

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held in the school
at 6.30 p.m. on Thursday 2 May 2013

No. 2012-2013-3

Present: Mark Broadbent (MB, chair), Joanne Coward (JC), Fr Peter Leeming (PL), Sally Livesey (SL), Barbara Lucesoli (BL), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), William Merrick (WM), John Moore (JMo), Sarah Slattery (SS), Jo Wager (JW), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

Apologies: Graham Hughes, Mary Meakin, Janet Muir

1. Welcome of Invited Observer Paul Rossi, Diocesan Assistant Director of Schools

Paul explained that he was visiting school GBs in order to stay in touch. He had also been asked to note that, regarding pay policy, the Bishops of England & Wales would not wish any institution attached to the church to be paying less than a living wage (in 2012, this was £7.20 an hour outside London). He noted the importance of supporting the head teacher, and discussing the head's aspirations as part of performance management.

Paul provided an update on the Diocesan questionnaire, which had received 44 responses online and 12 paper by Friday 25 April. PL had received 40-50, and there were more waiting in the school office. The Diocese aims to provide enough places for every Catholic child to have access to a place at a Catholic school, providing funding is available. However, a strong case is required to argue the need, so the questionnaire is very important.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Thursday 31 January 2013

Confirmed.

3. Matters Arising

The working party on succession planning (MB, SL, JMo, JW) has yet to convene.

The complaint to the local government ombudsman was rebuffed in a substantive response received by the GB's deadline of 28 February. A more formal complaint is now being prepared.

4. Headteacher's Report

There are 210 children on the school roll at present. 30 places have been offered for Reception admissions for 2013/4 out of 68 applications. Many SIFs were not returned. There is clearly a demand for a Catholic education even amongst non-Catholics. The catchment boundary this year was 1.1 miles.

A Spelling and Grammar test has been introduced, but no predicted grades were available as it is a new test. Teacher assessments will be submitted for the Foundation class.

Maths is being monitored this term and the children have responded well. Two observations were also made in French.

The homework workshops were well attended. Several policies will be reviewed by September (Teaching and Learning, marking, homework, and record-keeping and assessment). A curriculum statement is also being developed. Homework and marking will be discussed with the school council next week. Two new staff have been appointed through internal advertising – one for French, one for the Year 3 jobshare. From 2014, MFL will be compulsory at primary level. In order to raise standards among staff, the new French teacher will team-teach for a year with class teachers, to develop their confidence.

Not enough midday supervisors are volunteering, which is causing serious problems. The school will be advertising in the parish newsletter. The PFA are also having difficulty recruiting new members.

JMcC has been appointed a Local Leader in Education. He would like St Alban's to form a Teaching School Alliance, but other schools don't feel able to at the moment. One partner must be "outstanding" for teaching and learning in order to receive this status. Miss Swindell will link up with the Eastern Leadership Centre as part of the Middle Leadership Programme.

The CAFOD bins were covered on CAFOD East Anglia's website, www.cafodeastanglia.wordpress.com.

School priorities were circulated ahead of meeting.

5. 2013-4 budget

The Resources committee met last week and recommended the budget be approved; the school's financial advisor had some additional input post-approval. The school enters the 3-year budget cycle with a carry-forward from 2013 of £56k. At the end of the 3 years, there should be a £7k surplus. This is felt to be prudent, especially given there will be an election and potential associated changes.

TA levels are stable for the next 3 years. Local schools have agreed to return a small amount of money to the LA so that it can continue to function in the short term. All services will be traded in 2 years' time and will sit outside the LA.

Catering has moved to a different arrangement where the school pays £12k a year to employ kitchen staff, and is charged the marginal cost of providing the meals, to be covered by parental payments and hardship money for free school meals. The price of a school meal will be increasing by 10p from September but schools with more than 50% uptake of school meals (St Alban's is two-thirds) will not be affected by this increase. The school will be passing on this saving to parents.

The allocation of the £16k Pupil Premium will be discussed towards the end of the year for scrutiny by the governing body. There is an anticipated shortfall in school trips because the school can only ask for voluntary contributions and a small proportion of parents choose not to make these contributions.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the School Budget Plan for the financial year 2013/2014, with total funding of £772, 406.

6. Safer Recruitment Audit

The last audit took place in 2010 after scrutiny from the LA, raising its assurance to "moderate". It was an internal audit, which produced recommendations, some of which were addressed to the Diocese also. The GB will consider repeating the audit in the autumn term.

7. Governor Representatives for Termly Briefings

There were several volunteers for these briefings.

8. Governing Body Self-Audit

A working party (MB, WM, SL, JC) was set up and will agree a date to complete this.

9. AOB

It was suggested that the Diocesan questionnaire should be actively followed up to ensure better completion rates. JMcC agreed to set up a playground survey.