OLICAT Directors Meeting
15th July 2026
Minutes

Attendees:
Directors: Bill Nelson, Christopher Donellan, Joe Burns, Ilona Bond, Catherine Leong
Executive: Catherine Burnham, Asha Morjaria, Bernie Grimley, Paul McCahill, Andrew Waterhouse
Apologies: William Deegan, William Guri

Prayer: Bernie Grimley

Agenda item	Action
1. Declaration of pecuniary interest/conflict of interest arising from agenda Nothing declared	
2. Minutes & Matters arising 2.1. Noted all funds from the site sale have now been received and invested 2.2. Trips approved outside of committee for STM and TGS. 2.3. Minute correction (page 6, paragraph 2)	
3. Catholic Life BG presented the CL report. Points to note: • Two schools have been inspected under CSI – SFOA and TBCS. TBCS faced a challenging inspection agenda and performed well. Both were well prepared. • OLW were inspected last under the old framework in 2022 and are currently working on self evaluation under the new framework in anticipation of inspection next year. • IB noted from working with SFOA the framework is very closely aligned with the Ofsted framework. It is important that LACs have a clear understanding of Catholic Life in the schools. • SFOA has since appointed a chaplain allowing HT to be freed from that role. • TBCS has added a chaplains assistant to bolster the schools approach. • BG noted in a number of areas chaplains are shared across schools which we view as an advantage, • IB queried if chaplains meet as a group. CB confirmed there is a chaplaincy network. • CB reported grant funding from Sisters of the Holy Cross to attend a conference in Rome for chaplains. • Nationally the area of most concern has been RE teaching in CSI. We have investment and CPD planned for next year. BG reported she undertook an exercise where 3 questions were asked of LAC chairs and then asked of a group of children from each school. The outcomes were interesting: • When language of faith is used with children you can observe if its familiar or foreign to them • There is a difference in exposure ad that is influenced by the HT • For African students there is a strong presence of faith in the home	To pick up with LAC chairs training

• Where the school has a strong musical tradition they articulate through this • We recognise and can articulate the diversity of faith in our schools • To have a discourse with other faiths must have a conviction in ones own, and our children are comfortable doing that.	
4. Safeguarding PMC shared the safeguarding report. Key points to note: • Ofsted reports reduce safeguarding to met/not met but it covers a large scope. • Regional hubs are now in operation. These are used as a forum for leads but also supervision/bet practice/emerging themes. Low level concerns policy has come out of this. • All schools are now on MyConcern with the aim of being fully operational in September. This will provide us with a Trust dashboard for oversight. • Audits provide a comprehensive overview of schools – common positive themes: o Leadership and Culture are strong across the board o Recruitment is strong in all schools o Attendance, early help and family support are strong o Governors have an active role and provide challenge • Development areas: o Documenting case reviews and lessons learned o Refinement of home visit procedures o Refinement of behaviour and code of conduct policies o Digital safeguarding • Overall safeguarding is a strength within the trust, pupils feel safe and early help is effective. BN reported an area of concern within the community, in picking up comments from an older generation where children are going home challenging language and attitudes expressed. We are having to manage a tense cultural environment and our schools are doing that. CB thanked PMC for taking on this role alongside his HT role and moving things forward so effectively. CD observed when challenged by Ofsted/DFE on how we know, thn this is how we know.	a.
5. HR Paper circulated in advance has been replaced with a supplementary document as schools that did not respond in time now have done so. Each school has followed correct procedure and LACs have approved changes. CD questioned if it had passed Finance approval. AM confirmed in planning the assumption is made all will increment. One query noted in respect of fixed term contracts and schools uncertain how to manage these. Agreed to clarify with heads moving forward.	

The second paper for consideration comes out of the job evaluation process to align central team staff with rest of trust support staff for timings. Directors agreed both papers.	
6. CEO Update CB provided three papers to the board: a reflection on year one, a self evaluation framework, and a strategic plan. IB asked what the best thing has been this year. CB stated building relationships with people, and the trust is blessed with good people who are aligned with the mission of the trust. BN noted a key achievement has been the absolute clarity coming from the Chief Executive. CB explained the self-evaluation framework is recommended by CES and used by the diocese. It is developed by the Director of Education of the Archdiocese of Birmingham who worked with the DFE on the 5 strong pillars - the 6th one is Catholicity. CB explained Strong and flourishing is a best case scenario and most trusts are working towards that. Some areas in the red/yellow column – principally around chaplaincy, audit, formation, HR processes, etc. This was done as self-evaluation with SLT and gives a picture of where we are. View is next year to go to heads and LACs and look from their perspective how it looks. BN observed with the strategic target should be on PAN and explaining why not, and what support do they need to get to PAN. SEND remains a challenge with taking children we are not equipped to deal with out of our system and back to LA who are legally required to provide what is needed. IB noted this is a national problem. IB noted being aspirational with pupil attainment and progress. Schools should be in top 20%,at national is a minimum. Don't set your ceiling too low.	
7. Finance An additional supplementary paper was circulated following DFE update today on pay awards. Assumptions all remain same except for teacher pay awards which is now 6,5% over 2 years rather than 3 with schools now meeting first 1.8% rather than 1%. PE grant was going to be removed after one term, but is now staying for half a year. Originally we were looking at a 191k deficit, now revised to 173k deficit. A late update from St Marys means we may be looking at staff movement and they will move to a surplus. Apart from central and 2 schools all the rest are balanced or better. Directors are asked to approve budgets, noting LACs approved pre last minute changes version.	

	IB noted the way meetings and systems in place and are working with heads presents absolute clarity and makes much more sense to them. Directors agreed budgets. BN observed we need to increase reserves to 4%. CD noted we also have to develop central structure to take on new schools and options are limited - increase top slice is one. CB noted increasing numbers is another. CD observed part of the 1,8 million is developing that. CB noted her thanks to Asha for providing this level of support with one finance manager down. BN noted on internal audit a few minor issues to address and nothing of great significance. AM flagged oversight on capital projects and this will be addressed moving forward. A proposal from Top Tier Padel was presented to the board. TBCS has been working with them to develop. Board are asked to take oversight of the project and asked for further due diligence to be reported back. Project to proceed in principle.	
8.	Policies Equalities policy A question raised in response to a diocesan paper that questioned re-assignment of gender. We do have children in our schools who are living as a gender different to that born in, and they are supported and respected. CD aware we need to be cautious in our choice of words as there may be a lack of understanding in some areas. CB noted we are compliant with legal requirements of term in equalities act. IB observed its focus is complying with legal requirements and allows school leaders to articulate. BN noted growing up in Liverpool had every race, culture and religion and it was accepted. Who is not made in the image of God. Policy approved. Low level concerns policy Expand volunteers to cover governors and directors. Policy agreed Allergy policy has gone to schools to action, however additional DFE guidance came last Thursday. To update and Directors to see updated version next meeting.	a.
9.	Governance Minutes received and reviewed.	

Noted STMS is a draft. Concern over T&L review report and how it was presented and received by the LAC. IB and CB will discuss outside the meeting.	
10. AOB IB flagged that previously it was agreed for Directors to receive SI report, but this is yet to happen. Agreed tp put in place a system in September for regular reviews of T&L and Directors to have oversight. IB suggested time in October for all HTs to present results, concerns and plans to Directors. CB to investigate.	