

# ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting held in the school, Duncan Street, Islington, London N1 8BL on Monday 18 May 2020 at 10.00am.

Present:

Patricia Meerstadt	<b>Chair</b>	Rev Mgr Seamus O’Boyle
Stephanie Day	<b>Headteacher</b>	Justin Portess
Zoe Brennan		Kathleen Saville
Amos Curtis		Alexia Turner
Paula Denton		Claire Zammit (from Item 9)
Reyna Maldonado-Wynne		

Also present:

Nicholas Matthias	<b>Associate Member</b>
Matt Lake	<b>Clerk to the Governing Body</b>

The meeting was preceded by a prayer led by Rev Mgr Seamus O’Boyle.

		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
1.	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES/CONSENT FOR ABSENCE</u></b></p> <p>a) <u>Apologies Received</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Daniel Beazer, and Associate Members Peter Hadinger and Nicholas Matthias.</p> <p>b) <u>Consent to Absence</u></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> to consent to the absence of Daniel Beazer, Peter Hadinger and Nicholas Matthias.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></b></p> <p>Governors were reminded that they have a continuing duty to declare any changes to their interests since the completion of their annual declaration and to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda of the meeting for which they should exclude themselves from the meeting.</p> <p>No declarations of interest in agenda items were presented at the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>MEMBERSHIP MATTERS</u></b></p> <p>The following change in the membership of the Governing Body were formally reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reappointment of Amos Curtis to a new term of office as a Foundation Governor from 1 March 2020 to 31 August 2023.</li> </ul> <p>Governors noted the following terms of office that had expired or that were due to expire in the near future.</p>	

			<b><u>ACTION</u></b>												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Name</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Category</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Expiry Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rev Mgr Seamus O'Boyle</td> <td>Foundation</td> <td>31 August 2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alexia Turner</td> <td>Parent</td> <td>22 May 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paula Denton</td> <td>Foundation</td> <td>31 August 2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Category	Expiry Date	Rev Mgr Seamus O'Boyle	Foundation	31 August 2019	Alexia Turner	Parent	22 May 2020	Paula Denton	Foundation	31 August 2020		
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	<p>Governors noted that following the above changes the Governing Body currently had two vacant Foundation Governor vacancies in addition to the position above that had already expired and one vacant Parent Governor position. The Governing Body also retained two vacant Co-Opted Governor vacancies.</p> <p>The Chair reminded governors that a decision was awaited from the Diocese of Westminster on the appointment of Peter Hadinger as a Foundation Governor and that she would be leaving the Governing Body at the end of the current academic year.</p>														
4.	<p><b><u>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (10 FEBRUARY 2020) AND MATTERS ARISING</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2020 had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>a) <u>Accuracy</u></p> <p>i) <u>Item 3b – Committee Membership</u></p> <p>Governors noted that Kirsty O'Connor should also be listed as having been appointed as a member of the Resources Committee.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> that the minutes be signed as an accurate record of the last meeting subject to the amendment above.</p> <p>b) <u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>														
5.	<p><b><u>COMMITTEE REPORTS</u></b></p> <p>a) <u>Curriculum and Pupil Committee</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 3 March 2020 had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Committee Chair noted that the committee had received a detailed presentation from the school's Special Educational and Disability Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO). This had included an update on the continuing difficulties being experienced in receiving funds related to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to support provision for individual pupils</p> <p>The Committee Chair reported that a detailed review of the experience of pupils and families during lockdown had been undertaken at the start of the summer term. This had included identifying a total of 78 pupils lacking accessibility to devices and/or broadband to enable them to effectively engage in online learning.</p> <p>b) <u>Resources, Staffing and Health and Safety Committee</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meetings of the committee held on 4 March 2020 and 27 April 2020 were circulated with the agenda.</p>														

		<u><b>ACTION</b></u>
	<p>The Chair noted the following staffing matters reported at the March 2020 committee meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional Teaching Assistant was in post to support the provision of 1:1 support in Reception;</li> <li>• Internal maternity leave cover was in place in Nursery;</li> <li>• Interviews for maternity leave cover for Year 3 would be held on Friday 22 May 2020.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair reported that the committee had considered the following items at its meeting in April 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed in detail the outturn of the school budget for 2019/20 and the proposed budget for the 2020/21 financial year;</li> <li>• The content of the latest Conditions Survey of the school premises and works undertaken to address identified needs.</li> </ul> <p>c) <u>Pay Committee</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that there had been a recent extraordinary meeting of the committee to consider and approve levels of additional remuneration for staff who had continued to work through the Easter holiday period to support the children of key workers.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>SCHOOL BUDGET</u></b></p> <p>a) <u>Budget Monitoring to the End of the 2019/20 Financial Year</u></p> <p>Budget monitoring reports for the end of the 2019/20 financial year prepared by the school's Finance Consultant had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chair noted the reported variances against individual budget lines and the projected surplus of c£161,000 at the end of the 2019/20 financial year which had been boosted by insurance rebate income, additional income related to Free School Meals and increased income from Nursery and After-School Club provision.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted negative variances in respect of overtime payments made to staff and additional support that had been required to be in place to support pupils with additional needs. The Chair noted that the school was seeking to access funding to assist with these additional pupil provision related costs through the approval of additional Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).</p> <p>b) <u>Consideration and Approval of Budget for 2020/21</u></p> <p>A summary report on the proposed budget for the 2020/21 financial year showing comparative information to the budget for 2019/20 alongside a projected budgets for the following two financial years.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the proposed budget for 2020/21 included a projected in-year deficit of almost £38,000 but that this was permissible due to the carry forward of almost £162,000 at the end of 2019/20. However, it was important to recognise the impact that this would have on the positive balance in the school's revenue budget and that with c80% of expenditure on staffing costs there was limited ability to bear down on expenditure.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the proposed budget for 2019/20 had been drafted to reflect the school's position in a normal school year. However, there would likely be additional costs and potentially reduction in expenditure in differing areas of</p>	

		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>the operation of the school in coming months as well as the possibility of some additional funding to support increased costs from responding to Covid-19.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the initial budget projections for 2021/22 and 2022/23 envisaged further in-year deficits that would almost eliminate the current surplus in the school revenue budget.</p> <p>Justin Portess (JP) queried whether it were possible to set realistic budgets in the current circumstances faced by the school with such uncertainty around the potential level of costs for areas such as agency staffing and cleaning costs. The Chair stated that it would be necessary to make positive and proactive use of the school's current budget surplus to respond to these as they arose.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</u></b></p> <p>The termly report from the Headteacher to the governing body reporting on the spring term 2019 had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – LOCKDOWN ENTRY EXPERIENCE</u></b></p> <p>a) <u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>The Headteacher reported that there had been no changes to the existing funding arrangements for schools with previously set Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations unchanged. However, there was a recognition from the DfE of the additional costs that schools would incur in responding to the impact of the pandemic.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the school had made a significant short term saving of c£44,000 on staffing expenditure in the summer term 2020. In addition, c£11,000 had been saved on costs related to catering, clubs and associated overtime but that after being offset against reduced income the school had experienced a net loss of c£7,000 in these areas.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the school had spent approximately £8,000 on cleaning supplies, hygiene resources, vouchers for families eligible for Free School Meals and new signage. It was anticipated that the school would be able to claim additional funding support for some of these elements of expenditure although there were limits placed on this and the DfE would be publishing details on the claim process in June 2020.</p> <p>b) <u>Pupil Wellbeing</u></p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the school had created a home learning page on its website to support pupils and families in accessing support for learning at home including work for all year groups. In addition, the school had provided hard copy work packs to those that required these and especially those without appropriate internet access or enabled devices at home. Reading books for loan had also been provided.</p> <p>The Headteacher informed governors that the school had submitted an order for an initial batch of Chrome Books to support home learning with distribution to start with Year 6 pupils before progressing to other year groups. Additional Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) had been purchased to provide support by phone to those pupils at the school on the Speech and Language Register.</p>	

		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>c) <u>Assessment</u></p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the DfE had cancelled all the 2019/20 national curriculum assessments as a result of the impact of the pandemic on schools. This means that all of the following assessments planned between April and July 2020 were cancelled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Good Level of Development;</li> <li>• End of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments, including both tests and teacher assessments;</li> <li>• Phonics Screening Check;</li> <li>• Multiplication Tables Check;</li> <li>• Science Sampling Tests.</li> </ul> <p>d) <u>Free School Meals</u></p> <p>The school had continued to provide hot meals to the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils that had been attending school since the start of the lockdown. For those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) that were not attending school, the school had initially provided free packed lunches through Caterlink, followed by voucher for Sainsbury's for three weeks from the school budget prior to participating in the DfE's national voucher scheme operated by Edenred UK. There had been significant problems experienced by all schools in accessing the Edenred scheme in its early weeks with considerable amounts of time committed to engaging with this by the school's administrative staff.</p> <p>e) <u>Vulnerable Children</u></p> <p>The DfE announced on 20 March 2020 that schools would remain open only for the children of workers delivering critical services and for 'vulnerable' children. The latter category was defined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who have a Social Worker allocated to support them, with 5 of 6 such children on roll at the school attending;</li> <li>• Those with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in place, of which 0 of 4 such children on the school roll attending. However, risk assessments had been completed for them all with all of their parents content to keep their children at home;</li> <li>• Those that are 'otherwise vulnerable' as assessed by the school or the local authority and in need of continued education provision. The school had four such children presently on roll, all of whom were attending on a part-time basis.</li> </ul> <p>f) <u>Staff Wellbeing</u></p> <p>The Headteacher informed governors that all staff working away from school were expected to work for a minimum of five hours each working day with individual wellbeing and work-life balance needs discussed with their phase leaders. Teaching staff were maintaining contact with families and pupils by regular phone calls alongside planning for the delivery of remote learning.</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher was meeting remotely with all teaching assistants weekly as well as ensuring that direct phone contact was maintained with all alongside regular email communication to all staff. The attendance of teaching assistants to work in school was being delivered on a rota basis.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that a survey had been conducted with all staff with some concerns raised, especially by those living in households including</p>	

		<u><b>ACTION</b></u>
	<p>vulnerable individuals. The Headteacher noted that the guidance published by the DfE stated that there was no expectation of maintaining social distancing in Nursery and Reception classes and whilst the school could put in place as many steps to mitigate risk as possible it would not be possible to provide a completely safe space within school.</p> <p>The Headteacher noted that a number of staff had to use public transport to travel to and from school and that some also had childcare responsibilities for children not attending their own schools.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – PLANS FOR WIDER REOPENING FROM 1 JUNE 2020</u></b></p> <p>The Headteacher reminded governors of the updated guidance published by the DfE on 11 May 2020 to support the opening of schools to more pupils from 1 June 2020 on a phased basis. Following this, the school had completed a whole school Risk Assessment and a Staff Guidance report using templates provided by Islington Council.</p> <p>The Headteacher provided governors with a detailed breakdown of the actions taken to ensure that the school site would be ready to receive additional pupils from the start of June 2020 and a timeline of actions to be delivered. These included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of two different entrances for pupils;</li> <li>• The installation of additional handwashing troughs in infant and junior playgrounds;</li> <li>• Hand sanitising units installed at school entrances, all classrooms and the staff room;</li> <li>• Social distancing signs and floor markers installed;</li> <li>• Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff, especially those that would be responding to any accidents or injuries that may occur.</li> </ul> <p>The Headteacher informed governors that there was no requirement for staff to wear PPE but that staff were free to wear any items of PPE should they wish whilst in school.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the published guidance stated that schools should operate with ‘bubbles’ containing no more than 15 children and that a rota for attendance of different bubbles should not be permitted. However, especially in the light of some staff not yet being able to return to work in school, there was insufficient available space to accommodate all children returning for face to face provision full-time in bubbles of up to 15 children. Therefore, should large numbers of children return to school, attendance would be split with pupils attending for two days each week on either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday with children of key workers to be provided with on-site support all week.</p> <p><b>[NB – Claire Zammit joined the meeting at this point – 11.15am]</b></p> <p>The Headteacher provided governors with an overview of the proposed timetable of learning to be delivered including two days of in-school learning and two days of learning to be completed by pupils at home. It was proposed that pupils in Years 1 and 6 would return in week commencing 1 June 2020 with Reception pupils added from 8 June 2020 and Nursery pupils from 15 June 2020. This differed from the proposal return schedule of Year groups published by the DfE but would be safer to manage within the school.</p>	

		<u><b>ACTION</b></u>
	<p>Staff would be allocated separate break times during the school day to limit the number of staff within the staff room together. These would comprise of a 10 minute morning break and a 30 minute lunchtime break with staff having to provide their own utensils.</p> <p>Amos Curtis (AC) asked whether all school staff would be tested for exposure to Covid-19. The Headteacher reported that staff would not all be routinely tested but noted that individual staff members could apply for a test.</p> <p>Staggered playtimes would be supported by separate bags of resources to be used only by groups of pupils within each bubble which would also be allocated specific areas to use in the school playgrounds. Additional outside furniture had been ordered and a partition would be installed to separate the outside area to be used by the children in Reception. The school was also considering directly employing a cleaner to be on site throughout the school day to relieve teaching staff of additional cleaning duties.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the layout of classrooms would be reviewed with the Premises Manager with a view to identifying any items of furniture that could be removed to temporarily provide more space to allow for increased levels of social distancing. Rev Mgr O'Boyle commented that it may be possible to store some items in the crypt of the Parish Church.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>CHAIR'S REPORT</u></b></p> <p>The Chair noted the requirement that governors be reassured that the level of risk in the proposed wider opening of the school was acceptable and that all necessary and available precautions were being delivered in mitigation.</p> <p>AC asked what liability was held by the school should a staff member become seriously ill with Covid-19 that they had potentially contracted whilst at school. The Headteacher agreed to clarify this with Islington Council but noted that guidance from the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) was that insurance and related arrangements would address such circumstances as long as the school was taking into account guidance published by the DfE.</p> <p>JP asked whether teaching staff could refuse to return to work in person in the school. The Headteacher stated that they would not be able to refuse to return aside from those that were shielding due to personal clinical vulnerability.</p> <p>Kathleen Saville (KS) asked whether the school would be open during the October half term break. The Headteacher reported that provision would only be made available to support the five children whose parents were key workers.</p> <p>AC asked what would happen in the event of individual parents were to decide not to send their children to school. The Headteacher noted that parents would have to have a confirmed place to which to send their child including specific days and times as it would not be possible to operate provision for the latter part of the current academic year as an effective drop-in service.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether parents would still be permitted to keep their children at home from 1 June 2020. The Headteacher confirmed that this was the case and that penalty notices would not be issued for pupil non-attendance during the remainder of the current academic year.</p>	

		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
11.	<b><u>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></b> The proposed schedule of meetings for the 2019/20 academic year would be circulated following the meeting.	<b>Chair</b>
12.	<b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b> There was no other business to discuss.	
13.	<b><u>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</u></b> There were no confidential items.	

There being no further business, the Chair closed this section of the meeting at 11.45am.

**Matt Lake**  
**Clerk to the Governors**  
**The Bridge London Trust**

CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_