

ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love one another as I have loved you

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2021 at 1830 hours [1st draft: 28 October 2021].

PARTICIPANTS: John McDonald, Headteacher and meeting host
Lucy Lowe [Chair]
Claire Connor
Colette Haig
Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett
Teresa Marnell

Non-participants: Claire Suffield

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

The Headteacher and host opened the meeting and invited everyone to join him in a prayer.

1 PRELIMINARIES

WELCOME. The Headteacher welcomed and thanked the Governors, especially those who were recovering from covid-19, for joining the virtual meeting of the Standards Committee.

CONFIRMATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP. The membership of the Standards Committee in 2021/22 comprises: The Headteacher, Claire Connor, Lucy Lowe, Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett, Colette Haig and Clare Suffield.

Teresa Marnell had responded to the general invitation extended to all the Governors to join the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION: No apologies for absence had been received.

The quorum requirement of three Governors had been met. .

RESOLVED: To note the absence of Clare Suffield.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2021/22: Lucy Lowe self-nominated as Chair. Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett seconded the nomination.

Claire Connor self-nominated as Vice Chair. Colette Haig seconded the nomination.

RESOLVED: To elect Lucy Lowe, Chair and Claire Connor, Vice Chair of the Standards Committee in 2021/22.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

RESOLVED: To confirm, without amendment, the terms of reference for the Standards Committee for 2021/22.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS: The Governors confirmed that there were no changes to their Declarations of Interest completed in Autumn 2021.

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.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The Committee agreed to adhere to the protocol and observe confidentiality in relation to all business discussed this evening.

PROTOCOL FOR LINK GOVERNORS' VISITS:

RESOLVED: To note the Headteacher's intention to send the draft protocol for Link Governors' Visits to all the nominated Governors for their information.

2 MINUTES OF MEETING ON 8 JUNE 2021/MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee on 8 June 2021, are a true account of the meeting, subject to the amendment of the name Teresa Philpott to read Teresa Marnell in the list of those present.

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - THREE PRIORITIES

UPDATE ON PRIORITIES FOR 2020/21: The three priorities for 2020/21 were: Children's wellbeing: The impact of Covid-19, ie catch-up and remote learning: Curriculum Leadership and Staff Development in their particular area of responsibility.

The Headteacher reminded the Committee that under the new Ofsted Inspection Framework the curriculum is in three stages, namely Intent, Implementation and Impact. He was satisfied that Intent had been achieved and the school is now working on Implementation.

He showed a screen shot to illustrate what the subject leaders are working on in each subject. The intention was to streamline further by having information on each curriculum area. Some areas of the curriculum are already broken down, eg English and Maths. Maths is broken down to show the scheme of work for each year group, and the intention is to take a similar approach for every subject. Geography showed the long term overview for the subject, with three milestones for each half term over the academic year.

An external consultant has been brought in to work with the teachers on the Methodology.

The staff are reporting back that the amount of knowledge the children have is more than it used to be, and the intention is to do more work to simplify it. The long term plan is to have curriculum maps, ie the whole curriculum broken down to different parts.

The subject leaders have to monitor to ensure that what is supposed to be happening is actually happening. It is important that the Committee is satisfied that the staff are competent in what they have set.

The Headteacher suggested that one of the Committee's priorities for this academic year is to ensure that the intended curriculum is actually happening.

To assess this, the Committee could invite subject leaders to its meetings to give a time-limited presentation describing what the curriculum is like for their particular area, and how it is being implemented. It sounds operational, but Ofsted inspectors expect the Governors to have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and to be able to challenge the staff.

A governor asked: 'Are the children accessing the curriculum as intended?' adding to illustrate the point, that the staff could bring to the Committee examples of children's work across the peer group at different levels.

The Headteacher continued that he would like to see each subject leader giving all the Governors a one-page overview of their subject area, and for the Governors to question the subject leader as part of their critical friend role.

The Headteacher continued that to achieve good outcomes there needs to be a broad and balanced curriculum that the pupils can access and understand. Ofsted have moved away from focussing on data, which in the past had skewed the curriculum; now they want the teachers to be in the classroom with the pupils. It is crucial that Governors monitor the data and in future the Governors will be given data three times a year that is more focussed on what is going on in the classroom.

The second priority could be around the middle leadership, focussing on those middle leaders who are new to monitoring, and making sure they know who need monitoring.

It has been noted that children in Reception and Years 1 and 2, are not socialising as much as they should be.

The third priority could be the continuation of the wellbeing of pupils.

RESOLVED: To agree the three priorities for 2021/22, viz –

- 1. Children's Wellbeing**
- 2. Curriculum and Leadership**
- 3. The Implementation of the Curriculum.**

4 ADMISSIONS

APPLICATIONS FOR PLACES IN RECEPTION, SEPTEMBER 2022: This year's admissions were very similar to last year's, with 73 applications for places being received, 40 of which were first choices, 17 second choices and 16 third choices.

45 children were admitted in September, with an expectation that more children will join the school as the year progresses.

5 REPORTS

The Headteacher reported verbally on -

LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS. SUMMER 2021. Twenty-three pupils transitioned to St Mary's College; two to Wirral Girls' Academy; one to West Kirby Academy; two to Upton Hall; five to Mosslands, three to Oldershaw and six to Weatherhead academies.

ATTENDANCE: Last year's attendance at 96.22% was similar to the previous year. X codes had been used for covid-related absences and were not included in the statistics.

BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND PROPOSALS FOR BEHAVIOUR POLICY: Although there were some '*wobbles*' caused by the lockdown, on average, pupils' behaviour is very good.

The intention is to change the Behaviour Policy to focus more on aspects that the school is getting right and to reward those pupils whose behaviour is always good. Now is not a good time to change, however, and the policy will be looked at in the Spring term.

INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, RACISM, PEER ON PEER ABUSE AND EXCLUSIONS: Four incidents have been recorded, which tend to involve the older children outside the school, friendship issues, and swearing. The school has contacted the parents of some children who have been watching gruesome horror videos and offered advice.

SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS AND OUTCOMES: Three referrals have been received from Operation Encompass reporting domestic violence in family homes. The police had reported that none of the children had been present during these incidents.

A governor suggested that the school needs to be aware that the children may not be in the actual room where the incident takes place, but they could be in bed, petrified.

The Headteacher gave an assurance that the school triages the children involved, and keeps a 'special eye' on each one.

REFERRALS TO SOCIAL CARE: Three referrals have been made to Social Care's Integrated Front Door. The threshold had been met for one child. A strategy meeting has taken place and a child protection conference has been arranged to determine if the child meets the criteria for a child protection plan. One child is already on the child protection register.

A number of children are adopted from Care, or are subject to a special guardianship arrangement. The school has identified what it can do for these children, in addition to offering pastoral support etc. There might be children who are in private fostering, or are being cared for by grandparents, etc who are not registered with the Local Authority.

A governor advised that the Local Authority has a duty to support a family with an adoption support plan for three years.

The Headteacher thanked the Governor and gave a commitment to follow up the information.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: AUTUMN 2021. GREAT TEACHING TOOLKIT: The toolkit is a new approach to professional development. It identifies 'best bits' or priorities for teachers to aim to develop to increase pupils' learning and highlights what is important for teachers to know and do in the classroom. It breaks down the five elements to good teaching, using a common language.

The current Phonics scheme has been phased out and a new Phonics Scheme, *Little Wandle*, which focuses on the connection with books and children being able to read a book, has been implemented since September 2021, mainly for children from Reception to Year 1/2.

The school has invested in a new Reading Scheme. A workshop on Reading has been arranged after half term.

Reading scores in 2019 were lower than past scores. A consultant has been brought in to find out the reason, and to retrain the staff. The next stage will be monitoring.

AREA TO PRESENT TO GOVERNORS IN THE NEXT CYCLE OF MEETINGS: Reading

6 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

REVIEW ATTENDANCE STRATEGY: So far this term, thirteen pupils and seven staff, have tested positive for covid-19.

As at to-day, attendance is 95.6%. The Wirral average based on last week's data was 92.3%. The DfE's two weekly snapshot of nationwide attendance shows that on 14 October an estimated 2.6% [209,000 pupils] were absent from school for covid-related reasons.

REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF RE/PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH EDUCATION RELATIONSHIPS. SEX EDUCATION [RSE]: The Headteacher referred the Committee to the school's website. The school had consulted parents and interested parties last year, something that he found valuable and really liked. He would do more as part of the school's Values framework.

SRE will link in the value of the month. This month's value is '*Be nice, do your best, and never give up*'. The policy is on the website [Go to the website and click Parent Portal].

Different aspects of relationships will be highlighted in the value of the month in the next half term.

The Headteacher showed a screen shot which illustrated the huge amount of work that is going on in the school, eg Computing Overview for each year group, Teach Computing Curriculum etc. There have been many changes, especially in Early Years where there will be a brand new curriculum in 2022, with learning goals for change. There is a need to ensure that the curriculum for Early Years is compatible with the goals for 2022.

Research shows that teachers are spending far too much time measuring, recording and writing everything down, rather than helping the children to read.

The Assistant Headteacher explained how it is different now for the teachers. They no longer feel guilty about sitting with the children and in play. It is a big change, but they all love it. There is a big plan for the year. The staff no longer have the pressure of ticking boxes; it's about sitting down with the children. It's a big change but it's certainly for the better.

Claire Connor withdrew from the meeting.

The Headteacher added that the same approach is being taken in Early Years where the focus is not on recording everything, but is about being with them, being responsive to them and giving them feedback.

Finally, the Headteacher confirmed that the school is doing everything possible to support the children and the families who are suffering from covid-19, and hoped that things would soon settle down. He thanked all the staff for a interesting first half term and for all the things they are doing – he was amazed that they were still standing! He thanked everyone, including the parents.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 24 January 2022 at 6.30 pm.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for all the information he had provided, and closed the meeting at 1946 hours.