

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 7 July 2016

No. 2015/2016 - 6

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

Apologies for lateness: Jo Coward (JC)

Apologies for absence: Graham Hughes (GH)

1. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Thursday 28 April 2016

Confirmed.

2. Matters arising

Some but not all subject entitlement meetings have taken place.

Attendance records are still required for resources and performance & standards sub-committee meetings.

ACTION: MB to look at his notes for these meetings.

MB and WM will conduct the audit of governing body effectiveness.

The St Alban's Foundation has agreed to support the purchase and maintenance of a 17-seater minibus, providing £8200 towards purchase and £2000 p.a. towards its upkeep. The PFA contributed £1800. The Hope House minibus has been sold for £4500. The new minibus will arrive on Monday 11 July.

SL still needs to talk to Paul Barber. The Peterborough and Cambridge cluster heads were asked to lead a workshop on MATs. The Ipswich MAT has come to a halt over issues to do with its structure. The Newmarket and Haverhill MAT is going ahead.

4. Reports from termly briefings (10 May)/training/subcommittee meetings

LC attended the termly briefing in May. There was a strong focus on the importance of extracurricular activities in strengthening overall pupil performance. Minutes should also be kept for sub-committee meetings, as Ofsted can request these. The size of the attainment gap in Cambridgeshire between SEN pupils and the rest of their cohort was also discussed.

The Resources committee discussed the budget, and the conservatory project, which will be going ahead. Demolition will begin on 21 July in order to meet requirements for use by the beginning of the autumn term. Helen Bates at the Diocese is project managing; the overall cost will be £90k, towards which the school is contributing £5k. Some internal decoration will also take place using devolved formula capital money.

The Performance & Standards committee is due to meet next week.

5. Updates on curriculum areas (Staff)

JMcC gave apologies on behalf of several members of staff who were unable to attend due to other commitments and illness. Subject reports were tabled ahead of the meeting.

Miss Swindell (RS) presented the RE report. The Section 48 'outstanding' result is the most significant achievement. Staff had this as part of their targets; pupils went over the motto and mission statement thoroughly in class, and RS had shared her expectations of staff widely with them. The assessment structure was properly embedded and monitored. The senior leadership team planned their moderation and monitoring work rigorously, and the website was thoroughly updated. The wide participation in the Year of Mercy initiative was also significant. RS's discussions with pupils gave her great confidence that the pupils were proud of their RE work and deeply engaged with it. As a result, the inspection went very smoothly. This was an excellent achievement, and the report reflects well on the school. JMcC thanked RS on behalf of the school and governors; JW commented that it represented a huge long-term effort. JW asked how many teachers had taken up the offer of completing the Catholic certificate? RS is exploring the possibility of doing this online rather than committing to a large number of Saturdays.

ACTION: JMcC will provide reports for science and maths.

6. Update on vulnerable groups (RS)

The change in assessment and absence of levels makes it difficult to produce tables showing year-on-year progress.

For SPAG and maths, data from the new tests could be used to assess progress from autumn to summer. Overall, there was progress shown, but in terms of attainment most SEND/Pupil Premium pupils achieved 'working towards' expectations. JMu commented that in general the tests were much harder, and attainment across the classes was lower than would have been anticipated. The process has highlighted some areas that need to be focused on, especially with regard to upskilling the TAs and targeting specific areas.

Anne Fisher will be looking at the Pupil Premium in support of the annual audit. Detailed review of the data was delegated to the Performance & Standards meeting.

7. Key Stage results (JMu)

Measurements of attainment are now set as 'achieving', 'working towards' or 'greater depth'. The curriculum has become more difficult, and it has been harder to achieve these levels. A paper published this week by the DfE says that 66% of children were meeting the National Standard for reading. St Alban's had 67%, which while just higher than the average is lower than the school would usually achieve.

Reading and maths results were at and above the national averages; however, writing was substantially below. This test is teacher-assessed, and pupils are required to meet every single standard (previously a 'best fit' approach was taken). St Alban's achieved 57%. The across-the-board result was also very low compared to the national target.

JMu felt that staff had been very strict in their adherence to guidelines when marking. MB asked what kind of moderation there had been? JMu said there had been

comparisons with Sacred Heart, and there were external examples provided. External moderators were not involved in the writing test this year; only a percentage of schools per year are moderated, due to a lack of capacity. PC felt there was a huge discrepancy between the SPAG and writing results. JMu looked at pupils achieving at least 100 in SPAG; the main reasons these children didn't achieve the writing levels were because they weren't writing enough, had spelling problems, had issues with sentence construction, and produced lower-quality content. Pupils clearly demonstrated in the SPAG test that they knew all the rules, but then had difficulty applying them in their work when it came to the writing test. JMu felt there was a discrepancy between the spelling test administered as part of the SPAG and expectations in the writing test.

JMcC said that the school was very disappointed with the results, and the LA has been in touch to explore the reasons. JMu has been working hard to examine the data since results were achieved. The cohort was roughly in line with national averages at KS1, and JMcC is confident that in general St Alban's pupils are performing very well.

WM pointed out that about a third of the children who did achieve a good level in writing didn't manage this in maths or reading, and this is very unusual. JMu said 8 children didn't achieve writing that also didn't achieve reading. A further 5 managed reading but not writing. Details of what was required were only disclosed in March; however, this was also true for other schools. St Alban's will be one of the lowest performing schools in Cambridge, due mainly to the combination of the particular composition of the year group and possibly over-harsh marking. JMcC has written to Rosemarie Sadler explaining what the school has been doing; the LA has been in touch to offer support. Without MAT support, the school is potentially vulnerable, as it is one of the lowest funded schools in one of the lowest funded areas, and with lower levels of staffing. St Alban's needs to reassure the LA that it will be addressing the issues straight away. Results in Y5 and Y4 are looking more encouraging.

JC observed that the disappointment is very understandable; this is not what normally happens. Governors need to make sure it's not a trend. WM asked what shows that you've met the standard? The raw score is converted to a scaled score of between 80 to 100, of which 100 is average. There is a complicated scoring system.

LC asked if there had been any indication earlier in the year that this was likely to be a problem? The interim standards have been changing throughout the year. The results will be scrutinised in detail at Monday's subcommittee meeting. PC asked if it would have been possible to ask to be moderated? It's randomly selected.

ACTION: JMu's report to be circulated to the GB.

PC asked if it would be possible to see copies of the papers? JMcC commented that the quality of the reading paper was not especially high. JMcC is confident that St Alban's can recover from this, but the GB would like to know what the action plan is.

Thanks to JMu for all the effort she has put in to produce these figures in a very short timeframe. Children's reports this year will only include 'working towards' or 'at expected', along with effort and attainment. These are based on teacher assessments and tests. JW asked if data would be released globally to parents? No, just raw and scaled scores for individual children to their own parents.

8. Headteacher's report

The target for attendance was 96.2%, but 96% was what was achieved. There have been no changes to the SEN register. Early Years achieved a 66.6% "good level of

development". Mrs Ghandi and Miss L Swindell will be leaving St Alban's. The PFA raised over £2000 at the summer fair. Both trainees have passed their courses and secured jobs. Miss Waterson has done a great job of supporting them. It has been a challenging year, and JMcC would like to thank the staff for all their hard work.

9. School priorities

The new writing assessment is clearly the top priority. Writing is weaker across year groups because of the higher standards. JMcC would like to see some moderation of the assessment. MB commented that there is a suspicion that St Alban's is being a lot more rigorous than other schools; it would be good to have evidence of this. Anne Fisher will be helping. PC asked if we knew any external moderators? JMcC said we might be able to access the Peterborough moderator. RS asked if KS1 had fallen behind also, as that was moderated? LC asked if we were very different to other schools of similar size and composition? This is unknown yet; JMcC will talk to St Paul's, St Mary's in Royston and the school in Oxford.

9. Foundation governor recruitment

The GB currently has two foundation governor vacancies; it would be ideal if one of these could be a priest or a deacon. It was felt that the GB should cast around locally first in order to find possible candidates, and should ask the Dominicans and Canon Eugene for suggestions of people who can then be approached.

With regard to the second vacancy, JC asked if there were particular gaps in our skillset that needed plugging? MB said that finance is a particular issue. All agreed to consider possibilities.

10. Prevent training for governors

JMcC introduced a website that offers a 25-minute online course in Prevent training, and asked that all governors take this test and print a certificate to file at school.

11. Child protection review

JW and JMcC have conducted the child protection audit, using the new online system.

12. AOB

MB will try to attend the Wood Green termly briefing.

The date for next year's first meeting was set for Thursday 29 September 2016.