



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Isleworth

Governing Body Meeting

At a meeting held at the School on
Wednesday 20 November 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Dr J Park (Chair), Miss E Dawson, Mrs C Giglio, Mr S Hogg,
Mrs M Hooper (arrived late), Mr F Marsh (Headteacher),
Miss M Martin, Mrs A Mason, Mrs C Raffet

In Attendance: Mr S Cobbold (Deputy Headteacher)

Clerk: Mrs I Bowles

1. Opening Prayer

The Chair opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Ms M O'Donoghue. Fr N Labo Ratu was absent; he had met with the Headteacher to discuss his capacity and availability.

3. Declaration of Personal Interests

There were no declarations of personal interest.

4. Membership

a) Changes in Membership

Ms Martin had been re-appointed as a Foundation Governor with effect from 1 November 2019; Governors congratulated Ms Martin on her re-appointment.

b) Governor Vacancies - Two Foundation Governors

The application for re-appointment of Ms O'Donoghue was ongoing; it was hoped that this would be authorised in the near future.

The Headteacher would send notice of the remaining Foundation Governor vacancy to the Parish Offices for publication in their Newsletters, and put a notice in the school Newsletter.

ACTION: HEADTEACHER

5. **Headteacher's Report to Governors**

The Headteacher apologised that there was no written Headteacher's Report; he explained that there had been a computer glitch that had caused the loss of the document. However, he had circulated supporting documents, with a list of points through which he led Governors.

Highlighted points were:

a) Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers were healthy; Mrs Gardner worked hard on maintaining numbers. More children would start in Nursery in January 2020. Numbers circulated to Governors had included a Looked After Child who had been expected, but was not now joining the school. Y5 and Nursery numbers were down, but Reception through to Y5 were fine.

Mrs Hooper arrived at 6.15pm.

Q: The Admissions Committee had discussed a family of four children, who had requested temporary admission into a year group outside their age. Had that family joined the school?

A: Yes, and all children were now in the appropriate year group.

b) Latest staffing

- The school was understaffed in terms of Support Staff and if the budget allowed more would be employed.
- Mr Pipola would be physically back in school on 26 November 2019.
- NQTs and Teach First teachers were doing well. Support for the Teach First teacher had been reduced at half term in line with their programme.
- Six subject leaders were attending training through the Hounslow Education Partnership led by Jon Fostick and John Shannon.

c) Budget overview

The Headteacher explained that funds had been allocated to cover teaching staff costs, which would reduce reserves going forward. It was not possible for any staff expansion at the current time.

A question on staffing is minuted under confidential business.

d) OfSTED IDSR

The Headteacher noted that there was nothing that stood out in the IDSR. Governors were reminded that they needed to know what was in the IDSR, as this was what the inspection team would look at prior to arriving at the school.

Pupil Premium/ disadvantaged children did not specifically feature in the data any more. Governors were pleased to see that there were statistics on the last pages showing that the school was significantly above national average.

e) RAISE on a Page, Autumn Peer Challenge and Peer Challenge QA Report

The latest Peer Challenge review took place on 7 November 2019; the report, and that of the QA Inspector had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Governors agreed that it was a strong and positive report, and they were confident that the information presented to them by the school was validated.

f) Pupil Premium Report and Sport Premium Report

The Headteacher confirmed that the reports had been updated, and had been uploaded to the website.

g) PiXL (latest attainment information)

Y6 had taken PiXL tests in September 2019; other year groups had done so in October 2019. The results showed how the children compared to those in other schools. The Deputy Headteacher would meet staff to discuss the questionnaire and therapies.

6. Education Support Partnership Positive Workplace Survey

The Headteacher advised Governors that the school was working towards the Carnegie Award for Mental Health in Schools (looking at both children and adults), through the Liverpool Hope University. The Education Support Partnership survey had shown that TAs had scored some questions lower. The team leader would work with the TAs to take this aspect forward so that issues could be addressed.

The Headteacher explained why the number of TAs had been reduced. Although the cost to the school was around £25K per TA, take home pay was much less as this figure included pension and NI which the school must pay.

Q: Did the TAs feel any different now that duties were matched to pay?

A: The Headteacher advised Governors that some TAs were qualified by experience; if they were not qualified, they did not progress up the scale.

Q: Were large chunks of work being taken on by support staff?

A: There was a small amount of curriculum work, for half of each Friday afternoon (the other half was taken by Kick London). However, TAs had grown in confidence in delivering this, and had scored higher than teachers in some areas of the survey. Generally, all staff had scored highly across the survey.

Q: What was the context for the survey? Had SLT identified mental health issues in staff and children?

A: Staff were able to report any issues they might have to the Education Support Partnership – in any area, including relationships or finance – via their helpline. The Headteacher advised that two members of staff had contacted the helpline. Although contacts were anonymous, the Headteacher was advised of numbers, as he had to be able to confirm value for money.

Q: What was being done for the children?

A: The survey was just for staff. However, the Headteacher assured Governors that this was not a tokenistic initiative. Resources for children included “worry boxes”, Circle Time, and the opportunity to meet with one of the three ELSAs for those children that needed it. Governors noted that ELSAs have supervision in place. In the classroom, children were not set according to ability; they were able to choose their own level of challenge. The homework policy allowed children time to be children, and Y2 were unaware that they were sitting SATs.

Q: Governors recognised that the school was working towards the Mental Health award, but how was the mental state of pupils assessed?

A: Miss Lloyd was working on the submission document, but staff assess pupils all the time – they used brain breaks, SEAL activities and yoga.

The deadline for submitting the document was 29 November 2019; it was a huge document, with which the Deputy Headteacher was helping.

Q: On what evidential grounds would the organisation award the Mental Health mark?

A: It was made against the audit document.

7. School Development Plan (SDP)

a) Progress

The Headteacher reminded Governors that the current SDP was in the “SDP and SEF” folder on Dropbox. David Howley, External Adviser, would be in school on 21 November 2019 to review the document with SLT.

Governors could see the areas which had been worked on over the last year, as the SDP was RAG rated. There had been some successes, including:

- The lesson study had happened in the Autumn Term in Y4. The Headteacher was not sure whether or not this initiative would continue with the Blue School.
- Mr Smyth (Y6), Ms Murphy (Y4) and Mr G Lawlor (Y3) would carry out an internal lesson study before the Spring 2020 half term. Although these teachers would not teach exactly the same lesson, they would take a theme and plan together.
- The Early Career framework would come into effect in 2021/22, so would be trialled in the coming year. Governors noted that they might have to use an External Provider in the future.

b) Consideration of a Governing Body strategy statement

The Chair had circulated a draft Governing Body strategy statement to all Governors prior to the meeting and invited comments; those received had been incorporated. The Chair explained that this statement would:

- Be owned by Governors
- Lay out the key strategic functions of the Governing Body
- Contain objectives, which would complement the School Development Plan (SDP) when that was finalised
- Contain a Governor Action Plan
- Be a working document with an annual cycle linked to the SDP; it would probably work on a calendar year, to allow time for the SDP to be produced.

The Chair reminded Governors that the document was open for discussion. It had been drafted following the self-review session with Andrew Dodge in September 2019. It was important that the document was jointly prepared and owned by all Governors to ensure that a focus was maintained throughout the year. It could be useful evidence for external inspections. The Chair invited comments from Governors:

- It was a comprehensive document, but succinct.
- **Q:** What was its purpose?
A: In the recent past, some parents had not known what Governors did; this document could be shared with parents each year.

The **core functions** had been taken from the Governors’ Handbook. The **objectives** would be strategic, not operational; it would be important to ensure that the language was appropriate. Once the document was

developed and published, it would lead to an expectation of an annual report to parents, which was a good thing. During the OfSTED inspection in 2017, Governors had spoken to Inspectors with real clarity and knowledge about the school. Parents did not see that depth of knowledge from Governors. Governors acknowledged that this document could be a vehicle to confirm to parents that Governors want the best for all children in the school.

Mrs Raffet added that she had been fully involved in the PTA before becoming a Governor, but she had not understood the role of Governors; she felt that Governors needed to explain their role more, and communicate the good news about the school to parents more directly. Governors were in a privileged position.

Governors agreed that there had been a lack of communication with parents that had led to “Chinese whispers” and incorrect messages circulating. Most parents did not know Governors, so there was a lack of confidence in their actions in some cases. Better communication would improve this.

The Chair reminded Governors that the document was still in draft form; there would be more changes, and objectives added from the SDP. It would be signed off at the next meeting. Other items that Governors raised were:

- A focus on how the actions would be carried out
- Cross-reference with reports, eg that the Finance Committee strategically monitor the school budget
- Avoid jargon: it should be written in layman’s terms
- It might be better to have an upbeat newsletter with nuggets of information, rather than an annual report to parents. Longer serving Governors remembered that Mr Lucas had written Governor Newsletters for many years; the Chair had also produced some – the last one had been circulated in July 2019.

The Chair thanked Governors for their good ideas. He suggested that Governors gather good items for the Newsletter as time progressed; these items should be agreed by the Governing Body.

Q: How would the Newsletter be circulated to parents?

A: The school was paperless; the Headteacher asked that it did not go out via Social Media, but by e-mail or app electronically. It could go on the website, and further prompt parents to use the website. It was agreed that items for the Newsletter would have to be of interest to parents, and relevant for Governors.

This would be reviewed at the next Governing Body meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

8. Terms of Reference for Committees

The Clerk had reviewed the Terms of Reference, standardising membership and quorum across all committees. Clarification had been necessary, as the Staff Governor had, for many years, been the Deputy Headteacher. Governors noted that staff might also be Parent Governors.

Governors **agreed** the Terms of Reference documents, with minor amendments. The Clerk would make the changes and upload the documents to DropBox.

ACTION: CLERK

9. Reports from Committees

a) Premises and H&S Committee (met on 28 October 2019)

Miss Martin highlighted the following points that had been discussed:

- The wooden planter bench seats would be replaced with recycled plastic.
- The issues with solar panels were ongoing; Mr Pipola was meeting with Barkers on 26 November to discuss this.
- It had been agreed to award the contract for the toilet refurbishment to Focus Washrooms

Q: When would the work be carried out?

A: The Headteacher and Mr Pipola were meeting on 5 December 2019 to finalise specifications. Focus Washrooms manufactured most of the furniture, etc; as soon as this was ready, work would start. The school would receive a discount for having the work carried out during term time; the girls toilets would be closed for the duration of the work.

Q: How would Y6 girls access the building?

A: They would come in through the back office, and would use the toilets by the Library.

- Mr Pipola was to reclaim £2.5K for maintenance expenditure

b) Achievement and Standards Committee (met on 28 October 2019)

Ms Mason confirmed that it had been a very positive meeting. She highlighted the following points:

- Mrs Millett was attending a Cultural Education Course – a total of seven days over the academic year. This would help the school to achieve the Arts Charter Mark. Although the award would be for the whole school, Y3 would receive it each year.
- The Attendance trial was working well, with attendance currently standing at 98.5%.
- Since starting with Maths No Problem, results were improving. All staff had received training in the scheme.
- Y6 had undertaken PiXL tests, and had done very well.

c) Finance Committee (met on 4 November 2019)

Miss Martin reported that the Committee had reviewed the budget. They had learned that there was a new requirement in the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) for 2019/20 for Governors to receive financial reports at least six times per year. The Headteacher informed Governors that he had uploaded the budget report for week ending 8 November 2019 into the document folder for the full Governing Body meeting, for review by Governors.

d) Personnel and Pay Committee (met on 4 November 2019)

Dr Park informed Governors that the Committee had:

- Discussed the Parent Survey. The Headteacher informed Governors that 31 parents had completed the survey. The Headteacher had made an error in the ranking system, so the pie charts were incorrect. The questions and numbers would be circulated when the survey was closed.
- Adopted the Pay Policy.

- Received the Headteacher's Report on teacher appraisals, and agreed his recommendations for pay progression.
- Noted the Workload Charter and report on lunchtime supervision.
- Not been able to elect a Chair, as no eligible Governors were present.

e) Admissions Committee (met on 17 September 2019)

Mrs Giglio explained that there had been a fall in application numbers for Reception across the Borough. The school currently had vacancies in Nursery, Y5 and Y6. The Committee had discussed how they could encourage "cultural catholic" families to apply.

Mrs Giglio, Mrs Gardner and the Headteacher had attended training on admissions on 18 November 2019, which had been excellent. The training had confirmed that the school was already doing a great deal to help them to attract children; there was some tweaking required to the working in next year's Admission Policy on summer born children.

Q: Had invitation been sent to prospective new Reception parents for September 2020?

A: Miss Dawson confirmed that dates had been scheduled and parents invited. The Headteacher reminded Governors that he had asked for these meetings to be scheduled when he was in school; unfortunately, it was not possible for him to attend any of the dates set. Governors noted that Miss Dawson could communicate the school's ethos well to parents.

There would be some changes to the Admissions Policy for 2021/22. Although it was difficult to do much about falling numbers across the Borough, Governors noted that the places in Reception had been filled in September 2019, which had not been the case in all schools.

Q: Had there been a change in demographics?

A: The Headteacher informed Governors that he would attend a place planning meeting with other Headteachers on 9 December 2019, where Sheena Poley would go through predicted numbers. He advised that the data shows the predictions, taking into account new builds, etc, were accurate.

The Headteacher had informed the Committee that there had been a point in the minutes of the Summer 2019 Deanery meeting that, if schools were not full, and the Certificate of Catholic Practice was not helpful, schools should not use it. Governors had agreed that they wanted to maintain a priority for practising Catholics, followed by cultural Catholics, and should encourage all families to apply. Staff were working through the paperwork.

Ms Mason advised that she had met with Fr Nico to discuss the sticker system for the Certificate of Catholic Practice. He had been sympathetic.

The Chair asked Governors to consider the make-up of Committees and their timing, to improve attendance and efficiency at the meetings. All suggestions should be forwarded to the Chair.

ACTION: ALL GOVERNORS

10. Presentation of Audited Unofficial Accounts

a) Governors' Account – 1/9/2018 to 31/3/2019

b) School Unofficial Account – 1/4/2018 to 31/3/2019

This item was deferred to the meeting to be held on 18 March 2020.

ACTION: CLERK

11. Financial Items

There were no items that had not been covered in the Report from the Finance Committee at item 9(c).

12. Safeguarding

a) Any training attended

Miss Martin had attended a Safeguarding for Governors update on 12 November 2019. Content included up-skirting, cyber bullying and transgender issues.

b) Annual Safeguarding Report to Governors

This would be included in the Headteacher's Report in March 2020.

ACTION: HEADTEACHER

c) Any Safeguarding issues

There were no safeguarding issues. Governors were informed that there was currently one Looked After Child on roll.

13. Attendance Update

The Headteacher reported that the absence rate on the Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) was 3.6%. Raise on a Page shows attendance over four half terms of 98.5%. School figures were recorded as 96%. All these reports confirm that attendance continues to be good, which was also acknowledged by the latest Peer Challenge review report. Mrs Whyms attends network meetings for School Attendance Officers.

The Headteacher had reviewed the school template letter about punctuality.

14. Policies

a) Admissions Policy

As noted earlier in the meeting, the Admissions Policy for 2021/22 still required some amendment. The Admissions Committee would review and revise this via e-mail and agree the policy.

ACTION: ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

b) Feedback Policy

The Achievements and Standard Committee had agreed this policy, which replaced the Marking Policy. The Committee recommended the policy to Governors. Governors **ratified** the policy.

c) Photography and Video Policy

Governors had a robust and lengthy discussion on the proposed Photography and Video Policy, which had been agreed at the Achievements and Standards Committee and recommended for ratification at this meeting.

The discussion included the following points:

- This issue was very divisive, with strong depth of feeling on both sides – some parents wanted a full photographic record of their child’s school journey; others wanted nothing on social media under any circumstances.
- The policy was very detailed, because of the depth of feeling.
- In order to comply with GDPR, consent for photos could not be assumed.
- There were not enough staff to take a large number of photos.
- There had been a shift over the last five years across schools to stop parents taking photos at events because of safeguarding concerns and concerns with social media.
- There were strong views from a small group of parents; the school had to set a policy, which would then be respected by parents.
- Governors were informed that all parents had confirmed that they were content for photos of their child to be published in the school newsletter.
- It was vital for some children and their families that their images were not posted on social media.
- The status quo was that no policy was in place; procedures had been tightened due to parental concerns.
- Governors asked that staff endeavour to take “special” photos which could be used for Y6 leaver yearbooks.
- The Chair suggested that the Policy be adopted and used to the end of the academic year, when it would be reviewed by Governors.

Governors **agreed** the policy, with a review date of September 2020.

ACTION: CLERK

d) Health & Safety Policy

This item was deferred to the Spring Term 2020 meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

15. Minutes of the meetings held on 19 June 2019 and 25 September 2019

a) Accuracy of minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019

Some changes to the minutes had been suggested prior to the meeting. Governors **agreed** that the final minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting, which were signed by the Chair.

b) Matters arising from the minutes held on 19 June 2019

- **Item 16(b)(ii) – Relationships Policy:** The Headteacher confirmed that he had now received the model policy from the Catholic Education Service.

c) Accuracy of minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2019 were **agreed** as a true and accurate record, and were signed by the Chair.

d) Matters arising from the minutes held on 25 September 2019

All action points had been completed; there were no matters arising that had not been covered on the Agenda.

16. Any Other Urgent Business

a) Review of Term Dates

The Headteacher asked Governors to consider a proposal to have more INSET sessions as twilight sessions, and reduce the number of INSET days. Governors acknowledged that this would provide flexibility for the school to arrange training sessions with external trainers, and would also provide TAs with more opportunities to attend training. Staff had been consulted – the Deputy Headteacher had received one response that had been in favour of the proposal.

Q: Was St Mary's the only school who was considering this?

A: It was in operation at Our Lady and St John's.

Governors **agreed** to the proposal.

b) School Admissions Training

The Headteacher informed Governors that he had attended this training, led by Sheena Poley, with Mrs Gardner and Mrs Giglio. It had been informative and worthwhile.

17. Confidential Business

a) Item 5(c) – Budget Overview – staffing question

This is minuted on a separate sheet.

18. Dates of future FGB meetings

Wednesday 18 March 2020

Wednesday 17 June 2020

19. Closing Prayer

Governors were informed that a child in Y5 at Worple Primary had passed away on 13 November 2019; they remembered the family in prayer.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 8.18pm by the Headteacher.

Unfortunately due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Governing Body meeting scheduled for 18 March 2020 was cancelled. However, Governors conducted business by submitting responses to Agenda items by e-mail. These minutes were therefore agreed as a true and accurate record on 25 March 2020 – they will be signed by the Chair as soon as Governors are able to meet.