

The Governing Body of

St John's C of E VA First School



Together we have the roots to grow and the wings to fly.

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on the 17th December 2020 at 3.45pm

Governors present

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

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

Attendees

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

Apologies

Reasons accepted for:
No reasons given for:

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

Agenda Item	Discussion, decisions and actions	
	The meeting was conducted remotely due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic.	
1	<p>Standing items</p> <p>Opening prayer Mr Daniels opened the meeting with a prayer.</p> <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that she had been made aware of the death of a teacher at Christchurch First School. She had sent condolences on behalf of St John's school. Governors expressed their condolences.</p> <p>Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interests.</p> <p>Apologies Apologies were received as detailed above.</p> <p>Governor Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Clerk informed Governors that an application was in process for a new	

	<p>Foundation Governor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk informed Governors that she had received an approach from ‘Governors for Schools’ about flexi governance, where a Governor could be appointed from outside the local area and attend meetings remotely. Governors were happy to explore this. • The Clerk informed Governors that she had received an offer from a local contact to carry out a review of governance. The person had extensive governance experience. Governors were happy to explore this. • The Clerk informed Governors that she had started a log of actions and decisions and suggested that ‘Matters Arising’ be added back in to each meeting’s standing items agenda point, as currently actions were not being followed up. She suggested that the Chair review the actions log when setting the agenda and only add items to matters arising which needed discussion. Governors were happy with this. <p>Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2020 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly approved.</p>	
2	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Report Governors discussed the previously circulated SEND report, with the following of note;</p> <p>Current profile of children with SEND – table 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SENDO provided some corrections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in the first table, the year 3 columns said that an Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP) was to be explored. It should be 1 and 1 currently being assessed. ○ In the interventions table, there was a digit missing in behaviour support plans. It should say 6. • There were 47 children on the SEND register. The Headteacher had raised concerns around the figures obtained from SIMs with a latest figure of 51. The Headteacher and SENDCO had been running different reports and advice was required from the SIMs team to get accurate figures. A Governor asked the SENDCO how many were on her SEND list. The SENDCO responded that it was 47 so she felt that was the right figure but was concerned that the other report was showing 51. • The SENDCO informed Governors that the reviews in the first table related to children with the highest level of need, i.e. those on an EHCP or that the SENDCO thought would apply for one. The 4 reviews in reception were reviews of school entry plans. These are held if the area SENDCO is involved with the child at nursery. • A review had taken place for a year2 child with a EHCP. The review was overdue following lockdown. • Reviews for a number of year 4 children needed to be with County by 13th November as those children were due to move to new schools in September 2021. Some parents were exploring alternative provision for their child for year 5 onwards. School entry plan meetings would take place with their new schools. • Reviews were still due for various others. These would be held in the spring 	

term.

A Governor asked if the reviews only pertained to high needs pupils. The SENDCO responded that those done were on the professional portal with Somerset County Council. The reviews were not undertaken for all on the SEN register as it would be unmanageable. Lower need pupils would have a review as part of the parents evening process. They would be offered access to the SENDCO through the parents evening mechanism. The Governor commented that they felt it would be useful to clarify in the report that the reviews are the ones undertaken at a formal level as it would make the figures clearer.

A Governor asked if there had been no reviews done in the year 3 cohort. The SENDCO responded that one had been completed since the report had been written.

Current profile of children with SEND – table 2

- The SENDCO stated that the table compared St John's to England figures. They were published in July 2020 and related to the previous year. If this year's EHCP applications were successful St John's would be 0.9% above the national average. St John's would be 1.6% higher than the national average for those on the SEN register.
- The SENDCO stated that she had undertaken a gender comparison but it was important to remember that the national figure was lots of children and St John's was 47 children. So any variance looked high.

A Governor asked about the 7 pupils stated as being assessed and where they were in that process. The SENDCO responded that one already had an EHCP and then six were being assessed. Of the six, Somerset had acknowledged five and one would be submitted today. Two had had virtual meetings with the Educational Psychologist.

The SENDCO explained that once a request goes in to Somerset they must respond within 6 weeks. In the year to July 2020, only 32% of requests were met within the statutory timeframe. Experience this term was that this had improved.

A Governor stated that the Headteacher's report detailed that some children were in receipt of funding from the Frome Learning Partnership and asked if they were included in the table. The SENDCO responded that two were in the first column and one was in the second column and the fourth was a medical situation.

The SENDCO stated that agreement to assess depended on the quality of submission, which was a significant piece of work. The SENDCO always made sure reviews were detailed with clear evidence. When submitted, the request was straight forward because it referred back to the review. The SENDCO had not yet had a request declined or an assessment turned down.

Children on SEN register who also qualify for Pupil Premium funding, or are otherwise vulnerable table 1

- The SENDCO explained that the table showed numbers on the SEN register that were also on the Pupil Premium register or were otherwise vulnerable.

It demonstrated that there were children who had SEN but also an additional level of perceived disadvantage. The final column showed those who had support from Parent and Family Support Advisers (PFSAs) or Children Social Care involvement with the family. Other types of vulnerability included trauma within the family e.g. bereavement.

A Governor asked to clarify understanding of the figures that there were 16 Pupil Premium children who were also on the SEN register. The SENDO responded that that was correct, subject to clarifying the numbers on SIMs mentioned previously. **The Governor asked if that number was similar to the national average and also usual for St John's.** The SENDCO responded that she didn't have that information. The Governor stated that they thought the national figure was 30% and would send the SENDCO details.

Primary Areas of Need table

- The SENDCO explained that the table detailed children's primary area of need according to the SEND Code of Practice. She went on to explain that more than one need could be entered on the child's record but one had to be allocated as their primary area of need to ensure children were not double counted in data.
- Cognition and learning needs were mostly higher up the school and included children with autism. These needs often become more apparent as a child gets older.
- Communication and interaction were mostly lower down the school and is more common in younger children. Often an intervention can be put in place and it was unusual for the need to persist. **A Governor asked if this was then case then why there was a high number in year 4.** The SENDCO responded there were a large number in that cohort with autism where social interaction and communication would also be affected.

A Governor asked if the children with needs were spread evening across year groups. The SENDCO responded that it was varied. Between the two classes in each year group the split was; Reception, 4 and 3; Year 1, 4 and 6; year 2, 2 and 6; year 3, 5 and 3; year 4, 5 and 9.

A Governor asked if the SENDCO felt there was a problematic imbalance anywhere. The SENDCO responded that there were some difficulties in year 1 and challenge in meeting needs. One of the Year 2 classes had a higher level but also a very experienced teacher and TA staffing was varied across the classes to support where required. The Headteacher added that usual policy was to review class balances each year and shuffle classes where there was an imbalance. That had not taken place for the 2020-21 academic year because it was not appropriate due to the pandemic. Children had needed to return to their known cohort.

Progress and attainment and Interventions

The SENDCO explained that progress and attainment was not yet available but would be during the spring term. **A Governor asked when any interventions would be reassessed.** The SENDCO responded that most would run into the new year due to the focus on wellbeing. She went on to explain that interventions were very

challenging during the pandemic as bubbles could not mix. There were some key stage 2 interventions happening in class and key stage 1 phonics happening in an intervention space but one class at a time.

A Governor asked if all interventions on the list were running. The SENDCO responded that maths booster and ILI were not running due to staffing arrangements. The maths booster may run in the spring term. There was no capacity to run a maths and English intervention at the same time.

The SENDCO gave further detail about some of the interventions running;

- Talkboost running in reception. It started after half term and would finish by February and have exit data
- Motor skills would be assessed after 8 weeks, during the first half of the spring term. It was likely that some would continue.
- Phonics were ongoing. – reception was still doing whole class at the moment. The Headteacher commented that phonics data had been collected in years 1 and 2. A baseline had been done in September. Teachers had done very well and the outcome would no doubt be partly down to the intervention. Data was with teachers but needed collating and analysing.
- Some data had been collected from year 4 interventions running for two months. The intervention had resulted in an increased in spelling and reading ages of 3.4 months spelling and reading age 3.5 months.

A Governor asked that if there was no maths intervention running, was there anything else. The SENDCO responded that the interventions were above and beyond in class provision so in class support was still taking place. TAs were mostly in classrooms so were able to support in class.

Action Plan

- Ensure website compliance – the SENDCO stated that this was of concern as the policy had been due in October 2020. She intended to review it and present to Governors for their January meeting. **A Governor asked if the information report also needed updating.** The SENDCO responded that it did and she was hoping to carry out a consultation process on it but hadn't come up with a solution yet.
- Review Relationships for Learning Policy needed looking at. The Headteacher explained that she and the Deputy Headteacher would look at it.
- Strategic SEND inclusion discussion meeting – the SENDCO explained that she would meet the school's advisory teacher, Mark Long on 5th January 2021, as part of the new system of County supporting schools. She intended to talk around a Development Plan and clarify priorities for the rest of the year and beyond. **A Governor asked if that would tie in to the School Development Plan.** The SENDCO responded that it would. **A Governor asked if the SENDCO would be able to put together her School Development Plan section more fully as a result.** The SENDCO responded that she would.

The SENDCO informed governors that she had reviewed the Somerset written

	<p>statement of action and a few things were relevant, sections 5-7. Various actions were happening, for example, referrals for autism wouldn't have to go via a GP but straight to paediatrician.</p> <p>There would be more structured group pyramids and better opportunities for SENDCOs to raise things and to get actions etc. A Governor commented that there may be more cases people want to bring than time to consider. The SENDCO responded that she was still awaiting detail about criteria and ability to submit in advance.</p> <p>Governors expressed their thanks to the SENDCO.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Governor Responsibilities</p> <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that there may be a member of staff willing to take on the staff governor role in January. As there was also the foundation governor application currently in progress, governors decided to wait until January to review responsibilities.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>Governors considered the previously circulated report. The Headteacher highlighted the following;</p> <p>2. School Context – Characteristics of Learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a similar numbers problem with Free School Meal and Pupil Premium data as with the SEND data. The Headteacher knew that there were more on Pupil Premium than on Free School Meals but this was not reflected in the data. She was not sure if the issue was to do with inputting of data or use of reports in SIMs. • As highlighted in the SEND report, the Headteacher was concerned that the SEND number in SIMs did not tally with data in the school document drive. She intended to undertake some SIMs training. • There had been no racial incidents. • There had been 4 concerns raised by parents, including 1 raised by a number of people. The situation concerned had settled. None of the concerns were classed as a complaint. • There were 9 recorded physical restraints during the autumn term. These had been required for 3 children on 1, 3 and 5 occasions. A Governor asked if those children had positive behaviour support plans in place. The Headteacher said she hoped so but was worried that there had been no reference to these plans on the SEND report. The Headteacher was concerned that Team Teach accreditation was out of date for many staff and there may be no qualified staff by February 2021. A Governor asked if the Headteacher was confident things were still being done properly. The Headteacher responded that she was. 	

3. Safeguarding

- The safeguarding figures were lower than the previous year but it was early in the year. **A Governor asked if the additional day of safeguarding work being undertaken by the SENDCO was having an impact.** The Headteacher responded that it might have been interesting for governors to have asked the SENDCO how she was using her 3 days. The Headteacher thought that she was allocating all her time to SEND work at the current time. It was suggested a governor could contact the SENDCO by email to find out. A Governor asked if the Headteacher had enough support on safeguarding and if she was managing. The Headteacher responded that she was as there was nothing else she could do.
- A Governor asked how the domestic violence data compared to the previous year. The Headteacher responded that there was a higher level of involvement from Children Social Care and intervention in some additional families. She felt that the pandemic had had an impact on the number of incidents.
- The Headteacher informed governors that the safeguarding audit was open. She hadn't started it yet but usually completed it over the Christmas holiday period.
- The Headteacher informed governors that all staff had received basic safeguarding training in September 2020 apart from one person on sickness absence and there was one additional Deputy Safeguarding lead. An existing Deputy Safeguarding lead had undertaken their update training. Basic training would be delivered to the person who missed it and some new members of staff. The new Deputy Head would not be a Deputy Safeguarding lead as he had not received Somerset specific training. As there were 5 other leads, getting the Somerset training was not a priority for his role.
- The school had purchased an electronic safeguarding recording system, My Concern. The Headteacher hoped it would save a lot of time. A demonstration would be given to governors once training was complete. A Governor asked if this system would replace paper files. The Headteacher responded that it would but there would be a transition where some children had both.

4. Admissions

- More children admitted than leaving the school.

5. Achievements and Standards

- The Early Years Foundation Stage data had been collected and looked positive, particularly as a lot had missed a lot of nursery and had no transition. The Headteacher had invested a significant amount of staffing resource in that year group.
- The year 2 phonics check had been undertaken and the data was positive. The difference between the two classes was explained through ability rather than quality of teaching.

6. and 7. Ofsted and SIAMs

- Inspections remained suspended.

- The School Evaluation Form (SEF) required review and updating but the Headteacher would undertake this with the new Deputy Head to have some fresh eyes.
- SIAMs inspections were also suspended.
- If both Ofsted and SIAMS inspections returned after Easter 2021, things would be a year behind schedule.

8. Class Organisation

- There remained 10 classes.
- No alternative provision was currently possible but this would be reviewed in January 2021. Some children would benefit from it but it was not possible to mix year groups.

9. Staffing

- Staffing had not changed much since July 2020.
- Staff attendance had been pretty good. There was a lower level of frequent absence but any absence impacted the timetable and ability to provide breaks due to the bubble structure.
- There were 3 long term absences. 1 x HLTA, 1 x teacher, 1 x TA. Compassionate leave had been granted to 1 x TA.
- 2 senior leaders had had a period of self-isolation following contact with a confirmed case of COVID.
- 1 teacher was currently on maternity leave.
- 1 Business Manager continued to work from home.

10. Review of Performance Management Outcomes

- All performance management targets related to the School Development Plan.

11. Evaluation of School's continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- Some CPD had taken place.
- The January INSET day would have an input in the hall and then go off to do tasks.

12. Parental Engagement

- Families seemed to be engaged and interacting with videos etc.

13. Premises

- COVID had had a massive impact.
- The condition survey would be considered in January 2021.
- There had been 2 successful insurance claims for premises issues.
- There had been some concerns around working temperatures due to the need to keep windows and doors open under the COVID risk assessment. It was very cold in classrooms. A Governor asked if there was much that could be done. The Headteacher responded that ventilation was managed by opening windows wide when rooms were empty and then less when occupied. It was difficult to manage with the school's systems. Difficult

decisions might be required if it was very cold in January.

14. Health and Safety

- COVID continued to be the biggest health and safety issue.
- A full evacuation practice had been undertaken where everyone left the school site.
- The COVID risk assessment was regularly reviewed by the Headteacher and Business Managers. Reviews had been undertaken at the beginning and end of lockdown in November 2020. No changes were intended for January 2021.
- A review of all risk assessments held on the school's electronic system was required.
- Offsite visits were not currently taking place aside from some local walks outside.

15. School Improvement Priorities 2020-2021

- The Headteacher talked through the priorities detailed in the report.

17. Additional Strengths

- The Headteacher commented that the list represented a big achievement in the context of the pandemic.

A Governor commented that the Christmas video had been fantastic. The Headteacher expressed her thanks to Mr Coombs, who had worked on the video and also created an electronic school Christmas card.

A Governor commented that the attendance level looked pretty good. The Headteacher responded that it was not bad and that Somerset had done well with school attendance. There was some interesting poor attendance from the children with known attendance issues. This would be picked up on in January 2021 where it was not COVID related.

A Governor asked about the level of COVID related absences. The Headteacher responded that this could be looked at but there had not been many. A Governor asked if any families were choosing to keep a child at home. The Headteacher responded that there were not. A Governor asked if such an absence would be authorised or not. The Headteacher responded that it would depend on the individual situation.

School Development Plan (SDP) – Developing Leadership Capacity

Governors discussed the previously circulated report with the following of note;

- Not all actions were RAG rated green but that would not be expected at the current stage of the year. Leadership responsibilities needed to be reviewed as the Key Stage lead job descriptions had been put in place without a Deputy Headteacher in place. As TLR payments were in place and pay protected, some responsibilities should be retained. Senior Leaders had been given a section of the SDP each. The Headteacher hadn't monitored it but would need to review things in January 2021 when the Headteacher and

	<p>Deputy Headteacher would oversee things.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher wanted to ensure that Senior Leadership Team meetings focussed on self-evaluation and school improvement. It would be good to have the support of the new Deputy Headteacher. <p>Governors had no questions.</p> <p>School Development Plan (SDP) – Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher stated that she had realised not enough had been done on curriculum. She felt that it had been down to her but needed somebody else to drive it. The curriculum had been developed well but staff still seemed to need a lot of support for medium term planning and sticking to it. The new Deputy Headteacher was keen to drive this section. <p>Governors had no questions.</p> <p>School Development Plan (SDP) – School Ethos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher stated that some actions had been completed but she needed to make sure that a Senior Leader was driving it. A single calendar was needed for all actions on the SDP. <p>School Development Plan (SDP) – Meeting the Needs of all Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher expressed disappointment that no actions had been added to this section. Governors agreed that the SEND Governor would make contact with the Senior Leader concerned to discuss things further. <p>Action: Contact Senior Leader responsible for SDP – meeting the needs of all children section.</p> <p>Pupil Premium The Headteacher gave a verbal update with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She had met with the Business Manager as the last report was out of date. They had looked at the most recent report and the budget. She planned to use a simpler format for the report going forward. It was difficult to report impact on the old format. A report would be prepared for the next meeting. The Business Manager had done work on the numbers but more work was required on measuring the impact of the funding. The Headteacher informed Governors that the COVID catch up funding would require a report, similar to the Pupil Premium report. <p>Leadership Structure This item is minuted confidentially.</p>	Mrs Puleston
5	<p>Finance</p> <p>Governor Fund Mr Daniels gave an update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He had received an email from David Warburton MP and was considering sharing the school’s most recent condition survey with him. The Headteacher and Clerk advised caution about putting the entire report in to 	

the public domain. The Clerk stated that Mr Warburton was likely to consider DfE data on school condition before anything else.

- The Governor Fund was a concern. Mr Daniels had undertaken some research and there were some grant bodies available. However, grants were often for small or very particular situations.
- Mr Daniels drew governors' attention to the previously circulated newsletter from another school as he felt it presented things in a positive way. He stated that he felt the Governing Body may need to try and involve families more in fund raising. He went on to state that he believed that members of the public would often donate to community charities but rarely to schools that they had no personal connection to. The Headteacher stated that she did not agree with this approach as provision of education should be free. She stated that as the numbers of families eligible for Free School Meals had increased, the timing of a request for donations was not right.
- Governors noted that the only other option was to budget for the governor contribution to capital works.

Governors discussed the possibility of having a Governing Body newsletter as a way of feeding information to families. A Governor suggested doing things in a softer way by raising awareness of the Governing Body and its role ahead of a parent governor election. Fund raising could be mentioned.

Governors agreed that there needed to be a governor with specific responsibility for fund raising and this should be considering when reviewing responsibilities.

Mr Daniels indicated he would be happy to look further at possible grants.

The Headteacher reminded governors that letting the school premises was potential income but needed thought and to ensure that costs were covered.

Lettings / peripatetic teaching / after school clubs

Governors agreed to continue to suspend lettings, peripatetic teaching and after school clubs until February half term.

Meeting finished at: 5.30pm

Date of next meeting: January 2020

Summary of actions agreed

Action: Contact Senior Leader responsible for SDP – meeting the needs of all children section.	Mrs Puleston
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Summary of decisions taken

Governors agreed to continue to suspend lettings, peripatetic teaching and after school clubs until February half term
