

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

**Tuesday 19th March 2019, at 6.45pm
at Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Chipping Norton**

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) (Director)
Adrian Waters (AW) (Foundation Director)

In attendance:

Mary Shurrock (MS) (MAC Business Manager) and 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:

Fr Richard Walker (RAW) (Foundation Director)
and Rob Walsh (RIW) (Parent Director)

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Minutes of previous meeting (27th November 2018)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2018 was 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. Oxfordshire MAC Working Group update

i. Summary of meeting held on 12th February and 19th March 2019

The following letters had been circulated prior to the meeting:

Chair of The Board of Directors: Mr Paul Concannon

- Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company (DBMAC): Trust Review Meeting – 1 March 2019 from Dame Kate Detheridge DBE
- The Pope Francis Multi Academy Company (PFMAC): Trust Review Meeting – 1 March 2019 from Dame Kate Detheridge DBE

PC acknowledged that the majority of directors at this meeting were also present at the working group meeting held prior to this one. However, for those who had not attended the meeting PC explained that he attends regular meetings with the ESFA, and both letters covered a trust review of both MACs. PC advised that there were inaccuracies within the letters which he had since notified to Kate Detheridge, as yet no response had been received.

PC confirmed that the PFMAC is a successful MAC, has a good reputation within the diocese and had been asked to take a leading role in merging the DB and PFMACs. PC advised that he, AW, MS with input from Adam Hardy (Director of Education at the DES) had put a business case forward to the ESFA to obtain extra funding to mitigate the £900K internal debt owed by St Gregory the Great (SGG), stating that schools cannot access their reserves as they are used to keep the DBMAC solvent. PC advised that if the £900K is given, SGG would still have to repay that loan. Thus far there is potentially £380K coming in to rebroker SGG and St Joseph's Carterton (SJC).

PC advised that the lease had been reviewed and increased from £143K to £213K per annum, a valuation of £3.5M had been placed on the purchase of the freehold; PC is currently investigating the covenants on it, and possible options to sell some of the land which can only be used for educational purposes. PC informed those present that there is an old gym on the school site which could be developed for the good of the school.

ii. St Joseph's Carterton (SJC)

PC confirmed that the transition for SJC from the DB to the PFMAC had been in position for 1st April 2019 transfer, that date had been moved by solicitors to 1st May 2019 and now the ESFA have further delayed it until the £900K funding issue for SGG is resolved.

iii. St John's

Directors were aware that pupils and staff are leaving or have left this school. CS advised that she had been asked by the diocese to offer her support on the basis of 1 day per week, and that had been declined by the Headteacher of St. John's. LB confirmed that some of those staff had applied to Holy Trinity, she had requested references in line with the recruitment process and had not received them despite chasing. LB added that some staff were asking her to provide a reference given that she had taught at the school previously and that they were unable to obtain a reference from the Headteacher. PC will contact RAW, who is a governor at the school, to ask if he could approach the Headteacher to advise that this is poor practice.

iv. St Greg's

PC confirmed that if the £900K funding is granted by the ESFA, along with £380K rebrokering for SGG and SJC, the Regional Schools Commission

(RSC) and ESFA will request that all DBMAC schools transition to the PFMAC together; this has been a factor in delaying the transition for SJC.

Directors were aware that the Archdiocese timetable for all schools to become an academy and join a MAC is September 2020. CS referred to a letter sent to all schools from Bishop McMahon (Chair of Catholic Education Services for England and Wales) inferring that funding would be made available for schools to move to academy status; CS will forward the letter to PC for his information.

Directors then discussed schools having a deficit budget and what action could be taken to keep them on track, recognising that a process for all schools should be implemented. Directors **agreed** that any school with a deficit would be required to implement an action plan over a short period of time to bring their budget back on track.

Directors discussed whether it was preferable for all DBMAC schools to move to the PFMAC together or to allow 1 school (SJC) to come over to provide an opportunity to monitor the process and pick up on any flaws in the system.

v. Recovery Plan application

'DBMAC recovery Plan' had been circulated prior to the meeting. The trust review meeting had outlined the purpose of the recovery plan template, which is to be completed to support the argument for additional funding to facilitate the transfer of SGG to PFMAC.

7. Shared promotion of Catholic Ethos/Update from Schools (reports from Principals)

Holy Trinity Primary, Chipping Norton: Principal's report to the Academy Committee February 2019' had been previously circulated prior to the meeting. The first Catholic Heads meeting for over a year had been held and was very successful, the heads agreed that the St Francis Mass should be held during the day to increase the participation of children at all the schools. Both LB and Christie attended the S48 training and as a result amended the RE action plan and school evaluation form.

LB advised of a dip in outcomes last year for Year 6, confirming that outcomes this year are back up; interventions had been put in place to ensure the improvement of progress and attainment. LB confirmed that this year's Year 5 include higher attainers and should ensure good results for the following year too. LB reported that the Deputy Head is leaving and she will advertise for the position in due course.

Directors questioned the fixed term exclusion asking if this was for one specific child. LB confirmed that it was allocated to one child, and that staff are working with the Educational Psychologist, SEND, School support and the Outreach worker from Northern House. The child is now working in the library with 1: 1 support. Directors asked what was the long term plan, LB confirmed that the child required specialist provision and staff are working with parents toward an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). However, parents have a

right to name the school their child should receive provision from and LB was clear that this school could not meet the child's extreme behaviour needs. LB advised that the child is violent toward adults and is on a reduced timetable of one hour per day. Directors asked if all incidents are recorded, LB confirmed that they are recorded on CPOMS. Directors thanked LB for her written and verbal report.

St Joseph's Primary, Banbury: Principal's report to the Academy Committee March 2019 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Directors noted that Archbishop Bernard Longley confirmed 11 of the school's Year 6 children earlier in March, the school choir sang and the church was full. A reception in the church hall afterwards was also well-attended. Staff continue to pursue the CAFOD Live Simply Award with a focus this term on making the school grounds and the area immediately outside the school environmentally sustainable.

CS confirmed that 23% of all pupils in the school are on the SEN register, 2% have an EHCP in place with one more just confirmed making 5 in place across the school. In addition to the children who are specifically on the SEND register, there are a number who meet at least one of the 'vulnerable' characteristics, taking these into account, the percentage of children at St Joseph's who have higher levels of need rises to 75%. Directors noted that the school is recording this information as documentary evidence.

CS confirmed that there are now 11 children staying for 30 hours in the nursery, making them more likely to transition to reception.

Progress in KS2 is indicating that targets in Reading and Writing will be exceeded by the end of KS2, attainment will be higher and Maths progress is steady.

The Mental Health Worker is in school one day per week, and a visit from the Minister for Children and Families has been arranged.

CS reported that the school's Netball team won the local netball tournament and is now through to the North Oxfordshire tournament in Bicester. Directors thanked CS for her verbal and written report. Directors thanked CS for her verbal and written report.

Blessed George Napier, Banbury: 'Principal's Report to the Academy Committee Meeting 12th February 2019' had been circulated prior to the meeting. FL confirmed that the school had just recorded a new CD of carols which will go on sale next Christmas, around 500 CD's will be available. Rachel Smith led the staff Catholic Life meeting this term and all staff completed an evaluation survey as part of BGN's continuing cycle of reflection and improvement.

The draft minutes of the Curriculum and Achievement Committee held on 26th February 2019 had been circulated prior to this meeting. FL advised that mock data had been analysed and initially is looking stronger than this time

last year. Senior staff are looking at this data in more detail to ensure these are accurate predictions.

The Head of Maths has implemented Mastery for KS3 and will now carry this on into KS4, teachers have changed their approach following a transition visit from primary schools and picking up on good practice from primary teachers. Directors thanked FL for his verbal and written reports.

8. Expansion plans – BGN

FL advised that he had met with the architects and Cherwell District Council, Toni Guest (DES) had sent through some useful information regarding Section 106 funding. FL confirmed that the designated land was not large enough to provide what had been indicated in the original plan, which was to flip the MUGA 90⁰ and move it down the field, to provide a school hall large enough for the whole school to attend assemblies and Mass, additional car parking, a two storey block to house the Sixth Form and Science labs. The costings are currently identified at £6.5M, FL advised that BGN had placed a bid for £6.5M and is waiting for resubmitted plans to be approved. Directors asked who actually procures the building work preferring the school to place the order, for the school to have access to the funding and decide how it is spent. FL advised that it is unlikely that the school would place the order.

9. PFMAC & DBMAC Review meeting with DfE

This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting within the Oxfordshire MAC Working Group update.

10. Finance

The following reports had been circulated prior to this meeting:

- Draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 29th January 2019
- Finance Update for MAC Board 19.03.19
- Management Account Report
- Consolidated Period 5
- Consolidated Period 6

MS confirmed that Period 6 was based on Period 5 and there was little difference between them.

STJ - had reduced their in-year deficit by £7K and it is now projected at £30K. Further income is expected from Nursery admissions after Easter. Directors discussed the employment of an additional member of staff if nursery numbers increase further, noting that the additional funding obtained would pay for additional staff.

HTC – MS confirmed that this budget is mainly on track projecting a small in year deficit which may be offset by the additional teachers pay grant.

BGN – MS reported that the roofing work is now complete, the building should retain its heat and be warmer impacting on reduced heating costs. There is

currently a £25K contingency which if left unspent could be allocated to carpeting and re-flooring throughout the school.

MS advised that funding allocations had just been received and she is currently working on those figures to update school budgets.

MS reported on the Safesmart application discussed at a recent Headteacher's meeting; Trevor Buzzard has fed back that it is user friendly and straightforward.

MS explained that she is currently reviewing contracts for Energy and Payroll as part of procurement as advised by the auditors.

MR and MS are meeting next week to go through a benchmarking exercise.

Directors discussed and questioned what action they would take if a school is indicating a deficit, acknowledging that an action plan should be drafted and implemented. AW advised that Finance Committee had discussed this and agreed that an action plan would be implemented by any school with a deficit budget. This should apply to all schools and not just those schools joining the MAC. PC advised that provided a school had reasonable reserves, being in deficit for one year was not a huge worry. Directors were concerned that schools understood the consequences of a deficit budget and felt that a headteacher should have oversight and understand budgetary issues.

Directors had explored benchmarking in their Finance meeting on 29th January and compared staff costs across the PFMAC and with similar schools. Directors were aware that STJ costs were higher than HTC and BGN but given that we now know of their 75% SEN that explained it. MR had advised that some schools appeared to have more funding allocated to them than others, which could be attributed to higher SEN, or pupil premium and on an individual pupil basis. Even within the DBMAC some schools were allocated more per pupil, thus, Directors should be aware that it is more difficult to compare schools unless further details are available.

11. Health and safety

TOD confirmed that he is meeting with Trevor Buzzard (BGN Site Manager) and will be attending the Headteacher's meeting to gather more information on what they actually want from a health and safety software package, and gain insight into what their actual needs are. TOD was aware that the current system does not spot trends and he would like to bring more strategic information to this meeting in future.

12. Note Accounting Officers letters from ESFA for: November 2017, December 2017, March 2018, September 2018 and March 2019.

The above letters had all been circulated prior to this meeting and were formally noted by Directors.

13. Governor Hub

Directors discussed the benefit of having central storage for their documentation and a facility which is also GDPR compliant. KS informed Directors that it would cost £200 per annum through Governor Services to install Governor Hub. Directors approved the expenditure and asked KS to contact Governor Services to arrange a subscription and for KS to liaise with MS over payment.

14. Training feedback

MS will obtain training dates for finance training for Directors, noting that it was likely to be a 2/3 hour session so not reasonable to add on to a Board meeting.

15. Any other business

There was no further business raised for discussion.

16. Dates of next meetings

9th July 2019 at 6.30pm at St Joseph’s, Banbury

17. Closing prayer

PC closed the meeting with prayer at 8.20pm

KS 23rd March 2019