



Cambridgeshire
County Council



St. Laurence Catholic Primary School

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body

Thursday 17th March 2016 @ 4.00pm

Present: Mary Jane O'Sullivan (Chair), Sonali Kumarakulasinghe, Harry Roberts, Terry Taylor-Crush, Clare Clark (Head), Shauna DeWolf, Claire Southgate, Charlotte Woodford, Phyllis Maynard

Associate Members: Lizzy Bennett, Joan Brierley

Clerk: Eric Smith

Apologies: Rebecca Imhagwe, Fr Pat Cleary, Janet Scally and Nick Fraser.

Action by

1. Welcome, apologies and opening prayer

The Chair, Mary Jane O'Sullivan, formally opened the meeting, extending a welcome to all those present and led a prayer invoking guidance for the proceedings.

Apologies from Rebecca Imhagwe, Fr Pat Cleary, Janet Scally and Nick Fraser, accepted by Governors

2. Declarations of interests relating to items on this agenda

None

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 28th January 2016

The Minutes were approved by the Governing Body as a true and accurate record and signed as such by the Chair.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held 28th January 2016

Page 4 – Item 8 – Standing Reports – Chairs Correspondence - The Chair has been in contact with Mark Broadbent, the Chair of the Governing Body at St Albans to suggest a reciprocal arrangement to share Governors for Panel Hearings. The Chair noted that this would be done only in circumstances when the school had 'run out' of available Governors to sit on panels. The reciprocal arrangement is now in place.

Page 5 – Item 8 – Standing Reports – Chairs Correspondence - The Head confirmed that the Prevent Duty action plan has been circulated to all Governors.

5. Head Teachers Report

The Head had circulated her report ahead of the meeting, updated members and answered questions accordingly.

The number of pupils on roll is increasing and the percentage of pupils with 'English as an additional language' is also rising. The school sees this as a positive move, it increases the diversity in the school and the EAL pupils achieve well.

The number of days that members of staff have been absent has increased; there have been instances of sickness and personal issues. The Head noted that this has been a difficult time for members of staff due to a number of them experiencing family bereavements; members of staff were supporting each other.

There had been one fixed term exclusion and one child had been internally excluded. The Head confirmed that these sanctions indicated that the staff and SLT were implementing the schools behaviour policy. There was consistency across the school. The Head confirmed that behaviour is good overall.

The Head gave further explanation to the 'Stonewall Champion' status given to the school. She explained that Stonewall would be using the school as a case study in new documentation on how Faith Schools can support diversity. To a question on whether the Stonewall 'Train the Trainer' initiatives had been cascaded, the Head confirmed that it had not yet been cascaded as there was no space in the staff training calendar this term. There were plans for a school assembly in the Summer Term; however, some of the resources supplied were already being used.

The Equalities Working Party has met for the last time and the evidence for the application for the Equalities Award is being finalised.

The Head was asked if the school celebrated specific ethnic events such as Black History Month. The Head explained that advice from Stonewall is that such events were not the best models for embedding diversity and equality; they should be woven into every part of the curriculum. The Head noted that this school was very fortunate in reflecting diversity within our own context; you didn't have to look very far to see positive examples.

To a question on the website the Head confirmed that the positive feedback from parents was unprompted and to a further question the Head confirmed that significant school dates, e.g. term ending, etc., were in the calendar on the website.

There had been a meeting for Yr6 children and their parents held just before this meeting to explain how the school was working towards the SAT's. Lizzy Bennett explained that the 2 week break at Easter can lead to a 'drop off' in momentum in learning. The school has therefore invested in materials so that children can work over the break for one hour for five days so maintaining the learning momentum. To a question Lizzy confirmed that there had been 18 parents attending, the resources handed out to

<p>parents at the meeting would be sent to the parents that were not able to attend. Lizzy also noted that the resources were individually targeted to the pupils to aid their learning over the 2 week break. Lizzy also reported that the school would be providing breakfast for the children in Yr6 for the 4 days of the SATs. This would ensure that the children were in school calm and did not sit the tests hungry.</p>	<u>Action by</u>
<p>6. Governing Body Membership</p>	
<p>Parent Governor Election Process. The Chair reported that there had been indications of interest in the parent community in becoming a parent governor so the election process will be re-run at the start of the summer term. If there was a poll then the results of the poll would be announced on or about the 16th May. The Chair confirmed that there would be no indication of specific skills required and that the Governor Newsletter which will be published by the end of the term will note the election process.</p>	Clerk
<p>Confirmation of Sonali Kumarakulasinghe as the Local Authority Governor. Confirmed unanimously – Clerk to advise Governor Services</p>	
<p>Clerking for the Full Governing Body. The Chair confirmed that the current Clerk is retiring at the end of the March; Governor Services have not been able to supply a replacement clerk and could not guarantee supplying a locum clerk to cover the 2 meetings in the summer term. The Chair noted that she had been advised by Governor Services to recruit a Clerk. The Chair acknowledged that it was very difficult to recruit and asked all members to contact her if they knew of someone suitable. The Chair has spoken to the Chair at St Albans who is content for his Clerk to be approached to see if the St Albans Clerk would also take on the post of Clerk to St Laurence FGB. Proposal supported by Members, Chair to action. It was also agreed that the vacancy will be advertised in the School and Parish Newsletters. The Chair has several model job specifications for the post of Clerk and Charlotte Woodford will assist the Chair in finalising the specification. Members of the Governing Body thanked Eric Smith for his service as Clerk over the last 13 years.</p>	All Chair Chair CW
<p>Website – Governors Secure Log-in. The website has a secure area for Governors; all should have access. If there are issues then members should inform Claire Southgate. If members require access to the Wi-Fi system in the school then members should request access from the Principal Officer. It was agreed that the chairs of committees should have editing rights to documents on the shared area. Those with editing rights will be Mary Jane O’Sullivan, Sonali Kumarakulasinghe, Harry Roberts, Clare Clark, Claire Southgate, Charlotte Woodford or Janet Scally and the Clerk.</p>	
<p>7. Academy Status</p>	All
<p>At the last meeting it was reported that Catholic Schools in the Diocese apart from those in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were moving rapidly to various closer arrangements which could lead to Academy Status. The Schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be holding an ‘open’ meeting’ to which Governors will be invited to learn more about the issue. The Chair had circulated details of this meeting to all members; being Tuesday 12th April at 6pm at St John Fisher Catholic High School in Peterborough. The Chair confirmed that Helena Renfrew-Knight will be</p>	

attending; she is a solicitor instructed by the Diocese. The Head requires confirmation of the members wanting to attend, please notify the Head. Members already expressing interest are, Janet Scally, Mary Jane O'Sullivan and Joan Brierley.

All

To questions on the stance that the Diocese is taking on Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), compared to the stance taken by the Anglican Diocese (Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust, DEMAT) the Head explained that DEMAT was already far advanced as a MAT and had plans to include both Anglican Schools and former community schools in its membership. The Diocese of East Anglia seems to have no inclination to set up a centralised MAT for Catholic Schools. The option is for Catholic Schools to work together in collaboration to set up their own MATs.

Members asked how the move to Academy Status would be communicated to parents, etc., especially following the news in the budget that all schools would be academies by 2022. The Head confirmed that members of staff had been informed that the school was at a very early stage in the process. There would be a period of consultation.

To a question on the view of St Albans Primary on academy status the Chair confirmed that there was interest in a wider partnership. It was noted that the Head at St Albans was also the acting Head at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary in Peterborough and the Head confirmed that Sacred Heart had had issues in recruiting a substantive Head.

8. The Key for School Governors

The Chair explained that the school was part way through a trial membership of 'The Key' (ending at the end of March) and asked for member comment on whether the subscription should be extended. There were examples given that were both positive and negative but overall members decided that membership should be extended for a period of 12 months at a cost of £500; to be reviewed annually.

9. Standing Reports as Appropriate

Learning and Achievement Committee: Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February circulated. No matters raised by Members.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Will be meeting the day following this meeting of the Full Governing Body. The SFVS (Schools Financial Value Statement) has to be accepted by Governors and the Chair briefed members accordingly:

SFVS is a 9 page self-assessment form – it consists of 25 questions which governors discuss formally with senior staff each year and then complete and submit. Liz Taylor, Janet Scally, the Head and Finance & Personnel Committee governors review it over a period of several months each year and have recently updated it; it will be signed off the day following this meeting at the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting.

Section A: Financial skills of Governors and School Staff: Finance & Personnel Committee governors have each completed a financial skills audit. The Committee has clear Terms of Reference for finance and holds a register of pecuniary interests. Finance & Personnel Committee governors receive monthly financial updates from Principal Officer (Liz Taylor) on the

BCR (Budget Control Report). The Finance & Personnel Committee reviews the school staffing structure annually, pay decisions are linked to performance criteria and there is an external adviser on HT performance review.

Section B: Setting the Budget: There is a balanced budget, which is approved by FGB each year and linked to the School improvement Plan. The school has a financial plan for 3 years ahead and Finance & Personnel Committee governors monitor the 'Carry Forward' closely.

Section C: F Value for Money: Finance & Personnel Committee governors benchmark spending against other local primary schools (done 29th Jan 2016). The school follows county contract regulations and uses recognised suppliers. The school collaborates with other schools via CB4 and Catholic Clusters. The school has an asset management plan (to be updated Summer term).

Section D: Protecting Public Money: J Scally carried out an unannounced spot check (Nov 2015) of monies held on the premises and saw evidence that teachers' expenses are authorised by the Head and reimbursement claims and receipts checked by the Head and Principal Officer (to prevent fraudulent claims). The school follows recommended procedures e.g. Cambridgeshire's Scheme for Financing Schools (August 15 edition) along with annex 4 CCC Financial Regulations for Schools. The school has a Critical Incident Procedure, IT server backup, Diocesan & LA insurance, Whistleblowing Policy and asset register.

Chair

SFVS submission supported by Members. The submission will be added to the secure area of the website for Governors to view, Chair to action. Members wished to have their thanks to Liz Taylor minuted for her work on the school finances.

Members agreed that Safeguarding will be a standing item on the Agenda for the FGB. It was reported that all newly appointed Governors will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check as of 1st April 2016 and all Governors will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check as of 1st September 2016

Premises, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee: Met on 22nd February, minutes circulated. The report from the H & S Advisor and the H & S Inspections (both internal and external) were considered at this meeting. Some weaknesses had been identified and had either been addressed or were being addressed. The H & S Advisor was returning to the school to train staff in formulating risk assessments and to give ladder training. To a question on why this service had been bought in it was noted that the school had liability for safety and this service should have been introduced sooner. The Principal Officer felt very re-assured having this service in place. It was noted that the school had 'signed up' to the H & S support service for another year.

Governors Monitoring: Shauna DeWolf noted that one governor monitoring report had been circulated since the last FGB Meeting. There had been other visits, reports to be written, these reports will be reviewed by the Learning and Achievement Committee. Governors were reminded to arrange their monitoring visits through Veronica Harvey. Veronica will then make the necessary arrangements with the relevant member(s) of staff.

Governor Development Sub Committee: Met on the 9th February. The Chair had circulated a draft 'Governors Strategic Priorities 2016 – 2020' ahead of the meeting. With a small change this plan was adopted. To a question on Priority 2 'To move towards an Outstanding Ofsted rating', the Head confirmed that the immediate priority was to ensure that the Ofsted rating was secure as 'Good'. It was agreed that the Governor Development Plan was no longer required.

Equality Working Party: The Head reported that the on-line application for the 'Equality Award' would be ready for submission by the half term break in the summer term.

Link Governor for PTFA: The PTFA has been selling 'school' tea towels and to date has made a profit of £120; there are still some to sell. The Summer Fair will be held on 25th June. The PTFA will be funding the Yr6 leaver's party and books and will be contributing £4k to playground markings.

Parish: The visit of Bishop Alan to the school on the 4th March was a highlight of the term and members that met the Bishop spoke highly of the visit.

Chair's Correspondence: The Chair expanded on the visit of Bishop Alan to the school. Bishop Alan was very impressed with the school and wished his thanks be passed on to the Governors of the school. The Chair has joined the local chairs network. The Chair meets with the Head on a weekly basis. The Chair had circulated the latest parent questionnaire ahead of this meeting. The questionnaire was conducted by Governors at the parent consultation evenings in March 2016. The feedback was similar to the results posted from the survey carried out in February 2015, except that 96% of the responses in 2016 considered that the school was well lead (85% in 2015). It was agreed that next year the questionnaire could be adapted for parents with more than one child in the school. To a question the Chair confirmed that a summary will be published and sent to parents; currently being drafted. To a question the Head confirmed that the school will carry out specific year group pupil questionnaires, at the end of Reception to aid transition and at the end of Yr6 as an exit questionnaire. The Head also noted that a Pupil Wellbeing Survey will be carried out during the Summer Term.

Chair

Policy Review and Adoption Cycle:

Discipline Procedure/Grievance Procedure: The Policies that were adopted previously are on the schools website. Joan Brierley and Sonali Kumarakulasinghe have sent their concerns over the policies to EPM for consideration.

Governors' Induction Policy: Clerk to add to the Agenda for the next meeting of the FGB

Equality Policy: Adopted

Clerk

Link Governor for Training: The 'In House' Training will be 'Evaluating Governing Body Effectiveness' to be held on Thursday 28th April 4pm to 6pm. The Chair reminded Governors of the Termly Briefings for the Summer Term. Members updated the meeting on courses attended.

10. Dates for FGB Meetings for the Academic Year 2015 – 2016

5th May 2016 @ 4pm

7th July 2016 @ 3.45pm to hear the report from the School Council

11. Embedded Risk Management

Academy Status

12. Other matters appropriate to the Governing & School

None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.46pm.

Signed as a true record..... Date.....
(Chair)