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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FULL GOVERNING BODY OF  
ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD IN SCHOOL  
ON WEDNESDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020 AT 6.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Canon J Batthula (Chair, Foundation); Mr C Hartley (Vice Chair, Foundation), Miss P Pickering (Head); Mr M Doherty (L.A.); Mrs K O'Flynn (Foundation); Mr S Taylor (Foundation); Mr A McArdle (Foundation); Mrs E Morgan (Foundation); Mrs N Henderson-Andrade (Elected Parent); Mr P Haley (Elected Parent); Miss L Grant (Staff)

**APOLOGIES:** Mrs J Hurst (approved)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs N Winter (Clerk)

1. Chair opened meeting with a prayer.
2. Chair welcomed all to the first meeting of the new school year. Apologies received and accepted from JH. Meeting was declared quorate.
3. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**  
As specified on the Agenda –
  - Clerk advised that Canon John Batthula had been nominated to serve as Chair. All Governors were in favour of his appointment and this was carried unanimously.
  - Clerk advised that Mr Chris Hartley was the nomination for Vice Chair. All Governors were in favour of his appointment and this was carried unanimously.
4. **Register of Interests**  
There were no conflicts of interest declared.
5. **Minutes of the full GB meeting** of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were declared to be a true record and were signed by Chair.

**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising and all action points have been dealt with.

6. **Headteacher's Report (circulated in advance)**

Head asked if there were any questions regarding the SDP. ST thanked Head for making this available on Governors' Google Drive. He commented that it was a very comprehensive document which helped Governors understand the plans that are in place for the school. He mentioned that there was one area which required Governor representation which was Family Wellbeing. Head believed that this could come under the umbrella of SEN/Pupil Premium children. EM is responsible for this area of the SDP and agreed to take on this additional responsibility.

ST noted that there is an obvious need to increase pupil numbers and the next few months is the key time to work on this when parents are choosing primary schools for their children. He felt that Governors needed to publicise the school in our parish community. Head agreed that we need Governors to be proactive within the parish. The question could be asked that if going to Church is important to people, then why are they not sending their children to a Catholic school.

Head commented that the introduction of the After School Club hasn't made any impact on parents choosing our school so far. This will be a slow process in making a difference to numbers. She told Governors that our

School Census numbers had been disappointing as we lost several children before Census day but admitted 7 new pupils just after Census Day.

ST asked if Governors knew how other Catholic parishes sell themselves as regards increasing pupil admission numbers. Chair responded that Bicester was very different to other parishes in that it is a very rural setting. He is aware that there are many Catholics in Bicester who do not send their children to a Catholic school but send them to the local school for convenience. EM suggested promoting the Wrap Around Care element to parents making decisions at this time. Head agreed that it would be difficult this year with no proper Open Day but that she was hoping we could produce a video to market the school. Governors felt that this would need to be of good quality if it were to be used as a promotional video. Head will investigate feasibility/cost of production of video. KOF stated that we could respond positively to a not very positive situation by sharing the link with nurseries, playgroups and parish.

ST asked again what Governors could do? It was agreed that a Flyer would be designed which, among other methods of distribution, could be given out with the parish bulletin periodically over the next few months. The flyer could feature quotes from parents, students and Ofsted and should feature Wrap Around Care information etc.

EM said we should publicise how we managed during COVID and the fact that all classrooms are accessible from the outside of the school, making it easy for children to stay in their bubbles. Drop off and pick up is streamlined and friendly.

## 7. Pastoral Care

Chair revealed that we were the only parish in the area who have Mass every day and four weekend Masses. He has tried to make things as normal as possible within the Parish. However, it has yet to be organised how parents will bring their children to church for First Reconciliation.

The Chair feels that the school is safe and secure and that our children are great ambassadors.

## 8. Reports from Committees

### Finance/Buildings/H&S (minutes 22/09/20 circulated)

ST requested that Governors be advised in layman's terms of the financial position of the school. He appreciated the detailed minutes and was aware that the budget was a 3 year prediction. As Governors it would be good to know how secure we are. Head replied that we were, in fact, over-staffed although all staff are needed at this time. Looking at our 3 year prediction we are just balanced but there is no room for over expenditure. Our staffing budget is above what is recommended and this again brings up the problem that we need more pupils. We also have a non-teaching SENCo for 3 days which is essential to maintain. In essence, we need about 30 more children on roll. The difficulty is trying to manage some very small year groups with much larger year groups. ST estimated that it could take 5 years to increase pupil numbers to required level and suggested that strategic information should be on the minutes.

### Curriculum (minutes 23/02/20 circulated)

KOF said that Governors should now be using the Calendar on the Governors' shared drive. This can be used for Governor visits into school. Advance notice of any visits should be given, together with a clear aim or intention for the visit. NHA indicated that a Governor Monitoring Form had been placed on Governor Information on shared drive to help with structure of visits.

### Personnel (minutes 24/09/20 circulated)

Teachers have been set demanding targets as the school has set a challenging objective to get children back to where they should be.

## 9. Pupil Premium

Up to date information has been made available to Governors' on the website. There were no questions.

## 10. Sports Premium

The information on the website is not up to date. There is no sports plan for the academic year 20/21 because the school is negotiating with NOSSP as to what they can provide in context of current CV19 situation. Once this is resolved we can then update the website with the 20/21 plan.

## 11. Policy Review Schedule for Academic Year

ST commented that following the ESGA it had been agreed that there would be a schedule for policy renewal and updating by the different committees. A review schedule has been prepared and placed on the Governors' google drive for information. Due to circumstances this year, there are several policies which need to be reviewed by the Full Governing Body. It was agreed that amended policies would be prepared and placed on the shared drive for Governor comment/approval. Governors should respond via the appropriate Google Form.

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – this policy has been updated by OSCB and was placed on shared drive prior to this meeting for Governor comment/approval. There were no amendments and this policy is now considered ratified.

## 12. Overview of Governor Effectiveness Questionnaire and suggested Action Plan

A Questionnaire had been prepared and shared with Governors. ST had presented a summary in advance of the meeting. He proposed that Governors look at the top 3 issues and the proposed action for discussion.

(Q6) It was agreed that succession planning for GB roles did not lend itself to long term planning as governors, being voluntary positions, would come and go due to personal circumstances.

(Q8) The drawing of support from and interaction with other schools – this is now in evidence as the Academy Working Party carry out their research.

(Q5) Are Governors able to clearly evidence the impact of Training and Development on the quality of governance in the school? Governors are asked this at the end of every training course. ST suggested this information could be uploaded into Governor Training to show what Governors had learnt from their training. Head agreed that Governors' training could contribute to running of the school with the acquisition of skills and knowledge. It was agreed that this was a more defined role where Governors can develop their role and share their expertise. ST will liaise with sub-committee chairs to define the Role and Responsibilities and identify mandatory training requirements and other skills/experience needed for the role. KOF suggested that Governor Training could feed into succession planning for Governors.

## 13. Summary of action plan for Academy Working Party

ST emphasised that it was not the purpose of the Working Party to make recommendations, its purpose was merely to gather information for perusal and discussion.

The team had split into different sections and the work shared across the team.

ST & EM – with due diligence look into the Pope Francis MAC.

NHA & EM – Discussion with key stakeholders on their views on becoming part of a MAC. In this respect they will be sending out a Google Form to acquire stakeholders' views.

KOF & PH – have been talking to schools in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire who have gone through the academy process already to help them understand the conversion process and the impact of becoming an academy.

Lots of information has already been placed on the Governors' shared drive. The plan is for the committee to get together at the end of the year and pull together a short executive summary. They hope to have a report ready for the next Governors' meeting.

## 14. A.O.B.

NW was presented with a beautiful arrangement of flowers from the Governing Body as this was her last Governors' meeting before she retires in December. Chair thanked her for her service and wished her a happy retirement on behalf of all Governors.

AMA asked if there was a Social Media Policy for Governors. LG replied that there was one for staff that could include Governors. AMA and LG to work on this and to share with governors at next meeting.

**13. Dates of Next Meetings**

**Wednesday, – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 - 6.00pm in school**  
Finance/H&S/Buildings – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 8.30am  
Curriculum – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 19.15

NW/14/10/2020