



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FULL GOVERNING BODY OF
ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD IN SCHOOL
ON MONDAY, 26TH JUNE 2023 AT 6.00PM**

PRESENT: Mr S Taylor (Chair, Foundation); Canon J Batthula (Vice Chair, Foundation); Mrs N Henderson-Andrade (Foundation); Mr M Doherty (L.A.); Mrs J Hurst (Foundation); Mrs E Morgan (Foundation); Mrs Princess Akin-Olugbade (Elected Parent); Mr G Refalo (Elected Parent); Mrs T Yarker (Foundation)

APOLOGIES: Miss P Pickering and Miss L Grant (approved). PA-O will be 15 minutes late.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L Hall (Clerk)

1. CJ opened meeting with a prayer.
2. Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the new Foundation Governor. Meeting was declared quorate.
3. **Register of Interests**
 - a. NH-A declared she is a governor at Blessed George Napier school.
 - b. EM declared she is a member of staff at Blessed George Napier school.
 - c. GR declared he is Chair of St Mary's PTFA.

4. **Minutes of the full GB meeting** of 15th May 2023 were declared to be a true record and were signed by Chair.

Matters arising

Governors sought clarity for the date of the head teacher's Thanksgiving Mass as the previous minutes say it is on 19th July. This has been changed to 20th July. CJ will finalise details this week and Chair will send an invitation to parents.

PA-O entered

5. **Admissions/Attendance**

Since the last meeting we have had eight children leave St Mary's, including five Catholic pupils. We have been joined by one non-Catholic pupil and now have 238 children on roll. There are currently 32 allocated pupils for entry to EYFS in September (13 Catholics).

Governors discussed the impact that St Edburg's moving to three form entry could have on St Mary's admission numbers, and the importance of being proactive. They committed to the church display being in place for September, including governor information and quotes from Ofsted.

Attendance currently stands at 93.7%. National average is 91.1%

6. **Pastoral Matters**

Masses continue, with the Leaver's Mass taking place in the Prayer Garden last week and the Holy Day of Obligation this Thursday in church. Dates for the Sacraments next year will be confirmed this week, Masses will continue under the interim head teachers and the school will continue to provide pastoral care.

Governors questioned if there was a separation of St Mary's pupils and Catholic children at other schools. The parents and children who do not attend St Mary's tend to be present at church regularly. They meet

St Mary's parents at the sessions before First Holy Communion and they also mix during the Confirmation Retreat.

Governors asked if Confessions can take place in school and CJ explained that this is a safeguarding issue. He said it is important that parents take responsibility for taking their children to Confession.

7. Safeguarding

Chair, as safeguarding governor, explained that Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) is updated annually. Last year raised the bar for governor training, and this year's changes are:

- a. Internet safety - All schools need to address filtering and monitoring processes. All staff should receive training.
- b. Children absent from education - This can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns.
- c. Recruitment - Candidates should be informed that online searches could be performed.
- d. Incidents on school property - Lettings policies should include DBS checks for staff of outside agencies who use school premises for activities with children. The governing body's strategic responsibility is to ensure an appropriate policy is in place, it is the SLT's operational responsibility to ensure the policy is followed.

The existing Lettings Policy will be checked and the possibility of adapting PFMAC's policy will be looked into if necessary.

8. Finance/Buildings/Health & Safety

Chair discussed the health & safety monitoring audit carried out in school on 17th May. He said that it was very thorough and only a few things were identified to fix. Governors need to ensure that actions have been closed within six months so this will be added to the October agenda.

Governors asked for examples of required actions and Chair replied that the asbestos management folder must be drawn to the attention of contractors and equipment required for working at height must be regularly inspected.

Clerk explained that work is usually carried out by contractors during the school holidays and they are arranged through the building consultancy who, prior to the current works, undertook a refurbishment and demolition survey. The ladder register was updated the weekend following the audit.

9. School Based Project

Clerk discussed the course which she is currently undertaking (Level 3 Clerking of School and Academy Governing Boards). Part of this course is a school based project, and Clerk outlined her four goals:

- a. To help create induction plans for new governors.
Two of the current new governors were asked for feedback on the draft 'New Governor's Handbook'. It is hoped this will be a helpful resource for new and existing governors with information and links to help them settle in their role. Feedback was that it would not replace the importance of mentorship but suggested additions were the Scheme of Delegation, an explanation of the Google Drive, and signposting to organisations such as the NGA and Oxfordshire Governor Services.
- b. Support governors in creating an annual training plan.
Clerk explained that draft training plans for some of the governors are in place on Governor Hub, utilising the due date system of documents, so that individual governors are colour coded to flag up anyone who is not compliant with compulsory training (e.g. Level 2 safeguarding). New governors said that this training document was very helpful.
- c. Work with the Chair to develop an annual cycle of agendas.
This is currently being populated, and Chair explained that it will help to organise the agenda and governance business throughout the year.
- d. Support governors in maintaining an effective administration system.
Clerk asked if governors had any objection to her organising the Google Drive and making it more user friendly. Governors agreed that this would be helpful

10. Annual Complaints Review

Chair explained that best practice is to hold a complaints review once a year. This is not to look at individual cases, but to examine patterns and trends in order to learn from them. Chair confirmed that no

complaints had been escalated to the governors, but he would like further clarity going forward of the number of complaints below that level.

Governors discussed their role in the complaints process, including the need to advise parents who may approach them to follow the complaints policy. They agreed that they should make themselves more familiar with the adopted diocesan policy's thresholds for governor involvement.

11. Academy Status

The academisation roadmap, which was approved at last October's FGB meeting, states that in July's FGB meeting governors will "make the decision to start Academisation Process". The start of the academisation process is the formal submission to the BDES of an approved application from governors. Chair asked governors to make this decision with a vote, reiterating that this is not about whether or not to join the academy, which was already covered last October. This is to gain agreement to commence the formal process of academisation. He asked governors to vote by show of hands whether they agree, disagree or abstain to starting the academisation process.

Governors asked what the alternative is if they vote against starting the process today. Chair clarified that the discussion would need to be repeated, and after the challenges faced, he felt it would be detrimental to have uncertainty continue any longer. A governor added that they shouldn't pretend that this has not been a challenging period, but said that Calvary has got to be endured to experience Easter Sunday. CJ agreed that this is the only way forward for as governors of a Catholic school, and for the welfare of the pupils and staff.

All present governors voted in favour of starting the academisation process.

12. Interim Head Teacher Update

Chair shared that the academy has committed to a staffing solution with a retired head teacher two days a week and a serving head teacher for a further two days. He said that administration needs to be resolved before their names can be shared. As St Mary's is a maintained school, the LA has a statutory responsibility to ensure that the solution meets statutory requirements.

Governors extended their thanks to PFMAC for providing the temporary headships.

Chair said that the PFMAC Catholic Senior Executive Lead and both head teachers will meet with staff and governors before the end of the summer term.

13. Any Other Business

Governors discussed the Oxfordshire Governor Services annual conference which was on Saturday. One governor had attended and said it was a good networking opportunity and that they had met governors from within the PFMAC.

We have one foundation governor vacancy outstanding. The suggested candidate will hopefully be recruited before the October meeting.

Chair suggested that governors get together over the summer holiday to discuss their vision.

There was discussion about school residential visits which are usually booked a year in advance. This will be checked with PP.

The governors thanked PP and LG for their long service to St Mary's and Catholic education, wishing that God continue to bless them abundantly.

A governor thanked Chair for his stoic and inspirational leadership through a challenging time.

14. Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed by the end of the summer term.

The meeting closed with a prayer at 19:45

LH 28/06/2023

