

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 26th April 2019
at St Boniface House, Ashburton from 10.30am**

Attendees:	John Burnett (JB)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director
	Maria Edwards (ME)	-	Foundation Director
	Terry Stockley (TS)	-	Foundation Director
	Dan Rogerson (DR)	-	Academy Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Ann Harris (AH)	-	Co-opted Director
	Laura Sprackman (LS)	-	Co-opted Director
	Raymond Friel (RF)	-	CEO (Director)
	Karen Cook (KC)	-	CFOO
In Attendance:	Alan Morris (AM)	-	ESG Chair
	Kate Griffin (KG)	-	DSC
	Helen Laird (HL)	-	Clerk

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening prayer by ME.

2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

Apologies received from Sandy Anderson, Jacqui Vaughan and Richard Edwards.
Quorum met.

3. Declaration of Interest

3.1 Directors were asked to complete the Declaration of Interest and Attendance Register.

Additional item discussed prior to agenda commencing

JB raised the issue of a school in the East area which has gone into Special Measures following a recent Ofsted inspection and invited discussion by the Board.

- GB recommended that this initial discussion should take place with only Directors present. JB and KG disagreed and felt it was essential that RF and KC were present for this discussion. All present were in agreement and GB accepted this.
- AH noted the report could not be worse and there are very few strengths detailed within it. Parents are, understandably, concerned and there is talk of students being removed from the school. JB asked if this was a concern before the report. AH confirmed numbers have dropped by approximately 50 students but there is further unsettlement following the publication of the Ofsted report.
- AH shared her concerns that it is the most vulnerable who have been failed noting the most able have done well at the school. This is very much against the vision and values of the Trust.
- TS talked of his involvement with the school now that he has become its new Link Director and the devastation within the community. TS stated a forensic review needs to take place to understand what has happened and

Decision/Action

what has to be done now to ensure this is resolved for this school and does not happen in other areas.

- ME emphasised this has diminished her confidence in the Board's ability to monitor and hold the Senior Team to account. ME expressed her concern that the culture of poor Safeguarding within the school had existed for a number of years and was not noted as an issue by the ESM and SEL.
- GB had not expected to ever read such a scathing report for a school within any organisation he is involved in. The Board were led to believe that there were issues with this school but the level of these concerns were not fully understood. BG is now questioning the quality of the information being presented to the Board to give a clear vision of what is happening across all schools.
- LS referred to the number of students who are below the national average and a SEN students at the schools was concerned that the issues raised in the report had not been fully recognised and addressed by the ESM team. If the school was monitored more often the problems should have been picked up but LS felt that the workload placed on the SEL has not allowed for everything to be done as it should be.
- DR noted that progress to the new structure has not been as rapid in the East as other areas. It is often more difficult to obtain information from these schools and they have not engaged with the moves as well as others.
- TS responded by saying that many of the schools in the East were, in fact, very compliant and were fully "on board" with the new way of working in CAST. It was true that SBMs and clusters were not fully up and running yet but this was largely because of geography and the way that implementation of these initiatives had been prioritised.
- DR talked of the work done in a Cornwall school which has turned around quickly to move to Good and the report from the Headteacher detailing how this was done. This experience should be utilised to support in failing schools.
- AN agreed with the comments from his colleagues and questioned why the Board did not know how bad things were and what else do they not know.
- AM noted that he has not seen a report as bad as this one in any of the turn-around projects he has worked on. There will be concern about the ability of the Board to address this, particularly following all the work which has been done in the past 2 years to move forward so positively.
- AM advised the Board that responsibility needs to be taken and firm plans in place to show how this will be dealt with. The RSC will need to have confidence that the Board are the people to sort this out.
- The Board discussed the 4 key areas to have clear vision of:
 - How we found out what the issues were
 - What went wrong
 - What do we do
 - How do we do it

- RF advised there has been an article in the local press and some comments from parents in reaction to it have been reviewed. The SEL continue to monitor these and new comments.
- RF advised the Headteacher has left the school and recruitment for a replacement has begun.
- RF advised the LGB has been replaced by an IAB with immediate effect which will first meet next week. There will be a meeting with the parents next week also with RF, LA, the ESM and TS as link director all present.
- RF had spoken with the RSC and informed of a robust but good conversation about the school's situation. The RSC's question was what the trust is doing about the issues at this school. RF advised that LA has been put in place to lead the school and is based there for a few days a week. The plan is to improve quickly.
- JB asked how long the SEL have known the school had such major issues. RF noted that the judgement of the ESM was that this school would be judged as Requires Improvement but there is no dispute over the Special Measures judgement which has been made.
- RF noted that every person in the Trust has a part to play in this. The minutes from the meeting in March show a very soft conversation and very little challenge regarding the outcome for this school. RF talked of where challenge and holding the SEL to account needs to be more robust. RF talked further about the work that needs to be done by the SEL and ESMs for challenging the schools and their leadership to ensure all targets are being met. Procedures need to be tighter and this needs to happen quickly. The Trust knew the school was declining and did not act quickly enough to make the improvements needed.
- RF advised that the SEL will meet next week to spend the day looking at procedures and where these need to be tightened up.
- TS talked of the levels of monitoring and checking and asked for clarification on what actually happens in each step of the process. RF noted that the steps are happening but perhaps not robustly enough. LA meets with the ESMs monthly and receives reports from their school visits which are reviewed and discussed. RF meets with LA but admits this does not happen enough and needs to be formalised.
- RF advised that the RSC was satisfied with the response of what the Trust plans to do. AM noted that this conversation was prior to the report being published and that this may now change the stance of the RSC. RF responded that the report is bad but surely the RSC would have expected to read something like this for a school in Special Measures so it should not change her view drastically.
- LS expressed her concern over whether ESM has not flagged the problems with the school and the need to ensure those in these positions are confident to involve the next level when there are concerns.
- LS referred to the report indicating that the Headteacher was having to deal with an historic teaching culture

which she could not manage. This was not clear to others who had read the report.

- GB noted the need to work at a higher level, show that actions are being taken by commissioning external reviews of other schools to ensure they are being judged correctly by the SEL.
- GB noted the restrictions of Finance which may have stopped the right quality assurance being in place.
- GB questioned whether the MAT is too big and ventured the proposal of splitting into 3 MATs or 3 large clusters within one.
- DR talked of the resistance of staff to make the changes needed and noted the need for strong leadership to rectify. DR also noted he has not always seen the ESMs driving the changes needed in schools as directed by the Board.
- DR talked of the need to have more regular conversations between the SEL and down to the ESMs. This needs to be happening weekly.
- RF reassured that there are conversation happening regularly outside of the formal arrangements. RF added that all of the other predictions for Ofsted judgements have been accurate, this is the first that has not been as expected.
- RF advised of the need to have a very clear action plan in place for AM to feedback to the RSC when he meets with her the following week.
- ME questioned why the ESM has not been the person to step in to lead the school and how the trust can cope with LA being side lined for 2 days a week. RF explained his decision to send LA into deal with this was based on who was right to make the improvements needed in a short time.
- LS raised the issue of ESMs still being classed as Critical Friends, this is not the case now and they need to be line managing the Heads in a more formal way.
- AH talked of the leadership review which took place some time ago and the view of parents and staff that the Head was not succeeding for some time. Action needs to be taken more quickly in these circumstances. RF noted that the Board were aware of this weakness.
- KC spoke of the problems with recruiting strong, catholic leaders and questioned if appointments are made because this is the best available within the remit but not necessarily the right leadership for our schools.
- KG supported the comments made by AM and the need for strong points from the Board to be taken back to the RSC. KG also supported GB's suggestion to arrange external reviews of schools.
- KC noted that there is a need to look further than just schools with regards to reviewing procedures.
- LS suggested the Board should be meeting more quickly when there is a concern of this nature.
- AH advised she and TS have formulated questions which she believes need exploring to enable the Board to feel confident of the way forward.
- AH noted that the school was listed for a while as exempt from inspection due to being outstanding and

questioned whether the school had less support due to this. RF responded that they received support based on the CAST evaluation not the current Ofsted judgement and therefore has received a suitable level of input. AH noted the need to focus on other schools who are exempt to ensure there is not a repeat of this situation.

- AH believes there is a need for strongly skilled ESMs in position. DR responded that the need for good leadership in the schools is more prevalent. KC reminded that the ESMs are all qualified Headteachers who have done the job themselves and spoke of the line management processes in place.
- JB asked AH to circulate the questions she has put together to the Board.
- There was discussion about how this process needed to proceed with pace.
- GB spoke of the 3 key areas needed to be agreed at this meeting.
- DR needs reassurance that there are procedures in place to ensure actions are carried out.
- JB requested that RF prepare a response action plan for the Board to approve and to be delivered by AM to the RSC and followed up when the SEL meet with the RSC later that week.
- AH highlighted the 4 steps the Board now needs to take:
 - Reviewing the way in which the reporting is carried out within the management team.
 - Reviewing the support delivered to the school over the past year – including the number of visits and area of focus
 - External reviews of vulnerable schools as an emergency reaction.
 - Development of ESMs
- There was discussion regarding the ESM structure and the need to ensure the skills within this role are appropriate and strong.
- AM advised he would need the Boards response by 6.30pm on Tuesday 30th April to allow time for him to read and digest prior to his meeting with RSC the following morning.
- AM advised that the resources of the SEL are stretched with the need for LA to be involved wherever there is an issue. There is a need to embed a structure beneath her to ensure there is the same support across the whole trust. He was extremely concerned about the capacity of the team when LA is having to deal with a crisis such as this.
- AM expressed concern that there is no information system in place and this has been discussed for 2 years with no resolution.
- AM needs to know how the Board will plan to move forward in these areas.
- AM once again raised the issue of having to have Catholic leaders in place and whether this is realistic in the South West. Does this impact on the level of education that can be delivered to the children in the care of the trust?

Action – AH to send questions to all

- AH advised a management system plan is underway in response to AM's concerns and KC informed on the progress being made in this area.
- KG talked of a conversation she had with the Bishop previously relating to the supply of good Catholic leaders.
- RF advised he would work on the document that afternoon and send it on to the Board to consider for responses. All were asked to respond promptly to allow time for the document to be finalised and sent over to AM in good time for his meeting with the RSC.
- The Board agreed that the discussion had now concluded on this for the time being and the task to prepare the response and action plan now needed to take place with pace.

Action – RF to prepare response document. All Directors to provide feedback by email.

4. Minutes of previous meeting of 29th March 2019

4.1 Minutes approved as an accurate record.

Approved

4.2 Action Summary updated.

All actions were updated on the summary.

- KC updated on the issues with St Mary's Buckfast.
- The Board discussed the need to carry out an external review of Governance.
- AH noted the need to carry out a self-evaluation and the Board discussed how this can be carried out. AH to circulate the document and HL to co-ordinate the responses.
- GB noted the need to have a sub-committee who appraise the chair.

Action – AH to circulate the Self Evaluation Document and HL to collate responses for feedback

5. Chair's Business

JB advised of some time he may be out of action due to an operation.

6. Executive Update

6.1 CEO Update

Most areas covered in the previous sections.

- RF advised on the Staff Survey responses which have been received and informed that the full details will be shared shortly. RF presented the highlights from the feedback, received by a third of the work force.
- TS asked for processes to be put in place to ensure Link Directors are kept abreast of what is happening in their schools. Directors discussed how this could be done. AH advised that the E&S committee will be looking to produce guidance for link directors with regards to school visits.

6.2 Secondary Proposal

The ESG had reviewed this proposal at the meeting the previous week and recommended it to the Board for approval.

- JB talked of the land on which the 2 secondary schools sit and asked what the value of the properties is. KC responded that there is no value to the Trust, they belong to the diocese and the Sisters of Notre Dame.

- JB asked about the leasehold on the 2 schools. KC advised there is 125 year contract for SBC which began in 2014 with the diocese, ND land is owned by the Sisters of Notre Dame, no rent is charged. All buildings and maintenance are the responsibility of the Trust.
- JB asked about the competitor schools in the area and would like further information on various factors. KC advised that all of this information was provided in the report presented to the Board at the last meeting and has been discussed at various times throughout this process.
- KC talked of the projection data available for the admission numbers for Plymouth for the next 10 years and the likely declining numbers.
- KC advised that the 3 grammar schools are applying to extend their PAN and the possible impact of this on the secondary schools.
- JB noted the considerable subsidy SBC takes from the Trust. KC advised the plans proposed with shared services across the schools would allow SBC to breakeven.

The Board discussed:

- Funding to merge the schools and the likelihood of any re-investment by the diocese if one was closed and the land sold
- The impact on student numbers of merging the schools
- The impact of closing SBC and retaining ND
- JB asked how long the trust can continue in this manner with regards to financial positions. KC advised this is down to recruitment and successful delivery of education. KC warned that it would not be possible to run SBC if the numbers dropped down to 300 students.
- KC informed the Finance committee will need to look at the finances closely at each of their meetings to monitor this going forward.
- TS noted that this is the only way forward but it will need to be monitored closely and alternative decisions made at a later date if needed.
- KC talked of the points of review and when discussions need to be had.
- GB noted that this liability needs to be added to the Risk Register. KC agreed and advised it is ready to be added once this proposal is approved.
- JB asked for this to be monitored at every Board meeting.
- RF reminded of the view point of the Diocese and the Bishop's comments at the AGM informing the Board that desire to ensure Secondary Education for both boys and girls.
- KG noted that the DSC will review this proposal and will want to keep a watching eye on this area also.
- LS noted the number of students coming from the Catholic Primary feeder schools and suggested ways to improve recruitment.
- The proposal was approved by all present with strict monitoring of finance and educational outcomes through the Board committees.

Decision
Secondary
Proposal
approved

–

JB made his apologies and left the meeting. AN assumed the role of Chair.

6.3

Cluster Proposal

This proposal had also been through the ESG and is recommended by them including any changes discussed at the meeting earlier in the month.

- TS noted the potential risk for management confusion under this structure which had been discussed by the ESG also.
- TS noted the risk of reducing the focus of the ESMs and queried their involvement in the strategic side of the Trust.
- TS noted the amount of time the Cluster Co-ordinators could spend travelling and queried them taking on the additional work with no additional pay.
- TS expressed concern over securing the Cluster Co-ordinators in each area.
- TS talked of the involvement of Chairs of Governors and whether this begins to cloud the Scheme of Delegation.
- AM responded that the clarity of the roles of the Cluster Co-ordinator and ESM is something to be cemented in the summer term in preparation for September.
- GB expressed concern about the management of those who do not follow instruction and noted this needs to be a disciplinary action rather than simply "discouraged". GB noted these issues recorded in the ESG minutes are not detailed in the report.
- AN noted the need to ensure all Headteachers need to know what Good looks like.
- AM noted the need to have consistent quality of data and standards is key to ensuring quality assurance and this would be a responsibility of the ESM.
- AM acknowledged there are still procedures to be ironed out over the coming term. AN added these are still lessons coming from the pilot.
- TS talked of the geography issues in the East which could have an effect on the success of the Cluster.
- AN suggested the presentations from the pilots should be shared with the rest of the Headteachers.
- RF advised on the possible Headteachers stepping forward to take on the Cluster Co-ordinator roles and talked of the professional development opportunities.
- KG offered reassurance on the progress made with schools in moving to one way of working.
- The Board approved the proposal.
- ME noted the benefit of having local knowledge on the Board following conversations which have taken place at the meeting and stressed how important it is to have Directors from all areas to give this context to discussions.

Decision – Cluster Proposal approved

6.4

Risk review

- KC advised of some other risks that now need to be added. The main one being the Secondary schools following the approval of the proposal earlier in the meeting. There is also the need to re-consider the risk

Decision – amendment to the risk register to include Secondary

	<p>rating of Risk 1 following the school that has been put into Special Measures. All agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KC also noted the concerns regarding recruitment of students and advised she has increased the risk in this area. • The issue of student recruitment was discussed. • GB questioned if reputation on a local level and with the RSC should be part of the Risk Register. KC advised this is more of an outcome of some of the other risks. • KC will update the register and take this to the Audit & Risk committee in a few weeks. 	<p>schools and rating of Risk 1</p> <p>Action – KC to update Risk Register and present to A&R</p>
7.	Governance and Management	
7.1	<p>Committee Responsibilities and focus – Holding Management to Account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AN talked to the document sent to all prior to the meeting which had been lifted from the one presented to the Board the previous meeting. Designed by AM, HL has split this into committees so that the key focuses are understood for each area. • Approved by all. <p>LS left the meeting.</p>	<p>Decision Document approved for committee areas of responsibility –</p>
7.2	<p>Strategic Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AN updated on his meeting with JB and RF to move this forward following the concerns raised at the last meeting, detailing the decisions and actions which were agreed. • RF noted his concern about the view point that there are too many references to the Catholic Faith in the document. GB explained the context in which he made this point and it was agreed that there needs to be a vein of the faith of the trust throughout the document. • AN asked for approval of the Strategic Aims. All agreed. • AN asked for approval of the Strategic Priorities. All agreed. • TS noted that the environment does not stay the same and these will need to change as the Trust moves forward. • KC advised the amendments from LA for the milestones are still awaited. • AN recommended meeting following the Board meeting on 14th June to review this plan and find a way forward that everyone is agreed with. • TS suggested referring to the approach of The Key with regards to the structure of the plan. • The Board discussed if they need to see operational plans to ensure they are monitoring the work against the strategic plan effectively. AM made a recommendation that the Board are reassured the timings of milestones are secure. • It was agreed that many of the elements can be monitored at sub-committee level. • RF noted that Catholic Vision should sit with the Board. • Agreed to hold the Strategic meeting on the afternoon of 14th June following the Board meeting. 	<p>Decisions Strategic and agreed – aims and priorities</p>
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the need to have a facilitator 	<p>Decision Strategic Planning meeting to take place on the –</p>

- It was agreed that evidence of operational plans is to be brought to the next Board meeting.
- HL to circulate AM's email to those not on the ESG.

ESG Update (Oral) and Termination

- The final minutes have been circulated to all and the ESG members approved the minutes as an accurate record.
- AM noted that all that was set when the ESG was established has been achieved.
- JB to write a letter of thanks to IG and CH to thank them for their commitment to the ESG.
- AM passed thanks to the members of the ESG.
- The Board approved the termination of the ESG.
- AN thanked AM for his input and contribution. This was echoed by all present.
- TS asked if there is anything that can be done to keep AM involved. AM offered his support if it could be utilised in some way.

TS raised an issue raised by some schools in the East area with concerns over the admissions policy. The concern relates to the addition of a criteria for social and medical justification and the implication of this sitting over Catholic applicants and other Faiths.

This was discussed and the Board were advised that the policy for 2020-21 could not now be changed following consultation with Local Authorities, schools and parents. The next opportunity will be when the 2021-22 policy is reviewed which will be carried out through the Education and Standards committee. They will pick this up at that time.

AH advised that the Terms of Reference for the Education and Standards committee had been sent to all by HL for approval by email.

KC raised an issue with sickness cover requirements within one of the schools and advised the Board of the impact of this on their budget.

RF advised of the receipt of a letter from Buckland Abbey during the day to complain about the treatment of the local school with regards to the on-going issue with the Scheme of Delegation and plans to amend the Articles of Association. The Board delegated the Chair and CEO to take appropriate legal action and respond appropriately. The Board did not require to know any more about this letter so as to be available for any future dealings without prejudice.

8. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 2.30pm

Future Board Meeting Dates

All meetings to commence at 10.30am at St Boniface House, St Lioba Conference Room.

Friday 14th June 2019

Friday 26th July 2019

Minutes approved on 14th June 2019

afternoon of 14th June

Action – HL to circulate AM's email to the RSC to those not on the ESG

Action – JB to write to IG and CH to thank them

Decision – ESG terminated