

The Governing Body

Minutes of the Full Governing Body held on the 24th February 2020 at 6.00pm

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

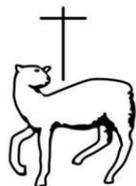
Mrs Alexia Loundras – Vice-Chair and Parent Governor
Mr Brent Milverton – Foundation Governor
Mrs Fiona Puleston – Co-Chair and Parent Governor

Attendees Mrs Rosemary Conway – Business Manager and Clerk to the Governing Body

Apologies Reasons accepted for:
No reasons given for:

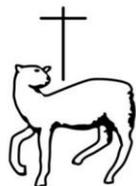
Key: **Decisions** **Challenge** **Actions**

Agenda Item	Discussion, decisions and actions	
1	<p>Standing items</p> <p><i>Opening prayer</i> Mr Daniels opened the meeting with a prayer.</p> <p><i>Declarations of interest</i> There were no new declarations of interest.</p> <p><i>Apologies</i> Apologies were received as detailed above.</p> <p><i>Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2020</i> The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly signed by the Chair.</p> <p><i>Governor updates</i> The meeting Chair informed Governors that Mrs Beth Coates resigned as Foundation Governor over the half term break.</p> <p>The Headteacher suggested that a notice be included in the next school newsletter to thank both Mrs Coates and Mr Neil McCormick for their contributions to the Governing Body.</p>	



The Governing Body

	<p>Governor Membership</p> <p>Governors discussed current membership of the Governing Body. A Governor commented that he recently spoke with the vicar of St John's Church and asked him about recruitment to the current foundation vacancies. The vicar responded that nobody had told him how many vacancies there were and asked for a list. Another Governor refuted that the vicar was not aware of the vacancies, as he had raised the issue of Governor vacancies at every meeting of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) that he has attended.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the Clerk should send an up to date list of vacancies to the vicar of St John's Church in time for the next meeting of the PCC.</p> <p>Action: Report Governing Body vacancies to the St John's PCC.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that she had communicated with Somerset Governance Services before half term and that she had been disappointed in the reply received. The reply asked if she had spoken to Governors about her concerns and recommended a review of Governance. It further stated that the Diocese was responsible for assistance with vacancies as the majority were foundation. A review would cost approximately £2,000.</p> <p>Governors discussed a review of Governance. Governors felt that getting membership increased was the first priority and that Governors should contact the Diocese and Governance Services. The Headteacher informed Governors that School Organisation and Governance Adviser, Claire Hudson had previously offered to carry out a review of Governance. Governors agreed that the Headteacher should follow this up.</p> <p>Governor expressed frustration that the school paid for support from Governance Services but it did not feel like much help was offered.</p> <p>A Governor suggested that all Governors threaten to resign en masse. Governors did not feel this would be suitable course of action.</p> <p>Action: Raise concerns to Governance Services about Governing Body membership</p> <p>Action: Raise concerns to the Diocese about Governing Body membership</p> <p>Action: Claire to contact Claire Hudson re review of Governance.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Mrs Puleston</p> <p>Mr Daniels</p> <p>Headteacher</p>
--	---	---



The Governing Body

	<p>Health & Safety Governor</p> <p>Governors noted that there was currently no Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety, as Neil McCormick had recently come to the end of his term of office.</p> <p>Mr Milverton offered to take on the role. Governors voted in favour.</p> <p>Mr Milverton was duly appointed as Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety.</p>	
2	<p>Inspection Data Summary Report</p> <p>Governors discussed the Inspection Data Summary Report, with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Headteacher informed Governor that this is the data that Ofsted would view, prior to an inspection. Governors therefore need to be familiar with the report and work out what questions may be asked.• A Governor suggested that Greater Depth writing at key stage 1 would be of concern.• A Governor asked if the 'Absence (whole school)' category was the same without medical needs included. The Headteacher responded that Ofsted had allowed medical needs to be removed at the last inspection, as there was a high number of children with SEND needs. A Governor asked what the figure was without medical needs and it would be enough of a difference to put the absence level at an acceptable level. The Headteacher responded that she didn't know off the top of her head and that no absence was acceptable, but the school should aim for the level to be 4% or lower. She felt that it probably would drop below 4% if SEND was removed. Governors asked the Headteacher to provide the absence level without SEND for the next meeting.• A Governor asked if the Headteacher was surprised by the EAL absence rate. The Headteacher responded that the data was for the last academic year and that some children had since left. One child goes home between Christmas and February, which affected their attendance.• A Governor asked if the child who had been excluded was still in the school. The Headteacher responded that they were not and had started at a specialist provision.• The Headteacher explained the Ofsted process to Governors. She summarised that there would be two two hour phone calls between her and an inspector with questions based on the data in this report and on the website. The answers to those questions would shape the focus of the inspection.• Governors discussed what data they would like to see to better understand	



The Governing Body

the context to the report. Governors asked the Headteacher to provide attendance data without medical needs, SEND medical needs and English as an Additional Language.

- A Governor asked the Headteacher to explain the overall SEND absence rate detailed on p2. The Headteacher responded that one of the child in that figure left halfway through the previous year.
- The Headteacher directed Governors to consider the workforce guidance on p3. She asked them to think about what questions an inspector may ask. A Governor suggested that they may be asked about staff wellbeing.

A Governor asked the Headteacher to explain the staff absence data. The Headteacher responded that there had been two longer term absences that made the data look more worrying. The data for staff with one period of sickness was still a worry. A Governor asked what was being done to address things. The Headteacher responded that she had had a managing absence meeting with the school's HR adviser and attended the Somerset training on managing absence. At the meeting, she had reviewed a RAG rated absence list and talked through how to approach managing the absence of staff RAG rated at red. This would be done through an Absence Review Meeting. A Governor asked if wellbeing was discussed at such a meeting. The Headteacher responded that it would be.

A Governor asked if the school used the Bradford Factor. The Headteacher responded yes. A Governor asked if the school took in to account individual circumstances. The Headteacher responded yes. A Governor asked if the Headteacher was happy with how it worked. The Headteacher responded yes, she had the guidance and an Absence Review Meeting set up.

The Headteacher informed Governors that staff had been informed that the policy would be followed tightly. She went on to state that the school had a duty of care to staff, but that they had a contract with the school. The meetings would be about support but would still enforce that contract.

A Governor asked if absences were emotional or physical? The Headteacher responded that there had been no instances of work related stress but frequent bugs can be an indicator of stress. There were many staff with pressures out of school. A Governor commented that they were confident that the Headteacher was managing things appropriately.

A Governor mentioned that everyone has outside stressors but wondered why there was such a high level at St John's? The Headteacher responded that that was why the Absence Review Meetings were important. The meetings would give a chance to offer support and to be clear. A Governor commented that people have to take responsibility for themselves and that



The Governing Body

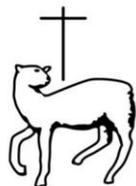
it was important to get appropriate support in place.

The Headteacher stated that this policy would be a change for staff. A Governor asked if the Headteacher had shared the absence data. The Headteacher responded that she had but the usual response was 'you can't help being ill'.

The Headteacher informed Governors that two staff were due to attend mental health first aid training the next week.

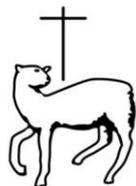
The Headteacher was trying to get staff to think about positives – the staff room shout out board was going to come down but be replaced with a board for 'something that makes you smile'.

- **A Governor asked why there was a downward trend in Key Stage 1 writing.** The Headteacher responded that it was explained by looking at progress and the low 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) data at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A Governor asked how the data looked between girls and boys. The Headteacher responded that on the whole, boys outperformed girls.
- **A Governor asked if the Headteacher was happy with the moderation.** The Headteacher responded that the high figure was moderated last year and that it was a strong cohort. If an inspector was scrutinising the data, the Headteacher would use internal data to back up some of the figures.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that the current year 3 cohort had a high level of SEND and a low GLD. The SEND data did not show as higher but it did not include the high tariff SEND children as they were on high needs funding, which would shortly translate over to an Educational Healthcare Plan. If an inspector was looking at this data, she would provide internal data along with the School Evaluation Form, to give more information and context.
- The Headteacher stated that Governors needed to be able to answer questions on the data with an inspector and that she felt this would be difficult at the moment. **A Governor asked if the Headteacher felt held to account by the Governing Body.** The Headteacher responded that she did not. A Governor asked what they could do about that. The Headteacher responded that she felt the Governing Body did not have capacity to do any more with the current level of vacancies. If there were more Governors, the Board could operate more effectively. She felt that the Governing Body did not talk about teaching and learning enough.
- The Headteacher reminded Governors that Ofsted would be due in September 2021 and that in the lead up to the last inspection, Governors prepared a folder of documents specifically for the inspection. Any Governor



The Governing Body

	<p>could pick it up and remind themselves of key data and contextual information. Governors agreed it would be a good idea to start such a folder again.</p> <p>Action: Headteacher to provide Governor Ofsted folder.</p>	Headteacher
3	<p>School Development Plan (SDP)</p> <p>Governors discussed the SDP with the following of note;</p> <p>Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Headteacher stated that she felt better about the provision but thought staff would run with the coaching pairs. A Governor asked about the Coaching pairs. The Headteacher responded that she felt like people needed to be spoon fed and she had hoped that people would take the initiative a bit more. A Governor asked why there was a lack of initiative. The Headteacher responded that her predecessor didn't really say no to things and that many staff have been at the school such a long time that they found any change a challenge. Staff morale was still low but for a mixture of reasons, including personal reasons. The Headteacher stated that she felt few teachers were able to reflect that they could be part of the problem with a difficult child in the classroom. <p>A Governor asked if there had been a gradual change in the Headteacher's time in post. The Headteacher responded that she felt she often went two steps forward and then three back due to staffing difficulties. There had been more rapid change in the last couple of years but a culture cannot change that quickly.</p> <p>A Governor asked if anything could be done to increase morale or address the lack of initiative. The Headteacher responded that it felt like the question had been going on a long time. When difficult weeks happen, it has a big effect on staff morale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Headteacher stated that the safeguarding workload continued to be significant. A Pupil Progress meeting was missed due to safeguarding, so comments were given. Teachers had raised a concern when SEND children missed their intervention due to a Teaching Assistant being away. The Headteacher stated that teachers needed to take responsibility for the children in their class as they were the most qualified person.The Headteacher stated that she had concerns around how progress was being tracked in the Acorns alternative provision. She stated that the school must be secure around how children are selected to go in to the provision. Whilst she knew why children were selected, she was not sure if others did.	



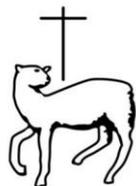
The Governing Body

She was concerned that there was no concrete data or system to show who would access the provision and what the provision would be. There needed to be a system to show progress at the end.

- The Headteacher reminded Governors that there was SEND training available and that the SEND Governor should be in school 3 times a year.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that issues around leadership and management had been the focus of the recent School Evaluation Partner (SEP) visit. The visit had resulted in a number of actions that would be followed up.
- The Headteacher informed Governors that of the performance management reviews outstanding, one had returned with some negative comments, but the review had not been changed as the Headteacher felt they were an honest reflection of the conversation. Another was unreturned, but the Headteacher was due to meet with them the following day.
- **A Governor asked what were the next steps with not all teaching being good or better.** The Headteacher responded that a high percentage was OK. Job shares can be difficult as the class would not have inadequate teaching unless taught by a fulltime in adequate teacher.
- **A Governor asked if the Headteacher felt enough points were RAG rated at amber or green by the end of the Spring term and whether the school was moving in the right direction.** The Headteacher responded that some of that would depend on the conversation due to take place the following day. A Governor stated that the situation felt similar to when the Headteacher started and had had to get staff to understand where the school was at that point. The Headteacher stated that she felt more confident as she has tackled the staff she needed to.
- Governors discussed the Teaching Assistant Professional Development Meetings (PDMs). A Governor asked if anyone else led these meetings. The Headteacher responded that this does happen sometimes but the meetings can easily turn in to an opportunity for staff to vent feelings. She said it was noticed if these meetings didn't take place.
- The Headteacher stated that she felt the progress on provision could be turned around within the following five weeks.

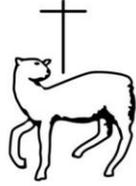
School Ethos and Vision

- The Headteacher stated that this section of the SDP was a real worry to her. The Governor who had been given responsibility for monitoring this section had asked to meet but it hadn't happened. As that Governor had since resigned, no further monitoring had taken place. Governors discussed responsibility for monitoring this area and agreed that Mr Milverton would take on this responsibility.
- The Headteacher stated that the lack of a Deputy Head was noticeable as she was trying to drive both sections of the SDP where usually one could be



The Governing Body

	<p>given to the Deputy Head to drive. She stated she had a lack of capacity to work on this part of the SDP but that no Governors had asked about progress. A Governor stated that lack of capacity to work on was a serious concern and asked if there was an RE subject lead in place who could take on this responsibility. The Headteacher stated that there was but that they were new to the role and she wouldn't leave them to a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection on their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Headteacher reminded Governors that the school's SIAMS inspection was due in January 2021.• Governors discussed SIAMS awareness training and agreed that someone should look into sources of training such as The Key, National Governance Association and Diocesan training. The Headteacher reminded Governors that they had no money in the Governor Fund to pay for training but that it could be funded from the school training cost centre for now.• Governors discussed a Deputy Head role. A Governor asked if the role should be advertised internally. The Headteacher responded that it was a really hard decision. No current members of the Senior Leadership Team had experience of another school. Governors agreed that outside experience would be beneficial. <p>Action: look at SIAMs training</p> <p>Mr Milverton to be Governor with responsibility for SIAMS</p>	<p>Mrs Puleston</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Parent Survey</p> <p>Mrs Loundras apologised that she had not yet prepared any questions for a parent survey. It was agreed that these would be drafted and sent to Governors by email. The Headteacher suggested that Governors use the Ofsted parent view questions as a starting point.</p> <p>Governors agreed to carry out the survey after Easter.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Policies</p> <p>Admissions Arrangements 2021-22</p> <p>Governors noted that there had been no responses to the recent consultation undertaken by the Local Authority on behalf of the Governing Body.</p> <p>Governors approved the Admissions Arrangements for 2021-22.</p> <p>Admissions ranked list for September 2020 entry</p> <p>Governors delegated authority to approve the ranked admissions list for 2020-21 to Mrs Loundras.</p>	



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

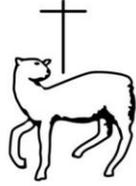
"LEARNING TOGETHER – AIMING HIGH"

The Governing Body

6	Agree the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2020 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly signed by the Chair then sealed in an envelope.	
----------	--	--

Meeting finished at: 7.30pm

Date of next meeting: 17th March 2020 at 6.00pm



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

"LEARNING TOGETHER – AIMING HIGH"

The Governing Body

Summary of actions agreed

Action: Report Governing Body vacancies to the St John's PCC.	Clerk
Action: Raise concerns to Governance Services about Governing Body membership	Mrs Puleston
Action: Raise concerns to the Diocese about Governing Body membership	Mr Daniels
Action: Claire to contact Claire Hudson re review of Governance.	Headteacher
Action: Headteacher to provide Governor Ofsted folder.	Headteacher
Action: look at SIAMs training	Mrs Puleston