At a meeting of the Governing Body of St. Ursula’s Convent School held at St. Ursula’s Convent School on Thursday 17th March 2016

Present:

Mrs. E. Currie - Chair
Mrs. C. Hamilton - Headteacher
Mr. B. Farrelly
Mrs. L. Maresca Harmer
Ms. M. Mythen
Ms. S. Ward

Observing: Mr. A. Fernando, Ms. N. Johnson, Ms. G. Smyrk and Mrs. B. Durrant.

Ms. Carol Ladbrook attended as Clerk to the Governing Body

MINUTES

Sr. Alice opened the meeting with a prayer

Mr. Farrelly took the Chair for the first part of the meeting.

1. BRIEFING; NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK

The Clerk gave a short briefing on the possible areas of questions that may challenge governors at a new OfSTED Framework. A briefing paper is appended to these minutes

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence had previously been RECEIVED from Ms. Doherty. Apologies for lateness had previously been RECEIVED from Ms. Currie.

Fr. Chris and Ms. Mythen gave their apologies as they had to leave at 7.30 p.m.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Governors were reminded that they must declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any item that might arise during the course of the meeting. Governors who have declared an interest must leave the meeting while the item is discussed and any decision is taken by the governing body.

The Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations 1999 requires that all governing bodies set up a register of interests, and ensure that it is updated regularly. Further advice is contained in the local authority’s School Financial Procedures Manual. The Governing Body were reminded that it confirm the register of interests is fully completed and up to date.

4. LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

The Governing Body discussed the delegation for approval of nominations for Local Authority appointments or re-appointments to the Chair. AGREED.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNING BODY MEETING

The minutes of the previous governing body meeting held on 12th November 2015, having been previously circulated, were APPROVED as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

7. HEADTEACHER’S REPORT

The Headteacher’s report, having been previously circulated, was taken as read. **Q: Ms. Mythen and Ms. Maresca-Harmer requested a paper copy, rather than electronic copy, for ease of reading and the ability to highlight areas.**

Ms. Hamilton highlighted areas of the report.

**Headline Data:** The Head reported that the school is still outstanding by national standards but governors should note that there was a dip in results last year. OfSTED would be looking at three year trends and the 5 A*-C including English and Maths
results dipped. She warned governors that the school cannot afford to be complacent about the results. The Government’s big focus is on disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students on every measure and closing the gap between these pupils over a three year trend.

RAISEonline is still a very positive report indicating a wealth of SIG+, however the Government regularly change the grade boundaries which can affect the results again. The Head has asked people to be fairly cautious with predictions in light of the new assessment arrangements for this year.

**Ms. Currie joined the meeting at 6.10 p.m. and took the Chair for the rest of the meeting.**

Ms. Hamilton spoke about expected progress and highlighted the information in RAISEonline. As the school could now be viewed to be on a downward trend, the following must be put into place:

- More regular and rigorous data analysis using 4Matrix.
- Implementation of very early interventions for ‘at risk’ students. Ms. Hamilton felt this has not worked as well as it should in the past as lots of students feel like they are being pulled in different directions.
- Regular Raising Attainment meetings with HoDs to monitor the success of interventions in depth.
- Implementation of action plans for underachieving departments. Ms. Hamilton confirmed that all subjects have to be line managed and meetings take place weekly or bi-weekly. There is a mixed response in terms of predictions, e.g. DT predictions are high. It was noted that Drama had a change of examination board and are predicting 71% A*-C. (There have been a number of interventions during the year but there is an urgency to address what might be a dip again this year. There will be a continual discussion around predictions.)
- Identification of the widening achievement gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. Ms. Hamilton confirmed that the school now has a working party specifically looking at this information.
- Departments required to implement PiXL strategies to maximise progress.

**The Chair spoke about the government changes with reference to accountability measures.**

Governors noted that the headline measures for secondary school performance from 2016 will be

- Progress across 8 qualifications (Progress 8)
• Attainment across the same 8 qualifications (Attainment 8)
• Percentage of pupils achieving the threshold in English and Maths (currently C grade, grade 5 when new GCSEs in English and Maths are first reported in performance tables in 2017)
• Percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate

Q: A governor asked how the school monitors the quality of teaching in line with the agreed actions from progress meetings. Ms. Hamilton agreed that high quality teaching is key to pupils making good progress and there is a thorough analysis and investigation of teaching through a number of key aspects. The school has developed the feedback process to ensure staff are reflective and provide development opportunities for the student. HoDs are still being empowered to have the necessary conversations should teaching not be good enough to ensure appropriate support is provided.

Q: A governor asked about the 6% of teaching needing improvement in November 2015. Ms. Hamilton confirmed that this percentage equated to 2 supply teachers.

Q: A governor asked if there is a dip in attainment, if there has been an analysis for the reasons for this dip. Ms. Hamilton said there had been an analysis and departments are under review as part of the school’s process. Staff have been moved around in English, Maths and Science and some of the classes have been doubled up so teachers can deliver the lessons and not rely on supply teachers. This would assume 60 children with two teachers and a member of SLT as best practice. More staff have been attending refresher courses than ever before and teachers have been looking at best practice and improving their own practice in their own classrooms. Ms. Hamilton felt that there were also more staffing issues than ever before.

Q: A governor referred to the upper ability tracking data. Ms. Hamilton reported that this is very focused and there is also a lot of careful planning and teaching for the less able children. The focus group for the school is the disadvantaged children. PiXL has a lot of A* resources which are being utilised well.

Q: A governor referred to the less able children and whether some may be struggling because of the number of subjects they have to take. Ms. Hamilton agreed that this could be the case, however, they do have a different curriculum and they receive extra Maths and English lessons.

Q: A governor asked if the pupils know about the new progress measures, e.g. Progress 8. Children just need to know that they must reach the next level. The school must ensure students get the correct grade.
A predictions sheet containing information from all HoDs was circulated. Ms. Hamilton highlighted some of the subjects, including French where there are lots of interventions for differentiated groups. (This includes interventions at Easter for 10 girls.) If the interventions are successful, the prediction for A*-C will move to 86%.

**Teaching School Status:** The Chair referred to the HT’s report on Teaching School Status that had been requested for this meeting.

**KS3 Curriculum and Assessment Reform:** A presentation was given to the L&T Committee.

**Q: A governor asked when parents will be receiving information on this change.** Ms. Hamilton advised that year 8 will begin to move over to this new KS3 curriculum in the summer term. There are important changes to assessment and the school will look closely at the way this information is conveyed to parents. **Action Point: How the school communicates this change to parents will form an agenda item for the L&T Committee.**

**Admissions:** It was reported that the school has received 391 applications via the supplementary forms (total overall of 526 applications).

**Fr. Chris Connor and Ms. Mythen apologised and left the meeting at 7.20 p.m.**

**Behaviour:** Governors received information on the behaviour log from December to March. **Q: A governor felt there should be a clear policy for parents and students and an understanding that students come to school to learn. How can this be enforced in terms of behaviour?** The school is working hard to reduce the exclusion rate. PSPs (Pastoral Support Programmes) are being written and reviews take place on a regular basis. **The Chair spoke about the stage prior to permanent exclusions where governors may assist with the process. Meeting with the parents and the child has worked on a number of occasions in the past.**

**Fire Drill:** Fire drill will take place before the end of term.

8. **PROGRESS ON S48 AND OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS**

Section 48 –
- Support for Chaplain
- Recommendation for another RE teacher – now in place.
Ms. M. Perez-Velazquez apologies and left the meeting at 7.25 p.m.

- Better participation of students and Chaplaincy – Youth Ministry Team – increase of 10% of curriculum time.

OfSTED recommendations:

- Broaden the curriculum – new Spanish and French from year 7. Children can choose both options. Triple Science.
- Marking consistency – formative feedback and the power of learning. Policy implemented and HoD monitor. This continues to be an action point.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Premises and Finance: Governors were informed that the end of year statement shows a 5% carry-over. Governors continue to look ahead to plan for the future challenges.

Work has taken place to refurbish the Art Room courtesy of a diocesan grant. The school is also spending some money on the Food Technology Room refurbishment over the Easter holiday.

The Head highlighted the catering arrangements and suggested a working group to look at the current situation as the contract is coming to an end.

Teaching and Learning: Governors discussed the KS3 assessment and curriculum changes.

10. OTHER REPORTS

Governor Visits: Governors discussed the learning focused visits and were asked to consider areas for a future visit:

- Upper ability
- Single Central Record
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Governor Training: Mrs. Maresca Harmer attended PREVENT training. (Ms. Hamilton, Ms. Mythen and Ms. Doherty have already completed this training.) Governors were encouraged to complete the on-line training -

http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness
11. SCHOOL POLICY REVIEW

The Admissions Policy and Procedures 2017-18 were circulated. Governors were informed that the main difference is that the date of baptism is no longer a way to differentiate between children admitted to the school.

Q: A governor spoke about the drop in applications received from St. Winifred’s School. Parents have discussed the dip in results and also felt the school provided less pastoral care than, say, Eltham Hill. Governors and the school will pursue this further.

The Freedom of Information Policy was circulated.

The Anti-Bullying Policy was circulated.

Q: The Chair commented that there was no reference in the new policies to the Catholic ethos of the school. She also felt the school needed to make it explicit that there is a separate Anti-Bullying Policy for staff.

Action Point: The policies will be amended accordingly and circulated for approval. The Induction Policy will be discussed at the L&T Committee.

12. CHAIR’S ACTION/CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair reported:

• Recruitment of new Headteacher. The Chair thanked governors for taking part in the selection procedures. The Governing Body had RATIFIED the decision to appoint Ms. Hamilton as the substantive headteacher of St. Ursula’s Convent School. She felt the school was now in a stable and secure position and governors were looking forward to working with Ms. Hamilton.

• The Local Authority is keen for St. Ursula’s to take additional pupils to ease the pressure on school places which is now filtering through to secondary schools. As there are insufficient places for children in Greenwich, the Local Authority has asked the school to take an extra form of children per year. The Chair was unsure what the deadline for this change would be. The Head and the Chair had met with the LA to look at a feasibility study on accommodation. This topic will form an agenda item once the school secures more information from the LA.

• Government plans for academisation of schools. The Chair will email governors requesting a working group to look at the many options.
13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

School Journey  Governors were requested to approve a proposal to take the school choir on a planned tour, ending in Rome, during 2017-18. APPROVED.

Governors were reminded that the enrichment programme continues this year with planned trips to Ypres and Bolougne (risk assessments will be completed to ensure safeguarding of pupils).

The meeting was closed with a prayer.

What Questions Might Inspectors Ask Governors?

1. Governors’ understanding of the school and their role
Governors should refer to the Governor’s Handbook to ensure they know what their role is and what their statutory duties are.

2. The strengths and weaknesses of the school

3. How governors evaluate their own effectiveness
The governing body should be able to show how it evaluates its impact on the school. Inspectors may ask for information on:
· When was the last review of effectiveness conducted by the governing body?
· What strengths were identified?
· What areas for development were identified?
· What action was taken to improve where there were weaknesses?
· Do governors regularly follow-up on agreed actions to ensure they have been completed?

4. Use of funding

Questions regarding the use of funding may include:
· How is the pupil premium funding being spent? How effective is this? What impact is the spending having on the achievement and personal development of disadvantaged pupils? How do you know?
· How is the additional funding for PE and sports being spent? How effective is this? What impact is it having on pupils' fitness and health? How do you know?

5. Safeguarding

Governors may be asked questions about their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding, such as:
· How do you ensure that policies are kept up to date?
· How do you ensure that policies are put into practice?
· Have you ensured that all staff have read Keeping Children Safe in Education?
· How effectively have possible risks to pupil safety, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), radicalisation and sexual exploitation, been addressed in training, policies and procedures?

Keeping children Safe in Education is the DfE's statutory guidance on safeguarding.

What Questions Might Inspectors Ask Governors?

6. Pupil achievement

· How pupils' attainment and progress compares to other schools nationally, especially if the school is in the top or bottom 20% in the country
· Trends in the school's performance over time, as shown by the data dashboard
· The performance of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in comparison to their peers
· How the school is tracking progress, or planning to track progress, following assessment without levels

7. Understanding achievement

· Be aware of the school's level of attendance and how this relates to the national average. This data is available on the dashboard and in the RAISEonline summary report.
· Be able to link the attendance of specific groups with their achievement, explaining cause and effect where there is a clear link.
· Does the governing body address underachievement, and hold the Headteacher to account?
Governors need to demonstrate that they have some way of checking the accuracy of what they are told by the Headteacher.

8. The quality of teaching

What do you know about the quality of teaching and how do you know this?
How is good teaching rewarded and underperformance tackled?
Governors should be able to show that they understand how teaching is monitored and how teachers’ performance is managed. They should be clear about:
· The types of targets that are used, especially in relation to pupils’ achievement
· How challenging the targets are
· How well the targets are being met
Governors should know how the performance management process feeds into decisions about which teachers receive pay increases.
Governors should also be able to explain the measures the school is taking to improve the performance of any teachers who are failing to meet their targets, and what impact these measures are having on their performance.

9. British values

· How do governors ensure that pupils are receiving appropriate preparation for life in a diverse and modern Britain?
· How well are pupils taught the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith?

10. Statutory requirements
Governors may also be asked about why certain statutory requirements are not being met.
For example:
· Are you aware that no fire practice has been carried out this term?
· Are you aware that the school website does not meet requirements?