

Meeting of the OLICAT Directors
 22nd May 2024
 Minutes



Attendees

Directors: Joe Burns, Bill Nelson, Christopher Donnellan, Ilona Bond, Catherine Leong

Central team: Tony Bishop, Sue Robinson

Clerk: Andrew Waterhouse

Apologies: Jo Brake-Oakes

Prayer: Tony Bishop

Agenda item	Action
1. Declaration of pecuniary interest/conflict of interest arising from agenda IB declared director role at BEST. No conflict envisaged.	
2. Minutes & Matters arising <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To adjust attendees to define role and add prayer b. Accepted as a fair record c. Items assigned to NY are work in progress and will return in due course d. Any further matters arising will be addressed in body of meeting 	
3. Catholic Life Bernie Grimley presented an overview of Catholic Life and current inspection status. The grid circulated shows schools' self-evaluation and current CSI judgement (or anticipated CSI judgement). Key points noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Lady Catholic Primary is SEF 2 and CSI 2. School has made significant progress with chaplaincy (former head of RE splits role with St Thomas More Secondary). RE teaching is area for development, a position reflected nationally with curriculum and training providers still in an emergent phase. We are using own good practice to steer and trial resources. CD observed we're effectively developing our own. BN queried if diocesan sign off was needed. BG confirmed not as we're adapting and developing approved delivery. • St Edwards has similar judgements. We disagree with Catholic leadership evaluation and believe this is stronger than a 2. RE teaching is also a development area here. • Our Lady of Walsingham was inspected under the older criteria. At that time RE needed development but is no longer the case. We anticipate inspection next year. • St Gregory's SEF was outstanding across the board, and CSI came in as 2s. RE teaching again a development area, particularly information recall. • St Mary's CSI took place in April. SEF was 2s, CSI did grade some as 1s. School has a shared chaplain and a strong vision. JB queried how many schools have chaplains. BG confirmed just under half, but what is emerging is sharing chaplain resource across schools is very impactful. 	

- St John Rigby is strong on all fronts, and their head of RE sits on the trust steering group.
- Thomas Becket has a strong chaplain and Catholic Life in the school is strong. The challenge is teaching of RE and difficulty in recruitment for the subject. JB queried how much is taught by non-specialists. BG confirmed small and largely year 7 and 8, but we have no A level applicants. There is a legacy position of high proportion of allocated students combined with teaching that needs to inspire.
- The Good Shepherd are awaiting inspection. Self-evaluation has them at a solid 2.
- St Josephs and St Gregorys have been observed recently for teaching and have particularly strong pedagogy. Catholic leadership is strong, but development is in collective worship. TB noted the HT appointment was for a 2-year period and we will now move to make that permanent.
- St Thomas More Primary is one of the stronger schools across the board with a SEF and inspection both at 2.
- St Thomas More Secondary has a SEF of 1 for Catholic Life and Mission, RE teaching and Collective worship. The CSI inspection came in at 2s. We do not agree with this outcome.

BG explained some of our challenges are notional such as RE teaching but change in leadership at the diocese has impacted. At school level we have identified where support is needed and moved to implement.

Plans moving ahead include:

- Change to prayer and liturgy policy. BG to provide training to directors.
- Core RE initiative for 6th form.
- New induction programme with diocese for chaplains.
- To reflect on and evaluate trust mission.
- Jubilee year coming up

IB queried if schools were now comfortable with the new SEF format. BG confirmed this had bedded in – initial mistake was to attempt a straight transfer from old to new.

BG to arrange training.

4. Wellbeing

Nathan Wells presented a report on the most recent wellbeing survey. Key points noted:

- To place in context wellbeing has been a process of development and understanding from staff that we are not asking how they feel, but rather giving agency and supporting structures over their own wellbeing.
- Overall survey is very positive. Response rate is up 50%, and only one school has dipped in response rate. We read this as greater engagement and buy in.
- In taking reliance on the data the caveat is they are answering the questions we are asking. Also, we have to take into account where there are big jumps any background context – for example the change in staffing profile at SJR.

- What we believe we are seeing is where resource and focus is brought to bear positive impacts are seen – for example behaviour with an improved overall score up 1.1.
- Usually where a response rate increases scores drop. We've seen an increase in both response and scores.
- Four schools have some decrease. OLW participation doubled, and score dipped slightly. STB saw a big increase in participation (previously largely SLT with skewed scoring). STG and STE need unpicking and action plans formulating.
- Meetings will take place now with wellbeing leads and heads to contextualise data and formulate school specific action plans.

CD observed wellbeing can often be viewed with cynicism, but if it encompasses action and practical solutions staff will feel supported and valued.

IB observed with 3 years now into the Trust structure people are seeing each other working together and this supportive collaborative approach filters through.

NW explained action plans will be reviewed in the autumn. IB noted one of the Bedford schools is linking to the SDP, and perhaps this should be encouraged across the board.

NW concluded average score of all staff was over 7.5 in each question which is a fantastic result. None of our scores have an average near 5. All are in the positive.

5. Finance & HR

a. Finance Report

CD recognised this would be SRs last meeting as Finance Director, and that Directors thanked her for her work in pulling together three separate trusts into a cohesive whole.

SR presented the finance report. Key points noted:

- Monitoring delayed due to budget process
- March, and April, figures are looking a little better than expected.
- STE will be significantly over with unforeseen maternity covers.
- Majority of primaries are close to balanced even if in deficit. Little more adjustment can be done here. Secondary deficits remain the main challenge.
- High supply cost for secondaries is impacting, particularly at TBCS.
- BN noted from the ESFA meeting there are other schools in the area in a far worse position and a higher priority focus for the ESFA.
- TB observed we know we won't be balanced this year, and it will take time to move to that position. We don't want to harm the positives, but we will have to make spending judgements. Longer term decisions will need to be considered for some of our schools as to whether they can sustain 2 form entry structures.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. TBCS ICT expenditure approval Returned from last meeting. BN advised countering their settlement figure with a much lower and more realistic one. TB asked where the money is coming from in the budget. SR to confirm. Spend agreed. c. STE outdoor play area expenditure approval Funding is across 2 years from PE grant c 19k year. BN at LAC meeting queried if needed to be referred to board for approval. Directors approved. d. Credit Card policy Directors approved the revised policy e. Support Staff increments 2 schools have done their increments. Report attached. Request also contains a correction for a missed scale point for a teacher. IB queried how this had occurred. Confirmed this was under a prior head and information not available. Directors approved. f. Redundancy proposal Proposal is for a role at SJSG. BN queried once the other school site is returned will there be a role requirement. TB confirmed this would not be the case. BN queried if redeployment was an option. TB confirmed it was not something the staff member wanted. Directors agreed. g. Reserve Pooling Policy Policy considered, and BNs comments have now been incorporated. Process/request form to be added as suggested. Directors agreed policy. 	
<p>6. Chairs Update CD reported the DST seems to have disappeared and meetings been delayed.</p> <p>TB updated on Diocesan education strategy. TB met yesterday with Oliver Larkin the Diocese new COO, plus Joe Richardson, Joanne Hoarty, Pauline Cuddihy, Simon Penhaligan and Christopher Perry.</p> <p>A number of potentially contentious things came out of this meeting. The education review has now been completed and was shared this afternoon. The question was raised about MAT structure and diocese, which moved on to possibility of the formation of a third MAT in MK. We made it clear that OLICAT should not hear in this format if earlier permission had been given. Our view is it's a mistake.</p> <p>Pauline Cuddihy is now Acting Director of Education.</p>	
<p>7. Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An allegation has been made against a staff member at OLW. Investigation is in progress in accordance with policy/procedure. 	

b. Police investigation following an allegation made against a member of staff at OLCF has now been closed with no action.	
8. LAC Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Received and noted• Central team moving to TGS over the summer to free up teaching space at TBCS	
9. AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noted IT support contract update received outside of committee.• Noted energy contract will require out of committee approval.• Honorarium process deferred to a later meeting.	