

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

HELD ON TUESDAY 28TH JANUARY 2014 AT 7.00PM

Present: Mr T Martin, Mr D Barrow, Miss M Baker, Mrs A Brough (from 7.35), Mrs H Brown, Mr G Bucci (from 7.05pm), 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 Rev A Attwood and Mr C Rollason. No conflicts of interest were declared for the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 24TH SEPTEMBER AND 27TH NOVEMBER 2013

The minutes of the meetings of the Full Governing Body held on the 24th September and 27th November 2013 were approved and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Publication of minutes on school website

It was agreed that the minutes of Full Governing Body meetings should be published on the school website, excluding any confidential sections. Mrs Weir undertook to liaise with Mrs Morris to arrange for the minutes of all FGB meetings held this academic year to be posted on the website.

Action: arrange for minutes of FGB meetings to be published on the school website (Mrs Weir)

Governor recruitment

It was noted that the term of office of Mrs Kettle, Staff Governor, had ended at the end of December 2013. Following a request for nominations for the Staff Governor vacancy, one nomination had been received from Mrs Kettle who was prepared to serve a further term. Governors expressed their thanks to Mrs Kettle for volunteering to continue in her role.

Mrs Weir explained that there had been no further communication from Governor Services regarding the LA Governor vacancy. Mr Whitehouse confirmed that the Community Governor vacancy had been advertised at Warwick University, but no applicants had come forward.

Governor External Engagement Plan

Mr Martin reminded Governors that the External Engagement strand of work identified at the Governor Self-Assessment Workshop needed to be followed up in terms of developing specific actions and targets. This work is still outstanding and Mrs Brown, Mrs Derrick and Mrs Baker agreed to meet in the near future.

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

4. RAPID IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION FORM

Mr Barrow explained that a new Rapid Improvement Plan had been produced for the Spring and Summer 2014 terms, and the Self Evaluation Form had also been updated. He explained that the documents had been discussed in detail at the Performance and Standards Committee meeting, and invited Governors to ask questions or offer suggestions on the documents at any time.

Rapid Improvement Plan

Mr Barrow explained that the latest pupil progress monitoring data had been triangulated with lesson observations and work in children's books, and this had led to the inclusion of two additional targets in the Rapid Improvement Plan. The first of these is to ensure that good or better progress is made in writing across the whole school for all groups of children. The data consistently shows that progress in writing is below that in maths and reading and therefore writing has been included as a priority. Mr Barrow noted that this priority includes a teaching non-negotiable on daily guided reading sessions, as Mr Barrow believes that children need to be confident readers across a range of genres before they will be able to write well.

The second new priority in the RIP is to ensure that interventions in and out the classroom enable vulnerable groups to make good or better progress. Mr Barrow explained that the data shows that vulnerable groups, especially those with SEN, are not achieving and therefore this priority puts a focus on these groups.

Mr Barrow drew Governor's attention to the fact that the new priorities are in addition to the current three targets, which remain in the plan. Karen Davies from DRB Ignite, the school's external consultant, will be reviewing the RIP to check that it is robust. Mr Barrow explained that he had also worked together with Priorsfield School in developing the plan.

School Self Evaluation Form

Mr Barrow took Governors through changes to the Leadership and Management section of the SEF. He explained that at the last Senior Leadership Team Meeting it had been decided to make the headings of, and language used within, the Leadership & Management section consistent with the OFSTED descriptors for 'good': this was in line with advice from the school's external consultant to "speak the language of 'good'". Mr Barrow then went through each of the headings and explained the impacts identified for each: he noted that the impacts were not always as explicit as he would like and welcomed suggestions from Governors on how they could be improved.

- *Key leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition:* this is evidenced by the new aims statement, which is rapidly being taken on board by pupils; and by rising attainment levels in Foundation Years and Key Stage 1;
- *Teaching is good and/or improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring, effective performance management and professional development, which are closely matched to the needs of the school:* this is evidenced by a strong improvement in the quality of teaching from the position eighteen months ago; evidence from triangulation of data that teaching is good over time; and a link between quality of teaching and teacher performance management;
- *Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and the school's actions are carefully planned, concerted and effective:* Mr Barrow is confident that the SEF is comprehensive and realistic;
- *The well-thought-out policies ensure that pupils make at least good progress in literacy:* whilst writing is an area for development, there are strong foundations as evidenced by good attainment in Reception and Key Stage 1;
- *Governors, or those in a similar position, systematically challenge senior leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved, or previous good performance in these areas has been consolidated:* Governors' presence in school is evidence of this, but Mr Barrow welcomed suggestions from Governors as to anything else which could support this section;
- *The school's curriculum encourages a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. It covers a range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence and contributes well to pupils' academic achievement, their physical wellbeing and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It promotes good behaviour and a good understanding of safety matters:* evidence for this section includes the good behaviour of pupils; improved participation in homework and project work; a range of PE activities including specialist teachers; and pupil interviews which indicate an enthusiasm for topic. However this enthusiasm is not always demonstrated in the classroom and steps to address this are being investigated;
- *The school's actions have secured improvement in achievement for those supported by the pupil premium, which is rising, including in English and mathematics:* this is evidenced by the detailed progress data for the Pupil Premium children;
- *The school works well with parents, including those who might find working with the school difficult, to achieve positive benefits for pupils:* evidence for this objective

includes positive feedback from the parents' questionnaire, and also favourable comments on the new school website;

- *The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements:* robust systems are in place which evidence this;
- *Governors ensure the efficient management of financial resources. This leads to the effective deployment of staff and resources:* the budget is balanced despite the additional spending to make the necessary improvements to the school;
- *Partnerships:* this is evidenced by effective links with the Church, local community and PTA. The international aspect of community cohesion is a current focus in the school.

The areas for development identified are included as actions in the RIP Priority 3, namely 'Ensure that leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the achievement of pupils and groups of pupils, taking rapid action to address underachievement.' A key area for development is including more explicit spiritual, cultural and moral development opportunities.

Mr Martin stated that he believed that the lack of progress being made by Key Stage 2 should be acknowledged in the first subsection of the Leadership and Management section to ensure completeness, even though the issues are covered elsewhere in the SEF. Mr Barrow agreed to do this. Mr Bucci asked how the RIP and the SEF were linked. Mr Barrow explained that the Rapid Improvement Plan set out the things that the school needed to do to move forward, whilst the Self Evaluation Form considered the current position of the school and how it had got there. Mr Barrow commented that the RIP and SEF could be cross referenced, and undertook to include this in the documents. Mr Bucci asked whether both documents were a requirement or good practise. Mr Barrow responded that the Rapid Improvement Plan was required until the school achieved a good OFSTED assessment, at which point a School Improvement Plan, with a longer term focus, would be required. Some form of school self-assessment is also needed, although a SEF is not a requirement.

Mr Whitehouse questioned the reference in the document to a 'Governance 360 degree review', and Mr Barrow acknowledged that this should be reworded to 'Governor self review'. Mr Whitehouse asked whether there was any evidence from the parent questionnaires or other parent feedback to support the assertion that the curriculum was encouraging a thirst for knowledge. Mr Barrow responded that he had received positive feedback from parents regarding the new curriculum, and he would compile a file of such evidence. Mr Martin noted that Priority 5 of the Rapid Improvement Plan (to ensure that interventions in and out the classroom enable vulnerable groups to make good or better progress) could clash with Priority 2 (ensure all groups of children make

good or better progress, narrowing the attainment gap, over the year. Ensure that judgements are accurate and higher attaining groups do not mask under achieving groups). Mr Barrow did not believe that the two priorities clashed, but acknowledged that there could be some repetition which he undertook to tidy up.

5. CHILDREN'S CENTRE UPDATE

6. CHILDREN AT RISK UPDATE

Mr Barrow presented a breakdown of Children at Risk data at St John's. He explained that reviews under the Common Assessment Framework took place every six weeks as is the statutory requirement, and Mr Barrow, Mrs Baker and Mrs Eastham were all qualified to conduct these. Children's Services reviews also take place every six weeks and apply to Children in Need and those subject to a Child Protection Plan. Mr Whitehouse asked whether families of Looked After Children and those under a Child Protection Plan still had access to the Parent Advocacy Support body to provide independent support, and Mr Barrow confirmed that in the case of Look After Children this was always made available.

Mr Whitehouse then asked whether Statements were being replaced by Education Healthcare Plans, and the implications of this. Mrs Baker explained that the change from Statements to Education Healthcare Plans was taking place over a period of time, and in practise was not a major change as healthcare services are already involved in the process. Mrs Baker also noted that the School Action and School Action Plus categories of special educational needs were being merged.

Mr Martin explained that in the light of recent high profile cases of children 'slipping through the net', he felt that it was necessary for Governors to review the Children at Risk data on a regular basis. Governors agreed that it should form a standing item on the agenda.

7. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Mrs Coopey noted that the need for a Complaints Policy had been highlighted at a recent Patch meeting. She explained that she had made a number of changes to the Warwickshire model policy to make it less legalistic and more accessible to users. An additional stage of a written complaint to the Headteacher has also been included in the procedure, as this would give clarity of what had been communicated to the Head in the event that the complaint is subject to an appeal to Governors. Mrs Coopey went on to note that the guidance on the Warwickshire website states that help should be made available to parents to put their complaint into writing should they require it: this facility has been made explicit in the St John's policy.

Governors agreed that the Complaints Procedure Policy was clearly written and approved its adoption.

8. STAFF AND GOVERNOR USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET SITES

The Warwickshire model policy on Staff and Governor use of Social Networking and Internet Sites had been circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow brought to Governors

attention the fact that there were two options contained within the model policy and Governors would need to agree which was most appropriate for St John's. He also highlighted that the St John's policy would need to include a clause on the use of Facebook by the Children's Centre, as this media is actively used by the Centre to promote activities. Mr Barrow asked Governors to look carefully at the section on Staff and Governors interacting on-line as this was of particular relevance.

Due to the limited availability of time Governors agreed to postpone the detailed discussion of the Policy until the March meeting of the Full Governing Body.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Mr Barrow explained that he wished to introduce a Confidentiality Agreement to be signed by all those who work or volunteer within the school. The Agreement had been discussed in detail at the January meeting of the Performance and Standards Committee, who recommended that the Confidentiality Agreement be approved by the Full Governing Body and that all Governors sign the Agreement.

Mr Whitehouse asked whether there had been a specific incident which had triggered the development of the Confidentiality Agreement. Mr Barrow confirmed that there had been an incident and that he believed that ensuring a mutual understanding of the professional standards required by all those who work or volunteer within the school is important. Mrs Baker added that the school wanted to maintain the open relations that it currently has with parents and other volunteers. She noted that such an agreement is common practice in other schools, as it clarifies what is appropriate behaviour.

Mr Whitehouse asked what would be the implications if an individual broke the terms of the Agreement or refused to sign it. Mr Barrow stated that they would not be allowed to come in to school. Mrs Brough asked whether the lunchtime supervisors would also be required to sign. Mr Barrow confirmed that all staff, volunteers and governors would be asked to sign.

Introduction of the Confidentiality Agreement was ratified by the Full Governing Body, and all those Governors present at the meeting signed a copy of the Agreement.

10. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Resources Committee

The Resources Committee had not met since the last Full Governing Body meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for the 12th February 2014, and Mr Barrow confirmed that the indicative budget had been received and would be discussed at the meeting.

Performance & Standards Committee

Minutes of the Performance and Standards Committee meeting held on the 15th January 2014 are attached to these minutes. Mrs Coopey explained that Miss Baker and Mrs Benarous had attended the meeting to present the progress data for the second half of the autumn term, and this had accelerated as had been previously predicted. Mrs Coopey said she felt that the presentations gave Governors comfort that all areas of concern were being identified and addressed, and also demonstrated that delegated leadership was working, with the Phase Leaders clearly taking responsibility for their areas. Mr Martin added that Governors found it very valuable to be taken through the data by the practitioners concerned, and thanked Miss Baker and Mrs Benarous for giving up their time to present.

Mrs Coopey went on to explain that Mrs Baker had given a comprehensive presentation of the Pupil Premium data, which showed that relying on averages did not always give an accurate picture of what was going on. In general however the gap between Pupil Premium children and non-Pupil Premium children was not large. Mr Whitehouse asked whether the line representing age related expectations had been included on the graphs of Pupil Premium children's progress, as this would provide a benchmark for progress. Mrs Coopey confirmed that this had not been done for the Performance and Standards Committee meeting, but had been noted as an action.

Mr Martin highlighted that the OFSTED data dashboard includes a line for Pupil Premium children's progress, but it was unclear what this represented. He asked whether it would be possible to consolidate St John's data into the OFSTED data dashboard format so that the two could be compared. Mr Whitehouse undertook to do this.

Action: Consolidate St John's Pupil Premium data into the OFSTED data dashboard format (Mr Whitehouse)

Out of School Club Working Group

The Out of School Club was inspected by OFSTED at the start of term and received a 'Good' grading. Mr Martin highlighted that the OFSTED report cited Mr Barrow as an inspirational leader, and congratulated Mr Barrow on this achievement.

11. GOVERNOR MONITORING

Mr Martin said that Governors were finding the Governor Monitoring activities very informative, albeit the process was in the early stages and Governors were still learning. He drew Governors attention to the fact that Mr Barrow had produced a new programme for the spring term. Mr Barrow noted that three Governors would be coming in to participate in the diagnostic visit on the following day.

Mr Martin emphasised the importance of compiling a body of evidence to support the monitoring activities that can be shown to the OFSTED inspectors. He requested that Governors complete all outstanding Governor Monitoring Forms, and a deadline of the 11th February was agreed for this. Mr Barrow commented that the forms did not need to be highly comprehensive, providing they showed that Governors had been in to school and what activities they had participated in. He suggested that if Governors printed off a form and completed it by hand at the time of the visit, in conjunction with the teacher involved, this would suffice.

Action: Complete outstanding Governor Monitoring Forms by 11th February 2014 (All)

12. GOVERNOR TRAINING

It was agreed that the 2013/14 In-house Training Course would be on the subject of 'Effective Governor Visits' and would be requested for Tuesday 11th March at 6.30pm. Mrs Weir undertook to arrange this.

Action: Confirm in-house training course for the 11th March (Mrs Weir)

13. ON-LINE BANKING

Mrs Weir explained that Mrs Thomas, Finance Officer, had requested the approval of the Governing Body to apply for on-line access to the school bank account. This is common practice in other schools and would enable real time monitoring of the account. Governors approved this request, subject to any facility for electronic payments requiring two authorised signatories.

14. PATCH MEETING

Mrs Coopey noted that the next Patch meeting would be held on the 4th February and Mr Rollason, Mrs Brough and she were hoping to attend. If Governors have any issues they would like raised at the meeting they should let one of those attending know.

Mr Whitehouse highlighted that the Spring Term County Forum Meeting is scheduled for Saturday 29th March, 9.30am at Wedgenock House, and encouraged Governors to attend where possible as this is a very useful event.

15. FUNDRAISING

Mrs Brough thanked Governors on behalf of the PTA for their help at the Christmas fair.

Mr Barrow informed Governors that the school had been fortunate in receiving a donation of £10,000 from a former pupil, and this would be used to fund the laptop project.

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the FGB will be held on Thursday 20th March 2014, commencing 7pm at the school.