

# 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 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 4.30pm

#### 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

#### 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><b>Standing items</b></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 interests.</p> <p><i>Apologies</i> Apologies were received as detailed above.</p> <p><i>Governor Business</i> The Headteacher stated she thought it would be a good idea to run a staff governor election. Governors agreed.</p> <p><b>Action: Arrange Staff Governor election</b></p>	Clerk

	<p>A Governor stated they thought a Parent Governor should also be held once all children were back in school. Governors agreed.</p> <p><b>Action: Arrange Parent Governor election</b></p> <p>A Governor asked if there was any news about the Foundation Governor application being considered by the Diocese. The Clerk volunteered to chase the application.</p> <p><b>Action: Chase Diocese about prospective foundation governor application</b></p> <p><b>Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b> The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly approved.</p> <p>The confidential minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly approved. The minutes were later signed, placed into an envelope and sealed.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b> Governors considered the open actions on the actions log and the following updates given</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact Senior Leader responsible for SDP – meeting the needs of all children section – a meeting had been arranged – action closed.</li> <li>• Confidential action – Governors discussed if the action was still required as it had been put on hold due to the recent lockdown. Agreed to still proceed, action left open.</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><b>COVID-19</b> The Governors considered the previously circulated risk assessment,</p> <p>The Clerk in her role as Business Manager highlighted changes from the version that had been in operation before Christmas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school would use the ‘Catch it, bin it, kill it’ campaign with children.</li> <li>• The reception classes would be considered as one bubble for the purposes of using their dedicated outdoor area.</li> <li>• The school’s face covering policy had been updated to require all adults on site to wear face coverings any time they were not in their primary workspace.</li> </ul> <p><b>A Governor asked about reception being one bubble and whether this would result in shutting both classes in the event of a positive case.</b> The Headteacher responded that potentially it would but the area had been used over lockdown as it was intended to be used and children had made friendships across the classes. Going back to a strict timetable would not be in keeping with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The Headteacher said she felt the risk was low, as the area was outdoors and national thinking was that airborne transmission was more likely than touch point transmission.</p> <p>The long term, post pandemic vision for reception was to have freeflow between both classrooms and the outdoor area.</p>	

	<p>A Governor asked if other classes were back in bubbles? The Headteacher responded that they were. Social distancing was not possible within classrooms, but a 2m gap would be maintained between pupils and adults at the front of the classroom. All other elements of the risk assessment, such as not bringing items in to school from home would be enforced.</p> <p>The Headteacher suggested that a reference to the school's staff lateral flow testing programme be added to the risk assessment. Governors agreed.</p> <p><b>Action: add reference to staff lateral flow testing to the operational risk assessment.</b></p> <p>Governors were happy with the risk assessment.</p>	<p><b>Business Manager</b></p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Planner</b></p> <p>Governors discussed the agenda planner for the remainder of the 2020-21 academic year.</p> <p>Governors discussed whether the Headteacher's report needed to be written or could be verbal, given the ongoing pandemic. This required clarity.</p> <p><b>Action: Seek clarity over format of Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>Governors discussed various items pertinent to agenda planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Headteacher stated that the SIAMs Self Evaluation Form and overall Self Evaluation Form (SEF) had not been updated in a year before a recent discussion with the school's Diocesan adviser, but this was the position in most schools. The SEF was different at the current time as no data was available due to the pandemic.</li> <li>• The Headteacher informed governors that timescales for SIAMs inspections were currently unsure due to the pandemic. She had recently had a SIAMs conversation with Pauline Dodds from the Diocese and Mr Milverton. She had stated to Pauline that the school had been without an ex-officio governor for 2 years and long term foundation governor vacancies. She stressed that Janet Cauldwell from St John's Church had been very supportive to the school. She suggested that Governing Bodies should usually consider a couple of sections of the framework each term rather than looking at everything at once. She stated she felt unsure that governors were familiar enough with the framework to be able to talk confidently to an inspector during an inspection. Governors were generally in agreement. The Headteacher suggested she send through the SIAMs Self Evaluation Form and notes from Pauline Dodds as a starting point.</li> <li>• The Headteacher requested that meetings start at 4.30 rather than 3.45 to enable her to attend other after school meetings with staff. Governors agreed.</li> <li>• The Headteacher stated that she was concerned that the website was non compliant due to some policies and other key documents needing updating. She suggested that a governor audit compliance and look at a policy schedule. Governors agreed this would be sensible. Mrs Loundras</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>

<p>volunteered to undertake this action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Governor asked if there was any admissions information yet. The Headteacher responded that numbers were low but she had been informed that numbers were low across the county due to it being a low birth year. The Governor asked if that concerned the Headteacher. She responded that she didn't worry about it as it was out of her control. She stated that the school had been careful with staffing and not replaced some staff when they left.</li> <li>• The Headteacher stated to governors that she felt agendas needed to be drawn up in a more timely manner because it was stressful when governors were not in touch to prompt agendas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Send SEF to Governors and Pauline Dodds' notes.</b>  <b>Action: Update agenda planner and reschedule all meetings to start at 4.30.</b>  <b>Action: Audit website compliance and create a policy schedule</b></p> <p>Governors agreed agendas for the remainder of the academic year as follows;</p> <p><b>March</b>  Headteacher's report  Draft budget  Schools Financial Value Standard  Website and policy review</p> <p><b>April</b>  Draft budget  End of financial year, including Consistent Financial Report (if available)  Admissions – ranked list  Review of School Development Plan – meeting the needs of all children and curriculum sections.</p> <p><b>May</b>  Pupil premium report  Sports Grant report  SIAMs  Approve the budget  End of financial year, including Consistent Financial Report (if not available in April)</p> <p><b>June</b>  School Evaluation Form  Data analysis  SEND report</p> <p><b>July</b>  Headteacher's report  Review the School Development Plan – ethos and leadership sections  Agree School Development Plan priorities for 2021-22  Month 3 financial report</p> <p>Governors discussed agenda planning beyond the current academic year and agreed that the Clerk, Headteacher and a governor should meet to finalise the agenda</p>	<p><b>Headteacher  Clerk  Mrs Loundras</b></p>
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	planner for the new year on Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> June at 9.15am.	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>New item – School Funding</b></p> <p>The Headteacher informed governors about issues under consideration at the Local Authority with a potentially significant impact for the school budget.</p> <p>The Headteacher informed governors that she sat on the Somerset High Needs Funding Sub Group and that an announcement had been made with no consultation, about cutting money from the budgets of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and local behaviour partnerships, including the Frome Learning Partnership. Overall a saving of 11.7% across all budgets was needed. The only proposal put forward to achieve this was to dissolve the behaviour partnerships, resulting in children requiring their support being picked up by the PRU Glastonbury, which would also have a budget reduction. The Headteacher stated that she had challenged this announcement on the basis that Frome Headteachers had not been informed of the proposed changes. Within 30 minutes she had been summoned to a meeting with Local Authority representatives. The Headteacher reported that in the time since, there seemed to be arguments within the Local Authority as to how this had happened.</p> <p>The Headteacher went on to state that two key decisions were due to be made at an upcoming Schools Forum meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for Parent and Family Support Advisers (PFSAs) was due to go to a vote at the meeting.</li> <li>• Funding for PRUs and behaviour partnerships was a Local Authority decision being discussed, but not voted on, at the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>The Headteacher informed governors that a lot of children and St John’s benefited from PFSA support and that the school was in receipt of funding from the Frome Learning Partnership to support 1:1 provision for some children. The Headteacher was extremely concerned that these two funding decisions could negatively impact some of the school’s most vulnerable children with significant behaviour issues. It would have a significant impact on the school’s budget as the school may have to consider employing its own PFSA and/or paying for some of the 1:1 provision out of the budget.</p> <p>A governor asked how the Local Authority was justifying taking the money. The Headteacher responded that the high needs funding budget had been overspent for a very long time due to historically not having statements or enough provision in county. A lot of money was therefore being spent either sending SEND children out of county or transporting them across the county or sending them to independent provision. The budget was anticipated to be £22 million in deficit by the end of the next financial year. If the planned changes were made, the PRU in Glastonbury would only be able to do statutory work i.e. day 6 and medical provision. Early help support would therefore disappear. There was an additional point that none of the PRUs currently provided for primary age children. The Headteacher felt that the proposed changes would result in children being permanently excluded.</p> <p>A governor asked if the Headteacher would have found out about the proposals if she hadn’t been on the High Needs Funding Sub Group. The Headteacher responded that she wouldn’t. She went on to state that the response from the Local Authority</p>	

	<p>felt very unprofessional as colleagues were directly contradicting each other.</p> <p>The Headteacher stated that unitary consultation had commenced, but that the timescales were extremely tight. Any organisation needing to make redundancies as a result of budget cuts would have only two days to submit a gateway report to the Local Authority if the decision was made at the Schools Forum meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March. The Headteacher stated she was shocked that such an announcement was being made during the week before schools were due to reopen to all children.</p> <p>The Headteacher summarised action she had taken in response to this issue;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She had spent 17 hours in meetings just about this issue in the past week.</li> <li>• She had written a letter and impact report as Co-Chair of the Frome Learning Partnership. The impact report demonstrated that the changes would have a negative impact on all the statements in the Local Authority's written Statement of Action, following its last Ofsted inspection of its SEND provision. The Headteacher informed governors that it was not legal for the Local Authority to take actions that negatively impacted the written Statement of Action.</li> <li>• The Headteacher would attend the Schools Forum meeting, as it was a public meeting.</li> <li>• The Headteacher suggested that governors consider writing to the Local Authority, to add weight to the other letters already sent. Mrs Puleston volunteered to do this.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Write to the Local Authority about proposed funding changes.</b></p>	<b>Mrs Puleston</b>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>New item – School Key Holders</b></p> <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that the school's cleaner / caretaker would no longer be able to act as key holder for out of hours call outs for the school from the end of April 2021. As she was the only person on the call out list in front of the Headteacher, the school needed someone prepared to take on this role. It could be covered by a governor. An alternative was to ask other staff, but many had childcare responsibilities, meaning they would be unable to respond to call outs. Other options were to approach the school's caretaking contractor or seek a security contractor. The Business Managers were looking in to the cost of these options.</p> <p>Mr Haines volunteered to act as a key holder but stated that he sometimes had childcare commitments.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>New item – Headteacher request</b></p> <p>The Headteacher made a personal request to governors, which is minuted confidentially.</p>	

**Meeting finished at:** 6.05pm

**Date of next meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Summary of actions agreed

Action: Arrange Staff Governor election	Clerk
Action: Arrange Parent Governor election	Clerk
Action: Chase Diocese about prospective foundation governor application	Clerk
Action: Add reference to staff lateral flow testing to the operational risk assessment.	Business Manager
Action: Seek clarity over format of Headteacher's Report	Clerk
Action: Send SEF to Governors and Pauline Dodds' notes.	Headteacher
Action: Update agenda planner and reschedule all meetings to start at 4.30.	Clerk
Action: Audit website compliance and create a policy schedule	Mrs Loundras
Action: Write to the Local Authority about proposed funding changes.	Mrs Puleston

### Summary of decisions taken

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