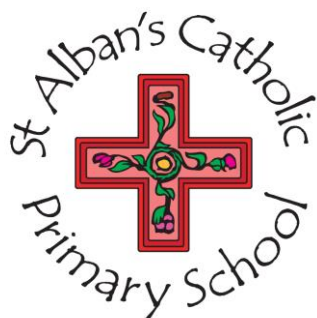


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## ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

*Love one another as I have loved you – John 15:12*

### MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

13 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 1900 hours

#### ATTENDANCE

Name	Category	Term ends	Present	Absent
John McDonald	Headteacher	Ex-officio	P	
Kevin Doogan	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett	Foundation	31/08/2025	P	
Colette Haig	Staff	31/08/2024	P	
Lucy Lowe	Foundation	31/08/2024		A
Teresa Marnell	Co-opted	31/08/2023	P	
Peter Matthews	Foundation	31/08/2025	P	
Catherine Moor	Foundation	31/08/2025		A
Bridget Pullen	Parent	31/08/2026	P	
Father Ramesh	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Lorraine Adamson	LA Governor	31/08/2026	P	
Vacancy	Foundation			
Vacancy	Foundation			
Vacancy	Parent			
In attendance:	Kelly Nuttall, Deputy Headteacher Eileen Coyle, Clerk to Governors			

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## KEVIN DOOGAN in the CHAIR

### 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the extraordinary meeting of the Governing Board. He introduced and welcomed Lorraine Adamson, newly-appointed LA Governor.

The absences of Lucy Lowe and Catherine Moor were noted.

### 2 THE PURPOSE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

On 28 March 2022, the Government issued a new Schools White Paper which stated that the Government wanted all schools to be part of a '**strong trust**', or be in the process of forming or joining one by 2030.

Academies are independent, state-funded schools that are outside local Council control. Multi-academy trusts [MATs] are groups of academies operating in areas.

The Diocese had expressed a wish for all Catholic schools in Wirral to be part of one Multi-academy trust - the Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust.

The Chair stated that he was aware that historically academisation had attracted strong views with some people seeing an opportunity for autonomy and school-led collaboration, whilst others questioned whether it improved standards. Understandably, the lack of knowledge and understanding had raised concerns amongst schools' staff.

With this in mind, along with the Headteacher, he had invited Andy Moor, CEO, Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust, to give a presentation and to respond to Governors' questions.

Andy Moor thanked the Governors for the invitation. He was aware that there were many anxieties within schools and this evening he hoped to allay many of those fears whilst outlining the benefits of being part of a MAT.

He explained that the Holy Family MAT currently comprises five schools, two secondary schools – St Mary's Catholic College and St John Plessington Catholic College – and three Catholic primary schools – Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Wirral, and St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, in Cheshire.

His presentation took the form of a series of projected slides, accompanied by a running commentary.

Andy Moor explained that the White Paper states that the DfE's intention is to make academisation right for the children, the parents and they community it serves. The

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aim is to ensure that young people and families across the country are at the heart of the trusts' mission and work. The DfE has been clear that it will support trusts financially across the country.

He continued that regardless of what the buildings or the structure look like, everyone is involved and the mission is the same for all schools.

The North West Dioceses and those across the country are working towards 2030 in different ways. Over the past three years, many conversations have been taking place amongst Catholic schools; which sometimes are chaotic. There had been '*ups and downs*', but overall Andy Moor was confident that during his time as CEO he had been successful in bringing the current schools in the MAT together in a very significant way. A whole range of professional services had been developed over the last couple of years, for example, Finance, HR, IT, Estates and Health & Safety, all of which are managed by people with the right skills and provide opportunities for schools to work closely together and to build relationships with other schools. The structures move forward and evolve as circumstances change. For example, discussions are taking place on how the MAT would work with other schools in the future. Experience has shown that Headteachers and school leaders have really great ideas which would be taken forward. The MAT also supports teaching training as part of its teaching school hub. It's the only Catholic teaching hub in the North West.

Andy Moor explained that the three values, Vision, Mission and Core Values are at the heart of anything the MAT does. The intention over the coming years is to focus on Cultural Matters, Vision and Ethos; People matter; the Whole Child matters, Educational outcomes, Quality Matters; Governors' Leadership and Accountability, ensuring that people are part of what matters.

*Andy Moor paused the presentation and invited questions/comments.*

The Chair responded: Based on what you have said, my view, which I have held for the past 5/6 years, has changed and I can see that you are keen to develop a model based on a partnership approach. I can see exciting new opportunities.

The Headteacher stated: I agree. It's a very exciting time. Different messages come out every year, but the White Paper makes the position clear from 2030. My view is that it would probably be better to join earlier rather than later. The plan is for all the Catholic Schools in Wirral to be part of the Holy Family MAT although those schools have different aims. It is important for Governors to share any with worries they may have, because it is only by articulating these concerns that they can be addressed and taken away. There are implications because of the different structures. The plan is to have 34 schools in the MAT by 2030, and that is a lot of schools. It will be a Governors' decision. There are some horror stories going around about certain MATs and there will be staff who have heard these stories who will be highly anxious. It is important that all these horror stories are brought to the

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surface so the staff can be appeased. I lose out on autonomy to a degree, but the important thing for me is ensuring that the right decisions are made because there will be huge implications for the children who join the school in the future.

Andy Moor gave instant responses to questions raised by individual Governors –

- *Pensions: How would pension transfers be managed as part of the MAT?*
- *HR: Having HR support is optional for schools. What happens if a school does not have a TLR for HR?*
- *All schools are different. Like crisps, there are many different flavours, and it's complex.*
- *Currently, HR which is optional, as is Health & Safety, are traded services and are part of the LA. What traded services will be offered, and secondly, from the health and safety perspective, I notice Finance etc. What about health and safety? Who is it currently with, and what is the offer?*
- *We buy Improvement Services from Edsential. Does that continue?*
- *Have you considered continuing Mental Health support, not just children's mental health, but also employees?*
- *Where are the hubs based?*
- *There have been academies that have closed. What happens to a school that is in a MAT and is on a downward trajectory? There have been outstanding schools in the past, and others that are not doing very well. How do we get best practice in every school?*
- *Can staff be instructed or directed to move to from one school to another school?*
- *I'm interested in the parents' and staffs' perspectives. It has certainly triggered a lot of anxieties, and I don't want people to have to worry until we have asked the questions and have the answers. If we all do the hard work we can talk about it. It's a matter of timing.*
- *From the staff's point of view, there are concerns about their jobs and conditions of service etc.*
- *The link between the primary and the secondary schools. It's important to have them together, although they are really different to each other.*
- *The number of children coming to Catholic schools has dropped. More work is needed to get people into the churches. It's not just a matter of getting children baptized so they can get a place in this school.*
- *What's the situation with Catholic independent Colleges who operate a single MAT?*

Andy Moor resumed the presentation with a focus on the Role of the Teaching Hubs, eg, the Maths Hub, collaboration across the country, and an upcoming conference at the Floral Pavilion.

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At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair commented that it was a really good presentation in which a good deal of information had been shared, whilst giving the Governors ample opportunity to ask questions.

He asked, *'What happens from here?' 'Do the Governors feel there is any value in moving forward?'* He continued, there needs to be conversations with the staff when they are given the opportunity to bring forward any concerns or qualms they may have. Following that, if further information is required the governors would like to be part of the conversation. The support staff may have concerns about what it looks like. Before it goes any further, there is a need for a conversation between ourselves as Governors.

Addressing Andy Moor, a governor stated: Listening to what you have said, it's a natural transition. You have converted me. I've changed my opinions.

The Headteacher stated: If you go at the right time, there are opportunities for the staff to develop and progress. There will be 34 schools, you have five now. We have people in this school who are really good. I keep coming back to being the custodians for our children, and how can we make it so that they have the best opportunities and chances?

The Chair thanked Andy Moor for the presentation and the opportunities given for the Governors to ask questions. The whole experience has been very useful and had provided an opportunity to share ideas.

Andy Moor stated that he would be happy to return and to talk to the Governors at any time.

*Andy Moor withdrew at 2020 hours.*

The Chair asked if there was anyone who felt that it would not be appropriate to move the agenda forward slowly, ie in terms of opening up the conversation with the staff.

The governors replied -

*'There are advantages in getting in sooner rather than later.'*

*'There's a big issue with Catholic leadership. Having something like this is good.'*

*'It's interesting and attractive, and not something to take for granted. Many children are lacking faith and there is unpredictability and uncertainty in their lives.'*

*'No staff will lose their jobs; on the contrary there will be opportunities for them to progress.'*

*'Starting the conversation now gives us time to get everyone straight so we are not panicking.'*

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The Headteacher commented: *'I am definitely in favour, although I will lose some autonomy.'*

The Chair commented: *'The White Paper has developed the situation from where it was six years ago, when it was a non-starter. It doesn't look like that now.'*

The Governors made the following suggestions to move forward –

- *Gather some questions, ask those questions, and consider at that time whether there is a need to re-evaluate.*
- *Have another meeting, perhaps when the parent governors and the possibly the two foundation governors have been appointed, and if everyone agrees to continue the conversation.*
- *Have a Zoom business meeting.*
- *Having the conversation is very important.*
- *When you have looked at staff engagement, have a good cohort of parents to ask questions, and have that discussion with new parents.*

**RESOLVED:** To agree to the following actions being taken to inform a decision on if and when to join the Holy Family MAT –

Action	By	When
<b>Ask Andy Moor to provide a Power Point copy of the slides used in the presentation, by Wednesday, 19 September.</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Wednesday. 15/09/22</b>
<b>Send copies of presentation to all the Governors, with a request to forward raise further questions by 26 September.</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Wednesday, 19/09/22</b>
<b>Report Governors' further questions/concerns received to the Business meeting on 27 September.</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>27/09/22</b>
<b>Update the Diocese on the views of the Board and seek further information.</b>	<b>Headteacher/ Chair of Governors</b>	<b>28/09/22</b>
<b>Collate all the information available, and begin an initial consultation with the staff.</b>	<b>Headteacher/ Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Early/mid October 22</b>
<b>Consult key stakeholders, including the parents</b>	<b>Headteacher/ Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Mid October</b>
<b>Update the Diocese</b>	<b>Headteacher/ Chair of Governors</b>	<b>By Autumn half term.</b>

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**3 DATE AND TIME OF BUSINESS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** To hold a virtual business meeting of the Governing Board on **TUESDAY, 27 September 2022** at 1800 hours.

The Chair thanked everyone for their input into a productive session and closed the meeting at 2050 hours.

**SIGNED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2022.**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_ DATE