



## **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 115th meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at the school starting at 1700.**

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)

Anna Boshier (Head Teacher)

Kevin Moon

David McCabe

Robert Jasper

Jo Gibson

Father David Camilleri

Elizabeth Atkinson (co-opted)

Lisa Weeks (Deputy Head Teacher)

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**

Peter Gudge, Austin Barradell, Bruno Cotta and Toni Paris sent their apologies.

#### **3. Declarations of Interest** in items in this Agenda.

None.

#### **4. Minutes** of the previous meeting, held in March 2015, were reviewed.

##### **4.1. Confirmation of Accuracy.**

One amendment to be made.

*Item 12: Umbrella Trust Update* - Toni Paris to be included as having attended the first meeting of the Umbrella Trust.

The minutes were deemed to be an accurate record.

**Minutes agreed by all.**

##### **4.2. Matters Arising.**

The Chair requested that the Head Teacher include a report on 'British Values' as part of her Report (item 5).

## 5. Head Teacher's Report

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

- **Attendance**

The Head Teacher reported that attendance was 95.7% according to the Spring Term census. The Governors recognised that attendance below 95% would be questioned by Ofsted. Therefore, letters from the EWO to address this issue had been sent to parents whose children whose attendance had been unsatisfactory. Following this, it was hoped that figures would show an improvement going forwards, back up to 97-98%.

Governors expressed grave concern at the drop in attendance and supported a zero tolerance approach to non-attendance due to factors other than illness.

It was discussed how to encourage parents to make attendance at school a priority. Ideas included putting weekly attendance figures on the website and issuing posters from local authorities regarding this. Governors also suggested that parents may think twice about taking unauthorised absence if it were made clearer to them the wider negative impact it would have on the children and the school.

- **Targets**

Mrs Weeks was commended for helping Year 6, particularly in giving extra support to the children who needed it.

**Questions asked by Governors:**

*Q: Writing at level 5 is 51% compared to the target of 75%. Why is this and should targets be lowered next year?*

*A: Writing is a more challenging area and has been below 51% previously. Targets are aspirational, but the idea is that it is better to set a high aspirational target to reach and not reach it rather than set a low one. It is difficult to change a culture if only low targets are set.*

Year 5 are working within the new assessment without levels. Children at one end are receiving extra support (one-to-one, lunchtime clubs, prior learning before school), and at the other end doing well.

81% of Reception children are at or above expectation, and the Chair commented on how good this level was. The teachers' judgements were agreed in a recent visit by a moderator, and equally, the Year 1 phonics screening judgements were also moderated and agreed.

The new tracking system is working fine and should be more beneficial as more data is input.

The Governors were informed that David Gosling would be making a visit to evaluate 'Overall Effectiveness' on 13<sup>th</sup> July and they were invited to attend. The next meeting of the Umbrella Trust is planned for 9<sup>th</sup> September.

**Questions asked by Governors:**

*Q: Is any cohort causing concern going into 2015/16?*

*A: This year's Year 6 are the start of a three-year trend of a number of pupils who have low to middle prior attainment. Much work is being put into Year 4 as*

*there are a number of needs in this class. However, the annual meetings with parents were very positive and significant progress has been seen with these children, despite the challenges of changing to the new curriculum and assessment and this particular cohort having to catch up more than others as a result. The Head Teacher and parents are very proud of the work being done here.*

- **Teachers**

The Head Teacher reported that 100% of teachers were good or outstanding, and that this was supported by the recent Section 48 review. Mrs Weeks and Mrs Richards are involved in moderating at other schools.

The Head Teacher had been invited to become a member of the Diocesan Excellence Board which had been set up and had had its first meeting. There was the recognition that, while Spirituality is of high importance, Excellence was also important. The next meeting would be in the Autumn Term.

It was also reported that:

- the R.E. inspector was satisfied with their findings
- the Power of Reading was having a significant impact on the children's writing
- the cursive handwriting initiative was firmly embedded
- the emphasis in Maths was on reasoning and problem-solving, with encouraged use of maths equipment
- a practical approach and key vocabulary was being emphasised in science
- Mrs Richards had given an excellent presentation on Maths and Cookery at the Children and Learning meeting
- Visits and school trips were enhancing Humanities
- there is a significant increase in P.E. and sports activities, with the Sports Premium being well spent.

Mrs Connolly was praised for her efforts in initiating the increase in P.E. and sports activities, and indeed all the staff were commended highly for successfully taking on additional responsibilities over and above their classroom commitments.

The Governors requested more explanation regarding the Power of Reading at the next Children and Learning Committee meeting. **Action: LW, ABo.**

- **Behaviour and Safety**

There are high expectations of the children's behaviour and excellent feedback has been received concerning recent trips. It was reported that the children were considerate to each other at the Year 4 sleepover, and that Years 5 & 6 demonstrated maturity in the questions they asked and the respect they showed at the talk on gender issues. The Chair congratulated the Head Teacher on behalf of the Board for having shown true leadership in handling this subject in the absence of guidance from external bodies.

- **British Values**

It was reported that multifaith teaching was continuing throughout the school with each class focussing on a different faith. The school philosophy sessions continue to take place at Monday assemblies and enable the children to explore issues concerning right and wrong. Sport has encouraged teamwork and team playing, while the school council meetings encourage democracy within the school. Recently, a Lebanese visitor came to talk to the children and also share their traditional food and dancing.

- **Leadership and Management**

Father David Camilleri was formally welcomed to the Full Governing Body. It was reported that the children had received him very positively.

The Head Teacher reported that performance management interviews with support staff and admin staff had taken place, and observations were underway.

The building project to improve the school facilities (as described per the recent Resources & Audit Committee minutes) was in progress, and quotes had been obtained.

The new website was being built and a 'mock-up' would be sent first to the Chair and to the staff for feedback before being sent to the Governors. It was agreed that useability of the site was of great importance, and how it would be kept up-to-date depended on how easy it would be to maintain.

Regarding PSHE, it was confirmed that the school upholds Pope Francis' principle of tolerance to all and respecting differences.

Governors who attended the Governor Morning reported that the encouragement and comments from the teachers in books were most impressive. The marking was in depth with comments being responded to and taken up readily by the children. (The Head Teacher noted an amendment to be made to the attendees on her report. **Action: ABo.**)

Parent questionnaires were to be sent out, but likely in September rather than with the Summer Report (where it might be overlooked). Questionnaires had been sent to parents in relation to the NACE award and sports.

**Spring Data:** The Head Teacher took the Governors through the Spring data.

**CPD:** The Deputy Head informed the Governors that staff are enabled to attend any training they feel they would benefit from, and are asked to give written feedback on any training they undertake. The Governors were invited to review the file of feedback should they wish.

## **6. Chair's Report**

The Chair invited the Subject Ambassadors to offer feedback.

One Governor reported that he observed a Year 2 Maths lesson during the Governor Morning and was impressed by the level of engagement of the children and how they were learning in their own way through the use of the maths equipment available to them. The Mathletics initiative was reported to be mostly positive, although the funding of this would need consideration.

Another Governor indicated that it was a challenge for teachers to find time to report back to them, but ongoing communication was certainly the way forward.

Another Governor stated that she had been impressed on all levels during the Governor Morning.

One Governor attended the Governor Morning and had written an informative and positive report on his subject areas since he was unable to attend this Full Governing Body meeting. These papers were circulated to the Governing Body following the meeting.

The presentations given at the Children and Learning Committee meeting were reported to have been excellent and worthwhile. Mrs Richards gave an informative presentation on Maths and Cookery. Particular thanks was extended by the Governors to Mrs Wilson for her hard work in respect of the NACE award and all she does as subject leader for the Exceeding, Gifted and Talented.

## **7. Budget Monitoring Report**

The Bursar confirmed that results were positive and that there were no areas of concern. He has committed to sending monthly reports to the Resources & Audit Committee.

He reported also that the systems report from Baxters was excellent and hardly any recommendations had to be made. This was due to the hard work which the Finance Officer had put in, and the Finance Officer was duly thanked and commended.

## **8. Committee Reports**

### **8.1 Resources and Audit Committee/8.2 Children & Learning Committee**

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

## **9. Reports from Governors with Special Responsibilities**

Discussed under Item 6 above regarding the Governor Morning.

The Governor responsible for Community Cohesion offered to draft an annual letter from Governors to parents in lieu of a Governor Newsletter. **Action: JG.**

## **10. Policies for Review**

These will be reviewed in the Autumn Term when they are required.

## **11. Umbrella Trust Update, Buildings Update**

Discussed under Item 6 'Targets' and 'Teachers' above.

## **12. Any Other Business**

It was confirmed that David Gosling would be assessing other schools in the Umbrella Trust on 'Overall Effectiveness'.

Confidential items were discussed.

It was noted that there are prospectively two Governor vacancies and the Board welcomed Father David's advice concerning potential Governors.

**13. Dates of next meetings**

Attached.

**14. The Closing Prayer** was led by Father David Camilleri.

**The meeting closed at 1900.**

## **DATES OF GOVERNOR MEETINGS 2015/16**

### **Autumn Term**

Resources Committee	Tuesday 06 October at 4.30pm
Admissions Committee (to agree policy)	Tuesday 13 October at 4.00pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 13 October at 4.30pm
Governor Morning	Tuesday 17 November at 9.15am
Full Governing Body	Thursday 26 November at 5.00pm

### **Spring Term**

Resources Committee	Tuesday 26 January at 4.30pm
Governor Morning	Tuesday 9 February at 9.15am
Admissions Committee (to endorse process used for admissions)	Tuesday 1 March at 4.00pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 1 March at 4.30pm
Full Governing Body	Thursday 17 March at 5.00pm

### **Summer Term**

Governor Morning	Tuesday 26 April at 9.15am
Resources 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