

Minutes of the meeting of the governing body of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School held at the school on Thursday 15 October 2015

**Present:** Helen Frostick, Headteacher (HF)  
Amanda Barrett (ABa)  
Lavinia Buhagiar (LB)  
Nick Gardner (NG)  
Chris Hopkins (CH)  
Paul Kenny (PK)  
Liam O'Connell (LO)  
Hannah Richardson (HR)  
Serena Sexton (SS)  
Fr. Richard Whinder (RW)

**Apologies:** Anna Brown, Chair (ABr)  
Clare Chance (CC)  
Tricia Shields (TS)

**Also attended:** Jan Hopkins, Clerk to the Governors (JH)

---

## 1. OPENING PRAYER

1.1 The meeting opened at 7.30pm with a prayer led by RW.

## 2. APOLOGIES AND OPENING REMARKS

2.1 Apologies were received from ABr, CC and TS. In the absence of ABr, CH took the chair. He then extended a warm welcome to Lavinia Buhagiar, the newly elected Parent Governor elected for a four-year term, and ensured that she knew the other members of the governing body.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REGISTER OF GOVERNORS' INTEREST

3.1 Blank copies of the Declaration of Pecuniary and Personal Interest forms had been circulated to all governors beforehand with the request that they be completed and brought to the meeting. ABr had emailed her completed form, and all governors present at the meeting handed JH their completed forms for placing in the Minute Book.

**Action: JH**

3.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## 4. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

4.1 JH took the chair and declared that ABr had been nominated for the role of Chair. She asked if there were any further nominations for this role and, there being none, declared that ABr was elected unopposed as Chair.

Signed: ..... *Anna Brown* .....

Date: ..... *4th February 2016* .....

4.2 JH then declared that CH had been nominated for the role of Vice Chair. She asked if there were any further nominations for this role and, there being none, declared that CH was elected unopposed as Vice Chair. CH then took the chair again.

## 5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

5.1 The draft minutes of the governing body meeting held on 25 June 2015 had previously been circulated and CH asked if there were any comments on these.

5.2 NG requested that the action point under 7.4.1 should be corrected to “NG to chase Bob Froud ...”.

5.3 CH then signed and dated the minutes and JH will file them in the Minute Book.

**Action: JH**

## 6. CHAIR’S REPORT

6.1 As the Chair was not present at the meeting there was no Chair’s Report.

## 7. HEADTEACHER’S REPORT

7.1 The Headteacher’s Report had previously been circulated and the following points were highlighted:-

7.1.1 Aside from the report, a Year 4 pupil had made an appointment to see HF to discuss the fact they had been to Germany during the summer holidays and had seen people there applauding as they welcomed refugees into the country and wondered if the school could raise some money for the refugees.

7.1.2 *Free School Meals (FSM)/ Pupil Premium:* A significant proportion of Pupil Premium Grant income had been spent on providing a SENCo in addition to Wendy Burns.

7.1.3 *Languages:* Approximately one fifth of the pupil population speak English as an Additional Language. There is often a concern that the school’s Reception pupils do not do as well as Reception pupils in some other Richmond schools but it was pointed out that this is because they often come in to the school with very little English but this is soon remedied as they move further up the school.

7.1.4 *Inset Day 2/11/15:* This inset day is a good demonstration of how the locality schools work well together, and it is a good day for all staff as different schools cover different subjects. Governors were advised that St Mary Magdalen’s would cover English as an Additional Language on this day.

7.1.5 *Learnpads:* Fifteen learnpads had already been bought and the children enjoyed using them so much that they were keen to speed up the fundraising in order to buy more and were coming up with ways to achieve this. Governors were advised that the learnpads are in the library and accessible to all pupils.

Signed: Anna Brown

Date: 4th February 2016

7.1.6 *Leadership and Management:* There were generic targets for staff. An extra category – “UA” (under achievers) – had been added for children who were not making as much progress as expected, irrespective of their level of attainment. This was a term coined by the school and HF advised that it was impressive that staff were keeping an eye on them.

7.1.7 *Parent Questionnaire Analysis:* The website was being relaunched soon.

7.1.8 *Policy Review:* The Safeguarding Policy had to be updated in line with new government advice and it was discussed whether the Premises Committee would be the most appropriate committee to progress this and LO agreed that ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> Premises Committee would take this on.

**Action: LO**

7.1.9 *Travel Plan:* The school had gone from bronze to silver with the travel plan, with two junior Safety Officers receiving a special plaque and certificates. Governors noted that parents were amazing at ensuring children walked or cycled to school and, in Year 1, many parents are car sharing.

7.1.10A governor asked whether 5% unauthorised absences was good or bad. HF said that it was good in this area. The system for applying on the blue form where the holiday requested was not necessarily agreed was a good thing. She also pointed out that EAL children may have family overseas and consequently there may be a need for a child to travel overseas urgently and/or suddenly. She advised that there had been an occasion last year when she had to write to a parent about their child’s unacceptable level of absence but this year the child had currently achieved 100% attendance. She pointed out that, as the school is small, she knows whether there is a need for intervention on her part.

## 8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 8.1 Curriculum Committee

8.1.1 The draft Curriculum Committee meeting minutes of 6 October 2015 had previously been circulated.

8.1.2 Governors noted that HR had visited a Maths lesson which she had found very interesting, and that she hoped to also visit an English lesson soon.

### 8.2 Finance Committee

8.2.1 The draft Finance Committee meeting minutes of 18 June 2015 had previously been circulated. The committee had also met earlier this evening at 6.30pm.

8.2.2 The school’s new Finance Officer, Rosemary McGuire, had provided a clear and meaningful report of the current state of the school’s finances to the finance committee which had met earlier in the same evening. The projected carry forward at the end of the current year is £87,449 which is extremely healthy. The school had started the year with c.£99,000, which was higher than expected.

Signed: ..... *Anna Brown* .....

Date: ..... *4th February 2016* .....

### 8.3 Personnel Committee

8.3.1 Governors were advised that, since the last full governing body meeting, the Personnel Committee had not met.

### 8.4 Premises Committee

8.4.1 Governors were advised that the Premises Committee had met on 24 September 2015. Highlights included:

- i. There are three new cooling and heating units: one in the SEN hut, one in Year 2 and one in Year 5. These had been inspected, along with the new WC facilities, and all look good.
- ii. *Security Entrance:* It was planned to upgrade security at the school entrance over half term. It was noted that there was a need to look at the back of the school in terms of security. It was noted that the cemetery gates open at 8.30am, and the hall door is open for breakfast club, with the rest of the school locked until the staff come on duty.
- iii. *New Caretaker:* A temporary caretaker was currently in place, provided by the cleaning company.
- iv. *Playground:* The playground was much improved but the contractors had not done what they had been meant to do and a method to remedy this was currently being explored with them. It appeared that the problems stemmed from the fact that the contractors had in fact employed sub-contractors and there was a concern about the quality of the work carried out and its potential to be long lasting. LO was drafting a letter in an attempt to get the matter resolved.

**Action: LO**

### 8.5 Admissions Committee

8.5.1. The draft Admissions Committee meeting minutes of 1 July 2015 had previously been circulated.

8.5.2 In light of the recent OSA Determination, the revised Admissions Policy and Supplementary Information Form had been amended and these had been previously circulated to all governors, along with an amended Register of Interest Form.

8.5.3 Governors noted that, at their meeting on 1 July 2015, the committee had considered whether to meet to discuss potential amendments to the admissions criteria, and whether to include the following issues:

- prioritising catechumens;
- prioritising children whose older siblings had already left the school.

Signed: ..... *Anna Brown* .....

Date: ..... *4th February 2016* .....

8.5.4 Governors were advised that the Diocese does not recommend giving preference to children whose older siblings had already left the school. Governors also agreed that any discussion about whether to give preference to catechumens could wait until next year. Hence it was agreed that no changes to our admissions arrangements for 2017-18 would be considered.

## 8.6 Pay Committee

8.6.1 Governors were advised that the Pay Committee had met on 18 June 2015 to discuss confidential pay-related matters.

## 9. DELEGATION TO COMMITTEES REVIEW

9.1 The following documents had previously been circulated to all governors:

- Delegation to Admissions Committee
- Delegation to Curriculum Committee
- Delegation to Pay Committee
- Delegation to Personnel Committee
- Delegation to Premises Committee
- Finance Committee Roles and Responsibilities within the Scheme of Delegation

9.2 Governors approved these draft documents and JH would update them accordingly.

**Action: JH**

## 10. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/GOVERNING BODY CHECKLIST

10.1 The current committee membership had previously been circulated to all governors and they were invited to consider whether they wished to join or leave any committees.

10.2 ABa said she would like to join the Admissions, Finance and Premises Committees.

10.3 NG said he would be happy to relinquish his role as Admissions Committee Chair and governors indicated that they would consider whether they would be willing to take over.

10.4 JH will update the committee membership list and circulate to all governors.

**Action: JH**

## 11. GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW

11.1 Governors were reminded that this LA model policy was agreed for the first time at the autumn term 2014 meeting. It sets out recommendations that the governing body adopt, and their role. Recommended amendments to this document were shown in red as follows:

- governors will commit to refresh relevant training every three years
- alternative arrangements for governors to participate at meetings would be accommodated
- the Register of Governors' Interests and governor details will be published on the school website.

Signed: Anna Brown

Date: 4th February 2016

11.2 Governors agreed the above changes and JH will finalise the draft policy accordingly.

**Action: JH**

## **12. TERM DATES 2016-17**

12.1 The LA term dates for 2016-17 had previously been circulated to all governors.

12.2 Governors agreed that the school would follow the LA term dates but two out of the three INSET days were dependent on agreement with other schools regarding joint INSET days. Terms dates for 2106-17 would now be publicised with those two INSET days noted as to be confirmed. It was, however, noted that Monday 5 September 2016 would definitely be an INSET day.

## **13. TRAINING**

13.1 The following governor training had taken place since the last meeting:

*Serena Sexton:*

Making Sense of Change: The Facts, the Proposals & the Implications of Recent Developments in Education Policy – 13/10/15

## **14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

14.1 There was no other business.

## **15. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

15.1 Governors noted the following dates of forthcoming full governing body meetings, all to be held in the school commencing at 7.30pm:

- Thursday 4 February 2016

- Thursday 23 June 2016

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.

Signed: *Anna Brown*

Date: *4th February 2016*