



**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, 22 JUNE 2021 at 1800 hours

PARTICIPANTS:

Kevin Doogan [Chair]
John McDonald [Headteacher and meeting host]
Nicola Boyd
Claire Connor
Pat Duprey
Colette Haig
Pat Higgins
Lucy Lowe
Teresa Marnell
Bernie Mooney
Clare Suffield
Marie Wolfe

Apologies:

Bridget Pullen
Peter Matthews

In attendance:

Fleur McAlavey, Assistant Headteacher
Eileen Coyle, Clerk to Governors

The Headteacher opened the meeting with a prayer.

LUCY LOWE IN THE CHAIR

1 PRELIMINARIES

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION: Apologies for non-participation were received from Bridget Pullen and Peter Matthews.

Peter Matthews had apologised for non-participation at the meeting of the Assets Committee on 15 June 2021. Technical difficulties had prevented him from contributing, but he had been able to hear the discussions.

RESOLVED: To consent -

- i. to the unavoidable absence of Bridget Pullen and Peter Matthews;
- ii. retrospectively, to the absence of Peter Matthews from the meeting of the Asset Committee on 15 June 2021.

KEVIN DOOGAN IN THE CHAIR

1.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: The Governors declared individually that there had been no changes to their Declarations of Interests made at the Autumn 2020 meeting.

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

1.3 CONFIDENTIALITY: The Chair reminded the Governors of the need to maintain confidentiality in respect of all business discussed this evening.

1.4 MEMBERSHIP: The terms of office of Pat Duprey and Peter Matthews were due to expire on 31 August 2021.

Pat's intention had been to step down after completing four terms of office on 31 August 2020. To help with the transition following the re-organisation of the Board, she had agreed to continue to serve for a further year. She confirmed her intention to step down on 31 August 2021.

The Diocese had re-appointed Peter Matthews as Foundation Governor for a further term of four years to 31 August 2025.

Maria Wolfe announced, with regret, that family and other commitments prevented her from carrying out the duties of Governor as she would wish, therefore she would be stepping down as Foundation Governor from 31 August 2021.

Pat Higgins tendered her resignation as Foundation Governor.

RESOLVED: To –

- i. express the appreciation of the Governing Body to Pat Duprey for her outstanding service as Governor and Chair of Governors throughout her 17 year involvement with the Governing Board, and for her unstinting support and involvement in many facets of school life. Her expertise and knowledge would be greatly missed;
- ii. thank Marie Wolfe and Pat Higgins for their service as a Foundation Governors and their valuable contribution to the work of the Governing Board;
- iii. welcome the reappointment of Peter Matthews as Foundation Governor.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD ON /MATTERS ARISING

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 2 March 2021, are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

3 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF GOVERNORS' COMMITTEES

The minutes of meetings of Governors' Committees had been posted on the Google drive.

RESOLVED: To note the minutes of meetings of governors' committees viz Parish, Community, Parents, Pupils: 16 March 2021; Extraordinary meeting 18 May 2021; Standards Committee: 8 June 2021 and the Assets Committee: 15 June 2021.

4 GOVERNORS' MONITORING AND REVIEW

4.1 THE HEADTEACHER'S TERMLY REPORT, SUMMER 2021, had been posted on the Google drive for reading in advance of the meeting.

The Headteacher highlighted the key aspects of his report and invited questions.

The Chair commented that the attendance data was very good and must be close to national average. The CPD opportunities being offered to the staff were outstanding.

A governor agreed, stating the continuing professional development opportunities were unique and offered the teachers many opportunities to progress.

The Headteacher advised that as part of a trail blazer group, the school had signed up for first year teaching practice with Evidence Based education. He explained how the experience works for the staff involved.

The Chair stated that the school is to be commended on taking part in the initiative, which is a great opportunity and approach going forward. However, it is important not to overload the staff.

The Headteacher replied that, amongst other concessions, the staff are given 'time back' of one day, on a half-termly basis.

The Chair expressed confidence that the Governors would support the approach.

A governor stated that 'overload' applies to the Headteacher as well as the staff.

RESOLVED: To thank the Headteacher for his report.

4.2 PUPIL ATTENDANCE: The Headteacher reported that absences were unexpectedly high when pupils returned after the lockdown. The national average for primary schools is around 7%. As at to-day, absences in this school are 9.65%. Measures are in place to reduce this figure by the end of term.

4.3 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: Currently, the SDP is being updated for the start of the new academic year.

One of the key priorities focuses on Assessment and a new way of delivering the curriculum based on seven areas [instead of the current 17 areas]. The intention is to reduce the time spent on recording and spend more time on assessment.

Phonics data: 96% of children at the end of year 2 have been phonics checked; 77% of children passed the phonics check in year 1, which, given the impact of the pandemic, are very good outcomes. Every effort is being made to ensure that those children continue to progress. The focus to the end of the year will be on those that, so far, have not made the expected progress.

The Chair commented that most of the SDP has been RAG rated amber and green. He asked the Headteacher if there was anything the Governors could do to support those rated red becoming amber and ultimately green.

The Headteacher expressed his intention to develop certain areas as priorities; others were currently being evaluated. The areas rated red are 'not quite there' yet but, with training, they should be there by the time of the next review.

4.4 PUPIL PREMIUM REPORT 2020/21: The Headteacher reported that he was currently working on an analysis of the data for last three years.

This year's grant would be used, for example, to pay for training on Speech and Language for the TAs. The training opportunity mentioned earlier would have a positive impact on the whole school class teaching.

The Headteacher was satisfied that the use of the pupil premium has had the right impact.

4.5 CATCH-UP PREMIUM REPORT 2020/21: In the first cohort, the premium was used for 120+ children to have extra tuition. The process has begun of analysing the data from the second cohort.

4.6 ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN REPORT: 2020/21: The report had been sent to the Governors. The staff have been trained in safeguarding children in school, and further training had been booked for July.

Staff have been trained in paediatric first aid; the central record has been updated and checked, with a final check due at the end of the year. Operation Encompass has been involved with the school over the last couple of months concerning issues of domestic violence.

The school has no further children in child protection, there are four 'families in need' this year. The system is based on a confidential one-stop shop approach. There have been more incidents because more information is being reported. Some children are using homophobic and racist language and they have been heard swearing on the yard. The staff help the children to understand that the use of such language is hurtful. There have been no victims of homophobic language. Most incidents are to do with friendship issues. Social workers have been involved in some cases, educating them about the power of language. A child involved in safeguarding has been offered an alternative placement.

Other issues to do with children's health and wellbeing are concerned with anxiety and low self-esteem, mainly due to the impact of the lockdown.

Discussion continued on children with low self esteem and the connection with children who live in poor financial circumstances, or have recently suffered the bereavement of a close family member.

The Chair commented that safeguarding cases are rare in this school, but where one arises, it is always well monitored.

4.7 GOVERNORS' REPORTS ON TRAINING ATTENDED: The Chair reported having a discussion with the provider, Edsential, regarding training for Governors.

The Headteacher reported on a meeting with a person who works with a Government agency in Wallasey, and with the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss the possibility of working together as a team to sharpen up and improve existing good governor knowledge. The person had offered the date, 8 July, between 3 pm and 6 pm; hopefully it will be face-to-face training.

A governor gave positive feedback on the person's involvement in talking to Governors in a school in another area. The talk was very positive and thorough and focused on what the Governors know already, what they are doing well, and what they should be doing. An action plan had been devised at the end, which the governors can refer back to.

The Chair commented that from the conversations he had had it all sounded really good and if the Governors agreed the meeting should go ahead.

RESOLVED: To invite the speaker to meet the Governors on 8 July, between 4 pm and 6 pm.

The Headteacher suggested that the remaining agenda items, eg monitoring, assessment, the curriculum, had been covered as the meeting progressed.

5 DELEGATED BUDGET: BUDGET SETTING

The Assets Committee had scrutinised the budget in detail at its meeting on 15 June 2021, and recommended ratification by the Governing Board at this meeting.

The financial year 2020/21 had ended with a healthy credit balance of £121,741, being carried forward to 2021/22.

However, the Board needed to be aware that a modest **deficit of £15,675** is predicted at year end 2022/23, with a substantial **deficit of £100,518**, being projected for the financial year 2023/24, increasing to **a deficit of £175,620**, at the end of 2024/25.

Action taken to address the deficits included the introduction of a policy of recruiting staff on fixed term temporary contracts and delaying recruitment to vacant posts. In the longer term, consideration is likely to be given to the possibility of reducing the number of classes.

RESOLVED: To -

- i. note the budget outturn for 2020/21;**
- ii. ratify the budget for 2021/22, for signature by the Chair of Governors and submission to the Local Authority by 30 June 2021.**

6 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE: MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES

The Headteacher had forwarded to the Governors a letter from Cabling & Installation dated 14 June, detailing the charges for year 1 and for year 2 onwards for upgrading the school's internet services.

In an email to the Governors dated 14 June 2021, the Headteacher had included a schedule of DFC income and expenditure, indicating that the school can meet the full costs of £4,665 for year 1 from this source.

The Headteacher's report to the Governors included detailed information on the funding arrangements for the replacement of the current lighting with LED lights.

The Diocese had offered to contribute £15,000 towards the cost, in addition to a contribution of £10,000 from the Council's Conditions Budget. The balance would be funded from Capital Expenditure, with no contribution from the school's budget.

The Headteacher recommended the fitting of hepa filters in each classroom as an added protective factor against Covid-19, at a cost of £3,000.

The Chair congratulated the Headteacher on his negotiating skills which had resulted in the very favourable outcomes reported.

RESOLVED: To approve the expenditure proposed by the Headteacher.

7 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Governors had received in advance for reading and information the Safeguarding Children Policy 2020/21. Amended April 2021, the Keeping Children Safe in Education [KCSIE] Amended April 2021, and the School Fund Policy.

A Governor raised a query on the use of debit cards for the Before and After School clubs.

The Headteacher confirmed that he was aware of and was working on the matter.

RESOLVED: To adopt the policies –

- i. The Safeguarding Children Policy 2020/21. Amended April 2021**
- ii. Keeping Children Safe in Education. Amended April 2021**
- iii. The School Fund Policy.**

8 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair reported that he had written a 'thank you' letter to Annie just prior to her retirement as Deputy Head and, in reply, had received a beautifully composed letter addressed to all the Governors. The Chair read out the letter thanking everyone for their generosity and expressing appreciation for the arrangements that had made her retirement a very special and memorable occasion.

The Headteacher reminded the Governors that Tony, who has been with the school for a very long time, would be retiring in July. He had been on sick leave since half term following an operation. His salary during his absence had been covered by Supply Insurance.

The Governors authorised the Headteacher to mark the occasion by presenting a suitable gift to Tony, funded by the Governors' Fund.

9 DATES OF GOVERNORS' MEETINGS

The Chair explained that normally, the Board would hold a 'business' meeting in early September to re-establish the Committees and re-issue certain documentation. He proposed the date 7 September for the business meeting, followed by an ordinary meeting of the Governing Board on 5th or 12th October, all starting at 6pm.

RESOLVED: **To hold the 'business' meeting of the Governing Board on 7 September 2021 at 6 pm.**