

Cardinal Newman Catholic School  
 Minutes of the Full Governing Body  
 Extraordinary Meeting Date: Thursday 21 January 2016  
 Meeting Time: 19.00 hours

| Attendees          | Initials | Role                                      | Attendees            | Initials | Role                                  |
|--------------------|----------|---|----------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Domenica Maxted    | DM       | Chair of Governors<br>Foundation Governor | James Kilmartin      | JK       | Head teacher                          |
| Graham O'Sullivan  | GOS      | Foundation Governor                       | Sandra Murphy        | SM       | Co-opted Governor                     |
| Suzanne Harmer     | HR       | Co-opted Governor                         | Carolyn Sheehan      | CyS      | Co-opted Governor                     |
| Cathy Hoar         | CH       | Foundation Governor                       | Caroline Shinn       | CoS      | Parent Governor                       |
| Louise Hulton      | LHu      | Foundation Governor                       |                      |          |                                       |
| Ian Keating        | IK       | Foundation Governor                       | Kerry Clarke         | KC       | Local Authority Governor              |
| Roger Galvin       | GN       | Staff Governor                            | Fr. Kevin O'Donnell  | KOD      | Foundation Governor                   |
| <b>Apologies</b>   |          |   | <b>In attendance</b> |          |                                       |
| Fr. Kieron O'Brien | KOB      | Foundation Governor                       | David Harvey         | DH       | Temporary Clerk to the Governing Body |
| Gemma Bond         | GB       | Parent Governor                           |                      |          |                                       |
| Claire Webster     | CW       | Foundation Governor                       |                      |          |                                       |
|                    |          |   |                      |          |                                       |
| <b>Absent</b>      |          |   |                      |          |                                       |
|                    |          |   |                      |          |                                       |

**The quorum for the meeting is 50% of the current membership of the Full Governing Body which is 16.  
 The meeting was quorate.**

| Agenda Item | Discussion and Decisions   | Action |
|-------------|--|--------|
| 1.          | <b>Opening prayer</b><br>The meeting was opened in prayer by KOD.  |        |
| 2.          | <b>Apologies</b><br>Apologies had been received from CW, GB & KOB. These were accepted.  |        |
| 3.          | <b>Freedom of Information reminder</b><br>Governors were reminded that business should be conducted in an open way which stands up to public scrutiny and that all non-confidential minutes are to be published on the school's website. |        |
| 4.          | <b>Declarations of pecuniary and other interest</b><br>There were no declarations of interest.   |        |

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| 5.          | <p><b>Minutes of meeting of 20 October 2015</b></p> <p>5.1 The FGB agreed that, given the extraordinary nature of the present meeting, approval of the previous meeting minutes and discussion of actions (the meeting of 9 December 2015 having been postponed) be deferred to the next session, scheduled for 15 March 2016.</p>   |        |
| 6.          | <p><b>OfSTED report discussion</b></p> <p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>6.1 DM set out the background to this item. The school had been made subject to a ‘no notice’ inspection by OfSTED, which had taken place over 9 and 10 December 2015. Its’ draft report had been sent to the school on 6 January 2016, for CNCS to provide comments on its factual accuracy. This information had been provided by the school and returned to OfSTED, within the one day specified for this response.</p> <p>6.2 At the Strategy Committee meeting of 19 January 2016, DM reported that governors had taken the decision to convene an extraordinary meeting of the FGB, to take place on 21 January (even though at the time, the final OfSTED report had not yet been received) to be given an update and discuss developments.</p> <p>6.3 DM informed the FGB that the report had now been received this day (21 January). JK arranged the distribution of hard copies to all attendees, with the request that it be handed back at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>6.4 DM drew attention to the overall rating made by OfSTED, which was ‘requires improvement’ (four out the five categories, the fifth being ‘good’). DM, with support from governors directly involved with the inspection process, commented on its’ antagonistic and aggressive nature; also its initial overall negative tone. DM then invited governors to read the report and suspended the meeting for fifteen minutes to allow this to happen.</p> <p><i>Governor discussion</i></p> <p>6.5 Governors gave their initial reactions, feeling that the report was not a complete disaster, commenting that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a clear need to improve governance and project how this would be done.</li> <li>• Tackling the concerns highlighted was manageable and achievable.</li> </ul> |        |

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|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A start had already been made to address shortcomings on Pupil Premium, although it had not helped that the required information was not on the school website.</li> <li>• Grapevine commentary had imagined the worst (e.g. special measures), which was not the case.</li> <li>• The school and governors needed to embrace the report’s criticisms.</li> <li>• Matters could only improve from now on.</li> <li>• It was important for the school to seize the initiative.</li> <li>• There were different audiences for the positive messaging that would be necessary, e.g. parents of children at the school, also new ones too.</li> <li>• Tone of the school’s messaging would have to be carefully phrased, with the emphasis on the school taking the report seriously.</li> <li>• OfSTED inspectors had noted the school had the right Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in place to effect the necessary changes.</li> <li>• Circumstances of the inspection would need special handling, in terms of providing an explanation of why OfSTED came.</li> </ul> <p><i>Headteacher comment</i></p> <p>6.6 JK stated that the last eighteen months had been very difficult. He and the SLT had had to cope with what appeared to be a campaign against the school and had not been able to respond to criticisms for reasons of confidentiality.</p> <p>6.7 JK acknowledged that the OfSTED rating amounted to a disappointing judgement, however he would choose to view it as a mandate to implement change. JK confirmed that he agreed with a lot of what had been stated in the report (the areas identified for progress were very useful), it was clear that the school did require improvement.</p> <p>6.8 JK pointed to the large size of the school (143 teachers and 60 support staff) and the task therefore of ensuring consistency, which would need a new strategy with high quality teaching. JK wanted to focus on the main issue, as a headteacher and parent, which was to ensure the school would become the best it could be.</p> <p><i>Further governor discussion</i></p> <p>Governors commented that :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing more support (e.g. from the LA) was important, using the means of school improvement meetings. JK added that there was a question of making sure there was an impact in measures taken. In terms of narrowing the gap for</li> </ul> |        |

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|             | <p>example, this had narrowed recently for Year 11, although figures for 2014 had showed a widening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour and support was worth looking at closely</li> <li>• Third party providers to carry out the governance review should be identified</li> <li>• A change in the school improvement adviser might be needed.</li> <li>• A look at governor induction should be considered</li> <li>• The views of staff should be assessed. JK stated the report had not yet been shared with them, only the areas for improvement. JK reported that staff agreed the thrust of criticisms were fair and were keen to tackle the problems identified.</li> <li>• Unpopular decisions might be necessary, with staff in place trained to deal with outcomes. Such new processes would have to be fully explained, in order that staff understood why they were happening.</li> <li>• The watchword on the way forward in general should be transparency, with as much information shared as possible.</li> <li>• The views of the students should be considered. RG stated that there had not been a protest made about the report. CNCS was a good school with good students, albeit some with challenging behaviour. However most wanted to do well and were willing and keen. That said, some needed encouragement to work and so any practice of being too lenient in this regard had to stop. DM added her view that the sixth form would be supportive.</li> <li>• The approach to behaviour management should be examined.</li> <li>• The student voice in the school was already strong. Although they wanted some form of representation and involvement, this might not extend to attending governors' meetings. Governors should take the time to talk to students, explain how the school worked and governance in general.</li> <li>• Student voice needed to be more representative and broadened. At present there were only two students per class elected yearly on to the School Council; reporting back to form (not across Year) groups</li> <li>• The school mission statement could be renewed, symbolising the imminent changes to come.</li> <li>• There would now be a risk of less new parents choosing the school to send their children. This pointed to the school's recruiting policy being reviewed.</li> <li>• There used to be a programme of governors visiting feeder schools, this could be</li> </ul> |        |

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|             | <p>built up again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school's inward looking culture needed changing, closer contact with local primaries should be developed. JK stated that he met primary school headteachers on a termly basis; also that the school's facilities (such as the theatre and sports fields) were made regularly available.</li> </ul> <p><i>Next steps</i></p> <p>JK stated that OfSTED would publish this report on their website within five working days (from the date on the document, i.e. 21 January). However, it clearly stated that the school should make it available to parents and carers as soon as possible.</p> <p>Governors stated that this early circulation ought to be effected from 22 January, with a covering letter from the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Its content could be short, with :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a statement expressing disappointment</li> <li>a promise to work together and improve the situation,</li> <li>a statement of the need to digest the report further,</li> <li>an acknowledgement of the concerns expressed,</li> <li>information about an improvement plan already in the process of being formulated.</li> </ul> <p>Governors added that there should be (in as transparent and rigorous a manner as possible):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of governance carried out as soon as possible</li> <li>A plan of action devised, based on the areas of weakness identified and setting out what governors would do to tackle them.</li> <li>A set of objectives drafted and shared out amongst governors to complete.</li> <li>A set of meetings arranged with parents (existing and new) to communicate these actions and address their concerns</li> </ul> <p>Governors also raised the issue of the size of the school, questioning whether this should be an item for further discussion. JK stated that, in terms of the proportion of pupil premium students, the school was in the middle range. Ideas of dividing the school into, say, three blocks had been looked at but not taken any further. There was also the question of the number of catholic children at the school to be taken into consideration; as well as going back to an 11 (instead of 12) form intake. On this last point, JK felt this was inefficient, given it affected the move back to thirty children per class which</p> |        |

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|             | mattered.   |           |
| <b>7.</b>   | <p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>7.1 DM provided background of three incidents – safeguarding and staff grievance related – details of one of which might appear in local media on 22 January (the Argus). DM recalled that information of these incidents had been shared with other governors and the local authority. DM concluded by asking governors to declare their availability to serve on panels when they are convened.</p> <p>7.2 JK reported that the abusive comments appearing in the Argus on 18 January had had a demoralising effect on staff. The action taken by Corinne Allen with the Argus to ensure these had been taken down was much appreciated. But the fact remained that the Argus was poor at moderating its comments column, for example refusing to block commentators who made defamatory comments on a regular basis.</p> |           |
| <b>8.</b>   | <b>AOB</b> - None   |           |
| <b>9.</b>   | <b>Date of next meeting</b> – 15 March 2016 (although the Chair considered there was value in scheduling another one before that date)  | <b>DM</b> |

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Documents attached to the minutes: None