



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 Business Meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 24th September 2020 starting at 1700 on Zoom.

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)
Lisa Weeks (Head Teacher)
Michelle Wilson (Deputy Head Teacher)
Kenneth Chan
Fr David Camilleri
Amanda Garlick

Margaret Connell
Carlette Victoire-Nijjar
Mark Hutchins
Mark Edwards
Paul Gribben
Martin D'Souza

In Attendance: Dominique Wells (Clerk)

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

1. Welcome and Opening Prayers

The Chair and Head Teacher thanked Carlette Victoire-Nijjar on behalf of the Governing Body for her service and support during her term of office has ended. She in turn thanked the Governing Body.

Carlette Victoire-Nijjar left the meeting.

This was followed by a prayer led by the Chair.

2. Apologies for Absence

Catriona Hardiman

Declarations of Interest in items in this Agenda.

None.

3. Governing Body Membership Matters

A new Parent Governor has been elected: Elizabeth Williamson (who has a child in Y1).

Regarding Martin D'Souza's DBS, there had been some confusion due to his having lived abroad. His DBS and references are now with the Commission but it is unknown how long it would take for them to complete the paperwork as they are running on skeleton staff.

4. Review of Minutes of the meeting, held on 12th March 2020 (deferred until this meeting).

4.1. Confirmation of Accuracy

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

4.2. Matters Arising

None.

5. Review of Minutes of the meeting, held on 24th June 2020

5.1. Confirmation of Accuracy

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

5.2 Matters Arising

Item 8: Staffing Matters

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Has the Breakfast Club been used since coming back?

A: Although numbers were unsure in June, they have risen and are fairly high, so it is worthwhile having resumed this provision – it is both good for the school and for parents.

6. Chair's Action regarding Admissions

Guidance for school governors on interpreting evidence of Catholic Practice in Supplementary Information Forms following the Coronavirus outbreak. (Education Commission)

The Chair reported that all Catholic schools had to ask for a variation from the Office of the Adjudicator. In mid-August, the Archbishop issued a statement for the website and for parishes to put in their newsletters. Following this, having spoken to the Commission, the schools adjudicators and LBB had been written to and it has been discussed with the parish priest.

There had been 2 appeals this year, both unsuccessful, and it is anticipated that the number will likely increase next year.

Fr David expressed how he could feel parents' apprehension over the SIF form and that, although he knows families that used to come to mass regularly, it was difficult to identify new ones as the church has been closed. He also reported that on re-opening the church there had been many young people and children attending mass.

7. Head Teacher's Update

a. Report on lockdown period

This report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

The Head Teacher was thanked for her report.

b. Return of pupils in September

The Head Teacher reported that a few families had been nervous about returning and their concerns had been discussed with them. 2 families had not wanted to

come back straight away. Plans for these families had been made, based around responding to the individual needs and concerns of these families and finding a balance.

c. Non-attendance issues

See b. above.

d. Staff attendance and well-being

The Head Teacher reported that the previous week had been difficult with 35 children and 5 staff not at school due to isolating while someone in their household is waiting for a test.

She reported that the situation had been very hard for staff and stress levels were higher than before the summer. The classes are now full and the classrooms are small and enclosed. It was hard to balance getting the children back into school with indecision over symptoms and varying expectations of parents. Staff are in full-time teaching with the recovery curriculum. Additionally, there is accountability in the form of potential visits/calls from the HSC, DfE and Ofsted.

Only 10 people are permitted to be in the staff room at one time, so it is more difficult for staff to socialise or gather – they are more isolated as they have to stay in their bubbles.

The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher ensure that they touch base with staff often.

e. Risk Assessments (updates if any)

Patrick Harrison from the Education Commission had asked to see this and was very happy with it.

f. Safeguarding Issues

No issues. There is only one child on a CAF.

g. Pam Fearnley's rôle going forward

The UT head teachers had met Pam Fearnley and they had decided that the rôle should focus on the curriculum. She talked through the current regime and the high possibility of an Ofsted: the 5 main areas they will look at are risk assessments and safeguarding, the curriculum, remote learning, behaviour and attitudes towards learning, and Catch Up Premium Spend/impact. (With regard to remote learning, the Head Teacher mentioned there would be a contingency plan on the website at the end of September concerning isolating, lockdowns and local lockdowns.)

The Head Teacher mentioned that constant guidance from the DfE and LA did not always align and conflicting information meant that many emails needed to be sent to parents.

The Governors asked whether there was anything they could do to support the Head Teacher and School. Their offer would be borne in mind and meanwhile they were asked to keep teachers in their prayers. Mass had been a highlight and thanks were given to Fr David for this.

8. Financial Matters – Covid-19 related expenses

The Finance Officer reported that, although it seemed that only schools in deficit would get the grant, the School applied anyway. Any related expenditure to July had been paid back and there had been no extra expenses since. The School could apply again in December for the period September-November and would seek to obtain money for lidded bins and sanitiser.

Testing for Covid appears to be easier now – the School has 10 tests and will order another 10.

All meetings for this term would be held over Zoom.

9. AOB

The Head Teacher, Caretaker and Finance Officer undertook the Health and Safety walk.

Fire drills were still continuing.

Thanks were given to the Vice-Chair for checking the website for compliance.

The LA used to send safety alerts to schools, but now these seem to be word-of-mouth with the recent concerns about child safety and attempted abductions. Mrs Connolly had talked to Y6 about being vigilant and this had been highlighted in the newsletter. Most Y6s are being dropped off and picked up by parents.

10. Dates of Next Meetings

Resources & Audit Committee	Tuesday 20 October at 4.30pm (by Zoom)
Admissions Committee (to agree policy)	Tuesday 10 November at 4.00pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 10 November at 4.30pm
Pay Committee	Thursday 19 November at 4.30pm
Full Governing Body	Thursday 19 November at 5.00pm

11. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by the Chair.

The meeting closed at 17:27.