

# **Statement regarding talks at ACAS between St Catherine's Management and the NEU**



**18 December 2019**

On 12 December, the NEU met at ACAS with solicitors representing the Governing Body and the LSU Trustees, and an HR representative for the School. Neither the Trustees nor the Governors were present. However, although talks were productive and good progress was made, the parties failed to reach agreement on the dissolution of the Governing Body and its replacement with governors in whom the staff can have faith. The NEU continue to call for the Governing Body to be dissolved. Such a solution to the current situation is supported by the Diocese.

Prior to the talks, ACAS proposed a number of independent professionals to conduct an investigation into the leadership of the School. At the talks we confirmed our acceptance of one of these investigators; the School have yet to agree to that ACAS-nominated investigator.

The NEU call for:

- (i) acceptance by the School of the ACAS-nominated investigator, and
- (ii) the appointment of new foundation governors in whom we can have faith to implement the recommendations from the independent investigation.

The solicitors informed us that the Head Teacher has taken a leave of absence. They stated that, for the avoidance of doubt, Mrs Connolly has not been suspended nor is she subject to any disciplinary process. This means that, at any point, Mrs Connolly can return to work at St Catherine's. In order that we can have faith that the investigation into the school leadership is fair and independent, the NEU needs confirmation that the Head Teacher has been suspended, or has at least been withdrawn from School, while that investigation is conducted.

We continue to remain open to talks for a swift resolution to this dispute.