

STA Board Minutes 18/12/2023

▶ Cossington ▶ Monday, December 18, 2023 ▶ 4pm ▶ Chair: Sarah Noon ▶ Clerk: Jennifer Barnacle

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Governors Attending: >Brian Underwood, Sarah Noon, Maria Jane, Mary Mihovilovic, Terry Smith

Governors Apologies: >Immaculate Wilson- Mbah, Fr Raphael Imoni

Non Governors Attending: >Jennifer Barnacle, Simon Gillespie, Antoinette Bouwens, Ruth Elmore, Marcella Gillespie, Ruth Elmore, Mike Hobbs, Mary Robson

Non Governors Apologies: >Tom Shannon

Agenda Item 1 ▶ Welcome and opening prayer

MINUTE

The meeting opened with a prayer.
The Chair welcomed Fr Simon Gillespie to the meeting.

Agenda Item 2 ▶ Minutes of last meeting, matters arising, conflicts of interests, and business and pecuniary interests

MINUTE

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

There were no declarations of interest.

Matters arising

Board - Sept 23

Directors to update their TG profiles, read relevant documentation and ensure declarations of interest are up to date by 16/10. **IWM and RI outstanding. Reminder sent 18/12/23.**
Revised Terms of Estates and A&R Committees to follow. and Committee meetings to note revised terms of committees. **Done**
Revise Safeguarding Governor Monitoring Checklist with filtering and monitoring appendix will be issued to schools shortly. **MG Done. ON A2 LGB Agenda**
Ensure that the IT distribution list for governors are up to date. **JB/Clerks Done**
Obtain costs for protection software for Ipads. **MG Now implemented**
Amend Mission Statement for 2 areas. **Done**
NL to amend strategic plan to reflect points raised by Board. **Done**
Amend Risk assessment policy at point 6 and send final version to Clerk for TG. **Done**

Finance Committee (Nov 23)

HR advice will be sought about the possibility of asking and/or incentivising staff to move schools. **NL had discussed with HR. MR stated that the policies already in place (eg redundancy and restructuring, recruitment and retention policy) have provision for incentivising, asking staff to move schools etc and the strategy could be used to avoid redundancy situations in some schools. However there is a risk that it destabilises staff and if it is done on a volunteer basis there is a risk that the staff who volunteer are not the staff that the school would want to move. Directors acknowledged this but stated that in the right circumstances it is something that they would want to explore as some schools are overstaffed. Whilst no schools are understaffed, according to the tight KPI's applied, there are vacancies in some areas. Financial considerations must be taken into account. NL and MR to continue to look at using the existing policies on a case by case basis to establish if it is appropriate to ask staff to move to other schools or to incentivise**

	<p>moves. Consideration will be given to informing parents about the SEN situation and encouraging them to write to their MP's about the issue. In an informal conversation with the MP for Market Harborough, the MP had stated that it is recognised that SEN funding is insufficient but there are currently no plans to increase it. The Finance Committee will recommend to the Board that the pension scheme is adjusted to zero in the accounts.Noted.</p> <p>HR Committee (Oct 23)</p> <p>Raise issue of role of the HR strategic group and its links to committees to be added in to Terms of Reference. MR To be done when reviewed (summer 2024) MR to explore options for reports for Board/committee standardised across CMATs. Ongoing. Prototype reports to go to HR Strategic Group. The STA specific implementation plan will come to the next HR committee.Noted</p> <p>Estates Committee - Nov 2023</p> <p>Cross reference revised committee terms of reference to capital build protocol to ensure documents are aligned. AB Outstanding. Independent Survey re St Pauls doors to be commissioned. Quote awaited. The Committee requested that the diocese is kept informed of developments at St Martins and that the committee is emailed the results of the HAC survey. Survey results are awaited . However a summary shows that the school does have HAC but it is in good condition and has been subjected to stress testing. It is only in a small area of the school. Consider grant funding for pool heater at DL. AB Outstanding. Continue with LED proposal and get Diocesan approval. AB Submitted and approved.</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee - November 2023</p> <p>SN to raise payroll issues at Chairs meeting.SN has seen an internal audit report. She has asked that a report is compiled twice a year showing how many queries have been raised, on what subjects and how long they took to resolve. Work is ongoing to look at what records are currently kept to be able to answer these questions. MH to produce a paper re census checking for Board. See Agenda item SN to inform Fr Simon of audit retender process followed and recommendation.Done NL to amend Risk Register. Done NL to establish the Access Matrix for shared systems. Ongoing JB to distribute the IT response re email security to the Committee Done. Board are satisfied with security of emails.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>IWM and RI to update their TG profiles, read relevant documentation and ensure declarations of interest are up to date . Cross reference revised committee terms of reference to capital build protocol to ensure documents are aligned. AB Independent Survey re St Pauls doors to be commissioned. AB Consider grant funding for pool heater at DL. AB NL to establish the Access Matrix for shared systems</p>
<p>DECISION</p>	<p>Directors agreed that NL/MR should continue to explore incentivising staff to move schools and asking staff to move schools as a way to reduce overstaffing at some schools.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 3</p>	<p>Governance, Correspondence, Legal and regulatory</p>
<p>MINUTE</p>	<p>1. Members meeting preparation and letter. SN stated that Directors have been sent all relevant information and Chairs of Committees have been asked to write a short paragraph outlining the work undertaken by the Committee. Directors are invited to attend the Members meeting.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The potential new Director has withdrawn her application. Directors are asked to consider if they know anybody who may be a suitable appointment. 3. Board approvals since last meeting by email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the terms relating to the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Charles Borromeo, Ashby-de-la-Zouch deciding to make the church building and car park available to the CMAT on a permanent basis. Terms are no financial return, other than the CMAT to be responsible for all professional fees in dealing with this matter, the CMAT to be responsible for all repairs and maintenance for the land and property going forward, and if in the future the property is sold, the parish is to receive the sale proceeds less any clawback by the Government for public money having been spent on the building. Diocesan approval to be sought. • C Reynolds to be an independent advisor to CEO Performance Management Panel. Diocese approved. • Approval of continued use of existing complaints policy, pending Diocese issuing new policy. SN stated that a new policy is almost ready for approval. • Approval of new boiler at St Josephs Leicester. Diocese approved. AB stated that the paperwork sent to the Diocese had incorrectly referred to St Josephs MH and she apologised for the error.
ACTION	Chairs of Committees have been asked to write a short paragraph outlining the work undertaken by the Committee.
DECISION	<p>Board approvals since last meeting by email:</p> <p>Approval of the terms relating to the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Charles Borromeo, Ashby-de-la-Zouch deciding to make the church building and car park available to the CMAT on a permanent basis. Terms are no financial return, other than the CMAT to be responsible for all professional fees in dealing with this matter, the CMAT to be responsible for all repairs and maintenance for the land and property going forward, and if in the future the property is sold, the parish is to receive the sale proceeds less any clawback by the Government for public money having been spent on the building. Diocesan approval to be sought.</p> <p>C Reynolds to be an independent advisor to CEO Performance Management Panel. Diocese approved.</p> <p>Approval of continued use of existing complaints policy, pending Diocese issuing new policy. SN stated that a new policy is almost ready for approval.</p> <p>Approval of new boiler at St Josephs Leicester.</p>
Agenda Item 4	▶ CMAT Parent Survey
MINUTE	<p>The results were noted.</p> <p>There had been 1700 responses and parents had been directly approached through Arbor. Due to the nature of the survey, further analysis is challenging and work continues on looking at how to extract meaningful data. At present it is hard to highlight any major concerns. Numbers responding from some schools is a concern.</p> <p>There were some positives highlighted and these related to Catholic Life, behaviour, safeguarding and pastoral support.</p> <p>The purpose of the survey was explained to parents when it was sent out. The CMAT has an obvious presence in all schools including on signage, lanyards, paperwork and on the website.</p>
CHALLENGE	How do we know what awareness of the CMAT parents have? Do they understand what the survey is used for?
Agenda Item 5	▶ CMAT Risk Register

<p>MINUTE</p>	<p>The paper on the risk register was noted .</p> <p>The Executive Team had undertaken a thorough review to establish if the risk register met the needs of the CMAT and the Audit and Risk Committee had considered the Register in detail at their meeting in November.</p> <p>The purpose of the Register is to enable the Executive Team and Trust Board to identify, monitor, mitigate and (eventually, if possible) remove risks to the organisation. Potential obstacles to achieving this had been identified.</p> <p>The Executive team and Audit and Risk Committee members stated that they believed that the four categories of risk worked well and should be maintained - Strategic and reputational risks, Operational risks, Compliance risks and Financial risks.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Committee had stated that old or very low risks should remain on the register rather than be removed. This is to ensure nothing is overlooked.</p> <p>Committees look at their relevant risks at their meetings.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6</p>	<p>▶ Report from Catholic Life Committee</p>
<p>MINUTE</p>	<p>The minutes of the Catholic Life Committee held in November 2023 were noted.</p> <p>The Lead Lay Chaplains report focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness and impact of the support provided for schools to help develop their Catholic Life and Mission and Collective Worship. The LLC has worked with all schools to ensure their mission statement is part of how life is lived in the school. • the effectiveness of provision for the development of Catholic Life and Mission within the Trust central team. The Committee had noted the initiatives that take place with the Central Team to help develop Catholic Life and Mission eg Monday prayer and reflection, prayer table, half termly thanksgiving service. NL stated that a pulse survey conducted with the Central staff asked How important is it to you that the CMAT is Catholic? There were 16 responses. 4 said extremely important, 3 said somewhat important and the rest said neither important or not important. However when asked about what being part of the CMAT meant to them comments mentioned 'sense of family', 'sense of pride', 'upholding values', 'supportive', 'caring' etc and so it was clear that the Catholic ethos is valued by central staff. It is discrete and lived day to day and reflected in how staff treat each other. • considering to what extent encounter with the person of Jesus Christ is truly at the heart of each school community and the Trust as a whole. • update on Chaplaincy formation and development. Chaplains meet monthly to share ideas and good practice. • Strategic priorities for 2023/24. • Work is ongoing to improve the effectiveness of LGB's in monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school, including reviewing Primary schools Retreat Action Plans. • 32 pupils have now signed up to the Lourdes trip which will take place in July. • The Committee had considered any issues or challenges highlighted in Catholic Life at the schools and looked at what is being done to address them. • Two schools have had a CSI inspection in the Advent term. St John Fisher's report has been published and a judgement of Good overall was achieved . It had been judged outstanding in 7 out of 9 categories. The report for Holy Cross Whitwick is awaited.

Another 7 inspections are due this academic year. Lessons have been learned from the CSI inspection, especially relating to what evidence is required.

Agenda Item 6 ▶ **CMAT ECO Policy**

The CMAT Eco policy statement was noted. Once approved it will form part of the Diocesan Framework in due course

It was acknowledged that due to the diverse estate it is very difficult to set targets re energy efficiency, such as how much we intend to reduce energy consumption by and it was agreed that instead it should be a general target with no percentage applied to it. Similarly we should state that we intend to reduce food waste without setting a target of zero by a specific year.

MINUTE

The document should standardise references to biking and cycling.
A front sheet to be added to the document.

It was noted that many of the aims will not be achievable without further expenditure and future budgets may need to consider an amount for eco changes. Much work is already being done in schools as part of the Eco Roadmap.

The action log will be completed by the CMAT to record actions being taken at both school and whole CMAT level. Actions will be reviewed twice a year at the Estates Committee.

Subject to the above amendments, the Eco Policy statement was approved.

ACTION

Remove target percentage for energy efficiency and the reference to zero food waste by a specific year. AB
The document should standardise references to biking and cycling. AB
A front sheet to be added to the document. AB

DECISION

Agreed to remove target percentage for energy efficiency and the reference to zero food waste by a specific year.
Subject to the above amendments, the Eco Policy statement was approved.

Agenda Item 7 ▶ **Safeguarding**

MG presented her report.

All staff training has been done in schools and HT, DSL's and SLT have had specific training.

Take up of the mandatory training for governors has improved - 90 out of 126 have completed it in the Advent term. Mop up sessions are being held in January for those who have not already undertaken it. Once the mop up sessions are finished, JB, MG and SN to look at non-completion and decide what action to take against those governors .

MINUTE

Data from CPOMS was noted. Categories have been streamlined and there is consistency across schools now. Mental Health and Wellbeing issues remain the biggest concern.

It was noted that data refers to each concern and not pupils. Some pupils will have multiple concerns and in multiple categories and these can be identified.

Many schools have senior Mental Health Leads , but it is often combined with other roles in the school. Some secondary schools have their own counsellors generally funded through PP Funding. ELSA's (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) are having a great impact in primary schools. Staff are generally good at identifying issues and making the appropriate referral. All schools offer support but it was acknowledged that due to high needs and complex cases it is not always enough.

	<p>Staff can use the Medicash system to access help with mental health and wellbeing. Once iTrent is more established data relating to absence, illness and mental health and wellbeing will be easier to obtain.</p> <p>Directors noted the Filtering and Monitoring Guidelines which clearly sets out where responsibilities lie. The Safeguarding audit toolkit includes a section on Filtering and monitoring and LGB's reviewed the completed toolkit in A2. Governor training also featured a section on filtering and monitoring. The Board approved the guidelines and it will be rolled out across schools, subject to the IT helpdesk address being amended.</p> <p>Clerks will be asked to ask their LGB's who has undertaken the Cyber security training at the L1 meeting.</p> <p>Directors noted the External Speakers Protocols, which includes the Diocesan checklist as an appendix. It was suggested that the safeguarding section is put as a separate appendix as it is the section that should be sent to speakers to complete. Schools should be advised what speakers need to complete and they should also be informed that the event organiser needs to complete the Diocesan checklist. MG to amend and bring revised version back to Standards Committee.</p>
ACTION	<p>Consider what to do re non-completion of governor safeguarding training. JB/SN/MG Clerks will be asked to ask their LGB's who has undertaken the Cyber security training at the L1 meeting. Clerks/JB Amend External Speakers policy and present to standards Committee. MG</p>
DECISION	<p>The Board approved the Filtering and Monitoring guidelines subject to the IT helpdesk address being amended and it will be rolled out across schools.</p>
CHALLENGE	<p>How do we support pupils with mental health and wellbeing issues? Do we have data on staff mental health and well being?</p>
Agenda Item 8	<p>▶ Report from Estates Committee</p>
MINUTE	<p>The Estates Committee has now been split from the Finance Committee to allow greater scrutiny now that the CMAT receives the SCA directly.</p> <p>The minutes of the Committee meeting in November 2023 were noted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major works at schools had been reviewed. 2. An Energy Efficiency grant for £450k is available. The Committee had considered a proposal that it is put towards replacing all lighting in the primary schools with LED lights. The Committee agreed that replacement would have high impact on environmental emissions, an impact on pupils by improving the working environment and would lead to savings and agreed the use of the grant for this purpose, subject to Diocesan approval (subsequently obtained). Full cost of replacement at 16 schools is £774k plus £150k for ceiling replacements and the grant will be used to offset some of this. 3. Willis Towers Watson (WTW) has been appointed by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide risk management support to members of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA). Twelve of our schools (2 secondary and 10 primary schools) have been selected for a Health and Safety review. The process is designed to be supportive and identify areas of good practice and areas where we may recommend improvement. Any observations or recommendations are discussed during the review and confirmed in writing as a written report. These reviews allow RPA members to demonstrate that reasonable risk management standards are being maintained. 4. YMDBoon will be completing an Estates Strategy Plan once condition surveys are complete at all schools. It will include a five year maintenance plan for every school. 5. RAAC has been identified at St Josephs Market Harborough and remediation work is needed to replace it in the roof, hall and kitchen. Confirmation has been received that full costs whatever they are (estimated at £0.5m) will be met by the DfE. It will be a challenging project and it is hoped that it will be complete for the start of the next academic year. Diocesan approval to be sought. Parents and staff have been very supportive and adaptive.

6. The bond of £40k relating to St Martins car park work has now been returned (minus a small residual due in 2024).

ACTION

Diocese to be asked to approve work re RAAC at St Josephs Market Harborough. AB

Agenda Item 9

▶ Finance Report and report from Audit and Risk Committee

The Finance report and minutes of the Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee were noted.

Approval of Accounts

The Audit and Risk Committee had received a presentation from the auditors on the accounts for the year ended 31/8/23.

A number of minor amendments to the accounts had been suggested and made and the Audit Committee recommend to the Board that the accounts are approved and signed. A further minor amendment is needed to remove a duplicated resignation date on page 17.

There is nothing in the audit report to bring to the attention of the Board.

It was noted that the accounts include a statement of public benefit and it was agreed that the Board meets the criteria for public benefit as set out in the Charity Commission Guidance.

The Board approved the audited accounts for the year ended 31/8/23 and authorised SN and NL to sign them.

Retender of External Auditors

The Audit and Risk committee had considered the retender of external auditors. The DfE framework had been used. Only two tenders had been received and both had been considered and scored by the Committee using set criteria..

A recommendation is made to the Board that Forrester Boyd are reappointed for a further 3 years , with the potential to extend for a further two years.

They do a good job for the CMAT, represent good value for money and are recognised experts in the field.

MINUTE

The Board approved the recommendation and it will be put to members in January.

Management accounts

The accounts were noted and are considered monthly (by email) by the Finance Committee.

Internal Audit

The report was noted and will be filed with ESFA.

Census

MH presented a paper detailing steps that had been taken to ensure that pupil census figures were accurate. This area had been highlighted in an internal audit report.

The CMAT buys in services from local authorities re the census and a report of what checks they perform has been obtained. MH will enquire if they found any specific issues in schools in relation to the census.

An internal check was carried out to look at forecasted figures compared to actual to see if there were any major variances. Two schools were flagged: St Pauls and Sacred Heart Leicester. St Pauls variance relates primarily to the 6th form. Numbers in the bulge year did not carry forward into the 6th form as anticipated and it was noted that other local 6th forms had conducted aggressive marketing campaigns. The school had also had to cut some courses due to a lack of teachers/pupils. Pupil voice had identified some reasons for going to alternative 6th forms including perceived greater freedom etc and some internal changes have been made as a result. The school has put strategies in place going forward and is looking at cutting in year costs. Courses will not be run if not financially viable. Sacred Hearts variance appears to be due to specific circumstances at a point in time.

	The Board stated that they are satisfied with the checks undertaken on the pupil census.
ACTION	Remove a duplicated resignation date in accounts on page 17. MH MH will enquire if Local Authorities found any specific issues in schools in relation to the census.
DECISION	The Board approved the audited accounts for the year ended 31/8/23 and authorised SN and NL to sign them. The Board approved the recommendation to reappoint Forrester Boyd as Auditors and it will be put to members in January.

Agenda Item 10	▶ Report from HR Committee
MINUTE	<p>The Minutes of the HR Committee meeting held in October were noted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher and Support Staff pay awards were agreed and paid in November. 2. Progress against the HR strategic implementation plan was reviewed. 3. The TLR restructure is complete. There are 2 formal appeals to be heard by an Appeals Panel. 4. A pulse survey had been undertaken in respect of performance management and has led to the development of an Employee Growth and Development Programme. An action plan is being compiled. 5. The school workforce census was completed and sent before deadline. 6. The HR Committee had agreed that the consultation process re the removal of TLRs at St Pauls and St Winefreds should take place. Once all complete Board approval will be sought.
7.	

Agenda Item 11	▶ Performance and Standards
MINUTE	<p>The Directors of Performance and Standards presented their report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The strengths and areas of development for each school were noted. In particular there are 4 schools which are causing some concerns and these were discussed in detail including the steps being put in place to address the challenges being faced. 2. There is much positive improvement in all schools, particularly in the area of curriculum planning, and the next stage of this is enactment, including improving assessments and directing attention of learners. 3. The strengths and areas of development are identified at the school reviews. All schools have had a review in the Advent term. This is an intensive exercise and includes some common themes such as safeguarding, SEND, Attendance and behaviour and also some bespoke areas specific to the school. 4. A CMAT Behaviour and Attendance Lead is in place and is having a major impact in schools. His work is being well received. He has met with all schools and is undertaking bespoke work with them. A number of schools have been identified as priorities. Whilst our overall attendance figure is above National Average, it is still not back to pre pandemic levels. 5. A number of whole Trust themes have been identified: <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches and knowledge around safeguarding by leaders which impacts on whole school culture • Personal development curriculum planning and implementation • Clearly planned behavioural approaches which are understood by staff and pupils • Curriculum planning is clear and consistent across a range of subjects. Sequenced long term plans include opportunities for children to recall learning and spaced retrieval opportunities.

- Early reading curriculum, approaches and teaching



Areas for development:

- Personal development: knowledge of other world faiths, careers education
- The enactment of the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure the most important learning is being identified and taught correctly
- Maths curriculum in primaries; the White Rose resource is not always used well. Leaders and teachers need to identify why certain problems or questions are being asked, that misconceptions are being thought about and that checks for understanding are effective.
- Leaders need to have secure plans in place to address gaps in learning for some curriculum subjects

Next Steps

- Targeted specific coaching at curriculum level within specific schools
- Specific and targeted training around enactment of the curriculum: is the approach at curriculum level effective and are children remembering the most important components of learning?
- Focus on primary Maths, particularly in terms of pedagogy
- Training on approaches for directing attention within the classroom
- Training and coaching around questioning

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<p>Agenda Item 12</p>	<p> Policies</p>
<p>MINUTE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ECT Policy. This is a Diocesan policy. SN stated that she had a number of queries relating to where responsibility lies (school/CMAT) and will raise these with MR. Approval was deferred. 2. Positive Handling. This policy has been drawn up by Behaviour and Attendance Lead. It has been well researched and incorporates best practice. It has been shared with Heads and the Executive Team. The Board approved the Policy subject to requirement to keep documentation for 75 years and the ability of the CPOMS system to do this being checked (8.3). It was noted that the CMAT behaviour and attendance lead will receive a copy of every form completed re positive handling and will give feedback to staff. Staff will be trained on when and how to complete positive handling reports. The DPS will report to the Standards Committee with a positive handling overview. 3. The Modern Slavery Statement was noted. The following amendments were requested - last paragraph has the wrong name of CMAT and reference to our Catholic principles should be included within the document. Subject to the above changes the policy was approved.
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Queries re ECT policy to be raised with MR. SN Requirement to keep documentation for 75 years and the ability of the CPOMS system to do this to be checked in the Positive Handling policy.(8.3) Amend Modern Slavery Act Statement : last paragraph has the wrong name of CMAT and reference to our Catholic principles should be included within the document.</p>
<p>DECISION</p>	<p>The Board approved the Positive Handling Policy subject to requirement to keep documentation for 75 years and the ability of the CPOMS system to do this being checked The Board approved the Modern Slavery Act statement, subject to the above changes being made.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 13</p>	<p> Director Only item</p>
<p>MINUTE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CEO's Performance Management Review was complete. Details had been emailed to all Directors. New objectives have been set.

2. The CEO and Executive Pay Awards were discussed and will be in line with the figures recommended by the Executive Pay Advisory Committee. Consultations with CEO's and Executive Team have been held.

3.

Agenda Item
14

▶ Closing Prayer

MINUTE

The meeting ended with a prayer.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

STA Board meeting *dated:* 18/12/2023

Minutes approved by Jennifer Barnacle