

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 10 July 2014

No. 2013-2014-5

Present: Mark Broadbent (MB, chair), Jo Coward (JC), Graham Hughes (GH), Mgr Peter Leeming (PL), Sally Livesey (SL), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), William Merrick (WM), John Moore (JMo), Janet Muir (JMu), Sarah Slattery (SS), Rachel Swindell (RS), Jo Wager (JW), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

1. Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 1 May 2014

Confirmed.

2. Matters Arising

Minutes from the meeting of 23 January 2014 have been approved but still need to be signed.

Information on document storage for Ofsted will be circulated to the Governing Body.

There is no diocesan policy for governors; there is a county handbook. CES guidance has been downloaded.

The new wall has been discussed by the Resources committee. Helen Bates at the Diocese has provided further information on costs and the rationale for their extent. The funding has been bid for and therefore must be used for this purpose, so the main issue to be discussed is the extent of the contributions St Alban's should make. MB proposed that the school should pay a £5k contribution, seconded by WM. The motion was defeated by 4 votes to 3.

3. Succession Planning

Best practice guidance from the NGA states that no one should be chair for more than six years; MB has chaired the GB for longer than this. However, JC and GH's terms of office are also due to end very soon. JC proposed that the GB focus on filling vacancies (current and upcoming) first, and consider the question of MB stepping down as chair later, in order to ensure continuity, especially given that Ofsted is expected next term. A new vice-chair could potentially be nurtured to take over the chair. MB proposed that a small group of governors should get together with JMcC to conduct a 'gap analysis' of the current GB. PL again noted that JW could be appointed a foundation governor, thus freeing up one parent governor space. A working group of GH, JC, JMcC, PL and MB was established.

4. Feedback From Training/Termly Briefings, Governor Visits, Subcommittees

SL had attended the summer termly briefing, which was well attended, and at which there was much discussion of new funding streams, including some for children whose first language is not English. Children with good English still fall into the EAL group and can attract extra money from a 3-year national pot for teaching EAL. JMcC will look into this. In Cambridgeshire, CREDS is supported by the primary pot; this is

the only place giving out support to schools. The primary sector supports CREDS with £100k and has given it a year to become self-sustaining.

JMcC and MB carried out an observation of a coding lesson, which was outstanding, and looked through some French books. SL sat in on a geography lesson and found it very impressive. JMo had performed a health & safety visit, and had some minor feedback.

The Performance and Standards subcommittee had focused on measuring and analysing pupil progress. They also discussed the new curriculum, which is due to come into effect for all years except 2 and 6 in September. This entails a shift to a 'learning outcomes' approach, measuring what students have achieved, rather than how they have achieved it. This should give teachers more freedom regarding delivery in the classroom. The decision that was made previously to move to a topic-based curriculum will enable teaching staff to make the transition to the new curriculum more readily and effectively. Interventions were discussed; the school is both aware and knowledgeable of the progress all students are making. Governors are confident that incisive tracking of student progress is not only in place to support those children identified as vulnerable, but also that it is both effective and appropriate.

WM had attended a training course on the SEF and data analysis.

5. Standards

WM presented the results of analysis carried out following his training. The St Alban's KS1 average point score over time has declined slightly against an improvement in a national average, so the school has lost ground, although it is still just ahead of the national average. KS2 has been more uneven. 2013 was the best-ever year according to the data, but again the national average is rising.

The Fisher Family Trust dashboard shows a good average point score and added value. The percentage of pupils at level 4 or above for KS2 is just above the national average, as is the value-added score. Average points are good but Level 4+ figures are less so. This is accounted for by pupils who are scoring highly but not quite reaching Level 4. A large number of these are EAL pupils, who as a general rule make great progress, especially at KS4, but haven't quite reached their potential in KS2. Can anything more be done to support them in attaining a Level 4? Many pupils are achieving a high Level 3, although some children did not make 2 levels of progress. The predicted levels for 2014 SATs were good. JMcC is in touch with 2 schools in Oxford with very similar profiles to St Alban's in order to establish benchmarks.

SATs outcomes were presented. The results show phenomenal progress, with one child achieving 4 levels of progress.

RS explained how vulnerable groups had been categorised for tracking purposes, into those making adequate progress within a year, those below, and those above. Pupil progress meetings take place every term, at which data for the whole class is analysed. The meetings discuss what has worked well, and what future actions might be needed for those who are still falling behind. An additional set looks at progress from KS1 results to where pupils are now, looking at 3/4/5 sub-levels of progress (behind expectations, average, outstanding). Vulnerable groups within each year group were also outlined (EAL children, summer-born, BME). The Year 1-4 class cohorts are 50% EAL. The bracket of EAL has changed considerably. These children make the least progress at St Alban's, particularly in the earlier years. The school aim must be to focus on early intervention with these children. TAs have attended courses on better support for EAL children, the learning from which should be put into practice in the

2014-15 academic year. There was still a cluster of children who were falling behind; the school decided to change the structure and put in some focused TA attention. Additional resources were purchased, and dedicated teaching put in place. This has been effective as a short sharp shock; however, continuing for a full year might be detrimental because of missing class time and peer support. Reading has been very successful. The TA team is consistent, reliable and delivering the best interventions. Research suggests that TAs have little impact on children's learning but St Alban's has a very different experience. JMcC observed that thanks are due to the outstanding St Alban's TAs. RS noted that this is a programme of regular monitoring; although the GB is seeing the end-of-year report, review is conducted on a termly basis. Regular monitoring ensures there is time to correct any problems before it is too late.

JM reported on the KS2 results, which had arrived the day before. JMcC thanked the staff for their achievements, and the TAs for their flexibility and interventions. Pupils are making outstanding progress. The 'St Alban's child' can be characterised as an EAL pupil achieving above expected levels of progress.

6. Head Teacher's Report

There are 210 pupils on roll; 5 children are leaving to the independent sector, while 1 child is now staying on in KS2 who had been expected to leave. Reception is full.

Y1 and Y2 are below the 96% target for attendance. The proportion of free school meals is dropping.

Sport is performing impressively for the school, not just in terms of outcomes, but in provision and the peer-to-peer support from teachers. Computing has been pitched at a very high level, with Code Club and Alban the bear's space visit. JMcC has recruited some computing students to support pupils. In performing arts, the school is committed to supporting the band instruments programme again next year in Y4 and Y5. The different approach to French this year has gone very well. Maths, coding and French should be the main focus next year, and link governors should aim to meet their linked teachers as early as possible.

Many thanks to Miss Montague. Miss Mulvin has been appointed to teach Year 4. A general administrative assistant position has been created to help with KS1 paperwork, and RS commented that this has been a great help. Midday supervisors are now at complement.

Bollards will go up in the car park over the summer holidays. The parish has been very co-operative, but the school will be managing their use.

Fr Henry's chaplaincy has been outstanding; JW has been helping with readings. The partnership with Cambridgeshire Music has been excellent. The Faculty of Education want to increase the number of placement students at the school. The Vision Evening went well, and a summary was circulated to governors. At City Kids, the chair and treasurer are leaving, and their hard work should be acknowledged. The PFA have also done a sterling job this year.

School priorities are in reading. Y4 has piloted 'Reading Express', an online reading activity to motivate children, following which boys improved more than girls.

JMcC commented that thanks to the support he receives from all sides, this has been the best Head Teacher post he has undertaken. The staff team is strong, and a considerable asset.

PL noted that chaplaincy within the parish has been reorganised. Fr Henry will continue at St Alban's and at St Bede's (with some additional support from Fr Peter at St Bede's), while PL will take on St Mary's Junior, as well as continuing with St Mary's Senior.

7. Policy Review

All statutory policies are in place. Subject co-ordinators are creating curriculum policies; others will be left undated. A review is due in the autumn term.

8. Audit of Governing Body Effectiveness

This is due on 11 July, and will be conducted by a subgroup comprising WM, MB and JW.

9. Child Protection Review

JW will conduct this with JMcC.

10. Head's Performance Review

This will be conducted by WM, SL and MB; a date is still to be set.

11. Equality Review

The GB reviewed and endorsed the school's equality statement.

12. New Legislation on Absence

This was discussed at the Resources committee meeting.

13. AOB

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10 September, 6.30 p.m.