

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School held at the school on Thursday 23 October 2014

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

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

1. OPENING PRAYER

1.1 The meeting opened at 7.45pm with a prayer led by RW.

2. APOLOGIES AND OPENING REMARKS

2.1 ABr welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Amanda Barrett and Paul Kenny, who had been appointed Foundation Governors since the last full governing body meeting.

3. REGISTER OF GOVERNORS' INTERESTS

3.1 It was noted that ABa had completed and returned a Register of Governors' Interests form, and that PK had previously completed one, which meant therefore that all governors had completed one this year.

3.2 There were no declarations at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

4.1 ABr invited comments to the minutes of the last meeting on 25 June 2014 and, there being none, she signed and dated them.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 Governors' attention was drawn to the fact that ABr and CH had been reappointed as Foundation Governors for a further four year term of office commencing 1 September 2014.

Signed: Anna Brown

Date: 5th February 2015

- 5.2 Governors noted that CH had attended the Richmond Governors' Partnership Meeting for Chairs and Vice-Chairs on 7 October 2014. CH advised that, at this meeting, the need for the governing body to have a Code of Conduct was raised as being good practice. A draft Code of Conduct had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting and governors agreed to adopt this document.
- 5.3 Governors were advised of the drive in Richmond and Kingston for schools to close the gap between Free School Meals (FSM) and non-FSM pupils in terms of attainment. However, it was noted that attainment across the board in Richmond and Kingston is already very high, with both FSM and non-FSM pupils attaining above national average.
- 5.4 It was also noted that, particularly as a third of the governing body had been relatively recently appointed, wherever possible governors are encouraged to attend as many training events as their time permits. Governors acknowledged that training opportunities provided by the Diocese tended to be inconvenient in terms of location. However, two Diocesan training sessions were noted as being both potentially useful and not too far away, namely 'Governing a Catholic School' for New and Existing Governors on 4 November 2014 at Bonus Pastor College in Lewisham, and the Governor Briefing Meeting on 13 November 2015 at Ursuline High in Merton.
- 5.5 ABr advised that she had been invited to a meeting for Chairs of governing bodies in Richmond and Kingston on 26 November 2014 which she will attend.
- 5.6 Governors were advised that the school was endeavouring to ensure that authorised absence was only granted for significant occasions such as attending a family wedding, rather than for family holidays. A governor pointed out that one way to avoid holidays being taken during term time was to publicise term dates as far into the future as possible, especially in a year such as 2015 where the August Bank Holiday falls on 31st of the month. HF advised that the joint INSET with other schools in our quindrat will need to be scheduled in September 2015 before we can confirm dates for autumn term 2015. However, the school should strive as far as possible to avoid starting a new term in the middle of the week rather than on a Monday. It was agreed that governors would endeavour to agree forthcoming term dates by email before the next full governing body meeting.

6. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

- 6.1 The Headteacher's report had been previously circulated to all governors and the following points were highlighted:
- a) *Page 3 - Free School Meals (FSM):* The Universal Infants Free School Meals policy now in place meant that there was little incentive for qualifying parents to register for FSM. Therefore, parents are being encouraged to sign up for FSM on the basis that this provides valuable extra funds for the benefit of the children.

- b) *Page 3 – Staff:* The vacancy for an SMSA/LSA had been filled by someone with nursery experience which governors noted was a positive attribute for the school.
- c) *Page 4 – Draft Pay Policy:* CH explained that a new model Pay Policy had been issued by the LA in September which is up to date with respect to national legislation and guidelines relating particularly to performance related pay. He also pointed out that it was a statutory requirement for the school to have a Pay Policy and that the draft policy contained in the Headteacher’s report was based on the latest LA model policy with minor amendments by the Pay Committee. Governors approved this draft policy.
- d) *Page 5 – Performance Management:* Governors noted that issues such as Pupil Premium, performance management, the School Development Plan and FSM all relate to each other, working towards helping vulnerable children.
- e) *Page 6 – Visitors:* There had been numerous visitors in school this term, including:
- (i) NG, who had visited the school with the playground committee for a meeting with the contractors
 - (ii) a tennis day
 - (iii) the Headteacher from St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Kingston, as part of the mentoring scheme
 - (iv) Harlequins FC
 - (v) the Great Fire of London Workshop, which had taken place that day
 - (vi) Mad Science
 - (vii) Father Richard, on many occasions
 - (viii) Chris Byrne, the school’s School Improvement Partner (SIP)
 - (ix) World Peace, Kingston

The school had also hosted the Year 6 Secondary Transfer Meeting which had also been attended by parents from St Elizabeth’s and St Osmund’s.

- f) *Page 6 – Achievements and Targets:* Governors noted that the results for 2014 were excellent, with there being a chance that the school would be top of the Richmond league tables. However, it was pointed out that cohorts vary and it is likely that this year’s Y6 will not achieve quite so highly.
- g) *Pupil Premium 2014-15:* Governors were advised that one of TS’s roles now she is out of class in the afternoons is to work on boosting progress for the more vulnerable groups. She analyses pupil data and checks their results from Reception onwards to see what progress they have made, and works with Wendy Burns (the school’s SENCO) to move them on if possible. Governors noted that the analysis of results since Reception informs the individual programmes for each child across the whole school, not just in Year 6.

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- h) *Parent Summer Term Questionnaire 2014:* Governors noted that the questionnaires returned provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, although the number returned was low. Of particular note was the re-launch of Planet Platinum and the “Take One Picture” initiative. Points of note were:
- (i) With regard to First Aid, the school had appointed a new member of staff with paediatric First Aid training which governors noted was a positive attribute.
 - (ii) With regard to the Fit for Sport complaint, there were new Fit for Sport personnel in the school this year who had been observed by Fit for Sport themselves in order to ensure high quality delivery. Governors noted that they had been very enthusiastic both during school PE lessons and After School Clubs, and that the children in all years were finding it a very positive experience.
- i) *Chris Byrne (SIP), Report to Governors 2012-14 Outcomes:* TS explained how the graphs included in our SIP’s report provide a good illustration of the school’s high levels of attainment across all year groups. A governor questioned the FSM gap graph which indicates that the gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils is significantly greater than national average. However, it was noted that Chris Byrne did not comment on this in his narrative, indicating that it was not a significant problem for the school, perhaps due to the very low numbers involved. Governors were advised that Chris Byrne is likely to come into school after half term and that a governor would be welcome to participate in that meeting in order to gain further insight into how the school is striving to push up progress and attainment.
- j) *The Key for School Leaders:* This details the changes in education this year and illustrates how challenging it is. Governors can access further information on specific topics via the links.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Curriculum Committee

- a) The draft Curriculum Committee meeting minutes of 20 October 2014 had been previously circulated to all governors. A governor commented that the pupil tracking system, where every pupil’s progress is closely followed, sounded great.

7.2 Finance Committee

- a) The draft Finance Committee meeting minutes of 25 June 2014 had been previously circulated to all governors, and the committee had also met prior to this evening’s full governing body meeting.

- b) It was noted that we are half way through the school's financial year and the current projection is that we should be closing the year on 31 March 2015 with a revenue reserve of £25,593 to carry forward, which is a relatively healthy figure. It was noted that the school's financial adviser, Jonathan Rhoden, was being more conservative on the income side than had been the case previously, on the basis that the school should not budget for income which it may not eventually receive. Therefore, it is expected that the eventual revenue carry forward into FY2015/16 will be higher than currently projected.
- c) The recent census recorded a pupil roll of 269 which is very high, due to the fact that we now have two additional classes in the school and also due to the fact that all classes but one are full. The increased school roll will have a positive effect on the school's finances in the next financial year.
- d) It was noted that HF was helping out two other schools, one in Ham and one in Kingston, for ten days each. The school gets paid a significant sum of money for this outreach work, which is provided due to HF's status as a National Leader of Education. This additional funding helps to fund time out of the classroom for TS, and helps us fund the current staffing complement this year of ten teachers for nine classes.

7.3 Personnel Committee

- a) Governors noted that ad hoc meetings had occurred regarding staff attendance and absence management, details of which must remain confidential.
- b) It was also noted that the reason for keeping the Personnel Committee meetings attendance minimal was to preserve a pool of governors from which to draw on who have no prior knowledge of any matters for consideration at any potential appeals panels.

7.4 Premises Committee

- a) The draft Premises Committee meeting minutes of 19 June 2014 had been previously circulated to all governors.
- b) Governors were advised that the Sport England grant and revamp of the playground had been the main purpose of the meeting. Everything was now nearly signed off with the intention that it should fit into Sport England's idea of what it should look like and not be just like another football pitch, so a compromise had been reached with the contractors to ensure it would be versatile. However another problem was timescales as it was not possible to do the work at this time of year, and access and planning permission was a further problem, so the work will probably not happen until the spring. It was looking likely, however, that the school would not need to match fund the Sport England grant.

Signed: Anna Bramm

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- c) Governors were advised that, unfortunately, the contractors had condemned the trim trail on the spot and have taken it down, which may be something for the Premises Committee to consider in their next meeting.

Action: LO

- d) ABr asked if the Premises Committee could lead the Health & Safety Policy review in the next couple of months to which LO agreed.

Action: LO

7.5 Admissions Committee

- a) The draft Admissions Committee meeting minutes of 7 October 2014, and the meeting minutes of 10 July 2014 had been previously circulated to all governors.

- b) At the beginning of September 2014 the Diocese had required more changes and a draft Admissions Policy 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 had been previously circulated to all governors. Governors noted that they could make changes to the Admissions Policy without consultation as long as they did not change the rules of admission. They were advised of the three changes being proposed highlighted in yellow, namely:

- (i) Page 3: Under "Principles" a third additional oversubscription criterion, thus "Where the last [...] drawing of lots"
- (ii) Page 5: In Appendix A, the addition of the paragraph entitled "Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age". The purpose of the clause is to try to stop schools from staggering admissions and make it clear that the school admits all children in September who are rising five that year. Parents can defer until the term in which their child turns five however. HF advised that the school would stagger the intake just for a few days.
- (iii) Page 5: In Appendix A, under "Waiting List", the addition of the final two sentences, thus "The waiting list [...] the Admissions Criteria."

Governors approved these changes and agreed the policy.

- c) A reformatted Register of Interest Form had also been previously circulated to all governors and they subsequently agreed it.
- d) Governors were advised that the next Admissions Committee meeting would not take place until after Christmas 2014.

7.6 Pay Committee

- a) CH explained that there were three governors currently on the Pay Committee, CH, ABr and HF. In order to consider matters relating to Headteacher's pay, which discussions HF could not be party to, one more non-staff governor is required to join the Pay Committee to maintain a quorum at meetings. Governors agreed that they did want an additional governor on the Pay Committee, and PK said he would be happy to join the committee, which governors agreed to.

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8. INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

- 8.1 Governors were reminded that the Instrument of Government is a two page document which sets out the present governing body constitution, and that September 2015 is the date by which a new Instrument of Government must be agreed and in place. Different models can be considered, in terms of the numbers of various types of governor, and the governing body should follow advice from the Diocese and the LA. Governors were advised that, although the Diocese training on this subject was not suitable in terms of location, there was an LA training session in Twickenham entitled "Guidance on the Reconstitution of Maintained School Governing Bodies (Governors)" on 4 November 2014.

9. POLICIES/DELEGATIONS TO COMMITTEES REVIEW

- 9.1 Drafts of the Health & Safety Policy, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy, Child Protection Policy and School Behaviour Policy had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting.

9.2 SEN Policy

Governors noted that the draft SEN Policy had to incorporate a significant number of changes, which Wendy Burns was undertaking. The policy review would then take place within the Curriculum Committee, with the aim being to present it to the next full governing body meeting in February 2015. It was also advised that work was being progressed to detail on the school's website exactly what could be offered in terms of SEN.

- 9.3 The remaining three policies will be recirculated for committees to review.
Action: JH

9.4 Delegations to Committees

The following documents had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting:

- (i) Draft Delegation to Admissions Committee
- (ii) Draft Delegation to Curriculum Committee
- (iii) Draft Delegation to Pay Committee
- (iv) Draft Delegation to Personnel Committee
- (v) Draft Delegation to Premises Committee
- (vi) Draft Finance Committee Roles and Responsibilities within the Scheme of Delegation Terms of Reference

- 9.5 Governors agreed to amend the draft Delegation to Admissions Committee point 3g) to reflect that the annual review of the Admissions Policy will take place in the autumn term.

- 9.6 Governors agreed to adopt all of the above documents which JH would update to reflect the current committee membership and recirculate.
Action: JH

Signed: Anna Brown

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10. **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

10.1 The current governing body committee membership structure had been circulated before the meeting. Governors reconsidered this, amended it and JH would recirculate the updated structure.

Action: JH

11. **GOVERNING BODY CHECKLIST**

11.1 Governors were reminded of the need to undertake training for their governing body roles. They were also reminded of the need for them to ask questions about any specific spheres of interest that they represented and if possible to undertake visits to the school in those roles. Governors reconsidered the governing body checklist, amended it, and JH would circulate the updated version.

Action: JH

12. **GOVERNOR TRAINING**

12.1 The schedule of governor training undertaken since the last full governing body meeting had been circulated to all governors.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

13.1 There was none.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

14.1 Governors were reminded that the date of the next meeting is 5 February 2015.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm with a prayer led by RW.

Signed: *Anna Brown*

Date: *5th February 2015*