

**ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY, KENILWORTH**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**HELD ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2015 AT 7.00PM**

Present: Mr T Martin, Mr D Barrow, Mrs H Brown, Mrs T Coopey, Mrs A Derrick, Miss K Harrison and Mr J Whitehouse

In Attendance: Mrs C Weir (Clerk to Governors)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Harris, Mrs Killian and Mrs Kettle. No conflicts of interest were declared for the meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015**

The minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body held on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 were approved and signed as a true record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**Reception 2015 Intake**

Mr Barrow informed Governors that the Local Authority had not confirmed whether or not they would be making a contribution to the building work necessary to create an additional classroom to accommodate the 2015 Reception intake. Mr Barrow has chased the LA by email and is awaiting a response. The total cost of the building work is around £13,000, which will account for the school's entire capital budget if no contribution from the LA is forthcoming.

**Revised Terms of Reference for the Head Teacher's Performance Review Committee**

Mrs Coopey explained that she had attended a training course on Head Teacher appraisal, and as a result had raised concerns that the proposal agreed at the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body to combine the role of the Head Teacher's Performance Review Committee and the Pay Committee into a single Performance Review Committee was not in line with the Warwickshire County Council model. Mrs Coopey and Mr Martin had investigated this further and had sought the advice of Gordon Latham, HR Partner, who had advised that Governors were free to decide on a structure that worked for them. However, Governors need to be mindful that their

process for agreeing teacher pay awards should be such that a member of staff who had a pay-related grievance could not feel that the process was flawed, and that those Governors who make up the Appeals Committee must not be involved in the detail in order that they remain impartial in the event of an appeal. Mr Martin noted that the Warwickshire guidance on pay committees says that the Head Teacher's Performance Review Committee and the Pay Committee can be made up of substantially the same individuals; therefore it seems unnecessarily bureaucratic to keep the two committees separate. Mr Whitehouse noted that he had raised these issues previously and Governors had agreed to the proposal to merge the functions of the Head Teacher's Performance Review Committee and the Pay Committee subject to it being kept under review. Mr Whitehouse stated that he believed that reviewing the process after a twelve month period was the best approach. Mr Barrow asked whether the Pay Committee would review the detail of individual pay awards: Mr Martin confirmed that the terms of reference of the Pay Committee will be to monitor the performance management system, ensuring that it encourages, challenges and supports teachers' improvement and that salary increases are linked to the better achievement of pupils, as well as carrying out the Head Teacher's appraisal. In practice, the Pay Committee will be led by Mr Barrow as to how much information needs to be provided for the Committee to fulfil its remit. The Full Governing Body would only review the process for reaching recommendations on teacher pay and general anonymised data.

Governors agreed that the remit of the Head Teacher's Performance Review Committee and the Pay Committee would be carried out by a single committee named the Performance Review Committee, and that this arrangement would be reviewed after a year. Mrs Coopey will review the Teacher's Pay Policy to identify what changes to the policy are needed to reflect this decision.

***Action: Review the Teacher's Pay Policy to ensure it reflects the agreed committee structure (Mrs Coopey)***

### **Governor Training**

Mr Martin informed Governors that he would be attending training in Safer Recruitment in October. The In-house Training Session on 'Engaging with Parents and the Community' has been confirmed for Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

## **4. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT**

The Head Teacher's report for the Summer 2015 Term had previously been circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow presented the key points.

Beginning with staffing, Mr Barrow stated that he felt the school had an ideal staffing structure in place for the coming academic year, with a non-class based Deputy Head

and SENDCO and a Teaching Assistant in every class. Since the last meeting of the Full Governing Body, Mr Hobday had resigned and Mrs Deborah Pittarello recruited into the role of Year 1 teacher. Mrs Pittarello is a mature NQT. There will be four new members of the teaching staff next year, three of whom are NQTs and one who has a year's teaching experience. Mr Barrow noted that the recent recruitment field had been the strongest he had seen for a long time and he is confident that the new staff would do well.

Mr Whitehouse commented that the SEN data provided supported the decision to move Mrs Benarous up to year 6 with her current class, as all four pupils in the school with statements are in this cohort. Mr Barrow explained that one of the statemented pupils was due to leave at the end of term to attend a specialist school. One of the Teaching Assistants currently dedicated to supporting this child will remain with the school providing pastoral support including at lunchtimes. This support would be predominantly focussed on pupils in the upper end of the school. Mrs Alex Gorvett will be taking on this role from September.

Mrs Coopey asked what reaction there had been from parents to the mixing of the classes in the double entry years from September. Mr Barrow explained that the letter to parents giving details of the new classes had only been sent out that day so parental feedback had been limited so far. He explained that the mixing of classes was intended to give a better mix of personalities and individual needs between the classes in each year group. Three parents so far have raised issues and these have all been concerns regarding their child being placed in a class with particular individuals. Mr Barrow commented that he expected more issues to be raised now the detail of the classes had been given, and explained that he would suggest to parents that the proposed classes be given until the October half term to see how they were working and then, if a child was still particularly unhappy, moving the child to the other class could be considered.

Mr Martin noted that the level of absence amongst Teaching Assistants seemed high, and asked Mr Barrow whether this was due to long term or short term absences. Mr Barrow replied that there had been instances of longer term absences amongst the Teaching Assistants and these were influencing the data. Mr Martin asked whether the school had sickness absence insurance in place: Mr Barrow replied that cover was in place from the eleventh day of absence for teachers, but absence amongst Teaching Assistants was covered within the school. Mr Martin expressed concern that the level of Teaching Assistant absence could be adversely affecting the efficiency of the school. Mr Whitehouse suggested analysing the absence data in more depth, benchmarking it against other primary schools, and looking at trend data to better understand whether it really was a problem. Mrs Brown agreed that a better understanding of what was underpinning the data was required before the issue was raised with staff, as it could

adversely impact staff morale. It was agreed that Mrs Killian would look at benchmarking staff absence data as part of the benchmarking project. It was also agreed that Mr Barrow would include trend data in future Head Teacher reports to help put the staff absence data into context.

***Action: Benchmark staff absence data (Mrs Killian); Include trend data for staff absence in future Head Teacher reports (Mr Barrow)***

Mr Barrow then presented the highlights of the performance data. The attainment in the Nursery is very good, with just one child below age related expectations and a number already at the expected level for Reception. In Reception, 70% of children have been assessed as achieving a good level of development in the data recently submitted to the Local Authority. This is above the national average and in line with other Kenilworth primary schools: it is also major improvement on the result for Reception in 2013/14. Mrs Coopey asked what the overall assessment based on, as it did not appear consistent with the detailed data provided: Mr Barrow explained that it was an average based on a subset of the categories against which the Reception children are assessed. Mr Barrow went on to draw Governors' attention to the results for the 'Being Imaginative' strand, where 79% of pupils at St John's had achieved the expected level compared to 85% nationally in 2014: this had been a focus area for Reception this year but was still one of the lower scoring areas. Mr Barrow explained to Governors that in order to be assessed as 'good' at the 'Being Imaginative' Early Learning Goal children needed to demonstrate that they could be imaginative independently. More investigation was needed to understand why the children were not demonstrating this. Mrs Coopey commented that 'Being Imaginative' must be difficult to teach: whilst teachers could model behaviour this would not necessarily mean that children would voluntarily demonstrate the behaviours independently.

In the Year 1 Phonics Screening, 93% of pupils achieved the threshold level or above. This was significantly above both last year's score and the national average. The two children who were not successful in achieving the threshold level were not expected to do so: one child has speech and language issues and the other has special educational needs.

In summary, Mr Barrow explained that the Year 2 SATS results would show a decline from the previous year in writing but a positive trend in reading and maths. Writing will continue to be a key strand in the Learning Improvement Plan from September. Mrs Brown asked whether there had been interventions in writing and Mr Barrow explained that there had been a lot, both during and outside literacy lessons.

Data for years 3, 4 and 5 related to attainment at the end of the spring term and was presented as emerging (below age related expectation), expected (at age related

expectation) and secure (exceeding age related expectation). In Year 3 a small proportion of pupils are below age related expectations, and writing in all three years is a particular concern. Mr Barrow noted that it was taking time for the various writing initiatives to become embedded, and hopefully the data for the end of the summer term would show an improvement.

The Year 6 validated SATS results are due on the 7<sup>th</sup> July. The school believes that the results will be broadly in line with those achieved in 2014, which Mr Barrow felt was an achievement given that the current Year 6 cohort had a lot of ground to make up.

Turning to the school premises, Mr Martin informed Governors that during recent discussion on ways of growing the school, one option put forward was to expand the nursery by incorporating largely redundant corridor and storage space into the nursery class room. This would enable more pupils to be taken into the nursery class. Mr Martin asked whether this was being progressed: Mr Barrow responded that nursery numbers fluctuate significantly between years, and whilst the nursery is full this year the number of applications for next year is lower. He noted that whilst the St John's Nursery offers a high quality nursery education, it is not as flexible as other childcare providers which might make it less attractive to working parents. Mrs Brown commented that the need to pay for all afternoon sessions even if not all days were required was a big commitment, although she understood why the school encouraged children to attend all afternoon sessions. Mr Barrow explained that this requirement was driven by the need to provide the curriculum for early entry children, but noted that if an entitlement to thirty hours a week of funded provision was introduced by the Government this would change the picture completely. Mrs Coopey asked for clarification on the current situation regarding nursery provision for two year olds: Mr Barrow responded that this was provided by the Children's Centre and many of the children attending their 'Ready Rangers' sessions would transfer to the St John's Nursery when they turned three. Mr Martin suggested that a watching brief be kept on the nursery numbers and potential for expansion, and Mr Barrow agreed with this.

Referring to the Local Authority Learning Improvement Officer's report of her recent visit, which was appended to the Head Teacher's Report, Mr Whitehouse noted that there was a recommendation that the Governing Body consider producing an impact statement and asked what this might involve. Mr Barrow suggested that this be addressed in the new academic year, and Governors agreed with this suggestion. Mrs Derrick noted that the report referred to a visit in March and asked when the Learning Improvement Officer would be carrying out a follow up visit. Mr Barrow explained that Joyce James, the school's independent consultant, had visited that week and the Local Authority Learning Improvement Officer was due to visit later in July.

## 5. LEARNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Learning Improvement Plan had been updated with the current status of the actions rated red/amber/green and had been previously circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow highlighted the amber and one red action and informed Governors that these would all be carried over into the revised LIP for the next academic year. Mr Martin queried why many of the amber targets related to the 'improving the quality of teaching' area: Mr Barrow replied that this was because these actions required time to become fully embedded. He added that improving the quality of teaching would be an ongoing target in the LIP. Mr Barrow commented that he was pleased that as from September his time would be freed up to allow him to focus more on coaching and leading the staff. Mrs Brown highlighted that the amber actions represented the next stage in driving the improvement in the quality of teaching, and went on to ask whether it was the curriculum or skills ladders that drove the teachers' lesson planning. Mr Barrow explained that the curriculum provided the skeleton of the planning and the skills ladders were used to fill in the gaps. Mr Barrow noted that, under the new approach, assessment would be ongoing not half termly as currently. Mrs Coopey asked whether the Assessment Policy was being revised to reflect this change and Mr Barrow confirmed that Mrs Baker was in the process of updating the policy in the light of what had been learned during the previous year. Mrs Brown asked whether the emphasis on marking would continue: Mr Barrow confirmed that it was important that the quality of marking was not allowed to slip.

## 6. GOVERNOR SKILLS AUDIT AND SELF-EVALUATION WORKSHOP

Governors reviewed the objectives that had been agreed at the Governor workshop and that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

### **Raising the profile of Governors**

***Action: prepare school calendar for 2015/16 and circulate to Governors (Mr Barrow)***

Mr Barrow confirmed that the school calendar for the forthcoming academic year was almost complete and would be circulated to Governors shortly.

***Action: contact Governor Services to arrange an in-house training event on 'Engaging with Parents and the Community' (Mrs Coopey)***

The training course is arranged for the 20<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Assign a Governor to monitor the effective use and impact of Sports Funding spending**

***Action: Develop an approach to the monitoring of the Sports Funding in consultation with Mrs Baker, and report back to the next meeting with a proposal and timescale (Mrs Brough and Mrs Harrison)***

This action is ongoing.

**Elect a governor to be responsible for monitoring the effective teaching and promotion of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural learning**

**Elect a governor to review the school's values and their impact**

***Action: Agree an approach to the development of a school values statement in consultation with Mr Barrow, and report back to the next meeting with a proposal and timescale (Mrs Killian and Rev Attwood)***

Mrs Killan is in the process of organising a meeting with Mrs Baker and Mr Barrow to progress this action.

**Ensure that robust monitoring of safeguarding takes place at least once a term**

Mr Martin is booked on the safer recruitment training course. Mr Barrow and Mr Martin are meeting to go through the Governor Safeguarding Audit and the required actions.

**Governors to agree a strategic vision for the school**

## **7. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **Resources Committee**

A meeting of the Resources Committee had been held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June and the minutes circulated to Governors. Mr Whitehouse gave a summary of the key points of the meeting. The Resources Committee had approved funding for the appointment of an additional Teaching Assistant to provide pastoral support and assistance over lunchtimes. The Committee then reviewed the 2013/14 accounts for the unofficial funds, Dinner Money and the School Fund. It was identified that some items of expenditure that had gone through the school fund should have been allocated to the main school budget and it was agreed that this should happen in future where possible. The headlines of the recent Health and Safety audit were also discussed and will be reviewed in more depth at the next meeting.

Mrs Coopey asked whether the school's healthy financial position would be adversely affected by the building work to create the new classroom. Mr Barrow advised that it would not impact the main budget as the building works are a capital item which are funded separately. Mr Martin asked whether it might be possible to secure some special project funding from the Local Authority, outside of the main capital budget. Mr Barrow replied that there might be some Early Years funding available but this would be limited. The main option for seeking funding for the building works would be the Edwards Trust. Mr Martin questioned whether it would be worth applying to the Edwards Trust for funding to expand the nursery classroom. Mr Barrow responded that

he did not think it would be advisable as currently there is no evidence of need. He suggested waiting for the outcome of the Government review of nursery provision, as until that became clear there was a risk that any building work undertaken could prove to be unnecessary.

### **Out of School Club Working Group**

Mr Martin informed Governors that the Club is often running close to maximum capacity, which presents an issue of how to ensure that the required staff supervision ratios are managed. Until the end of this term additional staff have been employed to cover the peak periods to ensure that staff ratios are met. From September it is proposed that advance booking on a half termly basis be introduced, to assist in staff planning. A letter is being drafted to all parents to explain the changes to the booking system. Mrs Brown, whilst accepting the need for the change, raised some concerns over how the system would work in practice. Mrs Brown undertook to review the draft letter to parents and provide feedback from a parental perspective.

#### ***Action: Review the draft letter to parents regarding changes to the Out of School Club booking system (Mrs Brown)***

Mr Whitehouse noted that the Club's reserves were now healthy and increasing, and asked whether any consideration had been given to how the surplus should be utilised. Mr Martin responded that the Out of School Club Working Group had discussed this. Some small expenditure on resources for the Club had been identified and the purchases made. The Working Group had also discussed the potential for the Club to provide a wraparound care service for the Nursery, which would necessitate significant expenditure for it to be delivered including investment in facilities such as appropriate toilets. It had been agreed that a decision on whether to pursue the provision of wraparound care for Nursery would be delayed until 2016 at the earliest, as it would be a distraction from other school priorities, but the reserves are being retained in case a decision to go down this path is taken.

Mrs Coopey has agreed to join the Out of School Club Working Group to replace Mr Rollason who resigned earlier in the year. Mr Martin noted that although Out of School Club matters took up time in Full Governing Body meetings, he felt this was more efficient than holding separate Trustee meetings. Governors were in agreement with this.

## **8. GOVERNOR MONITORING**

Mr Barrow explained that from September there would be a move back to holding diagnostic days, as this is more in line with the new OFSTED approach. The diagnostic days will be set out in the school calendar, which will be circulated shortly, and

Governors will be able to participate. Mrs Brown asked whether Governors being assigned to monitor specific year groups would be compatible with this: Mr Barrow said that it would, as Governors would be able to select to monitor an activity related to their particular year group.

#### **9. CORRESPONDENCE**

An update on the activities of the Children's Centre had been provided by Mrs Condillac, Children's Services Manager, and was circulated to Governors.

#### **10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Full Governing Body will be held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015, commencing 7pm at the school.