

St Mary & St John CE Primary School

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Let all that you do be done in love... 1 Corinthians 16:14

Minutes of St Mary and St John CE Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting Monday, 13 September 2021 ('Term 0'), 7.00 pm, Meadow Lane

Present:

Bex Stott (BS), Headteacher
Sarah Franklin (SF), Foundation Governor – *Chair*
Anna Ballance (AB), Foundation Governor – *Co-Vice Chair*
Jenny Worroll (JW), Foundation Governor – *Co-Vice Chair*
Julia Bell (JB), Foundation Governor
Tim Foster (TF), Parent Governor
Emily Kerr (EK), Foundation Governor – arrived 7.09
Ben Klooss (BK), Parent Governor
Philip Ritchie (PR), Foundation Governor
Richard Tarver (RT), Local Authority Governor

In attendance:

Chris Chamier-Williams (CCW), Associate Member
Jane Godby (JG), Associate Member
Jenny Dyer (JD), Local Authority Clerk

Apologies:

Sarah Blackwell (SB), Associate Member
Elizabeth Clarkson (LC), Staff Governor
Mary-Anne Sinclair (MAS), Foundation Governor
Victoria Tofts (VT), prospective Associate Member

1. Welcome, apologies, quorum

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and especially Bex Stott as new Head Teacher of Mary and John.

Apologies were received as noted above and accepted.

The meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of any other urgent business

The Chair advised of an additional item relating to collective worship, which would be discussed under any other urgent business, agenda item 16.

JW informed governors of a recent publication *Vaxxers: The Inside Story of the Oxford AstraZeneca Vaccine*, where one of the authors acknowledged Mary and John indirectly for the keyworker provision for their child during lockdown.

3. Declarations of business/pecuniary interests, confirmation of eligibility

3.1 Declarations of business/pecuniary/personal interest in any item on this agenda

No declarations of interest were made by any members of the FGB.

Signed Chair of Governors: _____ Dated: _____

3.2 Annual confirmations

Relating to the following documents, the Chair reminded all governors, including associates, of the need to complete their annual 'Governing Body Confirmations' via GovernorHub:

- Declarations of Interest
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Governor Code of Conduct

In addition, governors would need to confirm they are not disqualified from serving as a school governor.

Action 1: All governors and associates to complete their annual return for the register of business/pecuniary interests (Governing Body Confirmations).

Action 2: All governors and associates to confirm that they are not disqualified from serving as a school governor (Governing Body Confirmations).

4. Appointment of Clerk to Governors

JD agreed to continue as Clerk to the Governing Body for 2021-2022. Governors approved the appointment.

5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair(s)

JD took the Chair for the election of Chair of Governors. SF confirmed that she was willing to stand again. There being no other nominations, SF was duly re-elected as Chair for 2021-2022.

SF conducted the election of Vice-Chairs. Both AB and JW were willing to stand for office. There being no other nominations, AB and JW were duly elected as Co-Vice Chairs for 2021-2022.

Chair and Vice-Chair elections for the academic year 2022/23 will be held at the first GB meeting of that year.

6. Appointment of Associate Members of the Governing Body

SF proposed the re-election of associate members SB, CCW, JG; their appointments were duly approved for 2021-2022. In addition, governors approved the appointment of Victoria Tofts, the school's Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo) as Associate Member for 2021-2022.

7. Safeguarding

7.1. DBS checks for all members of the GB

CCW confirmed that DBS checks had been carried out for all governors; those for new staff governors/associates were awaited.

7.2. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2021

All Governors were reminded to read this important document, available in FGB folder for this meeting, and to understand the latest updates, then to confirm via GovernorHub.

Action 3: For all governors to confirm they have read and understood KCSiE 2021 under the ‘Declarations’ tab within your personal profile on GovernorHub before the Term 1 FGB meeting.

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

8.1. Review/update of the Code of Conduct (three-year review) – review, approve

This document, reviewed every 3 years, was circulated prior to the meeting with proposed changes shown in blue.

Governors agreed the changes made and approved the Code of Conduct.

8.2. Annual confirmation of commitment to abide by the Code of Conduct

Action 4: Governors to confirm they agree to the Code of Conduct via GovernorHub, under the ‘Declarations’ tab within their personal profile before the Term 1 meeting.

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

This document, circulated prior to the meeting, was approved by governors, subject to one amendment clarifying the role of the Curriculum Committee: (p. 8) ‘... and strategic overview of teaching and learning in school ...’.

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

In reviewing the work of the GB and then sharing ideas going forward, SF was conducting conversations with all governors, with most of these having already taken place – these would be summarised in a GB self-evaluation report and presented at the October FGB meeting. As part of this process governors had agreed individual roles and responsibilities for the year ahead, summarised in the document ‘Mary & John GB – committees, other designated roles & working groups, 2021/22’, circulated before the meeting.

Governors approved the proposal for all governors to be allocated to committees and roles as outlined in this summary, and for the new foundation and parent governors, once appointed, to join the Finance, Premises and Staffing Committee (FPS).

11. Appointment of governors with special responsibilities

As above (item 10). Governors also agreed the following special responsibilities:

- RT as Chair of the Head Teacher Appraisal Committee, with RT and SF as co-clerks.
- SF as Chair of the Pay Committee and to clerk the meeting.

12. General update, new school year

12.1. School news

BS updated governors as to the start of the new academic year:

- BS welcomed parents and children at the gate each morning and this was providing an excellent opportunity to establish strong channels of communication with families on an informal basis.

- Two inset days had taken place with staff enthusiastic to start the new academic year. Areas covered included:
 - **Numbers on roll** – In Years 1-6, numbers were currently 34 children below capacity; this would impact on the budget by approximately £100k and in future years, if places were not taken up. At Comper, there was a full take up of places from September, with one entry deferred until October. Therefore, the number of pupils on roll for the Census Day on 2nd October would be key in determining the school's funding.
 - **Behaviour** – Approaches to behaviour and the school rules were re-visited, with a focus on creating a consistent culture involving the whole school community. To add clarity, it was agreed to reduce the number of rules from seven to three, enabling them to be more readily memorised: Ready, Respectful and Safe. These rules would be established as a 'blue print' and embedded throughout the term.
 - **Safeguarding** – Lanyards would be worn by all adults in school, with blue for staff members, yellow for visitors and then for any adults without lanyards to be challenged. This was considered to be really helpful for the children in recognising adults in school.
 - **Building & refurbishment** – Closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) had been installed at four site locations to improve security.
 - **School Vision and values** – These were revisited and discussed, since it was important for all staff, including those new to the school, to own the Vision and Values. Six statements embodied and underpinned the whole school ethos and would be articulated through the learning taking place, to impact on pupil achievement and outcomes: love, respect, empathy, courage, aspiration and curiosity.

Action 5: BS to share the vision and values with governors at the next FGB Meeting.

Relating to the installation of four CCTV cameras, governors challenged whether these were enough for the whole site and particularly in monitoring the boundary along Meadow Lane to minimise access to the grounds.

BS advised coverage would be reviewed. Although older children continued to access the site and use the playground after school, it was hoped the signage advising of CCTV would be a deterrent in keeping the school site safe.

12.2. COVID-19 update

The Risk Assessment, relating to virus transmission, had been circulated to governors via GovernorHub prior to the meeting. Should five or more positive COVID cases in one year group be reported, then a contingency plan would be implemented, to include reverting to bubbles and learning at home. BS reported that only one Covid case had been reported since the start of term.

Governors questioned whether the risk assessment adopted a more cautious approach than previously.

BS confirmed Mary & John was taking a 'middle line' approach and following national and local guidance. However, the situation presented challenges, since siblings of those contracting the virus could still attend school following a negative PCR test. To achieve greater social distancing, only one year group was eating lunch in the hall at a time, apart from Years 1 and 2, while those with packed lunches sat outside. Whole-school assemblies were being conducted in a hybrid way, with streaming to year groups in separate classrooms.

Relating to wellbeing, governors asked how staff were feeling at the start of the new academic year with the pandemic still prevalent.

BS advised how the whole school community was feeling confident and safe with the current arrangements. CCW and other staff present agreed that there was at present a general sense of staff feeling safe. Whilst the guidance was more fluid, staff were confident to make the necessary changes and share with the children, to enable them to understand how the school was working to keep everyone safe. Attendance, which can be an indicator of confidence, is normal.

Governors expressed concern about children being together from different year groups in the After School and Breakfast Clubs and asked about a contingency plan.

BS explained how there was wrap around care guidance. Furthermore, numbers at the Breakfast Club would be limited to 30, with the appropriate staff to pupil ratios.

Governors were aware of concerns expressed by parents and challenged whether there should be greater clarity within the plan.

BS confirmed that a letter had been sent to parents to provide clarity. Furthermore, the risk of transmission at playtimes was reduced because year groups, although together, were in well-ventilated spaces.

12.3. Summer building and refurbishment work

See minutes at Item 12.1.

12.4. Homework letter to parents – communicating approach and policy on homework

The Homework draft letter was available to governors for perusal prior to the meeting. It explained implementation of a more interactive approach, to include homework, via 'Purple Mash', an online platform. Interactive work, tailored to support the needs of all pupils, would be assigned to reinforce learning taking place in the classroom. The annual subscription amounted to £1300, or £2k over 4 years and therefore a considerable saving. BS emphasized the importance of an online homework tool, particularly if there were future closures. Furthermore, the children were familiar with the programme, it was user friendly and followed the English National Curriculum. In addition, Comper would be trialling 'Purple Mash', in linking to the new early years' statutory framework, instead of 'Tapestry', though would not necessarily change from Tapestry.

Governors challenged whether another learning platform was necessary and requested BS to include with the letter to parents an explanation as the rationale behind the move from ‘Seesaw’ to ‘Purple Mash’.

BS confirmed she would share how ‘Purple Mash’ worked well in her previous school to reassure parents and include all the benefits.

Governors agreed for ‘Purple Mash’ to be an agenda item for the next Curriculum Committee and for more information to be available.

Action 6: ‘Purple Mash’ to be an agenda item for the next Curriculum Committee.

12.5. Comper update

BS and Catherine King, Comper Head, are meeting fortnightly. An update would be available at the next FGB Meeting.

13. School improvement

13.1. School Development Plan 2021/22 – outline, for discussion

A summary of the current School Development Plan (SDP), with two main aims, then sub-divided, was shared with governors:

Aim 1: To develop a broad and balanced curriculum with strong outcomes in English and maths

- 1.1 To identify gaps in learning as children enter the new curriculum for their year group
- 1.2 To develop foundation subjects to provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum
- 1.3 To develop the role of subject coordinators in non-core subjects
- 1.4 Maths and English subject coordinators to monitor the performance of core subjects and observe a sample of lessons
- 1.5 To introduce assessment for non-core subjects to demonstrate progression.

Aim 2: To further develop a school community which fosters inclusion and personal well-being

- 2.1 To ensure the smooth running of a safe school during a pandemic
- 2.2 To put in place a remote learning platform to be used for homework and home-learning
- 2.3 To write a remote learning policy
- 2.4 To enrich the provision of spiritual experiences through which children develop their own spiritual language (SIAMS March 2016) and strengthen our relationship with our church
- 2.5 To further embed our restorative approach to behaviour and consolidate links to the wider behaviour policy
- 2.6 To identify gaps in pupils’ well-being
- 2.7 To make staff well-being a priority
- 2.8 To ensure all curriculum subjects have regard for diversity and inclusion
- 2.9 To use the outdoor space to increase physical activity and find opportunities for outdoor learning across the curriculum.

Governors questioned whether there would be a revised SDP replacing the previous SDP.

BS confirmed they were the same, so all familiar aims and objectives. These would be worked up into a detailed plan for 2021/22, to be discussed at the Term 1 GB meeting.

14. Policies, procedures

14.1. Procedure for administering medicines to children in school

BS confirmed that responsibility for ensuring medications were in date, and for administering them to pupils, was not within teachers' remit, but rested with parents. This protocol was standard practice across all schools and would be followed at Mary and John. Office staff would help with this on occasion.

14.2. Whistleblowing policy – confirm in line with guidance and available to all in school

In line with current guidance, the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) model policy had been adopted and was displayed in school and shared at induction, to ensure it was available to all staff. The policy had been reviewed by FPS last year (October/November 2020).

15. Dates of meetings for governors, 2021/22

Dates of 2021/22 Meetings were circulated prior to the last FGB Meeting, in July. There was only one change, with the Curriculum Committee meeting moving from 2 May to 5 May. All meeting dates were then approved by governors.

16. Any other urgent business (ref. item 2)

16.1 Collective Worship

A parent had queried religious content in school assemblies and the principle of 'collective worship'. Governors discussed the content of collective worship at Mary and John which is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', as required by the Education Reform Act, 1988. BS outlined how collective worship is inclusive, providing a time for reflection and celebration, as stated in the Collective Worship Policy, and takes into account the diverse cultural mix of the school's demographic.

Action 7: So that new parents understood the arrangements for Collective Worship at Mary and John, BS would send a letter to parents.

Future agenda items

- Child Protection & Safeguarding policy – approval (Term 1)
- School development plan, 2020/21 – final review (Term 1)
- School development plan, 2021/22 – discussion, approval (Term 1)
- Participation in Oxfordshire School Streets scheme – update (Term 1)
- Governor training needs – review, plans for 2021/22 (Term 1)
- Governing Body self-evaluation – including report on skills audit (Term 1)
- Public Sector Equality Duty statement (Term 1/2)
- Annual Safeguarding report to Governing Body (Term 2)
- Statement of Freedom of Information Publication Scheme – review, approval (Term 2)
- Year plan of key Mary & John Governing Body tasks and dates, 2021/22

The meeting closed at 8:40 pm.

Next Full Governing Body meeting (Term 1): Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 7.00 pm.