



St John's Church of England VA Primary School

Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting Held in St John's Primary School

on
Tuesday 22nd October 2024
at
4:15pm

Present: Jo Leigh – Foundation Governor

Joe Basquill - LA Governor

Olly Priestley – Ex Officio

Sarah Brown – Staff Governor

Luke Merchant – Foundation Governor

Ruth Knowlman – Foundation Governor
Colin Simpson – Ex Officio

Cathy Paull – Parent Governor

Chair Safeguarding, SEND, PP and
CLA, Equality Duty, SDP -Curriculum
Vice Chair Finance, SDP – Future
Planning

EYFS, SDP – Curriculum

Health & Safety, GDPR,
Cybersecurity, SDP – SIAMS
Collective Worship SDP- Writing
SIAMS, Church School
Distinctiveness, SDP – SIAMS
SDP – Writing

Apologies: Brian King –Parent Governor

SDP – Future Planning

Clerk: Angela Morley (School Business Manager)

Item	Details
1.	WELCOME & OPENING REFLECTION The Chair welcomed everybody. Rev Colin led Governors in a prayer compiled by the pupil chaplains.
2.	APOLOGIES Apologies had been received from Brian King. Governors accepted the apologies.

3.	<p>DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS There were no matters to declare.</p>
4.	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26th September 2024 The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Matters Arising None raised.</p> <p>Outstanding Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk reported that, despite a number of reminders, the outstanding skills audit form had not yet been received. • The Clerk reported that she had compiled and circulated information regarding the Foundation Governor vacancies. <p>Q: Had there been any interest in the Foundation Governor vacancy? Headteacher (HT): Reported that one person had expressed an interest and he planned to meet with the candidate after the Half Term holiday. Action Headteacher</p> <p>Q: Had consideration been given to proactively encouraging parents with English as an Additional Language (EAL) to becoming involved in the Governing Board? HT: Agreed that it would be good to have EAL representation on the Governing Board and added that there will shortly be a Parent Governor vacancy. All parents will be encouraged to consider submitting an application for this role. In addition, a number of Christian families, from a range of diverse backgrounds had recently joined the school. The HT offered to circulate the Foundation Governor Vacancy material to school parents/carers. Action Clerk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk reported that the KCSIE document had not been shared with Governors and stated that the document would be shared by the end of the week. Action Clerk • The Clerk reported that a number of courses had been booked for the Chair and other Governors. The Chair requested that the clerk recirculate the training opportunities and encouraged Governors to secure places on relevant courses. Action Clerk
6.	<p>HEADTEACHER FIRST HALF TERM SHORT WRITTEN REPORT A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Governors thanks the Headteacher for the report.</p> <p>The HT reported that Judith Barrett, School Improvement Partner (SIP), had visited the school in order to scrutinise curriculum planning and delivery. She inspected books, interviewed children and consulted staff. Her feedback had been excellent and extremely complimentary. Judith commented that the school is held in high esteem by the Local Authority.</p> <p>The SIP noted the children's natural enthusiasm and stated that she had been particularly struck by the obvious rapport between staff and children. She noted how this had exemplified the vision and values of the school.</p>

The Chair echoed the comments of the SIP and thanked the Headteacher and staff for their excellent and consistent work. The Chair also reported that the Headteacher had been set robust performance management targets.

HT invited questions upon the half term report.

Q: It is good news to note a total of 215 children had been on roll for Census Day. What is the make up of the pupils? How many attract funding and what provision had been offered?

HT: There had been 33% of children in receipt of pupil premium and 43 EAL children receiving £500 funding for the first 3 years. The school had taken on a few high tariff pupils, but the funding received had not matched the time investment. Provision had been made for those pupils requiring additional support.

Q: Is there any flexibility in class sizes this year?

HT: stated that Y6 is now full, Y3,4 and 5 had room to accommodate a few more pupils, Y3 is now full; Y2 had room for 2 more pupils. Y1 and reception had been gradually securing additional pupils. He further commented that St John's had become very popular and the numbers had been increasing rapidly. The hope he had been to secure 225 pupils on roll by the end of the academic year.

Q: Are the additional pupils joining the school due to people moving into the area or are they from nearby schools?

HT: Stated that it is a combination; some move from other schools and others had been families moving into the area or from overseas.

Q: SIMS - Will there be any downtime? Will the system improve? Why are we doing it?

SBM: Explained that SIMS had been hosted by a third party (Praestantia). SIMS had introduced new technology precluding third-party hosting from taking place. Therefore, the only way in which the school could continue to use SIMS had been to purchase the cloud provision directly from SIMS. The SBM explained that the current provision often timed out and this feature had been frustrating for staff. Purchasing the service direct from SIMS would improve efficiency. The switch will take place over a two-day period during term time. Careful planning would be necessary in order to run the school whilst the SIMS module is out of action.

Q: Would consideration be given to changing to switching to an alternative school information system?

SBM: Explained that two other options had been available: Arbor and Bromcom. The County had run sessions outlining the merits and demerits of each system. On balance, it had been concluded that SIMS best suited St John's at present and that now would not be a good time to retrain the whole school team in the use of an alternative system.

Q: How had the new members of staff settled in?

HT: Remarked that he had been delighted with the four new appointments. He reported that they had settled in well and were a great addition to the school team.

Q: How had the school community been on the anniversary of the significant bereavement this time last year?

HT: The anniversary had been challenging for the whole staff team. Added to which, there had been a lot of sickness absence during the anniversary week, this had compounded the impact and strain upon staff. The HT commented that it had been a long half term and that everyone (including the children) had been tired and are ready for a break.

7.	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP) The plan had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The HT outlined the aims and objectives of the plan. He detailed the emphasis upon teaching and the necessity for a robust assessment method suitable for each age group. The assessment methods were being fine-tuned and would be further reported upon during the course of the academic year.</p> <p>Q: Where is the overarching assessment criteria written down? How are these methods evidenced?</p> <p>HT: Acknowledged that the section in the Teaching and Learning Policy had been quite generic, but each subject lead had included a robust assessment section in their individual subject plans.</p> <p>Governors concluded that a clear overarching assessment criterion and rational should be included in the Teaching and Learning Policy and requested that the HT update the policy accordingly. Action Headteacher</p> <p>HT: Further explained that writing had remained a focus in order to consolidate previous work. He reported that enthusiasm for writing had improved across all age groups; this had, in part, been assisted by the introduction of new writing certificates which engaged and encouraged pupils to work towards achieving excellence in writing.</p> <p>HT: Expressed his gratitude for the work that had been achieved by staff and pupils in terms of preparing for SIAMS. The report had been exceptional. The HT explained that SIAMS continued to be a focus because of the imperative to make the RE curriculum more exciting and engaging for the children. Additional resource cost may be incurred, details of which would be shared with Governors in due course.</p> <p>Spirituality had been and will continue to be a key focus.</p> <p>Q: The Vicar asked if the school would like to receive visitor from church members who could share how they live a Christian life?</p> <p>HT: Replied by stating that this may be of real benefit to the children and suggested that the Vicar raise the matter at the next Ethos meeting. Action Vicar</p> <p>HT: Summarised the Future Planning section of the SDP and emphasised the proposed strategy to explore how best to promote the school in the wider community. He explained that predicted pupil numbers in Wellington had been lower than anticipated by the County and there was a strong likelihood of unallocated places in future years. Therefore, there had been a necessity for St John's to publicly celebrate all that is positive about the school.</p> <p>Governors agreed that it is essential to undertake work upon promoting the school in the public arena and asked the Headteacher to keep them apprised of developments. Action Headteacher</p> <p>HT: Concluded by encouraging Governors to book SDP monitoring visits prior to Christmas and to invest time in holding relevant conversations with both staff and children.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible for Governors to come into school at anytime or does it have to be for a specific purpose?</p> <p>HT: Responded enthusiastically and stated that he welcomed a proactive involvement from Governors.</p>
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	<p>The Chair added that a comprehensive monitoring timetable is currently in the process of preparation and had been shortly due for circulation. Governors will be expected to provide feedback to Full Governing Board meetings.</p> <p>Q: How were the SDP categories selected and had these been based upon feedback from external inspectors?</p> <p>HT: Responded by stating that the areas highlighted had been identified prior to both the Ofsted and SIAMS inspections. Upon inspection, the areas highlighted had been validated.</p> <p>Q: How is the SDP used during the year to keep track of things?</p> <p>HT: stated that the SDP had been written in collaboration with the teaching team. A lead for each section had been appointed and their duty had been to keep track of progress and rag rate it accordingly. The SDP is reviewed regularly, and feedback is provided at staff meetings.</p> <p>Q: I have worked with the RE lead and seen firsthand how incredibly hard she works on her subject. Would you say that this investment of time is consistent throughout the teaching team?</p> <p>HT: Absolutely; St John's has an excellent, proactive and hardworking teaching team. The subject leads had invested thoroughly upon their areas.</p>
8.	<p>SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>HT reported that he and the Chair of Governors had recently scrutinised the contents of the Single Central Record and had been satisfied that the record is up to date.</p> <p>A small proportion of staff DBS certificates had not been renewed in recent years. The HT recommended that all staff DBS certificates be renewed on a rolling programme as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff every five years. • Volunteers every 3 years. <p>Governors agreed to this proposal.</p> <p>The HT expressed thanks to the administrative staff for maintaining the record so thoroughly.</p> <p>The HT reported that both Deputy Headteachers had been due to attend Designated Safeguarding Lead refresher courses in November. The HT refresher training had been booked for next Spring.</p> <p>The Chair reported that she had attended basic and advanced Safeguarding Training.</p> <p>The HT reported that the Safeguarding Policy had been circulated to all staff and Governors.</p> <p>Q Had any changes to the policy been suggested?</p> <p>HT: A few tweaks were made in response to staff input.</p> <p>Q: What safeguarding measures are in place for children who are on a restricted timetable?</p>

	<p>HT: Every effort had been made to keep children in school who may otherwise be in danger. This is monitored by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) who had invested a significant amount of time in keeping in touch with the families.</p> <p>Q: What measures are in place if a child had been suspended and they are found to be out and about in the community?</p> <p>HT: If a matter this nature had been highlighted, the Social Worker would be contacted. The matter would also be reported to the County.</p>
9.	<p>PUPIL PREMIUM The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>HT: Stated that this had been the last in a three-year strategy. The HT outlined the improvements in Pupil Premium school delivery and explained that there had been sound evidence to demonstrate that the Pupil Premium budget had been utilised wisely.</p> <p>Governors highlighted that the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement had not been accurately updated and still contained highlighted and incomplete sections.</p> <p>HT: voiced concern and explained that he was unable to determine how this mistake had occurred. He offered to look at the document draft and resend the correct version to Governors. Action HT</p>
10.	<p>PAY COMMITTEE The meeting of the Pay Committee had been cancelled because a Governor had been unable to attend. Therefore, the meeting had not been quorate. The Clerk suggested Governors appoint a third member to avoid a reoccurrence.</p> <p>Governors agreed and appointed Cathy Paull as an additional member of the Pay Committee.</p> <p>The Clerk was instructed to rearrange the Pay Committee meeting. Action Clerk</p>
11.	<p>POLICY REVIEWS The following policies were reviewed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Policy • First Aid Policy • Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions • Teaching and Learning (subject to the inclusion of the amendment detailed in item 7 above regarding assessment) <p>SBM explained that the majority of HR policies had been updated except for the Education Specific statutory policies e.g. Pay, Appraisal etc. which were awaiting formal parliamentary approval in early November.</p> <p>Q: Had the significant Employment Law changes that had been brought into effect in April 2024 been included in the relevant policies?</p> <p>SBM: Reassured Governors that the updates had been actioned centrally by the County HR team and these had been adopted by the school.</p> <p>Q: Which policy includes details of when a family member is able to be removed or banned from the school site due to Health and Safety considerations?</p>

	<p>HT: Explained that he could not recall directly but offered to look up the details and email Governors?</p>
12.	<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY/PREMISES REPORT A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Governors thanks the School Business Manager for the report.</p> <p>Q: Do we have an updated version of the School Condition Survey and the progress made upon action points? SBM: Assured Governors that an updated version had been actioned and progress noted. This report had been due for review at the next Asset Management Group meeting.</p> <p>Q: Why had Governors not been informed that a member of staff had fallen and broken her wrist whilst updating displays in her classroom? HT explained that the incident had taken place at the end of the summer term and advice had been sought from the County Health and Safety team who had confirmed that the matter had been dealt with appropriately. The accident had been recorded on the County Council accident software.</p> <p>Q: Was the matter Riddor reportable? SBM: The member of staff was only absent from work for two days and the circumstances were such that it was not a reportable accident. This had been verified by the County Health and Safety team.</p> <p>HT The member of staff concerned had admitted that she should have contravened guidance whilst updating her displays.</p> <p>HT: Explained that he had taken the opportunity to reissue guidelines stating how to safely undertake display work and arranged for all staff to complete online training in respect of working at heights. In addition, safety steps had been purchased.</p> <p>Residential Trip The HT reported that, although the children had had a good experience at Wildside, it has not been up to the usual high standards and the quality of the experience was not as positive as in previous years. Therefore, he had researched alternative options and discovered a PGL venue, Barton House. He explained that Barton House had offered grant funding because of the level of deprivation at St John's and could accommodate the children in April 2025.</p> <p>Governors agreed to the booking of a residential visit to Barton House in April 2025.</p> <p>Q: Is there anything that can be done in respect of the parking in Priory Rd? Parents are parking dangerously. Added to which, drivers exceed the speed limit and had not noticed children attempting to cross. HT: Informed Governors that he had included a safety briefing in the school newsletter and would again remind parents after half term.</p> <p>Q: Can we petition the council? HT: The Council had declined to act when previously contacted. The HT offered to contact the PCSO to request regular monitoring at peak times.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible to provide a second Crossing Patrol Service on this road? HT: Stated that the school did not receive funding for a second Crossing Patrol.</p>

13.	<p>GOVERNOR ITEMS</p> <p>Governor Training: The Clerk reported that seventeen courses had been attended and a further four had been booked.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors that Safeguarding training is of paramount importance.</p> <p>A Governor provided Feedback on a recent training course. She stated that Governors had been reminded that there was an onus upon them to raise parental and staff understanding of governance and to take every opportunity to be visible e.g. when attending church services, sports day etc. The Governor suggested wearing Governor lanyards on these occasions.</p> <p>Governors agreed to this idea.</p> <p>Q: Is the recruitment process robust for Governors? SBM: Responded by stating that the process is thoroughly robust and follows County guidelines. All checks had to be completed prior to the appointment of Governors and all Governors had been added to the Single Central Record.</p> <p>Q: Would it be an idea for an existing Governor form part of an interview panel for potential new Governors? SBM: Explained that potential new Governors tend to meet with the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors.</p> <p>Governor Monitoring Feedback: Clerk confirmed that the monitoring schedule would be distributed in due course. Action Clerk</p> <p>The Collective Worship Governor reported that she had attended an assembly. She stated that she was very impressed by the biblical knowledge of the children. She did not have the opportunity to speak to the children individually but hoped to do so when next visiting.</p>
14.	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>The Clerk reported that no correspondence had been received.</p>
15.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting of the Full Governing Body will be held in school on Tuesday 26th November 2024 in school at 4:15pm.</p>

Meeting closed at 18:30pm

Minute Ref	Action Point	Responsibility
5.	Headteacher to meet with potential new Governor	Headteacher
5.	Circulate Foundation and Parent Governor Vacancy details to parents.	Clerk
5.	Circulate KCSIE document to Governors	Clerk
5.	Circulate Governor training courses	Clerk
7.	Update Teaching and Learning Policy to include overarching assessment criteria.	Headteacher
7.	Raise matter with Ethos Committee of church members visiting school to discuss 'living a Christian life' with the children.	Vicar
7.	Undertake marketing work regarding the promotion of the school locally.	Headteacher
9.	Update and resend Pupil Premium Strategy Statement.	Headteacher
10.	Rearrange Pay Committee Meeting	Clerk
13.	Distribute Monitoring Schedule.	Clerk

Signed Jo Leigh

Chair of Governors

Date 26/11/24