

from the Chair of Governors, Mr Patrick Murphy O'Connor, and the Governor who Chairs the Safeguarding sub-committee of the Board, Mrs Susan Vale, that safeguarding and child protection is the overriding concern of the Governors, and must also be my overriding concern as Headmaster.

3. Governance changes which took place before my appointment

- 3.1. Following the publication of Lord Carlile's report in 2011, the Abbot and the Advisory Governors of the school at the time undertook to implement all of the recommendations in the Carlile report. Principal among these was to establish a lay trust to govern the school, which would be completely separate from Ealing Abbey. Ownership of, and responsibility for, the school was transferred to the new trust in September 2012.
- 3.2. The new trust is constituted in exactly the way I would expect it to be from my experience of other good independent schools: there is a lay Chair of Governors, to whom I report as Headmaster, and a mixture of Governors who are parents, or alumni, or without any other specific connection to the school. Of the board of 15 Governors, three are monks and twelve are lay people drawn from different areas of professional expertise.
- 3.3. The Governing Body meets termly, as do a range of sub-committees with responsibility for Educational matters, Finance and Safeguarding. The Safeguarding sub-committee is Chaired by a former Headmistress, Mrs Susan Vale, who is a recognised expert in the field of Safeguarding.
- 3.4. The fact that the board of Governors is now completely separate from Ealing Abbey means that the school is governed entirely in order to promote and protect the education and well-being of its pupils. This is, of course, exactly as it should be.

4. What changes in Governance, if any, have taken place since my arrival?

- 4.1. In the past two years, new Governors have joined the Board, including the Heads of two other successful independent schools: John Watson, Head of Bablake School, Coventry and Paul Keyte, Head of St Antony's School, Hampstead. The Board now has three highly-regarded serving Heads on it. Two further female Governors, one a parent and the other a former parent, have been appointed, and for the first time the board now also has two non-Catholic Governors.
- 4.2. I took the job as Headmaster at St Benedict's because I found the Governing Body to be forward-looking, open-minded, and willing to develop and change in order to do the very best for the pupils. The school, which has been fully coeducational since 2008, has gradually grown in size over the past 6 years, and now has about 1100 students aged 3-18. Safeguarding is the top priority, as I hope I illustrate later in my statement.
- 4.3. St Benedict's is the only Benedictine day (non-boarding) school in the United Kingdom, and is located in an area of dense population rather than rural isolation. From my own experience, it is certainly the case that the parents of day pupils in London will scrutinise far more closely the education and pastoral care their children are receiving than parents are able to do if their children are boarders, especially if they live many miles away from the school.