

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Minutes of the meeting of the full Governing Body
held remotely at 6.30 p.m.
on Wednesday 3 February 2021

No. 2020/2021 – 4

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 No apologies were received.

1.2 Present: Lia Campos (LC, chair), Edward Acton (EA), Cristina Alves Martins (CAM), Patrick Coughlin (PC), Fr Alan Hodgson (AH), Tanatsa Jingura (TJ), Joseph McCrossan (JMcC), Keith Menary (KM), Janet Muir (JMu), Sarah Smith (SS), Jo Wager (JW), Michael Yelton (MY), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 8 December 2020

2.1 Confirmed.

3. Matters arising

3.1 The Pupil Premium plan had been shared with governors.

3.2 Fr Alan consulted with Canon Harkness and was informed that the parish is postcodes CB1 and CB2, with some of CB1 shared with St Philip Howard. The parish boundaries of Sawston are more clearly known because of the recency of its re-establishment. The size of the parish really points to a need to expand the school; there are families that are very loyal to the parish but are still unable to obtain places. The new lockdown had disrupted initial attempts at beginning a business plan. There was some discussion about possible premises near the existing site.

4. Reports from termly briefings/training/sub-committees

4.1 MY has applied to attend the safeguarding training next week but is on the waitlist. CAM has training scheduled in February and March (looking at data). AH will be attending several Diocesan safeguarding training sessions in the near future. KM will be attending the governance induction on Saturday morning.

4.2 There will be a Resources meeting on 10 February, looking at the next budget, capital plan expenditure, the budget monthly reports and potentially the SFVS.

4.3 Performance & Standards had been unable to meet; agenda items have been translated to the next agenda item in this full meeting.

5. Performance & Standards

5.1 Four class bubbles have been opened in school for vulnerable and key worker children - four times as many as during the first lockdown. Some pupils are coming in full time, and some part time.

5.2 A survey was run with pupils and parents, to gather feedback on what worked well during the last lockdown. It was decided to introduce live Zoom meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays for around half an hour with small groups of pupils. These all seem to be going well. A whole-class Zoom is also being run on a Friday. Each teacher is responsible for keeping their class's learning platform going. On Monday, a learning overview is uploaded so that parents and pupils are aware of what the class is going to cover that week. One teacher's approach was considered particularly clear, so this has been adopted across the classes as best practice. Each pupil is expected to upload two pieces of work each week that will be fully marked. Maths, English and one other type of lesson are set each day. Teachers are aware that there is additional need, especially at the bottom end of the school, with parents' work requirements having changed.

5.3 After half term, the aim is to have all staff in school at least for part of the week, to share the workload and also for wellbeing and community participation, and to relieve JMcC of classroom teaching. Teaching staff do also need time out because they are still running the online learning programme. An extra bubble will be introduced; Reception and Year 1 will be taught in separate bubbles, alongside Year 2/3, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6, following a 3-day rota with a member of staff along with a teaching assistant. A detailed schedule for staffing the bubbles was shared with governors. Each bubble will have a maximum of 12 children, so a maximum of 60 children in school – considerably higher than other schools. The school is also trying to build capacity in case other pupils require in-school support. There are families in which only one parent is a critical worker and both are at home; it might be necessary to ask such parents to keep their children at home.

5.4 How will we pick up any children who aren't learning to read, and should be? Engagement on Zoom and ClassDojo is being monitored; the school is also communicating with parents, and inviting them into school. Pupils who will need intensive support once schools re-open are being identified.

5.5 Is there any way of improving the use of digital platform? The Reading Eggs programme was being used previously, but most parents are doing their own thing with their children. If parents need support they only need to ask - laptops have been sent home to some pupils.

5.6 Some parents have commented that there is a lot of printing sheets required. Could workbooks be set up with a range of activities, as more economical, with worksheets set through this? One disadvantage of this is that the curriculum doesn't necessarily follow this sort of approach.

5.7 Parental survey results had been discussed at a previous meeting. Entitlement assessments are ongoing. The safer recruitment audit was deferred because of lockdown. The next Performance and Standards meeting needs to focus on catchup requirements, with children tested on their return and assessed against expected progress. It would be desirable to set a meeting date towards the end of this term if possible. If schools are still not open, this will need to be after Easter.

5.8 Is there any potential for improving remote learning platforms? It seems too late in the day at this point, although it could be possible in future should it be required. Teams and other platforms have been used by others, but the pupils are familiar with ClassDojo now. It could be possible to extend the ClassDojo platform by paying for additional elements. Mrs Paul is using ClassDojo for her Early Years assessments. Parents and pupils would like it to be used more for uploading homework. Teams is worth exploring because it allows information to be organised

more effectively. Lessons can also be recorded, so if a pupil misses a lesson, they can watch back, which might be beneficial to students who need additional support.

6. Budget allocation

6.1 The school's budget has been allocated based on 211 pupils on roll; however, the school is losing two EHCP pupils. The allocation is up approximately 14k from 2020-21. Most of this will be absorbed in staff costs, and it will therefore be important to look at benchmarking as part of the SFVS scrutiny. Examining like-for-like schools (for example, the Spinney in Cherry Hinton) offers a sense of how the school has benefited or not from the allocation process. The Spinney has similar demographics so is a good school to benchmark against. This will be explored in more detail in the Resources meeting. Governors are invited to explore the spreadsheet to understand where St Alban's sits in terms of funding. The school has quite a high level of EAL pupils compared to many other schools, and parents have been strongly encouraged to correctly record pupils whose first language is not English. The carry-forward from last year is around 26k, and at first sight it seems it will be possible to retain existing staffing structures without needing to re-organise.

7. Staffing – office and class teacher (Y2 post)

7.1 There are no applicants so far for the finance officer post (the closing date is 15 February). However, a keen parent has been in discussion with the school; she has experience of working in the city, and has discussed the post with Mrs Monument, so it is to be hoped that she will apply. Ray Byford has been asked for support; EPM could be able to offer some.

7.2 Mrs Monument has negotiated with Queen Edith and Queen Emma to do some hours for the school each week until someone has been appointed. JMcC is also looking for a mentor for the new appointment. He would welcome a governor to be involved in the interview, which is due to take place during half-term, while there will be no one in school. However, availability of the candidate and of interview panel members may be affected.

7.3 A long-term sickness absence is being reviewed, and EPM and the staff member's family are involved.

7.4 One of the present jobshare partners in Y2 is resigning. In an ideal world, there would be one full-time teacher in either Y1 or Y2, and two part-time teachers for the other class. If none of the current teachers want a full-time position, it will be necessary to appoint a fourth part-time person. Mrs McCrossan is willing to opt for this job share model from September if necessary.

8. Structure of bubbles post half-term

8.1 Covered under remote learning (agenda item 5)

9. Headteacher's report

9.1 There are currently only two pupils with EHCPs. The school is applying for one more, for a child who is currently receiving much needed one-to-one support, which is having a big impact on resources.

9.2 There have been two racial incidents in the school (both involving the same pupil). The child that made the comments has an EHCP, so it needs to be handled

very sensitively. Both sets of parents are involved, and the school are putting in place measures to address it. Lockdown may have been a factor.

9.3 There is no update on the RAG-rating of priorities as a result of lockdown.

9.4 There was a staff wellbeing survey in December, with very positive responses – staff appear to feel supported, and that there are no further measures required. A further survey is being taken; staff are also consulted at staff meetings. It was noted from the data that some staff are unsure whether everyone is adhering to Covid requirements. JMcC extended sincere thanks to teaching assistants, as they have been regularly coming into school; it has been the intention to protect the teachers as much as possible. How do teachers feel about being tested regularly on return? LFD tests have already started, on a Wednesday at 6pm and Sunday, and staff seem happy to do these. The workload balance on returning to school will need to be carefully monitored; this is why parents are only being asked to upload two documents. There needs to be an eye to long-term staff wellbeing.

9.5 On the subject of digital learning more generally, one governor commented that Teams and OneNote offer a lot of potential for recording and delivering lessons, which can reduce duplication of effort, as well as providing pupils with resources to return to as they prepare for assessments. JMcC has a concern about pressure on pupils to revisit lessons; attendance and attention levels may drop if pupils know they can catch up later. Interface with the teachers should be the most important thing. The technical side would need to be looked at from a logistical point of view.

9.6 The heaters and plumbing work from the condition survey will hopefully be completed before March (the Diocese is paying). The PFA raised 6.5k to install a new pergola in the KS1 playground, which should be completed by the beginning of the summer term. JMcC had asked for a governor's support with improving road safety; he has been involved with a Local Highway initiative and has put forward a proposal with Linda Jones, and will be speaking on 10 February. The councillor seems confident that greater road safety measures (zig zags, signage etc) can be installed.

9.7 The school did very well in the Sumdog county championships. JMu spoke to all year council reps one to one with some specific questions about pupil experience of the first lockdown; from these specific questions, reps were asked to go back to their classes and find out how they were feeling. This information can be distributed to governors after the meeting. There were differences between KS1 and KS2 - KS2 had much greater enjoyment of receiving points in ClassDojo than KS1. Pupils are missing their friends, and the school building and routine. Some pupils were finding it difficult to concentrate at home. Pupils will be asked again on return from this lockdown.

9.8 JMcC is unable to attend the local authority's Covid forums due to teaching responsibilities; the office manager has also attended some. The Diocese is looking to appoint a new headteacher in Peterborough in early 2022.

9.9 An update on the MAT was expected in January, but as yet has not been received. The CEO is leaving in the summer, and one of the two executive heads is leaving at Easter, which is a fairly significant change. JMcC has offered whatever support the MAT might need.

9.10 There is a new chair for the PFA, which has been carrying out fundraising online.

10. Safeguarding audit

10.1 SS and MY had conducted this earlier in 2020.

10.2 The safer recruitment audit, which the school had volunteered to undertake, is now dependent on the local authority.

11. SFVS

11.1 The financial advisor attended the school to meet JMcC and Mrs Monument.

11.2 It was noted that it was very easy to manipulate the spreadsheet to compare school setup. JMcC proposes this should be a tool that is scrutinised at the resources meeting. It could be very useful when starting to set the budget.

11.3 Governors have all received a copy of the SFVS. This will be scrutinised at the next resources meeting, with attending governors having reviewed the sheet ready to discuss Value for Money, Staffing and Setting the Budget.

12. MAT Update

12.1 Covered in the Headteacher's Report (9.9)

13. AOB

13.1 JMcC offered a huge thank you to all the staff for their support – anything they've been asked to do has been done – and also to parents, because it's so difficult having children at home. The chair in turn thanked the head and staff for their fantastic work.

13.2 JMcC will discuss the long-term sickness situation with MY.

Meeting closed: 7.58 p.m.