



ST JAMES' R.C. ACADEMY TRUST

Maybury Close, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1BL

Faith in Action, Working Together, Walking in the Footsteps of Christ

Minutes of the 135th meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 17th March 2022 starting at 1700 on Zoom.

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)

Lisa Weeks (Head Teacher)

Michelle Wilson

Elizabeth Williamson

Kenneth Chan

Fr David Camilleri

Margaret Connell

Mark Hutchins

Martin D'Souza

Amanda Garlick

In Attendance: Dominique Wells (Clerk)

Papers relating to the meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

1. Opening Prayers

Fr David opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cat Hardiman, Paul Gribben, Mark Edwards

3. Declarations of Interest in items in this Agenda.

None.

4. Review of Minutes of the last meeting:

4.1. Confirmation of Accuracy

The minutes were agreed by all to be a true record.

4.2. Matters Arising

Item 11: Pupil Premium Report

This is now on the website.

Item 14: Chair's Report

The budget for Governor training is a standard £250, of which 50% has been spent so far this year. Money is available for Governor training.

Congratulations were given to the School on its Outstanding OFSTED result.

5. Literacy/Inclusivity Resource

Miss Atkinson presented a new literacy/inclusivity resource to be used in Year 4: a pride book as part of the Literary Tree.

The message of the book is about love, equality and acceptance and is the story of the gay activist who created the rainbow flag and who was assassinated.

The book links with Catholic social teaching and will help prepare the children for and make them comfortable with the world as it is today. Miss Atkinson feels that she can deliver this confidently and that it can be threaded into the curriculum as a lovely representation of Christianity.

Governors welcomed educating the children in acceptance and equality and supported the resource.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Should the School write to parents explaining the rationale behind using the resource, in case there are parents who may be uncomfortable with it?

A: The School finds that parents are usually informed and supportive of these initiatives (e.g. diversity talks). Parents' evening or EDDI may be a good chance for them to talk about it should they want.

6. Head Teacher's Report

The Head Teacher highlighted the following points:

- Ash Wednesday Mass took place in church and it was good to be able to celebrate mass together again.
- School visits are now resuming. Extra-curricular clubs are now taking place, including new ones.
- Mental Health Week went very well.
- There was nothing of major concern arising from the results of the Bullying Questionnaire – the Head Teacher has talked to children where there was a potential issue and the situation/understanding was clarified and resolved.
- Following the publication of the OFSTED result, many lovely letters of congratulation have been received from Sir Gavin Bacon, the Chief Inspector and other authorities.

The Head Teacher was thanked for an outstanding Head Teacher's Report.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Is there any update on COVID?

A: There was no COVID for a few weeks but it is returning. 15 children are currently off school but they are all home-learning. It is more challenging when staff are absent, not only financially but also having to take TAs away to cover lessons.

Q: How is the level of Reading in Reception?

A: It seems more difficult for parents to read at home than before. Most parents work, or may be single parents, and there is financial pressure. Parents are not reluctant to read at home, but have other worries and concerns. Mrs Richards is aware of this and there are parents who come into school and read.

The School use the Literacy Tree and All About Phonics. It doesn't use a DfE-listed scheme but OFSTED saw good practice in the School. The DfE have now recognised All About Phonics.

The Governors asked for further information on this to be shared in the next Children & Learning Committee Meeting.

Q: What is Artsmark?

A: Miss McCarthy has applied for this award which recognises art as an important subject for the wellbeing and to nurture a well-rounded child.

7. Ukraine – school/parish/community update

2 families in the School have relatives in the Ukraine. Both the Head Teacher and Fr David have spoken to the families to see how our community can support. The shoebox idea was good but financial aid seemed the best way forward as there are sometimes too many items donated, or they can be acquired more cheaply in Poland. The walk raised money and children could see that they had done something positive. Volunteering time and praying were also good ways to support.

Fr David reported that he was considering (along with other Petts Wood churches) the best way for our Parish to help. It seemed likely that physical help may be required.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Might there be an impact on class numbers with refugee families needing to be accommodated?

A: It is not yet known, but it seems that Ukrainian schools are currently teaching remotely.

8. Pam Fearnley's Spring Term visit

The Head Teacher noted that there is a real dialogue between the School and Pam Fearnley, who sometimes rings the Head Teacher for advice as well as giving advice herself. She looked at Computing, DT and PE. She is considered valuable for keeping the School 'on its toes'.

9. Umbrella Trust Development Proposals

The remaining 6 schools in the UT wish to remain as a trust. A working party was set up in May to consider ways of strengthening the Trust and the Chair has been on this working party. They propose that having a management structure for the Trust will be a good thing. The National Association of Head Teachers have said that a school can't be forced to go to a MAT. It is considered that a MAT will not benefit either children or staff. The Head Teachers are confident that they can continue as a trust, the aim of which is to promote Catholic life and the mission of the school.

There will be more meetings and clerical support will be needed. The UT would pool accounting and audit functions.

10. Holding the School to Account

Responses to questions as follows:

Quality of Education

The School is aware that writing, after a period of home learning, needs attention. In Years 5 and 6, a TA will sometimes cover a teacher to enable them to work one-to-one with children – this has been very effective. There are focus groups in classes and it is talked about daily.

Early-morning interventions are in place. In data day meetings, the effectiveness of interventions are assessed.

The Deputy Head explained the 7 principles of Catholic Social Teaching and confirmed that she went through these with staff in the staff meeting and how to embed these principles. Cafod and 10-10 resources would be used to promote it, with one being covered each year from Reception to Year 6.

The School would apply for the Oscar Romero award – there are lots of aspects to this, including the aim of aspiring to be more, not have more; how people are treating and helping them to live life to the full. It will help the School to see what it does, what can be done and what has been achieved.

Behaviour and Attitudes

The Single Central Register is reviewed monthly.

Confidential items.

There are no concerns with attendance or punctuality (COVID aside).

Personal Development

In the Bullying Questionnaire completed by KS2, 100% felt they could tell someone if there was a problem. Discussions had taken place with children who had mentioned a potential issue and all were clarified/resolved.

Children, parents and teacher can refer to the Listening Ear.

Parents Evening gives parents an opportunity to express concerns to staff and the Head Teacher continues to hold her surgery. Teachers have an 'open-door' policy and parents can talk to them at a mutually convenient time.

Staff are very aware of the SEND or disadvantaged children in the School.

Leadership and Management

Staff are still accessing support as needed. The stability of staff in the School would indicate that they feel supported.

The mission statement of the School remains unchanged and has not been discussed with staff. The School accepts that there is a possible need to review and will take this on board.

11. Chair's Report

The Chair highlighted the main areas in her report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

12. Religious Education/Catholic Life and Mission

This will be an agenda item for all meetings going forward.

The Deputy Head Teacher gave an overview of how the School helps to promote Catholic life. For instance, Year 5 plan and lead collective worship on Wednesdays – they choose hymns, theme, scripture, etc. Currently they are looking at Lenten themes.

Fr David noted that it would be good to have a focus on the spirituality of St James and offered to help with this. St James' feast day is in the school holiday.

The Chair mentioned training at the Commission regarding the new curriculum and recommended it. She would email the date to Governors.

Year 6 had gone to Reconciliation and returned refreshed. Thanks were given to Fr David for this. Fr David reported that the children had been very well-behaved.

13. Budget Monitoring Report

The Finance Officer was thanked for these.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Are the water distribution works (capital item) financially complete?

A: The School has received part of the funds and £11k has been paid so far. This is currently ongoing.

Q: Are there financial changes to be aware of re. the Teachers Pension Scheme?

A: The School will receive a grant for this and the NI increase.

The School continues to be mindful.

14. Committee Reports

The Children and Learning and Resources and Audit Committees have met this term and the minutes from these meetings will be approved at the next meetings of these committees.

15. Subject Ambassadors/Link Governors summer term meetings

These should take place early next term. Governors were asked to contact the Head Teacher to meet their Subject Lead either on Zoom or face-to-face. A reminder would be sent next term.

16. Reports

School Garden & Forest School Reports

The Governors thanked Mrs Deasy and Mrs Richards for these.

Health & Safety Report

The twice-yearly Health & Safety walk had taken place – no major concerns noted and appropriate action taken where needed. Thanks given to Mr Gribben for doing this with the Head Teacher and caretaker.

The School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool Checklist

This is done annually by the Head Teacher and Finance Officer together.

17. Any other business

18. Dates of next meetings

Governor Morning	Wednesday, 27 April at 9.15am
Resources & Audit Committee	Tuesday 3 May at 4.30pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 17 May at 4.30pm
Full Governing Body	Thursday 23 June at 5.00pm

19. The Closing Prayer was led by Fr David.

The meeting closed at 18:15