

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL CLERKING SERVICES

**The Cluster Board of Endsleigh Holy Child, St Anthony's and St Mary Queen of Martyrs  
Voluntary Catholic Primary Academies**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cluster Board  
held at St Anthony's RC Primary Academy on Thursday 17 March 2022 at 2.00pm

PRESENT: Reverend W Massie (in the chair)  
Dr S James; Mrs K Reed

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Bentley (Interim Head of School, Endsleigh Holy Child); Mrs C Coldham (Head of School, St Mary Queen of Martyrs); Mrs N Coyle (Lead Lay Chaplain); Mrs D Hermann (DSL, Endsleigh Holy Child); Mrs M Ryan (Executive Headteacher, Cluster 1); Mrs E Smith (DSL, St Mary Queen of Martyrs); Mrs J Storch (Co Head of School, St Anthony's); Miss M Walker (Acting DSL, St Anthony's); Mr M Ward (Co Head of School, St Anthony's)

GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL: Tony Hammond, Independent Professional Clerking Services

Prior to the commencement of formal business, introductions were made and new members welcomed to the Cluster Board.

Mrs Ryan confirmed that she now had oversight of safeguarding for the Trust and had decided that it would be useful for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) to attend so they could answer any questions on safeguarding data.

84 OPENING PRAYER. Reverend Massie led attendees in prayer.

85 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS. No interests were declared.

86 APOLOGIES. There were no apologies for absence.

87 MEMBERSHIP. Members noted the appointments of Dr James and Mrs Reed, who were thanked for joining the Board.

88 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2021.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

89 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

i) The Alpha Course (minute 80 refers)

It was noted that Mrs Coyle and Mrs Ryan had completed the course.

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Chair's initials

ii) Missing Hours at St Thomas More (minute 80 refers)

Mrs Coyle informed members that Miss Coyle was now working in the Academy for one day per week, so each of the academies had the same allocation of time.

90 CHAPLAINCY UPDATE. The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mrs Coyle drew attention to key points, as follows:-

- There had been a significant amount of activity since the last report. Photographs had been included in the report to bring to life what had been happening.
- The churches now had a display boards showing the academies' Feast Day activities. There was also a new Chaplaincy Check-In newsletter with information about the Saints and activities for children to complete. I-Spy activities had been provided in the churches.
- Holy Week liturgies were being planned and would be uploaded to Sharepoint. These could be used on separate days or combined to form a Holy-Week-in-a-Day celebration.
- Logistical issues with the Travelling Crosses had led to the production of Lent-in-a-Bag for each class in each academy, which included five liturgies. The Team would like academy leaders to consider whether they wanted to see the return of the Traveling Crosses.
- There would be an Easter Chaplaincy Check-In newsletter for pupils to take home.
- The dates of Be Spirited days would be emailed to the academies. It was hoped that the full Chaplaincy team would be able to support at each.
- Adoration would be taking place on 30 March, starting at St Thomas More. A lesson plan had been prepared so the children knew what Adoration was and what to expect.
- The possibility of employing an apprentice in the Chaplaincy Team was being considered. Chaplaincy was developing well and there were good resources, but more capacity was needed. An apprenticeship would involve a two-year distance learning qualification (equivalent to a foundation degree) with a focus on theology.

It was pointed out that the Assumption Legacy Fund might be a source of funding for an apprentice.

Mrs Ryan informed members that she and Mrs Coyle met regularly to ensure effective communication.

Mrs Coyle circulated copies of the St Mary's College Chaplaincy report for information.

Mrs Ryan paid tribute to the excellent support the Chaplaincy Team provided for the Trust's pupils and staff, including the staff reflection evenings.

The heads of school confirmed that they would prefer to have both Travelling Crosses and Lent-in-a-Bag. They acknowledged the work involved and offered their help in managing the two, including support in putting the Lent bags together.

Mrs Coyle was thanked for her report and left the meeting.

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91 COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES. Reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mrs Ryan confirmed that the report template had been modified to include the following:-

- A breakdown of behaviour by category.
- The name of the staff member with responsibility for looked after children.
- Safeguarding policies.
- Website checklist.

Heads of school were each asked to highlight a small number of key issues.

### **St Mary Queen of Martyrs VC Primary Academy**

Mrs Coldham drew attention to the following:-

- The Local Authority's Education Safeguarding Manager (Philip Painter) had carried out a rigorous safeguarding review, which had been very useful and had resulted in some helpful recommendations (for minor changes). These included recording the names of the people making referrals on CPOMS and updating social worker details on CPOMS when the Local Authority vulnerable children list was received.
- Persistent absence(PA) remained high. Some families did not value education and used COVID-19 as an excuse for non-attendance. Mrs Smith had now taken responsibility for attendance and there was a range of strategies in place to support families to reduce persistent absenteeism. Staff were relentless and went over an above the Trust's Attendance Policy. Most of the PA children had Social Care involvement.
- Staff absences as a result of COVID-19 had impacted on staff training, but Mrs Smith was ensuring gaps were being addressed.

Mrs Ryan confirmed that she would monitor the follow-up of all safeguarding review recommendations. Members welcomed the fact that the audit had been rigorous and that follow-up was being monitored.

Mrs Ryan confirmed that Academy staff were working hard to reduce persistent absenteeism and the situation was improving, albeit slowly.

Members were informed that the Trust had bought into a national online safeguarding package, which provided a useful supplement to Local Authority training.

In response to a question, Mrs Coldham confirmed that the Academy had three emotional literacy support assistants (ELSAs), who provided valuable support for 16 highly vulnerable children (14 of whom were entitled to the Pupil Premium). Mrs Smith informed members that children were assessed before and after ELSA involvement to check on impact, and that the six-week programme could be extended where necessary.

Members noted that some of the 52 PA children would have genuine anxiety and asked how the Academy addressed this. Mrs Smith confirmed that staff examined CPOMS data, consulted parents and provided bespoke support, including emotional literacy.

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Members asked how attendance compared to the national average and Mrs Coldham informed them that there was currently no national data. She confirmed that 96.7% was the pre-COVID average and the Academy's attendance was currently 94.6%. It was hoped that this would increase to c96% by the end of the term.

Academy staff were praised for their hard work.

### **St Anthony's VC Primary Academy**

Mr Ward drew attention to the following:-

- The Academy had been subject to a safeguarding review, which had resulted in some useful recommendations. There had also been a Section 8 inspection and the Academy had been judged good. Miss Walker was highly effective in her interim role and safeguarding provision was effective. Safeguarding was discussed in all staff meetings and was a significant focus in staff training (including online training).
- There had been 17 racist behaviour incidents, which had largely been comments about skin colour. Lesson-plans focused on diversity had been produced, parents had been contacted and a Police visit had been arranged.
- Attendance was below target at 95.4%. COVID-19 had impacted, but there had also been a number of cases of sickness bugs and chicken pox this term.

Members asked whether the Academy utilised texts incorporating the positive representation of different groups and Mr Ward confirmed that the curriculum offer included a wide range of authors and characters. He informed members that the incidents of racist behaviour had not been malicious and the Academy's response had focused on education.

In response to a question, Miss Walker confirmed that, whilst there were currently no looked after children, the designated member of staff's training was up to date.

### **Endsleigh Holy Child VC Primary Academy**

Mrs Bentley drew attention to the following:-

- The Academy's safeguarding review was due to take place on 1 April 2022.
- There had been an increase in physical behaviour incidents, but 10 of the 26 related to two siblings who were struggling and for whom external agency (including Social Care) referrals had been made. The Academy was now better able to quickly identify where such support was needed, including responding to the Local Authority's vulnerable children list. The two siblings had ongoing support within the Academy (including ELSA support) and there was a large team around them. A second ELSA was being trained in response to a change in demographics. Domestic violence was the next focus for staff training.
- 16 staff had undertaken Level 1 Safeguarding training and good use had also been made of the national online safeguarding training provision. An incident of sexual harassment had led to additional training for the DSL and DDSL.
- Persistent absence had reduced. Punctuality remained a concern.

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Members noted that monthly safeguarding newsletters were shared with all staff and asked what topics these covered. Mrs Bentley confirmed that the DSLs determined what should be included and topics covered to date included online safety, neglect, CPOMS and Roma communities.

It was noted that each DSL had a peer link in another academy, which facilitated mutual support and advice, and provided a back-up in the event that a DSL and DDSL were unavailable in an academy. It was also noted that resources were shared via Sharepoint.

Members were informed that DSLs liaised with secondary schools as necessary (for example, where there were older siblings).

In response to a question, Mrs Bentley confirmed that overall attendance was just below 96%. Members asked whether this reflected the Academy's context and she confirmed that many parents were in employment.

Mrs Bentley was asked when the single central register had last been checked and she confirmed that she and the DSL had checked the register on 28 February 2022.

It was noted that there was reference in the report to teaching about protected characteristics and Mrs Hermann informed members that, following some racist comments, work on diversity had been undertaken with Year 5 and 6 pupils. Mrs Bentley confirmed that texts reflected diversity and the Academy did a significant amount of work in relation to global links. It was noted that there had been a Key Stage 2 assembly focused on respect and that the Academy had commemorated Martin Luther King day

92 ACADEMY WEBSITES. It was noted that compliance checks were now incorporated in the Committee Reports and Updates.

93 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING. It was noted that the next meeting had been arranged to take place on Thursday 9 June 2022 at 2.00pm.

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signature of Chair