

**Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting  
Tuesday, 18 September 2018 ('Term 0'), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane**

**Governors present:**

Elizabeth Burton (LB), Headteacher  
Sarah Franklin (SF), Foundation Governor – *Chair*  
Robin Morris (RMO), Parent Governor – *Vice-Chair*  
Chimene Bateman (CB), Foundation Governor  
Beth Gibson (BG), Staff Governor  
Robert Green (RG), Parent Governor  
Emily Kerr (EK), Foundation Governor  
Philip Ritchie (PR), Foundation Governor  
Mary-Anne Sinclair (MAS), Foundation Governor  
Jenny Worroll (JW), Foundation Governor

**In attendance:**

Chris Chamier-Williams (CCW), Associate Member  
Sam Coleman, Associate Member  
Jonathan Smith (JS), Clerk, OCC Governor Services

**Apologies:**

Bilqees Akhtar (BA), Parent Governor  
Sarah Blackwell (SB), Associate Member  
Jane Godby (JG), Associate Member  
Chris Warner (CW), Associate Member

The meeting opened at 7.10 pm.

**1. Welcome, apologies, quorum**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that the purpose of the 'Term 0' meeting was to organise FGB business for the coming year. The minutes and actions from the Term 6 FGB meeting will be reviewed at the Term 1 FGB meeting, to be held on 11 October at 7.00 pm.

Jenny Worroll (new Foundation Governor) and Sam Coleman (prospective Associate Member) were welcomed to their first FGB meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from governors and associates as listed above.

The meeting was quorate.

**2. Declarations of any other urgent business**

Governors agreed to discuss the proposed change to the Admissions policy for 2020/21.

**3. Declarations of business/pecuniary/personal interest in any agenda item**

There were no declared interests relating to this agenda.

**4. Appointment of Clerk**

Governors agreed to appoint Jonathan Smith as Clerk to the Governors for the academic year 2018/19.

**5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors**

JS conducted the election of Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors.

Sarah Franklin was nominated for the role of Chair of Governors, and was elected to this role by unanimous vote.  
Robin Morris was nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of Governors, and was elected to this role by unanimous vote.

Governors thanked Sarah and Robin for accepting these roles and wished them good luck.

Governors agreed that Chair and Vice-Chair elections for 2019/20 would be held at the first GB meeting of next year.

Signed

Date

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**6. Appointment of associate members of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body appointed the following as Associate Members of the Governing Body, by unanimous vote: Jane Godby (JG), Sarah Blackwell (SB), Sam Coleman (SC), Chris Warner (CW, Head of Comper Foundation Stage School).

JG, SB and SC will attend meetings of the Curriculum Committee, as appropriate; CW, as all associate members, will be welcomed to meetings and have access to papers.

**7. Annual declarations of business/pecuniary interest**

Governors were asked to complete the standard 'Register of Business/Pecuniary Interests' pro forma circulated at the meeting and available in the dropbox. Completed forms were collected by JS and will be stored in a file in the school office.

**8. Governor Code of Conduct – review, approval, declaration of agreement**

The newly revised Governor Code of Conduct was made available for scrutiny by governors in advance of the meeting. The document was the result of work completed during 2017/18.

Governors commented that they were pleased to see the Nolan Principles of Public Life identified in the code; also that the 'core functions and responsibilities' were a helpful reminder of the purpose of governance. SF reminded governors that one of the responsibilities identified in the document is to undertake relevant training. Governors have access to a full range of training opportunities made available by OCC and the Diocese, at no cost to the school beyond initial subscription, already paid. It is important that every member of the Governing Body commits to attending relevant training.

Governors approved the Code of Conduct and agreed collectively to abide by it.

**9. Governing Body and committees (structure and terms of reference) – review, approval**

Terms of reference for each committee and a general 'schedule of responsibilities' had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. SF reminded governors that these were working documents that were flexible. They are scheduled for review in September 2019 but can if necessary be adapted before then to suit circumstances.

Governors approved the committee structure, terms of reference and schedule of responsibilities.

**10. Appointment of governors/associate members to committees, working groups, etc.**

A summary of the proposed membership of each committee together with nominated Chairs and Clerks had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

There is currently no nomination for Clerk for the Curriculum and FPS Committees. There is a provisional plan to provide the necessary clerking support but SF asked governors to make themselves available to help if possible.

In accordance with the usual arrangement, it was proposed that the Pay Committee would consist of the Chair of Governors, Chair of Curriculum Committee and Chair of FPS Committee (SF, CB, RMo). It was proposed that the Headteacher's Performance Appraisal Committee would consist of SF and EK, with Sarah Varnom (SV Education Associates) as external adviser.

Governors approved these arrangements and the composition of committees as described in the document presented.

Governors noted the schedule of meetings for the year and agreed these dates, with two changes: Curriculum Committee will now meet on 1 October 2018 in Term 1, and on 19 November 2018 in Term 2.

**11. Appointment of governors with special responsibilities**

Governors approved the allocation of roles to governors as described in the document presented.

Sf noted that the GB currently has vacancies for three governors. Plans are in place to make appointments. An interested party proposed as local authority governor had chosen to join the GB at another school and it is hoped that the LA will make a further recommendation. Another governor with financial experience would be most welcome.

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### 12. General update, new school year

#### *School news*

LB explained that two new teachers had started in September, and four new TAs. The teachers have been allocated to Year 5 and Year 1 and three of the TAs are working with Year 1. All new staff have settled in quickly and there are no staffing issues to report.

#### *Summer building and refurbishment work*

Significant building work has been completed over the holiday:

- The main school boiler has been replaced. The new system is very efficiently controllable and this together with the windows and roof work completed earlier will provide a more efficient and economical service.
- Outside areas have been resurfaced.
- Ceiling and lighting work in the main hall has been completed and the floor sanded and re-varnished.

A governor asked if the PLUS Base space had been improved, as the lack of space, especially for Key Stage 2, had been an issue raised in a recent parent survey. LB explained that there were plans to expand the space by 'knocking through' to a storeroom. In the time since funds for this had become available contractors could not be found to take on this work. It will need to be done out of term-time, as the plans require the removal of a supporting wall. LB added that the children are only together in the small space for registration after school, and that the library and other areas were available for 'break-out' activities after that.

Governors were shown photographs of improved flooring, toilets and new furniture at Comper School following their summer premises investment.

RMO reported on a recent meeting of SF and RMO with Comper governors. The Comper budget is in deficit and costs of the Comper/Mary & John partnership as currently structured exceed the level of the current funding agreement. A full report of this meeting should be available for the next GB meeting. Governors noted that leadership and premises costs faced by Comper are proportionally relatively higher, as it is a smaller setting, and reaffirmed their continuing intention to work with and support Comper.

#### *Homework letter to parents – review, approval*

During 2017/18 the Curriculum Committee had agreed to do away with a homework policy document, and had agreed that the letter sent out to parents at the start of the year, updated annually, should stand as effectively the school's 'policy' on homework. As the letter is effectively a policy, SF asked governors to review, comment and approve.

Governors discussed the place of homework in children's learning; noted comment from CCW that educational research suggests homework has very little impact at primary level. LB added that since the school had implemented and communicated the strategy outlined in the letter, far fewer parents had expressed concerns on homework.

Governors approved the letter to represent the school's policy on homework for the year.

### 13. School improvement

#### *13.1. School development plan, 2018/19 – outline draft, for discussion*

LB and SF outlined the annual process of drawing up the school development plan (SDP). In Term 6 and at the Term 0 GB meeting staff and governors discuss and agree priorities and aims for the year ahead; in Term 1 previous SDP targets and objectives are reviewed and LB presents the new SDP for the year ahead.

LB presented a draft of aims for the year ahead. As previously the over-arching vision for 2018/19 would be:

*To drive school improvement towards outstanding provision by maintaining high standards with:*

- *consistently good teaching and learning;*
- *a highly motivated, committed and aspirational staff team;*
- *an enriched, broad and balanced curriculum.*

There were a range of developments planned for 2018/19. Many of the areas of focus last year would continue into the new year. However, LB wished to identify two broad aims as new priorities:

- To enrich the English curriculum and improve outcomes for all groups of pupils;
- To develop a school community of healthy minds based on trust, empathy and mutual respect.

This follows the pattern of previous years, of one curriculum-based aim for the year and one based within the framework of 'developing the whole child', identified in 2016 as a broad longer-term goal for the school.

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Several governors asked if maths was 'safe' enough to be de-prioritised from the SDP. LB explained that there would be no relaxation in maths. Maths had been a focus on the SDP for two years and though there is clearly room for improvement still in progress and attainment in maths, Ofsted had concluded that the drivers for improvement were all in place. Interventions and careful monitoring would continue in 2018/19. Governors noted that there is some evidence that Mary & John's English data is skewed by a group of higher-achieving children who read enthusiastically for pleasure, etc. and whose good attainment and progress could be masking less good performance of other children. Hence this was a 'new' and urgent priority.

Governors discussed the wording of the second aim, and the definition of a 'healthy mind'. Some governors argued that it was possible for individuals to live with mental ill-health, manage it and preserve a sense of well-being. Governors also discussed the concept of 'health' being expanded to include physical health, diet, exercise, E-safety, etc.; agreed however that for this year the scope of this aim should be more tightly focused.

Governors approved the over-arching vision of the SDP and the two main areas for focus as identified in the document, wording of the second aim to be developed further by LB and the leadership team; agreed also that it was important to reserve the option to revisit previous priorities in the future, especially maths, if necessary.

**Action 1: LB and the leadership team to draw up the SDP for 2018/19, for discussion and approval at next GB meeting, including how impact of planned actions will be monitored.**

### *13.2. Parent consultation (post-it boards), 2018 – discuss, agree points for action*

Governors were encouraged to submit any final comments within the next few days, before actions are agreed.

**Action 2: Governors to submit to SF proposed points for action based on outcomes of parent consultation.**

## **14. Governor self-evaluation**

Last year's self-evaluation report had been circulated prior to the meeting, along with a summary of recent feedback from governors. SF thanked governors for their comments. Governors reflected on positives, including:

- Successful Ofsted report, governor contribution to that;
- Impact being seen from two-year focus on maths attainment and progress;
- Implementation of new year plan for governor work, as planning aid and guide to thinking strategically;
- Development of policy review schedule, to make policy review more systematic and encourage monitoring of implementation and effectiveness of school policies;
- Making good use of best practice – all governors now have access to 'The Key for School Governors'.

It was noted that not all governors were aware of or had been able to access the Key.

**Action 3: SF to circulate to all governors details of how to access 'The Key for School Governors'.**

Development issues for 2018/19 will be:

- Training on analysis of pupil performance data, including progress tracking (in line with Ofsted priority);
- Improved links with Comper;
- Appointment to the GB of a governor with financial expertise;
- Circulation of papers in a timely fashion;
- Improved attendance at meetings.

## **16. Any other urgent business**

### *Admissions policy for 2020/21*

EK explained that although the Admissions policy is reviewed by governors every year, there is a requirement that it is presented for full consultation every seven years. As previously discussed by the GB, the Admissions & Attendance Committee will alter the policy to give a degree of priority to children of members of staff as a new category of priority. Governors noted that this category would be placed at the lowest level of priority, just above 'all other children', and that consequently this change is unlikely to generate resentment in the community. The eligibility of staff children will be subject to certain restrictions, as in admissions policies already in use by other schools.

Governors agreed to the change proposed, to be submitted to the Diocese for checking ahead of publication for consultation, and thanked EK and the A&A Committee for their work on this.

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### Next FGB meetings

Term 1 Full GB meeting: Thursday 11 October 2018, 7.00 pm

Term 2 Full GB meeting: Monday 3 December 2018, 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

### Actions from meeting

	Action (by Term 1 GB meeting, unless stated otherwise)	Who	Outcome
Action 1	LB and the leadership team to draw up the SDP for 2018/19, for discussion and approval at next GB meeting, including how impact of planned actions will be monitored.	LB	
Action 2	Governors to submit to SF proposed points for action based on outcomes of parent consultation.	All Govs	
Action 3	SF to circulate to all governors details of how to access 'The Key for School Governors'.	SF	

### Appendices – Documents presented/discussed

Agenda, Full GB meeting, 18 September 2018 (Term 0 meeting)
Mary & John GB – list of governors and associates, 2018/19 (SF)
Register of Business/Pecuniary Interests form
Register of Pecuniary Interests – Guidance Notes
Mary & John GB – Code of conduct – July 2018 (SF, JL)
Mary & John GB – GB and governor committee structure & schedule of responsibilities – September 2018 (SF)
Mary & John GB – membership of committees/working groups & designated roles, 2018/19 – September 2018 (SF)
Dates of meetings for Mary & John GB, 2018/19 – September 2018 (SF)
Homework letter to parents and carers – September 2018 (LB)
School Development Plan, 2018–2019 – vision and aims, draft (LB)
GB self-evaluation – Report to Governing Body, September 2017 (SF)
GB self-evaluation – September 2018 (SF)
Year plan of key Mary & John GB tasks and dates, 2018/19 (SF)
Oxfordshire Governors' Association Autumn Open Meeting, 'Who Governs Our Schools?', Saturday 29 September 2018 – flyer