

# St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held in the school  
at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 7 October 2015

**No. 2015/2016 - 1**

**Present:** Mark Broadbent (MB, chair), Sally Livesey (SL), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), William Merrick (WM), Janet Muir (JMu), Jo Wager (JW), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

**Apologies:** Jo Coward, Graham Hughes, Fr Peter Leeming, John Moore

## **1. Behaviour policy review**

Two Y6 house captains presented updates to the behaviour policy. Changes over the years were discussed. This year has seen the introduction of lines, to be written with the Head during golden time on a Friday. JW commented on the positive behaviour system in Y4 (going up the cloud and over the rainbow). It was confirmed that each class has its own similar system of rewards. It was suggested that the behaviour policy could be added to the standard 'supply card'. The house captains believe the school is a happy and safe environment. The governors thanked the house captains for their presentation.

## **2. Election of Chair and Vice-chair**

MB and Jo Coward are both willing to continue in their posts. The GB thanked MB (and JC in her absence). MB declared his intention to remain as Chair for 2 years, during JMcC's executive headship of Sacred Heart. WM proposed and SL seconded both appointments, unanimously approved by those present.

## **3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Thursday 9 July 2015**

Confirmed.

## **4. Matters arising**

Progress on MATs (or alternative co-operation structures) across the diocese is currently uneven, with schools at very different stages of the process.

## **6. Reports from termly briefings/training/subcommittee meetings**

SL and MB attended the termly briefing session, which focused on moving from 'good' to 'outstanding' at Ofsted. The county council has concerns about overall performance in the authority, which is on a par with national averages for most things, below for some and above for a couple. There are two main concerns: in Key Stage 2, the county is falling a long way behind; 103 schools appear to be improving but there are 23 trailing. In addition, SEND and FSM children without a statement or a plan are currently significantly underperforming. In comparison with other authorities' funding, there does appear to be a correlation between low funding and performance in this particular cohort. JW commented that this had been recently reported on in the Cambridge Evening News. The county has moved up in the league tables with regard to funding (now 136th out of 151 authorities). There is a very high discrepancy between the cost of out-county and in-county places. A lot of children come into Cambridgeshire, for which the authority receives funding. The LA is very

keen to reduce out-county places, as it is a heavy load on the high-needs budget; out-county schools negotiate hard for money in order to meet specific needs. JMcC notes that many special schools are overloaded. The LA is piloting a project south of the city to support children with special needs in alternative ways. JMcC gave a quick overview of how St Alban's is performing against local and national averages.

There should be a structure for staff and parent governors to communicate with their constituencies. Staff governor information is disseminated via staff meetings; it would be helpful to set up agreed channels for communicating with parents.

## **7. Review committee composition and link governors**

JW agreed to take on responsibility for Pupil Premium. MB reminded governors of the need to carry out monitoring visits. JMcC stressed the importance of this in particular in RE, given the upcoming inspection. Given the impending change in composition of the governing body, with existing parent governors' terms ending, it was agreed to defer a more complete review to the next meeting.

## **8. Meeting dates for 2015-16**

Full meetings will take place on:

- Thursday 26 November 2015
- Thursday 4 February 2016
- Thursday 28 April 2016
- Thursday 7 July 2016

## **9. Succession planning (governing body)**

JMcC will begin the election process for new parent governors. Graham Hughes has agreed to stay on for a further year as LA governor, but the school will require another LA governor next year; this could be an opportunity for the governing body to identify someone who is unable to be a foundation governor owing to not being Catholic, but who has skills that might be to the school's advantage. As part of the agreement between the two schools, the St Alban's governing body is due to receive a foundation governor from Sacred Heart as an 'associate member', but this role is as yet unfilled. St Alban's also needs to nominate a foundation governor to fill this role on the governing body of Sacred Heart. SL is willing to attend one meeting, and wondered if this role could rotate to share the load? JMcC said that there are 4 full GB meetings per annum. MB said he was willing to take up the position if necessary. JW wondered if rotating the role would make things difficult in terms of continuity? JMcC will find out when the full GB meetings are due to take place.

Assuming that JW becomes a foundation governor when her term as parent governor ends, the school will have one vacancy for a foundation governor. There is a specific need for a governor with skills in finance, given GH's strengths in this area and his expressed intention to end his term after the current academic year. The parent governor elections could prove an opportunity to identify candidates with these skills.

## **10. Headteacher's Report**

There were two unsuccessful appeals for reception places. The LA appears to be struggling with handling applications. The school continues to meet its attendance targets. It currently has its lowest ever number of children with FSM. The KS2 results were good, and the school received congratulations from Rosemarie Sadler.

Mrs Rackham's maternity leave starts in the spring term. Mrs Sewell will job-share Year 6 cover, with French being taught during PPA. Mrs Felipe will be leaving as she is moving to Newcastle. She will be very much missed, and the GB sends its thanks to her. Mr Mellish has accepted a new post, and the school will begin recruiting as soon as possible, drawing on support from the IT service in the meantime. There have been problems with CCS recruitment, but the school's cook is happy to stay on.

Tickets are being issued again in the car park owing to continuing problems with parking during the day. The conservatory was not built due to a lack of funds, but the hope is that it can be constructed next summer. The school is awaiting confirmation of a start date for an energy-saving project.

Father Anthony has become the school chaplain. Miss Swindell is the named PREVENT (threat of terrorism) lead. The school is now able to set its own term dates; the aim will be to synchronise with St Bede's. Y2 and Y6 are following the new curriculum. Latin club is continuing. There are significant changes in Early Years: the school is now accountable directly to the DfE, and must assess using an approved DfE provider. The net result is to provide a national baseline assessment. Education Health Care Plans are replacing existing statements and school action plus.

Assessment without 'levels' will begin this term, assessing children according to national curriculum end-of-year descriptors. Y6 SATs will be reported on at scaled scores. The school has a data recording system and teacher assessments; there is currently no consistent approach to assessment that successfully populates the data. St Alban's is piloting a system based on one devised by a school in Rugby.

Teaching staff received a 'disqualification by association' letter, asking them to disclose criminal records of any family members; this is targeted at those working with children under the age of 7 (i.e. early years). The SFVS was completed in May.

## **11. Operational items**

An updated policy on safer recruitment has been received from the LA. JW asked about the policy applying to all volunteers, contractors and agency workers - does this include PFA and parent volunteers? Does this mean that helpers in school will need basic child protection training? Activity providers currently agree to abide by the policy. There is also a 'Code of Conduct' referred to in Clause 12. JMcC has a pack to be given out to people who come into the school. The governing body agreed that the admissions policy is still fit for purpose and should be re-adopted. WM and JMcC are continuing with the rolling policy review process.

## **12. Register of pecuniary interests**

There are new statutory obligations to publish the register of pecuniary interests on the school website. The termly briefing clarified the requirements of this.

## **13. AOB**

MB is happy to continue to be involved in the headteacher's performance review, and assumes that Fr Peter will also be keen to take part.

SL updated the governing body on former headteacher Dorothy Head's picture of St Alban's, which turns out not to be of the current school. If a picture of the school does come to light as her personal effects are organised, Dorothy's daughter will send it on.