

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY, KENILWORTH

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

HELD ON TUESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2015 AT 7.00PM

Present: Mr T Martin, Mr D Barrow, Mrs A Brough, Mrs H Brown, Mrs A Derrick, Miss K Harrison, Mrs S Kettle, Mr D Molyneux (from 7.20pm) and Mr J Whitehouse

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Rev A Attwood, Mrs T Coopey and Mrs R Killian. No conflicts of interest were declared for the meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

Mr Daryl Molyneux was appointed to the Governing Body as a co-opted governor. Governors welcomed Mr Molyneux to the Governing Body. In view of his financial skills, it was agreed that Mr Molyneux would join the Resources Committee.

Mr Martin reminded Governors that there was a second vacancy for a co-opted governor, and parents and carers had been asked to express an interest in volunteering for the role. Three parents had put themselves forward, of which one had withdrawn due to work commitments. Mr Martin and Mrs Coopey had met with the remaining parents and had concluded that both had lots of skills to offer and would make excellent governors. Mr Martin and Mrs Coopey recommended that Mrs Rebecca Augustus be appointed as co-opted governor. Mrs Augustus has a degree in Psychology, a Masters in Social Work and works as an adult safeguarding officer.

Mr Whitehouse asked whether there was any way of offering a role to both interested parents. Mr Martin responded that under the constitution of the Governing Body only one further co-opted governor could be appointed. It was hoped that the second parent would be happy to be approached when a suitable governor vacancy arises in the future.

The Governing Body appointed Mrs Rebecca Augustus as co-opted governor.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 10TH SEPTEMBER 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body held on the 10th September 2015 were approved and signed as a true record, subject to correction of an error in Minute 7 where the sentence "A target of 90% of pupils making expected progress, and 4%

making better than expected progress, had been agreed” should read “...and 40% making better than expected progress...”.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

LA contribution to the cost of building works

Mr Barrow confirmed that the school had now received a contribution from the Local Authority towards the cost of the internal building works required to accommodate the additional Reception class in September 2015.

Teachers’ Pay Policy update

Mr Barrow informed Governors that the Local Authority had revised the Warwickshire model Teachers’ Pay Policy since the last FGB meeting. He suggested that he go through the updated model policy with the Resources Committee at the next meeting. Mr Barrow commented that he did not believe that there were any significant changes. Governors agreed with this proposal.

Action: Review the latest Warwickshire model Teachers’ Pay Policy and update the St John’s Teachers’ Pay Policy accordingly (Resources Committee)

Benchmarking Exercise

This is ongoing and the findings will be reported to the Resources Committee in the spring term to inform the budgeting process.

Governor Monitoring

Details of the governor monitoring activities that had been undertaken during the autumn term had been circulated to Governors. Governors asked whether monitoring reports should be submitted electronically or in hard copy: Mr Barrow replied that it did not really matter, although a file of hard copy reports would be a useful resource during an OFSTED inspection.

Pupil progress meetings are scheduled to be held during the week commencing the 14th December 2015. This is a week later than originally proposed as teachers require some additional time to enter their data onto the new Classroom Monitor system. Dates and times of the pupil progress meetings will be circulated to Governors on Wednesday 25th November and Governors were asked to let Mr Barrow know which meetings they would like to attend.

Governor Page on the School Website

Mr Martin drew Governors’ attention to the latest statutory guidance (The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools – Statutory Guidance August 2015) setting out what information about governors should be published on the school website, and

asked Governors to agree that the St John's website be updated in line with the guidance. Mrs Brough noted that there was no requirement in the guidance for governor photographs to be published on the website. Mr Martin agreed that this was the case but that Governors at St John's had previously decided that publishing their photos would be helpful. Mrs Brough expressed her reservations about this, and it was agreed that Mrs Brough, Mr Barrow and Mr Martin would discuss the matter outside the meeting. Governors agreed that Mrs Brown and Mrs Weir would work together to update the Governor page of the school website.

Action: Produce a draft update of the Governor website page (Mrs Brown and Mrs Weir)

5. SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Mr Martin explained that he had asked both Mr Barrow and Mrs Baker independently what the top priority for the school was, and both had replied that it was safeguarding. Having taken on the role of Safeguarding Governor, Mr Martin said that he was in agreement with this view. Previously the school priorities identified in the Learning Improvement Plan had not been ranked in terms of importance, but Mr Martin had suggested that Safeguarding should be made the number one priority, with the other priorities remaining unranked. Governors agreed this proposal.

Mr Barrow added that, in assembly, he had also asked the children what they thought his top three priorities for the school were. It took around twelve suggestions before keeping the children safe was identified as the number one priority. The children quickly identified that their being happy was the second priority. There was some discussion about number three before the children suggested that pupils achieving their best, no matter what their ability, should be the third priority. Mr Barrow stated that he would like to adopt these as the school aims and Governors were in agreement.

Mr Martin noted that there is a lot of legislation in place regarding the safeguarding of children. However, The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, which is the overarching legislation that defines the responsibilities of head teachers and governors, makes no mention of safeguarding children. Mr Martin has brought this to the attention of the local MP, who undertook to bring it to the attention of the Education Secretary.

6. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT FOR THE AUTUMN 2015 TERM

The Head Teacher's report for the Autumn 2015 Term had been previously circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow commented that he had revised the format of the report, to make it easier to access on mobile devices. Mr Barrow then took Governors through the key points in the report.

Two new members of staff have been recruited for January 2016: Miss Kirsty Baker, who will be covering Miss Taylor's maternity leave in Year 3; and Mrs Esther Duxbury, who has taught at the school previously and will be in Year 1 until the end of the academic year. Mr Barrow then explained that the school had been liaising with Warwickshire Human Resources department regarding the employment status of child specific teaching assistants. The Resources Committee will discuss recent guidance issued by the Local Authority on employment contracts for child specific teaching assistants becoming permanent after two years, and the budgetary implications of this. Mr Whitehouse declared an interest in this matter, as he has a daughter employed as a child specific teaching assistant at the school, and noted that he would therefore be unable to lead on the matter in the Resources Committee. Mr Barrow responded that he would be happy to take the lead, and that it was important that the situation was clarified before the budget is finalised.

The first Kenilworth Cluster training day for all primary teachers and teaching assistants was held on the 13th November. The event was on the subject of working at greater depth in the curriculum and had been very well received. Mr Barrow commented that, in addition to his role as Consortium Chair, St John's was seeking to share good practice as the lead school within the consortium.

More detailed statistics on safeguarding have been included in Mr Barrow's Head Teacher's Report at Governors' request. Children who are experiencing emotional and well-being issues is now a key focus in the Self Evaluation Form. Mr Barrow has calculated that 8% of pupils at St John's are experiencing emotional and well-being issues, for a range of reasons: this 8% is in addition to those children identified as having special educational needs and disabilities and means that almost 25% of pupils at St John's require additional support in some form. Mr Barrow emphasised that the situation has been a day to day operational issue for the school for some time and is being dealt with: however Governors need to be aware of the scale of the issue. Mr Barrow emphasised that it was difficult to quantify the impact of some of the measures put in place to support children with emotional and well-being issues: he outlined some of the indicators that could be looked at, such as improved attendance, reduced number of fixed term exclusions, and reduction in Senior Leadership involvement in high profile behaviour incidents.

Mr Barrow explained that he had been discussing this with Mr. Martin, and went on to propose that he run an information session for Governors on how nurture can be used to fill developmental gaps. Mrs Brown asked how this fitted with the cluster project on nurture that St John's are piloting with St Nicholas. Mr Barrow explained that the pilot project was already underway with a high profile pupil from each school undertaking joint activities, although it is nurture in the loosest sense. This has been beneficial for

the pupil from St Nicholas's, but less so for the pupil from St John's. Part of the issue has been that with only two children involved the sessions have been quite intense, so the teaching assistants involved have suggested making it available to a wider group of pupils.

Action: arrange date for Governor Information Session on Nurture early in the Spring 2016 Term (Mr Barrow)

Mr Whitehouse questioned where nurture groups could practically be held at St John's, as the focus on increasing pupil numbers has left the school with little spare space. He noted that this was a requirement that should be borne in mind if building works to extend the school are required in the future. Mr Martin highlighted that the Warwickshire County Council Sufficiency Strategy stated an objective of increasing special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) facilities in mainstream schools, and therefore the Local Authority should be receptive to a request to incorporate SEND facilities in any future expansion of the school. Mrs Brown noted that schools are being asked to take the lead on one area of SEND provision, for example speech and language or autism, and asked which area St John's would like to focus on. Mr Barrow explained that within Kenilworth each school will be leading on one aspect of SEND, and his preference would be for St John's to lead on emotional wellbeing.

Mrs Derrick noted that the statistics for SEND showed a high number of SEND pupils in Year 3 and asked whether they were spread across both classes, given that the new Year 3 teacher is an NQT and a high number of SEND pupils could be a challenge. Mr Barrow confirmed that the SEND pupils were in both classes, and added that additional support would be provided by the Senior Leadership Team who are providing cognitive behavioural therapy sessions for the pupils.

Moving on to pupil progress, Mr Barrow noted that the current Early Years children are coming into the school at below the national baseline level (ie age related expectation): this means however that St John's should have plenty of scope to demonstrate value added. Attainment data as at October 2015 was provided for Key Stages 1 and 2: this shows that writing is still an issue for certain year groups. This is being addressed with staff, who are being asked to have high expectations of the children and raise the bar on attainment. Mr Barrow noted that Nursery is a good example of how it is possible for staff to have high expectations but the children still to be happy. Mr Whitehouse asked whether there was an error in the Year 6 maths data: Mrs Baker confirmed that there was and the number of children attaining above age related expectations was overstated. Mr Whitehouse questioned why 61% of children in Year 6 were below age related expectations in maths: Mrs Baker explained that it was more difficult higher up the school for children to meet the new curriculum expectations as they have less time

to adjust to the changes. Mrs Brown asked whether the data was influenced by the fact that there had not been opportunity to cover all the topics so early in the academic year: Mrs Baker agreed that this was the case and the data for the end of term should show a higher percentage of pupils achieving age related expectations. Mr Barrow added that good practice was now to look at pupil progress data at the end of each term, and the data at the October half term had primarily been gathered to give staff the opportunity to get used to using Classroom Monitor. The recent pupil progress meetings had focused less on the data and more on whether staff knew the children in their class. Mrs Brown asked for clarification that assessment would be termly going forward: Mr Barrow responded that data analysis would be termly although the impact of interventions may be monitored on shorter timescales.

Mr Barrow then updated Governors on staff performance management. All teachers have been set performance targets, and targets for teaching assistants will be set depending on their development needs. Wellbeing interviews have been held with all teachers and support staff and Mr Barrow felt that the exercise had been worthwhile. A Health and Safety walk had been conducted by Mrs Brough and Mrs Derrick: Mrs Brough confirmed that this showed an improvement in health and safety matters since the previous walk.

In the Learning Improvement Plan, the context page had been re-worded by Mr Martin to reflect the proposed change in priorities and had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. Mr Barrow had provided an assessment of where the school currently sat against each of the OFSTED assessment areas in terms of maintaining its 'good' rating. Overall Effectiveness was still felt to be good and Effectiveness of Leadership and Management was considered to be good moving towards outstanding. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment is good overall, with more outstanding teaching in evidence. Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare is still outstanding and is the particular strength of the school. No judgement on Outcomes for Children and Learners can be made until the data is analysed at the end of term, but the RAISE online data indicates a decline in achievement.

In light of the number of NQTs that have recently joined the school, Mr Whitehouse asked whether achieving a greater level of stability should be a goal in its own right if the school is to achieve outstanding. Mr Barrow agreed that stability was key and would underpin progress to outstanding, and added that this had been a driver behind the decision to minimise year group changes amongst staff this academic year.

Mr Whitehouse asked whether the 360° e-safety mark that the school is pursuing would also involve parents and carers. Mr Barrow confirmed that parents would be included. Mr Martin asked how many parents were attending the planned safeguarding

information session: Mrs Baker responded that it was around twenty so far which was good for an evening session.

7. REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM THE GOVERNOR SKILLS AUDIT AND WORKSHOP

Mr Martin explained that he had updated the list of actions arising from the Governor skills audit and workshop using a traffic light system. Mr Barrow noted that those actions marked as red were the next areas of focus. Mr Martin then asked Governors to give a brief update on their actions.

Governor Monitoring: Mr Barrow explained that the amber status reflected the fact that there was a need to maintain a focus on Governor monitoring throughout the year. However, he felt that the monitoring was going well. Mrs Baker added that she had used the St John's approach to Governor monitoring as an example of best practice on a recent quality assurance visit to another school.

Increasing the profile of Governors and engaging with stakeholders: Mr Martin noted that the recent training event on 'Engaging with Parents and the Community' had been held and had had a wider focus than just Governors, encompassing the whole school. Mrs Killian has produced a draft communications strategy which has been circulated to Governors: Mr Martin asked Governors to feedback on the strategy via email. Mrs Killian, Mr Barrow and Mr Martin would then work up a full strategy to be presented to the next meeting of the Full Governing Body.

Action: Comment on the draft Communications Strategy (All)

Action: Produce a final draft Communications Strategy (Mrs Killian, Mr Barrow and Mr Martin)

Monitoring the effective use and impact of the Sports Funding: Miss Harrison explained that she and Mrs Brough had begun to build a system to identify the priorities and actions required to meet the objectives of the sports funding grant. There will be a greater focus placed on communicating the way in which the sports grant has been used, including a page on the school website. Mr Martin recommended that Miss Harrison and Mrs Brough liaise with Mrs Killian so that communications regarding use of the sports grant are built into the communications strategy.

Action: Ensure communication regarding use of the sports grant is included in the Communications Strategy (Miss Harrison, Mrs Brough, Mrs Killian)

Performance Management of Staff: this is now fully embedded.

Strategic Vision for School: to ensure that St John's is perceived by the Local Authorities as the preferred school for development in the event that the population of Kenilworth expands: This is being worked on with the Local Authority. Mrs Baker

asked Mr Whitehouse whether he could confirm the likely timescales in which expansion of primary education facilities in Kenilworth would be required. Mr Whitehouse responded that expansion was tied up with the Local Plan which is currently in suspension: the timescale is therefore uncertain but is several years away. Mr Martin commented that a further objective for the school is to reduce uncertainty around the Reception intake in September 2016. He, Mr Barrow and Mr Whitehouse had met with the Local Authority to discuss both the short and long term position for school places and had encouraged the Local Authority to look at short term requirements in the light of the longer term needs.

Mrs Brown asked whether Mr Barrow would be keen to have two Reception classes in September 2016 so as to maintain consistency in year sizes. Mr Barrow explained that having a two class intake in September would present issues in terms of a lack of physical space and would also have a detrimental financial impact when the cohort reached Key Stage 2. Generally a school with one and a half class intakes, such as St John's, has stretched resources and therefore the Local Authority preference is for two form entry schools.

Values Statement: Mrs Baker reported that Mrs Killian was seeking to work with both teachers and teaching assistants on the value statement and her preference was to see both groups in the same week. This will be scheduled for January 2016.

Monitoring of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: Mr Barrow explained that Mrs Fenner and Miss Gill had been appointed as leaders for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) in school, and therefore they would be the best point of contact for Rev Attwood and Mrs Killian to liaise with going forward.

Action: Liaise with Mrs Fenner and Miss Gill to agree how SMSC education should be monitored (Rev Attwood and Mrs Killian)

8. REVIEW OF POLICIES

The list of policies for review during 2015 had been circulated to Governors, together with their latest status. Policies on Accessibility, Minor Contracts, Lettings, Collective Worship and Homework have all been approved by the appropriate committee. Draft policies on Early Years, Calculation and Teaching and Learning are complete and will be presented to the next committee meetings for approval. Work on the Fire & Evacuation and Health & Safety policies is underway: it was noted that both Mrs Brough and Mrs Derrick were working on these. Mrs Baker is currently working on the Assessment and Maths policies.

Action: Complete review of assigned policies (All)

9. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Performance and Standards Committee

A meeting of the Performance and Standards Committee was held on the 16th September 2015 and a copy of the minutes had been circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow reported that the focus of the meeting had been a detailed review of the end of year performance data and how this informed the Learning Improvement Plan.

Resources

A meeting of the Resources Committee was held on the 11th November 2015 and a copy of the minutes had been circulated to Governors. Mr Whitehouse reported that the meeting had reviewed the latest finance update, which forecast a small financial surplus for the 2015/16 financial year. The committee had discussed the merits of the Senior Leadership Team providing teaching cover for absences and whether this was sustainable. Whilst the Committee agreed that it would be desirable to breakeven or have a surplus at the end of the year, the view was that a small deficit would not be a problem if this meant that the pressure on the Senior Leadership Team was reduced. Mr Barrow will keep Mr Martin updated on the Senior Leadership Team workload. The Resources Committee had also reviewed the draft Dinner Money and School Fund 2014/15 accounts, and Mr Whitehouse thanked Mrs Weir for presenting these at the meeting.

Out of School Club

Mr Martin circulated the draft management report for October 2015 and reported that the financial position of the club remains healthy. The OOSC booking procedures had been revised from September, in order to enable the OOSC to better forecast the number of children attending sessions and ensure that appropriate staffing ratios were maintained. Despite the change the club continues to be popular. One written complaint about the change to the booking system had been received from parents and Mr Barrow had responded sensitively to this. Mr Molyneux asked whether the debtors for the OOSC and school dinners were the same families, and Mrs Weir replied that generally they were not.

Mr Barrow left the meeting at 8.22pm

Performance Review Committee

Mr Barrow rejoined the meeting at 8.25pm

10. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs Condillac, Children's Services Manager at the Kenilworth Children's Centre, had provided an update for Governors. Mr Barrow noted that the school continued to have

a close relationship with the Children's Centre, and Mrs Condillac was providing support to the school on pupil emotional and well-being issues.

Mr Whitehouse commented that a recent report to the Local Authority on Children's Centres had indicated that, following the change of management, there had been a reduction in support worker hours which meant that the Children's Centres were not reaching as many families as they should be. Mr Martin asked Mr Barrow whether he thought that this was true of Kenilworth: Mr Barrow replied that resources were stretched and some reduction in services had been inevitable.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Full Governing Body will be held on Wednesday 27th January 2016, commencing 7pm at the school.