

Minutes of the meeting of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School governing board held at the school on Thursday 29 June 2017

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

1. OPENING PRAYER

1.1 The meeting opened at 6.30pm with a prayer led by RW.

2. APOLOGIES AND OPENING REMARKS

2.1 Apologies had been received by LO and SS.

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 2 February 2017 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 The Chair's Report had previously been circulated. Highlights included:

5.1.1 Governors' Maintenance Fund (GMF)

Governors were advised that the suggested contribution by parents to the GMF has stood at £50.00pa for the last ten years and it was proposed to now suggest that parents contribute £10.00 per month, through either Wisepay or by setting up a standing order.

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Governors felt that it was important to be transparent to parents with regard to the intended purpose of the money. The meeting was advised that the balance had been over £21,000 but as the new boiler had cost over £10,000 the balance was currently £3112. It was also advised that a grant of £67,000 had been awarded for fire safety, the school needing to find 10% of this.

Given government cuts, governors appreciated that the GMF was an important income source, although a governor commented that any proposed increase should not be linked to government cuts but to HF's recent successful bid for fire safety.

The meeting was advised that there are 260 pupils in the school from 150 families, of which 45-60 families contribute to the GMF; the number having increased in recent years. Governors appreciated that this new request might generate more income, although a governor commented that it might be better if more parents pay less than less parents pay more. A further governor commented that follow-up requests for GMF contributions received via Wisepay are perhaps not appropriate.

The meeting noted that the request needed to be appropriately worded, ie stressing that GMF contributions are voluntary, and that any contribution amount would be welcomed. It was also suggested that the letter should suggest that arranging payments through Wisepay or via standing order might make life easier for people. ABr said she would circulate a draft letter for governors to approve and the meeting agreed with this proposed course of action.

ACTION: ABr

5.1.2 Academy Working Party Report

Numerous meetings on this subject had been attended by members of the working party, and it was the intention to report to the full governing board on this issue at the spring term 2018 meeting.

ACTION: ABr

5.1.3. Thanks were expressed to TS, who would be retiring at the end of term, and to RW, who moves to another parish in August; both of whom were attending their last full governing board meeting.

(RW left the meeting at this point)

5.1.4 Proposal for Head Teacher Arrangements

The meeting was advised that Fiona Lambe, Head Teacher of St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, has been appointed Head Teacher at Archdeacon Cambridge's CE School in Twickenham, and that St Osmund's was facing challenging circumstances with a falling pupil roll and an interim Acting Head Teacher for the next academic year.

It was also advised that HF had been approached by Oona Stannard, Standards Lead Associate at the Education Commission, to become Executive Head Teacher of both St Mary Magdalen's and St Osmund's, however HF did not feel that this was currently the right solution.

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It had been suggested that HF become Consultant Head Teacher, where she would be contracted to St Osmund's for one day a week for which they would pay St Mary Magdalen's one-fifth of her salary. HF confirmed that her commitment to St Osmund's would probably be two half days.

HF is already a National Leader of Excellence, for example supporting St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Kingston, and Meadlands Primary School in Richmond for ten days per term, which generates £6,000pa additional income for the school, but this would not continue if the intended arrangement with St Osmund's proceeded, although the £6,000pa would still be paid as she would be supporting a school in a challenging situation.

HF had met today with Fiona Trinder, Chair of Governors at St Osmund's, who, along with their Senior Leadership Team, agreed with this arrangement, which benefits both schools, ie St Mary Magdalen's will receive additional income, and as St Osmund's received an outstanding RE Ofsted Inspection last year, and it is expected that St Mary Magdalen's is due to be similarly inspected next year, this allows us to share expertise and gain from working with each other.

HF circulated a draft Memorandum of Understanding to the meeting which governors were asked to consider. A governor asked if HF felt she had capacity to accommodate this and she said she did, that it was a great opportunity to work together as a partnership school, particularly as they were in close proximity.

A governor asked if, under this arrangement, other St Mary Magdalen's staff would also be required by St Osmund's during the school day, and whether St Osmund's would also cover these costs and the meeting was advised that all other expenses incurred by St Mary Magdalen's will be met by St Osmund's. In any event, HF confirmed that this would not be the case in 2017-18 as she would be Consultant Head Teacher, but if she became Executive Head Teacher, managing two schools two and a half days a week each, then the situation might be different. A governor commented that this would be good preparatory work for the school, and that, in any case, involvement of other staff in this arrangement would be ad hoc and at HF discretion.

The meeting understood that Deputy Head Teachers deputise for Head Teachers when they are out of school, and that this arrangement worked well at St Mary Magdalen's, for example TS deputises for HF when she is on study leave. It was also informed that although the school would have a new Deputy Head Teacher from September, the incumbent had experience of deputising for their Head Teacher in their current school. In any case it would be planned for the Deputy Head Teacher to have non-contact time when HF was away.

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Another governor pointed out that if they pursue the academy route, one school will end up managing the other, with staff gaining beneficial experience in other schools, and HF would be in a strong position to manage this which would give St Mary Magdalen's greater control. However, a governor pointed out that having an Executive Head Teacher running the schools, with different Head Teachers for each school meant just another top layer of management. HF confirmed that any potential impact was subject to stringent review as the arrangement had to work for both schools, however it had to be remembered that we are unsustainable on our own.

It was agreed that the Memorandum of Understanding needs to be made clearer so a revised version will be emailed to governors for their further consideration.

ACTION: HF

6. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

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

6.1.1 **Behaviour and Safety (page 4):** The meeting was advised that although the school already had an Evacuation Policy, due to recent adverse global events a Lock In Policy is also needed.

6.1.2 **Attendance (page 4):** Governors attention was drawn to our outstanding pupil attendance record of 98%.

6.1.3 **Contribution of the Pupils (page 5):** Governors attention was also drawn to the new prayer monitors, who had taken part in the Mass for St Peter and St Paul earlier today. This was part of a new development for children known as pupil chaplaincy which other schools are also operating suggested by Sharon Docherty (Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality at the Education Commission) during her recent visit.

Field of Prayer Tree: The meeting was also advised of the Field of Prayer tree in the school reception area. Spontaneous prayer had started in assemblies, focussing back on pupils in terms of prayer life, and children wrote their prayers on sticky notes and added them to the tree.

6.1.4 **General Visitors (page 5):** HF and Chris Byrne (the School Improvement Partner) had observed writing this week, and were impressed by watching teachers lead such inspired, exciting lessons. Governors were advised that monitoring visits are carried out termly, and that HF is a useful third-party assessor, as are, for example, Chris Byrne and Sharon Docherty.

6.1.5 **CPD (page 7):** Governors noted the breadth of training that staff had undertaken, ensuring a very highly skilled workforce across the board.

6.1.6 **Premises and Health & Safety (page 8):** After the new boiler installation a thorough asbestos survey had been carried out which had detected the presence of asbestos in the boiler room, however it had been completely removed during the May 2017 half term holiday.

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- 6.1.7 **Section 48 Inspection (Appendix):** The school had received a diocesan visit, and advice from Sharon Docherty, and HF had rewritten the Section 48 SEF.
- 6.1.8 **Subject Coordinators Reports from Teachers (Appendices):** This good practice makes teachers immediately accountable for their subject, however Subject Coordinators are aware that there is a danger of just focussing on Maths and English and that the next step is to carry out further assessments in foundation subjects. Governors were advised that provision mapping was a good opportunity to be more focussed.
- 6.1.9 *Spark Review:* It was part of the School Development Plan to increase provision to one Learnpad per child. A review had been commissioned from a computing specialist who had been impressed by the lessons they had observed. It was suggested that rather than incorporate computing in cross-curricular lessons that it is taught more discretely.
- 6.1.10 *Numeracy and Literacy reports:* The Senior Leadership Team had scrutinised the results and were deploying Teaching Assistants to classes of greatest need; next year this would be Y3 and Y6, but there was always at least one Teaching Assistant per class.
- 6.1.11 Governors were advised that since levels had been removed except in Years 2 and 6 the school had needed to find an alternative method for the other year groups. However, Target Tracker did not match the government terminology.
- 6.1.12 The meeting was also advised that PTA funds are used to help fund a variety of projects, for example Easigrass, and a new picket fence for the outside Reception space, more computing, school journeys, Fit for Sport, the school Library, and the Hardship Fund.
- 6.1.13 There had been one complaint in February but the parent had declined invitations to meet with governors, however the complaint had been thoroughly and comprehensively investigated.
- 6.1.14 Another governor's visit report was due in the autumn.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Curriculum

- 7.1.1 The draft Curriculum Committee meeting minutes of 13 June 2017 had previously been circulated.
- 7.1.2 A draft Sex and Relationship Policy had been discussed based on a diocesan model policy but as some of the wording was deemed inappropriate for a primary school this would be revisited.

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7.2 Finance

- 7.2.1 The Finance Committee meeting minutes of 2 February 2017 and 6 March 2017 had previously been circulated. The draft meeting minutes of 12 May 2017 will be circulated in due course.
- 7.2.2 Governors noted that the budget plan for 2017/18 had been prepared by Rosemary McGuire (RM), the school's Finance Officer, and HF, based on a revenue carry forward from 2016/17 of c£26,000. The estimated revenue reserves to carry forward into 2018/19 stand at £1,556. Well publicised funding cuts made setting a budget in the black with even a modest carry forward a significant challenge. The budget does not include any income which St Osmund's may pay for HF's services.
- 7.2.3 Several areas where cost savings could be made had been identified by HF and RM. The meeting noted that two Teaching Assistants who were leaving were not being replaced, and a further Teaching Assistant was reducing her days. Requests for more financial support were being made to the PTA, and further savings were being made, for example insurance. However, items such as Music and Fit for Sport would not be lost.
- 7.2.4 Governors were advised that the budget deadline was the end of June so were asked to approve the budget for 2017/18 so that RM could process it tomorrow and governors agreed.

7.3 Personnel

- 7.3.1 The Personnel Committee had met on 1 April 2017 and continue to meet only as and when needed.

7.4 Premises

- 7.4.1 The Premises Committee meeting minutes of 19 May 2017 had previously been circulated.

7.5 Admissions

- 7.5.1 The Admissions Committee meeting minutes of 22 February 2017, 28 February 2017 and 25 April 2017 had previously been circulated.
- 7.5.2 Matthew Paul (LA Head of School Place Commissioning, Achieving for Children) had attended the 25 April meeting and discussed how well the situation regarding the triumvirate of schools taking additional classes was working.
- 7.5.3 The meeting noted that many families do move in and out of the parish, yet there had been a decline in Baptism rates so governors considered ways to alert families to the fact that additional places would be available in the Reception class 2018/19. Governors noted that it had been included in the Summer Fair brochure, and a banner was due to

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be put up outside the church. It was also intended to include it on the school website, in the school and church newsletters, and those of other parishes as well.

7.6 Pay

7.6.1 The Pay Committee will be meeting on 11 July 2017 to review teachers' forthcoming pay awards.

8. TERM DATES

8.1 The LA published term dates for 2018/19 had been circulated prior to the meeting. School term dates for 2018/19 will be an agenda item for the autumn term 2017 full governing board meeting.

9. TRAINING

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

Anna Brown:

- Joint Governors' Partnership Meeting (with HF) - 16/3/17 (LA)
- Helping Governors Understand Their Role in an Ofsted Inspection - 25/3/17 (Education Commission)

9.2 Governors might be able to attend the Inset Day planned for 4 September 2017. Further details on this will follow in due course.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Governors discussed a confidential item.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The full governing board meeting dates for 2017-18 will be circulated in the next few weeks.

11.2 Governors were advised that full governing board meeting frequency will remain termly, and that committee meeting dates for 2017/18 would be agreed in advance with HF.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm with a prayer led by ABr.

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