

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 4 July 2023

No. 2022/2023 – 5

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Tanatsa Jingura and Ruth Burrows.

1.2 Present: Lia Campos (LC, chair), Stefania Deidda (SD), Frances Image (FI), Joseph McCrossan (JM), Keith Menary (KM), John Parrott (JP), Sarah Smith (SS), Jo Wager (JW), Michael Yelton (MY), Rachael Beale (RB, clerk)

1.3 The meeting was quorate.

2. Standing items:

2.1 The **minutes** for the meeting on Tuesday 25 April 2023 were confirmed.

2.2 Matters arising:

2.2.1 JP had an action to contact the Highways Authority regarding the legality of the school putting out cones to control traffic at sensitive points, but had not completed this. Another parent at the school is very interested in taking forward the traffic management plans. This situation seems to be better than it was, but may deteriorate with the winter weather as more people drive. A school travel plan may help to advise parents as to the best approach. It might be possible to lobby for an exemption to the existing parking restrictions to help alleviate congestion at crunch points. The infrastructure on Hills Road is being improved in the favour of cyclists and pedestrians, to promote active travel in the city.

2.2.2 ACTION: JP to continue to follow up traffic management.

2.3 No relevant **pecuniary interests/conflicts of interest** were declared.

2.4 Reports from committee meetings:

2.4.1 Resources:

2.4.1.i The minutes of this meeting had been distributed ahead of time. JMcC had circulated some helpful documents that Rona Metters had sent in response to one action point. The new toolkit rollout is proving difficult. With regard to Helen Bates's involvement in the tendering process for the KS1 playground work, the tenders have come in and it has been stated that the school may not review them. The money has come from the PFA rather than the Diocese. There is concern that if the bids cannot be reviewed, it might result in cost inflation. **One governor thought it should be possible to review the bids once the process has closed. Another thought that while public procurement rules probably apply, it should be possible to see details of the bids without company names attached. Is it possible to set a cap to the job?** The school wants to be able to retain the right to choose what it gets for the money, so it has to be possible to review the bids. This is a simple project which has real potential

to escalate. **Could it be done more cheaply, so it's under the tender threshold of 10k?**
The Diocese needed to take it forward because it is their land rather than the school's.

2.4.1.ii ACTION: JM to clarify with Helen Bates that the school believes that the small, ringfenced budget for this project does not require a tender

2.4.1.iii Rona Metters will investigate permissions to change the windows in the KS1 building, owing to the school's location in a conservation area and OLEM's recent listing (though the latter should have no impact).

2.4.2 Performance & Standards:

2.4.2.i The minutes of this meeting had also been distributed in advance. The safeguarding report had not been possible to save, but this had subsequently been sent out. The new Catholic self-evaluation document, in relation to Diocesan rollout, will be put into Reception. There had been a request for extra training in relation to this, which had been distributed to governors, but GovernorHub training courses likely cover St Alban's needs already. Every link governor should by now have completed a visit and associated report, which should be on the website.

2.5. Reports from termly briefings and training

2.5.1 LC and JM attended an Ofsted meeting, outlining the expectations of the school. Outstanding schools will all be re-inspected by December 2025, but there is no clarity as to when it might happen for St Alban's. Ofsted are running behind, and have increased capacity. A 'pilot' has been introduced, to allow for a two-week conversation to question the findings of the inspection. It is felt that the school is in a good position for Ofsted. Training is now being kept up to date on the website.

2.6. Reports from link governor visits

2.6.1 There are several of these on the website now, available for mutual review by governors. The format of the form has been changed.

2.7. School priorities/SDP

2.7.1 These are changing for next year: RE and maths for the curriculum; joining the MAT, organisationally. It will be important to keep up the momentum on governor training; Anna-Marie Cooper will revisit in September, and Rachel Schofield will also return from a safeguarding perspective. It will be important to ensure that H&S continues to be a priority, as is staffing the office. It will be important not to become complacent about the closeness of the community with regard to ensuring safeguarding. Development of a strategic overview for the next three years is also on the list; it will be important to keep this rooted in pragmatism. School office function is currently answerable to the consultancy, which introduces some delay. This will be similar with the MAT. SATs results are due on Tuesday 18 July. Existing priorities were reviewed, and found to be doing well. Attendance has gone up to 96.2% from around 94, above national and local targets even if it didn't meet St Alban's own. It was agreed that this document needed to remain on the full governing body agenda so that everyone was able to input to its review. In an Ofsted visit, governors will be expected to understand what these priorities are and how work towards them is progressing.

2.8. Safeguarding

2.8.1 The safeguarding policy is up to date and has been circulated. Monthly visits have been taking place, looking at various focuses on the safeguarding wheel, and being recorded centrally. Spot checks have also not highlighted any issues.

2.9. Health and Safety

2.9.1 There were no recent H&S reports to discuss. The caretaker's job description is being reviewed.

2.9.2 ACTION: JP and KM to produce a couple of paragraphs outlining recent conversations on this.

2.10. Policy review

2.10.1 The complaints policy is on the agenda for discussion. There will be a new H&S policy from the LA to discuss in September.

2.11 Curriculum update

2.11.1 The new RE curriculum will be starting in September in reception. Spanish will also start instead of French. The new phonics system will also be implemented. One of the SIP actions was to explore how to assess the foundation subjects.

3. Subject leader reports

3.1 Subject leader reports were circulated ahead of the meeting. Governors thanked the teachers for sending them, and for all their hard work during the year. One governor commented that they were impressive, taken as a whole. Another governor particularly commented on the deep passion displayed in the English report. **A governor queried a sentence in the science report which seemed to indicate there would not be followup of monitoring, where it was believed the opposite was actually intended.** The teacher responsible for geography is also going on some training.

4. Complaints policy

4.1 This was circulated ahead of the meeting, based on a generic policy from the LA. **A governor commented that there was one paragraph regarding a choice over a face-to-face meeting, and suggested that it was better to retain the option to hold a face-to-face meeting rather than ruling it out.** There were no objections to this proposal.

4.2 It was agreed to adopt the new policy.

5. RE Survey

5.1 This was very interesting. It was good to see parents' views of how the school is perceived. The main headline was that parents had all noticed that links with the parish were poor. JM has been working on improving communication with Fr Paul at Fisher House; there is an ordinand arriving in a year who might be able to support chaplaincy. JM has been in contact with other schools that are near a church to find out whether they have a better relationship, but this has not proven to be the case. This suggests that it is a wider issue that needs to be put to the Diocese, perhaps regarding the question of what needs to happen during priestly formation to support improvements. This can be looked at quite dispassionately, as a result. Other schools also confirmed that there is not proactive involvement from priests, but it needs to be

fought for. **A governor noted a comment that other than Y6, lower down the school there is less active involvement from pupils. This could be related to Y3 no longer preparing for first holy communion in schools; could there be some thought about how to involve other year groups?** There is some involvement from younger children e.g. ringing the bell for prayers. Fr Paul is willing to come in to lead some meditation, and also to prepare classes for class liturgies. St Laurence's has now stopped doing FHC preparation in school. Governors offered sincere thanks to Fr Simon at St Laurence's and Fr Paul at Fisher House for their support.

5.2 The pupil survey was also very healthy.

6. Succession planning

6.1 This is to allow St Alban's to enter into the MAT without causing too much disturbance to the school community. JM talked through this timetable. The office manager is leaving in October.

7. Headteacher's report

7.1 This was circulated ahead of the meeting. There was concern about making sure that children who were due to leave were replaced by new pupils in time for the census date in September. Reception is full for September. Pupil Premium children are below the threshold for attendance, although still above the national average. This needs to be carefully monitored, but it should be borne in mind that there are not many Pupil Premium children.

7.2 ACTION: JM to explore the reasons behind these attendance rates.

7.3 155 incidents have been logged in MyConcern since January, but this includes many different things.

7.4 50% pass is considered OK for SEN or pupil premium children, but not lower than that. **A governor noted that the actual number of pupils involved can skew things heavily.**

7.5 The headteacher's report was structured in an Ofsted-friendly way following input from the school improvement partner. JM believes St Alban's is a 'good' school. **One governor commented that some of the ratings felt a little harsh?**

7.6 The decision was taken not to replace the TAs that are leaving in order to see what happens in September. The boiler company went into administration, so there is still a question mark over this work. Sincere thanks were offered to longstanding PFA members at the summer fair. Governors also felt the PFA should be thanked for purchasing the phonics materials, which was very important. The school has been informed that there will be an RE inspection next year.

8. School improvement report

8.1 This was sent out in advance, having been received from Sue Blythe.

9. EYFS moderation report

9.1 This report was also circulated ahead of the meeting.

10. MAT plans

10.1 *This was discussed alongside success planning (item 6).* St Albans's is looking at joining the MAT in April 2024, which will mean a 6-month consultation from September, coinciding with Rona's contract ending. It should also map onto the financial year. This provides a term to bed things in before the new academic year begins. This should be communicated clearly to the Diocese, and as soon as possible, so that it is possible to make the required changes in good time. An email will be sent to Flavio. There are still many open questions, including ones about governance structure, financing and IT. The CFO resigned 3-4 months ago, and the MAT has also lost its IT person. There will need to be a big piece of education for parents around what exactly this means.

10.2 ACTION: LC and JM will email Flavio with the school's intentions.

11. Date of next meeting

11.1 If an extraordinary meeting is needed in relation to the MAT this could happen over Zoom.

11.2 The first meeting of 2023-24 was set for **Wednesday 4 October.**

12. AOB

12.1 KM said he needed to step down as a governor for personal reasons. The chair thanked KM very much for his sincere participation in spite of everything that has been going on for him. This will require another election. All other governors also thanked him.

12.2 This was also RB (clerk)'s last meeting; the governors offered thanks for 13 years of work in the role, and especially for contributions to Ofsted preparations.

12.3 The 'Strawberries & Cream' summer concert is on Tuesday 11 July at 6pm. This clashed with Diocesan training; it was hoped that the training might be recorded.

12.4 The end of term mass was fixed for the morning of Wednesday 19 July.

Meeting closed at 20.32

ACTIONS:

• JM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarify with Helen Bates that the school believes that the small, ringfenced budget for the KS1 playground project does not require a tender ○ Explore the reasons behind attendance rates
• JM/KM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Produce a couple of paragraphs outlining recent conversations on H&S issues.
• JM/LC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Email Flavio to confirm intentions of St Alban's with regard to timetable for joining the MAT
• JP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to follow up traffic management issues.