 ▶ 4pm ▶ Chair: Sarah Noon ▶ Clerk: Jennifer Barnacle

**FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.**

Governors Attending:	>Maria Jane, Sarah Noon, Christopher Reynolds, Raphael Imoni, Brian Underwood, Immaculate Wilson-Mbah, Terry SmithMary Mihovilovic,
Governors Apologies:	>Mary Mihovilovic
Non Governors Attending:	>Jennifer Barnacle, Marcella Gillespie, Antoinette Bouwens, Mary Robson, Neil Lockyer, Kim Frith, Mike Hobbs, Ruth Hurcombe (item 5 only), Tom Shannon
Non Governors Apologies:	>Ruth Elmore

<b>Agenda Item 1</b>	▶ <b>Welcome and opening prayer</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	The meeting opened with a prayer.
<b>Agenda Item 2</b>	▶ <b>Minutes of last meeting, matters arising, conflicts of interests, and business and pecuniary interests</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were approved.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>MM to update Declaration of interest on TG (tick boxes to show complete). <b>Outstanding.</b>            TS will put some guidance and sample questions together re the Collective Worship progression document for the next Chairs Symposium. <b>Done and sent to all Chairs.</b>            Catholic Life Chaplaincy reports to give examples of impacts and a summary of any issues in schools. In addition the 8 aims should be linked to the CSI inspection framework. <b>TS Done</b>            MG to detail what we offer at present in terms of mental health support.. <b>See item 7</b>            Amend Low levels Concern Policy and send final version to Clerk. <b>Done</b>            Admissions policy will need to be approved by email. <b>Done</b>            Amend Charging and Remissions policy . Send final version to Clerk. <b>MH Done</b>            SN and NL to sign accounts and accounts to be submitted to ESFA. <b>MH Done</b>            A report on the use of the Medicash system was requested for the HR Committee. <b>MR/KF See item 9</b>            Reports to include details of any schools that are removed from priority lists. <b>RH confirmed none removed</b>            Add Common Language for Learning to next Chairs symposium. <b>SN/NL Done and sent to Chairs</b></p>
<b>Agenda Item 3</b>	▶ <b>Governance and Correspondence</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>Board approvals since last meeting by email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolution passed: The Employer agreed to release the following Employees to the Diocese for such days as are required by the Diocese for the conduct of denominational inspections on behalf of the Diocese. The Employer agrees to the terms and conditions as set out in the letter dated 27 January 2023. (Ruth Elmore, Helen White, Catherine Murphy, Andrew Monaghan, Lucy Gunton, Sarah Lockyer, Joe White). (Jan 2023)</li> <li>• Approval of 2024-25 admission policies (Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form) (Feb 2023)</li> <li>• Board approved delegation of responsibility to the HR Committee to consider the proposed responsibilities relating to potential TLR restructure for the duration of the restructuring exercise. (• To oversee the process of the TLR restructure within St Thomas Aquinas CMAT • To approve the consultation document prior to the launch of consultation. • To consider any representations received from the consultation</li> </ul>

- process. • To approve the final structure for TLR payments in schools. • To receive regular updates from the executive team and provide regular reports to the Board.)(Jan 2023).
- Approval of School Resource Management self assessment checklist (March 2023)

### Reserved Posts

- Dr John Pye has resigned from his position as Head at De Lisle. The Board noted the tremendous contribution he had made to the school. Recruitment is underway and it is hoped that a replacement can be appointed next term. The CMAT will communicate to staff its' commitment to continue with the excellent work done by JP, and confirm that the direction and ambition for the school will continue. This will form part of the interview process. There are good deputy and assistant heads in place at the school.
- The CMAT has been advertising for 4 Hub chaplains to work with different schools in different geographical areas. Two have been appointed and work continues on recruitment for Leicester and Loughborough Hubs.. Hub chaplains will work with school chaplains to increase chaplaincy capacity in schools and provide expertise and support. They will generally be in individual schools for around one day per week.
- Ms Felicity Knight has been appointed as permanent Headteacher at St Charles (previously interim Head).
- Recruitment for a Headteacher at Holy Cross Whitwick has been unsuccessful. Catherine Murphy will continue to be Executive Headteacher at both Holy Cross and St Winefrides.

### Local Governing Bodies

A temporary solution has been found for Holy Cross Whitwick LGB. SN is acting as Chair and 2 experienced Chairs from other schools have agreed to sit on the LGB to the end of term. A new foundation governor has been appointed and there are 2 new parent governors in place. The new governors are being supported in their roles. A contingency plan is being developed for next academic year should no further Foundation Governors be appointed.

Board approvals since last meeting by email:

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Approval of 2024-25 admission policies (Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form) (Feb 2023)

Board approved delegation of responsibility to the HR Committee to consider the proposed responsibilities relating to potential TLR restructure for the duration of the restructuring exercise. (• To oversee the process of the TLR restructure within St Thomas Aquinas CMAT • To approve the consultation document prior to the launch of consultation. • To consider any representations received from the consultation process. • To approve the final structure for TLR payments in schools. • To receive regular updates from the executive team and provide regular reports to the Board.)(Jan 2023).

Approval of School Resource Management self assessment checklist (March 2023)

DECISION

CHALLENGE

**How do Hub chaplains work with school chaplains?**

Agenda Item 4

▶ **Legal and Regulatory**

MINUTE

Nothing to report.

Agenda Item 5

▶ **Performance and Standards**

MINUTE

RH presented a report with an update on primary and secondary schools. Challenges were noted alongside progress made and support put in place. The Performance and Standards committee will consider data at their meeting in mid April.

RH detailed the work of the school improvement team. This includes:

- Two Directors of Performance and Standards.

- SEND and Inclusion Lead. This role within the school improvement team will increase to 2 days a week next academic year (currently one half day)
- Maths improvement Lead. This role is one day per week with the SI team.
- Music improvement Lead. This role is one day a week with the SI team.
- Roaming Assistant Head/Primary Curriculum Development This role is one day a week with the SI team.
- EYFS support. This role is one day a week with the SI team.
- Teaching and Learning Development. This role is half days with the SI team

The staff are deployed where needed, according to priorities set. The team have built up over the past five years and there is now a formalised School Improvement Team meeting every term. Most of the staff are secondments from existing roles. The building up of the team is good for succession planning and it also helps challenge talented staff and gives them good career advancement, which helps with staff retention. Backfilling is sometimes needed to allow the secondments to take place and this often allows other staff to gain more experience. In other cases there is capacity to release staff without the need to backfill.

An update on the Exemplary Leadership Programme will be given at the next committee meeting. The Programme is due to begin recruitment for a 4th cohort of delegates. 15 members of staff have already successfully accessed the programme.

**CHALLENGE** Do the SI team secondments roles need backfilling in the original schools?

**Agenda Item 6** ▶ **Lent Term Ofsted feedback**

**MINUTE**

NL presented a summary of the Lent term Ofsted inspections.

There have been six inspections and some reports had not yet been published.

The Directors noted the summary and NL stated that the experiences had been positive in all the schools that had been inspected.

Nl stated that the CMAT offers extensive support for heads and schools going through an Ofsted inspection. He stated that all the inspections this year had been conducted in a professional and supportive way, but that the inspections do cause stress, particularly because such short notice is given, the inspection itself is very intense and so much depends on the final judgement. The CMAT has good systems in place to support schools and much work is done throughout the school year to ensure schools feel prepared for inspections. Members of the central CMAT team are on hand during the inspection and the Chair of the CMAT often attends feedback sessions and supports governors. Good feedback has been received from schools about the support they receive from the CMAT.

The directors of performance and standards and other members of the central team monitor schools carefully and regularly to ensure that schools sustain or improve on their Ofsted judgement. Areas of concern are picked up and addressed early.

**CHALLENGE** What support can the CMAT give staff, particularly given recent press coverage about the stress of Ofsted inspections?  
How does the CMAT ensure that schools sustain or improve on their Ofsted judgement?

**Agenda Item 7** ▶ **Safeguarding**

**MINUTE**

**Mental Health Provision in schools**

MG presented a report on the review of childrens mental health provision in the CMAT schools.

The work being undertaken in schools was noted and the considerable challenges that schools face were acknowledged. Mental Health of children is a nationwide issue .There is a growing need for support for pupils and outside services, such as CAMHS, are stretched.

The impact on staff of dealing with mental health issues was recognised. Support and supervision is in place for staff but it is not consistent across schools and work is ongoing to improve this. Consideration is being given to setting up a mental health forum so staff can support each other, but there is a capacity issue for teams that are already stretched.

Funding is available to train mental health leads, but this funding ends on 31/3/23. MG has been encouraging all schools to apply for it and only 4 schools have not accessed it yet. One school has stated that it does not have the capacity to access it or to have time to allow the training to take place.

It was noted that if the CMAT provided additional centralised resource to deal with mental health issues this would result in cutbacks needing to be made in other areas and this would need to be a strategic decision. All schools currently have some provision and some schools have more than others. Levels of need varies between schools.Schools share resources where possible. NL stated that whilst the schools could provide more pastoral support if resources were available it could not make up the shortfalls of CAMHS.

It was noted that it is preferable to talk about wellbeing rather than mental health and the Board asked MG to draft a CMAT Wellbeing strategy for consideration.

**Safeguarding review**

An external safeguarding audit had been conducting and the report had been received. Auditors had spoken to DSL's, Central Team, school staff and had reviewed policies and procedures.

The report was very positive and will be considered in detail by the Boad committees.

Areas of strength include a strong safeguarding culture, an experienced safeguarding director in place, policies are good, provision of training for governors and staff is good and there is frequent assessment of knowledge . Suggested areas for development include having a separate safeguarding strategy, increased mental health provision, extending types of training and considering if headteachers should be DSL's.

**ACTION**

MG to draft a Wellbeing strategy.

**DECISION**

Wellbeing strategy to be drawn up.

**CHALLENGE**

**Should the CMAT appoint a centralised resource to deal with Pupil Wellbeing? Should the schools be looking to meet some of the shortfalls of the CAMHS service? How are staff supported?**

**Agenda Item 8**

**Catholic Life and Chaplaincy**

**MINUTE**

TS presented the chaplaincy report. For future reports, the Chair asked for updates to be highlighted.

The following points were noted:

- The Feast Day structure extended over a longer time period had proved successful.
- Examples of impact of work were noted. It has been suggested that schools bookend Mission on a Monday and a Friday and half of the Primary schools have adopted this. It has improved engagement and behaviour during the week.The pupils are asked to try to complete the mission by Friday, when they will have 'mission feedback' with their teacher. They will have a few minutes to discuss the mission, how they completed it and how it made them feel, or the impact it had on someone else.The class teacher then records a summary of the children's responses in the comment section on Truespirit. A bi-product is that this then generates evidence for a CSI inspection, showing the impact that Collective Worship is having on the young people in school. Some schools have been resistant to changing their existing system and have concerns that it will take up time. TS will continue to emphasis the benefits and encourage schools to implement it.
- The Collective Worship Progression document and guidance issued to governors is on TG. It was agreed that once more CSI inspections have taken place a template could be considered for governors. similar to

	<p>the one used for the safeguarding audit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been some good examples in schools of young person leadership. At one Secondary School, when the Chaplain left, a group of students carried on running retreat sessions independently and leading prayers etc.</li> <li>• Progress against 2022-23 Chaplaincy Action Plan was noted. Directors asked that 'Opportunities for staff to explore their Faith' is added to the action plan.</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION</b>	<p>Future reports to show the updates highlighted/different colour.TS  Once more CSI inspections have taken place a template should be considered for governors, similar to the one used for the safeguarding audit. TS  'Opportunities for staff to explore their Faith' to be added to the action plan.</p>
<b>DECISION</b>	<p>Directors asked that 'Opportunities for staff to explore their Faith' is added to the action plan.</p>
<b>CHALLENGE</b>	<p><b>Why haven't all schools adopted bookending Mission if it is so impactful?</b></p>
<b>Agenda Item 9</b>	<p><b>HR</b></p>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>MR presented the HR Directors report.</p> <p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial action by teachers continues. An offer has been made to unions and support staff but it is not known yet if this will be accepted. The Board noted the current position regarding potential 2023 pay awards. Strike action took place on 1/2/23 (24% of teachers on strike ), 1/3/23 (13% on strike), 15/3/23 (17% on strike) and 16/3/23 (17% on strike). 80% of pupils were in school. Most schools were impacted. Two secondaries had to close to year 11 on the first day of the strikes. Pupils were given work to do at home.</li> <li>• HR committees will be aligned across the three Trusts in 2023-24. Meetings should take place in a two week window directly following half term. The HR strategy group will meet in the first half of each term.</li> <li>• It was noted that no further changes are undertaken to the method of calculating holiday entitlement until the outcome of the Government consultation is published.</li> <li>• Part of the national agreement on support staff pay was to increase all employees annual leave entitlement by one day with effect from 1 April 2023.The Board confirms the uplift on all of the support staff annual leave entitlements and Term Time Only pay equations, with effect from 1 April 2023.</li> <li>• The Committee noted the adjustment in the school year for 2022/23 to account for the Kings Coronation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medicash report</b></p> <p>KF presented the report on usage of Medicash in the period from 1/9/22 to 28/2/23.Usage is increasing and it is being promoted in staff bulletins etc.</p> <p>Claims procedure is good and prompt. Most claims relate to dentistry, private GP appointments and optical appointments. Directors asked if further details could be obtained about the usage of counselling services.</p> <p>Staff can upgrade their policy to include their spouse or level of cover.</p> <p>The provision costs £60k per annum and is currently not a taxable benefit. Costs will be reviewed at renewal and consideration could be given to making it an optional benefit or only applicable to some staff, eg based on length of service etc.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	<p>KF to obtain further details of Medicash counselling services.</p>

<b>DECISION</b>	The Board confirms the uplift on all of the support staff annual leave entitlements and Term Time Only pay equations, with effect from 1 April 2023
<b>Agenda Item 10</b>	▶ <b>Finance</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>MH presented the Finance report.</p> <p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023-24 Budget planning is ongoing. Current forecast indicates an in-year deficit, but there are many uncertainties and variables, and these will be firmed up in the next few months. Meetings continue to be held with Heads to highlight the financial pressures the CMAT is facing and to review staffing.</li> <li>• The DfE announced a new grant (MSAG) to help with increased costs of pay and energy. Exact funding is unknown, but budget forecasts have assumed circa £600,000 between April and August, and £1.44 million in 2023/24. This additional funding is welcomed and has helped to cover the previously announced pay awards. The DfE have said there is no further funding available to that already announced.</li> <li>• The main funding source (GAG) for 2023/24 has been confirmed. Overall, there has been a reduction in pupil numbers of 134, equating to circa £670,000 less funding. Despite the reduced numbers, GAG has increased overall by 1.8% (circa £831,000). This is due to receiving MSAG funding.</li> <li>• St Pauls has arranged its' own transportation for 2023-24, and this will remove the need to subsidise the provision.</li> <li>• The ESFA View My Insights dashboard was noted. This compares data with similar schools. The high level of non-educational support staff spending was noted at a number of schools. MH stated that it is difficult to make direct comparisons between schools as schools may allocate and code staff costs differently. The dashboard is also based on 2020-21 data and the data is likely to have changed and improved since then.</li> <li>• Major variances will be explored to determine if they are the result of coding errors and allocation or if there is genuine overspending.</li> <li>• Management accounts for the period ended 28/2/2023 were noted. School level detail has been included and was welcomed by the Board. The number of individual schools in deficit was noted and this reflects the financial challenges being faced by schools and the CMAT. Heads are very aware of the financial challenges and are looking at ways to address them in their schools.</li> <li>• Overstaffing has been recognised in some schools, whilst other schools have vacancies that can be challenging to fill. At present it is not easy to move staff between different schools and consideration is being given to increasing flexibility by introducing Trust Wide contracts. This might allow staff to get experience in a range of different schools. Redeployment of staff should be an option when there is overstaffing.</li> </ul>
<b>CHALLENGE</b>	<b>Why is non educational support staff spending so high in some schools?</b>
<b>Agenda Item 11</b>	▶ <b>Business Services</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>AB presented the business services report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress made on the School Condition Allocation work was noted. Work has begun on establishing priorities for next year and will be presented to the Committee in April. Some condition surveys will be carried out in the Pentecost term and this will help inform decision making.</li> <li>• Starting from April 2023, the SCA allocation will be directly deposited into the CMAT's account, which means that the CMAT will have additional accounting responsibilities. Consideration will be given as to whether the Board intends to establish a new committee, composed of three directors, to handle SCA projects. This will be decided next term and will be in place for 2023-24 if implemented. AB will put a proposal together for consideration.</li> <li>• A revised programme is in place for the work on the T level block at De Lisle. Work will start in June and be complete for the new academic year. It was noted that numbers are likely to be low for the new T level courses being offered initially, but are expected to grow over time.</li> <li>• We will hear in June what priority group we are in for the school rebuilding programme. Some preliminary discussions will be held with Sport England regarding a new Sports Hall proposal.</li> <li>• The H&amp;S consultancy went to tender and was won by YMDBoon for 3 years. Trip consultancy will be with</li> </ul>

	<p>Evolve (DCC) until the end of August and will then move to Evolve advice. The retendering has resulted in a £20k saving and training will be delivered more locally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christopher Reynolds , H&amp;S Director, presented his H&amp;S report. There has been much progress made and there is a declining number of 'overdue' health and safety issues. Most schools are now classed as Gold standard. Thanks were expressed to Jackie Banks for her work with schools on Health and Safety issues.</li> <li>• A software package has been purchased to help deal with GDPR compliance issues.</li> <li>• Work continues on an overall IT strategy and on a broader digital strategy for the CMAT.</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION</b>	Consider setting up a new SCA committee, composed of three directors, to handle SCA projects. AB will put a proposal together for consideration.
<b>Agenda Item 12</b>	▶ <b>CMAT Risk Register</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>There have been two additions since the last review.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pensions and Payroll systems. NL had met with other Trust CEO's and discussed payroll provision. Work is ongoing to develop a stronger relationship with the centralised payroll team. The implementation of the new payroll system has resulted in a relatively small number of inaccuracies which are being addressed. Work is ongoing to ensure that pension treatment is accurate.</li> <li>2. Concerns were raised by a candidate at a recent interview about the application of reserved posts criteria. These criteria are set by the Diocese. It was noted that there are potential reputational and recruitment issues relating to the criteria and how it is expressed and that risk must be mitigated.</li> </ol>
3.	
<b>Agenda Item 13</b>	▶ <b>Director Only item</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	<p>The Governors Open Morning was cancelled as there were not enough attendees.</p> <p>To increase visibility of directors , it was suggested that directors might consider splitting schools between them (3 each) and attending those schools occasionally to meet Chairs, Heads, other governors etc. This would not be to monitor work, but should be seen as a way to be part of school life and to listen to any concerns etc. This approach had been suggested in both the governance and safeguarding reviews. Directors are asked to feedback to SN a list of 6 schools they might consider working with so that schools can be allocated .</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Directors are asked to feedback to SN a list of 6 schools they might consider working with so that schools can be allocated .
<b>Agenda Item 14</b>	▶ <b>Closing Prayer</b>
<b>MINUTE</b>	The meeting closed with a prayer.

**Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0**

STA Board *dated:* 30/03/2023  
Minutes approved by Jennifer Barnacle