



## ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

*Love one another as I have loved you*

### MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

TUESDAY, 2 MARCH 2021 at 1800 hours

<b><u>PARTICIPANTS:</u></b>	Kevin Doogan [Chair] John McDonald [Headteacher and host of meeting] Nicola Boyd Pat Duprey Colette Haig Pat Higgins Lucy Lowe Teresa Marnell Peter Matthews Bridget Pullen Bernie Mooney Clare Suffield Marie Wolfe
<b><u>Non-participants:</u></b>	Claire Connor.
<b><u>In attendance:</u></b>	Ann Evans, Deputy Headteacher Fleur McAlavey, Assistant Headteacher Eileen Coyle, Clerk to Governors

**KEVIN DOOGAN IN THE CHAIR**

#### **1 WELCOME**

The Chair opened the meeting with a special prayer, followed by the prayer, Our Father.

He welcomed and thanked everyone for the excellent participation in the virtual meeting of the Governing Board.

He gave a commitment to ensure that the meeting would not be as lengthy as the last meeting which lasted for almost three hours.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION**

Clair Connor had been unable to participate in the remote meeting due to technical problems.

**RESOLVED: To consent to the unavoidable absence of Clare Connor for the valid reason given.**

## **3 THE AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION**

The Headteacher had posted the documents relating to the meeting on the Google drive for reading in advance.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Governors confirmed that there were no changes to the declarations of interests signed at the Governors' meeting on 30 September 2020.

Having reviewed the agenda, the Governors confirmed that they had no personal, pecuniary, contractual or prejudicial interest in any item on the agenda for this evening's meeting.

## **5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Governors agreed to maintain confidentiality in relation to all matters discussed at the meeting.

## **6 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 24 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Governors confirmed that they had read the minutes in advance and

**RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board on 24 November 2020 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.**

## 7 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the meeting of the Governing Board on 24 November 2020.

## 8 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF GOVERNORS' COMMITTEES

**8.1 STANDARDS COMMITTEE:** The Governors had received in advance the minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee on 2 February 2021, and the Assets Committee on 23 February 2021.

At the invitation of the Chair, Lucy Lowe summarised the key points discussed at the meeting of the Standards Committee. The Committee had expressed their appreciation to the whole school staff for their efforts in ensuring that the school is kept Covid-safe at all times.

The Headteacher added that the Admissions Policy 2022/23 had been submitted to and accepted by the Diocese and the Local Authority.

**8.2 ASSETS COMMITTEE:** The Chair thanked the Governors' Clerk for the rapid turnaround of the draft minutes.

The Committee had received the bursar's period 9 budget report.

The Chair emphasised that it was crucial for the Board to be aware that, although a credit of £37,810 had been predicted at the end of the current financial year on 31 March 2021, the three-year projections predicted a deficit of £35,637 in 2021/22, a deficit of £129,396 in 2022/23, and a deficit of £146,582 in 2023/24.

The projected deficits were due to the large number of pupils leaving in July, and an expected lower number of children joining the school in September.

**The Chair emphasised that, clearly, the deficits are very substantial amounts which the Governors need to bear in mind when making decisions, particularly on staffing matters.**

The Chair continued that the Committee had approved the quotation to replace the existing lighting system with LED lights, the installation of a CCTV system following incidents of anti-social behaviour, and to renew the Service Level Agreements [SLAs,] with the current providers.

The bursar had given a detailed presentation on her budget report. Preliminary discussion had taken place on the arrangements for the questionnaire on Schools Financial Values Statement to be completed and on benchmarking. The Committee had discussed the impact of falling rolls on the school's budget allocation, plans to extend the opening and closing hours of the school's after school clubs, and the

staffing arrangements, and on Catch-up funding. The Headteacher had reported on the Pupil Premium spend in 2019/20, and the Pupil Premium Strategy 2020/21.

**RESOLVED:**       **To note the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee on 2 February 2021 and the minutes of the meeting of the Assets Committee on 18 February 2021.**

## **9 HEADTEACHER'S TERMLY REPORT**

The Chair stated that he had discussed item 6.3, the Pupil Premium report, with the Headteacher. In the past, the report had followed the same format, just updated from year to year. This year, the Headteacher intends to provide more information to inform the Governors precisely where the money has been spent. Meanwhile, given the current situation, the Headteacher had focussed attention on the catch-up funding.

The Chair invited the Headteacher to highlight the key points in his report, and to respond to questions from the Governors.

The Headteacher reported on the feedback received following the Parents' survey. The parents had commented that there had not been a pupil survey this year. The intention is to carry out a pupil survey after the children return to school on 8 March and have had time to settle. The outcome would be reported to the Governors.

A Governor enquired if any thought had been given to sending out a questionnaire about the teacher's wellbeing, before the children return.

The Headteacher replied that he was considering the fairness to the staff of expecting them to triage the children on the way in to school. A staff meeting has been arranged tomorrow to look at staff wellbeing, before the focus changes to the learning. The children will be excited about returning, whilst some will be anxious.

Research by the National Foundation for Education shows that children are about three months' behind in their learning; the same amount of time they have been out of school. Nuffield Literacy Intervention is a proven intervention for early years on which the staff in reception and year 1 have been trained. The training is recognised by the covid-19 catch up programme as being best practice. The difficulty is that intervention cannot take place if children are not in school.

The staff are on a 20-week programme and one of the things it says is to be ambitious in working out how to bring, and keep, the children up to expectation. Next week will see the start of the intervention programme, which was due to start in January, but a decision had been made to defer it. 45/46 children have been identified for intervention and part of the catch-up premium is spent on these children. Trying to catch-up on a year's missed work is a global issue.

Lucy Lowe asked the Headteacher if catch-up and identifying gaps had been discussed at the staff level for when the children come back in.

The Headteacher replied that the staff have agreed that it is for the teachers to understand the kind of language from the children's perspective; it's about them reaching that at the end. It will remain in everyone's mind. It's a good point.

The Chair invited the Headteacher to talk about class allocation.

The Headteacher replied that although it is common information around the school, it is confidential within this meeting for the time being.

Staffing models, in terms of trying to support children with high levels of anxiety, and children who have missed out on early education, have been looked at for next year. Two core subject leaders in key stage 1 have asked to move to year 3. The school is looking to developing Maths with the Maths Hub. It is a mastery approach using the skilled staff the school already has; it's about minimising the anxiety of the children have over learning, and will start in September.

When a year 6 teacher retires next year rather than recruit a straight replacement for year 6, each teacher will move up a year with the children in their class. Having a teacher they know already will reduce the children's anxiety. It takes the new class teacher about half a term to find out the children's strengths and weaknesses, but that process will be unnecessary in the next academic year.

The staff had been spoken to earlier in the day, everyone is on board, and are keen for the children to return and to support them in receiving the help they need to catch up.

Pat Duprey commented that it is a very sound approach in the circumstances and it makes sense.

Bernie Mooney said that it gives consistency for the children and will build their confidence; it's a great idea.

The Headteacher stated that he would be interested in the parent governors' perspective.

Nicola Boyd stated that it is not so much the impact on the younger children, because there is not so much pressure on the younger ones to get their work in, for example. It will be possible to get a good assessment of how they are when they come back in September.

Bridget Pullen stated that she agreed with the approach; the current teachers know the children already.

The Headteacher added that it lessens the children's anxiety and any problems can be ironed out.

**The Chair thanked the Governors for the feedback and the Headteacher for a first class report.**

**SAFEGUARDING AUDIT:** The Headteacher reported on actions that need to be taken following the Safeguarding Audit, for example, some policies, such as Prevent need

to be updated, areas around 'language' and some titles had changed, for example Designated Lead etc.

**10 GOVERNOR TRAINING:** Governors, including the Headteacher, had accessed on-line training this morning on Safer Recruitment and Managing Allegations.

The Chair enquired if the training had been useful.

The Headteacher replied that the session was bespoke to and provided an opportunity to talk about situations that apply to this school.

He continued that he had attended training Curriculum Design, Implementation and Design in December, facilitated by Chris Quigley. The morning had been spent on the theory and how children learn, and the national curriculum. It was very useful – Chris Quigley makes it very clear what he is talking about.

Bridget Pullen reported on attendance at training on School Finances, which she found very helpful. It talked about the National Funding Formula, the covid-19 catch up grant, and Governors' involvement in responding to the SFVS questionnaire. She had learned a lot about the acronyms used in the budget, how the pupil premium is worked out, and the questions that governors could ask. The training was really good and looked in greater depth at many areas of interest.

Pat Duprey stated that she had attended finance training and thought it would be useful to go through benchmarking. She also attended the Diocese's Morning of Reflection, which she found very interesting. When Governors can come back into the school, there is an urgency about reflecting on what has happened and moving on slowly to make sure the children are on board and that the teachers get together and re-form bonds with the children.

**PUPIL PREMIUM REPORT:** The Chair stated that as mentioned above, the discussion would be deferred until the summer term when the Headteacher would provide the Governors with detailed breakdown of spend.

The Headteacher advised that the previous pupil premium report identified strategies, but there had been no clear audit trail on where the funding had been spent. This year, a substantial amount of the grant has been spent on extra staffing, including TA support. Whilst he had made progress, he had run out of time preparing for this meeting. The report would be ready for the next meeting.

**In thanking the Headteacher, the Chair stated that approved the arrangement for detailed information to be provided on spending of the Pupil Premium; and looked forward to receiving the report.**

**11 NOMINATED GOVERNORS' REPORTS.** Governor visits to school had not been possible in the current circumstances, but conversations had taken place.

Bernie Mooney stated that the enormity of what has happened will hit hardest in June and July. It's about the little things that help people bond, bringing in cakes for example. Perhaps every child in the school could be given an Easter egg.

Colette Haig added that the staff have been talking about it in school this week and ideas will be taken to the Headteacher on what can go ahead to bring everyone together. That will be the emphasis, when everyone is back and part of one big happy family.

The Chair agreed that it is important that the staff don't get left behind when everyone is thinking about the children; making everyone feel good would be a great benefit.

The Headteacher added that the staff have collective worship each morning at 8.30 am.

The Deputy Head added that everyone gets together with the staff prayer in the hall.

The Chair thanked everyone for their reports and feedback.

## 12 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS: SUMMER TERM 2021

MEETING	DATE	TIME
PARISH/SCHOOL/COMMUNITY	TUESDAY, 16 MARCH	1830
SPECIAL MEETING TO SIGN OFF SFVS	TBA before 28 MAY	1830
STANDARDS COMMITTEE	TUESDAY, 8 JUNE	1830
ASSETS COMMITTEE	TUESDAY, 15 JUNE	1830
<b>FULL GOVERNING BODY</b>	<b>TUESDAY, 22 JUNE</b>	<b>1800</b>

## 13 OTHER BUSINESS

**13.1 WRAPAROUND CARE:** The Headteacher reported that very positive responses had been received to the parents' survey on wraparound care, with the vast majority being favour of extending the opening hours of the before and after school clubs.

Apart from enhancing the out of school hours service provided for the parents, it would be a positive development for the school. HR's response had been that it would be a 'win-win' situation for the staff and for the school.

The next step would be to consult the staff affected about working hours. Discussions are ongoing on how to manage the payroll.

**13.2 DOMINIC HOUSE:** Bernie Mooney stated as far as she was aware any plans for the future use of the building had '*fallen off the radar*' as far as the LA is concerned. All that is happening is that the building is being cleared out. Some people want it as a community centre, others want housing. The Council are saying any housing has to be high quality. She stated that she would let the Governors know as soon as she hears something.

*The Deputy Headteacher withdrew from the virtual meeting.*

The Assistant Headteacher stated that most governors were aware that the school has many plans and ideas in the pipeline to mark Annie's retirement.

An event would take place on a Saturday when the theme would be Dance, involving all the children and staff, and Governors who wish to participate. She invited the Governors who could not take part physically, to send a clip to add to the school's video of the event; a small wave goodbye, for example, would be lovely.

Pat Duprey proposed that each Governor makes an annual contribution of, say £20, so that money is readily available for gifts and cards to mark retirements and special occasions. Payment could be made by bank transfer into the school office,

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the discussions.

In particular, he thanked the Headteacher for forwarding key documents to the Governors for reading in advance, and for the preparation and pre-planning which enabled the full agenda to be addressed in 63 minutes. He declared the meeting closed at 1903 hours.