

ST. JAMES THE GREAT ROMAN CATHOLIC (VA) PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL
WINDSOR ROAD, THORNTON HEATH, SURREY CR7 8HJ

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARENTS AND GOVERNORS
held on Wednesday 21st January 2004 at the school, commencing at 7.35 p.m.

Mr Edwin Abreo	Foundation Parent Governor	Present
Mr Stephen Beck	Headteacher Staff Governor	Present
Mr Francis Butler	Foundation Governor	Present
Mrs Terri Cefai	Teacher Staff Governor	Present
Mr Rossi Gonsalves	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Mr Chris Hart	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Mr Benedict Hughes	Parent Governor	Present
Rev Michael Jones	Foundation Governor (Chairman)	Present
Mr Rob Kremis	Parent Governor	Present
Mrs Debbie Lawless	Staff Governor	Apologies
Mrs Louise Lewis	Clerk	Present
Mrs Elaine Macadam	LEA Governor	Present
Mr Tony Mills	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Rev John O'Toole	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Mr Steve Pollock	LEA Governor	Present
Mrs Ann Scowcroft	Foundation Governor	Present
Mrs Isobel Vassallo	Deputy Head	Present
Mrs Elaine Williamson	Foundation Governor (Vice Chairman)	Present

Others present: 71 parents and staff.

- 04.1 Rev Jones opened the meeting with a prayer and asked the governors present to introduce themselves and outline their areas of interest.
- 04.2 Apologies for absence were recorded from governors Mr Gonsalves, Mr Mills, Mr Hart, Mrs Lawless and Rev O'Toole and from staff members Mrs Forward and Miss Becky Hughes, who were on a course, and Mrs Beignet.
- 04.3 Corrections to the minutes of the last Annual Governors and Parents meeting held on 4th November 2002 were: Mrs Williamson was not present and gave her apologies. With this correction, Mr John McGowan proposed the acceptance of the minutes and was seconded by Mr Steve Stewart. The motion was carried unanimously and Rev Jones signed the minutes as a true record.
- 04.4 Under matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting, Mrs Maureen Jones said the new sound system for the hall, (item 6(c)), had been installed, as everyone could hear, and was being put to good use.
- Mrs Vassallo said she was running a working party drafting the anti-bullying policy (item 5(p)). She said fourteen parents were on the working party, which would now give a presentation to the parents and governors. Mrs Lopeman, with children in Years 5, 2 and Reception, and Mr Willis gave a the presentation. They expected to have the draft policy ready for discussion by the governors within the next few weeks.
- Questions were then invited from the floor. One parent asked with reference to the 'squabblebusters' what was a squabble and what was bullying. Mr Beck said that bullying had to be persistent. Initially, the chance for reconciliation would be given. Mrs Vassallo said that major incidents were not the remit of the 'squabblebusters'. Mr Beck said that it was important for bullies to be made aware of the consequences of their actions. It was asked if there would be consultation with the parents before the issue of the policy. Mrs Vassallo said once the draft was ready it would be issued to parents and feedback would be welcomed. Mrs Dolores Collins asked if the 'squabblebusters' were having a positive effect. Mr Beck said there had been a good response from the children. Years 3 and 4 were using the scheme and Years 5 and 6 would be consulted to make it more accessible to them. Rev Jones thanked the working party for their hard work and for an excellent presentation – very thorough and very clear. There was a round of applause.

- 04.5 Rev Jones then introduced the Annual Report for the academic year 2003/2004 and thanked those who worked so hard to compile it. He congratulated them on the very professional layout. The report was taken as read.
- 04.6 Rev Jones said that one written question had been received. He thanked Mrs Hickland for her question and said that further questions would be taken from the floor after her question had been answered. Mrs Hickland said her question concerned the safety of the monkey bars in the adventure playground - whether they were too high and whether the surface underneath was soft enough. Her daughter had fallen from the bars and suffered a bad break to her arm. She was asking if the monkey bars could be replaced or modified. They are popular and get overcrowded, which is a worry especially between the finish of the early morning clubs at 9 am and the start of school at 9:15 am, when they are not supervised and the parents are not there either. Mr Kremis replied for the governors and said that he had investigated the accident. There was a rota for using the monkey bars to prevent overcrowding. The equipment was the same as in the local park and it was regularly checked as part of the Health and Safety checks done by the governors. He said there was a dilemma as the children liked the monkey bars and it was meant to be an 'adventure', but would welcome suggestions. A suggestion to put a rubber surface under the monkey bars came from the floor and Mr Kremis said he would look into it and also look into the use of the bars out of school hours. Mr Beck said the equipment was so popular it was a victim of its own success. He said all comments would be taken on board.
- 04.7 Rev Jones then took questions from the floor.
- a) Mrs Leggett referred to the Activemark award on Page 15 of the report. She said there were lots of sports for the girls, but not enough for the boys, particularly in the winter – only football run by the parents. Mr Beck said that the school does access outside provision for sports and he would look into what was available for boys. The gym was as much for the boys as the girls. Mini rugby was mentioned. Mr Beck said the children would need to have instruction; otherwise it was just rough play.
 - b) Mrs Panchu asked about French. She said that there was none in Year 3 and asked about Year 4. Mr Beck said it was the intention to give French lessons in Year 4, but it was a question of staff availability.
 - c) Mrs Campbell congratulated the school on Sports Day – it was a great day - but there was not enough shade. She asked if canopies could be provided so chairs could be in the shade. She also asked about drinks. These were made available for children in the races, but the others had to try and fill their own water bottles from the fountain beforehand. Many children could not fill theirs in the time available and the water got hot anyway. Mr Beck said it was not his understanding that drinks were restricted to the competitors, but he would look into it.
 - d) Mr Lands asked for clarification of some of the terms used in the National Curriculum results. He asked what Coverage meant when referring to Value Added and what Stability meant. Mr Beck said Coverage tried to measure the children's' progression as they moved through the school and Stability measured the number of children leaving and entering the school as a percentage of the whole school.
 - e) Mr De Ruyter commented about the Year 6 lockers. He said the space was inadequate, there were no hangers, they were unsuitable for wet clothes and it was difficult getting in and out of the room. Mrs Campbell said her son would not wear a coat on cold days because it took so long to put it away. Mrs Vassallo said that wet coats were left in class to dry and did not have to go in the lockers. The children had extra storage in their lift top desks. Children lingering in the locker room made it more difficult for the others to get in and out.
 - f) Mrs Jones asked if parents could be given more notice of school activities. Parents need to be able to schedule time off to attend the activities. She had only seen the notice of tomorrow's assembly at 3.20 pm this afternoon. Mr Beck apologised and said he would do better.
 - g) Mrs Jiminez asked about the cuts in school funding, whether it was the government or the LEA and if it had affected the children's education. Mrs Williamson, chairman of the governors' finance committee answered. She said that the school was well managed financially, but the cut in funding had seriously concerned the governors. It was hoped to hear better for next year. She said it was difficult to know whether it was the government or the LEAs that were responsible for the cuts. Inner City schools had certainly lost money, but the government said it was spending more on education. The governors made a priority of education and staffing levels had not been cut. The cut backs had affected school facilities, but Health and Safety was not compromised. For example the programme of furniture replacement had been put on hold.

- h) Mrs Panchu asked if the Oratory could be used by the parents. Mr Beck said they very definitely could. In Lent, parents would be leading reflections before and after school – he would be sending a letter about this soon. Rev Jones said he hoped the altar and bench and prayer boards would be in place by then.
 - i) Mrs Panchu asked about progress on reducing congestion on the path round the school mentioned at last year's meeting. The new nursery kitchen has made congestion even worse. Mr Kremis said the governors had looked at the problem. Mrs Williamson said making the path one way was not the answer, because by the time parents got to the end of the path, classes had already started and they were a distraction to the children. Widening the path would ease the congestion, but it would be expensive and with limited funds, expenditure had to be prioritised. The external decorations and the refurbishment of the toilets were higher priority. If the narrowness of the path is a genuine Health and Safety issue, the governors would deal with it, but it was seen to be more a matter of convenience. There was a long discussion and various suggestions were made, including staggering start times and changing the way in to the Nursery. The governors felt this was more a question of parents showing consideration towards each other and did not think it appropriate to be dictating behaviour to the parents. What should they do about the parents who ignored the one-way rule if they set one up? If past experience was anything to go by, at least half the parents would ignore it if it was quicker for them. It was pointed out that this issue had come up every AGM for at least 8 years. Mr Beck said he would revisit the issue.
 - j) Mrs Marcia Dillon asked about the children's swimming now that Streatham was closing. Mrs Scowcroft said that Thornton Heath pool would be opening at the end of April and it was intended to continue the children's swimming.
 - k) Mrs Panchu said the school was not doing enough about black history week. Mr Beck said he was very surprised to hear this, because the school had done a great deal. Mrs Panchu said that some parents had not been aware of it.
- 04.7 Rev Jones spoke about the OfSTED report. He congratulated the school on a report with a lot of 'very goods' and quite a few 'excellents'. He congratulated the children on their behaviour during the inspection and congratulated the parents on getting such well presented children to school on time and in many cases early. He also congratulated the parents on attending the OfSTED and other meetings in such large numbers. Mr John Wentworth said it was a magnificent report. He congratulated the staff and the governors. St James the Great is an outstanding school and it was good to see the OfSTED report give it the recognition and praise it deserved. There was prolonged applause.
- 04.8 Rev Jones moved on to the adoption of the governors' annual report to parents. Mr Darren Byrne proposed the motion and was seconded by Mrs Ragu. The motion was carried unanimously.
- 04.9 Rev Jones closed the meeting with prayers at 8.50 pm.