



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 116th meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 26th November 2015 at the school starting at 1700.

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)	Bruno Cotta
Anna Boshier (Head Teacher)	Paul Gribben
Kevin Moon	Mark Edwards
David McCabe	Elizabeth Atkinson (co-opted)
Jo Gibson	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 the Chair of Governors.

2. Apologies for Absence

Father David Camilleri, Bobby Jasper and Toni Paris sent their apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest in items in this Agenda.

None.

4. Committee Matters

4.1. Adoption of New Governors.

The following Governors were adopted by the Board:

- Paul Gribben (Foundation Governor)
- Mark Edwards (Local Governor)

4.2. Governors' Code of Practice

Copies of these were distributed and signed by all present.

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

5.1. Confirmation of Accuracy.

Amendments as follows:

Item 5: Head Teacher's Report - Targets – '81% of Reception children....'

Item 7: Budget Monitoring Report – ‘The Bursar ... **has committed to** sending monthly reports ...’

The minutes were deemed to be an accurate record.

Minutes agreed by all.

5.2. Matters Arising.

Item 5: Head Teacher’s Report - Teachers

The Chair reported that during the recent Governors’ Morning, she had seen real evidence that the cursive handwriting initiative was firmly embedded and the children seem to be taking it very seriously. Additionally, prospective parents had commented positively on the handwriting during the Open Morning.

6. Head Teacher’s Report

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

- **Achievement**

The Chair of Governors commented that Ofsted will consider Achievement a very important area and that pages 1 and 2 of the Head Teacher’s Report answers many of the questions Governors might be asked (by OFSTED) concerning achievement.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: How is this best seen in the context of the Raise-On-Line report?

A: Page 36 of the report gives a comprehensive chart. Andy Best has completed his analysis but did not include our L6 Reader, he is therefore currently correcting this. The ‘G’ pages give Governors the information they need.

St. James’ is in the top 5% of schools nationally for all subjects.

The Head Teacher highlighted that the School should be proud of the results since staff had worked extremely hard to achieve them, given the level of middle-low attainers. She also pointed out that similar challenges would be faced in the current Years 5 and 6 due to the higher level of needs. There is a higher-than-average level of low prior attainment in our Year 5 class. Therefore, staff are working very hard with these children. The Year 6 cohort last year had a high level of middle attainers and the Value Added was very pleasing.

Additionally, there were no significant areas for development on the Inspection Dashboard, and the report from David Gosling’s last visit was all ‘green’, so there was much to be proud of.

The Chair reported that the children who David Gosling met were confident and proud of their work, and that she was consequently proud of the children. Progress has been better than expected.

- **Assessment without Levels.**

‘Assessment without Levels’ was shared with parents at the recent Curriculum Meeting. Benchmarks are still required and discussion within the Umbrella Trust has been taking place to determine what is required in ‘mastery’. It was noted

that the schools had different ways of monitoring progress, which posed difficulty for the discussion, although Classroom Monitor was used by the majority of the Trust.

The SATs tests are different in look and difficulty and there are no past papers to refer to. The staff and children are nevertheless continuing to work hard towards this end.

- **Teachers**

It was reported that one member of staff had started working towards her MPQSL qualification.

7. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that, following David Gosling's visit last summer during which he gave her an 'Ofsted-style' interview, his recommendation going forward was based around Community Cohesion and the analysis of the parent questionnaire. Therefore, she had met with the Head Teacher and Jo Gibson (Community Cohesion Governor) to carry out this task, the result of which showed that there were many positive aspects to the School but on the other side, parents did not seem to know what the Governors did and they also felt communication could be improved. These issues have been addressed during the term:

- on the first Tuesday of every month, the Chair and Jo Gibson have been available at the school gates in the morning to talk with parents
- at Goal Sharing, the Chair spoke to around 90% of parents and handed out a sheet explaining the Governors' role. Any issues brought up were resolved. The website seemed to be a concern to some, but a soft trial of the new site would take place next week before the website goes 'live'.
- the weekly Newsletter to parents was working better and the tone of emails sent out was also better.

It was felt that this had been a worthwhile exercise and the Head Teacher thanked the Chair and Jo for their professional approach towards it.

8. Budget Monitoring Report

The School was reported to be in a healthy financial position. Following the Reception classroom building project, it is holding £80k in surplus which is considered as a necessary amount to hold. The Governors thanked Bobby Jasper for his work in organising the Finance Manual at low cost.

The auditors were chasing for the Trustees Report to be completed.

Action: DMC, TP

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 Subject Ambassador Governors

The Exceeding, Gifted and Talented, Science Governor reported on the Governor Morning he attended, during which he had met with the teachers relevant to his areas.

With regard to the NACE award feedback, the School was in a good position and any areas for further improvement were being addressed. In particular, more competitions for the children were being sought.

With regard to Science, new units are being brought in and the data is being collated along the same lines as ICT, which has provided a good framework for this. A Science Day is being planned, with students in Further Education potentially contributing and bringing their knowledge back down to school level.

The Chair referred to her report regarding SEN.

11. Holding the School to Account Process

Many of the questions were addressed in the Head Teacher's Report (Item 6 above). There were no exclusions or referrals to report.

12. Policies for Review

- **Safeguarding**

The changes made concern emphasis on radicalisation, reporting extremism or extremist behaviour, and female genitalia mutilation. Also, a section on how staff can protect themselves from accusations.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: What is done about the physical security of the school, and is this required in the policy?

A: CCTV is installed at the front and back entrances of the school.

The Head Teacher would update the appropriate policy regarding visitors to the school. **Action: ABo**

The Chair offered information concerning an e-learning training module – Channel General Awareness – which is part of the PREVENT strategy. Although more relevant to secondary schools, it was considered still useful and she would distribute the link via the Clerk. All agreed that the more safeguarding training undertaken, the better. **Action: MH**

- **Health & Safety**

No significant changes to this policy.

- **SEND**

Only minor amendments to this policy.

All policies presented were ratified.

13. Umbrella Trust Update

Discussed under Item 5 above.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: It has been noted that different tracking methods are used by the schools. Is there any recommendation likely to be received from David Gosling as to which is better?

A: No one system is recommended, it does not matter if the terminology differs as long as schools agree what is Expected. Book scrutinites help with this.

14. Any Other Business

- Two new members of staff have been appointed – a cleaner and a new member of the office staff. The Head Teacher is pleased with both appointments.
- The phone company who have proposed to set up the phone mast opposite the Church were contacted, but there was no satisfactory reply. It was noted that the Councillors are also against the proposal.

Paul Gribben and Elizabeth Atkinson left the meeting at 1800.

- The Year 6 trip to France in October 2016 has been cancelled due to recent events. The School had to act quickly in order to avoid loss of money. There is difficulty in finding an alternative venue, but the School is on several waiting lists and it is hopefully that somewhere will be found.

Confidential items were discussed.

15. Dates of next meetings

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

16. The Closing Prayer was led by the Chair of Governors.

The meeting closed at 1810.