



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – Part A
Held on 2nd April 2025 at 5.30pm
At The John Fisher School

Mr A Theobald (AT)	Foundation Governor - Chair	Present
Ms G Grabowski (GG)	Foundation Governor – Vice Chair	Present
Mr D Fox (DF)	Foundation Governor	Absent
Mr P Hall (PH)	Staff Governor	Present
Mr N McEvilly (NM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Dr A McGowan (AM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Father F Murphy (FFM)	Foundation Governor	Present
Dr T Newman Sanders (TNS)	Foundation Governor	Absent
Ms M Ryan (MR)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor	Present
Mrs J Cole (JC)	Parent Governor	Absent
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present
Ms S Nasser (SN)	LA Governor	Present
Mr T Richmond (TR)	Co-opted Governor	Present (<i>from 6.10pm</i>)
Mr R Teague (RT)	Headteacher and Ex-Officio	Present

Attendees (non-voting)

Mr D Mawer (DM) – Assistant Headteacher / DSL (*until 6.30pm*)

Mrs Y Epale (YE)– Diocese Advisor

Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

	Minutes	
	Welcome and Opening FFM opened the meeting with a prayer.	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from: TNS, DF and JC which were accepted. The meeting was confirmed to be quorate. There were no declarations of interest raised in respect of any agenda item.	
2	Minutes of the meeting of 27th November and 4th December 2024 The Chair said he was taking the minutes as read, there were no further questions or comments. DECISION: Governors agreed that the Part A and B minutes of the meeting held on 27.11.2024 and 4.12.2024 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. <u>Update on Actions</u> 1. Governor emails – completed. 2. Link governors – completed. 3. Safeguarding training – completed. 4. Completed. 5. EDI policy update – SN confirmed she had liaised with TNS but they had not discussed further c/f action. 6. MAT presentations for mid 2025 - c/f action.	



YE advised that the MATs within the diocese were progressing at speed and all SATs will have moved into MATs from this September. Half of the schools in the diocese are now within MATs with 2030 as the target date set by the Bishop. 7. Statutory governor training It was agreed that NW and JB would liaise with regard to their respective lists on what training had been completed - c/f action. A governor requested that for 25-26 that governor safeguarding training was completed together in September to ensure compliance. There was discussion about the various options – National College, YE delivering an online session for the diocese. DM said it was recommended that governors complete safeguarding training annually but at the very least every 2 years. Prevent training was also discussed with the government online course recommended. NW said she would send the link to the National College and to Prevent – ACTION. 8. Rugby festival – AT confirmed that Mr Street had given further information following the previous meeting, but it remained insufficient to cover all areas allowing governors to reach a decision. However, in the interim since then he had resigned and therefore there is the question over whether it is practical for the festival to continue. AT and RT had just held a meeting with Peter Bennett the alumni sponsor who underwrote the festival and it was PB's idea that this was a 5 year project. This did not align with AT's previous understanding when it was approved by Chair's action. The DRP is waiting for additional information, the deadline had been extended for it to be provided by Easter. A governor commented that the next DRP is 1.5.25. The deadline had originally been end February which was then extended to Easter. The information required was important rather than just box-ticking. A governor asked if the school has an absolute commitment about the sponsorship from PB and whether it was in writing? RT said PB had guaranteed it for the next 4 years and whilst it was not in writing, PB had a track record of supporting the school. A governor asked what information the DRP was waiting for? It was confirmed this related to safeguarding, whilst there was not a lot of information missing, it was important and the FGB had to be certain it was in place otherwise it put the school in a position where it would be liable. RT said his concern would be manpower with TS leaving. DM commented that a lot of the work TS had done for the festival was already set up and therefore more easily replicable. Kirsty Butterworth had also been heavily involved and did a lot of the work for it. A governor added that TS had been the driving force and irrespective of the alumni finance and any safeguarding issues, the governors should consider how that gap would be filled. There remained the issue about the direction for the school to go in.	1.
---	-----------



	Another governor asked if the insurance question had been answered. The CoG confirmed that this had been resolved and they were fully covered by the LA. A governor commented that there were several similar events at Plough Lane and queried what is in place for those events? YE said there should be the same level of scrutiny. RT felt the difference with the festival was that boys were staying in hotels making it residential, so the character of it was different. The CoG commented that it had attracted a lot of media attention, which whilst all of it had been very positive and was an excellent showcase for the school, also gave it a different character. If it had been differently presented originally the matter would have been resolved already. RT should ask the sports department for the remaining information, however he agreed that with TS's departure whether there was the capacity and appetite in the sports department to manage it, presented a further question for the DRP to decide. He said that the DRP members would have a discussion before 1.5.25 and look at the range of outcomes. A governor commented that there was a financial risk if PB were not to follow through with the sponsorship and that some of the other smaller sponsor had still not paid what they had committed. The school's finances could not support it being a loss leader. RT said that when he had checked last week and they were still expecting c£6K, but this year's one would show a surplus. DM suggested that they could asked for sponsorship up front next time. YE asked what guarantee there was of PB's sponsorship? RT replied that whilst it was not in writing, he was committed to £25K plus gift aid and had always delivered previously. The CoG said they had to proceed on the basis of PB's intent being genuine. A governor commented that with the school's financial situation, there could be no decision unless they had seen the money. A governor agreed that it should be in writing. The CoG summarised that the DRP would deal with the matter and report to the next FGB – ACTION. 9. Safeguarding report to be distributed – completed. 10. H&S policy amendments - c/f action.	2.
7.	Safeguarding (<i>presented by DM – report previously distributed</i>)	
7.1	DM referred governors to the report on the basis of it being read, he highlighted key points:- Attendance (page 4) – there is a positive 3 year trend and the data shows like-for-like periods. There have been lots of government initiatives to improve attendance post Covid.	



The school's attendance sits at 94% with the target of 96%.

There is a year by year breakdown. He pointed to the fact that currently in Y7 and Y8 there are some students with significant absence which skews the data and gave some examples.

The weekly attendance breakdown shows a dip at the end of January, with no real discernable reason other than various illnesses.

The FFT data places them in the top 25% overall and the top 10% in the spring term.

In terms of individual student groups – those with EHCPs have slightly lower attendance, there is some school refusal and some illness. They have used more alternative provision and online tutoring this year. Pupils with FSM/PP are within the same margin of attendance as the rest of the cohort.

The actions to support good attendance include:-

- addressing it at the first welcome evening,
- letters to parents to reinforce attendance,
- a very proactive approach to absence with the school office contacting parents, chasing medical evidence etc.
- The EWO supports targeted meetings with parents.
- Following the policy with warning letters before December of those below the thresholds – 90% = persistent absence and below 80% = chronic absence.
- Scheduled parental meetings with a member of SLT and in some cases home visits for those who are harder to reach.

The government have tightened up on what absence can be authorised, therefore this is lower whereas unauthorised is higher. Holidays in term time are never agreed.

7.2 A governor asked about lateness?

DM referred governors to the last column regarding lateness. He agreed it could be better, giving the reasons of ongoing issues with transport. He advised that 'late gate' staffing was not feasible currently due to staffing levels, but he had arranged with the EWO to do some late gate sessions. They produce reports each week which lead to sanctions and consequences for lateness.

A governor asked if they saw any correlation of those late in the mornings also being late to lessons throughout the day?

DM said this happened in some cases.

A governor commented the data suggested lateness was a rising number.

DM agreed this was correct.

A governor asked if there was any correlation with lateness and other attendance issues, or with exclusions and general behaviour?

DM said there was no hard data on a correlation but agreed there was some – he gave some examples.

A governor commented that the traffic, roadworks and transport had been diabolical these last few months.



	DM added that if there is a known big issue which has caused the lateness, they still record it as lateness but do implement the consequences.	
7.3	Safeguarding – DM asked if there were any questions about the summary data or review? A governor asked if he felt there was sufficient training and other CPD for staff? DM said there was, every member of staff does INSET training in September, plus updates and regular messages over the course of the year. It is all certificated. The school goes beyond what is statutory.	
7.4	The school buys in various services e.g. mental health and well-being; a IYS (Integrated Youth Services) worker for 1.5 days per week, which is a pilot programme across schools in Sutton to pick up early on issues, due to the difficulties getting hold of Early Help. It is being used for a targeted number of students, some of whom are vulnerable.	
7.5	Every year the school does a compliance audit review and every 3 years they have an on-site visit. The structure was that DM and Andrew Highfield did a site walk with the inspector, reviewed the SCR, the inspector spoke with staff, students etc to get a snapshot overview. They also had a call with Juliette as Safeguarding governor. Overall they were happy with the policies and procedures in place and that staff and students understood their roles and made safeguarding part of the culture of the school; engaged with the correct agencies and had tight procedures for disclosures. They had picked up on some things on the website which were out of date, which have now been changed. The strengths they picked up on having spoken to a wide range of boys from Y8,10 and 12. These included the Head Boy, LAC children, a boy who had experienced a safeguarding issue. They had found the boys eloquent and commented that they felt safe in school and listened to, also knew who to go to if they had issues. There is a network of DSLs in Sutton who share good practice and there is regular communication with staff. Staff understand that it is better to over-report even if this means more work. They have professional curiosity. They take a holistic view of the students. Andrea Highfield is leaving at Easter which will be a big loss. DM hopes they will be able to replace this role.	
7.6	The curriculum was picked up in the report and they now have to review the RHSE curriculum and how it is delivered to ensure that they are covering more difficult topics and plugging any gaps.	
7.7	DM commented the audit picked up on governor safeguarding training and that records of it need to be good. NW (the governor responsible for governor training) asked if there was any way they could use a shared network to record certification? DM proposed setting up a Google Drive with a JF account with the permissions set to keep track of training. There was discussion around Governor Hub for recording but this was dismissed as too expensive. The CoG thanked DM for his presentation. <i>(DM left the meeting at 6.30pm).</i>	



3	Governing Board Business	
3.1	Visits:- • DF had submitted a report on his visit – 27.3.25 to meet the Head Boy and Chaplaincy prefects and 28.3.25 re the CSED preparation. • NMc had visited with regard to the premises matters. • TR had submitted a SEND report with regard to his visit. • AT advised they had carried out various governor walks.	
4	Headteacher's Report <i>(previously distributed)</i> RT commented that his report included reports for other staff (including the one previously discussed by DM). He highlighted various points:- 4.1 The admissions picture is positive, particularly set in the context of falling numbers of applications for Catholic schools. JF's percentage of Catholics has increased, which shows the confidence of the Catholic community. Last year there were 26 on the waiting list, this year there are 60+. Many pupils have changed their original preferences. He attributed this to a range of things, including the marketing done e.g. the open event by Andy Dean which had been very well done. The feedback was fantastic. The outreach was good, but they need to do more. They have contacted all the RC schools in the area for invitations to their open evenings. Kirsty has gone through every Catholic application where they had not put the school as first preference to ask for feedback which they will then analyse. They held open events again in the autumn during the school day which were well attended, attracting a higher number than had registered for the event. A governor commented that the majority of the intake is from Croydon rather than Sutton, therefore felt that the Sutton Catholic schools would potentially be a good source to focus on. 4.2 The website – this remains a work in progress each week to change the content. The feedback received is that it is much better. YE agreed it was much easier to navigate. RT added that it had been done at a very reasonable cost, approximately the same as the general annual management fees, in that it is an old boy of the school who runs it. 4.3 FFM asked about parish engagement including to promote open days, he felt that other schools had contacted them more? RT said he would check about this - ACTION. He added that there were a lot of priests coming to the school (around 10 parishes) and were supporting them holding weekly masses. The CoG agreed that the details should go to every parish office in the Sutton deanery.	3.



	YE added that a phonecall is also helpful in case the paperwork does not get through.	
4.4	RT referred governors to the SEND report by Katie Hall who had also presented at the Teaching, Learning & Standards committee last week.	
4.5	There is the overview of the recent Y11 and Y13 PPE. He felt the report to the TL&S committee by Nick Owen had been quite cautious. He said with regard to Y11 results, that if compared with last year, they were more positive on every count. As a result they anticipate an uplift and the progress indicates things are moving in the right direction. With regard to Y13, Danny Jackson in his presentation to the TL&S committee had been clear about the Y13 cohort having lower average prior attainment, but they hope to end up with good progress measures. The key information shows that Y12 has higher prior attainment than Y13 which suggests that adjustments to entry criteria to the 6th form has resulted in greater retention of more able boys.	
4.6	A governor asked if the plan was to increase the streaming from 30 to 60? RT advised they already had 60. In a typical year group 30% have 'High Prior Attainment', but it would be difficult to have more than 2 groups. The feedback had been positive. PH agreed that in school the boys are crowding around the posters and there is genuine interest. Once they are in the top 30 or 60 they want to maintain that and if they are outside it they want to get it. He acknowledged that for the lower levels it was possible they see it as unattainable, but it is important to try what will drive everyone forward. He added that the Y12s know that they have got the ability to take them on and get good grades here and therefore get a good university. The Y10s have a good attitude. They want to do well.	
4.7	Catholic life – Since reporting at the last FGB, the new chaplain has continued to do good work, establishing routine and order to the morning prayer which he delivers Wednesday to Friday and prepares for the other days to be delivered. This provides quality and consistency. There is a hymn, gospel, prayer and reflection, it follows a consistent structure. Catholic INSET training was delivered by DF, giving directed time for curriculum links. There are class masses which the boys have a choice whether to attend. The majority want to come. These are the first steps with the plan to increase to 2 classes and year group masses with one year group at a time. RT thinks they would get c50% of the students wanting to attend. There are opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation. The chaplain has moved his office in to the sacristy area so that they can leave the chapel open and therefore accessible for the boys. There is some habit-forming to be done. The chaplaincy prefects are still a little hit and miss. Each day they are allocated to morning prayer, but they want to get them to prepare talks too. Social service projects – there is a lot happening in Y7 e.g. visits to care homes, food hubs etc to get as many boys as possible involved with service projects. This is difficult to do practically with a smaller staff, so will be challenging. CSED – DF is helping with the preparation of this.	
4.8	A governor asked if there is any chance of the 10% of outreach being changed? YE advised this was not going to change. A governor confirmed that 10% related just for the input of theory into practice.	



4.9	YE asked if the school planned to do the Oscar Romero award this year? RT said they were and are speaking to the diocese about it.	
5	Committee Reports 5.1 Resources Committee – presented by NMc The budget is not in a good position. They had a meeting with the LA in December. SMS Ltd have taken on the role of School Business Manager and the LA had helped out after the December meeting. As at 31.3.25 there is a £970K deficit, but over 5 years if the school carries on as is, it will rise to a £5m+ deficit. Based on the current proposed re-structuring, the plans over 5 years as presented to the LA show the school will be at £70K deficit by the 3rd year and in the 4th year into positive numbers. However, the £1m will still have to be paid back. 5.2 Part B minutes. 5.3 NMc advised that there were items of expenditure – the Lockdown alarm will be installed, costing c£30K; fire doors – there are 57 to be checked and based on the outcome, this could be a significant cost. ATi commented that in terms of energy consumption, there had been a spectacular reduction (this year £131K compared with £300K last year) due to things like the LEDs. They are looking at solar panel options and speaking to the diocese about it. There are various government initiatives to install panels. NMc added that the Plough Lane roof had fallen in and quotes obtained. Also for the science block and David Laine. 5.4 Lettings – these are gaining traction and they are hoping to build the income to c£50K. This has not been factored into the budget. 5.5 Cleanology – there have been discussions about cutting the number of deep cleans from 7 to 5 per annum. However, the sports hall needs to be focussed on for cleaning after lettings. 5.6 Toilet blocks – these are starting next week and will be finalised by the May half term, which is being 90% funded by the diocese, the school has to contribute 10% of the £200K total. There are temporary ones in place until then. The staff toilets are also being done. Vape alarms are being fitted and additional CCTV cameras. These things are being funded largely from the governors' fund. 5.7 The number of bank accounts are being reduced from 9 to 5. Teaching Learning & Standards Committee (presented by GG) 5.8 The meeting in early February had a presentation on Research-led teaching initiatives, which covered learning communities and CPD. The meeting in late March had presentations from Danny Jackson regarding the 6th form, the employability report and university applications. At this meeting there was a presentation by TR and Katie Hall the SENDCO outlining the work done in	



	the Catherine group. Particularly to note for governors was the aspect of their reflective practice, review and evaluation of the work being done. No child was marginalised. There was also a focus on the extent of staff workload this entailed for the team.	
6	Catholic Life – covered under the Headteacher's report.	
8	Policies for review – none.	
9	AOB Part B minutes.	
	Closure of Meeting The meeting was closed at 20.05 by the Chair. FGB meetings this academic year:- Wednesday 9th July 2025	

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Outstanding Actions and Actions arising from 2024 - 2025

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 18th September 2024					
9	TNS to review the EDI Policy in liaison with SN	TNS / SN	Nov mtg	c/f 28.11.24	Open
12	MAT presentations for mid 2025	AT / RT	2025/tbc		Open
Meeting of 27th November 2024					
13	JB to report back on outstanding statutory governor documentation.	JB	ASAP	c/f NW & JB to liaise.	Open
14	RT to ask TS to put together a business case to be presented as one bundle to the CoG. The timeframe being only once it was presented could it be scrutinised by the DRP governors.	RT / TS	ASAP	c/f 2.4.25. further information required.	Open
16	AM to send H&S policy amendments to RT for	AM / RT	4.12.24	Agenda item	Open



	resubmission at the next FGB				
Meeting of 2nd April 2025					
1	NW to distribute National College safeguarding link and government Prevent link. Governors to send their certification back to her.	NW – all govs	a.s.a.p.		Open
2	DRP to report to the next FGB on the outcome of the rugby festival decision.	DRP	9.7.25		Open
3	RT to check about liaison with parishes about open days.	RT	a.s.a.p.		Open