

Minutes of the meeting of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School governing board
held at the school on Thursday 2 February 2017

Present:	Anna Brown, Chair	(ABr)
	Helen Frostick, Head Teacher	(HF)
	Amanda Barrett	(ABa)
	Chris Hopkins	(CH)
	Francis Keeling	(FK)
	Paul Kenny	(PK)
	Serena Sexton	(SS)
	Tricia Shields	(TS)
	Fr. Richard Whinder	(RW)
Apologies:	Nick Gardner	(NG)
	Liam O'Connell	(LO)
	Hannah Richardson	(HR)

1. OPENING PRAYER

1.1 The meeting opened at 7.40pm with a prayer led by RW.

2. APOLOGIES AND OPENING REMARKS

2.1 Apologies had been received by NG, LO and HR.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

4.1 The draft minutes of the full governing board meeting held on 19 October 2016 had previously been circulated. There were no comments on the minutes so ABr signed and dated them and JH will file them in the Minute Book.

Action: JH

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 ABr gave a verbal report. Highlights included:

5.1.1 Governors attention was drawn to the DoE document "Keeping Children Safe in Education: Part 1" (2016) which it is good practice for governors to read.

Signed: Anna Braun

Date: 29th June 2017

5.1.2 With regard to last year's government proposal for all schools to become academies, ABr, NG, SS and TS had all been to different meetings on this subject. By way of background, governors were advised that initially it had been the intention for all schools to have started the process by 2020 and complete it by 2022 but the decision whether to become an academy now rested with schools. The purpose of all schools becoming academies was originally to help those who were failing, but outstanding schools were now also being encouraged to do so. It had been possible to obtain a grant of c.£25,000 to cover mainly legal costs for those schools who did convert. A governor asked for clarification that the number of pupils required to form a multi-academy trust (MAT) was 1000+ pupils and HF advised that there were no hard and fast rules. Governors appreciated that it was essential to make the right decision because if the school did convert to academy status this decision could not be reversed.

Governors noted that an umbrella trust was a 'softer' option that would involve maintaining independence, ie retaining our own Head Teacher and governing board. An example of the potential advantage of being part of an umbrella trust would be the ability to 'pool' resources, for example if a Teaching Assistant was suffering long term sickness absence then we could utilise a Teaching Assistant from one of our umbrella trust member schools.

It was noted that other local Catholic primary schools are keen to form academies and are starting due diligence, and governors agreed to establish a working party to undertake a feasibility study and report its findings to the full governing board over the next year. HF, ABr, SS and PK volunteered to form this discreet group. HF advised that a primary school in Kingston had become an academy and might willing to meet with our academy working party.

ABr was currently trying to liaise with Stephen Bryan (Deputy Director, Leadership & Governance at the Education Commission) and the governors agreed that it would be a good idea to invite Stephen Bryan to a future full governing board meeting to advise on this matter.

6. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

6.1 The Head Teacher's report had previously been circulated. Highlights included:

6.1.1 *Attendance (page 2):* Governors noted that, as the LA average for attendance was 93%, our figure of 97.47% was outstanding. Two new pupils were joining Year 5 this week, and another was joining Year 4 after the February half term holiday.

6.1.2 *Reading (page 4):* Governors noted that the school is fortunate to have a team of parent helpers in KS1. 2017 targets look very good for the end of the year, and even though targets do not need to be set they are useful for illustrative purposes.

A governor asked if the target was for 70% at a good level what was the expectation for the remaining 30%. HF advised that the expectation was lower, primarily due to some of these children having English as an Additional Language (EAL) rather than having speech and language difficulties, or being summer born. Governors noted that the school's targets were still above the national, and local, levels.

Signed: Anna Braun

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Governors noted SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) assessments already existing in Y6 had also commenced in Y2 this year.

- 6.1.3 *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (page 5)*: Governors attention was drawn to the breadth of CPD, particularly EAL training.
- 6.1.4 *Visits and Visitors (page 6)*: Governors noted the numerous visitors to the school which helps to enrich the curriculum. The wealth of sporting activities was also highlighted.
- 6.1.5 *School Development Plan (SDP) (page 7)*: Governors' attention was drawn to the different ways in which schools used their school councils, one of which was to analyse teaching and learning. As an example, last term a questionnaire was circulated to pupils asking what a teacher does that helps you learn, and also what disrupts your learning. Results centred on teachers talking slowly and repeating new concepts as being most helpful to the learning process, and that too much noise and chatter was the most disruptive element to learning. Going forward, children had considered that spacing tables further apart could improve the learning environment. Overall, the questionnaire demonstrated that children were actively involved in their learning.
- 6.1.6 *Community Cohesion (page 8)*:
- (a) *Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child*: The shoeboxes prepared by the children for Operation Christmas Child had been very well received.
 - (b) Whilst the school already supports CAFOD it was also considered that supporting a global initiative would be a good idea. The charity "Let the Children Live!" was suggested as a possibility.
- 6.1.7 *Appendices*: Governors appreciated that this data was a good reference for pictorial representation.
- 6.1.8 *Overall Performance Summary*:
- (a) *Page 15*: Governors acknowledged the national focus on middle prior attainment pupils; the school being above the LA and national levels for SEND and more able children, and close with middle prior attainment children, and appreciated the need to focus also on core middle attaining children.
 - (b) *Page 16*: Governors also acknowledged that the gender difference in reading, writing and maths was a one-off, not a trend. Governors were advised of the difficulties faced when a class is more heavily weighted with one gender.
- 6.1.9 *Shop 'til You Drop*: Governors noted that this initiative had generated a profit of £1500 by the Year 6 pupils which they will use to purchase a legacy for the school.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Curriculum

7.1.1 The Curriculum Committee had met on 16 January 2017 and the minutes of this meeting would be circulated in due course.

7.1.2 The draft Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy had previously been circulated and governors voted to approve this document. JH will file this and liaise with the website administrator to publish it on the school website.

Action: JH

7.1.3 The committee had also discussed support plans which carefully monitor vulnerable children in the school. Governors noted that the progress of these children is not only monitored in small group settings but also in the classroom

7.1.4 A governor asked about child-led worship. TS responded that this was well underway and was taken very seriously in Year 6 where there was a folder of ideas. Children had formed groups of four and decided on the theme and format of their chosen worship. As an example, the school's tradition of children having their own stones with their names on in Reception and which follow them through the school and are then taken away with them when they leave the school had generated discussions about the symbolism of this tradition with regard to St Peter.

7.2 Finance

7.2.1 The draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 19 October 2016 had previously been circulated, and the committee had also met earlier this evening.

7.2.2 Rosemary McGuire (RM), the school's Finance Manager, had taken the committee through the current state of the budget. After ten months the projected carry forward into the next financial year was about £14,000. The amount of the school budget share allocated by the LA was currently unknown but RM would work on the budget for the committee to review when they meet next month before the end of March 2017 budget submission deadline.

7.2.3 A governor asked if this projected carry forward was small compared to last year and was advised that it was, but it was conservative, so the final figure might be higher. Governors noted that, with potential cuts, it will become more problematic for schools to set their budgets.

7.2.4 A governor asked what the ballpark figure from the LA would be and was advised that it was c.£1,000,000; the majority being based on a figure per pupil, therefore pupil numbers were critical. Governors noted that the target class size was thirty pupils, with thirty pupils being the maximum class size permissible in KS1. Classes become non-viable with less than twenty-six pupils but the school was currently viable. After the February 2017 half term holiday there would be only eight places available throughout the school.

Signed: Anna Brown

Date: 29th June 2017

7.2.5 The committee had discussed a draft Data Protection Policy, and a draft Freedom of Information Policy, both of which it was a statutory requirement to have. These would be circulated to the full governing board in due course with a view to seeking their approval.

Action: CH

7.2.6 The committee had also considered ways to generate income, for example through lettings. Governors also noted that the new boiler might be cheaper to run.

7.3 Personnel

7.3.1 The draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting of 4 January 2017 had previously been circulated. This meeting had focussed mainly on the Deputy Head Teacher recruitment.

7.3.2 The interview panel had undertaken shortlisting for the Deputy Head Teacher post on 30 January 2017 and would hold interviews on 6 February 2017.

7.3.3 The most recent versions of the Catholic Education Service Capability Policy & Procedure, Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, Grievance Policy & Procedure, and Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure, and their respective appendices, had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors voted to approve these documents, subject to an amendment to the Sickness Absence Policy; JH will circulate this amended policy to all governors.

Action: JH

7.4 Premises

7.4.1 The Premises Committee had met on 9 December 2016 and the minutes of this meeting would be circulated in due course.

7.4.2 Governors noted that the wall along the boundary between the school/churchyard and Worple Street was causing concern and would need attention at some point. RW advised that someone was visiting on 9 February 2017 to fix sensors to the wall to see what work was required to be carried out but that this could all be achieved from the street side of the boundary. HF asked if any work necessary on the wall on the opposite boundary might be carried out at the same time, as presumably both walls were of a similar age, however RW advised that they were apparently of different ages, and were also of different heights.

7.5 Admissions

7.5.1 Since the last full governing board meeting, the Admissions Committee had approved the rewording of the Admissions Policy 2018-19 to clarify the position regarding previously looked after children. However, the school's admissions arrangements remain the same and these determined arrangements have been forwarded to Hatija Bhatia (Head of Admissions at the LA), Keith Burleton (Admissions Officer at the Education Commission) and have been published on the school's website.

Signed: Anna Bram

Date: 29th June 2017

7.5.2 The Admissions Committee will next meet to classify next year's admissions on 22 February 2017, and again on 28 February 2017, both commencing at 9.00am in the school.

7.6 Pay

7.6.1 The draft minutes of the Pay Committee meeting of 19 October 2016 had previously been circulated. Confidential minutes of this meeting are held separately.

8. TRAINING

8.1 Since the last meeting the following training had been undertaken:

Chris Hopkins: Introduction to RAISEonline Data for Primary School Governors 9/11/16

Serena Sexton: Academies & MATs – Exploring Models & Structures – 17/11/16

Jan Hopkins: Clerk's Briefing – 22/11/16

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There was none.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting will be held in the school on Thursday 22 June 2017 commencing at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.

Signed: Anna Brown

Date: 29th June 2017