



ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Love one another as I have loved you

MINUTES OF THE VIRUAL MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2022 at 1900 hours
[1st draft to HT 30/10/2022]

PARTICIPANTS: John McDonald, Headteacher
Kevin Doogan
Charles Donnelly
Jill Formston
Bridget Pullen

Apologies: Father Ramesh, Cath Moor.

In attendance: Eileen Coyle, [Minutes]

In opening the meeting, the Headteacher invited everyone to join in the Governors' prayer.

The agenda of meeting, with links to the agenda items attached, had been forwarded to the Committee for reading in advance.

- 1 CONFIRM GOVERNORS ASSIGNED TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE. INTRODUCE NEW MEMBERS. INVITE NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.**

The membership of the Standards Committee had been agreed at the business meeting, and comprised: The Headteacher, Kevin Doogan, Rather Ramesh, Bridget Pullen, Charles Donnelly, Jill Formston, and Cath Moore.

The Headteacher introduced and warmly welcomed the new members, Charles Donnelly and Jill Formston.

He invited nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee in 2022/23.

Bridget Pullen volunteered as Chair, and Jill Formston volunteered as Vice Chair. There were no further nominations.

BRIDGET PULLEN IN THE CHAIR

Apologies were received from Father Ramesh and Cath Moor.

2 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS. CONFIDENTIALITY

No declarations of interests were received. .

The Committee were reminded to observe confidentiality in relation to all matters discussed this evening.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 24 MAY 2022.

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee on 24 May 2022, had been sent to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

4 ADMISSIONS

A graphic displayed on the screen showed that the number of pupils in Reception at September 2022 totalled 36, with 24 boys and 12 girls.

The Headteacher advised that the planned admission number [PAN] is 56, and that 57 children had left year 6 in July 2022. He drew attention to the data in the October 2022 census [see below] showing a total number of 355 pupils on roll, advising that the current two-form entry system would not be sustainable in future years, unless the numbers increase significantly.

He added that lower pupil numbers would have an adverse impact on the school's budget allocations for future years, which in turn would affect staffing levels and the curriculum.

The Pupil Admission Number at 56 is part of the Admission Policy for 2022/23 and cannot be changed. The intention would be to reduce the PAN in the Admission Policy for 2023/24.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: How do make links with local nurseries and pre-school provision? Do you work with them?

HEADTEACHER'S RESPONSE: The school advertises its Open Days in the nurseries and a TA attends a nursery on a monthly basis and reads stories to the children. The school does its best to engage with parents and families, but this is difficult given that school does not have a nursery. The intention is to build capacity for a nursery on site, thus catering for Catholic children as well as non-Catholic children, making the transition much easier for all children, and avoid a settling-down period, whilst continuing to work alongside other nurseries and early years' providers.

The Headteacher continued that the trend towards lower pupil numbers is not unique to this school and that most primary schools in Wirral experience similar problems due to the low birth rate in recent years. He referred to a '*Gentleman's Agreement*' whereby schools agree not to try to 'poach' children from other schools.

A governor suggested the need for more presence on social media.

5 THE SCHOOL'S ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Headteacher advised the Committee that given there are only 36 children in Reception and the fact that the school cannot spend beyond its resources, there is a need to look at class sizes going forward.

The Admissions Policy for 2022/23 had been sent to the Governors. The Board needs to make a decision to reduce the PAN from 2023/24. Part of the process includes a six week consultation process, which would be between 31 January and 31 March.

The Headteacher continued that reducing staffing levels is something that is new to this school and he was anxious not to generate fear and panic amongst the staff. He described, in strict confidence, the approach he proposed to take.

Autumn Census: October 2022.

- Number on roll: 355 [189 boys: 166 girls]
- Eligible for free school meals: 22%
- English as an additional language [EAL] 3.4%
- Authorised absences: 457 sessions: 45.7%
- Unauthorised absences: 43 sessions: 3%
- SEND pupils: 76.6% Non-SEND: 2.72%
- Education Health Care Plan: 3 pupils: 0.8%
- SEN support: 80 pupils. 22.5%

6 PUPILS

LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS. SUMMER 2022. The Committed noted –

- Eleven pupils [7 boys and 4 girls] had secured places in Wirral selective grammar schools, [St Anselm's and Calday]
- Twenty-nine pupils [15 boys and 14 girls] had transitioned to St Mary's College
- Seventeen girls joined Weatherhead High School, and two boys moved to Wallasey secondary schools.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: What percentage of children was lost to non-Catholic schools?

ACTION: The Headteacher to calculate the percentage of children who were lost to Catholic education.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: How many girls went to Upton Hall?

HEADTEACHER'S RESPONSE: None this year.

7 **REPORTS/COMPLIANCE:** Links proving a substantial amount of information based on NCER statistics, had been attached to the agenda under the headings -

7.1A SCHOOL DATA CAPTURES SHEET FROM 2022. ACTIONS UP TO 2019

7.1.B GOOD LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT: For EYFS, Phonics, KS1 and KS2, with data on attainment in 2022 compared with 2018 and 2019, for school, LA and National.

As part of a comprehensive presentation, the Headteacher shared the following –

- At 72.7%, greater depth was higher, more or less, and higher than the national average last year of 65%.
- Phonics at 65% was positive on last year.
- In Reading, 84% had been maintained after introducing Little Wandle , and it could go higher. One class was almost 100% and another 70%, a drop from 2018.
- KS1, which had significant staff absences last year, is a concern.
- Last year, Reading, Writing and Maths dropped to 51%; Wirral was 64.4% and National 66.9%.
- The school compares itself to National. In greater depth, writing at 3.6% is a big drop from the national average of 5.7% and is equivalent to 20% behind.

The Headteacher continued that given the significant drops, particular cohorts need a lot of support and to address this, changes have been made to the way in which the pupils and teachers are working together, and there have been some changes in the deployment of staff. Consideration is being given to having an extra teacher with

a tutoring role to work with children who are not yet Year 3 ready, with a target for Christmas 2022.

The Chair commented: The parents have a role to play in this as well.

The Headteacher continued that the role of the Standards Committee is really important in monitoring the progress of Year 3 going forward.

As no data was coming forward pre-Year 6, all the school could do is compare itself with national averages. The school has set a target for the current year 3 to achieve national, but this raised the question, '*How do we do that between now and when they leave year 6?*' There is a feeling that the year group had been let down for one reason or another, and there is a desire to accelerate their progress as much as possible and make sure when they reach year 6 that they are ready for secondary school.

Self regulation is difficult for some children because they missed out at KS1 in terms of sharing etc. There is a desire to be clearer when looking at assessment, and to make sure that the data the school is working on is accurate and the Committee knows where these children stand. Assessment is a key priority.

ACTION: The Headteacher to share data for Reading, Writing and Maths at the next meeting.

7.1 ATTENDANCE: The Headteacher directed the Committee to the link showing attendance by whole year group, broken down for boys and girls, free school meals, pupil premium, SEN support and EHCP support.

Highlights –

- The overall absence in 2021/22 was 6.2%, based on 5,410 sessions missed from a possible total of 87,887 sessions, equating to an overall average rate of 15.9 sessions missed, per pupil.
- 18 pupils [5.3%] had no overall absence sessions.
- 146 Covid related absences equated to 2.7%.
- In total, the school lost 745 sessions due to Covid, equating to 2.2 sessions lost per enrolment.
- The school's overall absence increased by 3.3% from 3.8% in 2018/19 and to 6.2% in 2021/22.
- The National average increased by 2.2% from 3.9 in 2018/19 to 6.1% in 2021/22.
- The school's average for the last three academic years is 4.7%
- The school's overall absence of 6.2% is 0.1% higher than the National average. This is equivalent to 49 more missed sessions than the National cohort.
- Pupils missed an average of 15.9 sessions – 2.3 more than the National cohort.

- This school had been better than the National average twice in the last three academic years for Overall Absence.
- This school rose one place in the percentile rankings between 2018/19, from 48 to 49.

Data on attendance taken from the October census showed –

- Last year's attendance was 93.9% overall - 1% behind the national average.

The Headteacher commented that attendance by pupil premium and SEND children are causes for concern. He asked: *'How do we support those children to ensure that they are in school all the time?'* Attendance by children on an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] is much higher.

He continued that Attendance is a national issue and there is a need to talk about attendance in terms of priorities. He had discussed with a colleague from another school the possibility of a pilot to work alongside the other schools in the Catholic cluster. He had also spoken to a staff member at St Mary's College which is brokering support from the DfE on a culture to get as many children as possible into school, and about managing it.

7.2 CURRENT ABSENCES DUE TO SICKNESS: Several children have been absent with respiratory illnesses; it's about judging whether they are well enough to be in school, and how it is managed.

Five staff members have been absent with Covid. This week in year 3, four teachers, including supply staff, were absent due to Covid. Year 3 is being supported in terms of attendance.

The overall absence rate Autumn and Spring 2020/21 is 62%. The school was doing better than national in 2020/21, the percentage has increased and the school is now higher than national.

At 17.6% in Autumn/Spring, persistent absences were less than national, but have increased from 2020. Persistent absence had been high over the last three years, but less than national.

7.3 BEHAVIOUR: Incidents by type up to 10 October 2022.

The link displayed the data:

- **Accidents: 14**
- **Physical incidents between pupils: 45**
- **Physical incidents with staff: 8**
- **Verbal abuse incidents to staff;**
- **Friendship issues 8**
- **Safeguarding concerns reported by staff: 8**
- **Causes for concern: 119,**

- **Meetings with parents: 8**
- **Bullying incidents: 8**
- **Racial incidents: 4**
- **Referrals from Operation Encompass: 30,**
- **67 incidents were in the playground: 67**
- **Incidents in the classroom: 183**
- **Incidents at home: 22**
- **Incidents outside the school: 21**

The Headteacher explained that the school tends to over-report incidents. Some incidents classified as racist were to do with children not understanding what they are saying. Use of the word 'gay' is always reported. Most incidents were in the classroom, and some were outside school.

The school's playground is very small and TAs go outside at lunchtimes to supervise the children and to organise games. The school manages mental health and wellbeing very well as a way of regulating children's emotions.

Breaches of the Behaviour Policy resulted in two internal exclusions. Internal exclusions are used because they enable the child to continue to access education and they are not 'out unsupervised on the streets'. No child had been excluded from school.

7.4 OUTDOOR EDUCATION: The Headteacher reported that due to Covid and the lockdown, the five-day residential at Ullswater had been the first opportunity for Year 6 to take part in a residential, and had resulted in some parental anxiety and homesickness.

To reassure the parents, photographs of the children had been sent home daily and the staff had explained how the homesickness was being managed.

Very positive feedback had been received from the parents and pupils following the visit. A parent had reported that their child had become independent and self-reliant on their return home. The children had enthused to the children in other classes about their experiences.

The Committee advised that Edsential offer a range of courses, including one night residentials to gradually accustom the children to being away from home.

The Headteacher replied that the school intends to organise a couple of days/nights for years 4 and 5, with possibly one overnight for year 3, in preparation for the outward bound course in year 6.

7.5 SAFEGUARDING [PREVENT]: Highlights –

- No referrals to Children's Social Care so far in the Autumn term 2022
- Two referrals received from MARAC
- Three referrals from Operation Encompass

- One child is dual registered with parent and a relative
- Six children are Looked After

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: How many are on the Child Protection Register?

HEADTEACHER'S REPLY: One child is on the Child Protection Register. Three children are classified Child in Need.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: Are you staff clear about disclosure and do they know when?

HEADTEACHERS REPLY: Yes, we have five staff, one lead and four others, and they know when they need to refer. The school has contacted the Integrated Front Door five times when advice was given and no further action had been taken.

7.6 SCHOOL'S BANDING LETTER: The file attached to the agenda item showed the school's data which had informed the school's banding eg significantly below national averages in KS1 and KS2, and persistent absences higher than the national average.

The Headteacher commented that since 2020, the school has been in the process of change – changes of staff, and new schemes for Reading, Writing and Maths. Everything has been particularly difficult for years 3 and 4 because, due to the pandemic, they did not have the benefit of the normal entry into school.

The LA had invited the school to a meeting where it will be asked, '*What is the school is doing about it? What is included in the School Development Plan?*' '*Do your Governors know where the school is, and can they talk about it?*'

As a Band 3 school, the school is entitled to support from the LA's School Improvement Team.

7.7 SENCO'S REPORT: The SENCO's report was available via the link. The Headteacher highlighted the following:

- The names of 83 children, 26 in KS1 and 57 in KS2, equivalent to 23% of the school roll, are on the SEN register.
- 39 children on the SEN register are also classified as Pupil Premium children.
- A large number of children with SEN are in year 3. This year group will continue to be the priority for support and resources.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: How quickly were children in F2 identified?

HEADTEACHER'S REPLY: Some children in F2 have significant needs. They come to this school from early years' provision with letters saying how they can cope in school, but without a plan in place for them. The school has to pick it up. For example, one child in early years had no language.

The Headteacher referred to the significant changes in the LA's SEND team.

7.8 DSL' S ANNUAL REPORT: The report had been published on the school's website.

7.9 COMMITTEE'S PRIORITIES: The Headteacher asked the Committee, '*What are the priorities?*' '*What do we need to focus on?*'

The Committee responded -

- **Attainment for all groups, especially year 3 [in 2022]**
- **Establish the Link Governor role to ensure that the governors have strategic oversight to support and challenge school leaders, and that they submit link governor reports**
- **Assessment and Foundation subjects [the end points].**

GOVERNOR QUESTION: Who has had Safeguarding Training?

HEADTEACHER'S RESPONSE: The school business manager emailed the Governors to make sure that they all had access to training, and to advise the school if anyone had any problems, when they would be fixed. The SBM had subsequently sent out the correct link for the training.

The Headteacher gave an undertaking to ensure that the children are kept safe in education. He advised that the KCSIE guidance had been republished and urged the Governors to let him know if they experienced any difficulties in accessing the guidance.

The Chair of Governors emphasised that the guidance on FCSIE was very important and must be followed at all times.

7.10 STAFF CPD: The Headteacher reported: The staff have received training on EVOLVE and they are working on the curriculum in terms of the chronology. The subject leaders have received training, they are writing action plans and monitoring themselves. The plan for the second term in the Autumn is more or less around the curriculum. The Deputy Headteacher is working with subject leaders, in particular.

7.11 LINK GOVERNORS: Two reports have been received from Father Ramesh on visits to support RE. Learning walks, accompanied by the Headteacher, had taken place.

Charles Donnelly had visited the school.

8 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION

The CES had advised Diocese nationally that inspections would be delayed until queries relating to changes to the document used by the Catholic Schools' Inspectorate had been ironed out.

This school's inspection, initially scheduled for the first half term in Autumn 2022, is now expected to take place in the second half term.

8.1 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: SELF EVALUATION DOCUMENT [CSED]: St Alban's 42-page Self-Evaluation Document was available to the Committee via a link on the agenda.

The school had provisionally graded itself -

Catholic Life and Mission	1
Religious Education	2
Collective Worship	1

The Headteacher advised that the CSED would be updated each term.

9 POLICIES FOR REVIEW

The School Business Manager had forwarded the policies to all the Governors, and invited questions and feedback.

9.1 ATTENDANCE POLICY: PUPILS: The Attendance policy is being updated. The intention is for the five Wallasey Catholic schools to trial working together on Attendance with the Holy Family MAT.

NEW POST: ATTENDANCE/PASTORAL LEAD: The LA had completed the job evaluation and a draft job description had been issued. The postholder would work with parents to ensure that children attend school regularly, and alongside the senior leadership team and other professionals to identify and support those children who have poor attendance and are on a child protection or are children in need.

The LA has issued advice that Governing Bodies should identify a governor for attendance. Jill Formston had volunteered to undertake the role at the business meeting. Jill had met with the Headteacher and asked a number of questions. Regular progress reports would be submitted to the Board with information on what is outstanding.

9.2 ATTENDANCE: STAFF: The CES policy on staff attendance was available on the link.

The Headteacher explained that some staff are finding children's behaviour difficult to manage. It's about understanding the changes in children's behaviour, which is a different model for some staff.

9.3 SEND POLICY: The Headteacher explained that the SEND policy, which is self-explanatory, is on the link.

The only comment was question was whether the number of SEND children in this school is slightly high.

9.4 REST EASY POLICY AND PROCEDURE: The Headteacher confirmed that the staff had completed training on the Policy. The link detailed the timeline and procedures to roll out the policy with minimum disruption and maximum benefit for the school.

The initiative which started on 10 October 2022 would last for a minimum of two years, and be reviewed on 11 November 2022, followed by three further reviews in the two-year period.

Rest Easy had been delivered to pupils in PSHE/RSE lessons during week beginning 10 October 2022.

10 GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS RAISED IN ADVANCE

No questions had been raised in advance.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION AT MEETING: Who fills in the link report, the Governor or the subject lead?

HEADTEACHER'S RESPONSE: The link governor's report is very simple and straight forward.

ACTION: The Headteacher to re-issue the Link Governor report proforma and guidance to all the Governors.

The Chair of Governors stated that the Governors had no wish whatsoever to place extra work on the teaching staff, adding that he felt uneasy about just turning up for a link visit.

ACTION: The Headteacher to discuss drawing up and publishing a schedule of link visits with the Deputy Headteacher.

On behalf of the Standards Committee, the Chair of Governors commented that a huge amount of very useful information [and more] had been covered at the meeting.

The Headteacher invited the Governors to visit the school, when he would be more than willing to introduce them informally to the staff.

GOVERNOR'S QUESTION: The Committee Chair asked the question –

How many Year3 children are progressing with the Sacraments?

ACTION: The Headteacher to discuss with Father Ramesh and to look at the dates.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 23 JANUARY 2023 AT 1900 HOURS.

The Headteacher enquired if the Standards Committee was happy to continue to have meetings by Zoom; one advantage being the substantial saving in energy costs during winter evenings.

The Committee raised no objections to having virtual meetings.

12 OTHER BUSINESS

At the beginning of the meeting, whilst emphasising the importance of all the Governors having easy access to documents, the Chair of Governors had suggested that some Governors may have had difficulty in navigating the links sent out with the agenda.

The Headteacher gave an undertaking to assist and support the Governors in every way possible. He invited any Governor having difficulty to let him know in advance when he would invite the Governor to the school where they would receive all the help and support they needed to enable them to access the links on their devices.

He took the opportunity to thank the Governors for all they do on behalf of the school, which he described as 'amazing' in terms of time spent on the school.

He continued that he and the school staff are totally committed to making sure that the best outcomes are achieved for all the children.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.38 hours.

**SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE ON 17 OCTOBER 2022**

_____ CHAIR

_____ DATE