

**Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting
Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane**

Governors present:

Elizabeth Burton (LB), Headteacher
Sarah Franklin (SF), Foundation Governor – *Chair*
Jane Godby (JG), Associate Member
Robin Morris (RMo), Parent Governor – *Vice-Chair*
Chimene Bateman (CB), Foundation Governor
Beth Gibson (BG), Staff Governor
Robert Green (RG), Parent Governor
Mary-Anne Sinclair (MAS), Foundation Governor
Jenny Worroll (JW), Foundation Governor

In attendance:

Sam Coleman (SC), Associate Member
Jonathan Smith (JS), Clerk, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Governor Services

Apologies:

Sarah Blackwell (SB), Associate Member
Chris Chamier-Williams (CCW), Associate Member
Emily Kerr (EK), Foundation Governor
Philip Ritchie (PR), Foundation Governor
Chris Warner (CW), Associate Member

The meeting opened at 7.04 pm.

1. Welcome, apologies, quorum

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was quorate. Apologies were received as listed above. All were accepted.

2. Declarations of any other urgent business

Governors noted receipt of a letter from a parent concerned about cars idling outside school, as a public health issue, and agreed to discuss this as an additional item of business.

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

RG declared his connection with Kate Green, currently employed by the school as a specialist external teacher (part-time); PR and MAS are members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

4. Minutes of Full Governing Body meeting, 5 February 2019 (Term 3)

Document circulated via dropbox: interim minutes.

Governors agreed the following amendments to the minutes, for clarification: “catchment area of the school may fall within the newly established East Oxford Community Impact Zone” (p. 3); “thereafter the picture remains uncertain” (p. 5); “possible cost savings in areas such as catering and insurance, and/or looking for fresh sources of funds” (p. 6).

Governors agreed that with these amendments the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and approved them, to be signed by the Chair and filed at the school.

Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

5. Matters arising from the minutes

The following actions were reported.

	Action (by Term 4 GB meeting, unless stated otherwise)	Who	Outcome
Action 1	LB to confirm requirements of Public Sector Equality Duty Statement and discuss Equality Objectives with the Leadership Team, and report at GB meeting.	LB	In progress Action 1
Action 2	CB and MAS to carry out pupil voice visits, report to GB meeting.	CB, MAS	Completed (see Item 8)
Action 3	EK to work with LB on examples of short questionnaires on staff views and well-being.	EK, LB	In progress Action 2
Action 4	LB to communicate to parents news of appointment of new PE Lead teacher.	LB	Completed
Action 5	MAS to meet with Comper safeguarding governor to confirm process for joint checks of the Single Central Records of the two schools.	MAS	Completed
Action 6	All governors to review governor training programme brochures and identify relevant training opportunities (OPL/Oxfordshire County Council and EIG/Oxford Diocese – see dropbox). Chairs of Committees to prompt members of their committees on this.	All governors / Chairs of Committees	In progress Action 3
–	SC to report on impact of school development plan measures to improve outcomes in English (Curriculum Committee).	SC	CC agenda item (Term 5)
–	CCW to report on results of school survey of views of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding (Term 6 GB).	CCW	GB agenda item (Term 6)
Action 7	Spring 2019 parent consultation (post-its) – SF to circulate timetable and sign-up sheet; all (non-staff) governors to sign up.	SF / All (non-staff) governors	In progress (item 8) Action 4
Action 8	Pending response to email enquiry confirming budget requirements, Comper/M&J Working Group governors to meet again with Comper governors and report to next M&J GB meeting.	C/M&J WG governors	In progress (item 9) Action 5
Action 9	Comper/M&J Working Group governors to confirm terms of reference for the group with Comper governors.	C/M&J WG governors	In progress (item 9) Action 6

6. Headteacher's reports

• Headteacher's report – long-form report (*incl. school self-evaluation report*)

LB presented her report and highlighted the following:

- The number of children on roll was 412 (eight spaces in total, across Reception to Year 6). Reception classes are likely to be full in September 2019, which is good; many schools will have spaces.
- Attendance was at 96.1% (slightly down from last term, 96.4%, but up from last year at this point, 95.6%). This exceeds the local authority target of 95%. LB confirmed that close monitoring and intervention is continuing to be effective. *A governor asked about attendance of children eligible for PP funding.* CCW was not present at the meeting to confirm but JW noted that when Curriculum Committee met earlier this month attendance of PP children was close to that of non-PP children. *A governor asked for attendance of pupils eligible for PP funding to be included as a separate figure on the pro forma for the termly HT report to GB.* LB agreed.
- The number of Fixed Term Exclusions has fallen significantly and the target of a 50% reduction in FTE this year is well within reach.

With regard to the school self-evaluation section of the report – the categories used in this evaluation report reflect the current Ofsted inspection framework. The report represents a comprehensive self-evaluation of the school at this time. Governors discussed the report and questioned LB, and LB highlighted some key strengths.

- LB confirmed that in future the report would be amended to reflect the revised Ofsted framework (from September 2019). This includes a 'Quality of Education' criterion, encompassing the breadth and creativity of the whole-school curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment. LB commented that Mary & John had been 'ahead of the game' in this respect and welcomed these changes to the Ofsted framework.
- Safeguarding culture has a high priority in school, including close attention to attendance of all children. LB reported that some local schools had been placed in a category on grounds of safeguarding concerns

Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

because children had been observed outside lessons and unaccounted for, on their own in corridors or unsafe at play. Safeguarding is much more than an administrative activity based on the Single Central Record.

- Teaching at the school is based around stated classroom 'non-negotiables': rapport between adults and children; teacher presence; children at least engaged and at best inspired; effective questioning; a purposeful learning environment; opportunity for higher order thinking (challenge). LB reported that all had been seen in good measure in the recent round of lesson observations (focused on teaching of English).
- Additional teachers are brought in to provide high-quality support and enhance learning in some subjects, including maths, art, music, outdoor learning, and for children with English as an additional language.
- *A governor queried the attendance target of 90% (p. 4).* Governors discussed attendance and LB confirmed that staff have good knowledge of any child with attendance of lower than 90%. It was agreed that the target should be increased to 95%.
- Proactive communication with parents is a strength of the school and has been effective in establishing support for some children with challenging behaviour. A culture of openness and honesty is a priority.
- Staff reported that anti-bullying training has had a significant, tangible impact.
- *A governor asked about the current status of the governor Behaviour Working Group. As behaviour reports are now reviewed regularly by the Curriculum Committee, could the purpose of the BWG be clarified?* Governors agreed that it was appropriate for whole-school behaviour reports to fall within the remit of the Curriculum Committee. It was also agreed however that the BWG should remain constituted and active as a smaller 'specialist' group of governors with good familiarity with the school's approach to behaviour, able to make focused visits to school, review incident folders, attend relevant training, etc. BWG governors and staff agreed to meet during Term 5 (CB, JW, JG, CCW) to review the incident folder.
- LB highlighted that the self-evaluation process and report includes the Reception children and Early Years (EYFS) provision. Governors were pleased to note that the forthcoming school improvement visit by the local authority System Leader will include a visit to Reception at Comper.

Action 7: Attendance of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium – LB to add this as separate figure on pro forma for termly HT report to GB.

Action 8: Behaviour Working Group to meet in Term 5.

• Comper – report

LB reported that members of the leadership team have made two visits to Comper recently, focusing on systems used to assess and track the attainment and progress of the Reception children. LB and JG reported that Reception children were happy and engaged. Other positive outcomes from these visits have included:

- Staff at the two schools are better able to coordinate planning (e.g. in the choice of stories offered to children in curriculum work), and are thus able to reinforce particular themes but avoid undue overlap and repetition before and after transition from Reception to Year 1.
- Mary & John staff have a better understanding of Tapestry, an application that enables parents and children to engage with children's progress in EYFS.
- In Terms 5 and 6, staff from Comper will visit Year 1 colleagues at Mary & John, attend lessons and share opportunities to set challenging work that extends pupil learning.

See also item 9, below.

7. Headline updates from committees

Standing item to improve communication and understanding by the whole GB of recent work of each of the main committees.

Format: brief (two minutes) verbal report from the chair of each committee. Limited time available for questions, or reference to minutes.

Longer discussion, if required, to be scheduled for later.

CB gave a short update on recent work of the Curriculum Committee (CC).

- CC governors had reviewed school strategies to improve attendance. For example, attendance at the start of the week has improved, possibly because of football having been switched to Monday!

Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

- Uptake by PP children of opportunities for after-school activities is encouraging but the proportion of PP children taking up the offer of free places in PLUS Clubs does not seem to grow. In some cases PP children may have post-school commitments that would make attendance difficult.
- Anonymised case studies presented by staff have helped CC governors to understand how children who demonstrate more extreme behaviours are supported by the school. It was noted that the behaviour culture of the school, in particular the restorative approach, encourages ownership and self-help in this regard.
- CC governors will meet with colleagues from the equivalent (Teaching & Learning) committee at Comper.

RMO reported on recent work of the FPS (Finance, Premises & Staffing) Committee.

- Phase 3 of the refurbishment program will be undertaken by Thames Ceilings, who will be able to make progress on some of the work over the Easter break.
- There is still no confirmation that central government will fund increased staff pension contributions scheduled to commence on 1 April this year, which are likely to lead to a £40,000 pa additional cost.
- FPS governors had discussed the fact that PE/Sports Premium funding is intended to be targeted at children in Years 1 to 6. Governors had agreed however that in a more conventional setting, with Reception provision on the same site as Years 1 to 6, Reception children would derive some benefit from investment of this funding (e.g. in access to equipment, outdoor education resources, etc.). Consequently, FPS governors had endorsed continuing to allocate the usual pro rata proportion of PE/Sports Premium funding to Comper.
- The deadline for setting the 2019/20 school budget is 1 May 2019. As it is now unlikely that a revised funding agreement can be reached with Comper before then (see next item, item 9), FPS had agreed to extend the current Reception funding arrangement for another year. By this arrangement funds transferred to Comper include pro rata allocation of all per-pupil funding, calculated by number of children on roll, plus an additional uplift of 1.25% of whole-school government funding allocation. Kristy Bailey (KB), the school's Business Manager, will confirm this arrangement with the Bursar at Comper.

In EK's absence, SF reported that EK, LB and Ruth Tarry (RT), School Administrator, had met for the Admissions & Attendance Committee to review applications for admission onto the school roll for 2019/20 and rank and approve them according to the relevant admissions criteria. The process was carried out thoroughly and transparently; the governors would like to thank RT, in particular, for her excellent and careful work on this in tight turn-around time.

- The school received 105 applications (for 60 places), 65 of these 'first-choice' applications; consequently Reception will be full next year, 2019/20. This is especially pleasing in a demographically 'low' year.
- Of applications received, places could be offered to all children living in the catchment area and to all children living outside the catchment area but with a sibling already in the school; places could also be offered to a number of children living very close to the school but outside the catchment area.

8. School development

• Pupil voice visits – report (Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2)

MAS and CB reported that this had been an enjoyable experience. The pupil representatives were energetic, forthcoming and mature in their outlook, reflective and informed in many of their responses, and supportive of each other. Some had been more articulate than others. The feedback had been generally positive: children clearly enjoy the school in general, their teachers and their learning. Governors thanked MAS and CB for their detailed transcripts of the sessions.

Two issues in particular were discussed.

- One child had commented that there were only limited opportunities to study one particular religion. Staff governors present commented that this was likely to be a reflection of the fact that the RE curriculum is sub-divided into sections of study at different times of the year. The child in question was currently experiencing a 'block' that focused on one religion, but the class would shortly be returning to study of others. *A governor asked about religions studied in RE.* LB explained that the curriculum had Christianity, Islam and Judaism at its core but all faiths are studied. Significant festivals from different religions are also celebrated at school. LB added that the school's RE curriculum is likely to be reviewed in the near future, in response to changes in the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) framework.

Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

- Several children expressed a wish for a designated 'Friendship Bench' for Key Stage 2, as in the Key Stage 1 play area. Staff agreed that this would be appropriate and it was decided to approach the PTA to ask if funds might be available to support.

Action 9: JG to contact suppliers for Key Stage 2 Friendship Bench; RG to liaise with PTA to request funding.

Action 10: LB to consider any other actions arising from these Pupil Voice sessions.

• Spring 2019 parent consultation (post-it boards) – interim feedback

SF thanked all governors who had participated in the first of these two sessions. Many post-it comments had already been added to the boards, and governors had had good conversations with parents. The second session would take place the following week, on 26 March. SF volunteered to transcribe all the notes in time for the next GB meeting, and prepare a full report.

• New school website – report; compliance review

LB reported that the new school website is up and running and school staff are very pleased with its fresh and uncluttered look. Governors congratulated staff on the work involved in achieving this.

Governors discussed 'permissions' from parents regarding the use of images and LB confirmed that these are all in place, meeting GDPR requirements.

JW and RMo had carried out checks to ensure that the website is compliant with other statutory requirements on school website content and governors discussed their findings and further content required to ensure full compliance.

JW had completed the 'School website: checklist for maintained schools' (audit tool provided by *The Key for School Leaders*). This is a very detailed exercise and completing it had revealed a number of issues relating to content that LB and the leadership team will address.

RM had completed an audit of the governor section of the website and had identified the need to update, for example, records of governor training, terms of office and attendance at meetings. JS commented that such information is automatically generated by the online service 'GovernorHub', to which the school has access. It is not customary for governors to have responsibility for updating this information on the school website and this is generally undertaken by the Clerk supported by an administrator at the school. JS offered to demonstrate to RMo how this might be undertaken.

Governors thanked JW and RMo for their very careful and thorough work on this.

Action 11: Actions from website compliance review – LB & JG to update data and items identified.

Action 12: Actions from website compliance review – JS & RMo to review governor record gaps.

9. Comper/M&J Partnership

• Joint working group on partnership structure and funding – report

CB, EK, RMo and KB were members of a working group meeting with three Comper governors and the Comper Bursar to discuss structure and funding arrangements between M&J and Comper, now and in the future.

The working group had not met since the meeting on 16 January, noted in the minutes of the last GB meeting.

RMo reported that Mary & John members of the group had been disappointed to be advised that Comper colleagues were unexpectedly and unilaterally withdrawing from the group, so that it had effectively been disbanded.

Mary and John governors discussed the partnership between the two schools. Staff and governors agree that the provision offered by the partnership is good. Communication between the two headteachers is open and effective; shared staff and GB approaches to safeguarding are robust; collaboration between staff on matters of teaching and learning, transition, etc. is good and continuing to improve. Though the working group had not covered all the ground it had been hoped it might there had been positive outcomes, including better understanding of the Comper setting as a whole and extensive research undertaken by members of the group to understand nursery funding nationally and in the local context, which has increased awareness and sensitivity among Mary & John governors to some of the challenges facing Comper as a joint setting (Reception, nursery, day-care).

Mary & John governors are committed to moving forward and establishing effective communication to make progress in discussion of shared concerns in all areas of the partnership, including but not restricted to financial pressures on the partnership. After a lengthy discussion, the following actions were agreed:

Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

- LB and SF will meet with CW and Ben Cairns (Comper Headteacher and Chair of Governors) and any other Comper governors to reopen discussion on shared concerns. Governors agreed that it was likely that misunderstandings had arisen because of missed opportunities for face-to-face communication between governors. There had been a catalogue of Partnership Group and other meetings having been cancelled or deferred by Comper, over the last year. Communication by email could also have contributed to misperceptions within both GBs on matters of detail and general intent. For example, the recent 'update' email from BC included multiple statements that M&J governors found to be inaccurate and/or indicative of lack of understanding of perspectives and attitudes of the M&J GB. Governors agreed that regular, face-to-face meetings, well attended on both sides, are much to be preferred over lengthy emails. LB and SF agreed to make these points in the meeting with Comper governors.
- In the absence of budget information from Comper, prerequisite to discussion of a new funding agreement, the current three-year funding arrangement (including the additional 1.25% uplift, PE/Sports Premium funding, etc.) will be extended for a year. FPS governors confirmed that a decision on this was forced by the need for both schools to submit budgets to the local authority before 1 May. Mary & John governors endorsed this decision.

Action 13: SF to liaise with Comper Head and governors; LB and SF to attend meeting with Comper Head and governors to discuss framework for partnership working.

10. Policies, procedures

- **Admissions for 2020/21, policy and procedures – update**

LB reported that the Admissions policy and procedures for 2020/21 have now been approved. Governors noted the status of this document on the school website needs to be changed to 'confirmed'.

Governors thanked EK for her work overseeing the policy review process.

Action 14: Admissions for 2020/21, policy and procedures – LB to confirm website text amended to 'confirmed'.

11. Visits to school by governors (since Term 3 meeting, 5 February 2019)

Governors had recorded 20 visits to school since the Term 3 GB meeting, including participation in the first of the two sessions of the Spring 2019 parent consultation (post-it boards). Other visits had also been made during this time. SF thanked governors for their visits and reminded everyone to record visits in the file at school reception.

12. Training undertaken by governors (since Term 3 meeting, 5 February 2019)

CB, JW and SF had attended training on understanding and using external school performance data (Oxfordshire Partners in Learning, 'Using External School Performance Data', 7 March 2019); reported that this had been interesting and that they expected to find it helpful.

13. Governing Body development

- **Parent governor election – update**

RMo reported that the parent governor election is in progress. There are four candidates on the ballot and the poll will close on 2 April.

The vacancy was created by Billy Akhtar's resignation. For reasons of illness Billy is sadly not able to commit to the role of parent governor. Governors agreed however to appoint her as an Associate Member of the GB, in recognition of her valuable contribution to the work of the GB.

- **Review of progress towards goals/priorities for the year – GB, committees, etc.**

This will be considered in detail at the Term 5 GB meeting (13 May 2019).

- **Governor skills audit**

This is ongoing. RMo encouraged governors who have yet to respond to do so by whatever means they find most convenient (electronic or paper). The completed audit will inform planning for governor training and recruitment.

Action 15: Governor skills audit – all governors to complete and return to RMo; RMo to report.

Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 25 March 2019 (Term 4), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

• Review of governor training plans

To be considered at the Term 5 GB meeting (10 May 2019).

14. Schools partnership and academy options – update

Standing item. Nothing to report. LB and SF advised that they would be attending the regular local authority briefing for Heads and Chairs of Governors this term, on 1 April 2019 and would report back to the GB on developments.

15. General Data Protection Regulation – update

Standing item. See also item 8 above: New school website – report. Otherwise, nothing to report this term.

16. Reports from committees/other groups

Not for further discussion at this meeting. Notice only, of minutes circulated via the dropbox, or to be circulated.

- Comper/M&J Partnership Group – Term 4 meeting (6 March 2019) cancelled; seeking alternative date
- Curriculum Committee – meeting 12 March 2019
- Finance, Premises & Staffing Committee – meeting 21 March 2019

Minutes were noted without comment (except as indicated in items above).

- Parent-Teacher Association – meeting 4 March 2019
JW had attended this meeting. Staff members present included LB and SB.

17. Any other urgent business

Governors noted receipt of a letter from a parent concerned about cars waiting outside school with engines idling at pick-up and drop-off times, as a public health issue. LB acknowledged that this was a concern. The situation at Meadow Lane is not as serious as at some schools but staff on duty at the gate are aware and take a proactive approach, talking to drivers on an individual basis and asking them to use the local authority car park on Meadow Lane. LB will raise this again in a school newsletter next term. SF will report back to the parent concerned.

Future agenda items

- **GB** March 2019 parent consultation (post-it boards) – report (Term 5)
- **GB** Summer 2019 parent consultation (questionnaire) – planning (Term 5)
- **GB** Committee and GB goals/priorities for the year – progress review (Term 5)
- **GB** Governor training – planning, review (Term 5)
- **GB** School development plan, 2018/19 – second review (Term 6)
- **GB** Statement of school's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme (Term 6)
- **Curriculum Committee, GB** School Improvement System Leader visit, incl. Early Years – report (Term 5)
- **GB** Schools partnership and academy options – update (standing item)
- **GB** General Data Protection Regulation – update (standing item)
- See also *Year plan of key Mary & John Governing Body tasks and dates, 2018/19*

Dates of next meetings

- PTA – Monday, 29 April 2019, 7.30 pm
- Comper/M&J Partnership Group – Thursday, 16 May 2019, 6.00 pm – *change of date*
- Curriculum Committee – *deferred from 2 May 2019, to allow for meeting with Comper governors; currently seeking alternative date for CC meeting*
- Finance, Premises & Staffing Committee – Friday, 10 May 2019, 4.30 pm – *change of date*
- Full Governing Body (Term 5) – Monday, 13 May 2019

The meeting finished at 8.55 pm.

**Minutes of St Mary & St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting
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Actions from meeting

	Action (by Term 5 GB meeting, unless stated otherwise)	Who	Outcome
Action 1	LB to confirm requirements of Public Sector Equality Duty Statement and discuss Equality Objectives with the Leadership Team, and report at GB meeting.	LB	
Action 2	EK to work with LB on examples of short questionnaires on staff views and well-being.	EK, LB	
Action 3	All governors to review governor training programme brochures and identify relevant training opportunities (OPL/Oxfordshire County Council and EIG/Oxford Diocese – see dropbox). Chairs of Committees to prompt members of their committees on this.	All governors & Chairs of Committees	
–	SC to report on impact of school development plan measures to improve outcomes in English (Curriculum Committee).	SC	CC agenda item (Term 6)
–	CCW to report on results of school survey of views of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding (Term 6 GB).	CCW	GB agenda item (Term 6)
Action 4	Spring 2019 parent consultation (post-its) – SF to circulate timetable and sign-up sheet; all (non-staff) governors to sign up.	SF & all (non-staff) governors	
Action 5	Pending response to email enquiry confirming budget requirements, Comper/M&J Working Group governors to meet again with Comper governors; report to M&J GB.	C/M&J WG governors	
Action 6	Comper/M&J Working Group governors to confirm terms of reference for the group with Comper governors.	C/M&J WG governors	
Action 7	Attendance of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium – LB to add this as separate figure on pro forma for termly HT report to GB.	LB, CCW	
Action 8	Behaviour Working Group to meet in Term 5.	CB, JW, CCW, JG	
Action 9	Actions arising from Pupil Voice sessions – JG to contact suppliers for Key Stage 2 Friendship Bench; RG to liaise with PTA to request funding.	JG & RG	
Action 10	Actions arising from Pupil Voice sessions – LB to consider any other actions arising.	LB	
Action 11	Actions from website compliance review – LB & JG to update data and items identified.	LB, JG	
Action 12	Actions from website compliance review – JS & RMo to review governor record gaps.	JS, RMo	
Action 13	SF to liaise with Comper Head and governors; LB and SF to attend meeting with Comper Head and governors to discuss framework for partnership working.	SF LB, SF	
Action 14	Admissions for 2020/21, policy and procedures – LB to confirm website text amended to 'confirmed'.	LB	
Action 15	Governor skills audit – all governors to complete and return to RMo; RMo to report.	All gov's, RMo	

Appendices – documents presented/discussed

Agenda, Full GB meeting, 25 March 2019 (Term 4 meeting)
Full GB meeting, 5 February 2019 (Term 3 meeting) – minutes (interim)
Oxfordshire Partners in Learning, Training & Development Programme, School Governors and Clerks – brochure, 2018–19
Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, Excellence in Governance – training programme brochure, 2018–2019
Headteacher's long-form report: school context and self-evaluation summary – March 2019
Pupil Voice report, Key Stage 1 – October 2018
Pupil Voice report, Key Stage 2 – March 2019
The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools – extract from DfE statutory guidance document, August 2017
School website: checklist for maintained schools – extract from <i>The Key for School Leaders</i>
Compliance review of school website – March 2019
Update from Comper FGB – letter from Ben Cairns, Chair of Governors, Comper, 25 March 2019
St Mary & St John CE Primary, Skills audit for Governing Board – interim findings, March 2019
National Governors' Association Governing Board Skills Audit – 2017