

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Minutes of the meeting of the full Governing Body
held **in the school** at 6.30 p.m.
on Tuesday 8 November 2022

No. 2022/2023 – 2

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Edward Acton, Sarah Smith and Michael Yelton.

1.2 Present: Cristina Alves Martins (CAM), Ruth Burrows (RBU), Lia Campos (LC, chair), Tanatsa Jingura (TJ), Joseph McCrossan (JM), Keith Menary (KM), Jo Wager (JW), Rachael Beale (RBe, chair).

1.3 The meeting was declared quorate.

2. Standing items:

2.1. Confirm the minutes for 14 September 2022 meeting

2.1.1 The clerk had corrected one typo. Otherwise, the minutes were confirmed.

2.2. Matters arising

2.2.1 ACTION: CAM and LC are still to meet to review the data; this should be possible towards the end of November.

2.2.2 More KCSiE signatures were collected at this meeting, but several are still outstanding. **ACTION: JM to follow this up**

2.2.3 Governor meeting dates had been added to the website.

2.2.4 A planner for the year has also been uploaded to the website.

2.2.5 ACTION: JW still needs to send the English link report to RBU.

2.2.6 Model ToRs for the committees have been formally adopted; standing orders for the full governing body need to be finalised. RB had worked on adapting a model policy from the LA but there were a number of questions still to answer. Perhaps a policy from the Key would be more appropriate?

2.2.7 ACTION: RBe to investigate Key templates for standing orders

2.2.8 Full training data had been obtained from the LA and the record uploaded to the website.

2.2.9 The visit policy was checked and it was confirmed that the requested changes regarding visit frequency had been made.

2.2.11 ACTION: most governors still need to send RBe a short biography for the website.

2.3. Relevant pecuniary interests/conflicts of interest

2.3.1 No relevant interests were declared.

2.4. Reports from termly briefings, training and governor visits

2.4.1 Governance training (run by Anna-Marie Cooper from the local authority) had taken place before the last Performance & Standards meeting, and was attended by all governors, some in person and some remote.

2.4.2 JW had conducted an English visit with the English lead on the day of the meeting; the report is therefore not yet available, but the focus was teaching practice for reading, and how that feeds into writing. The visit looked at how data was collected, how ECT teachers were supported, and whether there were opportunities for children to do extended writing. The school's results and the writing displays around the school, as well as 'writer of the month' awards, were all visible evidence that the strategies were having an effect. As well as supporting pupils, the subject lead is also focusing on supporting other teachers, for example to bring along guided reading in other classes. Both teacher and pupil welfare should be carefully monitored; these years (4 and 5) have really struggled with the impacts of Covid. The idea that they can be bounced straight back to pre-Covid achievement levels is unrealistic, and puts a lot of pressure on both staff and students. JM has approached Pearson, who will be conducting online tutorials with selected pupils from January. One governor commented that the PE lead had noted pupils unable to catch a ball; the music hub has had difficulty getting music teaching into other schools because all the breakout rooms are being used for additional support. A governor stressed the importance of wellbeing, given the pressure this puts on those pupils. A wellbeing session had been run with some pupils online, and also with teachers. A wellbeing coordinator (pastoral lead) has also been appointed within school. **It was suggested that there should be a link governor with responsibility for wellbeing who would liaise with the coordinator. A governor also suggested that wellbeing should form a talking point on all link governor visits.**

2.4.3 LC conducted a visit for H&S and attended a fire drill. There was also a sweep of the school that identified a (planted) hidden child. LC was very impressed with the pupils' behaviour in the playground. She also attended an assembly, and observed fantastic behaviour, and a great representation of the ethos of the school.

2.4.4 KM had attended H&S training online. The training used the fire drill as examples.

2.4.5 JM is in the process of attending IOSH training (how to write risk assessments), and has COSHH training scheduled. SS has also booked onto a number of courses.

2.5. School priorities/SDP

2.5.1 These had been circulated before the meeting.

2.5.2 By the end of the year, the school needs a roadmap for joining the OLV MAT. Finance, collaboration and standards all need to be clear. There has been a great deal of change at the Diocese. Andy Stone, the new Diocesan Director of schools, will be visiting the school; at the headteachers' conference recently he declared a desire to have all schools in the Diocese in a MAT. At present, the local authority is providing very effective support, and the school has not yet seen evidence that the MAT would be able to provide equivalent levels of support. A governor had previously tried to

review Ofsted data for the trust and observed that one of the failing schools in it did not have its data presented. As the trust is now more established, it should also now be possible to compare the services offered by the MAT against what the LA is offering to see if it is more affordable. A governor commented that it was also necessary to get a clearer idea of the qualitative value of support behind each line item. The Health and Safety services purchased by the MAT are the same as those used by St Alban's; similarly, personnel services are provided by EPM. It was suggested that Flavio Vettese could be invited to the next meeting. **A governor asked whether there was a directive from the DfE for all schools to join MATs?** It was thought not - a recommendation rather than a requirement - but the directive here has come from the Diocese.

2.5.3 ACTION: reviews to be conducted of the OLW MAT's Ofsted and finance reports.

2.5.4 On the subject of the bespoke curriculum, it is necessary to look at the quality of provision and continuity. **A governor asked what 'bespoke curriculum' means?** This is looking at what the school does that is unique to its own setting - for example, performing arts is particularly strong here. History and geography are all around us, given the school's central city location.

2.5.5 The 'high needs' block is being sliced again, and the county still does not have fair funding; both these things have serious implications for the school's finances. The need to meet higher thresholds to receive an EHCP could also have a huge impact on funding.

2.5.6 **A governor asked for clarification as to cover arrangements for the inclusion coordinator?** The school has appointed Paula Ray for one day per week until February half term, after which James Hor will take on the responsibility. Paula has agreed to mentor him as he goes through the training for the SEND award (which is mandatory to become an inclusion coordinator).

2.6. Safeguarding

2.6.1 Governors had undertaken safeguarding training.

2.6.2 The local authority is satisfied that the school is fully compliant.

2.6.3 **A governor asked whether the car park barrier had had a positive impact on unauthorised entry to the school?** It was believed not, unfortunately.

2.7. Health and Safety

2.7.1 A letter had been received as a result of the fire audit declaring the work done in the school to address the issues had been satisfactory.

2.8. Policy review

2.8.1 JM requested a discussion of the pay policy. This is a standard EPM policy. The school is still awaiting the 5% increase for staff, with no indication of how this will be funded; there should be enough in the carry-forward contingency to cover this but it will be a significant slice. The policy introduces intermediate points on the pay scale, to enable awarding of increments to staff who have not quite met all requirements to step up a full point on the scale. A governor noted, however, that the unions were balloting their members for a higher increase, owing to the 20%

decrease in teacher pay in real terms. A significant number of schools south of the river will have a budget deficit next year.

2.8.2 The policy does not significantly deviate from EPM's template so should not require discussion with the unions; the school is following the national agreement for support staff and teachers.

2.8.3 The school does not currently have Leading Teachers (who can go out to other schools to support them). It does not seem wise for JM to resume his role in supporting other schools, as while it would have a positive impact on the school's finances, the school needs his expertise here; previously, there was also an experienced deputy head in Janet Muir to provide cover. The headteacher's pay is comfortably within the 25% above-the-range margin for a Group 2 school.

2.8.4 DECISION: The chair recommended that the EPM policy be adopted; no objections were noted.

2.9. Curriculum update

2.9.1 This was discussed under the SDP.

3. Feedback from strategy evening and SDP discussion

3.1 The PowerPoint presentation from the strategy evening has been uploaded to the school website. A number of good ideas were put forward; some were clearly in line with the desire for bespoke curriculum development, which validates its inclusion in development priorities. Parents were also very preoccupied with wraparound care, asking about the possibility for more clubs. Most of the parents attending were relatively new to the school. Many of the ideas had been raised at previous similar events. **A governor commented on the impact on staff wellbeing of providing extensive opportunities outside the curriculum.** This has been investigated, but given the nature of the school site, it is very difficult to provide this - there is insufficient space. **A governor asked if it might be possible for external organisations to hire space in the school and thereby provide this sort of care as well as additional finance?** There isn't enough space really to make this possible. An outdoor classroom for clubs had been suggested previously as a possible part solution.

3.2 ACTION: It was agreed that a response to parents acknowledging what can and can't be achieved would be prepared by JM, and sent to governors.

3.3 **Could additional finance be raised through tickets for shows?** There were concerns about the cost impact on parents. Some felt that many parents at the school are actually in a position to be able to afford this; a voluntary contribution could raise some money. The licences to perform do cost money.

4. SFVS review

4.1 ACTION TJ to identify a date to begin this process with JM and the interim school business officer Rona.

5. Governor training

5.1 This was discussed under standing items.

6. Governor recruitment

6.1 Frances Image has applied to be a foundation governor. She has a lot of education experience and has worked for the Diocese, and is a lecturer at the Margaret Beaufort Institute. There have also been four candidates for the parent governor vacancy, the election for which will commence soon. One candidate is already a governor at a nursery school so is already trained.

7. Headteacher's report

7.1 This was circulated ahead of the meeting. Unfortunately there were only 208 pupils on roll on census day, even though there are now 210 (another census takes place in January). There were a large number of families visiting for the 2023/4 open days. Attendance continues to exceed local and national benchmarks, but the gap is smaller than it has been; the school has been impacted by illness.

7.2 Year 4 and 6 have a high percentage of SEND pupils. An EHCP is expected for one pupil, which will provide more capacity; however, it is a fine balancing act between finances and capacity.

7.3 3 new welfare files have been created (logs of concern but not on the child protection register). There has been 1 'near miss'; this was recorded on the LA's website.

7.4 DECISION: The Pupil Premium strategy has been reviewed and it was agreed to adopt it.

7.5 The boiler work is still to be finished; it is hoped that this will be completed by the end of November. Some refurbishment of playground equipment and surfaces is also required; this will be discussed with the PFA, and it is hoped that they will contribute.

7.6 The church also has capacity problems as it has not yet got a replacement for Fr Alan, and the office manager left at the end of October. The school does have a priest to celebrate the end of term mass, at least. **A governor asked for governors to receive more warning of things like not having a priest to celebrate a mass on a holy day of obligation.** OLEM had offered the opportunity to join the 1215 mass, but that does not work with the school day; Y6 were able to attend, while other classes watched the livestream of the St Laurence mass. The St Mary's mass in the church was cancelled at the last minute; a priest had to be found at very short notice to conduct mass in the hall instead. **A governor asked whether we could join with St Mary's?** An email has been sent to Canon Eugene enquiring after possible solutions; there is a priest without a work visa. There is no priest to do confessions. **Why is school provision not a priority?** A governor has drafted a letter to the Diocese about the difficulties with provision, but it might need some adjustment to emphasise better the school's willingness to co-operate. It was agreed that it would be better to wait until the new Bishop was properly installed. There might also be a possibility of contacting Blackfriars.

8. MAT update

8.1 This was covered in the standing items discussion.

9. AOB

9.1 Anna-Marie Cooper would like to conduct a follow-up governance review to update the action plan that was issued last academic year.

Meeting closed 8.40 p.m.

ACTIONS:

• CAM/LC	○ Meet to go through the data to ensure a good governor understanding of the full achievement from an Ofsted perspective.
• LC:	○ Review OLW MAT Ofsted and finance reports
• TJ:	○ Identify date for SFVS process to begin
• JM:	○ Follow up KCSiE signatures separately with governors who were not physically present ○ Prepare response to strategy evening for governor review
• JW:	○ Send on the English link report to RBU
• RBe:	○ Investigate Key template for standing orders
• All governors:	○ Send an introduction of themselves, their skills and their relationship to the school, to RBe, to be uploaded to a public-facing area on the site