

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body
held in the school at 6.45 p.m.
on Thursday 23 November 2017

No. 2017/2018 - 2

Present: Flavio Vettese, Mark Broadbent (MB, chair), Lia Campos (LC), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), Bill Merrick (WM), Janet Muir (JMu), Sarah Smith (SS), Jo Wager (JW), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

Apologies for lateness: Jo Coward (JC), Patrick Coughlin (PC)

Apologies for absence: Canon Eugene Harkness, Graham Hughes

1. MAT update from Flavio Vettese

MB welcomed Sarah Smith (new governor) and Flavio Vettese, Deputy Director of Education for the Diocese of East Anglia.

The Diocesan strategy on MATs had been circulated to governors earlier in confidence, and follows on much discussion that has been underway for a long time. Following the extreme uncertainty over the free school bids, and further campaigning over the removal of the 50% cap, the decision has been taken to focus on existing schools within the Diocese, to provide a sustainable option. Several options were considered for the geographical grouping of the schools in the Diocese, but the goal was to achieve roughly equal size for each MAT, and an equal distribution of secondaries. This model has been approved by the Diocesan Schools Commission. St John the Baptist is already established and will take on new schools; Our Lady of Walsingham will similarly expand. There is also a clear deadline for this to be completed - 1 September 2020. The Diocese is working with governors to ensure a smooth transition. It is also keen to remain engaged with independent and interfaith schools. The basic number on roll for each of these MATs is over 4,000, which is a medium-sized trust; this is the point at which critical mass might be hoped for in terms of sharing teaching and resources.

LC asked about the CEO advert, which makes it clear that the implementation will take place - but no consultation has taken place. MB said that this recruitment was for a MAT that is already in existence. FV said that a summary of the position paper will be available publicly soon. The Diocese spoke to the chairs of the existing trusts to make them aware of the impact on their trusts. JW said that how we inform the parent body will effectively be an information evening - it can't be a consultation process when the decision has already been taken.

JC said it would be useful to have a 'frequently asked questions' sheet in order to anticipate parental concerns. LC had a copy of the minutes of Our Lady of Walsingham's consultation process, which could provide a good base to start from. FV said a small group of governors working on this could be effective, perhaps in conjunction with an introduction to people from Our Lady of Walsingham. No one at the Diocese underestimates the significance of this move; this is probably the biggest strategic and structural change the Diocese has undertaken in a lifetime. A discussion then took place concerning various points relating to futureproofing, potential exit

routes, MAT sizes, the possible involvement of private schools, geographical issues, impact on staff, financial implications and premises.

JC asked what the recommended next steps were. Is it to form a small group to do some more detailed work? What should that group discuss? What is the school aiming towards and what actions does it need to take? Can we set the timeframe? FV suggested collating individual governors' concerns in the first instance and then convening a meeting with the CEO and a director, reporting back to the full GB. MB thought it would be helpful to have a public position paper ASAP; FV said there would be one on the website within a week. JW had some feedback on the draft document - that LGB (for 'local governing body') should be defined, and preferably not abbreviated, to avoid confusion. LC thought that parents would want to know all the details. JC agreed - it would be clear then why this model had been chosen. JMcC said it was important also to consider where the other schools were so that the shifts didn't happen all at once. A lot of other schools appear to be considering quite a last-minute entrance to the MAT. LC asked what JMcC thought was the best timeframe in which the school should join? JMcC thought Year 1.

FV will wait to hear from St Alban's as to the working party and its preferred approach.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 7 September 2017

Confirmed.

3. Matters arising

Link governor appointments & subcommittees:

- English - JW
- Maths - PC
- Science - LC
- Child Protection - SS
- Inclusion - JC
- Early Years - SS
- Assessment & Planning - WM
- Environmental Studies - PC
- PE - GH
- MFL - LC
- Computing - MB
- Performing Arts/Art/DT - JC
- RE - JW
- PSHE - JW

Subcommittees:

- Performance & Standards: next meeting 13 December
- Resources: MB, LC (chair), PC, GH, SS; next meeting 6 December, 630

MB had spoken to the potential foundation governor and will follow up further.

5. Reports from termly briefings/training/subcommittee meetings

LC attended the termly briefing. Results for Cambridgeshire were discussed - the region is still lagging behind national averages on everything. Health & Safety was discussed - the H&S Executive may choose to come into schools and impose repairs at the request of parents, as the result of an accident, or through some other report. All H&S should be up to standard in order to avoid this happening. The last presentation was on using money from the sports grant. It has to be used to develop things that are not part of the curriculum. It can be used for swimming, but not to progress to the standard 25m; if you want to use it for swimming, you need to set further objectives. Ofsted will be looking out for this.

P&S had met and discussed the behaviour policy, with a presentation from pupils. Targets were also discussed; the school is formally a 'light touch' school. The KIT visit report was also discussed. WM said what a good thing it was to have pupils at governing meetings.

6. Headteacher's report

This was circulated ahead of the meeting. It was agreed that followup questions could be sent by email.

JMcC described the situation at the school that he had been supporting and the reasons for the urgency in providing support. A discussion took place highlighting possible concerns about the impact on St. Alban's. PC and JW felt that communication with parents could be improved. PC offered to take on responsibility for this.

There was a discussion of timing for joining a MAT, and a discussion of the changes to the decision-making structure, along with the moving of the governing body to being more of an advisory & monitoring body.

7. MAT discussion

WM, LC, JC and MB are willing to be on the MAT working party.

8. AOB

St Laurence's would like to renew their reciprocal arrangement to provide governors for each other's panels for disciplinary procedures; all governors were in favour.