

**ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY, KENILWORTH**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2016 AT 7.00PM**

Present: Mr Trevor Martin, Mr Darren Barrow, Mrs Rebecca Augustus, Mrs Anne Brough, Mrs Helen Brown, Mrs Trisha Coopey, Mrs Beth Cordrey, Mrs Antonia Derrick, Miss Katie Harrison, Mrs Rachel Killian, Mr Daryl Molyneux and Mr John Whitehouse

In Attendance: Mrs Cathy Weir (Clerk to Governors), Mrs Mary Baker (Deputy Head)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Sandra Kettle. No conflicts of interest were declared for the meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2016**

The minutes of the meeting of the full Governing Body held on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were approved and signed as a true record.

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

**Bid for Nurture Facility Funding**

Mr Barrow explained that he had submitted a bid to the William Edwards Educational Charity for £80k to refurbish the Out of School Club room as a nurture facility. This would encompass internal reconfiguration of the room, converting a window into a door to the outside area, creating an outside sensory area and partitioning off a section of the current 4L classroom to create an intervention room. The initial response from the trustees of the Edwards charity has been positive, with the trustees requesting a visit to the school and offering to fund a feasibility study. The Local Authority will project manage the work as it will be quite complex, and they will obtain three quotes from contractors. In terms of timescales, Mr Barrow estimates that the work will take place during the autumn term and the facility will hopefully be ready for use in the New Year. This will work well as the staff training day after Christmas can focus on nurture.

Mr Martin asked whether the facility had been pitched to the Edwards charity on the basis that it would be a resource available to all Kenilworth primary schools. Mr Barrow responded that his bid had focussed on the benefits that the facility would offer to the whole of St John's rather than the wider Kenilworth community, and had emphasised

the number of children in the school with emotional issues. The original cluster funding had financed a representative from each primary school to attend nurture training. The next step will be to get feedback from the schools on their level of need and how they intend to apply nurture. The other schools are realising that nurture is a useful intervention and the head teachers are keen to implement some aspects in their schools. Mr Martin asked whether St John's was effectively acting as the pathfinder school for nurture, and Mr Barrow agreed that this was the case.

#### **4. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT FOR THE SUMMER 2016 TERM**

The Head Teacher's report for the summer 2016 term had been circulated to Governors in advance. Mr Barrow explained that he was happy to take any general questions on the report, and would then focus in detail on the end of year performance data.

Mrs Cordrey asked which factors had been taken into account when determining the amount of teaching assistant time to allocate to each class. Mr Barrow explained that the number of pupils, the individual profiles of the children, and their emotional and special educational needs were all factors taken into account. Mrs Cordrey asked whether there were any minimum adult to child ratios that had to be met: Mr Barrow confirmed that there was a minimum ratio of one adult to thirteen children in Early Years, but not in Key Stages 1 and 2. This was why an additional teaching assistant was allocated to Reception. Mr Barrow reminded Governors that due to budgetary constraints a number of teaching assistants on temporary contracts had been given notice of redundancy with effect from the end of the summer term: as the school's financial position has now improved most of these have now been offered other roles from September.

Governors asked for more details about 'Open the Book'. Mr Barrow explained that they were a church group who come into school and re-enact a bible story during assembly. Governors asked whether assemblies also covered other religions: Mr Barrow confirmed that this was the case, with the festivals of religions other than Christianity regularly being the subject of assemblies. Other faiths are also covered in RE lessons. Governors asked whether the Humanist viewpoint was also covered: Mrs Baker confirmed that this was something that was being looked into and that the school was looking for a representative from the local Humanist group to come in to talk to the children.

Mr Barrow then took Governors through the end of year performance data. Starting with Early Years, 75% of Reception children had achieved a good level of development against a target of 85%. Mr Barrow explained that this represented a combined score across eleven areas of the Early Years curriculum. He acknowledged that 85% was an ambitious target and stated that he felt that 75% was a good performance. 75%

represented an 8% improvement on the 2015 performance and was above the average performance for Warwickshire. Reception had had a tricky year and a Rapid Action Plan had been put into place part way through the year: this had been fully implemented and as a result the children had made progress. There is a particular group of children within the Reception cohort who will need to be subject to ongoing monitoring: the two classes will be mixed as they move in to Year 1 in an attempt to dilute the impact of this group.

Mr Martin asked whether the national average performance level for Reception was known: Mr Barrow replied that it was not yet available, but the national average for last year was around 68%. Mr Whitehouse asked whether there was a noticeable difference between the performance of those children who had attended the St John's nursery and those who had not: Mr Barrow confirmed that generally the children who had attended the St John's nursery had performed better. Mrs Coopey asked whether parents had been informed about the mixing of the two classes in Year 1, and if so what the reaction had been. Mr Barrow confirmed that parents had received a letter the previous week which set out the rationale for the mixing of the classes. There had been some push back from parents, but Mr Barrow felt it to be important that the new classes be given a few weeks to embed before any conclusions were drawn. Mrs Cordrey asked whether classes were being mixed in any other year groups: Mr Barrow replied that in the past they had been but the decision had been taken this year that there was nothing to be gained in mixing other years.

In the Year 1 phonics screening test 88% of Year 1 pupils had achieved the benchmark level. If the four English as an Additional Language pupils who had joined the school during the year are excluded this increases to 93%. All Pupil Premium and Looked After/post Looked After children achieved the benchmark level. Although 88% was 8% lower than was achieved in 2015, it is still above the national and Warwickshire averages. Mr Barrow explained that systematic phonics teaching, close monitoring, vertical grouping across year groups and a focus in the last term on year group spellings had all contributed to the good performance in phonics.

Turning to Key Stage 1, Mr Barrow explained that teachers assessed the children at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 against five levels. In Year 2 there were also SATs papers in reading and maths: the Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar paper had been withdrawn. 87% of Year 2 pupils had been teacher assessed as being at or above the expected level in reading, which was slightly below the school's target of 90%. In the reading SATs paper 87% of children had also achieved or exceeded the expected level. Writing is subject to teacher assessment only and 77% of pupils were assessed as being at or above the expected level. The main area of difficulty had been application of spelling, which was heavily weighted in the assessment process. Mr Barrow expressed his satisfaction at the result, especially given the breadth of new curriculum material that

the children had covered in a short time. In maths 87% of Year 2 were teacher assessed as being at or above the expected standard, and 77% had achieved or exceeded the expected level in the SATs papers. Mr Barrow noted that the maths papers were very challenging, and St John's had administered the papers early so the children had missed five weeks of teaching time, which would have impacted on their performance.

Moving on to the end of Key Stage 2 results, Mr Barrow stated that the Year 6 SATs results were excellent and had exceeded the expectations of staff. In reading 90% of pupils were teacher assessed as achieving or exceeding expectations, and in the SATs test 85% had achieved the expected standard. Mr Barrow noted that the reading paper had been particularly challenging so the difference was not unexpected. Writing was only teacher assessed, and 90% of the Year 6 children had met or exceeded the expected standard. In maths the teacher assessment was 90% of pupils having achieved the expected standard, and in the SATs test 87% achieved the expected standard. The floor standard was set at 65% so St John's performance was well above the floor in all areas. The combined result was 78% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 53% nationally. St John's results were second in the Kenilworth consortium.

Mr Martin asked why there were no pupils who had attained the top category of achieving 'greater depth' in the SATs papers. Mrs Baker explained that the threshold mark for achieving 'greater depth' had not yet been published, so it was possible that some of the pupils had achieved this. Mr Martin asked whether challenging the more able pupils should be a focus area for next year. Mr Barrow agreed that it should, and explained that it had been identified as a specific strand for inclusion in the Learning Improvement Plan for September. Mrs Derrick asked whether the Year 6 results were shared with the secondary schools: Mrs Baker confirmed that both the raw data and scaled scores were provided to the secondary schools.

Finally Mr Barrow took Governors through the within-year progress data as at the end of May. He explained that expected progress over the whole year was two points. In Key Stage 1 progress in reading, writing and maths were mainly just short of two points progress. The exceptions were class 1W's progress in writing and maths which were lower: Mr Barrow explained that this was believed to be a moderation issue and the senior leadership team would be moderating the assessments at the end of the year to address this. Mrs Baker added that there is no national curriculum level available for children entering Year 1, as there is no direct mapping from the Early Years curriculum, and therefore the first assessment data for children in Year 1 was that carried out in October. It was believed that the children had made good progress in their first half term in Year 1 but this was not reflected in the progress data. Mrs Brown asked whether it would be possible to carry out baseline assessments in the first week of Year

1: Mrs Baker confirmed that this was being considered, but would be difficult under the new curriculum as it would need to be a broad assessment. There would also be a trade-off between focussing on settling the children in to their new class and gathering the baseline data, and staff were not convinced that it would be worth it. Mrs Cordrey asked why there was a difference in the progress data between the two Year 1 classes. Mr Barrow responded that there was no significant difference between the classes, which was why the data difference was believed to be due to moderation.

In Key Stage 2, Year 3 have already exceeded two points progress. Year 4 have made close to or above 2 points progress, and are likely to have achieved two points in reading, writing and maths by the end of the year. Year 5 have exceeded two points in all three areas and Year 6 have made more than four points progress in writing and maths. Year 6's progress in reading is only 0.7 points, but this limited progress is due to Year 6 already being at a high standard in reading at the start of the year.

## 5. FACT FINDING ON ACADEMY CONVERSION

Mr Martin reminded Governors that governor representatives and Mr Barrow had attended three conferences on academy conversion. Write ups and slides from two of these conferences have been uploaded to GovernorHub so that Governors can get a flavour for what was said. Mr Martin asked that any additional information from the conferences be uploaded to GovernorHub as soon as possible.

***Action: Upload information from Academy Conferences to GovernorHub (Mr Martin, Mrs Coopey, Mr Molyneux)***

Governors discussed some of the findings about academy conversion gleaned from the conferences. Some of the key points were:

- The direction of travel is still towards academy status even though the element of compulsion through legislation has been dropped;
- Government funding for local authorities is dwindling, so lack of LA support may force schools to convert to academies;
- Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) give economies of scale;
- The alternative to a MAT is informal collaboration between schools;
- For a MAT to work there needs to be like-mindedness between the member schools;
- Single schools can form a MAT and invite other schools to join later;
- The governance role is significantly different in an academy to a maintained school;
- There is no requirement for schools to have an external sponsor as they can be their own sponsor;
- There is no rush for schools to convert, but it is something that they should be thinking about now.

Governors asked Mr Barrow for his view on academy conversion. Mr Barrow replied that he would be hesitant to join an established MAT, as it is almost impossible to leave should something go wrong. His preference would be for St John's to set up its own MAT, either as a standalone school or together with other schools who share a similar ethos. He emphasised that any decision needs to be shown to benefit the children.

Mr Martin suggested that, in order to move thinking forward, a working group should be established. Governors agreed to set up a working group and membership was agreed as Mr Barrow, Mr Martin, Mrs Coopey, Mr Molyneux and Mrs Brown. The first working group meeting is scheduled for Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 1.15pm.

## **6. UPDATE ON STAFFING FOR SEPTEMBER 2016**

### **7. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **Resources Committee**

The Resources Committee met on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and the minutes of the meeting have been circulated to governors. Mr Whitehouse explained that at the time of the Resources Committee meeting Mr Barrow had not met with the school's Finance Officer, but this meeting had now happened and a finance update was available. Mr Barrow explained that there was a budget underspend in 2015/16 of £23,646, which was £10,340 higher than forecast due to the inclusion of some additional catering income, and extra pupil premium and SEN funding. The figure also includes a grant for updating the school library secured by Mrs Benarous. Governors authorised the budget virement of £10,340 to contingency.

At the end of 2016/17 there is a forecast surplus of £19,801, which increases to £72,364 in 2017/18 and £54,384 in 2018/19. Mr Barrow noted that consideration would have to be given to options for reducing these balances, but overall the picture was positive.

Governors asked what impact the reduction in the number of teaching assistants would have on the school. Mr Barrow explained that the total number of teaching assistants was now similar in September to this academic year, but more teaching assistants would be giving one to one child specific support rather than general classroom support. He added that increasing the number of teaching assistants was one of the options that could be considered when looking at how to reduce the budget surplus. Governors noted that teaching costs were assumed to increase significantly over the five year budget period, and asked that clarification of the reasons underpinning this be sought.

***Action: Clarify reasons for increase in teaching costs over the budget period (Mr Barrow)***

Mr Whitehouse explained that the Resources Committee had also reviewed the charges for lettings from September 2016. No increase to the charges for external lettings was recommended, but the Resources Committee were recommending an increase to the rent charged to the Out of School Club so as to bring it in line with external lettings. The proposal was for an increase to £8,550 per annum for the before and after school club, with the rent for the summer playscheme remaining at £250 for the week. Governors approved this increase with effect from September 2016.

### **Out of School Club**

Mr Martin explained that the 2015 accounts had been independently examined by Flemons Accountants and no issues had been highlighted as a result. The 2015 accounts were approved by Governors and signed by Mr Martin.

It was agreed that a meeting of the Out of School Club Working Group would be held on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 9.45am.

## **8. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

Mr Barrow drew Governors' attention to the safeguarding section of his Head Teachers report. He explained that Michelle Pickering, the St John's School Improvement Officer, had carried out a safeguarding audit and had concluded that the school's central register was in order and there were currently no areas for further development.

Governors noted that in two instances green concern forms had been submitted to social services and social services had decided that no further action was necessary. Governors asked Mr Barrow whether he was satisfied with this outcome: Mr Barrow explained that he had contested both the cases but social services were still not prepared to take action. He noted that the introduction of the Warwickshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) had suffered a number of teething problems.

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

Proposed dates for Governors meetings for the 2016/17 academic year had been circulated to Governors. Governors requested that meetings of the Performance and Standards Committee be held on a Wednesday at 12.45pm as this maximised the number of Governors able to attend. It was agreed that meetings of the Resources Committee would be held at 6.00pm. Mrs Weir will recirculate the agreed meeting schedule. The next meeting of the full Governing Body will be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016, commencing 7pm at the school.