



**Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Board of**  
**ST OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, LIVERPOOL**  
held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 at 4.30pm over **zoom**

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**Present:**

Mr A Hegarty (Chair)	Foundation Governor
Mrs R Hill (Vice-Chair)	Foundation Governor
Mrs T Gentle	Staff Governor
Mr G Manley	Foundation Governor
Mrs J Simm	Local Authority Governor
Mrs M Walsh	Head teacher

**Also Present:**

Mr I Strom	School Business Manager
Dave Rice	Acting clerk to the governors

<u>Item</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Action</u>
21/24	<b><u>Welcome and Opening Prayer</u></b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new academic year and opened the meeting with a prayer.	
21/25	<b><u>Members Present and Apologies</u></b> Apologies for absence were received and accepted from governors Colin Flood and Joanne Jones and Deputy Head teacher Donna Hay.	
21/26	<b><u>Election of Chair</u></b> The Head teacher invited nominations for the position of Chair of the Governing Board for the new academic year. Mr Hegarty was nominated and seconded for the position and he accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations the governors voted and <b>RESOLVED</b> unanimously that Mr Hegarty be elected to the position.  Thanking governors, Mr Hegarty took the chair.	
21/27	<b><u>Election of Vice-chair</u></b> Ruth Hill was nominated and seconded for the position of Vice-chair. Mrs Hill accepted the nomination.  There being no further nominations the governors voted and <b>RESOLVED</b> unanimously that Mrs Hill be elected to the position.	
21/28	<b><u>Declarations of Pecuniary Interest</u></b> There were no declarations of interest in any of the items to be discussed outside of the general interest of governors employed at the school.  The Head teacher said that governors could record and confirm interests on <i>GovernorHub</i> in order to constitute the register of business interests for the academic year. The clerk undertook to circulate guidance to governors on how to confirm.	<b>CLERK</b>

<u>Item</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Action</u>
21/29	<p><b><u>Items of Additional Business</u></b></p> <p>The governors <b>RESOLVED</b> to add “<i>Safeguarding: DBS clearance</i>” to the published agenda at the request of the Chair and “<i>Staff requests for Leave of Absence</i>” at the request of the Head teacher.</p>	
21/30	<p><b><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were screen-shared.</p> <p><b>a) <u>Accuracy</u></b></p> <p>The Chair proposed, Mrs Simm seconded and the governors <b>RESOLVED</b> unanimously that the minutes were correct.</p> <p><b>b) <u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p><b>i) <u>Minute 21/19 (i) (catering)</u></b></p> <p>At the previous meeting, arising from the business of the Resources Committee, governors had been informed that a meeting was planned with <i>Food For Thought</i> to discuss options for catering in future.</p> <p>The Head teacher reported that the meeting had taken place and <i>Food For Thought</i> had made a proposal which governors would need to consider and decide if they wished to accept. She said there would be significant implications e.g. the employer would change and staff would transfer under TUPE: Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that a task and finish group of three governors scrutinise the proposal and make a recommendation.</p> <p><b>ii) <u>Minute 21/19 (ii) (building update)</u></b></p> <p>At the previous meeting governors had been informed that the Chair would to set up a meeting with the Archdiocese to discuss Phase 2 of the building work. The Head teacher reported that the meeting had taken place with Arcadis. They had measured up and would provide costings for the next phase by October, with a view to work beginning at Easter.</p> <p><b>iii) <u>Minute 21/22 (ix) (pupil numbers)</u></b></p> <p>The Head teacher confirmed that she would update governors on pupil numbers in her report later in the meeting.</p> <p><b>iv) <u>Minute 21/22 (xiv) (health and safety walk)</u></b></p> <p>The Head teacher confirmed that the Health &amp; Safety walk remained a priority for the autumn term. The Chair had visited the school to see the new build and had been impressed with the quality of provision but said that the downside was that it showed up the poor provision in the rest of the school. The Head teacher said that nothing had been done in the infant building, though this had been promised during the amalgamation; she was due to speak to Chris Williams at the Archdiocese. She would report more fully later in the meeting.</p>	

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21/31	<p><b><u>Dates of Meetings in 2021/22</u></b></p> <p>Suggested dates and times for meetings of the governing board and its committees in the new academic year had been shared on <i>GovernorHub</i> prior to the meeting. <b>Mrs Simm said</b> that she may find it difficult to attend meetings on a Tuesday.</p> <p>After a brief discussion the governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the schedule of meetings for the remainder of the year be as follows:</p> <p><b>Autumn Term 2021</b></p> <p>Standards: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October at 4.30pm  Pay committee: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October at 4.30pm  Resources: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November at <u>4.00pm</u>  Full Governing Board: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 4.30pm</p> <p><b>Spring Term 2022</b></p> <p>Resources: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 4.30pm  Standards: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March at 4.30pm  Full Governing Board: Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March at 5.00pm</p> <p><b>Summer Term 2022</b></p> <p>Resources - one item agenda for budget Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May at 4.30pm  Full Governing Board: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July at 2.30pm (preceded by lunch with staff and class visits).</p> <p>Returning to the earlier discussion about <b>the catering contract</b> Mr Strom pointed out that the current contract ended in February and said there would need to be some handover time.</p> <p>After a brief discussion the governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the task and finish group report to the Resources Committee in November and further <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Resources Committee be authorised to take the final decision. The meeting would begin at 4.00pm with catering as the first item of business.</p>	<b>ALL TO NOTE</b>
21/32	<p><b><u>Governance 2021-22</u></b></p> <p>i) <b><u>Terms of Reference</u></b></p> <p>Terms of Reference for the Governing Board, the Resources Committee, the Pay Review Committee and the Standards Committee had been shared on <i>GovernorHub</i>.</p> <p>Following a brief discussion the governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the terms of reference remain unchanged.</p> <p>ii) <b><u>Committee membership</u></b></p> <p>Details of committee membership the previous year were shared on screen from <i>GovernorHub</i>. Governors confirmed that they wished to continue serving as in the previous year with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs Simm would no longer serve on the Resources Committee,</li> <li>• Mrs Jones would switch from Standards to Resources Committee.</li> </ul>	

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	<p>The changes were administered on <i>GovernorHub</i> by Mr Strom.</p> <p>As a number of governors were absent, the Chair asked the school to share the list of proposed committee membership with all governors with a request that governors contact him if they wished to make any changes.</p> <p>The Head teacher asked governors to bear in mind the skills needed on each committee: in particular the Standards committee, which considered a great deal of data.</p>	HEAD
iii)	<p><b><u>Head teacher's Performance Management Committee</u></b></p> <p>The Head teacher said that the School improvement Partner had given her a limited number of dates when he could attend the committee: 2<sup>nd</sup> November afternoon, 4<sup>th</sup> November any time, 10<sup>th</sup> November morning, 15<sup>th</sup> November morning or 18<sup>th</sup> November morning. The Chair suggested the governors involved agree a date and get back to the Head teacher.</p>	
iv)	<p><b><u>Link Governors</u></b></p> <p>A list of link governors from the previous year, and descriptions of the role of link governor for English, EYFS, maths, pupil premium, RE, safeguarding and SEN, had been shared on <i>GovernorHub</i>.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that they wished to continue in their respective roles and in addition Mr Manley was designated link governor for data and second link governor for SEN. The changes were implemented on <i>GovernorHub</i> by Mr Strom and the Chair again asked the school to share the information with all governors with a request that governors contact him if they wished any changes.</p>	HEAD
v)	<p><b><u>Code of Conduct</u></b></p> <p>The Head teacher had posted a copy of the governing board's <i>Code of Conduct</i> on <i>GovernorHub</i>. The clerk undertook to add a confirmation button to governor profiles on <i>GovernorHub</i> so that, in addition to confirming the record of their pecuniary interests, governors could confirm that they would abide by the code.</p> <p><b>The Chair observed</b> that the pandemic had caused a hiatus in governance and, while it was far from over, people were seeking ways to manage alongside it. He said that governors would need to become more involved with school life in what he termed 'soft engagement': not only because Ofsted expected it but because the children deserved it.</p>	CLERK
21/33	<p><b><u>Head teacher's verbal update on the new term</u></b></p> <p>The Head teacher delivered a verbal report on key issues for the school since the start of the new academic year.</p> <p>Arising from the report governors noted:</p> <p>i) <b>Covid-19:</b> DfE guidance to schools on Covid safety had changed – they were no longer tracking and tracing, close contacts were not isolating if double jabbed or under 18, siblings continued to come to school if a child</p>	

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	<p>tested positive. The Local Authority advice had been more measured and it had warned schools not to be too ambitious.</p> <p>The <i>risk assessment</i> and <i>emergency management plan</i> were on the school website. Some measures were being retained: staff were still being asked to wear face coverings when meeting parents, parents were not allowed at assemblies, parents' evening would again be conducted virtually. Emphasis on hygiene and ventilation continued, which meant the school felt cold some of the time and they were mindful that the weather was going to turn colder. Extra-curricular clubs and Breakfast club had restarted, with numbers limited to separate year groups. The school had retained staggered playtime and lunchtime to avoid too many children congregating.</p> <p>Some parents were still nervous and more inclined to keep children off. Attendance figures would inevitably be affected, as children off with Covid were marked as "ill", which made comparison with figures in other years meaningless.</p> <p>The school was not allowed to question whether staff had been vaccinated, unless a vulnerable person was involved when it formed part of their risk assessment and alternative working arrangements would be made. If an unvaccinated member of staff came into close contact with a positive they may be asked to self-isolate for ten days, vaccinated staff would be expected to attend work.</p> <p>ii) <b>Summer building work:</b> had not gone according to plan, with challenges arising from Covid and Brexit (difficulty procuring materials etc.) and the project had overrun. Meetings throughout the holiday identified some issues and it had been hoped that cleaners and teaching staff would have certain areas back and clear by Tuesday August 31<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>The foreman had gone on holiday (leaving clear instructions) but unfortunately his replacement did not stick to the plans. It became apparent the building would not be fit and emergency action would be needed in order to reopen for children on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The Head teacher had called the Arcadis project manager and the boss of Skyline and they walked the school and prioritised learning areas to ensure they were safe and clean, leaving certain parts of the building unfinished: upstairs Y5/6 toilets, the intervention room, floor coverings, staff toilets, window replacement and other issues.</p> <p>Planned INSET days were postponed and staff spent the two days ensuring the building was ready. It was hard, physical work and the Head teacher expressed her thanks to everyone for pulling together to make sure the school could open. The INSET (including training on the new Early Years Framework) would be rearranged.</p>	

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	<p>On a more positive note, the Head teacher said, the new parts of the junior building were beautiful, the rooms were large and spacious. Skyline had done a fantastic job and the finish was generally very good. Arcadis had been tasked with costing the next phase of the build with the aim of starting the following year.</p> <p>iii) <b>Future works:</b> approximately £18,000 of the school's £70,000 devolved formula capital allowance had been spent on furniture for the new building, smartboards for the classrooms, and improving Wi-Fi. The rest was needed for new CCTV, shutters, lighting on the school grounds, tree maintenance and revamping the sensory area.</p> <p>The roof on the junior building was getting to a critical stage with leaks causing major issues. The Archdiocese proposed to phase the work but the Head teacher wanted it as a separate project. The infant building had had nothing spent on it and looked poor in comparison. Unfortunately it had suffered a break-in in the week prior to opening. The offices had been ransacked and the intruders found the key to the safe and took a considerable amount of cash.</p> <p>iv) <b>Staffing:</b> staff had returned rested after the summer break and had worked hard to ensure the curriculum was strong. There were three staff over 28 weeks pregnant. They were in school but, as they could not guarantee social distance, they were working on small group or planning tasks. Another teacher would reach 28 weeks at half term.</p> <p>Staffing needs had been met through use of supply agency and temporary contracts and there would be significant cost implications.</p> <p>v) <b>Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):</b> staff were in the process of completing reception baseline assessment. It was a massive undertaking requiring 20 minutes with each child. A discussion followed around the purpose of the baselines and whether the time would be better spent with the children as a whole. <b>The Chair observed</b> that the assessments would not be referred to again until the child reached year 6. Many children would have changed schools in the meantime. He felt the exercise represented a phenomenal waste of time and energy.</p> <p>The Head teacher said that the new EYFS framework entailed considerable training. Changes had been made to improve outcomes at age five, particularly in early language and literacy, and reduce workload and unnecessary paperwork, so teachers could spend more time with the children. The Head teacher talked governors through the main changes.</p> <p><b>Staff governor Tracy Gentle endorsed</b> the Head teacher's remarks. She said that there was still an enormous amount of work to do but there would be a lot of positives in the new framework once staff got to grips with it. There would be improvements in nursery and reception.</p>	

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	<p>The Head teacher added that transition into year 1 would improve.</p> <p>vi) <b>School data:</b> the Head teacher screen shared an analysis of pupils by year group, detailing the number entitled to free school meals, the number taking free school meals, the number of paid meals and the number of packed lunches.</p> <p>The governors noted that there were 588 pupils in total and 178 were entitled to free school meals, which the Head teacher said was the highest identified.</p> <p>Turning to pupils with SEN, the Head teacher said the numbers continued to be high. Five children had Education, Health and Care Plans. <b>In response to a question from Mr Manley</b> the Head teacher confirmed that the number of pupils with special needs usually increased as children moved up the school. Many younger children were not given an agreed SEND status until they were older, outside providers often wanted to make sure the graduated approach of assess-plan-do-review cycle was completed. Sometimes, as children approached secondary transfer, parents became concerned that they may not cope.</p> <p>vii) <b>School Development Plan:</b> was in the process of being written, priorities would include the new EYFS framework and changes to Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education. The school was also introducing "Opening Worlds" and exciting curriculum development in year 3, which linked history, geography and religious education. <b>Mrs Simm observed</b> that Emmaus School was also introducing the scheme.</p> <p>The Head teacher said that primary teachers were increasingly being expected to work in subject specialisms, like secondary schools, which she felt was unrealistic and unfair.</p> <p>viii) <b>Catch-up curriculum:</b> was continuing. The school was working hard to close the gap, particularly in writing. <b>Governors asked why writing in particular.</b> The HT explained that writing was more difficult to control, teach and mark with remote education. Children did less writing at home than in school, lowering standards.</p> <p>ix) <b>MITA (maximising the impact of teaching assistants):</b> was a major piece of work. Teaching assistants were a key resource but the way they were utilised using their skills and also effective communication around teacher's clarity of expectations and requirements, could be improved to gain better outcomes for children.</p> <p>x) <b>Mental Health and Well-being of children:</b> remained a priority and the school had applied for £2,000 DfE funding for training to ensure a whole school approach to mental health.</p> <p>xi) <b>Phonics programme:</b> the phonics programme, <i>Letters and Sounds</i>, was not recognised by the Government and it was likely the school would have</p>	



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	<p>to source a new programme before March 2022. There were massive cost implications but without an approved scheme the school could not be judged as 'good'. <b>In response to a question from Mr Manley</b>, the Head teacher said a new scheme would cost upwards of £17,000.</p>	
21/34	<p><b><u>Budget report</u></b></p> <p>Business Manager Ian Strom had posted a September 2021 finance report on <i>GovernorHub</i> for information. The report contained detailed line by line figures 'Allocated', 'Committed', 'Actual spend' and 'Remaining Balance'. A full discussion would take place in Resource committee.</p>	
21/35	<p><b><u>Other Business: Staff Requests for Leave of Absence</u></b></p> <p>The Head teacher had posted a copy of the Leave of Absence policy on <i>GovernorHub</i> seeking governors' approval. She said that she had received a number of requests for leave of absence and since the policy stipulated that leave for various domestic reasons could be one day at the discretion of the governing board (with or without pay) she sought guidance from the governors on implementation.</p> <p>She cited examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a request for two days leave, from a member of staff who was to be bridesmaid at a cousin's wedding on Cyprus in 2023. The wedding had been planned originally for a half term and postponed because of the pandemic. The half term date in 2023 was not available.</li> <li>• Employees may be granted paid time off to attend <u>one</u> round of IVF or fertility treatment ... further time off will be at the discretion of the school / governing board.</li> </ul> <p>Governors acknowledged, and were sympathetic, where Covid had disrupted plans but some governors felt that 2023 was stretching the point.</p> <p>Acknowledging the Head teacher's dilemma, Mr Manley proposed in approving the policy governors adopt, as a general principle, that the Head teacher be authorised to grant one day's absence with pay but any additional days be without pay. The governors <b>RESOLVED</b> to adopt the suggestion.</p> <p>The Head teacher quoted additional examples from the policy and governors established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To move house subject to the choice of date being unavoidable. <b>One day with pay</b></li> <li>• To attend one's own degree ceremony or to attend their child's degree ceremony, where the child is an actual participant. <b>One day with pay</b></li> <li>• School Prize distribution for the applicant's child. <b>Half day with pay</b></li> </ul>	



<u>Item</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Action</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An expectant father or the partner (including same sex) of a pregnant woman will be entitled to take unpaid time off work to accompany the woman to up to 2 of her ante-natal appointments. Governors <b>RESOLVED</b> that the time off should be <b><u>with pay</u></b>.</li> </ul>	
21/36	<p><b><u>Other Business: Safeguarding - DBS clearance</u></b></p> <p>The Chair sought clarification of a request he had received in connection with his Discretion and Barring Service clearance. Mr Strom explained that the school needed to see photo identification – e.g. a photo driving licence or a passport.</p>	<b>CHAIR</b>

*The meeting closed at 6:00pm*