

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 9 July 2015

No. 2014-2015-7

Present: Mark Broadbent (MB, chair), Jo Coward (JC), Mgr Peter Leeming (PL), Sally Livesey (SL), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), William Merrick (WM), Janet Muir (JMu), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

Apologies: Graham Hughes, John Moore, Sarah Slattery, Jo Wager

1. Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 30 April 2015

Approved. The GB thanked RB (and Jo Wager, in her absence) for full, thorough and accurate minutes with the recent increase in the meeting workload.

2. Matters arising/feedback from subcommittees and training

None.

3. Updates on curriculum areas (Mr Gawthorpe - DG)

MB noted that this has been an extraordinarily successful year, with the Ofsted result, many sporting successes, and the Cambridgeshire Young People's Film Festival (a first, two second and a third prize). JMcC echoed this sentiment, saying that it has been a fantastic year. Each staff member has supplied a report on their curriculum area, which JMcC will circulate after the meeting.

DG explained that the school has made a big effort to increase the level of competition in sport and to widen access. As a result, the school has won or been runner-up in the majority of competitions it has entered. The netball record has been phenomenal since Floria Marshall took over the coaching, making the main team a key competitive group and providing other opportunities for those not yet ready to play competitively. Next year, there will be increased focus on providing more sporting opportunities for KS1; the school has also subscribed to the Parkside Federation sporting partnership to enable teams to participate in more competitions. Two coaches from Cambridge United will coach Years 5 and 6 in football, to allow more children to participate more regularly; the Monday football club will be targeted at KS1 and Years 3 and 4.

The school has been working on introducing the new science curriculum this year, and increasing emphasis on the subject in response to Ofsted comments. The target to provide resources and planning to allow the ready adoption of the new curriculum is being worked towards. The goal is to tackle science in a more practical way. JMcC commented that it was important to ensure new approaches were thoroughly embedded rather than rushed through. Science assessments are carried out without reference to levels; a traffic light system will be used, adapted from Miss Swindell's RE assessment grid. JMcC thanked Mr Gawthorpe.

JMcC reported that in performing arts, Mrs Burrows has kept the profile of music very high, and if anything, the school has been involved in even more external activities. The Bishop was very impressed by the Year 5 instrumental performance; the participation in the Barbican concert was another highlight. The Tuesday music

school is also going well. JC commented that the quality of provision rivals that available in private schools. WM mentioned that a recent report in the *Independent* had singled out St Alban's and St Bede's as very strong educationally.

Miss Waterson has been the subject lead for Humanities, and has been instrumental in the Footprints of Faith programme, as well as strengthening links with the local community. French continues to flourish; KS2 receive one hour's teaching per week. Y6 have entered into a pen-pal arrangement with a Belgian school. Mrs Sewell's work in English has been focused around establishing a clear purpose for non-fiction writing. Mrs Paul's work in EYFS has resulted in 67% of children attaining a 'Good' level of development. Nationally, reporting and assessment is changing across the foundation stage, and Mrs Paul has been preparing for this change. Many schools have approached the school in order to observe its practice in computing; investment in IT equipment has been well received. No report was provided for Maths as it was not a priority area. SL commented that this was a very impressive set of reports.

4. Update on vulnerable groups (Miss Swindell - RS)

RS presented the Y6 breakdown of progress in vulnerable groups, with additional breakdowns to be circulated to the GB. The school continues to have a high level of EAL pupils. Most children have made sufficient yearly progress; the children that have not progressed as well as hoped have still performed above the national average. SEN pupils have dipped in attainment, but they have all worked very hard. JMcC commented that the most vulnerable groups are making good progress. RS said that pupils that are both EAL and summer-born are a particular challenge, and in every class, about 50% of EAL children are also summer-born. This is a trend to watch in future. JC commented that EAL children often accelerate in KS2.

Intervention techniques have been similar to last year: ELS in Y1 supports children to develop into Y2; the 'five-minute box' provides focused one-to-one teaching. In KS2, the TAs have tailored resources effectively to suit the pupils that require support. The Totem reading scheme in Y6 has been very successful. A recent introduction is the 'Sensory Circuits' exercise programme, beginning the day with ten minutes' movement to energise pupils and ready them for learning. SL asked if the TAs received special training; RS said that they did have training opportunities, but their success can be attributed more to the fact that they are very able and work well together as a team. The GB thanked the TAs for their hard work. WM commented that staff and TAs not working well together is a common problem for schools, so this is especially worth noting. JC thanked RS for her hard work.

6. Head Teacher's Report

Targets for attendance have been achieved. KS1 pupils have done very well indeed, despite beginning at 33% GLD ("good level of development"). RS commented that the staff team at Foundation and KS1 was very strong. Only two children did not achieve the required level in Phonics. At KS2, 1 pupil did not achieve Level 4 in reading, writing and maths; 1 more did not achieve level 4 in writing and maths, but this pupil had only recently joined the school. 4 pupils (including 3 SEN) did not achieve Level 4 in SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar). The school also achieved its first-ever Level 6 in reading JMcC had received a letter from Rosemarie Sadler congratulating the school on its results. The GB offered its congratulations to all the staff.

In curriculum priorities, more work needs to be done on non-fiction writing, and on developing middle leadership. Developing autonomous learners will be a key objective for next year.

WM and JMcC have reviewed the school policies, using a toolkit from The Key to categorise them and prepare a table to keep track of the current status of all necessary policies.

The school has said goodbye to TA Laura Swindell and Nicola the cook. Quotes for the conservatory have been well in excess of the budget allocated. Plans for the wooded area have been put on hold until this issue has been resolved, but in the meantime, the pupils are really enjoying the opportunities for natural play and den building. The school fair raised nearly £3k despite the weather; Bishop Alan's visit was a great success. The St Alban's Foundation is raising money for a minibus; City Kids is going well and has a new chair. Fr Henry has been a great chaplain to the school this term.

School priorities requiring particular focus are: increasing local provision of Catholic school places; enhancing school premises; and enhancing spirituality.

This year has probably been the most successful in the history of St Alban's; many thanks to all those involved in making this happen. WM commented that the Ofsted report mentioned that staff, governors and pupils "treat each other well", and what a great achievement this was.

7. Pupil Premium Expenditure

The audit of Pupil Premium Expenditure was carried out using a template provided by the Schools Intervention Service; JMcC is awaiting confirmation of the outcome.

8. Compliance with equality duties

JMcC has updated the school's Equality Objectives Statement to include Ofsted comments on St Alban's excellent achievements in equality and recognition of the Equality Award.

9. Reconstitution of the governing body

The proposal is to change the Instrument of Government to:

- 7 foundation governors
- 2 parent governors
- 1 head teacher
- 1 staff governor
- 1 local authority governor

Total: 12 Governors

MB explained that having conducted a skills audit in line with the Diocese's recommendations, and adhering to local authority guidance, the GB had identified that it was not necessary to fill the long-standing vacancies to satisfy skills requirements. Therefore, a smaller governing body would more closely suit the school's needs. This decision was unanimously approved.

Sarah Slattery was approached to continue as a foundation governor following the elimination of the non-teaching staff governor post, but said she would prefer to end her term. The GB thanked her in her absence for her contributions to the GB.

The Instrument of Government will come into force on 1 September 2015. RB will send the School Governance Team a copy of the minutes.

10. Succession planning

The terms of office of the two parent governors end in November, as does that of the Local Authority governor. Jo Wager could potentially be appointed as a foundation governor; there are some uncertainties relating to the forthcoming arrangement with Sacred Heart. There may be one foundation governor vacancy remaining; if so, the GB will actively recruit to fill this role. The GB is broadly happy with the approach to succession planning.

11. Update on Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's committee

The Diocese approached the county council with a view to creating a new Catholic primary school, but was told there was no "procedure" for doing so. The LA agreed to create a policy, to be discussed for approval at a meeting of the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's committee, which took place on Tuesday 30 June. Paul Rossi sits on this committee alongside his Anglican counterpart; JMcC, MB and Helen Bates also attended. Helen asked to make a statement as a member of the public, in which she said that the Diocese would never apply to be the first school in the area, that it had good relationships with other LAs, and that other LAs have higher levels of Catholic provision. Paul also made a statement. Paul and his counterpart were asked to leave the meeting owing to a perceived conflict of interest. A draft policy was presented outlining typical oversubscription criteria which were discussed at length. Unfortunately this document also contained a number of factual and legal inaccuracies; Adrian Loades recommended that the paper be redrafted in consultation with both Dioceses, and a decision was deferred to the next meeting.

12. AOB

A recent Diocesan meeting on MATs suggests that there are likely to be three across the Diocese. Norwich is well advanced; Ipswich is forming; Cambridge, Peterborough and Haverhill would be a possible third grouping. The Diocese is keen to encourage this. PL said that the Diocese will not sanction either single academy trusts or a diocesan-wide trust. The timescale for completing this is variable, but the first MAT is likely to be in place between October and April.

The audit of governing body effectiveness was completed by SL, WM and MB.

The child protection audit was completed by SL, JMcC and JW according to the template received from the LA's Child Protection Service.

MB, JC and PL have reviewed the documents drafted by EPM in response to the Diocese's proposed executive headship partnership with Sacred Heart. After some changes, an agreement has been reached. A letter will go out from both schools on 1 July explaining the new structure.

The date of the first GB meeting of the 2015-16 academic year was set for:

Thursday 24 September at 6.30.