



To Parents and Carers at John Fisher School

6th May 2022

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Parents and Carers,

A great deal has been written and publicised in the media about the recent events at John Fisher School most of which strays significantly from the truth and is headline focused. The impact that all of this has had on the pupils and staff at the school which, as the Ofsted report states, is a caring community, is extremely regrettable. It was precisely to ensure this positive aspect is maintained that the Archdiocese recommended to the foundation governors that the planned event was cancelled. The action was never to do with the sexual orientation of the author but simply the blasphemous and highly sexualised nature of the author's books, making them unsuitable as a resource in a Catholic school. The reasons have been provided in some detail on the Diocesan Education Commission website at:

<https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/28th-April-2022-The-John-Fisher-Purley.pdf>

When governors are appointed to any catholic school by a diocese they sign a declaration form to say that they will uphold the legal requirements in the Instrument of Government, which in this instance states: *The John Fisher School was founded by and is part of the Catholic Church and at all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.* The school as a Voluntary Aided school, is also expected to work closely with the Local Authority.

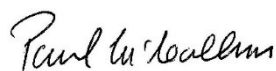
All Governors (the Headteacher, a staff governor, a local authority governor, the foundation governors and co-opted governors) give their time freely and bring expertise, energy and a passion for education to their roles, and their goodwill serves as a model to the school community. The Archdiocese is required to appoint a majority of foundation governors to ensure the school is run as a Catholic school in all respects. Following the governing body action in not accepting the advice of the Education Commissioner it was decided to replace the foundation governors. The Archdiocese is grateful for all the time and expertise that the outgoing governors have given to the role at the school but change was needed. A new and highly experienced group of foundation governors has been appointed and they have had several meetings already. Details of the skills and experience of the Foundation Governors are set out below.

The other roles of the governing body are to:

- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- oversee and ensure effective financial performance; and
- operate at a strategic level, ensuring that the Catholic vision and character of the school is upheld, holding the Headteacher and leadership team to account, ensuring high standards across the school.

The National Education Union have initiated a dispute with the Governing Body of The John Fisher School who are the employers of staff in school. The dispute involves fewer than 70 staff at the school. The governing body are working to address the union's concerns; some governors gave a day of their time last week to attend meetings with ACAS and the unions and will attend further meetings next week. They are committed to addressing the action recommended by Ofsted to restore stability to governance as quickly as possible, particularly for sake of the pupils who are shortly to take important exams.

Our priority throughout has been, and remains, the flourishing of pupils at the John Fisher School and we are continuing to work with the school.



Chief Operating Officer

JOHN FISHER FOUNDATION GOVERNOR PROFILES

- Yvonne Epale: A modern languages teacher until she retrained as an education lawyer specialising in human resources and governance. Provides support and training for foundation governors in the diocese.
- Mary Ryan: 27 years' experience as a school governor. A teacher and education lawyer now retired. Chair of Governors at Laleham Lea School.
- Fr Stephen Langridge: An old boy of the school and ordained in the school chapel with extensive experience of school governance, change management and parish renewal.
- Noel McEvilly: A Sutton school governor for many years he chairs Cheam Common Infants and Juniors Academies. He is also vice chair at St Mary's Catholic High School in Croydon and chairs the PTA at Richard Challoner School. His professional experience is in buildings resources.
- Andrew Theobald: Has been a school governor for 40 years in local schools at primary and high school phases. A finance specialist and ex local Councillor he has significant experience of public body responsibilities and sits on the local Sutton Local Authority Education (People) Committee. Both of Andrew's sons attended the John Fisher School.
- Aidan Tierney: 25 years of governance experience. Chair of the finance committee at St Mary's Federation, Croydon. Experience in the hospitality industry.
- Bernard Tomkins: Chair of Governors at 3 schools, St Mary's High, St Mary's Federation and St Chad's. Bernard is a DfE accredited National Leader of Governance providing support to the governors of other schools in the region. His son attended John Fisher School.