



ST JAMES' R.C. ACADEMY TRUST

Maybury Close, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1BL

Faith in Action, Working Together, Walking in the Footsteps of Christ

Minutes of the 117th meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 17 March 2016 at the school starting at 1700.

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)	Mark Edwards
Anna Boshier (Head Teacher)	Paul Gribben
Kevin Moon	Margaret Connell
Bobby Jasper	Kenneth Chan
Jo Gibson	Elizabeth Atkinson (co-opted)
Bruno Cotta	Lisa Weeks (Deputy Head Teacher)
Father David Camilleri	

In Attendance: Dominique Wells (Clerk to the Governors)

Papers relating to the meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

1. Opening Prayers

The opening prayers were led by Father David Camilleri.

2. Apologies for Absence

None.

3. Adoption of New Governors

Margaret Connell and Kenneth Chan were formally adopted by the Board as Foundation Governors.

Thanks were expressed to the retiring Governors, Toni Paris and David McCabe, for their years of dedicated service. Gifts had been given to them as an expression of thanks.

4. Declarations of Interest in items in this Agenda.

None.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting, held in November 2015, were reviewed.

5.1. Confirmation of Accuracy

The minutes were deemed to be an accurate record.

Minutes agreed by all.

5.2. Matters Arising

Item 7: Chair's Report - Website

The Chair noted that further detail should be included in the Governor section for compliance purposes and that the website needed to be regularly updated.

6. Head Teacher's Report

The report was based on the 'Holding the School to Account' questions as suggested by David Gosling. This was explained to the new Governors.

- **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance was reported to be higher than 97% which was very good, and punctuality had also improved.

- **Achievement**

The Head Teacher explained the new SATS terminology in relation to Years 2 and 6: 'Working towards', 'Reaching the expected standard' and 'Greater depth'. Independent writing included encouragement of redrafting, use of dictionaries and thesauruses. Moderating in school was taking place with the help of Mrs Weeks.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Does 'Greater depth' equal 'Mastery'?

A: No, it equals 'Expected'. For 'Mastery', the child should demonstrate ability in all their writing, not only here and there, or in Maths, they should be able to use their skills and teach it to other children. 'Greater depth' indicates more sophisticated problem-solving.

It was noted that it was hard to prepare for testing with only one sample test paper. Year 2 are the first year to cover the new curriculum at the right time.

- **Quality of Teaching**

100% of teachers were reported to be good or better, with many being outstanding. This had been confirmed by David Gosling.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Is there more use of apparatus in Maths teaching in Years 5 and 6?

A: Yes, the children see it as part of doing Maths. It helps them to learn representations. The issue is when the best time is to take it away in the lead up to testing.

- **Personal Development**

Kevin Moon and Mary Hutchinson reported that at the last Governor Morning, they talked to various children across the year groups about how safe they felt. The outcome was very positive: the children knew who to approach if there was an issue, they knew about procedures mentioned in the Safeguarding Policy, and were fluent in Internet Safety. The Chair added that the children felt rewarded for things that went well both at home and in school.

Some challenges were noted with regard to persistent non-attendance. This is now much improved.

- **Leadership and Management**

Copies of David Gosling's review of Leadership and Management and the SDIP had been distributed to Governors prior to the meeting. The SDIP is to be put on the school website.

Regarding additional reports previously distributed, the Head Teacher pointed out that the Autumn data report should be recognised as a snapshot in time. The data summary sheet was also a snapshot of the percentage of children reaching the required standard/'Expected' with regard to attainment and progress measured – each child's starting point is difference. It was noted that Ofsted are interested in 'progress'.

The Spring data would be reported at the next Children and Learning Committee meeting.

- **Exceeding, Gifted and Talented**

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: What criteria is used to identify and support underachieving Exceeding, Gifted and Talented children?

A: Mrs Wilson has gone through the characteristics with the staff so that they can identify these children. Appropriate support is given where required.

The EGT Governor noted that he has been impressed by the work Mrs Wilson is doing with these children.

Q: Is there a natural trend for there to be more EGT children in higher years, or does it depend on the cohort?

A: The level of EGT children changes year on year, but linked with maturity is a healthy competitiveness whereby the children push themselves and greater progress can be seen as SATs approach. The School is nevertheless mindful of protecting the child's mental health and the need to manage expectations.

- **Other**

The progress of SEND children is being monitored continuously throughout the year, with two pre-assessments not having progressed further.

No incidents of racism or other discrimination to report.

7. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that she had attended a Catholic Head Teachers and Chairs meeting in London, at which she had filled in a questionnaire indicating the need for more Professional Development from a Catholic point of view. She had attended Safeguarding Training.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Would all staff know who to approach with Safeguarding issues?

A: Yes, staff are all aware.

Paul Gribben left the meeting at 1750.

8. Budget Monitoring Report

The report was distributed prior to the meeting.

The Bursar noted the following:

- Strong positive cashflow with the recent building works having been paid for in full from revenue income
- Capital grants had been applied for, and the outcome was awaited.
- Going forward, cashflow looks still strong – this is a main target.
- There have been cuts in the EFA budget – this money has been cut gradually over the years, but the headline funding per pupil remains the same.
- There is £12k less revenue income due to less Fairer Funding, which gives the School c£80k benefit (previously c£100k), therefore this will be managed through prudent budgeting.
- The KPI of Current Assets vs. Current Liabilities is 1.5-2.0, which is good.

The Bursar explained that, as a charity, the school could not build up a surplus for the future since money is to be spent on the beneficiaries of the charity now. The maintenance fund (£120k legacy from the Local Authority when the School became an Academy) had been used on the new Reception classroom.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Is ongoing refurbishment reliant on grants?

A: There is some money in the budget for repairs and maintenance, the priorities being the KS2 toilets and flat roofing. The works would be phased.

The Bursar would send out the most up-to-date Budget Monitoring Report and welcomed any questions. **Action: BJ**

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Resources and Audit Committee/9.2 Children & Learning Committee

The draft minutes of the recent meetings of these committees were received.

10. Reports from Governor visits

Feedback on Humanities was covered in the Children and Learning Committee meeting.

David Gosling would look at Personal Development and Behaviour next term.

Governors were invited to the next Governor Morning on 26th April, and those who are Subject Ambassadors were invited to talk to the relevant subject leaders. A book scrutiny would take place.

11. Policies for Review

- **Safeguarding**

This is changing frequently, with the radicalisation section (p. 7) being updated. Indicators are noted, as is the e-learning PREVENT training, and ensuring that anything of concern according to the criteria should be immediately reported.

The Head Teacher would send the PREVENT flyer to the new Governors.

Action: ABo

The Head Teacher also noted that an Emergency/Lock-Down policy was being worked on. A Governor pointed out that in considering this, a procedure to ensure children are received by the correct parents should be included.

- **Positive Handling**

It was reported that training had been undertaken in how to move a child for his/her own and others' protection without hurting the child concerned. All staff were instructed in how to prevent a situation escalating and calming the child down. Additionally, how to handle reactions from other children present via a debrief after an incident by the class teacher.

12. Succession Planning

It was noted that the School was fortunate to have sufficient willing Governors. In future, the appointment of Foundation Governors would require a person in addition to the priest to make a recommendation. It was recognised that appointments should be skills-based. Parent Governors are approaching the time for (re-)election and the process would begin around 3rd May.

13. Umbrella Trust

The Head Teachers' group met to go through the Terms of Reference and the minutes of that meeting are yet to be circulated. It was reported that Academies were being encouraged into groups called 'Multi-Academy Trusts' (MATs) but if the Umbrella Trust is working well and all the schools within it are 'good' or 'better', there would be no interference. Issues would only arise if a school went into a category and therefore David Gosling's input is seen as pivotal to this.

14. Any Other Business

- Website – it was noted that the appearance of the website on mobile devices required improvement.
- Admissions to Coloma Convent – it was noted that families from this area are not in the catchment.
- Sports Clubs – there has been an increase or change in prices for the Summer Term. Some clubs are privately run, but the Head Teacher would look into the reasons with a view to informing parents. **Action: ABo**

There was positive acknowledgement of the 'seasonal' changes to the sports and activities offered.

- Bishop Pat would be visiting the School on 13th June in order to bless the new extension. A plaque would be made for this build.

Confidential items were discussed.

15. Dates of next meetings

Governor Morning	Tuesday 26 April at 9.15am
Resources & Audit Committee	Tuesday 3 May at 4.30pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 17 May at 4.30pm
Full Governing Body	Thursday 16 June at 5.00pm

16. The Closing Prayer was led by Fr David Camilleri

The meeting closed at 1840.