

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY, KENILWORTH

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

HELD ON TUESDAY 15TH MARCH 2016 AT 7.00PM

Present: Mr T Martin, Mr D Barrow, Mrs A Brough, Mrs H Brown, Mrs T Coopey, Mrs B Cordrey, Mrs A Derrick, Miss K Harrison, Mrs R Killian, Mr D Molyneux 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 Mrs Augustus. No conflicts of interest were declared for the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 27TH JANUARY 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the full Governing Body held on the 27th January 2016 were approved and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Governor Information Session on Nurture

The information session in nurture was held on Wednesday 9th March. Mr Martin stated that he had found the session very informative and helpful. Governors had agreed at the information session that the school should implement a pilot nurture scheme for twelve months in order to assess its impact. Mr Barrow undertook to produce an indicative budget for the continuation of the nurture scheme for a second year. Mr Barrow will circulate the handouts to those governors unable to attend the session.

Post meeting note: Mrs Brown and Mrs Augustus will work with Mr Barrow to monitor nurture provision.

Action: produce an indicative budget for extending the pilot nurture scheme for a second year (Mr Barrow)

Governor Website Page

Mrs Weir confirmed that the text of the Governor page on the school website had now been updated. A number of photographs are missing but this will be rectified in the next few days.

Health & Safety and Fire & Evacuation Policies

Mr Barrow confirmed that the Health & Safety and Fire & Evacuation policies had been updated and the draft policies sent to Mrs Brough and Mrs Derrick for their comments. The policies should be ready to be considered at the next Resources Committee meeting.

Action: review the draft Health & Safety and Fire & Evacuation policies and provide comments to Mr Barrow (Mrs Brough and Mrs Derrick)

Date for next Performance and Standards Committee meeting

It had been agreed that the next meeting of the Performance and Standards Committee will be held on Thursday 17th April at 9.30am.

4. RATIFICATION OF THE 3-YEAR BUDGET

Mr Whitehouse informed Governors that the Resources Committee had undertaken a comprehensive review of the 3-year budget proposal at their meeting on the 2nd March 2016. The Resources Committee's discussions are detailed in the minutes of the meeting. A summary paper explaining the main features of the budget proposal had been prepared by Mr Barrow and circulated to governors.

Mr Barrow explained that the indicative budget presented to the Resources Committee had been set based on pupil numbers in the February census. The final budget provided by the Local Authority has income based on pupil numbers in the October census, which for St John's means fewer pupils as it excludes the January nursery intake. This has reduced the school's income next year by around £14k. In addition to this, the LA Finance Officer has taken a cautious view and has not included in the budget other potential sources of income that have not as yet been guaranteed.

Mr Barrow circulated a copy of the final budget figures. He drew Governors' attention to the forecast surplus in 2014/15, which is £6k even after the £25k deficit from the previous financial year has been covered. In 2016/17 there is an £8k forecast deficit: Mr Barrow noted that there were a number of likely sources of income that had not been included in the budget and which would reduce this. He went on to explain that although his ideal objective would be to set a balanced budget, he did not feel that it was feasible to reduce discretionary costs any further without having a negative impact on the pupils. The budget for 2017/18 is broadly balanced and in 2018/19 shows a deficit of £43k due to the funding for the additional teacher for the current Year 1 ceasing when the cohort moves into Key Stage 2. In all years the budget enables the Deputy and SENDCO to largely remain out of the classroom.

Mr Barrow explained that a priority for the summer term is to increase the number of pupils in nursery as nursery children bring the highest per capita funding. The Senior Leadership Team has already brainstormed ideas on how to achieve this. There will also be a focus on encouraging all pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding to register.

Mr Martin noted that he had discussed the 2016/17 budget deficit with Mr Whitehouse and they had both concluded that, on a budget of close to £1m, an £8k overspend did not represent a major concern. The forecast deficit in 2018/19 was also not a concern given that it is a long way out and circumstances will inevitably change between now and then. Mrs Killian asked whether Mr Barrow was able to give an estimate of the additional income that the school expected to receive but which was not included in the budget: Mr Barrow responded that he expected to receive around £1,200 a head for each of the five Looked After Children at the school, and a further £6,000 additional funding for one of the high profile SEND children. Mrs Killian noted that if all this income came to fruition it would more than cover the forecast deficit.

Mr Whitehouse noted that the Local Authority had agreed to fund the severance packages for those teaching assistants leaving at the end of the academic year and that this was now reflected in the budget. Mr Martin asked why there was such a significant drop in Other Income between 2015/16 and 2016/17: Mr Barrow explained that this was due to a reduction in pupil premium funding. Mrs Brough asked whether Mr Barrow felt that the opening of the new nursery in Kenilworth had had a detrimental impact on the nursery admissions at St John's. Mr Barrow replied that he was not aware that this was the reason for the lower pupil numbers, and that he felt that the main issue was that St John's was an educational establishment offering a nursery education rather than a day care facility. Mrs Cordrey commented that the provision offered by the St John's nursery was not sufficiently flexible for some working parents, and this was narrowing the pool of potential pupils. Mr Barrow acknowledged that this was an issue, but from a practitioner perspective it would be difficult to deliver the curriculum if more flexible attendance patterns were offered. Mrs Coopey asked if Mr Barrow had talked to Kenilworth nursery about their offer, as they were still oversubscribed: Mr Barrow responded that his intention was first to consult with parents and better understand what they were looking for, to see if a compromise could be reached. The school would also be looking for opportunities to better market the nursery. Mrs Coopey suggested that the nursery could be marketed to parents at other Kenilworth primary schools such as Clinton, which does not have its own nursery and is close by.

The full Governing Body approved the 3-year budget as presented.

5. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

The Head Teacher's Report for the Spring 2016 term had been previously circulated to Governors. Mr Barrow took Governors through some of the main points in the report.

- Pupil Progress: pupil progress meetings had been held earlier in the day to review the latest data. Mr Barrow explained that Year 3 are now mostly working within the Year 3 expectations, which was very encouraging given where they had started the year. A diagnostic day had been held earlier in the term and was attended by governors. The results of this had been very positive;
- Community: the school continues to develop links with the wider community, including work within the Kenilworth cluster. The Out of School Club continues to flourish;
- Staff Absence: Teaching Assistant absences are high compared to teaching staff. Mr Barrow explained that the absences were due to a wide variety of reasons. The high level of midday supervisor absence was attributable to a long term sickness;
- Parental Concerns: Mr Barrow drew Governors' attention to the new category of Racism, Extremism and Radicalisation that was included in the report in response to the Prevent duty. Mrs Eastham had undertaken training in the safeguarding of children from racism, extremism and radicalisation and had in turn trained the rest of the staff. Mr Barrow commented that radicalisation covers a range of extremisms not just religious extremism. Mr Barrow informed Governors that on occasion he has played a wider role in resolving parental issues, for example recently being approached by the police to facilitate a mediation session between two sets of parents;
- Performance Reviews: mid-year reviews have been carried out;
- Premises: the school has experienced a number of issues with its drains due to tree root ingression. The Local Authority has now agreed to fund both the investigative and remedial works required to rectify this problem. As there will only be one Reception class in September 2016 there will be no work to expand the school premises this year;
- Learning Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation Form: the LIP had been updated, with progress on actions being rated red/amber/green. Following the recent diagnostic day Mr Barrow had evaluated where the school is against the OFSTED criteria. The only area in which the school was not believed to be good or better is 'outcomes for children and learners'. Whilst the performance data is looking good for this stage of the year, Mr Barrow explained that a final judgement could not be made until the end of year data was available.

Mr Martin commented that, having attended the recent diagnostic day and pupil progress meetings, he was confident that progress is being made. The pupil progress meetings had left him in no doubt that the decision to have the Deputy and SENDCO out of the classroom was the right one and with 23% of the children being assessed as having special needs their support was invaluable. Mrs Coopey noted that not only did the SENDCO support children with special needs directly; she also supported the teachers in dealing with children with SEND.

Mr Barrow added that Mrs Baker was currently giving significant support to Year 6. Mr Whitehouse asked for the latest view on Year 6's performance and whether the additional interventions were working. Mrs Baker responded that the interventions were yielding results, and under the old assessment framework the cohort had made an average of eight points' progress since September. However, as neither the form of the new assessment tests nor the pass marks were known it was difficult to make a prediction about performance with any confidence. The best view was that 86% of Year 6 pupils are predicted to pass the required standard.

Mrs Brown asked how the school viewed the new writing standards. Mrs Baker responded she considered the standards to be too high, especially in Year 2 where many children are not developmentally ready to cope with the new requirements. Mr Barrow added that the requirements were changing weekly which was very stressful. He informed Governors that St John's has been selected as one of the schools who will form part of the benchmark for the Key Stage 1 maths test and therefore will have to administer the test early on the 22nd April.

Mr Martin noted that the new standards were putting pupils under pressure but it was clear that the teachers were doing everything they could to avoid the children becoming stressed and to protect their wellbeing.

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

Governors gave a short update on progress.

Communications Strategy (Mrs Killian)

Mrs Killian explained that there had been no significant progress since the last meeting, and the next stage is for her to meet with Mr Barrow and Mrs Baker to agree how to progress the plan. Once this was agreed she could then develop a budget for implementation. Mrs Coopey commented that she had been researching how schools used Facebook, and had found that many schools that did use Facebook as a means of communicating with parents were positive about their experience. However, it was evident that it required close monitoring by the school and was therefore labour intensive. Mrs Baker asked whether the context in which the schools used Facebook

was known. Mrs Coopey stated that the schools were typically large schools and used Facebook for arranging meetings with parents. She added that all the schools that were actively using Facebook had a member of staff who was keen to take the lead on this.

Action: Agree a way forward on the school's use of Facebook (Mr Barrow, Mrs Killian, Mr Martin, Mrs Baker)

Monitoring the effective use and impact of the Sports Funding (Mrs Brough and Miss Harrison)

Miss Harrison confirmed that the document setting out how the sports funding was used and its impact was now complete. Mrs Coopey asked how many pupils were participating in sport outside the set PE lessons: Miss Harrison confirmed that uptake of extra-curricular sports activities, such as those offered by Premier Sport, was typically poor. This could be due to cost but the uptake for the recently launched Mad Science club, which is more expensive, has been very good which indicates that the issue is not financial. Mrs Baker added that the uptake for free sports activities is also low. Miss Harrison noted that St John's has been participating in more inter-school sports activities this year, so giving a wider range of pupils the opportunity to participate. Mr Martin asked whether the report on the use of the sports funding would be published on the school website and Mr Barrow confirmed that it would.

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 (Mr Martin and Mr Whitehouse)

Mr Martin noted that in the short term no expansion of the school would be required due to the single class intake in September. In the longer term, the Local Authority has produced a blueprint for how St John's could be expanded, which includes two additional classrooms next to Year 6 and another room in between the staff room and the hall which would double as a nurture room and the Out of School Club. The current Out of School Club room would revert to a classroom. Mr Martin stated his belief that the Local Authority saw St John's as the most obvious choice of school in Kenilworth to expand. Mrs Derrick asked whether it was felt that the Local Authority would prefer to expand an existing school rather than build a new one: Mr Martin stated that he believed it would as the LA did not favour single form entry schools. Mr Whitehouse commented that he felt that the school had moved the Local Authority's perception of how future demand for school places could be met. Mr Martin added that there would be a process to go through at such time as additional school places were required, but that St John's was now well placed. Mrs Coopey asked whether any other Kenilworth heads were interested in expanding their schools: Mr Barrow replied that he was not

aware that any were. Mr Martin concluded that St John's had progressed this as far as it could at this stage and the action was complete for the time being.

Values Statement (Mrs Killian)

Mrs Killian reported that her document summarising her work on the values statement was now complete and she would circulate it to governors for final comments. The document will then be approved at the next meeting of the full Governing Body. Mr Martin commented that he had looked at the output of the values work and felt that it was a valuable document. The work led by Mrs Killian evidences that the values identified are embedded in the school and are not just words on paper.

Action: Circulate the final draft Values statement to governors (Mrs Killian) and provide any comments (All)

Monitoring of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (Mrs Killian and Rev Attwood)

Mrs Killian confirmed that she had met with Mrs Fenner and Rev Attwood to discuss the monitoring of SMSC education in school. The school is now including religious education in with SMSC (RSMSC) and Mrs Fenner had explained why this was considered appropriate. Following the meeting Mrs Killian and Rev Attwood had concluded that governors could support religious and SMSC education in school by:

- Assisting Mrs Fenner and Miss Gill in their monitoring activities;
- Ensuring that RSMSC is a priority in school;
- Identifying areas where external input could support the teaching of RSMSC; and
- Acting as a critical friend on content. Rev Attwood has ideas on how to bring the teaching of RSMSC to life in the classroom.

Mrs Fenner and Miss Gill have set up a system whereby each class has a folder in which examples of RSMSC work are collected to support the monitoring of how the subject is being taught. Mrs Killian will be meeting with Rev Attwood and Mrs Fenner after Easter to assess the quantity and quality of the evidence in the folders.

Action: Arrange a meeting with Mrs Fenner to monitor the teaching of RSMSC in school (Mrs Killian and Rev Attwood)

7. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Resources Committee

The Resources Committee met on the 2nd March 2016 and the minutes of the meeting have been circulated to governors. Mr Whitehouse explained that the main business of

the meeting was to discuss the draft 3-year budget. In addition the Committee had looked at the output from the benchmarking website. In many categories St John's was in the middle of the range of benchmarked data, but energy costs were comparatively high. An interesting analysis had shown that for amount spent per pupil St John's was towards the lower end of the range, but for results at Key Stage 2 it was towards the upper end, indicating that the school is delivering good value for money. The Resources Committee had also received a draft response to the 2016 schools' Financial Value Standard questionnaire for comment. This had now been signed off and was ready for submission.

Out of School Club

Mr Martin circulated a copy of the February management report which showed that the out of School Club is financially healthy and continues to thrive. Mrs Killian asked why miscellaneous expenses were so high in February: Mrs Weir explained that they included the purchase of IT equipment.

Mr Martin noted that at the last meeting of the full Governing Body an increase in the rent charged to the Out of School Club had been agreed in principle, and a proposal was circulated to governors. The proposal is for an increase in the rent to £5,125 per annum to include the before and after school sessions and the summer play scheme. This would bring the rent charged to the Out of School Club more in line with that charged to external hirers. Mr Martin commented that the Out of School Club receives good value from the school facilities and can afford an increase in rent. The Club has also benefited for rent holidays in the past. Governors agreed to increase the rent charged to the Out of School Club to £5,125 per annum.

Mr Whitehouse noted that no charge is made by the school to the Out of School Club for Mr Barrow's management time, and this is something that could be considered in the future.

8. SUCCESSION PLANNING

Mr Martin informed Governors that Mr Whitehouse intended to retire as Local Authority governor at the end of the academic year after twelve years in the role. Mr Martin expressed his appreciation to Mr Whitehouse for his invaluable contribution to the Governing Body. Mrs Weir confirmed that she would contact the Local Authority to inform them of Mr Whitehouse's resignation so that they could seek a replacement.

Mr Martin noted that Mr Whitehouse's retirement would mean that a new Chair of the Resources Committee would be required in September. Mr Martin explained that Mr Molyneux had indicated his willingness to put his name forward, and Mr Martin had suggested that he undertake the necessary training as soon as possible to facilitate a

smooth handover should Mr Molyneux be appointed as Chair in September. Mr Martin emphasised that this did not preclude any other governor standing for the role of Chair of the Resources Committee in September should they so wish. Governors were supportive of this approach.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the full Governing Body will be held on Tuesday 17th May 2016, commencing 7pm at the school.