

22 September 2017

Mr M Smith
Solicitor to the Inquiry
IICSA
PO box 72289
London
SW1P 9LF

Dear Mr Smith

Request for information – investigation into allegations of child sexual abuse in the Anglican Church

Thank you for your letter of 22 August 2017.

I can confirm that I am David Jeffries, Chair of Governors at St Catherine's College. I have been Chair of Governors since 25 November 2013. We became an academy on 1 August 2016 when our name changed from The Bishop Bell CE School to St Catherine's College, a Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.

Rev Gordon Rideout was appointed as a governor of The Bishop Bell CE School on the 20 May 1997. He was chosen because he was an ordained member of the Anglican community. The following has been taken from the minutes of the governors meeting: *"The chairman then welcomed Cannon Rideout who is replacing Cannon Reade as Acting Rural Dean."*

Rev Rideout did not hold the position of safeguarding governor on our governing body. He did fulfil the usual role of a governor and was invited into school on appropriate occasions.

There were no processes prior to Rev Rideout's appointment in 1997 to obtain CRB checks. However in October 2009 we commenced the process of obtaining enhanced disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau for all our governors as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education.

Rev Rideout completed his CRB application and provided photo card driving licence, Nationwide bank statement and church clergy pension statement. The CRB application was sent to East Sussex County Council on 20 November 2009. Application reference number: F0051422406.

Enhanced CRB disclosures were returned at this time to the individual applicant with a copy being forwarded to East Sussex County Council who would inform the School of the disclosure number, date of disclosure and whether the disclosure was clear or blemished. If it had been some weeks since the School's original application it was normal practice to chase this with ESCC.

On the 25 March 2010 our Head of Personnel was informed by Sandy Inness at ESCC that Rev Rideout's CRB had been received and that it was a positive disclosure. She was told that the nature of the positive disclosure couldn't be disclosed to her but that ESCC would contact Terry Boatwright, Executive Headteacher or John Ross Acting Headteacher to discuss the matter further. She was also informed that the matter had been passed to Peter Davidson at ESCC who was responsible for matters relating to governing bodies. She was advised that under no circumstances should she do anything further with this matter.

The above information was relayed to the Executive Headteacher on 25 March 2010. He responded, also on 25 March 2010, that he was aware of the issue with Rev Rideout but was led to believe that it would not appear on the CRB because the nature of the issues were 'soft' information. He confirmed that he had been in contact with the local authority. At no point was the nature of the positive disclosure disclosed to the Head of Personnel. This information was not to our knowledge shared with the governing body.

As previously mentioned I became Chair of Governors in November 2013 and our Principal Mark Talbot was appointed to post on 1 September 2014. We have no knowledge of whether the school was informed of Rev Rideout's arrest for child sexual offences in 2002. We have no knowledge as to whether the Executive Headteacher was informed in 2010 that Rev Rideout's CRB disclosed further allegations of child sexual offences in the 1960's - 1970's.

For the same reason we are also unable to comment as to why Rev Rideout remained as a governor of the school until November 2011 and were not aware that he had been suspended by the Church of England regarding allegations of child sexual abuse for which he was on bail.

The minutes of the Full Governing Body AGM, 14 November 2011, show that Rev Rideout resigned at this meeting. *"Gordon Rideout relayed that he would not be standing for Chair and would be resigning his governor position. He had received one nomination for JG to take on the position of Chair of governors, all voted and were in agreement"*.

Yours sincerely

DPA

David Jeffries
Chair of Governors

Cc: Mark Talbot, Principal