

# 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 28 April 2016

## No. 2015/2016 - 4

**Present:** Mark Broadbent (MB, chair), Lia Campos (LC), Patrick Coughlin (PC), Jo Coward (JC), Sally Livesey (SL), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), William Merrick (WM), Janet Muir (JMu), Jo Wager (JW), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

**Apologies:** Graham Hughes, Larry Binns (observer)

### **1. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Thursday 4 February 2016**

Confirmed.

### **2. Matters arising**

JMcC has been in touch with another school that has a minibus, to obtain some benchmarking figures for the business plan, and also to obtain quotes for what transport costs in the last year would have been had transport been carried out via taxi. There may be interest from the SVP society in making use of the minibus over the weekends. A date has yet to be set for the meeting with the St Alban's Foundation.

PSHE link governorship will be taken on by JW, as link governor for RE. JW also agreed to take on English on a temporary basis, following Father Peter's departure, until the outcome of foundation governor recruitment was clearer.

JMu will update and circulate entitlement documents to relevant governors. LC asked if governors could approach staff; it was felt that the process went more smoothly when staff took the initiative to approach their respective governors.

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

None. MB and LC will attend the upcoming termly briefings.

### **4. Headteacher's report**

The school was again oversubscribed for Reception applications, with 105 applicants for 30 places, and 65 SIFs provided. 16 places were offered to siblings; the furthest 'new' family lived 0.6 miles from the school. There are implications for the school in the cost of appeals against these decisions (£300 per appeal). There is not much movement during the school year in terms of places becoming vacant.

Attendance was slightly down against target, largely in response to religious family events such as first holy communions and family weddings.

Staff are waiting for more information on SATs, and being cautious about performance predictions in the meantime. They are looking at previous performance in order to estimate outcomes. LC asked about the use of Target Tracker; JMcC said that the school is marking tests in order to obtain data. Over the course of the year, the tests will be revised in light of this year's experiences to produce a standard the school feels confident about. Under the new "assessment without levels" system,

children are now assessed as “working towards the expected level”, “at the expected level” and “working at a greater depth”. As a result, it is likely that the range of information available to governors in assessing performance will be very limited. Pupils who do not achieve “expected” level in Year 6 will be tested again in Year 7.

Miss Mulvin (Year 4) will be leaving to return to Ireland and will be sadly missed. The school wishes her well, and hopes to have appointed her replacement before half-term. The Office Manager has asked to reduce her hours; the request has been granted because of sufficient office capacity. The kitchen is once again recruiting for staff. The school was sad to say goodbye to Fr Peter and Fr Anthony.

There has not been much interest in the contract for the conservatory refurbishment. The PFA has a new and enthusiastic committee, including several KS1 parents, which is promising for the future. Teacher training numbers at the Faculty of Education have dropped significantly, which is potentially concerning regarding recruitment. This is due to other training providers coming into the market.

The school feels it is ready for its Section 48 inspection, which should take place this term. The Year of Mercy is being marked with door displays in school and along Hills Road. Sport, science and music are all continuing successfully.

A letter from Cambridge Primary Heads is to be sent to local MPs, regarding strong concerns over the speed of recent changes. Most heads in the Cambridge-Peterborough cluster are not in favour of forming MATs. The next few terms will be very important for St Alban's.

## **5. Budget**

The budget was examined closely at the Resources sub-committee meeting. It is balanced, with a carry-forward lower than that in the previous financial year. Most costs relate to staff, so there is limited flexibility. JMcC presented some headline items. The school's income has decreased in comparison to the previous year, as funding shifts more towards SEN, for which the school has a lower number of pupils requiring support. The impact of postcode is also significant; the school is seen as being in an affluent postcode area. WM commented that national funding will even out differences between authorities, but will not remove the Pupil Premium factor.

The uplift that was not certain last year has been confirmed. The school's carry-forward this year was about £44k (of which about £17k was Extended Schools money); the figure this year is forecast to be around £22k. JC commented that the diminishing of carry-forward was a reminder that it will be important to be particularly vigilant in the future.

Spend on supply teaching last year was higher than expected, to cover parental leave and training; midday supervisor costs were also higher. The school employed former pupils during the summer period to support extra activities such as sports day. Administrative supplies are anticipated to be lower next year, as this year's costs reflect outlay to support the restructuring of the office.

Governors are committed to continuing to support educational visits; parents are strongly encouraged to contribute to these visits, but sometimes it is felt it is not possible to ask this (for example, if the diocese request school participation that has additional transport implications).

Learning resources purchases were very high last year to support the implementation of the new curriculum; this year should see lower spend as resources are consolidated.

Bought-in professional services covered by the Pupil Premium refers to a counsellor who has been brought in, which has been very effective for those pupils that have required this kind of support.

JMcC thanked GH in his absence for his meticulous scrutiny of the budget. It was resolved to approve the School Budget Plan for the financial year 2016-17, comprising a total income and expenditure of £690k. This was proposed by MB and seconded by JC, with unanimous agreement from those present.

## **6. Update on MATs**

MB, JMcC, PC and LC attended a meeting in Peterborough regarding the Diocesan vision for multi-academy trusts. The first Diocesan MAT, St John the Baptist, is now in place (since 1st April). Despite recent announcements by the government, there is still considerable pressure in this direction and the governing body is continuing to explore options which will support the school, cluster Catholic schools and the Diocese.

*Further discussion was reserved.*

**ACTION:** RAB to circulate minutes from last year's meeting with Andrea Squires to PC and LC.

## **7. Diocesan paper for governors' information**

This was circulated ahead of the meeting.

## **8. AOB**

The parish administrator Canon Harkness prefers not to become a governor. It was agreed that the school would wait until the end of Canon Harkness's term as administrator and see if the new permanent parish priest wanted to become a foundation governor before seeking to appoint anyone else to the vacancy.

Enhanced DBS checks are now required for all governors. LC is registered for the school in any case; PC will need to provide a reference to move this forward.

MB, JC and GH will carry out the Headteacher's performance management.

The audit of governing body effectiveness will be carried out by MB and WM.

More governor information has to be provided on the website. JC and MB will have additional responsibilities to declare.

**ACTION:** JC and GH to provide RB with attendance records for subcommittee meetings.

There are vacancies on the Governor Advisory Group if anyone is interested.

The Schools Financial Value Standard needs to be signed off; a few additional items require scrutiny. MB will do this with JMcC.

The Performance & Standards committee will meet on Tuesday 3 May at 6 p.m..