

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

**Wednesday 18th March 2020 at 5.30pm
Virtual Meeting**

Directors present: 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)
and 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 telecon. Directors **agreed** that given the current situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) there will be no face to face meetings for the foreseeable future.

Apologies were received and accepted from:

Lorna Buchanan (LB) (Principal Holy Trinity/Director)
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 (27th November 2019)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2019 had been previously circulated via Governor Hub and were **agreed** as an accurate record of the meeting, electronically 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. COVID-19 virus – update

PC confirmed that schools had been asked to close from 20th March 2020 until further notice, they would remain open to vulnerable children and children of key workers. Directors noted that Ofsted and Section 48 inspections had

been suspended and all SATS, GCSE and A level exams would now not take place. *Directors asked what the situation was in all 3 of the MAC schools.* CS explained that 25% of children were not in school, 14 families are self-isolating, 1 Teaching Assistant (TA) is currently self-isolating and another TA had given notice that they would be doing so imminently. There are 7 vulnerable members of staff who have been advised to self-isolate. CS confirmed that the school remains calm, regular communication to parents has gone out and they have been responding sensibly. Staff are looking at how they can provide for those children who will be coming into school and work will be prepared for those asked to stay away. There is a Banbury partnership whatsapp group which has provided a useful link to other schools.

Directors questioned the definition of vulnerable, did it cover children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)? How would this instruction be enforced?

CS explained that there had been mention of schools taking on children from other schools, advising that she would be uncomfortable with that option, given that the school maybe receiving children not known to staff and advised that she is waiting for further guidance from the DfE.

Directors questioned how they could monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding if children were coming in from other schools. CS advised that the announcement had only just been made and more information will follow.

FL explained that as exams are not going ahead, students will be awarded their grades on the basis of predicted grades. The only alternative to this is to hold students back a year but that is not sustainable within the schools and will leave universities without a fresher year. FL confirmed that the cleaners will come in and carry out a 'deep clean, Trevor Buzzard will be in to deal with IT issues, there are staff with health issues who should stay off and self-isolate. The kitchen caters for other schools including Frank Wise Special School, Holy Trinity, St John's and St Joseph's, the priority will be to feed disadvantaged children, for some this will be their only meal of the day.

7. Terms of Reference Updated

KS explained that she only had a pdf of the TOR and did not have the software required to convert it to a word document. PC will ask admin staff if they can convert the document to word and send to KS for updating.

Action: KS/PC

8. Correspondence

No correspondence was presented for discussion.

9. Update on MAC Expansion

St John's Banbury

'Financial Appraisal of St John's Banbury and St Joseph's Carterton' had been previously circulated via Governor Hub. Directors thanked MR for his diligent work on the budgets for both schools and for drafting user friendly and comprehensive financial reports.

Directors questioned how many pupils were on roll at St John's noting that there are 205 currently on roll, with a capacity of 315 pupils. MR advised that there were 274 pupils in school on PLASC day in October 2019 and that will dictate funding for 2020/21. Numbers are predicted to fall to around 192 in September and are unevenly distributed across year groups, a reduction in pupil numbers will impact on budget figures for 2021/22.

Directors asked how much deprivation funding the school may be awarded. MR confirmed that the allocation is not yet known, advising that last year's figures were around £200K, it follows that if numbers decrease then funding will also be impacted. MR pointed out that as the school is coming over from the Local Authority (LA), its financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and its finance systems will have to be aligned with those of the MAC. Directors noted that they had not received a copy of St John's Funding Statement for 2021/2022, which would indicate their gag funding allocation. FL confirmed that he would be speaking with the Regional Schools Commission (RSC) tomorrow and would clarify GAG and deprivation funding with them.

Action: FL

St Joseph's Carterton

MR confirmed that the Funding Statement based on PLASC in October 2019 reflects numbers reducing by 19, explaining that the school takes in service children and is therefore prone to high mobility. GAG income is based on 122 pupils, however numbers are likely to be around 114 in September 2020.

MR advised that:

- recharge income is projected as £64.5K
- expected re-brokering at £56,437, half of what had been originally indicated
- reserves are projected at £117,588, whether that moves with the school or stays with the DBMAC is a decision for the DBMAC

*Directors asked whether IEG funding was included within the budget figures. MR confirmed that the figure is unknown and therefore had not been included. FL will also clarify the IEG funding with the RSC. **Action: FL***

MR informed Directors that the school had earmarked the re-brokering funding for their astro-turf. DBMAC Directors confirmed that: 'how that funding is spent is not a decision for the school to take and no approval had been sought for the supply of astro-turf'. TO arrived at 6.15pm. PC advised that re-brokering would be £110K. *Directors questioned where that had been confirmed*, PC explained that the amount had been discussed with the ESFA.

Directors asked FL to keep them copied in on updates regarding finance following his communications with the RSC.

Directors questioned the likelihood of both schools joining the PFMAC on 1st April 2020, noting that clarity regarding GAG funding and re-brokering is required before those schools are welcomed in.

Confidential item

Directors thanked MR for his persistence and huge contribution in ensuring due diligence regarding finance.

Adoption of new Articles/Scheme of Delegation

The following documents had been previously circulated:

- Articles of Association of Pope Francis Multi Academy Company
- Scheme of Delegation (Version 4.0 – 01.05.19)

FL advised that he had received signed supplemental agreements from the Diocese for signature, to be witnessed and hard copies to be returned to the DfE; AW will come into school tomorrow to sign them. **Action: AW**

Adopt new constitution for all schools within the MAC

Directors noted that the new constitution for schools will consist of:

- minimum of 6 Foundation
- 2 Parents
- 1 Staff
- Head/Principal
- Local Academy will now become the Local Governing Body
- Academy Representatives will be renamed Governors

The Board will consist of:

- minimum of 3 Foundation Directors, Co-opted Directors (provided Foundation Directors outnumber Co-opted by 2)
- no staff
- no parents.

Directors asked if FL would remain as Accounting Officer, FL confirmed that he would.

Directors **approved** and **adopted** the Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation, for circulation to all MAC schools. **Action: KS**

10. School Improvement – update from schools (reports from Principals)

• SJB

'Headteacher's Report February 2020' had been previously circulated via Governor Hub, CS reported that curriculum progress against success criteria is reflected in the SDP section. Teaching is robust with a focus on reading high quality texts.

There are 23 children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the morning session, increasing to 30 after the Easter break. The nursery is full, with an additional 10 staying in the afternoon after the Easter break. Numbers are

robust lower down the school between Years 2 to 5. Reception this year is in the main made up from our nursery, plus additional children from other providers resulting in a positive financial contribution.

CS advised that she would send out a parent survey later in the year to help identify what the school did well and what more it could do, summarising that comments may be helpful in clarifying what attracts people to the school and may be beneficial to utilise in marketing the school.

Areas for further development will require additional funding for resources, whilst ensuring that the school builds in a reserve. CS is meeting with LB tomorrow and will feed back to her on today's meeting. CS confirmed that she will be start to use the same template as LB for her Headteacher's report, making benchmarking and data analysis easier to access across both MAC schools.

- **BGN**

'Principal's Report to the PFMAC Meeting 11 February 2020' had been previously circulated via Governor Hub. Year 11 have had a positive impact, half yearly departmental reviews have been completed, this is the 3rd year staff have followed this process. An additional Inset day had been scheduled to focus on those reviews and curriculum implementation.

Students are achieving positive outcomes in their mock exams. The trip to Lourdes had to be cancelled given the coronavirus outbreak, students were very disappointed not to be going this year.

FL commented on Directors' ability to compare and benchmark if PFMAC schools are not using similar reporting procedures, stating that this had been identified as a concern within DBMAC schools.

- **HTC**

'Headteacher's report March 2020' had been previously circulated via Governor Hub. Directors observed that the format of the report identified vulnerable group contextual information and pupil group information at a glance, for ease of comparison with other MAC schools.

11. BGN Extension update

'BGN Expansion Project Organisation and Management Structure' had been previously circulated via Governor Hub. Directors noted that a Working Group (WG) had been set up at the LAC's meeting on 11th February, consisting of AW, ND and TO; anyone else who would like to join should contact either AW or TO. The MAC formally **approved** the implementation of the WG.

TO explained that the remit of the WG is to liaise with the Architect and the Diocese, and to ensure that BGN is the contact point for the school community, local stakeholders and residents. TO advised that the funding for the project would be paid direct to the MAC to allow VAT to be reclaimed. TO advised that the MAC are the client in this instance and will carry any risks

whilst the Diocese are running the project on a daily basis. Directors **agreed** that they want to ensure that all parties involved deliver what is best for the school.

TO advised that the next steps are to review the initial design concepts and instruct and developments or changes required before architects move on to the next stage. Directors requested more information and rigour behind the assessment of the electrical supply; TO explained that he had asked for further information. AW confirmed that the WG will liaise with the school to keep them updated.

AW confirmed that appointment documents for consultants are currently being prepared and the school should raise the purchase order for traffic assessment, adding that the business case had been approved by the LA.

12. Safeguarding update/Annual Safeguarding Audit

KS explained that in order to evidence 'how effective safeguarding is in schools' she and PC are working on a checklist for the DBMAC that ensures compliancy, they will then go through the annual safeguarding reports checking that list against individual schools. KS and PC will also look through the actions plans to ascertain areas for further development, either for individual schools or across the MAC. Action: KS/PC

FL advised that he had received copies of the Annual Safeguarding Audit from schools and will send them to KS for posting to Governor Hub. **Action: FL**

13. Health and safety

TO confirmed that the health and safety audit had been completed, he had received a copy of the report and there were no significant issues raised. Once again safeguarding of the perimeter of the school had been noted, FL confirmed that a risk assessment had been put in place. TO advised that Strictly Education would be carrying out a building inspection at St John's Banbury, and that he would like to meet up with their LAC Health and Safety governor. TO explained that he is making contact with all Health and Safety link governors across the PFMAC to discuss similar issues, resolutions and to share good practice.

14. Update from MAC Committee

Finance and Audit

The following documents were previously circulated via Governor Hub

- BGN Management Accounts January 2020
- BGN Budget Monitoring Variance P5
- HTC Management Accounts
- MAC Management Accounts
- SJBanbury Management Accounts

BGN - AW thanked MR for his short summary reports. Directors noted that BGN has a £33K in-year revenue deficit, recognising contributory factors as being the national pay awards of 2.75% and increased admin costs,

which had not been budgeted for. The school are exploring options to reduce the deficit.

St Josephs is forecasting a £841 deficit, MR confirmed capital income as £6K.

HTC is projecting a £34K deficit following a big audit adjustment, however, it is expected to end the year in surplus.

FL advised that the DBMAC also have an Impact Board which is working well by inviting Principals to attend on a rota basis to present on progress and attainment of their school. This gives Directors an opportunity to challenge and Principals an opportunity to discuss their teaching and learning. Directors noted that a similar committee may be implemented within this MAC at some point given the number of schools it now will contain.

15. Any other business

'Virtual Meeting' Policy had been previously circulated via Governor Hub. Directors approved and adopted the policy subject to an amendment at point 1.1, which is currently aligned to maintained schools. KS will prepare appropriate text relating to academies and recirculate the policy.

Action: KS

16. Date of next meeting

7th July 2020 at 6.30pm at Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Chipping Norton

17. Closing prayer

PC closed the meeting with prayer at 7.35pm

18. Effectiveness/Impact of meeting

- Keeping everyone updated on the current situation with coronavirus and its impact on curriculum provision and delivery. Challenging and monitoring schools with regard to children's teaching and learning during school closures and effective identification of vulnerable and key workers children.
- Approving a 'Virtual Meeting' Policy for all MAC schools and advising that committee meetings should be carried out via telecon/video link
- Ensuring schools taken into the MAC are financially viable, questioning budget figures and expected funding grants
- Holding LACs to account over deficit budgets, monitoring their finance plans to reduce that deficit
- Adoption and approval of new Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation. Discussion around structure of new Local Governing Boards and MAC Board
- Aligning Primary Headteacher reports for ease of data access and comparison across the MAC

- Approving a Working Group to ensure that BGN is the contact point for all involved parties regarding the BGN extension
- Drafting a safeguarding check list to monitor effectiveness throughout the MAC
- Formulating a coherent health and safety strategy across MAC schools

KS 25th March 2020