

Through God's grace, a community growing in knowledge and understanding



Cambridgeshire
County Council



Meeting Date & Time: Thursday 24th November 2016, 4pm – 6pm

Attendance & Apologies:									
Foundation Governors:			Parent Governors:			Staff Governor:			
Mary Jane O'Sullivan (Chair)	MJOS	P	Rebecca Imhagwe	RI	P	Phyllis Maynard	PM	P	
Claire Southgate (Vice Chair)	CS	P	Monica McDonald	MM	Ap				
Fr Pat Cleary	PC	P				Clare Clark (Headteacher)	CC	P	
Dr Charlotte Woodford	CW	P	Local Authority Governor:						
Harry Roberts	HR	P	Sonali Kumarakulasinghe	SK	P	Associate Members:			
Terry Taylor-Crush	TTC	P				Lizzy Bennett (Deputy Head)	LB	P	
Janet Scally	JS	P	Co-opted Governor:			Veronica Harvey (Deputy Head)	VH	Ap	
Joan Brierley	JB	P	Shauna DeWolf	SdW	P				

(key: P = present, Ap = apologies received and accepted, ApN = apologies received but not accepted, A = absent)

In Attendance: Mark Dowling (clerk), Flavio Vettese (FV) (Diocesan Deputy Director of Schools, Item 2)

	Notes	Actions/ Dates/ Person responsi ble
0	Opening Prayer	
1.	Declaration of interests relating to items on this agenda None	
2.	Academy Status Flavio Vettese, the Diocesan Deputy Director of Schools, gave a presentation and attended for a discussion of the issues involved in the formation of a multi-academy trust. 1 The current situation 1.1 The issue of the formation of more multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the Diocese is now entwined with the separate issue of the	

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	<p>opportunity to establish new 'free' schools, although such new schools could in theory be 'standalone'.</p> <p>1.2 There are already two MATs in the Diocese:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Lady of Walsingham (Newmarket and Haverhill) • St John the Baptist (part of Norfolk and north Suffolk) <p>1.3 Opening free schools is now a feasible proposition for the Diocese, given the Government's intention to remove the 50% limit on the proportion of admissions to new free schools that can be faith-based. (Consultation on this proposed change of policy continues until 12 December 2016, with a decision expected early in 2017.)</p> <p>1.4 The Diocese intends to submit bids for eight new schools in the next round, i.e. by March 2017, including possible primaries and a secondary in Cambridgeshire.</p> <p>1.5 The New Schools Network, a charity, is helping in the writing of bids, and would consider these in the second week of January 2017, meaning in effect that the bids had to be written by the end of this term.</p> <p>1.6 Last week, the Diocese asked CC and Joe McCrossan (Head, St Alban's) to do a substantial amount of work on the production of two bids by the end of term. There is further potential involvement, as bid documents have to specify by name who was going to be offering support and in what capacity should the bids be successful.</p> <p>1.7 Alistair Day (Head, St Bede's) is also providing advice to the Diocese in respect of the proposed Cambridgeshire applications. StA and StL are being encouraged to think about participation in a MAT but to hold fire pending the outcome of these bids.</p> <p>1.8 Meanwhile, StB has also submitted a bid of its own, to establish a new secondary school in Waterbeach.</p> <p>➤2 <u>Governors asked:</u></p> <p>2.1 Whether it remained Diocesan policy that all Diocesan schools should work together in MATs. <i>FV said it was, but also referred to the less prescriptive view of the National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter, whose vision for 2022 was that every school would be part of a formal collaboration that developed best practice and research potential.</i></p> <p>2.2 What the Diocese was asking St L to do. Sponsor a new free school? Join a MAT? <i>Probably both, but sequence and timing an issue (see 2.5 and 3.4).</i></p> <p>2.3 Who had the ultimate say – the Diocese or the Governors? <i>FV's response was that the Diocese wanted our Catholic schools to work</i></p>	
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together with one another, and possibly with Catholic schools in neighbouring dioceses. MATs were favoured because there were major issues that might not be evident to an individual school, such as the supply of Headteachers. It was also thought that applicant teachers would favour MATs as giving them more development opportunities. However, (unlike some of its neighbours) the Diocese was not taking a totally prescriptive line.

2.4 Whether the bids would have to refer to the proposed MATs involved. *FV's answer: only insofar as a bid would have to indicate which schools were allocating time to help in the establishment of the new school. CC's observation: Bids have to show the governance structure of the proposed school.*

2.5 Whether, if bids were unsuccessful, StL would be expected to go into a MAT with a school or schools outside Cambridge. *FV said yes.*

➤3 Governors expressed some concerns:

3.1 That the Diocese should rely more on consultants than on CC (and other Heads), which risked diverting her attention from the ongoing task of improvement in this school. StL was just beginning to consider what support it might offer to other schools, but it was early days and there was a risk of jeopardising StL's own progress.

3.3 That the creation of nearby new schools would have an impact on the roll and therefore funding and provision at StL, and on the proportion of Catholic children in the StL intake. (FV accepted there were concerns about the vulnerability of existing schools.)

3.4 It would be preferable to wait until we know the outcome of the bids and therefore the number of schools there are going to be before developing plans for MATs. This was expected to be in the summer of 2017.

3.5 That if a bid were successful it would be necessary to comply with the undertakings made in it, not revisit them as if it had been a draft.

4 Suggested actions:

4.1 FV suggested that, since there would be no decisions about MATs until the outcome of the bid applications was known, the Governors could invite someone from one of the two existing MATs to talk to them over the next two terms as part of our research into our options.

4.2 FV suggested that existing schools could be identifying their strengths and therefore matters that they might lead on. Governors commented that the Governors were thoroughly familiar with the strengths of StL.

5 Governors' conclusions:

➤5.1 **Governors embraced** the opportunity provided by the round of bids for new schools, particularly as it was not certain when the next

	<p>round after that would be.</p> <p>5.2 A MAT should not be established for the sake of it or as a matter of convenience but as the best way to enable a new school to draw on the best practice of existing schools.</p> <p>➤5.3 Governors welcomed the possibility of a collaboration between the two existing Catholic primaries and a new one, as that would be more likely to achieve better outcomes for children and improved staff development than the type of scheme that had previously been considered involving another school at a considerable distance.</p> <p>➤5.4 Governors would prefer to see the Diocese engaging consultants to draft bids into which the Heads would then have input rather than expecting the Heads to write them themselves.</p> <p>5.5 It was necessary to learn from the experience of the previous failed bid for a third Catholic primary school in Cambridge.</p> <p>➤5.6 Governors would rather StL was a lead partner in a MAT rather than a ‘tag along’ partner, and would prefer not to find some of the school’s current governance being mandatorily replaced. Similarly Governors would not want to see the autonomy of the StL Head being diminished. These considerations pointed to StL aiming to be the ‘sponsor’ of a new school.</p> <p>5.7 In the short term, the requirement that CC and other Heads divert their attention to writing a bid was unsatisfactory. They would need support immediately. ➤Governors agreed that the Chair should write to FV asking him to consider this as a matter of urgency and that she should inform Mark Broadbent (Chair of Governors, StA) of this request.</p> <p>5.8 In the medium term, if a Governor from StL were expected to contribute four hours a week until the establishment of the new school, it was not obvious where this time would come from. The possibility of finding someone with the time who would then become an Associate Governor of StL was mentioned. Although the bid required names it might be that in reality the four hours did not need to be all contributed by the same person, though those doing this would need experience of school governance. The possibility of some cascaded backfilling of time spent by CC on this matter was also discussed: however, it was felt that it is not feasible for CC to delegate her regular responsibilities.</p> <p>5.9 The fact that it would not be known until summer 2017 what schools were to be established made their opening in September 2019 rather an ambitious schedule.</p>	Chair, by 29.11.16
3.	Approval of the minutes of FGB of 6th October 2016: Approved	
4.	Significant matters arising from minutes of previous meeting Photographs of Governors were now on the school website.	

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5.	<p>Headteacher's Report was received.</p> <p>➤ Governors queried the number of permanent exclusions shown in the Report, which was corrected to zero.</p> <p>➤ Governors asked whether the inability to appoint a replacement for Mrs d'Armada (60%, now on maternity leave) meant that some of her work was not being covered, and CC confirmed that this was so in respect of one afternoon per week.</p>	
6.	<p>Key points from:</p> <p>a. current SEF and</p> <p>b. current RAP</p> <p>Governors were referred to the new 'School Performance' tab on their part of the website.</p>	
7.	<p>Chair's Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair reported that she had attended the recent Chairs' network meeting. • She drew Governors' attention to the fact that the Cambridgeshire Education Portal was now the Learning Together Hub, and the Schools Intervention Service had subsumed the Schools Governance Team. 	
8.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>All Governors had now completed their DBS checks.</p> <p>➤ In reply to a question from a Governor, the Head confirmed that two designated safeguarding persons were enough to cope with the responsibility.</p>	
9.	<p>Learning & Achievement Committee Report:</p> <p>a. The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2016 were received.</p> <p>b. The Learning and Achievement Committee Terms of Reference for 2016-17 were adopted.</p> <p>c. An update on the Monitoring Programme 2016-17 was received.</p>	
10.	<p>Finance & Personnel Committee</p> <p>a. The unconfirmed minutes of meeting of 14 October 2016 were received.</p> <p>b. The Finance and Personnel Committee Terms of Reference for 2016-17 were adopted.</p>	
11.	<p>Premises, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee was to meet the following day. The walkabout inspection had occurred and the school had been found pleasingly decluttered.</p>	
12.	<p>Policies</p> <p>The Governors' Allowance Policy was adopted. Compared with the previous version, the new policy contained only minor changes, necessary to comply with the latest legislation.</p>	
13.	<p>Governing Body Membership, Training and Development (including any report from Governor Development Working Group and action points from most recent Governor Audit)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS was about to go on performance management training. • The Governor Development Working Group was not scheduled to meet until after Christmas. 	
14.	<p>Parish Report</p> <p>PC reported that the parish will be making returns of annual numbers of baptisms in recent years to the Diocese as part of the schools provision planning process.</p>	

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15.	PTFA Report None	
16.	Any Other Business In further discussion of MATs, >the Governors decided to invite a senior representative of one of the existing MATs in the Diocese to talk to them at the Full Governing Body meeting scheduled for 16 March 2017.	Chair, by 15.12.16
17.	Embedded Risk Management > Governors again noted the risk of overburdening the Head with work relating to the bids for new schools on top of her work for this school.	
18.	Matters raised in this meeting which need to be highlighted for future Academy Status negotiations None beyond those discussed under Item 2.	
19.	Dates of future meetings: All 4-6pm unless otherwise stated 26 th January 2017 16 th March 2017 4 th May 2017 13 th July 2017 @ 3.45pm to hear the report from the School Council	

Abbreviations: EAL = English as an Additional Language, EY – early years, FGB – Full Governing Body, KIT – Keeping in Touch visit, KS1 – Key Stage 1, KS2 – Key Stage 2, , MAT – multi-academy trust, PP – pupil premium, RAP – raising achievement plan, SEF – Self Evaluation Form, SEND – special educational needs and disabilities, SMT – Senior Management Team, StA – St Alban’s Catholic Primary School, StB – St Bede’s Inter-Church School, StL – St Laurence Catholic Primary School

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