

St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Trust Board Minutes of Thursday 23 March 2023 at 5:00pm

Chair: Sarah Noon

Clerk: Joanne Williams

Locations: St Katherine's House/ MS Teams

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Governors Attending:	Sarah Noon, Helena Carrazedo, Martin O'Dowd, Nick O'Brien, Margaret Hyde, Richard Walsh, Christopher Maher, Paul Medcalf, Keith Wharam, Clare McKenzie,
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Governors Apologies:	Jennifer Lawes,
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Non Governors Attending:	Joanne Williams, Duncan Whitehouse, Simon Redfern, Simon Gillespie, Mary Robson, Kevin Gritton,
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Non Governors Apologies:	
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Agenda Item 1	Welcome, apologies and opening prayer
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MINUTE	1. The meeting opened at 5.00pm led in prayer by SN 2. Apologies were received and accepted from JL
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Agenda Item 2	Notification of Conflicts, Business and Pecuniary Interests
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MINUTE	1. There were no conflicts of interest declared
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Agenda Item 3	Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting - 9 February 2022 and actions arising
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MINUTE	1. Public and confidential minutes of the previous meeting on 9 February 2023 were confirmed for accuracy. 2. All matters arising were considered complete or for further consideration at this meeting with the exception of the following updates:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 8, Action 1 - DW to continue to review the Policy Framework and present an update at the next Audit, Risk and Governance committee meeting - subject to review at the next Audit, Risk and Governance committee meeting. • Item 8, Action 2 - DW to review the template for policies to ensure they are concise with procedural guidance separated out into appendices or separate guidance documents - subject to review at the next meeting. • In addition - DW to propose a date for a Board development session with the Central Leadership Team prior to the end of the academic year - an update is included in the CEO report.
<p>Agenda Item 4</p>	<p>Trust Board Committees - key matters to raise with the Board</p>
<p>MINUTE</p>	<p>1. Finance and Estates - 7 March 2023 - PM</p> <p>ICT update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system failure has prompted an accelerated planned move to the cloud. There has been no data loss and the move was very effective. Other moves are ongoing. <p>Estates update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school re-build programme is ongoing. • Questions have arisen regarding project management arranged by the DfE. • Saint Benedict's project is being managed internally. Project funding is being provided in arrears, therefore further conversations are being held this week with the Local Authority. <p>Finance update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timing of SRMA work and liaison with ESFA has been mapped out. • A meeting with the SRMA is scheduled for the week after Easter to receive feedback and a recovery plan proposal. • The SRMA has reviewed a lot of raw data. A staffing benchmark exercise against national comparisons has led to savings that could be made. The full detail would be worked through, however it does provide an indicator and what to expect centrally. • Feedback has been very complimentary of SR and the provision of required data.



- The recovery plan will be developed off the back of the recommendations with ongoing dialogue with ESFA, Head teachers and other stakeholders.
- In quick succession meeting can be scheduled to talk with more of the team regarding individual schools
- There is an end of May deadline for any appointments Headteachers want to / can make. SR has been preparing Headteachers for the need for savings, and robust conversations will be required. Meetings have been scheduled for the first week after Easter so SR can work with ESFA and Headteachers simultaneously.
- The context for the areas identified are to be shared by and discussed with the SRMA.
- Recovery will be staged in a manageable way longer term and teachers will be supported to implement changes.
- SR has modelled costs over the next 5-6 years and the SRMA agrees these are realistic i.e. there may be a revenue increase of 2-3% and an increase in staff costs of 9-10%, therefore the gap will widen.
- The general cashflow is the same across the country for all Trusts, however SRSCMAT is at a different starting point financially given the low reserve position.
- In terms of managing Headteachers expectations, primary schools are straightforward, however the use of staff in secondary schools is more complicated, therefore additional support is required. There is a need to consider how we support Headteachers with a range of options and resources.
- DW has drafted a communication plan with timelines.
- The recovery plan to ESFA will be high level with no detail regarding schools etc.
- SN has had conversations with the SRMA regarding Board involvement.
- SRMA suggested consideration could be given to Ofsted grades as improving schools will put the Trust in a stronger position.
- SR is meeting with ESFA next week to consider next steps, and will provide a brief update to the Board following this meeting



2. Joint curriculum and Standards / HR, Staffing, Pay and Performance - 7 March 2023 - CM

Curriculum & Standards - CM

- The Deputy Director of Performance and Standards role has been deleted. This is to be replaced with a proposed model of a Director for Performance and Standards (Primary) and a Director for Performance and Standards (Secondary). Consultation has closed and MR provided feedback.
- A Headteacher had suggested their school becomes a hub of excellence to enable leaders to support the Trust and replace the Director of Performance and Standards role. In the interest of parity KG is unsure of the view of other schools. Any proposals were welcomed but it was important to retain a strategic focus.
- SR highlighted that this is a cheaper model than the previous model.
- Strike action has affected 8 schools (mainly secondary schools). Two unions are re-balloting for strike action. Support staff union is balloting which would have a bigger impact.
- The payroll system is progressing well following a trial run in February.
- A HR meeting has been agreed with Sarah Reader to review what the new system can do, what we need and the benefits it provides.
- The staff benefit scheme is currently not generally being used, alternatives are being considered including high street offers and cycle to work schemes.
- MR is considering performance management schemes for September 2024, however it is recognised that there would need to be a lot of training provision to be effective by 2024.
- The existing 'Care First' system in place offers counselling and advice, however in the 12-month period up to July 2022, take up has been low. Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT uses the same system, however St. Thomas Aquinas CMAT uses a different system which has a higher uptake and can be accessed via an app. A recommended provider provides a platform and pay as you go with add-on benefits at a cost which is half the price of the existing package. STACMAT are currently trialling an alternate provider.

3. LGB update - DW

- A LGB symposium is scheduled for Monday 27 March to collect feedback from governors on the updated Headteacher report. Since



	<p>January Headteachers have received training on the new report and feedback will also be sought from them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A question was posed in Lent 1 regarding the CSI framework and how well it is embedded, feedback will be collated from meeting minutes. • Catholic and spiritual development is on LGB agendas, with a focus this year on Catholicity i.e. developing the role of Chaplains, RSE, Parish Ambassadors and Parish links which will feed back to the Catholic life committee. • There will be a curriculum focus in the Pentecost term. • Feedback has been positive to the new approach of questions being posed in the first meeting of the term, monitoring visits are scheduled and responses are provided in the second meeting of the term. This provides helpful evidence in the LGB meeting minutes. SN confirmed Ofsted is impressed by the Board questions to Local Governing Boards prompting governors to research their schools for answers and evidence.
ACTION	1. MO'D to be invited to be an observer on the Saint Benedict expansion steering group meetings.
DECISION	1. The Board unanimously agreed the proposed performance and standards structure to advertise roles from 24 March 2023.
CHALLENGE	<p>1. Is there any understanding of the financial impact identified to date?</p> <p>2. Is there sufficient scope to bring the Trust back in to balance?</p> <p>3. Can we manage staff reduction with natural wastage?</p> <p>4. Would the proposal by the secondary school to be a hub of excellence mean they would be reviewing their own school?</p> <p>5. Do we have a timescale to recruit to the Leader of Performance and Standards roles?</p> <p>6. How wide has the committee looked at this recruitment?</p>
Agenda Item 5	Chief Executive update
MINUTE	<p>1. KG provided the following update based on his circulated CEO report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors were made aware of an extended leadership meeting scheduled for 12 June to consider function planning, SWOT analysis of the position of the Trust and high-level objectives. • There is a lot of activity in Estates and IT functions. In addition to risk registers consideration is being given to what steering groups are in



place for larger function areas, particularly Estates given the number of ongoing projects i.e.54 capital projects including St. Benedict's and St. Mary's.

- The Head of Finance post has been re-advertised with a closing date of 27 March 2023.
- There have been 14 Ofsted inspections since mid-October, with the majority of school continuing to be 'Good'
- A grant has been approved to extend St. Benedict's with temporary accommodation, and approval for £6.1m funding for the school re-build project.
- It was agreed that the project will be run through the application of an industry standard process i.e. PMI, which implies at least the following controls:

- Executive Steering group will govern the project
- There will be a Stage gate buyoff - especially of design
- Effective risk management
- Change control
- Engaged procurement and finance
- Reporting of progress against a financial plan and actual (weekly)
- Commitment to an appropriate project organisation i.e. procurement, finance, communications, St. Benedict's leadership etc

- It was unanimously agreed that MO'D, as a Director will sit as an observer on the steering group.
- There have been leadership appointments - Headteachers at St. John Fisher and St. Edwards, both internal candidates, and two Deputy Headteachers at Holy Rosary.
- Chaplaincy recruitment has been fantastic and almost all posts are filled.
- Cleaning - provision has greatly improved, however there are still frustrated Headteachers who are being supported to ensure all issues are addressed.
- Catering - there has been lots of positive feedback, however some schools have found it more of an imposition regarding food standards. Some issues are teething problems and change-related, therefore expectations are being managed. AM meets with the Derbyshire Catering team weekly to provide feedback and changes are being made. Overall, there has been an increased uptake of meals since January, however it may still be too soon to identify trends. Consideration was given to the Pupil Parliament meeting with



	<p>the catering representative to encourage discussion on a different level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT - There is an inherent need for ICT to support the curriculum. Joe Redfern is focused on infrastructure and is addressing issues including averting a crisis at St. Benedict's. • KG maintains regular dialogue with Headteachers and addresses issues as they arise
DECISION	1. The Board unanimously agreed to delegate the spending of the grant for St. Benedict's re-build, to the steering committee.
CHALLENGE	<p>1. The current quote for the St. Benedict's rebuild is £6.4m, however we only have a budget of £6.1m? A sensible contingency will be required, and the specification could always be downgraded.</p> <p>2. Can we contain all plans for St. Benedict's within the budget?</p> <p>3. Do we have any frustrated schools?</p> <p>4. We are talking to Headteachers and staff about their views of catering, do we capture the views of students?</p>
Agenda Item 6	Draft CMAT SEF
MINUTE	<p>1. KG confirmed the draft CMAT Self Evaluation Form (SEF) continues to be developed to ensure it remains current.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no judgement attached to the SEF, as it is an assessment of where leaders think we are. • The draft SEF has been shared with the Board for feedback. • It was noted that LGB and Headteacher reports should be available on Trust Governor for Directors to see.
ACTION	<p>1. Report to be added to the HR and Staffing Committee work programme regarding promoting SRS as an employer of choice including programmes such as internships.</p> <p>2. Directors were encouraged to review the minutes and reports available on Trust Governor for their link schools to better understand what is happening in school</p>
CHALLENGE	1. Our objective is to be an employer of choice, however minutes show we are failing to recruit, perhaps we should identify steps we need to be taking? In part this is a reflection of the market and reserved posts are always difficult to recruit to. We are not recruiting nationally and having an impact



	<p>on ECT's (early Career Teachers). The same applies to other Trusts and is a national problem.</p> <p>2. Not being able to recruit is a national issue, however there is a large number of Catholic teachers working in non-Catholic schools. Do we have an understanding of the number of Catholic teachers not working in Catholic schools and why they are not choosing Catholic schools?</p> <p>3. Do we have a Teaching school, and do adverts go to them? Yes, and to universities too.</p> <p>4. It is noted that there are many Teachers now working in schools they used to attend, do we have an intern programme?</p>
Agenda Item 7	Finance / SRMA update
MINUTE	1. This point was covered earlier in the meeting
Agenda Item 8	Legal and Regulatory items
MINUTE	<p>1. DW provided the following update</p> <p>Complaints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints remain around the usual numbers, however there are a small number of very complex, and potentially damaging complaints DW is working on with John Walker. There are currently no complaints at stage 3 which is reflective of complaint management at stages 1 and 2. <p>6.47pm - MR left the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A couple of individual cases are impacting the wellbeing of some Headteachers, and work is ongoing with John Walker to address this. Peter Giorgio is having conversations regarding revising the complaints policy. <p>Risk Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional risks regarding the school re-build programme and new projects have been added to the Risk Register. It is proposed to remove a risk relating to the communications team not being involved in marketing, as the communications team are always involved. There is a risk missing from the register regarding school improvement. DW agreed to add this risk and to share the spreadsheet with the Board.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the risk register is discussed at each committee meeting to provide an understanding of what is there, and what has been added/removed. There is still some way to go to manage risks, however the number has reduced from 120 to 53 risks which highlights there is a clearer understanding and a better position to challenge.
ACTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Future complaints reports to provide trend data to provide context of movement over time. DW to update the risk register and share a copy with the Board.
CHALLENGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Could we have some context of the complaints received to better understand trends? Instead of having names on the risk register, should we have roles instead?
Agenda Item 9	▶ Policies
MINUTE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been no changes to the policy other than references to the Governance Handbook 2023 instead of 2022. DW would like to provide Whistleblowing guidance training in the Pentecost term. The policy was unanimously approved and adopted subject to contact details being updated.
ACTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contact details for KW to be added to the Trust website and the Whistleblowing policy
CHALLENGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have whistleblowing contacts changed as we need a Director as the named contact? KW was proposed and unanimously agreed to be the named contact.
Agenda Item 10	▶ Other Matters
MINUTE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Directors only matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no matters for consideration. Date of next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 18 May 2023, 6pm - St. Katherine's House or via MS Teams



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Agenda Item 11	▶ Closing prayer
MINUTE	1. The meeting closed at 7.05pm led in prayer by Fr. Simon