

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NURSERY AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE, KENILWORTH

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2013 AT 6.30PM

Present: Mr T Martin, Mr D Barrow, Rev A Attwood (left 7.45pm), Miss M Baker, Mrs H Brown, Mr G Bucci (from 7.15pm), Mrs T Coopey, Mrs A Derrick, Mr W Harris, Mrs S Kettle, and Mr J Whitehouse

In Attendance: Mrs C Weir (Clerk to Governors), Mrs M Baker (Deputy Headteacher)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Brough and Mr C Rollason. No conflicts of interest were declared for the meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF PARENT GOVERNOR

Following the request for nominations for the Parent Governor vacancy, one nomination had been received. Mrs Helen Brown was duly appointed to the position of Parent Governor.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 24TH SEPTEMBER AND 6TH NOVEMBER 2013

The minutes of the meetings of the Full Governing Body held on the 6th November 2013 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body meeting held on the 24th September 2013 will be reviewed for confidential matters and approved at the next FGB meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Governor Recruitment

Mrs Weir confirmed that Governor Services were aware of St John's vacancy for a Local Authority Governor, but no nomination has yet been received. Mr Whitehouse confirmed that he had spoken to his contact at Warwick University, who had agreed to advertise the vacancy for a Community Governor at St John's within the University. Mr Whitehouse has heard nothing further and will follow it up with his contact.

Action: Seek an update on interest in the Community Governor Vacancy from Warwick University (Mr Whitehouse)

Governor Self Assessment Workshop

Mr Martin stated that he felt that the recent Governor Self-Assessment Workshop had been very useful, and Governors thanked Mr Rollason for organising and facilitating the event. Mr Martin believes that the resulting work on Governor Monitoring is progressing well, although vacancies remain for some of the planned Governor Monitoring sessions and therefore Mr Martin encouraged Governors to volunteer for these. It was noted that four Governors has attended the Pupil Progress meetings on the 25th October, and Governors had found this very informative.

Mrs Coopey asked whether a schedule of monitoring activities would be prepared for next term. Mr Barrow explained that a revised Rapid Action Plan would be produced for the spring term. Mr Barrow is proposing to retain the three strands within the current Rapid Action Plan, and add three further strands for next term: development of cross curricular activity in writing, development of cross curricular activity in maths, and narrowing the gap between the progress of Pupil Premium children and non pupil premium children. Mr Barrow will develop a Governor Monitoring Schedule for next term that covers all six strands of the Rapid Action Plan.

Mrs Brown said that she was experiencing some issues in completing the Governor Monitoring Feedback Form, especially the section on impact. Mr Martin clarified that the impact section related to an assessment of the impact of the activity being monitored on the school, rather than the impact of the Governor on the activity. Mr Whitehouse suggested that it might be beneficial to share Governor Monitoring Feedback Forms in full with all Governors, rather than in summary format, whilst Governors are still getting familiar with the format. Mr Martin agreed and undertook to circulate the set of forms completed so far to all members of the FGB, to help Governors understand what is required.

Action: Circulate Governor Monitoring Feedback Forms to all Governors (Mr Martin)

Mr Martin turned to the vision for the school that was debated by Governors at the workshop. Mr Martin explained that Governors' feedback had been taken on board and an amended draft of the vision developed: "Happy and Secure with Outstanding Outcomes from Birth to Eleven". Mr Martin explained that subsequently a suggestion had been received from the Phase Leaders, following a benchmarking visit to another school, that a more child friendly vision might be appropriate. Mr Barrow raised a concern that the school currently has a learning statement, the vision developed by the Governors, plus another vision statement, and that this is too many. Governors agreed that the school should have a single vision statement, and that this should be appropriate for everyone in the school. They acknowledged that their draft vision was perhaps more a statement of objectives for the Governing Body. Miss Baker

commented that it was evident during her benchmarking visit that the vision was firmly embedded throughout the school, especially with the children, and that this had been viewed positively by OFSTED. Mr Barrow went on to explain that the pupils at St John's, through the forum of the School Council, have produced a list of words that they associate with learning at the school. The staff have then developed a draft vision based around these words. The proposal is that the staff reflect further on this vision, take it back to the School Council and then discuss further with Governors and other stakeholders. Governors supported this way forward.

Mr Martin reminded Governors that two strands of work were identified during the Governor Self-Assessment Workshop, namely Governor Monitoring and External Engagement. The External Engagement strand needs to be followed up in terms of developing specific actions and targets: Mrs Brown and Mrs Derrick agreed to meet with Mrs Baker to follow up on this area and produce an action plan.

Action: Produce an action plan for Governor External Engagement (Mrs Brown, Mrs Derrick and Mrs Baker)

Mr Martin recommended, as part of improving Governor External Engagement, that the minutes of the Full Governing Body meetings be published on the school website, commencing 1st September 2013. Governors agreed with this suggestion, subject to any confidential or sensitive information being excluded from the published minutes.

Action: Arrange for minutes of FGB meetings for this academic year to be published on the school website (Mr Barrow, Mr Martin and Mrs Weir)

5. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

Mr Barrow took Governors through the headlines of his Headteacher's Report for the Autumn 2013 term, which had previously been circulated.

Staffing: Mr Barrow highlighted that a Looked After child who required dedicated Teaching Assistant support has now left the school, and therefore the position of the TA would be reviewed at the end of her temporary contract. Mr Barrow noted that staff illness levels were lower than the previous term, and one day of industrial action had taken place.

Monitoring: Mr Barrow informed Governors that Tonia Bowden, the Local Authority Support Officer, had visited in September and the report of her visit circulated. A further visit had taken place on the 26th November, which took the form of a learning walk around the school. The feedback from this visit had been positive.

Community: Mr Barrow confirmed that St John's had been successfully registered for Funded 2 Year Old places. However, this is now on hold until the future of the Children's

Centre has been resolved. A parent questionnaire has been circulated and an 82% response rate achieved. Overall the responses were positive, and in particular were supportive of the leadership team and the curriculum. Some parents had indicated that they did not feel welcomed by the school, and actions were being put in place to address this. A formal partnership has been established with Priorsfield School following their recent OFSTED inspection, with the intention that the two schools could support and motivate each other. The year groups at the two schools have been paired and good practice will be shared. The lesson study model will also be shared across both schools.

Rapid Action Plan: Mr Barrow believes that the current three strands of action should be retained in the RAP for next term, and three additional strands will be added as previously discussed.

Data and Pupil Progress: Pupil progress had been slow during the first half of the autumn term but this was not unexpected. Indications are that progress has accelerated this half term. The data was discussed in detail at the Performance and Standards Committee meeting on the 6th November, and Mr Barrow highlighted the importance of ensuring that the minutes accurately captured the data and the discussions around it. Governors commented that in the Pupil Progress meetings that had been observed by Governors, teachers were well prepared and were able to speak confidently about the progress of their pupils. Mr Barrow explained that he had investigated the potential for running O-Track reports for Governors as requested at the Performance and Standards Committee meeting, and confirmed that it was possible to run anonymous reports. Governors agreed that this would be useful.

Admissions: Mr Barrow explained that since the Headteacher's Report was issued the number of applications received for admission into Reception in 2014 had increased to 28. Of these around 19 are within catchment.

Pupil Premium: There are 40 children at St John's who are eligible for the Pupil Premium. There is a general issue around the Pupil Premium in that the funding is based on financial year rather than academic year, therefore some of the current funding relates to children in last year's Year 6 who have now left, and no funding will be received for the new Reception children until April 2014. In terms of justifying use of the Pupil Premium, only the progress of those children still at the school can be monitored and the remaining funding will be reallocated to Reception children in the short term.

Performance Reviews: Mr Barrow confirmed that both he and the teachers now have performance targets in place and these were detailed in the Headteacher's Report. External support had been received in the setting of these targets.

Mr Bucci joined the meeting at 7.15 pm

Health and Safety: a Health and Safety review visit took place on the 27th November. Mrs Derrick monitored the visit on behalf of the Governing Body. A number of issues were identified including the propping open of fire doors. Some teachers like their classroom doors open, and it is currently unclear whether all the doors designated as fire doors are actually required. Abbey Fire Services have been appointed to review the school's fire precautions.

External Monitoring: Karen Davies of DRBignite has visited the school and her report is included in the Headteacher's Report. Mr Barrow expressed some disappointment that the visit had not produced more areas for action, but took reassurance that this means that the school is putting into place the necessary policies and procedures. Ms Davies will lead an INSET day for teachers on inspirational teaching and environments next term.

RAISEonline Report

Mr Barrow took Governors through some of the key messages from the RAISEonline report. A summary of the report, which had been prepared by Chris Quigley Education Ltd, had been previously circulated.

Performance of Year 1 in the national phonics test was above the national average, but Mr Barrow highlighted that the pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium had performance below the national average. Similarly, data on Key Stage 1 attainment showed that the Pupil Premium group had attained below both the national average and the non-Pupil Premium group. The percentage of KS1 children attaining Level 2b in reading, writing and maths was broadly in line with the national average, but the number achieving Level 3 was above the national average which was a positive achievement.

At Key Stage 2, attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar was below the national average. Attainment of the Pupil Premium group was below the non-Pupil Premium group and the national average across all subjects assessed. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ was below the national average in all subjects, and the percentage achieving Level 5+ was below national average in all subjects except reading. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 across all subjects (reading, writing, maths and spelling, punctuation & grammar) was below the floor level. The Pupil Premium group also achieved significantly below the non-Pupil Premium in reading, writing and spelling, punctuation & grammar.

Mr Whitehouse commented that poor performance of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium was a national issue, and performance in Warwickshire is below the national

average. No data is yet available to show how St John's compares with the performance of Warwickshire schools overall. Mrs Baker commented that with the exception of two pupils, the children in receipt of Pupil Premium were all making good progress, but their attainment is below the required level.

Mr Martin noted that the data showed a common theme in the gap between the Pupil Premium group and the rest of pupils, and asked whether Governors should place more emphasis on this. Mr Barrow responded that Governors needed to monitor all groups of pupils. He commented that the leadership team will be unpicking the reasons why the Pupil Premium group are underachieving, even to the level of family background. Mrs Baker noted that the issue of underperformance is particularly concentrated on pupils who both receive the Pupil Premium and are also on the Special Educational Needs register.

Mr Martin informed Governors that he had written to Mr Whitehouse and Mrs Baker regarding whether the background to last year's Year 6 SATS performance could be presented better for OFSTED. For example, statistics that could be presented could include the level of mobility in the 2012/13 Year 6 cohort versus the national average, and the level of children with special educational needs versus the national average. Mr Barrow responded that it would be very dependent on the particular OFSTED inspection team as to whether they would consider data that was split to take into account 'outliers' in the data. Mr Whitehouse suggested that the data could be presented to include the results based on the total cohort, plus a second 'shadow' set of results to illustrate what the data would have looked like if, for example, the SEN children were excluded. This would show a comparison without suppressing the overall picture resulting from the data. Mr Whitehouse and Mrs Baker undertook to follow up this area of work.

Action: Produce an analysis of the 2012/13 Year 6 SATS results to illustrate the impact of particular groups of pupils on the data (Mr Whitehouse and Mrs Baker)

Mr Martin informed Governors that the RAISEonline data would be discussed in more detail at the next Full Governing Body meeting in January. Mr Barrow emphasised to Governors that the 'Requires Improvement' assessment included in the Chris Quigley Education Ltd analysis of the RAISEonline data only referred to attainment and did not reflect any other area of assessment.

Returning to the Parent's Questionnaire, Mr Harris asked whether it was intended to share the results of the survey, including the negatives, with parents. Mr Barrow responded that this was the intention. Mr Harris commented that the responses from parents regarding homework were highly polarised. Mr Barrow agreed and stated that he would be investigating further to understand in more detail what was driving parents'

responses. Mrs Baker commented that the underlying issue could be consistency of homework, as she was aware that this could be an issue especially between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Mr Barrow explained that he would like any further discussions to be solution focussed, that is concentrating on what parents would like to see happen going forward. Mr Harris suggested that the survey results could be investigated further via the Parents' Forum, as this would be a vehicle to encourage parent participation. Mr Barrow agreed and also stated that he would be putting the results of the questionnaire on display in the school, and would add the results of future surveys to this to show what progress was being made. Mr Martin asked whether Mr Barrow would like Governors to attend the Parents' Forum meeting, and Mr Barrow agreed that this would be helpful.

Mr Martin informed Governors that he had attended a Governor Monitoring session on external support which had reviewed the impact of the Local Authority Officer visits, and which concluded that they were of limited help. Mr Barrow elaborated on this, clarifying that he did not feel that the visits had come up with any new suggestions which would accelerate St John's progress towards good. He added that the LA wanted to send in representatives from other schools to observe the good practice at St John's, but that he didn't feel that the timing was appropriate as staff were currently undergoing significant amounts of other monitoring.

Rev Attwood left the meeting at 7.45pm

6. CHILDREN'S CENTRE UPDATE

Mr Martin updated Governors on progress with the Children's Centre bid. The Pre-qualification Questionnaire was submitted on time, and the relationship with Kenilworth Nursery School is progressing satisfactorily. The single Advisory Board has been established and Rev Atwood has agreed to take the role of Deputy Chair on behalf of St John's. If the bid successfully passes the pre-qualification stage, the next step is submission of the full tender in January. Mr Whitehouse explained that Warwickshire County Council will be holding a workshop for all bidders to allow them to ask questions relating to the bid process.

Mr Martin asked whether the membership of the team who will work on the tender has been agreed. Mr Barrow responded that he and Miss Dyer would be involved, together with representatives from Kenilworth Nursery School, and that external input will be sought to support development of the bid.

7. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

A draft Continuing Professional Development and Communication Policy had previously been circulated. Mr Barrow explained that the background to developing the policy was

an action from the Local Authority Support Officer's first visit to St John's. The objective of the policy is to set out what support teachers would be entitled to if they were not performing to the required standards, to help them achieve the required performance standard. The section of the draft policy relating to Professional Development covers four areas: the learning environment at St John's; auditing and the identification of development needs; how appropriate training and support will be matched to identified needs; and ongoing monitoring. The Communication section of the draft policy sets out the steps to be followed should a dialogue on professional performance be necessary, and emphasises that staff are entitled to support before any other action would be considered.

Mrs Coopey asked whether the policy addresses the situation where a member of staff requests training that the leadership team did not believe to be appropriate. Mr Barrow replied that this was not explicitly covered in the policy, but that in such an event he would link the training requirement to the individual's performance targets. The policy does state that the Headteacher has the final decision on training requests. Mrs Coopey went on to ask whether this was a standard policy for schools. Mr Barrow explained that there is no statutory requirement for such a policy, but by having one in place it will be clearly set out what procedure will be followed if a dialogue on professional performance is required, and detail of the entitlement to training will be clarified.

Governors approved the adoption of the Continuing Professional Development and Communication Policy.

8. DRAFT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY AND DRAFT SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY

A draft Complaints Procedure Policy had been produced by Mrs Coopey and previously circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow informed Governors that he had subsequently found a previous version of a Complaints procedure in the archive, and it was agreed that this version should be taken into account before a final draft policy was submitted for approval.

Mr Martin explained that a policy to address the decision making process to be followed in instances which could potentially lead to a school closure, such as bad weather or industrial action, was proposed. Mr Barrow explained that he had looked for a pro-forma procedure but had only found examples which addressed school closure in the event of bad weather. Governors agreed that Mr Barrow, Mr Martin and Mrs Coopey should work to produce final drafts of both the Complaints Procedure Policy and the School Closure Policy and bring them to the Full Governing Body for approval.

Action: Produce a draft Complaints Procedure Policy and a draft School Closure Policy (Mr Martin, Mrs Coopey and Mr Barrow)

9. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on the 20th November 2013 are attached to these minutes. Mr Bucci explained that the School Finance Officer had attended the meeting and the financial position for the current and next two financial years were reviewed. The financial report indicated that the school would have a small deficit at the end of the 2013/14 financial year, but a surplus in the following years. The Resources Committee asked that Mr Barrow, together with the Performance and Standards Committee, look to develop proposals for ways in which this surplus could be utilised to support learning in the school.

Mrs Coopey asked how it was planned to manage the forecast deficit in the current financial year. Mr Barrow emphasised that the deficit was small, and that he believed there were some upsides which had not been taken into account in the report, for example extra nursery places after Christmas. Therefore he was not overly concerned about the deficit at this stage.

Mr Bucci stated that the Resources Committee had discussed the quotes received for the planned extension of the canopy to include Nursery and Reception. Two out of the three quotes requested had been received, and after due consideration the Resources Committee decided to appoint Arden Construction Ltd. Mr Barrow explained that landlord approval had been received, so the project could now progress.

Mr Bucci explained that the Resources Committee had agreed that a Pay Policy Working Group be established to consider the future development of the Pay Policy and Appraisal Policy. The three non-staff members of the Resources Committee would be on the Working Group, and it was proposed that two further Governors be appointed. Mrs Coopey volunteered to join the working group, and Governors were asked to consider whether they would be able to support the Working Group. The membership of the Resources Committee was also discussed, and a recommendation made that the size of the committee be increased. It was acknowledged that this was not in line with previous discussions at the Governor Self Assessment Workshop, but was felt by the committee to be appropriate in light of the upcoming workload. This proposal was supported by Governors.

Finally, Mr Bucci highlighted that the Resources Committee wished consider options for the County Caretaking provision for the next financial year. It was agreed that the Resources Committee would assess the options and bring a recommendation to the Full Governing Body for approval early in the New Year.

Performance & Standards Committee

Minutes of the Performance and Standards Committee meeting held on the 6th November 2013 are attached to these minutes. Mrs Coopey explained that for the first time the Phase Leaders had presented the performance data for their phase, and this gave Governors a clear view of the issues being addressed. She believed that it was useful to understand first hand the priorities of the Phase Leaders, and thanked Miss Baker and Mrs Benarous for attending the meeting.

Mrs Coopey commented that the teachers were confident in the direction of progress and that she felt confident that OFSTED would not uncover anything that the school was not aware of.

10. MEMBERSHIP OF SUB COMMITTEES

It was agreed that Mrs Brown would join the Resources Committee and Miss Baker the Performance and Standards Committee. It was noted that Mrs Brough had expressed an interest in joining the Performance and Standards Committee. Mr Barrow requested that in the interests of stability, Governors stay with the current committee membership for a year. Governors agreed to this, but noted that Governors were not precluded from sitting on more than one sub-committee should they wish to do so, and therefore should Mrs Brough wish to join the Performance and Standards Committee in addition to the Resources Committee she would be very welcome.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from PTA regarding Winter Fair

A letter had been received from the PTA asking whether Governors would be prepared to provide items for a Christmas hamper for the PTA Winter Fair on the 6th December. Mr Barrow asked that if Governors would like to donate items that they are brought into school by Wednesday 4th, and then he and Mrs Baker would organise them into a hamper. Any Governors who would be available to help at the fair between 3.15pm and 4.30pm on the 6th would be very welcome.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the FGB will be held on Tuesday 28th January 2013, commencing 7pm at the school.