



## ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Love one another as I have loved you*

### MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH, COMMUNITY, PARENTS & PUPILS COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2022 at 1900 hours

**PARTICIPANTS:** John McDonald [Headteacher and Host]  
Colette Haig [Chair]  
Brigid Gribbin [Vice Chair]  
Teresa Marnell  
Bridget Pullen  
Bernie Mooney

**Non-participant:** Nicola Boyd.

**Observer:** Father Ramesh.

**In attendance:** Eileen Coyle, Minute taker

The Headteacher invited Father Ramesh to lead an opening prayer.

#### **1 WELCOME, AND APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION**

The Headteacher welcomed and thanked everyone for participating in the meeting of the Community, Parish, Parents and Pupils Committee of the Governing Board.

He advised that Father Ramesh had been appointed Foundation Governor and would be very welcome to join the membership of the Governing Board. He thanked Father Ramesh to volunteering to attend this meeting as observer.

Apologies for non-participation had been received from Nicola Boyd.

The Headteacher showed a screen shot that outlined the remit of the Committee.

The terms of reference of the Committee, approved by the Governing Board in Autumn 2021, are appended for information.

The Headteacher confirmed that the quorum requirement of four governors, including the Headteacher, had been met.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Governors declared that there were no changes to their Declarations of Interest made following the virtual meeting of the Governing Board in September 2021.

Having reviewed the agenda, the Governors confirmed that they had no personal, financial, contractual or prejudicial interest in any item on the agenda for to-day's meeting.

## **3 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

**The** Headteacher invited nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

Colette Haig self-nominated as Chair, and Brigid Gribbin self-nominated as Vice Chair. No further nominations were received.

**RESOLVED: To elect Colette Haig Chair, and Brigid Gribbin Vice Chair, of the Community, Parish, Parents and Pupils Committee, until the first meeting of the Governing Board in Autumn 2022.**

## **4 SCHOOL'S INVOLVEMENT WITH AND SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY DURING AND POST LOCKDOWN.**

The Headteacher commented that the school is heavily involved with the local community. The support provided includes –

- **Home learning – making sure that all the children have access to learning at home.**

Covid is still around, with 170 new cases reported recently. Currently two members of staff are absent due to Covid - teacher absences inevitably have an impact on the children's learning. The teachers are making sure that the children who are absent with Covid are being supported. Nothing has changed apart from the legal jargon that goes with it. If someone tests positive for Covid there is no change in the five days, but a staff member can return to school after two negative tests provided they do not have a high temperature.

- **Support for the community.**

The school has sent the best people to the hub academy, provided laptops as people need them, ensures people are well informed and can access learning.

- **Social Pathway:**

Colette Haig has organised collections and events at school. The school is clearing out the library and she has sent boxes containing DVDs and other items home to parents. Colette and other staff go out to meet parents.

Colette added that the families who are known to need more support have been given vouchers, and they receive regular updates; everything is done very discretely.

The Headteacher added that some parents are very anxious. Colette has a wide-ranging knowledge of the families and she is aware of those she needs to watch and take care of.

- **Attendance:**

The school has been challenged in terms of attendance and trying to get children back into new routines. Sensitivity is a key factor whilst making sure there is a high level of challenge.

About 20 invitations for attendance meetings have been sent to parents and attendance has started to rise. For 2-3% of children, poor attendance is due to unauthorised absences for holidays in term time. Some challenges remain in terms of absences due to Covid, but these are concerned with classes, rather than with individual children.

The school has an academic monitor. The arrangement did not work with the first person who will be replaced from 26 March, with a person who had completed their training at this school and had just finished a degree course.

According to Headteacher colleagues, none of the four agencies used are able to provide supply teachers due to high demand to cover absences and that schools should try retain existing supply staff. Every effort will be made to make sure that there is no impact by closing a class in this school.

The problems have been associated with those children who have difficulties in terms of their readiness to learn and who are not able to self-regulate as they used to, particularly the younger children. The staff are continuing to support these children academically, particularly those who need help in cultivating a disposition for learning.

Post lockdown, two children have been working on the national computer programme.

Colette described her role in supporting families, which included collecting children from home and talking to their parents about how they are feeling; not just about the children. She continued that she should like to re-start the Coffee Mornings. There's a lot of isolation, when other people, apart from parents, can come in. It's been a

long two years, and it's about going out and making sure that everyone has the care and support they need.

The Headteacher stated that he had noticed more signs of hunger amongst the children. As a stop gap, and for a nominal charge of 10 pence, the school is about to run a breakfast when the children are offered a national breakfast. He envisaged it would consist of cooked and buttered bagels, available on entry to the school or sent to the classrooms at 8.45 am, with a portion of bagel [depending on the ages of the children] being available for the children to help themselves.

An update will be provided for the Committee at the next meeting.

The before school club is going from strength to strength with thirty children taking part this morning.

The school is reaching out and trying to help families in other ways. The staff are running homework clubs and reading clubs. Some family members work until 7/8 pm. When they leave the school, the older children go to Central Park to play until their parents return home and provide a meal for them.

The school has ordered a mini bus which will enable the staff to collect children from home when necessary to improve attendance. It will also mean that children in families without transport or other means can access trips etc.

- **Development of relationships with parents/carers, parish and community.**

The Church has re-started its parent group, and more children are attending Mass. The school is fortunate to have such a resource on its doorstep, and to have two priests.

Brigid and Teresa described the activities available for the children and the discussions taking place to get to know the parents.

The Headteacher gave an undertaking to promote and 'sell' the various clubs available.

He continued that it is obvious that there are strong links with the liturgy. He enquired if there was anything the school used to do and is not doing now, particularly where children are involved. He referred to links with the local Irish population and how they are celebrated.

Colette replied that many grandparents are involved and there used to be a Grandparents' day for grandparents and other people who are involved and can be called upon, around Christmas time. It had to be over two days because so many grandparents were coming in. A comment was made that it used to be in October. A suggestion was received to choose a date in the summer.

Teresa referred to a lunch club run previously by the school from 11 am to 1 pm on four days a week in the school holidays when a hot meal and drink were served.

People came in to help out and meet and have a chat with the children. A lot of food came from the local authority.

**ACTION POINT: The Headteacher to look at the suggestion for re-introducing the lunch club in the holidays.**

## **5 CELEBRATION OF PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENTS AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE HOLY SACRAMENTS**

A suggestion was made that the children have a big party in the summer term when they make their First Holy Communion.

The Headteacher advised that the First Forgiveness meeting would be held in the church on Thursday this week; some work had been done in classes and some at home. Probably about 50% are making their First Forgiveness this year and it is important to keep them interested.

## **6 RESPONSES TO THE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The Headteacher reported that the questionnaire had been sent to parents at the end of the school day to-day, and 16 responses had already been received.

Some of the responses, which were anonymous, were shown on the screen.

The Headteacher commented that he wished to ensure that the children were happy and that they felt safe in the school, therefore questions related directly to these two aspects. He continued that the parents would be encouraged to fill in the questionnaire, but often it's about how the questions are framed. Sometimes the words used in the responses are very '*loaded*' and it just means that they are a little bit annoyed with someone.

Comments received so far indicated that parents want more access to the teachers. On the question relating to bullying, one parent had commented that the school does not deal with bullying well and asked if it does happen what is the school doing about it.

Another parent had commented: *Bullying needs to be dealt with, fast.*

Another parent had commented: *St Alban's is a fantastic school and keep doing what you are doing.*

The Headteacher continued that the children would be reminded on a regular basis of what bullying means. Sometimes, there is a misunderstanding between falling out and conflict, but it's how it is dealt with. Negotiating friendships can be really difficult for children and it is hard for the parents. It's a matter of helping the parents to understand that. However, it is important that the school deals with everything, that nothing is discounted, and that parents have confidence when they ask a question.

The results of the questionnaire would be analysed and shared with the parents when dialogue would be encouraged on the reasons for negative responses. The school would respond to the feedback, draw up an action plan and share with this Committee.

## **7 GOVERNORS' SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMITTEE**

Teresa described in detail how the school in Dublin attended by her granddaughter celebrates the children's First Holy Communion and how the children's achievements are celebrated, adding, *'it's wonderful, and all about the children'*.

The Headteacher replied that it is important to do things together, and Covid was the only reason it did not happen last year.

The Committee put forward a range of suggestions to celebrate the children's First Holy Communion this year.

Father Ramesh embraced the suggestions wholeheartedly, and put forward further suggestions, including bringing children from the three schools, St Alban's, St Joseph's and Corpus Christi together in a procession. Referring to the Church diary, he suggested the dates 19 or 26 June 2022 at 3 pm. for the procession made a number of suggestions for inclusion in the celebration. Discussion continued on involving the children from the three schools in a benediction, possibly with a mini event with Corpus Christi the following week.

Father Ramesh added that he would begin the process by discussing the proposals with the Headteachers of St Joseph's and Corpus Christi.

In drawing the meeting to a close, the Headteacher thanked everyone for an enjoyable and very productive meeting during which a good deal had been achieved; he gave a commitment to explore the feasibility of introducing the suggestions put forward.

**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>THE COMMUNITY, PARISH, PARENTS AND PUPILS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HEADTEACHER TO BE THE CONDUIT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL, THE PARENTS, THE PUPILS, THE PARISH AND THE COMMUNITY.</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>Not less than four named governors, including the two Parent Governors, and up to three members of staff, elected annually by the governing body.  An invitation to be extended to all members of the Governing Board to attend meetings of the Committee.</b>
<b>QUORUM</b>	<b>Three Governors, including the Headteacher.</b>
<b>CHAIR</b>	<b>To be elected at the first meeting in the academic year.</b>
<b>VOTING</b>	<b>Where appropriate, questions/proposals/decisions to be determined by a majority of votes. The Chair to have a casting vote.</b>
<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>Meetings to be held at least once a term.  <u>NB:</u> In accordance with the School Governance [England] Regulations 2013, the Governing Board allows Governors to participate in or vote at meetings, including by telephone or video-conferencing.</b>
<b>REPORTING PROCESS</b>	<b>Written minutes to be produced and presented at least seven days in advance of the next meeting of the full Governing Board.</b>

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**To –**

- **monitor progress on any issues in the School Development/Improvement Plan that fall within its remit.**
- **oversee the development and maintenance of relationships with parents and carers, the parish and community, to ensure these contribute to community cohesion**
- **monitor parental/parish/community involvement in the school, and to make recommendations about the development of future links**
- **review and monitor the home school agreement and related policies**

- **monitor pupil attendance targets and strategies to improve attendance and engagement**
- **engage with and receive reports from the School Council representing children in the school**
- **celebrate pupils engagement in the Holy Sacraments**
- **recognise and celebrate pupils' academic achievements and performing arts and sporting successes**
- **receive termly reports on Behaviour and Discipline, including the number of bullying and racial incidents and the use and effectiveness of pupil exclusion**
- **monitor the effectiveness of the school's complaints policies and procedures**
- **ensure the school meets legal requirements to publish information, including details of the overall Governance arrangements, on the school's website in a readily accessible form**
- **monitor and respond to feedback received in Parents' and Pupils' questionnaires**
- **liaise with the Home School Association**
- **promote the school in the local community.**