



## **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 121<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the school starting at 1700.**

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)

Anna Boshier (Head Teacher)

Carlette Victoire-Nijjar

Bruno Cotta

Father David Camilleri

Bobby Jasper

Lisa Weeks (Deputy Head Teacher)

Margaret Connell

In Attendance: Dominique Wells (Clerk to the Governors)

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

#### **1. Opening Prayers**

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Father David Camilleri.

Sincere thanks were offered to Anna Boshier for the eight years of service she has given to the School as Head Teacher.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Elizabeth Atkinson

Paul Gribben

Mark Edwards

Jo Gibson

Kenneth Chan

#### **3. Declarations of Interest** in items in this Agenda.

None.

#### **4. Minutes** of the previous meeting, held in March 2017, were reviewed.

##### **4.1. Confirmation of Accuracy**

The minutes were deemed to be a true record.

**Minutes agreed by all.**

##### **4.2. Matters Arising**

None.

## 5. Head Teacher's Report

Thanks were offered to the Head Teacher for having ensured, throughout her years of service, that Governors were always given all the information they required.

Her report had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and taken as read. The Head Teacher highlighted the following points from the report:

- The Y1 phonics check had been completed and it is anticipated that 97% of the children will have reached the standard required. The Y1 teacher has nearly completed her NQT year and has continually ensured that the children were thoroughly prepared. Mrs Richards was present at times during the check to observe that it was carried out satisfactorily.
- A new teacher has been appointed as an NQT from September and he has been booked into the NQT programme at Warren Road.
- The May Procession took place, led by Fr David who presented the School with a papal blessing which he had acquired during his recent visit to Rome.
- The First Holy Communion services were reported to have gone very well.
- The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher had attended the Umbrella Trust Head Teacher cluster meeting. The outcome of this was that peer reviews would be put into place. Under David Gosling, the focus was on accountability. Now the focus is on development and Head Teachers are to look at each other's schools with this in mind, facilitated by the advisers.
- Plans are being formulated to open a Catholic secondary school on the site of St Peter and Paul. No timescale has yet been announced.
- Punctuality is currently excellent.
- Out of c180 applications to join the Reception class in September, there have been no Admissions Appeals this year.

## 6. Chair of Governors' Report

The Chair's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

The Chair offered thanks to:

- the Head Teacher for her years of service
- the Governors for their role and involvement in successfully appointing a Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher
- Bobby Jasper for securing funding for the KS2 toilet refurbishment
- Mark Edwards for designing the Umbrella Trust logo.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: How will the outcome of the recent General Election impact the School's funding?*

*A: Funding is being looked at again. The School knows what they have for the next academic year and will anticipate and manage any changes year-by-year as they happen.*

*Q: Is there any pressure for the Umbrella Trust to become a MAT?*

*A: No. The Umbrella Trust is working very well because of its focus on standards and Catholicity and willingness to share strengths. An Umbrella Trust is now being encouraged to set up in Bexley. While the Trust is successful, it is not considered necessary that it change.*

## **7. Budget Monitoring Report**

The Bursar stated that there was no change to report and that the School was still maintaining a strong cashflow position – indeed it is ahead of last year.

At the moment, there was nothing to indicate that there would be anything that would upset plans at the moment.

Regarding the KS2 toilet refurbishment project, tender documents would be sent out to three contractors. The funding is £34k and the School is expected to contribute £5k. Materials have been costed at £20k and will be bought directly from a supplier. The best supplier has already been sourced (being that used for the Reception classroom build), so it is only the contractor which needs to be appointed following the tendering process. As long as there are no hidden drainage issues, the work should be straightforward. Financially, the project will be tight. The work has to take place during the 5-week window during the summer holiday, and the Bursar will supervise the work as it is done.

It is believed that many of the problems with the toilets have been due to the lack of a daytime caretaker, but now we have one it will be part of his responsibility to maintain the toilets during his working hours.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: Are there any asbestos issues in refurbishing the toilets?*

*A: The asbestos report did not pick up any issues in this area.*

## **8. Committee Reports**

The minutes from the recent Resources & Audit Committee and Children & Learning Committee meetings were received.

## **9. Reports from Governors with Special Responsibilities**

The EGT/Science Governor had emailed his report prior to the meeting.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: What is the plan going forward with regard to preserving the good work being done, given that staff are at capacity?*

*A: The advantage of a one-form entry school is that it is possible to give NQTs more responsibilities. Mrs Wilson will continue with her work on EGT and RE, but will pass her other duties on to other staff.*

It was noted that there was likely to be an RE Inspection next May.

The School is considered fortunate to have staff who always have the School's and children's interests at the forefront of all that they do. The staff and Governing Body are the School's strength.

The Maths Governor reported on Maths at the Children & Learning meeting.

## 10. Admissions Policy

It had come to the School's attention that a past letter from the Bishop stated that St Swithun's Church was to be part of the parish of St Joseph's. However, there is no indication from St Joseph's that the admission of St Swithun's children was part of their Admissions Policy. The Diocese had been consulted but no response had yet been received.

It was decided that, if there is no response, the 2018/19 should be slightly reworded to remove the three places offered to children from St Swithun's, but that the sibling rule would stand for those children who already had an older sibling at the School. The Head Teacher would write to parents to explain this and to notify the appropriate authorities also.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: Do Admissions form part of the Umbrella Trust discussions?*

*A: Not unless there are significant changes to policy.*

## 11. Holding the School to Account

The main responses to questions posed were as follows:

- **Teaching: Maths** – initiatives in this area were working, with improvement in reasoning skills through use of equipment. The calculation policy and bar model is effective.
- **Sensory area** – This is being used well by some children in the school. Some children will use the Hall for safety reasons.
- **Personal development & welfare** – no incidents of racism, homophobia or bullying to report.
- **Safeguarding** – the School has been working through the recommendations following the Safeguarding audit. These were mainly around the tightening of policies and have nearly been completed. This includes procedures regarding visitors (delivery vans) entering at the back gate, who now have to ring the office for the caretaker to meet them and accompany them to the office.

The running of the School is much improved with the daytime caretaker. The contract cleaners are doing a good job and considered trustworthy.

Confidential items.

- **Health and Safety** – there are no H&S concerns. The Deputy Head teacher is undergoing training to become a H&S officer.

There would be another practice of the lockdown policy.

- **Staff attendance** – this is good.

## 12. Policies for Review

**All policies presented were adopted.**

**13. Umbrella Trust**

The school's 'term of office' ends this term and moves to Holy Innocents. All is going well within the Trust.

Future meetings were planned for 14<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

**14. Any other business**

Fr David informed the Governors that in there would be a National Eucharistic Congress taking place in Liverpool in September 2018. It would focus on Eucharist and pilgrimage and how Eucharist nourishes pilgrimage, Eucharist as Mass and Eucharist as adoration. It was felt that the School should be involved in this in some way.

While the budget for the next academic year is known, questions were raised about how cuts in funding may affect the School beyond this. Governors were reassured that staff always remain the priority and savings would be made elsewhere should this be necessary.

**15. Dates of next meetings**

Dates for next academic year as attached.

**16. The Closing Prayer** was led by Fr David Camilleri.

**The meeting closed at 18.35**