

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting,

Held on Monday 9th October 2017 (Meeting 2)

PRESENT:

Parent Governor (2): Mr James Walker

LA Governor (1): Mr Owen Lewis

Co-Opted Governor (1): Mr Jon Clarke

HT and Staff Governor (2): Miss Vanessa Hunt (HT), Mr Tom Potter (DHT)

Foundation Governors (8): Mr Stuart Goss, Mr Alan Kemp (Co Chair 01/11/18), Mrs Louisa Osmond, Mr David White, Revd Jonathan Gordon (Co Chair 01/11/18)

Associate Members: Ms Lynne Gore

LA Governor (1):

In attendance: Tracey Middleton, Clerk to Governors

Meeting opened at:20.06

1 Welcome:

1. The Chair welcomed colleagues

2 To receive apologies for absence and to consider approving any absences:

1. Governors were reminded that notification of absence from a meeting should be forwarded to the clerk, Chair and Head at least 3 days in advance of the meeting
2. Governors were reminded that whether apologies have been received and approved/not approved, or apologies have not been received and absence approved/not a governor not attending a governing body meeting for six months, without the consent of the governing body, automatically loses his/her governorship

3 To receive notification of any conflict of interest from the agenda:

1. Governors were reminded that in accordance with SFVS requirements, if a governor, or anyone else present, has a conflict of interest on an agenda item(s) – pecuniary or other, they must declare it and voluntarily withdraw from the meeting for that item(s) and not take part in that discussion. It is for individual governors to declare a conflict and voluntarily withdraw and not for another governor to instruct withdrawal
 2. None declared
- Confidentiality**
3. Governors were reminded that minutes remain in draft until they are signed off at the next meeting and should therefore not be shared before signing off, nor the content discussed outside of the meeting.

Signed: Date:

Governors have a duty to maintain confidentiality so clarifying this should be considered. Any persons with an interest in what discussions/decisions were had/made at governing body/committee meetings have the right to see the minutes from those meetings when they become public documents (once signed off), excluding 'confidential items' identified as Part II minutes (within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act). The Chair of Governors has added responsibility to maintain confidentiality as there may be occasions when the Headteacher has to bring a matter (e.g. safeguarding concern) to their attention

4 To consider notification of any items for AOB:

1. Governors were reminded that any items for AOB should be forwarded to the clerk, Chair and Head at least 3 days in advance where they will be considered. Only matters accepted by the Chair should be taken at the end of the meeting under – AOB and a reminder that an AOB item should only be used to consider matters that are deemed either important or urgent
2. None

5 To agree minutes of the last meeting: (previously circulated):

1. None

6 To consider matters arising from the last meeting's minutes:

1. None

7 Ofsted:

1. The Ofsted letter/report has been circulated to the GB and will be shared with the community tomorrow (refer to file)
2. Thanks, were extended to the staff and GB for the successful outcomes of the Ofsted inspection which judged the school as good and improvements were clearly demonstrated
3. The GB agreed that moving towards outstanding is the ambition for the school
4. Thanks, were extended to the governors who represented the GB during the inspection
5. Governors celebrated the outcome which is an accurate reflection of the hard work of all the staff and the way the children presented themselves and what they have achieved

6. The 3 key areas identified to focus on are included in the SDP: Middle Leader development; Geography and History to provide opportunities for extended writing; the Handwriting Policy to be consistently modelled across the school

8 Self-Evaluation/Skills Audit:

1. **ACTION: To be reviewed by the GDC to determine training requirements after completion by all governors**

ALL

9 Chair's Business:

1. It was noted that the autumn edition of Hertfordshire Governor is now accessible – log on at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/governors and select the button 'Herts Governor e-newsletter for governors and clerks'
2. Governors were encouraged to book the Hertfordshire Governors' Annual Conference - Saturday, 11th November 2017 - Theme: Governance and School Leadership – Working Together to Navigate Change
3. It was noted that the theme of Anti-Bullying Week 2017 has been set as 'All Different, All Equal' and runs between November 13th and 17th. In the lead-up to the week-long event the Anti-Bullying Alliance will support schools with free activities and lesson and assembly plans to take action against bullying and build safer environments for pupils. There will also be opportunities for pupils to nominate teachers, support staff and youth workers for the 'Power for Good' award, which recognises those who go the extra mile to help young people with issues such as bullying, family life and mental ill-health
4. The school has a rigorous Anti-bullying Policy in place which will be reiterated with parents
5. It was noted that the updated record of training attended by governors is available from governance@hertsforlearning.co.uk. Half termly emails are sent to every Hertfordshire governor with details of courses. The changes can for subscribing school can be found by logging onto our website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/governors and selecting 'governor training' followed by 'Training subscription'. Free in-house sessions (increased to 2 under the new package. Guidance on courses available can be found on the Governance Website; http://booking.hertsforlearning.co.uk/actweb/WDC/sseo/template_001.cfm?pageID=28&template=courseListing.
6. The GB considered addressing Safeguarding as an agenda item on each FGB agenda and agreed that reporting may be contained within the HT report, individual governor reports, and annual safeguarding report to governors
7. Governors were alerted to recent communication from a member of the community which has been reported to the appropriate authorities

10 Policy Review:

1. The following policies which were circulated in advance of the meeting (refer to file) were reviewed
2. The GB adopted the Complaints Procedure
3. The GB adopted the Child Protection Policy
4. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed in May 2018
5. The GB adopted the Handwriting Policy
6. The school has a handwriting scheme in place and the implementation is outlined in the Policy
7. The GB adopted the SENd Policy
8. The GB adopted the Pay and Appraisal Policy

11 Stakeholder Voice and Communication:

1. The GB newsletter was circulated last term and a further newsletter is planned for this term
2. The Chair has met with the school council
3. The parent response to Ofsted was very encouraging

12 To Receive the Head's Report:

1. The Head's report which was circulated in advance of the meeting was reviewed (refer to file)
2. Does the school know why children left St Mary's and moved to other schools at the end of Nursery? Not for all of the children. We have been given a few different reasons such as they have a sibling at another school which does not have Nursery provision (Aldbury), so they came to St. Mary's for Nursery but then moved on to the sibling's school for Reception. The Church school aspect has also been mentioned to Mrs. Bottali as a reason. It seems that some parents do not take this into account when sending their children to St. Mary's for Nursery but then think about it more before moving into the Reception class. Also, some children who attend Pre-school also attend Nursery and lunch club for convenience, but those parents are not intending to send their children to school here.
3. Looking at the pupil numbers, is there anything that can be done to attract an increase in class numbers in the year groups that are presently in the mid-20s? Two Reception children moved out of the area at the end of the summer term so Year 1 now has 28 children. The current Year 2 cohort was a particularly small Nursery cohort when I started at the school in 2015 and, as a result, the numbers moving into Reception were low. So, there are currently only 24 children in Year 2 and this year group in particular has seen a great deal of coming and going. Years 3 and 4

have 31 children. Year 5 has 29 children and Year 6 has 25 children, which is the largest Year 6 cohort we have had so far. This Year 6 cohort is probably the last year group which was affected by the change from being a First School in 2014, because I think children did leave to go to other schools at that point to go to the same school as their older siblings. We do receive regular requests for in year admissions, but quite often it will be a request for places for children in two different year groups and we are only able to accommodate one of the children. We do publicise the spaces in our classes but the Year 2 cohort seems a particularly fluid group. Numbers across the town generally are lower in Nursery this year and our Nursery class, even though it only has 25 children, has the highest number of children in a Nursery class in Berkhamsted. (Swing Gate 45/60, Greenway 23/30, Victoria 39/60, St. Mary's 25/30, Westfield 24/30, Bridgewater 38/60). Schools planning have informed BASH that the 2018 forecast is lower and falling slightly more in 2019. This is a town wide situation and not pertinent to our school now. However, we are not at the stage we were a couple of years ago when the pupil numbers were so low that the class sizes were unsustainable. 24 is the lowest number for a class with a full-time teacher to be sustainable. Any suggestions as to how to attract an increase in class numbers where needed would be appreciated.

4. Where class numbers are over 30 pupils, do we have sufficient staff resourcing to ensure we are meeting legal requirements? There is no legal requirement for the number of children in Key Stage 2 classes so we are able to take over 30 if we choose to. Last year we went over the requirement of 30 in a Key Stage 1 class when we accepted a pair of twins in Year 2. However, under the terms of our admissions criteria they were admitted as having taken one place. The staff resourcing has been increased to ensure the children's needs are being met. An extra adult has now been deployed to give support in Years 1, 2 and 3 every afternoon.
5. With year 6 children having three class teachers through the week, are there any issues/negative impact to the children or their learning? When the school had its first Year 6 cohort they had 6 different teachers throughout the week and the parents and children were very supportive of this, as they and we felt that it was preparing the children well for secondary school, where they would have many different teachers throughout the week teaching different subjects. Now, with our third cohort, this year the children have Mrs. Dobbs as their main teacher every day, with Mrs. Archbold for RE, and Game On for PE lessons, plus the specialist Herts Music Service teacher for their music lesson. All the

classes in the school have different teachers throughout the week, as they all have a lesson with a PE coach, a cover teacher for PPA time and quite often Mrs. Archbold or the Herts Music Service specialist music teacher. This has no negative impact and gives the children the opportunity to benefit from sports coaches and the specialist teachers teaching their subjects.

6. Are there any particular areas of concern that were raised by the OFSTED inspector at the point of the visit (knowing that the report has not yet been published), and is there a way of understanding what prompted our inspection? The report has been sent to all members of the GB. The Chair of Governors will discuss this further.
7. Could the website be reviewed for out of date or not relevant content with this content removed? Definitely. This is a work in progress.
8. Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare of Pupils at the School. Do we need to be at all concerned about the trend of pupil attendance, which seems to have been dropping marginally over the past few years?
9. Attendance has been an issue owing to a couple of children who were in year admissions and with their low attendance affected the attendance figures. They have now left the school. However, the attendance officer says that our figures are not a cause for concern and they were not raised by Ofsted as being an issue.
10. KS1 results for writing seem below where might expect in comparison with reading and maths, writing standards were also a priority from 2014 Ofsted inspection. Do we know why we under-perform in writing at this school and what else can we do to bring up the attainment in writing at the school?
11. When compared with Reading and Maths results, KS1 Writing results are lower, as can be seen from Herts and National results. However, St. Mary's were above the expected standard (77/71/68) and in line with National (16/16) for greater depth. This year the Key Stage 1 writing was externally and rigorously moderated. Lower Writing results compared to Maths and Reading is a trend nationally as expectations under the new curriculum for writing are so high. The Ofsted Inspector did have one of her key lines of enquiry as looking at writing and she found in Key Stage 1 that good progress was evident and that writing was developing well, that the most able pupils are challenged and produce high quality written work. Furthermore, at the end of Key Stage 2 in Year 6, provisional results for 2017 are even better than the previous year, where a third appear to have gained greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, her findings did not focus on progress and attainment in writing because of underperformance, but on having

a regular opportunity to write at length and to practise basic English skills across the curriculum such as in Geography and History. So, writing is the focus of the school development plan and has been put on all teachers' performance appraisal targets.

12. How do we measure the effectiveness of the interventions pupil premium funds are used for? The impact is tracked at pupil progress meetings and through liaison between Teaching Assistants delivering interventions, and class teachers and the SENDCo.

13. Thanks, were extended to the Head and OL for collation of the report

13 To Review and agreed the School Development Plan and Set objectives and monitor the Self Evaluation Plan:

1. The SDP and SEF which were circulated in advance of the meeting was reviewed (refer to file)
2. Confirmation was given that Prevent is addressed within the school
3. Additional information from the Ofsted Inspection will be incorporated

14 Receive link reports

1. The minutes of the committee meetings held since the last meeting were circulated in advance of the meeting (refer to file)
2. Drop Box is in place for governors to access shared documentation by committee

15 Items from the annual programme of work:

1. None

16 Any Other Business:

1. None

17 To agree Date of next meeting:

1. Colleagues were thanked for their contribution to the meeting
2. The next meeting will be held on Monday 05/03/18 – 19.00;
Wednesday 23/05/18 – 19.00

The meeting closed at:20.45