



# St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Isleworth Governing Body Meeting

At a meeting held via MS Teams on  
Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 6.00 pm

**Present:** Dr J Park (Chair), Miss E Dawson, Mrs C Giglio, Mr S Hogg, Mrs M Hooper, Fr N Labo Ratu, Mr F Marsh (Headteacher), Miss M Martin (arrived late), Mrs A Mason, Ms M O'Donoghue (arrived late), Mrs C Raffet (arrived late)

**In Attendance:** Mr S Cobbold (Deputy Headteacher)

**Clerk:** Mrs I Bowles

Fr Nico opened the meeting in prayer.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Miss Martin for lateness.

**2. Declaration of Personal Interests**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**3. Membership**

**a) LA Governor**

***Dr Park left the meeting for this item.***

The Clerk informed Governors that the LA had nominated Dr Park for a second term of office as a LA Governor, with effect from 1 September 2020. Governors welcomed the nomination and voted unanimously to **appoint** Dr Park as an LA Governor for a further four year term.

**ACTION: CLERK**

***Dr Park re-joined the meeting;*** he thanked Governors for his re-appointment.

**b) Governor Vacancy - One Foundation Governor**

The Headteacher had not yet contacted the Diocese in relation to this vacancy. This would be reviewed again in the Autumn Term 2020.

**ACTION: HEADTEACHER**

*Miss Martin joined the meeting at 6.12pm.*

#### **4. Approval of the budget 2020/21**

##### **a) Budget 2020/21**

The Headteacher reminded Governors that the budget papers had been circulated prior to the meeting; they were for the current financial year, and reflected the position at the beginning of the financial year.

Governors **approved** the budget for 2020/21, which would be submitted to the LA.

*Mrs Raffet joined the meeting at 6.15pm.*

##### **b) Unexpected expenditure in March 2020**

The Headteacher advised Governors that the unexpected expenditure incurred in March 2020, at the beginning of the lockdown period, would be identified and quantified towards the end of the Summer Term 2020.

Governors acknowledged that there would be changes to the budget through the current financial year in relation to COVID-19.

#### **5. Update from the Headteacher on the COVID-19 situation**

The Chair asked the Headteacher to communicate the appreciation of Governors to staff for all their hard work in these unprecedented times. The Chair confirmed that he had received regular updates from the Headteacher throughout the lockdown period.

The Headteacher updated Governors on the current situation:

##### **a) Safeguarding**

An OfSTED Inspector had been allocated to Hounslow to assist during the lockdown period. They had telephoned the Headteacher and talked through the list of vulnerable children, giving advice where appropriate. Children included:

- ❖ One child with a Social Worker, who was attending intermittently. The Social Worker had been informed and would follow this up.
- ❖ One child, about whom there had been concerns of neglect in the past, was attending the key worker children's provision.

There were no other significant safeguarding concerns.

##### **b) Health and Safety**

The Headteacher confirmed that staff were taking the COVID-19 Risk Assessments seriously. There had been some issues arising from expanding the children of key workers provision. Opening more classrooms had necessitated increased requirements for hand sanitisers, head thermometers, etc; however, the provisions put in place helped adults working in the school to feel more secure.

Teachers were wearing PPE when taking children's temperatures on arrival. A few members of staff had chosen to wear visors during the day.

Three members of staff were not back working in school:

- One was over 70

- One had a family member who was vulnerable (not at school at the Headteacher's discretion)
- One felt vulnerable, but would return to school on 22 June 2020.

One member of staff uses public transport, and had returned to work on 17 June 2020. The school had purchased a bicycle for staff use, so that it was not necessary to use public transport.

Feedback from parents had been positive; they had found the explanatory videos very useful, and were pleased to have their children back in school.

### **c) Staff Well-being**

Although staff generally felt safe in school, emotional well-being was variable at times. The school were members of the Education Support Partnership, which had a hotline that could be used by all staff. The Headteacher had consulted with the Union Rep on the Risk Assessments, which had reassured staff.

Mrs Formby had put stickers for two metre social distancing in the Staff room; on sunny days, staff were using the grass area. The Headteacher concluded that staff well-being was quite high.

### **d) Continuing Education**

There were currently three systems of education in operation – none of which was “normal”. Staff were trying to create a level playing field for children both in school and at home. There was a benefit to children in school, as teachers could model learning and give feedback, but the learning content was the same whether for classroom or home, based on individual learning.

The largest group of children were learning at home. Some parents were finding it difficult to continue with home learning when some children were back at school.

The Headteacher had contacted all key worker parents and parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 to establish whether or not they wanted to take up a place for their children this term. Responses had to be received by 24 June 2020. They had been told that children in other year groups would be offered any available spaces after that time. A number of requests had already been received.

Existing “bubbles” were nearing capacity, and more bubbles would be needed. At the present time, there was only one spare classroom in the school. The Headteacher had contacted Gumley and Gunnersbury, who would be taking St Mary's children in September 2020, to see if they had any space that the school could use for additional bubbles. Gumley had advised that they were unable to help; Gunnersbury had yet to reply.

**Q:** Could the school use portacabins?

**A:** The Government had stated that there could be no expansion of buildings – this would include the use of the Church Hall (although church buildings had not yet been given permission to re-open). It was suggested that the school could perhaps acquire a temporary lease for the Church Hall in September 2020, if appropriate.

The children of key workers were currently under the supervision of Kick London. Miss Chalmers and Miss Sola were working with these children for part of the day in the Library, helping them with home learning. The children would be put into a class-based group from Monday 22 June 2020 for Monday to Thursday; on Fridays they would be with TAs and Kick London. With effect from Monday 29 June 2020, there would be one member of Kick London staff in school from Monday to Thursday, and four staff members on Fridays.

**Q:** How were Miss Chalmers and Miss Sola finding working with different year groups with home learning?

**A:** They took children from each year group for one hour at a time. There was a lot of crossover in the work, so not a difficulty.

### **e) Curriculum in September 2020**

The following points were highlighted:

- Welfare and mental health: staff would ensure that welfare and mental health was a focus. Children would be helped to feel secure, get back into school routines and enjoy the school atmosphere. It was hoped that Mrs Reese would be back in school, so there would be three Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) to whom children could talk confidentially.
- Focus on the “three Rs”: there would be a period of identifying individual children’s needs, then possibly grouping children by those needs and working to plug identified gaps. The Headteacher reminded Governors that the school was a member of PiXL; this organisation produced resources, including quizzes which could be used for assessment to find the gaps. This focus would be in place for at least the first half of the Autumn Term 2020.

The SLT will put their aims together to the staff, in order to ensure that all staff are on board with the proposed programme. It was hoped and expected that these plans will be in line with any Government plan.....if this is radically different, then the school plan will have to be revisited.

**Q:** Would the priority be on plugging gaps in knowledge?

**A:** The Headteacher stated that this would have to be discussed with teachers, but the intention was to prioritise reading, writing and maths, using reading and writing across all subjects. He added that PiXL provided good methods and resources.

**Q:** Taking into account the proposed assessment processes at the beginning of the Autumn Term, what would be the delay in beginning the usual next school year activities?

**A:** The Headteacher advised that there was always a recap period of one and a half weeks at the beginning of each school year, to provide the foundations on which to build. He acknowledged that some children would have been out of school for six months, and would take some time to get up to speed. However, Governors were assured that children at the school do well in comparison to other schools, and the Headteacher was confident that this would continue. The school would continue to provide information for parents.

Staff had already compiled six months' worth of videos, etc for home learning, catch-up support and homework. The school had used "Maths No Problem" for two years; this could continue to be uploaded for parents to use with their children.

**Q:** Was the Headteacher looking at provision over the summer to help get children to where they need to be?

**A:** The Headteacher replied that he would need to know now if this was being proposed, but it would be necessary for this to be funded. Ms O'Donoghue stated that the majority of Headteachers had confirmed that they would not be opening schools over the summer. If the Government wanted to put provision in place, it was likely to be programmes run by companies such as Kick London, not educational provision. Governors agreed that it would be hard to plug gaps over the summer without teachers seeing and assessing children first.

**Q:** Did the Headteacher had any idea where the gaps were and where the focus should be directed, particularly in those year groups who had not yet returned to school?

**A:** The Headteacher reminded Governors that class teachers were calling children weekly. The home learning books would also be returned to school, and would be reviewed by teachers. However, it would be a very broad field, with many uncertainties. The Deputy Headteacher added that PiXL assessments had been undertaken in February 2020, so this could be used for comparison.

If parents wished to continue working with their children over the summer, the materials from Oak National Academy would be available, as well as other sites. Some sites were easier to access than others. The Headteacher confirmed that staff were aware which children were not accessing home learning, and would be recommending that they access the Oak National Academy material. Governors recognised that children had been accessing home learning for a long period of time, which was tough; for many, continuing over the summer would be too much.

The Deputy Headteacher explained that Subject Leads had compiled two major curriculum documents:

- Mapping year on year progress, using prior knowledge and prior skills. Teachers will ensure that work is challenging.
- Mapping where in the year areas of work are covered, without encroaching on the work of classteachers.

These documents were still being refined.

## **6. Update on arrangements for relationships and sex education (RSE) from September 2020**

The Headteacher informed Governors that the DfE had issued an update that schools could have an extension until the Summer Term 2021 to begin delivering this if needed.

**Q:** When would the school be ready to deliver the new RSE requirements?

**A:** The Headteacher felt that the school was probably ready to do this from September 2020. Sam Lawlor had been working with teachers; this had slowed down at the beginning of the lockdown period as staff had many other pressing issues with which to deal. The Headteacher suggested that

Governors invite Sam Lawlor to give an update on this at the next meeting, which was **agreed**.

**ACTION: HEAD, CLERK**

**Q:** Had there been any consultation with parents yet?

**A:** The Headteacher reported that he had hoped to undertake this with the Parent Forum, but this had not been possible. He reminded Governors that staff would only teach the statutory parts of relationships and sex education. Dr Park suggested that the consultation should take place once all children had returned to school.

Ms O'Donoghue informed Governors that her Academy Trust was carrying out a Parent Consultation Workshop, with a Google form. She would send details to the Headteacher.

**ACTION: MS O'DONOGHUE**

## **7. Policies**

There were no policies to be reviewed.

## **8. Update on staffing for September 2020**

The Headteacher confirmed that there had been no further resignations. Staff turnover at the school was low. Siobhan Cabbie had been appointed via TeachFirst. In light of the school's healthy budget, it was anticipated that additional support staff could be recruited, either on a two year fixed term contract, or as long term Agency staff.

**Q:** Why were two additional support staff being recruited this year?

**A:** The Headteacher explained that the budget for this year had looked very tight a year ago. As Government grants for pensions and pay had now been confirmed, the financial position was now improved.

**Q:** Many parents had been disappointed with the reduction in support staff in the past; could they be updated on the reasons for the proposed increase in support staff now?

**A:** Governors agreed that this would be a good idea. Mrs Raffet would discuss the content of this with the Headteacher. Governors agreed that the last two years had been financially difficult, but this had now improved.

**ACTION: HEAD, MRS RAFFET**

The Chair added that this increase in support staff numbers, due to the healthy budget position, was a strategic longer term decision. New staff would be placed into the initial years of KS1 and KS2, to help launch the children into the work in their new key stage.

Governors were informed that it was hoped that Mr Conway would join the TeachFirst programme in September 2021. The Headteacher advised that schools had cut back on recruitment; TeachFirst currently had 120 candidates without placements.

## **9. Any Other Urgent Business**

#### **a) Communication with parents**

- The Headteacher informed Governors that feedback from parents had been generally positive. He confirmed that parents were being kept updated of changes to Government guidance, which they appeared to find helpful.
- Governors noted that there had been some misunderstanding by parents of the different provision for children of key workers and those year groups returning to education in school.
- The Headteacher confirmed that there had been an issue with pathways to Governing Body minutes on the website, which had now been resolved.
- Parents were reporting that children were losing motivation in respect of home learning.

#### **b) Staff**

The Headteacher had worked hard with staff to ensure they were content with the arrangements made – eg all SMSAs except one had returned to work.

#### **c) Governors' newsletter to parents**

The Chair confirmed that it was the aim to send out a newsletter to parents before the end of the Summer Term. It would be positive and point to the future, whilst reminding parents that Governors had to respond to Government guidance. The Headteacher reminded Governors that the NHS was planning for a second peak in October/November 2020.

#### **d) Planning for September 2020**

**Q:** What plans were in place for the submission of work from children, and feedback on this from teachers?

**A:** The Headteacher replied that, if staff were teaching in bubbles, there would not be sufficient people available to cater for children who were not in school.

- Between 5% and 7% of children tested for COVID-19 in Hounslow had tested positive. The concern was for adults in school, not children. The Prime Minister had declared that schools were safe places.
- Headteachers had been advised at a LA meeting that the Government does not want to see schools opening and closing repeatedly.
- If the Government dictate that PPE is required to ensure high levels of protection, they would need to provide this.

#### **e) Wider re-opening of places to additional children**

**Q:** How would places be allocated after 22 June 2020?

**A:** The Headteacher confirmed that staff would be consulted to identify children or parents who were struggling to cope with home learning; in the first instance, these children would be invited to return. Parent Governors reported that, although many parents were finding it difficult to be at home with their children, managing home learning, every day for such a long time, they might not have voiced these problems to staff during telephone calls.

- The Chair added that the results of a Government review on social distancing should be published in the next few weeks; although there was an increased risk if the two metre distance was reduced, it appeared that this could be a solution for schools.

- The Headteacher reminded Governors that the Government recommended that all children not currently in school should use the provision from Oak National Academy.
- The Headteacher reported that a high percentage of schools in Hounslow were open, with more children attending.

#### **f) Mental Health**

- Governors noted that obstacles faced by children were not just related to learning; there were social problems as well. The Headteacher confirmed that the lack of access to school had a huge impact on families. The Chair added that normal structures had disappeared: it was difficult for adults – more so for children.
- The Duchess of Cambridge had recorded an assembly on Mental Health for Oak National Academy.
- Ms O'Donoghue reported work being carried out in her Academy Trust in respect of mental health. Staff were endeavouring to obtain more information from families via a welfare questionnaire, so that potential solutions could be offered to families. Ms O'Donoghue would send a copy of the welfare questionnaire to the Headteacher.

#### **ACTION: MS O'DONOGHUE**

**Q:** What happened with the questionnaires? What actions were taken?

**A:** Ms O'Donoghue explained that the pastoral team responded, maintaining a list of vulnerable families. There had been a number of families that had not been previously identified. Families were signposted to MIND if appropriate.

**Q:** How would Mr Marsh obtain support for families at St Mary's?

**A:** Support was available from Education Psychologists, CAMHS and other websites that were highlighted on the Diocesan website. There was a wide range of support that could be offered to families. The Headteacher added that all schools were different. He was aware of many families that were anxious and fearful, but there would be other families that had not been identified. The Headteacher confirmed that he would like to issue a questionnaire.

- Many families, even when identified, did not meet the social care threshold.
- **Q:** Was there a network that could be accessed via the OfSTED Inspector working with Hounslow? There had to be follow-up to responses from a questionnaire.
- A:** The Headteacher confirmed that there would be online resources available, including Early Help.

#### **g) Admissions for September 2020**

The Headteacher informed Governors that numbers were down for this year:

- 47 places had been allocated in Reception (capacity of 60).
- 21 places had been allocated in Nursery (capacity of 26). Some additional offers could be made for January 2021.

Numbers were down across most schools in Hounslow. Around nine schools across the Borough had been asked to lose a form of entry for 2020/21. Each child attracts funding of around £3.2K; the lower numbers had been reflected in the budget.

Fr Nico was reminded that Governors had removed the requirement for a Certificate of Catholic Practice from the Admission criteria. Fr Nicol agreed to inform the Parish priests accordingly.

**ACTION: FR NICO**

**h) Budget information**

Governors were reminded that the monthly budget monitor printouts for Period 2 had been circulated for review.

**i) School Journey updates**

➤ **Y6 trip to Rome**

The Headteacher confirmed that full refunds had been made to all pupils. A booking for the trip in 2021 had been made and deposits already paid to BA and the hotel in Rome had been carried forward. Governors **authorised** the trip to Rome in 2021.

➤ **Y5 PGL trip**

Refunds had not been given for this trip, as it had been re-scheduled for September 2020. It was hoped that the trip would be able to go ahead. The deposit had been paid to PGL.

**10. Dates of future FGB meetings**

Wednesday 16 September 2020 at 6pm – full Governing Body meeting

Monday 19 October 2020 at 9.30am – Pay and Personnel Committee

Monday 2 November 2020 at 9.30am – Finance & Premises / Achievement & Standards Committees

Wednesday 18 November 2020 – full Governing Body meeting

The meeting was closed in prayer at 8.05pm by Fr Nico.

**These minutes were agreed by Governors at a meeting conducted via MS Teams on 9 September 2020. They will be signed by the Chair at the next physical Governing Body meeting.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_