

**Minutes from the Board Meeting of
The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company (PFMAC)**

**Tuesday 9th July 2019, at 6.30pm
at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury**

Directors present:

Lorna Buchanan (LB) (Principal Holy Trinity/Director)
Paul Concannon (PC) (Chair) (Foundation Director)
Fraser Long (FL) (Principal Director)
Tony O'Donnell (TOD) (Foundation Director)
Michael Robarts (MR) (Foundation Director)
Clare Smith (CS) (Principal St Joseph's/Director)
Fr Richard Walker (RAW) (Foundation Director)
Adrian Waters (AW) (Foundation Director)

In attendance: Kathy Smith (KS) (Clerk)

1. Opening Prayer

PC opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Welcome & Apologies

PC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from:

Mary Shurrock (MS) (MAC Business Manager)

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations declared in any item on the agenda.

4. Minutes of previous meeting (19th March 2019)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2019 were **agreed** as an accurate record of the meeting, signed by the Chair and filed.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising, all actions were either included on the agenda for further discussion at this meeting or had been completed.

6. Budget approval

Academies Financial Handbook 2019 – to note

Directors noted that the updated Academies Financial Handbook 2019 had been posted to Governor Hub.

Chair of The Board of Directors: Mr Paul Concannon

The following budget reports had been previously circulated via Governor Hub:

- Finance Update for PFMAC Board of Directors meeting 09.07.19
- Blessed George Napier Secondary
- Notes on main variances for BGN Budget Monitoring P9 May 2019
- St Joseph the Worker Primary (STJ)
- PFMAC Three Year School Budget 2019-2022 For Directors Approval June 2019
- Management Accounts Report (psfinancials) revised 2018-19 Budget for: Blessed George Napier, Holy Trinity (HTC), St Joseph's and Consolidated
- Minutes for MAC Finance Meeting

AW confirmed that he, FL and MS are reviewing the current Risk Register and have included it as a standing item on the MAC Finance meeting agenda. AW advised that all three schools had been asked to produce balanced budgets and all three had sent in revised budgets. Directors noted that BGN has a surplus of £122K due to the Teacher Training Alliance Grant, which will form part of the carry forward for next year and has a balanced budget for the next 3 years. STJ is carrying a £20K in year deficit, having decreased their deficit from £37K and HTC is forecasting an in year deficit of around £5K.

Directors discussed and questioned the new capping formula which was set up to bring equality across all schools, however, it will not increase our school's funding but might just maintain the current position. MR had written to his local MP pointing out that if the capping formula was not in place our schools would be in surplus, thus far he had received no response. Directors were clear that they wished to maintain current levels of staffing in all three schools.

AW referred to the reserves policy advising that it should be updated to reflect that we should be working towards a minimum amount, to cover at least 1.5 months staff, and to ensure schools maintain their reserves for as long as possible. Directors discussed the option to have a central reserve in place should an individual school require additional funding for some specific circumstance.

PC advised that the ESFA were offering the support of a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) to monitor school budgets and recommend potential cost savings. We have already taken advantage of this and that several meetings and calls had taken place with Jez Barnard. His draft report had a few inaccuracies which have been raised with him and the ESFA. The document will help support the application for the additional funding being sought from Lord Agnew. AW, FL and PC are due to meet with Dame Kate Detheridge, who is taking over as Regional Schools Commissioner. MR will produce a one page report highlighting budget issues for the PFMAC for that meeting. Directors **approved** the budget.

7. Oxfordshire MAC Working Group update

i. Summary of meeting held on 8th July

PC explained that the Working Group (WG) had met yesterday and discussed the decision to grant a £900K loan to St Gregory the Great Catholic School, Oxford (SGG), due to be confirmed by Lord Agnew on 12th July 2019. PC advised that the loan would secure the remaining deficit built up by SGG; no repayments are expected for 2 years. PC confirmed that the biggest challenge is the lease at SGG, a rent review had taken place earlier this year, increasing the rent from £143K to £213K, the rent is currently discounted, however at the next rent review due in 5 years the discount is unlikely to apply. PC stated that the lease agreement appeared to have been set up with a view to SGG purchasing the lease and this option is currently under exploration.

PC then explained that some of the land on the SGG school site belonged to the Local Authority (LA), some to the Oxford Anglican Diocese and some to the Birmingham Archdiocese. The WG had since approached Wrigleys Solicitor LLP based in Leeds to look at options for development, such as affordable housing for key staff, on the school site within the constraints of the lease agreement. PC stated that once the £900K was secured the WG would be expected to move forward with merging the DB and PFMACs. We have to still focus on a resolution for the lease with the current best option to find a way to purchase it.

PC explained the worst case scenario regarding the rent review, it could raise the rent to potentially to as much £500K per annum in the future. Hence the need to ensure long before we get to this level we need to have found a way to purchase the lease and develop the land. MR questioned this as new information, however, PC stated that he was merely looking at all possibilities, advising that the Birmingham Archdiocese had signed the lease and the WG is now looking for ways to move the purchase of the lease forward. PC will send the lease to KS for circulation. **Action: PC/KS**

Those present rigorously discussed the difficulty of knowing the school site in question and requested a copy of the site plan to differentiate between separate pieces of land owned by the LA, Oxford and Birmingham Diocese. PC confirmed that the WG had agreed to meet on SGG school site for their next meeting on 24th September with a copy of the site plan to verify those pieces of land. PC explained that an academy cannot borrow this level of money thus, we need to find another way. MR stated that he would like to see a written proposal outlining recommendations and accompanying paperwork. PC confirmed that various reports had been circulated and a core group of directors had been attending a number and variety of meetings with various parties to bring about a resolution to the lease. PC stated that he would keep the board updated as things change so the Board could discuss; MR left the meeting at 7.05pm.

PC confirmed that he had taken advice from the Birmingham Diocese, ESFA, RSC and solicitors and accepted that purchasing the lease and developing the site was a huge undertaking and had only just been mooted as a culmination of meetings with various parties. Directors discussed their original

decision not to take on a school with a deficit budget and raised concern with the possibility of taking on SGG with an outstanding deficit and purchase of the lease. PC pointed out that primary schools within the DBMAC were all in a much better financial position than those in the PFMAC.

Until we get confirmation of the additional funding we are not in the position to agree a timetable to move things forward.

ii. St Joseph's Carterton (SJC)

PC confirmed that SJC is ready to go as soon as the loan is agreed.

iii. St John's

RAW reported back on the situation at St John's stating that it had been a difficult year for the school and staff had been resistant to change. RAW explained that a number of pupils had left, impacting on finances, and a lot of teaching staff had also left. There is now a new Deputy Head in place and a full complement of staff for the new academic year. RAW stated that the school is ready to join the MAC, PC advised that the RSC were holding the school back and not directors. RAW confirmed that there were many new governors too. FL confirmed that BGN had been supportive to the school and asked RAW what support is given to the Head; RAW advised that Mary Watts and Sue Tomkiss are supporting.

iv. St Aloysius

PC confirmed that he, AW and FL had met with their governing body and allayed some of their fears with regard to academisation and joining a MAC.

v. St Greg's

The meeting had previously discussed the £900K loan and issues around the lease, there was nothing further to add.

vi. Combining DB and PF MACs

PC explained that Whitley Simpson (Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors) had been tasked with reviewing proposed expansion plans for the PFMAC, with a focus on proposals for the structure of the PFMAC central team, processes around new schools joining the PFMAC and finance processes going forward. PC will circulate the 'Review of Proposed Expansion Structures May 2019' to PFMAC Directors **Action: PC**
FL will circulate the 'Sponsorship Application'. **Action: FL** PC reiterated that he is updating Directors and not asking them to make any decisions at this point.

8. Update from Schools (reports from Principals)

St Joseph's Primary, Banbury: Principal's report to the Academy Committee July 2019 had been circulated prior to the meeting. CS confirmed that Maureen O'Leary completed a Diocesan Monitoring Visit on 23rd May and indicated that the school was moving toward outstanding. Directors asked if a Diocesan visit was more challenging than an Ofsted one, CS confirmed that they are individual and different.

Directors noted that CS had requested an EYFS review, this was carried out by the River Learning Trust and they had identified some areas for further development judging progress overall to be good. CS advised that she had set up a two year cycle of review across all subjects and staff are currently re-writing the curriculum making it more challenging and supportive.

Directors discussed the percentage of FSM as in line with national, however, pupils from ethnic minority groups, EAL, pupils with SEN support and pupils with an EHCP was more than double that of national, reflecting a large proportion of those on the school roll as vulnerable.

CS distributed:

- Key Stage 2 Assessment reflecting a four year trend against Oxfordshire and National figures for Reading, Writing, Maths and Combined.
- Attainment Report and Commentary July 2019 for EYFS, Phonics Year 1 and KS1

Good level of Development is down on 2018

Phonics Year 1 also down on 2018

Phonics Year 2 has maintained for the last 3 years

KS1 Attainment:

Reading improved on 2018 at 74%

Writing remained same as 2018 at 43%

Maths slightly reduced on 2018 at %52%

CS explained that writing has fallen below national due the numbers of EAL, however, CS was confident that gaps would be filled by the time these children reach Year 6 as evidenced within KS2 Attainment.

KS2 Attainment:

Reading at 73% is an improvement on 2018 and in line with national

Writing at 75% is similar to 2018 and broadly in line with national

Maths at 74% is down on 2018 and broadly in line with national

Directors congratulated CS on her results acknowledging that children come in at low starting points and make good progress.

CS confirmed that admissions are low too, due to high mobility within this area. Directors thanked CS for her report.

Holy Trinity Primary, Chipping Norton: Principal's report to the Academy LB distributed 'Headteacher's Report 9th July 2019' to those present. LB advised that staff are trying to increase the number of Catholic children attending the school, by working more closely with the parish, currently there are 25.3% Catholic children in school.

Achievement data issued over 3 years:

GLD for EYFS 86% slight increase on 2018

Phonics at 86% an increase on 2018

KS1 – Reading at 84% slightly above 2018 results, Writing at 74% broadly in line with 2018, Maths at 74% slightly down on 2018 results

KS2 at the expected level – Reading at 86%, Writing at 93%, Maths at 89%, SPAG at 86% and Combined at 86%
At Greater Depth – Reading 36%, Writing 11%, Maths 25%, SPAG 29% and combined 7%

Directors noted that the above KS2 attainment are all above well national figures.

KS2 Pupil Premium – 100% achieved at the expected level
SEN – 60% achieved at the expected level
Non White British – 100% achieved at the expected level

LB advised that pupil progress meetings are held three times per year, if any concerns are raised then that would be increased to five times.

Directors noted that HTC had implemented CPOMS from January 2019, linking a number of incidents together including attendance, behaviour, child protection and safeguarding, from which relevant reports can be drawn. LB drew director's attention to the areas for School Development Plan 2019-20. Directors thanked HTC for her report and excellent results.

Blessed George Napier, Banbury: 'Principal's Report to the Academy Committee Meeting 21st May 2019' had not been circulated prior to this meeting, KS will post it to Governor Hub. FL reported on the pilgrimage of 39 sixth formers to Lourdes and their subsequent presentation at an assembly held on 24th June when governors attended as part of a Governor Day. FL confirmed the SEND lead from the Warriner School had attended to carry out a SEND review, some recommendations had been made and would be actioned as valid points.

FL paid tribute to staff leaving at the end of this academic year, recognising their years of service, great contribution to the school and their huge impact on student outcomes. FL confirmed that in some cases interim measures are in place whilst recruitment is ongoing.

FL confirmed that a class in Year 9 had been relocated around other class groups, leaving Marie Joyce (Deputy Head) to timetable curriculum provision around larger class sizes and he thanked her for completing a difficult task. FL advised that the Youth Choir consisting of 80 students will be touring Barcelona from 13th to 19th July. Directors thanked FL for his report.

9. Expansion plans – BGN

FL gave a brief update on the expansion plans for the new build and a requirement from the insurers for the school to underwrite the project by guaranteeing a £100K surplus. FL will send the details of the proposal to TD to scrutinise, if acceptable it will be approved via email. **Action: FL**

Directors discussed the value in all LACs having access to the Key given the subscription costs, CS, LB and FL will take that back to their LACs to ascertain the number of governors who wish to access the Key. **Action: CS, FL and LB**

FL informed directors that following Ofsted's fifth visit to SGG he had been asked by the Diocese to take on the role of Executive Principal at SGG for 2 days a week commencing in September 2019. FL confirmed that DBMAC directors had already commissioned consultancy from Nial McWilliams, a previous Head of school and his two colleagues, to work at SGG to ensure rapid improvement and to take the school out of special measures.

Directors asked what plans would be put in place to ensure leadership capacity at BGN does not suffer and raised concern at additional pressure that might ensue for senior leaders at BGN. Directors questioned where the funding was coming from to backfill various roles at BGN. FL assured directors that the measure would be short term from September to December 2019 and funding would come from the MDIF funding source. FL paid tribute to his senior leaders confirming their capability to run the school in his absence.

10. Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education – Draft

'Draft Keeping Children Safe in Education and Draft Keeping Children Safe in Education Part one' had been previously posted to Governor Hub. KS informed directors that the reports would be published and take effect on 2nd September 2019 and everyone should make themselves familiar with Part one.

11. Health and safety

FL confirmed that all schools are now using Smartsafe, a customised software package for health and safety incidents; the package is already in use at the DBMAC with limited functioning.

TD informed directors of a requirement to carry out a risk assessment on site security and that the next audit for staff well being would utilise survey monkey, there was nothing further to report.

12. Policy Review/Approval

Model DES Complaint – 'Complaints Policy September 2018 – Diocesan Education Service' had been circulated via Governor Hub and amended at Appendix B at Stage 2: Formal Resolution, deleting 'or other Senior Manager', ensuring that any complaint regarding a pupil, parents or staff that reaches that stage would be heard by The Head Teacher. Directors **approved** the amendment.

13. Any other business

CS confirmed that Mass would be held on 4th October 2019 at STJ and St John's would be invited. There was no further business raised for discussion.

14. Dates and structure for next meetings

PC advised that Board changes are not implemented as yet, however, to reduce the number of meetings, both DB and PF MACs would hold their meetings on the same day back to back in preparation to merge for the new expansion.

15. Closing prayer

RAW closed the meeting with prayer at 8.35pm

KS 14th July 2019