

MINUTES OF MEETING

Company Number: 07743523



Meeting title: Meeting of the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust Executive Committee

Date and time: Monday 8th February 2021 at 2:00pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

Membership

'A' denotes absence

Mr Ken Daly (Chair)
Mr Nigel Stevenson
Ms Sue Dryden (Vice Chair)
Fr Michael O'Donoghue
A Fr John Kyne
Mrs Susan Munro
Mrs Anne Recchia

In attendance

Mr James McGeachie (CEO)
Mr D Moore (Trust Finance Director)
Mrs M Robson (Trust HR Director)
Mrs K Rich (Company Secretary)
Mrs V Scott (Clerk to the Executive Committee)

Action

AT/01/21

Opening prayer

The meeting opened with the Trust prayer led by Mr Daly.

AT/02/21

Apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence from Mr Stevenson and Mrs Munro due to work commitments. Both were hoping to join the meeting later. Fr John Kyne forwarded apologies of absence to the Chair due to a Church commitment. The Directors resolved to consent to the absences.

Mr Daly advised that he would be stepping down from September 2021. He explained that he was announcing his resignation now to allow time for a successor to shadow him before taking over the role as Chair. Mr Daly **REQUESTED** that the Directors consider nominations for the role.

AT/03/21

Conflicts of interests and business & pecuniary interests

There were no declarations, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda.

Upon Mr Stevenson joining the meeting later, his declaration that he is a Director at Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and Finance Director for the NCC pension scheme would stand.

AT/04/21

Correspondence

➤ Legacy Letter from Bishop Patrick

Mr Daly explained that Fr Terry Fellowes had been a priest in Market Bosworth who was known to Mr Daly and Fr O'Donoghue. Mr Daly **REQUESTED** that the Directors consider

the best way to spend the legacy gift. Ms Dryden suggested that it could be donated to a Food Bank. Mrs Recchia proposed that it could be contributed towards a Trust Celebration of the hard work contributed by all staff during the pandemic, on the return to “normality”.

Q. The Directors enquired whether there were any caveats that applied to the legacy.

A. Mr McGeachie explained that the legacy gift must be used to assist vulnerable children and disadvantaged families. He described that some vulnerable and disadvantaged families in the Trust did not have recourse to public funds. For these cases the Trust operated a Hardship Fund that the legacy could be added to. Alternatively, the gift could be invested in laptops, or food parcels.

Mr Daly requested that Mr McGeachie identified children in need in order that the legacy was put to best use. Mr McGeachie **AGREED** to consult with Headteachers regarding students in need who would benefit most and would report to the Directors.

JWM

Mr Daly **AGREED** to write to the Bishop to thank him and let him know how the legacy had been used.

KD

➤ **Letter of praise and appreciation for outstanding contribution for St Edmund Campion, Foundation**

Mr McGeachie explained that a letter had been received from parents at St Edmund Campion advising Ofsted how pleased they were with education their children were receiving at the school. Mr McGeachie had replied on behalf of the Trust to thank the parents for their support. The Directors **AGREED** that Mr Daly would write a response on behalf of the Board.

KD

AT/05/21

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 3rd December 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 3rd December 2021 having been circulated on Trust Governor, were **AGREED** and **CONFIRMED** by the Chair.

All matters were completed or to be dealt with in the Agenda.

AT/06/21

Reports and Minutes of Sub Committee Meetings

➤ **Standards**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 2nd February 2021 were received, having been previously circulated on Trust Governor.

Mrs Recchia presented the minutes and updated the Directors on key points.

There were no further Directors’ questions.

➤ **HR & Pay**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28th January 2021 were received, having been previously circulated on Trust Governor.

There were no further Directors’ questions.

➤ **Audit & Risk**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st January 2021 were received, having been previously circulated on Trust Governor.

Mr Daly presented the minutes of the meeting informed by a report on these from Mrs Munro.

The Directors **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to the recommendation from the Audit & Risk to

appoint Cooper Parry as Internal Auditors.

DECISION

➤ **Finance & Estates**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st January 2021 were received, having been previously circulated on Trust Governor. Mr Daly presented the minutes of the meeting and explained that the Finance Reports had been received.

There were no further Directors' questions.

AT/07/21

Legal & Regulatory

There were no matters to report for this meeting.

AT/08/21

Diocesan Director of Education Update

There were no updates to report for this meeting.

AT/09/21

Chair's Reports to the Board

➤ **CMAT Chairs' Meeting – Feedback to the Board**

Mr McGeachie and Mr Daly had discussed which Chairs and HTs might be asked to contribute to a Review of the Board's activities. Mr Daly had **AGREED** to contact the Headteachers once approval was received from Julie Sweeney.

18th March – Mr McGeachie and Mr Daly to meet with Jane Lewis and Neil Weightman and were looking for 25 % of schools to be represented in surveys.

Action Plan – the Trust had been asked to keep a log of activities carried out and would update the Directors at the March meeting. Governor Training had also been discussed.

Joint Statement of Stakeholder Feedback – the Bishop and the Diocese had encouraged feedback. Mr McGeachie advised that there was currently a Trust Executive Team Working Group in place as not all Voice Surveys had been fed back to the Board.

Q. The Directors queried whether there would be timetable put in place for this.

A. Mr McGeachie confirmed that there would. Mr Daly noted that the Trust had always been mindful of obtaining feedback.

KD

The Directors **AGREED** that they were happy with the statement.

DECISION

➤ **OLoL Chairs' Symposium – Feedback to the Board**

Mr Daly reported that there had been a focus on the remote monitoring of work in schools and encouraging governors to continue to monitor schools virtually.

Mr Maher had led a session for governors to support with this.

Mrs Rich advised that a session for governors on Catholic Life in Covid times was being led by Peter Giorgio on 22nd February 2021.

Mr McGeachie reported that the Trust Mental Health Lead had worked with Headteachers on managing their own mental health in the current times.

Directors Training – Paul Barber and Christine Fisher had led a training session for Directors. The Directors reported that this had been very beneficial. Mrs Rich advised that all resources from the session had been shared with Directors.

The Directors **REQUESTED** more detail to assist their understanding as to how the Financial Responsibility of the Board fitted with the Members. Ms Dryden queried whether the Directors' legal duty would override any other duty. Mr Daly **AGREED** to request clarification on this from Neil Weightman.

KD

Further Directors training was scheduled to take place in March 2021. Mr Daly **AGREED**

AT/10/21

Report from the Chief Executive Officer

Mr Daly thanked Mr McGeachie for providing comprehensive reports, which had been previously circulated on Trust Governor.

➤ **Chaplaincy & Catholic Life**

Mr McGeachie presented a report from Mrs Kemple, that had been submitted to the Standards Committee. Mr McGeachie had asked the Chaplaincy Team to demonstrate how the Trust was meeting the needs of young people in Lockdown and whether they were engaging with the provisions in place. Mr McGeachie advised that the Lay Chaplains had been highly proactive in ensuring that these opportunities were made available. The 11th February 2021 was the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, for which special provisions had been put in place by the Chaplaincy Team. Mr McGeachie described that all students had access to excellent opportunities for worship.

Mr Daly commended Mr McGeachie on the Trust Inset Day which had taken place that morning and was facilitated by David Wells. Mr McGeachie explained that he had also received Headteacher emails commending the Inset provision and that staff had reported feeling valued as a result of the day. Mr Daly **REQUESTED** that Mr McGeachie write to David Wells to pass on thanks from the Directors.

JWM

Q. The Directors enquired whether there were any measures in place to support the development of Lay Chaplains.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that the Diocese were taking a lead on the development of Lay Chaplains. Mr Daly advised that a link with Derby University had been set up however, this was currently on hold due to Covid.

➤ **Exceptions Reports**

Mr McGeachie presented his Exceptions Report for February 2021, which had been circulated on Trust Governor. The report focused on the following areas of exception:

• **Catholic Life**

- *Strategic Focus: 75% of schools have a regular presence in parishes*

Issue: Limited access to parishes. Actions: Celebration of Mass in Schools is now permitted including during the national lockdown. The Virtual Trust Advent Liturgy (representing each of the 21 schools) had been advertised in Parishes for parishioners to attend. Schools and Chaplains continue to advertise events that can be shared with Parishes including the upcoming Trust/ Cafod Lent campaign. Mass, Liturgies and Catholic Life activities were carrying on.

- *Strategic Focus: All pupils have access to Lay Chaplaincy.*

Issue: Recruitment of a Lay Chaplain for the De la Salle hub. Actions: A Lay Chaplain was currently being sought. Mrs Robson had confirmed that the Chaplaincy Apprenticeship Programme had resumed.

Q. The Directors requested further detail regarding the provision from Derby University for the Chaplaincy Apprenticeship.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that the university was supporting the Trust's Apprenticeship in Youth Ministry. The provision had been shaped by Mr Tom Baptist and Mrs Kemple.

- *Strategic Focus: Faith in Action programme followed by at least 40% of schools.*

Issue: Covid-19 restrictions limit the activities that students can participate in to complete the award, particularly at the higher levels. Actions: Support being offered to schools by NDCYS through pre-recorded sessions and suggested activities to allow students to complete the Award within Covid restrictions.

• **Governance**

- *Strategic Focus: Ensure that the Board has enough Directors to be effective.*

Issue: Delay in identifying suitable additional Directors. Actions: 1 additional Director had been appointed. The Board now comprises 7 Directors. A shortlist is

being compiled. 8 or 9 Directors was the desired number.

Q. The Directors enquired whether there was a shortlist of potential Directors.

A. Mr Daly advised that there had been list but unfortunately, the candidates had not been able to progress any further. Work was taking place to identify new candidates.

- **Standards**

- Strategic Focus: Ensure equality of outcomes across all primary schools for writing and Maths.

Issue: SATs tests had been cancelled for both Year 2 and Year 6. Actions: A High quality blended learning provision had been put in place so that gaps were not widened during Lockdown 2. Schools were being supported through the assessment structure and revised approach to teacher assessments. Covid-19 recovery funding was available to support pupils in reducing gaps, particularly with phonics, reading and spelling.

- *Strategic Focus: Ensure equality of outcomes across all secondary schools.*

Issue: Full GCSE and A Level examination had been cancelled, uncertainty about teacher assessed grades/ reduced exams and internal moderation. Trust was looking at best ways to ensure progress using internal QA and 2019 data. The remote learning provision was much stronger for Lockdown 2 and recovery planning was robust.

- **HR & Staffing** – no exceptions to report.

- **Finance**

- Strategic focus: Ensure that the Trust is able to operate within its annual income. The latest Forecast Outturn demonstrated that 11 out of 21 schools were projecting a surplus in-year budget for 2020-21. Compared to previously this showed a significant drift from the original budget, where 17 of 21 schools (81%) were projecting a surplus. This reflected the impact of Covid19 and rising costs for schools.

- **Organisational Development** – no exceptions to report.

➤ **COVID-19 update**

Mr McGeachie presented his report. He noted that the closure of Our Lady & St Edward primary school had not been included in the report. The school was due to reopen on 9th February 2021.

Q. The Directors questioned how many Teachers had symptoms when tested for Covid.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that initially there had been only 2, but this had now risen to 4. 4 staff had reported longer symptoms of Covid.

(Mr Stevenson joined the meeting at 3.09pm)

➤ **Safeguarding**

Mr McGeachie explained that from 5th January the Trust schools had closed to all but vulnerable and Critical Worker pupils. The purpose of the closure was to stop the virus spreading within the community. The Trust schools had followed guidance from the DfE and admitted pupils with only one parent as a critical worker. Schools had worked hard to ensure that vulnerable pupils came into schools daily and supported them appropriately, where they remained at home. The Safeguarding addendum was updated and sent out to schools to be adopted and put onto websites by Friday 15th January 2021; websites were being checked for the updated version and schools contacted where the new version has not yet been uploaded.

Mr McGeachie advised that the Trust worked constantly to maintain high standards of Safeguarding throughout Lockdown, particularly when staff were not able to see children in person. Non-attendance at lessons was logged and any concerns were followed up with families and external agencies. All children were RAG rated around risk for child protection and safeguarding.

Mrs Recchia advised that a question had been raised at the Standards Committee as to whether young people were still able to report any safeguarding issues, with parents being present in the home. The Trust had assured the Directors that reporting pathways were still available to students.

➤ **Risk Register**

Mr McGeachie drew Directors attention to two main areas of the Register as follows:

• **Brexit**

Two areas of risk had been identified relating to pupil numbers and staffing. So far, the Trust had not seen any impact of Brexit on schools.

Storage of Data – the Trust had explored whether any Trust data was stored overseas. The area represented a high risk but the incidence of this occurrence was low. Mrs Rich continued to monitor the storage of data.

➤ **Coronavirus**

Mr McGeachie explained that the Trust was now in a good position to keep coronavirus risks low. He described that cover, testing and working from home measures were in place.

All original risks had been very high, but as processes and mitigations had been put in place, the risks were reducing.

School Staffing remained an issue. Safeguarding was potentially high risk, but due to processes and procedures learned across the pandemic, this was now graded as low risk.

Return to School issues tended to be around staffing; leadership; remote learning & access to devices.

Q. The Directors queried whether schools would return on 8th March 2021

A. Mr McGeachie advised that if all returned at once there might be an impact on staff perception and wellbeing. A staggered return might be favourable. However, it may be that primaries returned first. The Trust was awaiting government advice on the reopening of schools.

Q. The Directors enquired whether mass testing would continue with the return of students.

A. Mr McGeachie advised children would be tested before going into lessons going forward.

(Mrs Munro joined the meeting at 3.19pm)

Q. The Directors questioned whether the source of infection had been identified at Our Lady & St Edward.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that a full review had been carried out, but had not identified definitively any one particular source.

Q. The Directors queried whether ventilation was causing any issues in schools in view of temperatures dropping currently.

A. Mr McGeachie explained that ventilation was required and necessary. However, there were less children in classrooms in schools; therefore, schools could strategically use their rooms with best ventilation.

Q. The Directors enquired whether Mr Burrough had considered the use of ventilation units, as this practise was having positive impact within the NHS.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that this option had been explored; however, most rooms were assessed as adequately ventilated. Mr McGeachie **AGREED** to revisit this with Mr Burrough.

JWM

Q. The Directors questioned whether automated ventilation contributed to the spread of the virus.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that in some cases, it did, but this was not so not for all machines.

Q. The Directors queried whether air circulated by existing air con units was vented externally to school buildings.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that it did. However, this would be explored further for the summer months.

➤ **Marketing**

Mr McGeachie advised that a Trust Marketing Coordinator post had been advertised & several strong applications had been received.

Q. The Directors enquired whether the Trust would consider adopting an Environment Strategy.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that there was an Environmental policy in place. He explained that he and Mr Burrough were also members of the Diocese Working Group for this area.

Q. The Directors questioned whether students would be involved in planning an Environmental Strategy.

A. Mr McGeachie advised that they would and that most schools already had Environmental groups or reps in place. Mr Stevenson expressed that it would be beneficial to ensure that students were involved in shaping the strategy.

➤ **Headteacher Appointment**

Mr McGeachie advised that a Headteacher had been appointed at St Augustine's from outside the Trust. Peter Giorgio had supported her on the areas of Catholic Education.

AT/09/21

Finance Director's Report (CONFIDENTIAL ITEM REDACTED)

➤ **Appointment of Internal Auditor**

➤ **Management Accounts**

➤ **Balance Sheet & Cash Flow forecast**

➤ **Capital Report**

AT/10/21

Directors' Self-Review Update (CONFIDENTIAL ITEM REDACTED)

AT/11/21

Director Visits to Schools

On hold due to Covid-19 restrictions.

AT/2/21

Policies

From the Finance & Estates Committee:

(for review - no changes made)

- **Investment policy**
- **Write Off and Bad Debt policy**
- **Business Continuity policy**
- **Smoke-free policy**

Mr Stevenson proposed the policies. Mrs Recchia seconded the proposal.

The Directors **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to adopt the 4 policies.

DECISION

Mrs Rich enquired whether policies could be reviewed on a 3-year cycle, where possible. The Directors **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to this action.

DECISION

AT/13/21 **Other Matters** **(CONFIDENTIAL ITEM REDACTED)**

AT/14/21 **Date of Next Meeting**

Board meetings follow the OLoL 2020-21 Schedule and will take place at 2:00pm on the following dates:

- **Wednesday 31st March 2021**
- **Thursday 27th May 2021**
- **Thursday 22nd July 2021**

AT/15/21 **Determination of confidentiality of business**

The Committee considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed confidential. It was agreed that items concerning Finance & HR, Director's Self Review and the Other Matters all remain confidential.

AT/16/21 **Closing Prayer**

The meeting closed with a prayer led by Fr Michael O'Donoghue.

The meeting closed at 4.05pm

Signed:.....(Chair)

Date:.....

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING:

ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM

MINUTES OF MEETING

Company Number: 07743523

**Meeting title: Meeting of the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Executive Committee**

Date and time:

Location:

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS