

ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love one another as I have loved you

The meeting opened with the Governors' Prayer led by the Chair.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD **TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020**

PRESENT: Pat Duprey [Chair]
Nicola Boyd
Claire Connor
Kevin Doogan
Ann Evans [A/Headteacher]
Colette Haig
Pat Higgins
Lucy Lowe
Teresa Marnell
Peter Matthews
Bernadette Mooney
Bridget Pullen
Marie Wolfe

In attendance: Fleur McAlavey [Assistant Headteacher]
Eileen Coyle, [Clerk to Governors]

PAT DUPREY in the CHAIR

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new Clerk to Governors, Eileen Coyle.

Apologies for absence were received from Louise Mulhern and consented to for the valid reason given.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Governors confirmed that there were no changes to their Declarations of Interest completed and signed in the Autumn Term 2019.

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

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD ON 15 OCTOBER 2019

Copies of the minutes had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was pointed out that Claire Connor had been omitted from the membership of the Curriculum Committee.

RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board on 15 October 2019 are a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the inclusion of Claire Connor in the membership of the Curriculum Committee.

The Chair signed the minutes.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5 MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD ON 24 OCTOBER 2019.

The minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Governing Board on 24 October 2019 to ratify the appointment of the new Headteacher, had been sent to the Governors in advance of this meeting.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Governing Board on 24 October 2019.

6 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair reported receipt of the following correspondence.

6.1 A letter from Kate Frost expressing a huge 'thank you' for the wonderful words and generous gifts she received when she left the school at Christmas. Her time at St Alban's with the staff and children would always be in her heart.

6.2 A letter from Ann Evans in which she resigned from her post as Deputy Head from 31 August 2020.

She said that her last day of attendance would be 16 July 2020, at which point she would have spent 33 years in this wonderful school; it had been a privilege and she had loved every minute of it. She thanked all the Governors and her colleagues for their friendship, help and support they had given her throughout her time at the school. .

On behalf of all the staff, Colette Haig expressed a huge thank you to Ann for everything she has done for the school. The enormous difference in work/life balance this term is down to Ann.

- 6.3 Ro Thornton, the School Improvement Partner [SIP], had written that she had given considerable thought to continuing her support at the school, and although she had been very pleased to be asked to continue to work with the incoming Headteacher, she felt that there were a number of good reasons to stand down. She stated that she had enjoyed working with the school and wished everyone all the best for the future.

The Chair made all the correspondence received and the replies sent available to anyone who wished to read it.

7 REPORTS OF MEETINGS OF GOVERNORS' COMMITTEES.

7.1 FINANCE COMMITTEE: 25 FEBRUARY 2020. The Chair, Colette Haig, reported – The Schools Financial Value Statement [SFVS] is intended to give Governors reassurance that the school is achieving a good level of financial management. The Committee had noted that the answer 'Yes' had been given to 27 of the 28 questions in the SFVS questionnaire; the answer '*In Part*' had been given to the remaining question. The completed questionnaire was available in the school office should governors wish to see it.

Teacher Absence Insurance would normally be dealt with at the Finance Committee meeting, but quotations were not available at that time. The school has been with the same company for a couple of years and a decision had been made to change to Aviva, which was £70 cheaper.

The budget is looking healthy at present due to savings on the former Headteacher's salary from January 2020. The budget may not be as healthy going forward, due to lower pupil numbers, but this may be offset by the slight increase in the minimum funding per child.

The Schools' Financial Benchmarking [CFR] shows that this school is in the middle when compared with similar schools and that the office and support staff have the least spent on them.

The office staff are struggling – they deal with attendance, parents' queries, visitors, answering the phones etc – and there is a clear need to increase staffing in the office, either by existing staff working more hours or bringing in another person.

Bernie Mooney commented that the LA is supporting a scheme to offer apprenticeships to Children Looked After when they leave school. This would be a very cost-effective way of gaining extra support in the school office, it would improve the young person's employment opportunities, and give a good message to other schools.

The Finance Chair commented that all the TAs in this school are paid as TA2's, although some are qualified above TA2 level.

7.2 PAY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: The Chair reported that five Governors, Julie Johnson from the Diocese and the new Headteacher, had discussed the

advertisement, and looked at the essential and preferred criteria for Deputy headship. The vacancy had been advertised in the Diocese's magazine and on Wirral's website. The Committee had devised a schedule of dates for shortlisting, visits to school and for interviewing, which would take place in the Presbytery.

7.3 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE: The A/Headteacher reported that at the meeting on 6 March, the Curriculum Committee went through the new Ofsted framework, looking at the impact on the curriculum and subject leaders, and what deep dives look like. During inspection, there would be a deep dive on Reading and Maths and a foundation subject.

There had been a discussion on what the school is doing to promote reading in schools when the Committee talked about the children and what is their favourite book. The Governors would be asked if they still have their favourite book as a child and why it was their favourite. Pictures of the books would be taken to display around the school. The aim is to involve all aspects of the whole community, not just the teachers.

RESOLVED: To note the reports on Governors' Committees.

8 A/HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SPRING TERM 2020

The Governors received copies of the Acting Headteacher's Report, Spring term 2020.

The Acting Headteacher expanded under the headings:

PUPIL NUMBERS: There were 394 pupils on roll on census day 16 January.

STAFFING: The Acting Headteacher had been carrying out a dual role, as Acting Headteacher, and Year 6 teacher, throughout the Spring term.

In-service training: The report included an extensive list of in-service training undertaken by the staff. A member of staff had completed the Catholic Aspiring Deputy and Assistant Head course with the Diocese, and two members of staff had completed the middle leaders' course with Edsential consultants.

Ofsted up-date: Information on points of action following the Ofsted inspection, progress on Reading Books and Phonics, and Attendance.

There is a huge focus on Attendance across Wirral. Seven children [which is not a large number for a school of this size] whose attendance is below 90% had been discussed at a meeting with the locality attendance officer.

The parents of the seven children had been invited to a meeting to formulate an action plan to improve their child's attendance. They had been advised that failure to attend the meeting would result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

The children whose attendance would fall below 90% if they continued to take odd days off were discussed.

School Development Plan update: The report focused on progress made in raising attainment in Reading, for all more able pupils, and developing the curriculum.

Religious Education described, with photographs, how children in Reception, Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 to 6 had celebrated Christmas, referred to Sacramental Preparation, and included the calendar of events for Holy Week and Easter. Governors would be welcome to join parents for the Easter Story at 2 pm, on Thursday, 2 April.

F2 Parent Workshops were well attended. Each child received a book called 'The Cave' and suggestions were given to parents on how they could use the book with their child at home.

Other Curriculum Developments included the partnership programme with St Mary's for years 4/5 children when they will participate in a wide range of activities, from Maths and Languages, to Design Technology, Art and design, and Faith in Action.

Mental Health and Pupil Wellbeing has a huge focus across Wirral. Wallasey Deputy/Assistant Heads group are working on a project called Wellbeing4Wallasey. The group ran a competition to design a logo for the project and this school was very proud that the winning design was created by a pupil from this school, Lexie Ellis. The logo will appear on posters and literature to publicize the project across Wirral. The school donated £340 raised at a Wellbeing4Wallasey day on 7 February towards funding a large event in the Summer term to celebrate ways in which Wallasey schools promote wellbeing and positive mental health.

Premises and Health & Safety: The windows in the stairwell are to be replaced. The damp on the top corridor appears to relate to the outer wall. A report is awaited from a contractor who came in to look at the problem.

The report concluded with a list of events and activities in school, trips that have taken place this term, and photographs of the Chinese New Year Workshops, Year 2 at the library, and Fairtrade birthday buddies, and Home School Association events for the rest of the year. It was noted that the date of the summer fair is now 27 June.

RESOLVED: To –

- i. thank the A/Headteacher for her comprehensive report, and
- ii. request that the thanks and appreciation of the Governors are passed to all the staff for their devotion and hard work.

9 ADMISSION POLICY 2021/22

Copies of the Admission Policy were tabled.

The A/Headteacher advised that policy is based on the model policy suggested by the Diocese and the Local Authority. No changes were proposed. The policy has been posted on the school's website.

She continued that 70 applications had been received for entry into F2, 39 of which are first choices, which means second and third choices are likely to be allocated places. Each application received has been ranked and forwarded to the Local Authority. Information on the outcome is awaited.

Pupil numbers are low this year in schools across Wirral and this could have budgetary implications for this school. She recalled discussions in the past about increasing the admission number to 60, but suggested that this was something that the new Headteacher may wish to look at.

PROPOSED by Bernie Mooney, **SECONDED** by the Chair, and unanimously –

RESOLVED: To approve the Admission Policy 2020/21.

10 HOLIDAY DATES 2020/21

The Governors received the school holiday list for the academic year 2020/21, which included the dates of five staff development days. It was pointed out that Tuesday, 20 July should read, Tuesday, 1 September 2021.

The dates are in line with School Term Dates published by the local authority and had been agreed by the incoming Headteacher.

RESOLVED: To receive the School Holiday List 2020/21.

11 ATTENDANCE

The Local Authority is proposing to amend the Attendance Policy from September to read that anyone who takes a child on holiday or five days or more in term time, irrespective of the child's current or past attendance, will be issued with a fixed penalty notice. The A/Headteacher would give the parents adequate advance notice of the change.

The school had a Fun event to promote good attendance. Eight children, one from each class, with 100% attendance, were selected and taken to Park Primary School, where they talked about attendance. Children with 100% attendance are normally taken for granted and they do not get any recognition. The names of children with 100% attendance would be posted on the school's website.

Bernie Mooney suggested that thought needs to be given to children with mental health or physical issues, which means they will never achieve 100% attendance.

12 HEALTH & SAFETY INSPECTION

At the inspection on 7 February, the LA Health and Safety officer had a very thorough walk round with the A/Headteacher and the caretaker. She had looked in every stock cupboard in the school, noticed three dislodged ceiling tiles, and recommended the use of fire retardant paint where the displays on a notice board in a classroom are more than a metre apart. One of the stock cupboards is particularly narrow, a ladder is needed to reach the top shelves, and items had been left on the floor.

The inspector had offered advice on the day, and followed up with an email.

The caretaker has replaced the ceiling tiles, and the issue of items left on the floor in the narrow stock room is being addressed.

An item which could not be found on the inventory on the day had been found soon after the inspector left. A decision had been made to have two files, one for items that are no longer in use, and one for items that are in daily or regular use.

The three conifers at the far end of the playground are to be removed to avoid the ongoing expense of cutting them back, and replaced with bushes that do not grow as high or as quickly.

The objective to complete a lone worker risk assessment has been met. Work on completing a matrix that identifies staff training has and will be completed by the end of the Spring term.

The inspector had acknowledged the difficulties in working out the capacity of the hall and the number of people who use it. She agreed that the area at the back

could be included because it is used by staff during assemblies. She said, based on the number of fire exits, the school is compliant.

The outdoor play equipment will be inspected in April.

RESOLVED: **To note the recommendations and progress made following the Health & Safety Inspection.**

13 DIOCESAN BRIEFING

There was no attendance by Governors at the Diocesan briefing on 6 February 2020.

14 DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING FOR CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS

The Chair reported that she had attended the Director's briefing, when benchmarking and careers advice and guidance had been discussed. The speaker said careers advice should be given to year 6 children to encourage them to start thinking about employment possibilities. She said that many jobs for will not exist in the future and there is a need to provide guidance as soon as possible.

The Chair suggested that Governors should be thinking about what the school should be doing in year 6.

Bernie Mooney stated that the Artificial Intelligence section of society will be where the jobs are in the future, and jobs are changing all the time, even those in the NHS. It's about opening up opportunities, including for those with disabilities.

The A/Headteacher advised that people who work in different careers [eg, in a Nursery] would be invited to talk to the children about career opportunities at the Summer Fair.

The Chair suggested that this is something that Governors can really help with, because they have careers they can talk to the children about.

The A/Headteacher stated that the event would have small stands that would open up that opportunity.

The Chair continued that there had been talk at the briefing about CAHMS wanting to be involved in training for staff and governors, and a questionnaire was given out asking - What training do you want, where, and for how long? The training can be brief and lecture-style [quicker] or activity-based [longer but more effective]. What will actually work? A one-hour brief introduction with possible follow-up sessions for the SLT? Half-day? Full day? Should the training be for the Chair of Governors, the Mental Health Link Governor, the whole governing body, or a Governor and the Headteacher? Should the training be at a central location with repeated sessions, or delivered to clusters of schools?

A Governor suggested that the first session should be an introductory session, an awareness-raising session, on what their expectations of Governors are.

The Chair thanked the Governor for the suggestion, which she would feed back.

The Chair continued that there had been talk about data, and Ofsted saying that Wirral is considered to be a mediocre authority with 55 schools below average at key stage 2; about deep dives in Reading because the results are inconsistent, that

similar authorities have a steady record of maintaining and raising standards in Reading, but they are *'up and down'* in Wirral.

Alison Simpson said that Headteachers should be looking at schools outside Wirral that are inspirational and are able to maintain the progress they are making.

The Pupil Premium and different ways of using the money to raise the achievement of all the children in the school had been talked about.

The Chair reported that Bishop Mark had visited the school on 11 November, and it was a very nice experience. He had spoken to the Chair and said he was very appreciative of all the work the Governors do, that in reality the Governors are the face of the Church for many children and families and it is the governors and the school who pass on the ethos and teaching of Jesus. He said the Governors are important in promoting the vision of the Catholic Church and the way they express their opinions in person through social media must be at the highest level. The Governors' integrity must be beyond reproach because they are the face of the church to-day.

15 GOVERNORS' REPORTS ON TRAINING

There were no reports on Governor training attended.

16 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – SUMMER TERM 2020.

The A/Headteacher indicated that it might be necessary to change the date of the next meeting of the Governing Body scheduled for 23 June because of a clash with another event.

The Finance Committee had been scheduled to meet on 16 June at 5 pm; the new Headteacher would determine the dates of the Curriculum and the Pay & Personnel Committees.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting with a prayer.

SIGNED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD ON 10 MARCH 2020.

CHAIR **DATE: 23 JUNE 2020**