



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – Part A
Held on 18th September 2024 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	Present	
Mr N McEvilly (NM)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Dr A McGowan (AMG)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Father F Murphy (FFM)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Dr T Newman Sanders (TNS)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Ms M Ryan (MR)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor		Apologies
Mrs J Cole (JC)	Parent Governor	Present	
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present	
Ms S Nasser (SN)	LA Governor		Apologies
Mr T Richmond (TR)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Mr R Teague (RT)	Headteacher and Ex-Officio	Present	

Attendees (non-voting)

Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

	Minutes	
	Welcome and Opening The Chair opened the meeting with a prayer.	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from: SN and ATi which were accepted. The meeting was confirmed to be quorate. There were no declarations of interest raised in respect of any agenda item. Governors were reminded to return their annual declaration of interest statements to the Clerk.	
2	Election of Chair and Vice Chair AT was elected unanimously as Chair for a further year. GG was elected unanimously as Vice Chair for a further year.	
3	Governing Board Business	
3.1	Staff governor, it was identified that the board had been without a staff governor since March, therefore RT would arrange an election prior to the next meeting – ACTION . It was discussed about whether a staff union rep could also stand for staff governor. YE clarified that any member of staff is eligible to stand and they are not a representative of the staff (this is the headteacher's role) they are there to present the staff perspective to the board. JC as parent governor's term of office is due to expire in November. A parent governor election should also be held. The board would welcome JC returning for a further term of office.	1.



3.2	RT confirmed that the DBS checks for all governors are in place on the Single Central Record.	
3.3	Governors were requested to ensure that their contact details are up to date with the Clerk. A governor identified that their JF email address was not working which had caused issues accessing the online training; others voiced this was also their problem. The Chair asked RT to discuss this with the school's IT department to ensure it was resolved - ACTION .	2.
3.4	Website – the governor information on the website had been checked as out of date, including the attendance register. RT was asked to ensure this was updated – JB to send the 23/24 attendance register – ACTION .	3.
3.5	Code of Conduct – The JF governor Code of Conduct was distributed and all governors signed.	
3.6	Link Governor responsibilities – NW was asked if she would like to become the training governor. School-based this responsibility is held by David Mawer. NW agreed to this and asked governors to email her whenever they complete any CPD and send any certificates. Student Voice was discussed but this would require the staff governor. The missing link governors were identified as Equality and Diversity. It was agreed that the TL&S committee would oversee the various curriculum areas. The TL&S committee was asked to come up with a list of what is appropriate - ACTION . A governor suggested that the whole span of link roles was reviewed and what was required of the link governor.	4.
3.7	GIAS (Get Information about Schools) DfE website is not holding the correct information – e.g. re SN whose term of office is listed as historic – to be updated - ACTION .	5.
3.8	Sub-committee membership – The recently appointed governors were asked which committee they felt best suited their skills and interests. DF identified that the TL&S committee worked for him and TNS the Resources committee. A governor voiced that she felt there should be a separate finance committee as a subset of the Resources committee as this was such a large focus. The Chair replied that there were working parties for the debt recovery plan which is a subset of that committee. The TL&S has the working party for restructure to deliver the desired academic outcomes and both of these have joint working parties for where the focus overlaps. He identified that GG is the Chair of the TL&S committee and ATi and NM are joint-Chairs of the Resources committee. DF outlined that he was heading up a separate working party of the TL&S only until the Catholic Schools' Inspection takes place.	
4	Minutes from the Previous Meeting – 10th July 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 minutes of the meeting held on 10 th July 2024 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. DECISION: Governors AGREED that the Part B Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 th July 2024 were a true and accurate record of the meeting.	



4.1	<p><u>Update on Actions</u></p> <p>Safeguarding training – The Chair commented that the 2 hour course was not the correct focus for the level of knowledge required of governors, he felt the KCSIE was more the correct level of focus.</p> <p>AT said he would resend the safeguarding training link – ACTION.</p> <p>When governors complete this training they should forward their certificate to the Clerk - ACTION.</p> <p>RT asked that if the certificates were to go to the Clerk, the school would need a letter of assurance that the training was complete for the SCR – ACTION.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u> There were no further matters arising.</p>	6A. 6B. 6C
5	<p>Headteacher's Report (<i>previously distributed</i>)</p> <p>RT highlighted various points</p> <p>5.1 The results are preliminary as they have not been fully confirmed. There is an overview of the subjects.</p> <p>Both GCSE and A levels show a significant improvement on the 2023 results, but are still not where we want them to be.</p> <p>5.2 The Progress 8 (P8) score of 0.25 is currently still an estimate at this stage. The FFT give it at 0.31 which places the school in the top 28%.</p> <p>One particularly pleasing detail is that the previous weak point of high prior attainment results has improved by almost a grade per exam.</p> <p>The A8 was also comfortably above average.</p> <p>5.3 As part of their data sharing, they are doing as well at the 3-4 threshold as examples such as Greenshaw but were still falling behind in the 7-9 threshold. However, the gap is closing and the school has more than doubled the number of 9s, which shows healthy improvement. The average KS2 scores of this cohort were similar to the 2023 cohort therefore this can be seen as genuine improvement rather than just this was a better year group.</p> <p>5.4 With regard to the subject value added and percentile rank document – RT outlined the coding key which was where the detail is statistically significant (hence the music was for a small cohort therefore not significant).</p> <p>Drama was highlighted as an issue which had arisen due to the loss of the teacher and having to use cover because they had not been able to recruit.</p> <p>Food tech last year had the best value added but the teacher left and they could not recruit for Sept 23. They have now recruited a Food Tech coordinator this year and also for drama, so there is expectation this will impact future results.</p> <p>For music the Director of Music was on maternity leave so the classes were covered by an ECT. RT confirmed there ECT had not been given other responsibility beyond the actual teaching in line with the relevant guidelines. The subject leader was a person from another subject.</p>	



	<p>A governor asked about the Economics result.</p> <p>RT agreed this was below average.</p>	
5.5	<p>A levels – there was a value added increase but it was still negative. However, the top grades had increased significantly.</p> <p>BTEC had not made such strong improvement.</p> <p>RT explained with regard to the ALPs rating that this is a system of analysing A level and BTEC performance and the lower the number the better.</p> <p>He outlined there was a lot of variation e.g. Combined English Literature and language = 8 whereas Single English Literature =3. The school is looking to scrap the combined subject for the next group of Y12s. He said the main reason for the difference was that the entry criteria for the combined subject had been set lower.</p> <p>A governor commented that if students did not have good English language skills their general level of achievement diminishes, so asked how the school ensures that other subjects are either benefitting or otherwise?</p> <p>Another governor commented that the English results at GCSE had been very good.</p> <p>RT replied that these details are not contextualised and that the results were even more impressive given the significant national difference in performance between boys and girls which is especially marked in subjects like English language. RT said he hoped that this reflected the good work being done throughout the school in promoting literacy.</p> <p>A governor commented that essay-writing subjects were faring poorly.</p> <p>RT replied that this issue was recognised and that, as a result, literacy was prominent within the SDP.</p>	
5.6	<p>A governor added that there should also be more PR and marketing for the 6th form as they needed to get away from the perception that getting into JF was based on levels of sport skills. That message needs to be got out and also that they are addressing the curriculum e.g. the work being done around BTECs. The school is not yet making as big a difference as it should be.</p> <p>RT replied this is based on raw attainment scores, they are taking students whose prior attainment is lower therefore the results will not be as good. This does not give the value-added element. A lot has been done by Mr Gamage to target the Y11s and sell the value of the 6th form. Other 6th forms are taking on far more students due to the financial benefits e.g. Wallington 240 and therefore getting more funding. Everyone is fighting for the diminishing pupil population and some schools are able to take in more to boost their funding. The change in entry criteria for 2024 has led to a slight drop in numbers but seems to have led to a Y12 cohort with a markedly different profile.</p> <p>The governor agreed it was about the balance.</p>	
5.7	<p>A governor detailed this was this highest number of As and A*s in the last 3 years.</p> <p>A governor pointed out that many boys in last year's Y11 would not have got into the 6th form now with the new entry criteria.</p> <p>RT said the hurdle of 4 in both English and Maths meant that they did not offer to a number of boys.</p>	



<p>5.8</p> <p>5.9</p> <p>5.10</p> <p>5.11</p>	<p>A governor agreed this was good for the current students to know for their GCSEs they do not automatically get in and that they have to work for it.</p> <p>RT said it would mean a step back in the short term but would be good in the long term. Also it was about ensuring that boys were on the right course for them at the right institution.</p> <p>A governor asked what the numbers were in Y12 and Y13?</p> <p>RT said it was still changing at this early point in the term and there was a dip in Y12 at 103 with a capacity of 135. Financially we will take a hit.</p> <p>RT said they were revising the subject entry criteria ready for the 6th form open evening on 6.11.24. There is currently a proposal to introduce 5 GCSEs at minimum grade 4 but this still needs further discussion and given the financial position this must be considered, but they have to start moving in the right direction.</p> <p>A governor asked how many in Y12 would not have 5 GCSEs?</p> <p>RT said that most would, but the subject criteria will be simplified. Danny Jackson the head of 6th form has done a lot of research around this.</p> <p>A governor asked if they would be changing the subjects offered?</p> <p>RT said they needed to know the interest levels and will be doing straw polls including about the possibility of subjects like law, because boys have mentioned this as a factor in their choice to stay. Based on numbers they pulled double business but retained triple sport. They will know fully by Christmas to be able to advise. However, English Lit and Lang will go, there is a question mark over Sociology, Spanish is back and they might reintroduce French next year.</p> <p>A governor commented that the maths results used to be such a strong area.</p> <p>RT replied that GCSE was very good but agreed that A level was not.</p> <p>The governor added that with the low numbers in the groups, this had to raise questions about the quality of teaching. She also questioned about the decision relating to triple sport which had not been simply about the results.</p> <p>RT said that the ALPS for triple sport was 3. The issue was also the numbers on the BTEC courses and the negative impact on the culture for the 6th form, but it had to be recognised that if this was pulled they would lose the students totally because this was the only subject they were studying. However, it was being run differently with mornings the study element and afternoons they were supporting the running of games lessons which was helping the school, developing their skills, maturing them, taking responsibility and so far was proving positive.</p> <p>A governor commented this format would also support their CV building and they are putting what they are learning into practice.</p> <p>The Chair concluded that the results marked a better place than where the school had been last year.</p> <p>The Vice Chair added that RT and staff were to be congratulated.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>SDP (<i>papers previously distributed</i>)</p>	



	<p>RT outlined this document remained a work in progress and he would be meeting with the people with responsibility for monitoring progress across the year.</p> <p>He directed governors to the aims listed on page 4 which were divided between the Ofsted framework and the Catholic inspection framework.</p>	
6.1	<p>There is a new chaplain appointed from September – Niklas Carlsson – who is employed half the time by the diocese and half by John Fisher.</p> <p>1. The Catholic character of the school and personal development.</p>	
6.2	<p>2. Quality of education and continuing to push on behaviour. They have been trying to give more clarity and consistency to the teaching, some simple ideas on particular aspects of teaching e.g. orchestrating attention, clear expectations on how the lessons should be conducted, routines shared across the board which help everyone. They need people to learn and stay in the profession and gain classroom management skills.</p> <p>A governor asked if the teachers are being given support with this?</p> <p>RT agreed that some staff are nervous to expose any areas of weakness, therefore it was about creating a culture to allow them to be mutually supportive and recognise expertise. They are getting teachers together taking on the research of topics, using the expertise in school, but they still need to get better at this.</p> <p>There will be more frequent report in KS3 focussing on behaviour and effort and trying to give a push to do better. They will celebrate achievement with a top 50%.</p>	
6.3	<p>3. In terms of behaviour and attitude, they are pushing ahead and creating norms for staff/student interaction. To be 'warm, welcoming and friendly', whilst still being firm and holding them to high standards, speaking in a respectful way to pupils.</p> <p>A governor asked if staff have shouted in the past was this not seen as a safeguarding matter and that they should not be doing it?</p> <p>RT agreed that different people had different ideas of what crosses that boundary but the issue was not so much shouting as a lack of warmth and poor relationships. This amounts to a lost opportunity. It is important for a student to see that staff are acting in their best interests and that's why they are being held to high standards. In terms of the new Behaviour Policy, some staff do not want the conflict but it is about getting all staff to follow the same routines.</p>	
6.4	<p>4. Leadership and Management - being more rigorous, monitoring and evaluation. Last year the responsibilities were distributed and therefore it was difficult to pinpoint who was responsible, so now it is more streamlined e.g. David Mawer for behaviour, to give ownership and the ability to make a decision. The clarity is helping.</p> <p>He added that the action points list has changed since September and the 6th form action plan will be produced by the end of September.</p>	
6.5	<p>A governor commented that this was very ambitious but wondered how smart the actions were. How did they know if they were progressing or not? He asked if there might be room for one key action per objective and to make it smarter?</p> <p>RT agreed that the success criteria sometimes were difficult to pinpoint.</p>	



	<p>A governor added that it would help for it to be comprehensive for governors to understand where actions were e.g. with a RAG rating. There was a lot of information but a RAG allows governors to assess the progress.</p> <p>A governor commented this was planned to be done by December.</p> <p>RT said it was too early now and that some things will have to be later in the year due to their nature.</p> <p>A governor asked that there was a RAG rating termly and that the key points were highlighted - ACTION.</p> <p>A governor added that if it is something like maths which is huge and a longer timeline e.g. of 2 years, it is important to understand the prioritisation and the timeline.</p> <p>A governor commented she thought timetable drop ins for governors were a good idea but asked how these would be facilitated?</p> <p>RT said these would be spread over the year.</p>	7.
6.6	<p>A governor asked about since the implementation of the new Behaviour Policy how this had impacted on the number of suspensions?</p> <p>RT said the number was up last year but there had previously been no permanent exclusions for several years. While it was regrettable that three students had been permanently excluded in 2023-24, it is sometimes necessary to exclude to ensure that school remains a safe environment.</p> <p>The governor asked if those boys who had been suspended were going home and reflecting on it?</p> <p>RT said that in many – but not all – cases, suspension had a positive impact on the student concerned.</p> <p>RT said there is a widespread perception of a drop-off in behaviour in many schools due to the effect of being out of school during Covid which was feeding into this.</p> <p>A governor said it was a national trend in mental health and the number of 18 year old she sees through work is higher.</p> <p>RT said the Behaviour Policy is more to target lower level things e.g. punctuality and being on task to make sure that problems are not drifting.</p> <p>A governor asked if there was a robust reintegration process?</p> <p>RT said there is. Also they have 16 different modules the boys work through e.g. on bullying. They have regular meetings over a period of time to reflect and get to the root of the problem and change the behaviour. This has worked well with a lot of them, if not all. Some have deeper problems. The feedback from staff and students was that it had improved but remains a work in progress and there is more to be done. It is about changing mindset and culture.</p>	
6.7	<p>A governor asked about the number of children eligible for free school meals pupils and queried how the school identifies if families become eligible as they go through the school and financial situations change?</p> <p>RT said he was not aware if there are specific initiatives, but that staff had, on occasions, raised the subject with parents.</p>	



7	CSED Overview	
7.1	<p>The evaluation document was in preparation for the inspection which the school is expecting during this academic year. They have been offered a couple of days of evaluation as a mock, one of which they had in January and they have got the second one after half term. There are 3 inspectors to give the school 2 days, including looking at what they have done since January.</p> <p>3 governors, including DF with his wealth of experience of inspections, have been helping out monitoring the RE. The key people in the school's leadership are the chaplain (but he is not yet familiar with the framework but is getting up to date) and the Head of RE Stephen Issaka.</p>	
7.2	1. Catholic Life and Mission – the appointment of the chaplain is already making a difference. he is taking morning prayer 3 times a week and he has opened a chaplaincy from today (18.9.24) for three days a week so the boys can go in there.	
7.3	2. RE – they were told to increase this to 10% of the curriculum which has been done from last September. Also one of the problems identified was the profile of the RE department which has only one specialist in the school who was the only Catholic. Since then they have recruited an ECT who is Catholic and very committed and there will be another appointed from January 25 to strengthen the department.	
	<p>A governor asked what percentage of the staff are Catholic?</p> <p>RT said they report annually, but the proportion who are Catholics is below 50%.</p> <p>DF added that the RE teaching in Y12 is 5%. Y13 will also need 5% of RE teaching.</p>	
7.4	<p>RT said the outcomes are much better this year. The results moved from -0.28 to 0.4 this year. This is with all the boys doing this subject.</p> <p>A governor commented that he should be congratulated on this as it was so significant to the school.</p>	
7.5	<p>3. Collective worship – they held mass 3 times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The numbers vary but are increasing with up to 40 people attending before school – boys, parents and local residents. The chapel is open and the boys can go in for prayer.</p> <p>A governor asked if governors could be advised the times the chapel is open?</p> <p>RT said it was every day before school on those days.</p>	
7.6	<p>4. Reconciliation – they had had up to 9 priests in.</p> <p>DF commented it might be helpful and useful if governors were able to come in when the inspectors are here.</p> <p>RT said that once the dates were agreed, he would distribute these to governors – ACTION.</p>	8.
8	Admissions for the next academic year RT advised there were no major changes, they have 180 places with the entry criteria simplified last year in line with the diocesan guidelines.	



	<p>The only outstanding question was whether the 6th form should accept girls in 2026, but they will report on this further in the November meeting.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that any changes will have to be agreed with the local authority and the diocese.</p> <p>The meeting has been set for Saturday 23rd November from 9.30am until approx. 11.30am at the school. Kirsty the Admissions Officer will have already graded the applicants so the task for governors is to go through them to ensure all is correct. The Chair asked any available governors to attend.</p>	
9	<p>Policies</p> <p>These policies had been reviewed by separate governors and checked by RT. They are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility Plan• Capability• Charging & Remissions• Child Protection and Safeguarding• Complaints• Data Breach• Data Protection• Data Retention• Disciplinary• Early Career Teachers• Equality and Diversity• Freedom of Information• Governors' Allowances• Grievance• Health and Safety (including First Aid)• Instruments of Government• Premises Management• Privacy Notice for Governors and Volunteers• Privacy Notice for Job Applicants• Privacy Notice for Staff• Privacy Notice for Students, Parents and Carers• Privacy Notice for Visitors• Provider Access• Reorganisation• SEND Information Report• SEND Offer• SEND Policy• Sickness & Absence• Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions• Suspension and Permanent Exclusion• Teacher Appraisal• Teacher Pay <p>A governor commented that the Inclusion and Diversity policy felt light on certain protected characteristics.</p> <p>Another governor commented that the majority of the policies were following the diocese templates.</p>	



	<p>RT added that the Complaints Policy had also had feedback by Winkworth Sherwood.</p> <p>A governor asked what amount of external challenge had happened given that since the last review the general culture has changed?</p> <p>A governor commented that as a Catholic school they are allowed to discriminate in favour of Catholics.</p> <p>A governor said that the Equality and Diversity Policy was one of those which had to go onto the website, therefore it was agreed that TNS would look at this and ensure it was consistent with legislation – ACTION.</p> <p>A governor suggested TNS also liaise with SN as this was also her area of expertise</p> <p>TNS said it was important for them to be clear about what is OK and what is not and there to be no hint that the school is ducking the question.</p> <p>RT commented that there is also a Transgender Policy which should be viewed alongside the Equality and Diversity Policy.</p> <p>A governor added that the school is demonstrating that these topics are being acknowledged.</p> <p>TNS said any other gender-based policies should be taken account of so the topic is handled in the round.</p> <p>RT said he would look at the others and feedback – ACTION.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors AGREED that all the policies listed – excluding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – were approved.</p> <p>RT added that his PA was now keeping a schedule for policy review.</p> <p>A governor added that the term ‘statemented pupils’ was still being used in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.</p> <p>RT said he would have this changed – ACTION.</p>	<p>9.</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11.</p>
10	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The Chair suggested this had already been covered fully as part of other items.</p>	
11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>11.1 The Chair said that academisation would need to be considered within the foreseeable future. He outlined that the diocese had set up 5 MATs and the 169 schools diocesan would have to join one within the next two years or so.</p> <p>RT and AT had met with Elaine Jones recently who is the Chair of the Trust Board of Sancta Familia Trust which will go live with 5 schools on 1.12.24, then expand by up to 5 more on 1.10.25. He said this gave a clear timeline for the school to consider joining in Autumn 2026.</p> <p>A governor commented that the school is not in a financial position for them to want it.</p>	



11.2	The Chair responded that this was no longer a barrier and DfE will now allow it. He said they would look to get presentations for the middle of next year – ACTION . There had been no Chair's actions.	12.
12	Confidential It was agreed there were no items to be marked as confidential.	
	Closure of Meeting Father Francis closed with a prayer. The meeting was closed at 19.35 by the Chair. FGB meetings this academic year:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 27th November 2024 Wednesday 2nd April 2025 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					
1	Staff governor election to be held	RT	Before Nov mtg		Open
2	Governor email addresses to be checked for problems.	RT	Immediately		Open
3	JB to send attendance register and governance information to be updated on the website	JB / RT	Immediately	Register sent 19.9.24	Completed
4	TL&S committee asked to come up with academic link governor roles	GG / TL&S	Autumn term		Open
5	GIAS website to be updated	RT	Immediately		Open
6A	Safeguarding training link to be resent	AT	Immediately		Open
6B	Governors to send certificate to Clerk	All govs			Open
6C	Letter of assurance for the school to confirm governor training on KCSIE	JB / RT	Upon completion by all governor		Open
7	RAG rating on SDP – amendment of format.	RT	Termly		Open
8	Dates for Catholic inspection to be advised once agreed	RT	As relevant		Open
9	TNS to review the EDI Policy in liaison with SN	TNS / SN	Nov mtg		Open
10	Gender-based policies to be reviewed in the round – feedback.	RT	Nov mtg		Open



11	Terminology of 'statemented pupils' to be amended.	RT	Nov mtg	As part of EDI Policy review	Open
12	MAT presentations for mid 2025	AT / RT	2025/tbc		Open