



## The Governing Body

### Minutes of the Full Governing Body held on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 6.00pm

**Governors present** Mr David Daniels – Co-Chair, meeting chair and Foundation Governor  
Mrs Claire Marsland – Headteacher

Mrs Beth Coates – Foundation Governor  
Mrs Alexia Loundras – Vice-Chair and Parent Governor  
Mr Neil McCormick – Foundation Governor  
Mrs Fiona Puleston – Co-Chair and Parent Governor

**Attendees** Mrs Rosemary Conway – Business Manager and Clerk to the Governing Body  
Ms Sarah Priddle - SENCO

**Apologies** Reasons accepted for:  
No reasons given for:

Key:    **Decisions**                      **Challenge**                      **Actions**

Agenda Item	Discussion, decisions and actions	
1	<p><b>Standing items</b></p> <p><b>Opening prayer</b> Mr Daniels opened the meeting with a prayer.</p> <p><b>Declarations of interest</b> There were no new declarations of interest.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received as detailed above.</p> <p><b>Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b> The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Mr Daniels informed Governors that he had contacted Helen White about the possibility of becoming an associate governor.</p>	
2	<p><b>Pupil Premium Update</b></p> <p>The Headteacher provided a verbal update on use of the Pupil Premium grant. She</p>	



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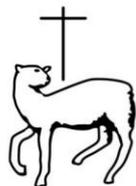
informed Governors that she had set aside time to meet with the Business Manager to go through Pupil Premium but had had to cancel the meeting as a parent concern and serious safeguarding issue arose.

The Headteacher tabled the 2019-20 Pupil Premium report with the following of note;

- The Headteacher was concerned that the report was not fully representative and would not stand up to scrutiny in its current form. She went on to explain that much of the grant is used on staffing but there are complications with this due to the staffing budget working to financial year and the Pupil Premium Grant to academic year. She felt that further work is needed to reflect on the impact of that staffing.
- It is possible to do a 3 year plan. **A Governor asked what the advantage would be of a three year plan.** The Headteacher responded that it would be tricky to develop such a plan.
- The Headteacher reported that she felt at least a day's work was required to get on top of things and the same attention is needed for the Sports Grant. This would be difficult to achieve with the distractions day to day at school. Governors expressed that this should be given priority.
- The report is currently retrospective. **A Governor asked if all schools work in that way.** The Headteacher responded that some do. She informed Governors that schools should publish a report for the previous year and a report setting out plans for the current year.
- The Headteacher advised caution about blanket uses of the grant such as subsidising all school trips for Pupil Premium children. Such a use may be of significant benefit to some, but not all. The school should also be clear on how much the grant is use for extra curricular activities.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that the Pupil Premium cost centre was overspent, but further work was required to ascertain if some adjustments were required. The Headteacher said she felt that the school was getting a good reputation for meeting children's needs. She went on to ask Governors to consider whether sustaining that level of provision was possible, with staffing expenditure of 80% of the budget.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) all impact on Pupil Premium

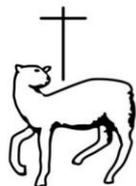
Governors discussed how the school assesses impact of use of the Pupil Premium Grant, with the following of note;

- A Governor asked if Pupil Premium children are tracked in terms of attainment as a separate group. The Headteacher responded that they are but it is not easy to do so on SIMS but that she is still learning. Current tracking involves printing a class list and looking for the appropriate children.
- The Headteacher reported that she finds the current format of the Pupil



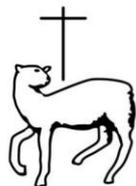
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	<p>Premium report difficult and would prefer to have a review for each section rather than just at the end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's nurture provision is entirely funded by Pupil Premium Grant. A Governor asked if all the children who access the provision are in receipt of Pupil Premium. The Headteacher responded that they are and that around 52% of Pupil Premium children also have either Early Help Assessments or Social Care involvement. There are a number of non-Pupil Premium children in school who have experienced issues such as bereavement, who would benefit from nurture or ELSA support.</li> <li>• The Headteacher informed Governors that she felt the school should consider what is impact and ensure that it is backed up with statistics.</li> </ul> <p>Governors discussed compliance with statutory obligations around use of the Pupil Premium Grant, with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Headteacher informed Governors that the school website is currently not compliant in terms of Pupil Premium information, as it should have the previous year's report and a plan for the current year.</li> <li>• The Headteacher reminded Governors that Ofsted may interrogate Governors on use of Pupil Premium so they need to have a good understanding of it.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Pupil update</b></p> <p>The SENCO presented the SEND report with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SENCO felt that more data could be included but it was difficult to access for some groups. She has looked at different models of presenting that give more data and more information about budget.</li> <li>• Governors received an overview of numbers for the last academic year. They noted that the number of pupils with SEND needs was higher than the national figure from January 2019. A Governor was surprised at the year by year breakdown.</li> <li>• Governors noted there was a significant number of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. A Governor asked how pupils are categorised if they fall in to more than one category. The SENCO responded that she used the primary area.</li> <li>• There were six pupils in receipt of High Needs Top Up Funding. The SENCO informed Governors that it was previously possible to access top up funding without an Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP) but that changed, resulting in a backlog of requests for EHCPs.</li> <li>• The SENCO reported that EHCPs are being considered for two pupils but that they previously had funding in place. A Governor asked what the status was for those two. The SENCO responded that the assessment request is in for one and the other would be shortly. There are some schools where children's bandings have been lowered as a result of assessment.</li> </ul>	



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- The SENCO reported that she has been successful in requests for funding, which would indicate that she made appropriate judgements.
- The SENCO provided an overview of the EHCP process. It is a 20 week statutory process. The first 6 weeks involves a request to assess. If thresholds are met there are 14 weeks of assessment, then a draft EHCP is issued. The Local Authority can turn down the request in the first 6 weeks if they have reason to. SENCO colleagues around the County have reported that those already in receipt of funding usually go through more smoothly than new ones. Some have been turned down about lack of provision so the SENCO must be very careful to submit appropriate evidence. There is no right to appeal for the school. Parents can but a school can only resubmit after 6 months.
- A Governor asked if the 5 children from 2018-19 were still under consideration? The SENCO responded that they were and were from a mixture of year groups. A Governor asked if the requests to assess for those 5 have been submitted. The SENCO responded that they haven't as there needs to be 2 cycles of assessed plan to review first. For example, an ABC log.
- The SENCO informed Governors that outside agency involvement was becoming more difficult to access. E.g. with social communication needs, it could be beneficial for someone from the Local Authority team to come in, but that is not possible until an Early Help Assessment has been done showing provision and impact.
- Governors discussed School Entry Plan meetings. A Governor asked if they took place for those who have been excluded? The SENCO responded that there was one for one child who was later excluded. The Headteacher commented that the school needs to work better with nurseries. A Governor asked when can a request to assess go in? The SENCO responded that there must be 2 cycles of assessed plan to review which would take 2 terms. A Governor asked if there is any acceptance from the Local Authority that children will arrive in reception with unidentified needs? The Headteacher responded not with the new system. It used to be possible to put in an in year funding application but this is not available anymore. If a nursery had applied and got Early Years funding then it would stay in place until the end of reception year. A Governor asked if nurseries ever do this? The Headteacher responded that some do but that children with needs often end up moving around nurseries due to their needs so no one applies.
- A Governor asked why the overall number of children with SEND needs for 2019-20 was higher than previous years? The SENCO responded that some dyslexia was identified and there were some in year admissions who joined the school with needs.
- A Governor asked if there were any more pupils to add to the already noted 7 who may need a EHCP? The SENCO responded that two in year admissions came with funding already in place and a further 3 children would need a



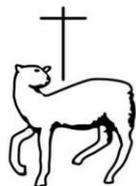
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request to assess. There were a number of pupils who had been recently diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It would take time to work out which needed assessment as their medication was still settling.

- The SENCO reported that medical advice has been received from Taunton and Bath that autism will only be diagnosed in children aged 5 and under due to capacity. This is because it should be apparent by that age. This is a big worry as SENCOs know that some children have not had diagnosis until aged 8 or 9 or even teenage years. A Governor asked when that would be put in place? The SENCO responded that it was already in place and a document had been received from the medical team to confirm. A Governor asked what if a parent went with the child to a paediatrician? The SENCO responded that there is a resistance but if there was a clear need, we should continue to try.
- The Headteacher commented that capacity at County level may be struggling but schools would also reach crisis point.
- **A Governor commented that the report did not contain much information about medical need and asked if there was an update on funding for children with medical needs?** The SENCO responded that she had met the advisory teacher from the County PIMS team. He stated that it was possible to apply for funding for children with medical needs and provided the appropriate paperwork. The SENCO completed the paperwork but it was not clear where to send it. Nobody initially could say where it should be sent. She managed to find a contact and sent it off a month ago but had not heard back yet.

Governors discussed the impact of interventions with the following of note;

- The SENCO reported that these had had significant impact and there were skilled staff in place. A Governor asked over what period of time is the impact? The SENCO responded that it is measured over a term for all interventions apart from nurture, ELSA and Talkboost.
- Phonics booster is given in year 2 until pupils meet the required level for the year 1 statutory phonics check.
- A Governor asked what is the scale for measuring impact of interventions? The SENCO responded that it is given by the support service. A Governor suggested that it is a multiplier.
- A Governor asked what is the intervention for Key Stage 2 English? The SENCO responded that a combination of ILI and small group interventions have been used. The Headteacher informed Governors that interventions are often interrupted and Governors should be aware that that has an impact. It was suggested that the report should show the number of weeks of the intervention and how often it was interrupted. The Headteacher stated that staff need to understand the impact of what they are doing. For ILI, it has a big impact while being delivered but what about longer term?
- **A Governor asked how the school ensures value for money as one to one work**



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	<p><b>is very expensive?</b> They went on to ask if it is just SEND children who access interventions? The SENCO responded that it is not all SEND children, but the majority are. <b>A Governor commented that for the purposes of a SEND report, the non-SEND children could inflate the impact and would be interested to see the variance in that.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Governor asked what was the intervention for Key Stage 1 maths? The SENCO responded that it is a HLTA working with Year 2 teachers and the SENCO to identify gaps and misconceptions. They then work to address them in specific ways. The Sandwell assessment is used.</li><li>• The Headteacher reported that Teaching Assistants (TAs) have been pulled from interventions to support children who cannot manage their behaviour. This had to be done to prevent impact to the rest of the class. This is difficult for the TAs as the behaviour can be abusive, both physical and verbal. It was not appropriate for those children to go into alternative provision as some were very bright and the alternative provision is designed for those who are not able to access the National Curriculum.</li></ul> <p>Governors discussed the key priorities for SEND. <b>A Governor asked if the SENCO was happy with the progress being made.</b> The SENCO responded that it is very challenging as staffing is so stretched. Some areas are very successful but the school cannot deliver all the interventions it would like to. A Governor stated that it was important to reflect things as they are, including showing where there is less or no impact as access to an intervention was not possible. The Headteacher commented that she felt class teachers needed to do better at recognising groups of children in their class that needed help and addressing the need in class, rather than passing them to intervention groups.</p> <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that there would be a teachers Professional Development Meeting in the coming term about meeting the needs of all children. This is in line with the School Development Plan.</p>	
	<p><b>Headteacher's report</b></p> <p>The Headteacher presented an updated version of the Headteacher's report that was discussed at the previous meeting, with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A Governor asked how the safeguarding data compared to other local schools?</b> The Headteacher responded that at one nearby school there are approximately 50 on their register and at another approximately 90. She reported that she had never had 6 at Child Protection level. A Governor asked how many meetings that involved. The Headteacher responded that some of that 6 there are some siblings and she was not required to do all the meetings as some were covered by the Deputy Safeguarding Leads. She reported that there have been 6 significant incidents since September 2019.</li></ul>	



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- The Headteacher highlighted changes since the report was discussed previously.
  - Training added
  - Number on roll was 288
  - A note on SIAMs was added
  - Staffing was updated
  - Continuing Professional Development details were added. The cost of part time staff attendance at inset days still needed to be added.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that she would like to add parent attendance at Parent Partnership sessions and Parents Evenings.
- Governors noted that volunteer numbers were low but that the school needs to have a volunteer policy.
- School improvement priorities updated.
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The Headteacher provided some premises and health and safety updates;

- It was frustrating that DDA work was requested in September but will probably not happen until February half term.
- The front gate had broken, which has been a real concern as staff cannot buzz people in. The gates in the playground also still did not release in the event of a fire alarm. A system was needed.
- There was a health and safety incident where a child got their arm stuck in the banister in the school hall. It required three adults to release their arm safely.
- Attention is required to the area of offsite visits. The Headteacher felt that some staff were getting blasé about checking risk assessments and ratios.
- Hair and earrings. Many children are asking staff to remove earrings and tie up hair for PE.

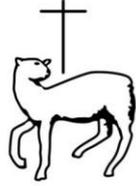
Governors discussed current challenges and priorities;

- The Headteacher reported that there was an issue with Senior Leaders managing rather than leading. **A Governor asked what the Headteacher planned to do to address this?** The Headteacher responded that Senior Leaders have been given additional release time, but she would like to be clearer on her expectations of how that time should be spent. The Headteacher has also ended up with children in her office on many occasions, as their teacher has not been able to manage their behaviour.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that the school needed to respond to the new Ofsted framework and that she intended to work on the curriculum with staff during the inset day in January 2020. St John's would enter the inspection window in September 2020 and so curriculum needed to be sorted by that point. A Governor asked if Governors could attend the inset. The Headteacher responded that they would be welcome to but that the day will be purely looking at curriculum.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A Governor proposed that the Governing Body write to all parents in January 2020 to explain the Governor Fund and how it works. Governor agreed that this would be beneficial.</li></ul>	
5	<p><b>Safeguarding audit</b></p> <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that the safeguarding audit went live two weeks before the meeting and was due to close in March 2020. Governors would be required to consider the audit in the meeting in March.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Governor informed Governors that she met with the Headteacher and went through the safeguarding register. She reported that she felt confident that the Headteacher was on top of things and that the register and filing system was working well. The safeguarding workload was significant and there were a couple of cases on a waiting list with the Frome Learning Partnership.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked if distributing cases amongst the Safeguarding Leads is working better?</b> The Headteacher responded, yes and no. She had noted that other Safeguarding Leads were not proactively checking for new Cause for Concern forms for their cases, but were dealing with urgent issues as and when needed, regardless of their usual cases. They had also been asked to focus on Teaching Assistant performance management meetings during the last few weeks, which resulted in less time to work on safeguarding.</p> <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that she has a simple but effective system that all safeguarding stationery is yellow. No other forms can be that colour so that all know yellow means safeguarding.</p>	
	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>Governors agreed to approve the following policies, subject to the amendments noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Anti-bullying – no amendments noted</li><li>Complaints<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complaints about the Headteacher to be addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body.</li><li>All other complaints to be sent to the Clerk to the Governors at a dedicated email account <a href="mailto:governorclerkstjohns@educ.somerset.gov.uk">governorclerkstjohns@educ.somerset.gov.uk</a></li><li>A copy of the Complaint form to be available separately to the policy and as a Word document</li><li>Model vexatious section to be included</li></ol></li></ul>	



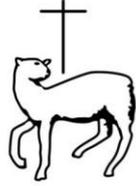
ST JOHN'S CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND (VA)  
FIRST SCHOOL

"LEARNING TOGETHER – AIMING HIGH"

## **The Governing Body**

**Meeting finished at:** 7.20pm

**Date of next meeting:** 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 6pm



ST JOHN'S CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND (VA)  
FIRST SCHOOL

"LEARNING TOGETHER – AIMING HIGH"

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### Summary of actions agreed

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