



## **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 122<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at the school starting at 1700.**

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)	Bobby Jasper
Lisa Weeks (Head Teacher)	Mark Edwards
Bruno Cotta	Kenneth Chan
Jo Gibson	Father David Camilleri
Paul Gribben	Elizabeth Atkinson
Margaret Connell	Michelle Wilson (Deputy Head Teacher)
Carlette Victoire-Nijjar	

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 meeting was opened with a prayer entitled 'Trust' led by Father David Camilleri.

The Board welcomed Lisa Weeks, Michelle Wilson and Bobby Jasper in their respective new roles within School and the Governing Body.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Paul Gribben.

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

None.

#### **4. Committee Matters**

All Governors signed the Governors' Code of Practice.

#### **5. Minutes** of the previous meeting, held in June 2017, were reviewed.

##### **5.1. Confirmation of Accuracy**

The minutes were deemed to be a true record.

**Minutes agreed by all.**

##### **5.2. Matters Arising**

None.

## 6. Head Teacher's Report

The Head Teacher's report had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and taken as read. The Head Teacher highlighted the following points from the report:

- Thanks were offered to Anna Boshier for aiding the smooth transition of the Head Teacher role.
- The peer review undertaken by the Head Teachers of the Umbrella Trust had gone very well.
- The SDIP has been produced and completed, taking into account the results of the parent questionnaire and significant input from staff. The Governors would review this document during a working party taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 3.30-6.30pm.
- While many schools are narrowing their curriculum, St James' curriculum continues to be broad with staff enabling a huge number of activities as demonstrated by the reports presented in the recent committee meetings: including PE, British Values, French. The NQTs have subject responsibilities (art, history and RE). It was recognised that, despite being a one-form entry school, St James' provides a rich curriculum for its children.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: Is St James' still an international school?*

*A: Yes - the School maintains links with the Lebanon via Y6; a link is being sought with the Spanish school at which Mrs Jones' daughter is working in, to tie in with the Spanish Club; a proposed Y5 link with France is being investigated.*

Thanks were given to the Head Teacher for her excellent report.

## 7. Holding the School to Account

Many questions had already been answered in the Head Teacher's Report as per item 6 above. Others were addressed as below:

- Although league tables are not a significant focus of the School, it was pleasing to note that it has gained recognition in the Sunday Times, ranking 87<sup>th</sup> in the country. Recognition has also been given in the News Shopper and Petts Wood Residents Association publication.
- The School's results are all above the national average.
- The trends in writing have been fed into the SDIP.
- On the whole, there are no weaknesses, only tweaks for improvement.
- The work scrutinies have shown that the children need to be given more time to respond to the questions asked. However, standards are equal across the curriculum.
- Regarding progress, all groups are achieving better than expected. The only trend to note was that there is a natural dip between Y2 and Y3 due to the transition in curriculum, but that this picks up going forward. Children who could progress more are identified and given specific support. Trends are very cohort-led in this small school.

- The NACE award is currently reviewed every four years.
- The Middle Leaders are new to leadership and are undergoing training on being subject leaders. Much CPD is being undertaken by staff and records are kept by the Deputy Head Teacher.
  - o Mrs Wilson has had training in Safeguarding, First Aid, Diabetic Training, Fire Awareness, E-Safety, SEND and autism. She reported that there was new assessment for RE and an inspection due.
  - o Miss Spedding and Miss Gray recently attended a Science course and returned with many fresh ideas.
  - o Mr Parr has attended NQT training at Warren Road as well as internal training in school with records kept by his mentor.
  - o Other training courses attended by staff include Maths for KS1, Early Years Forum, Wellbeing of the Child (with focus on therapy writing), leadership training.
- The external peer review recently undertaken was successful with 70% outstanding teaching and the remainder good with outstanding features.
- The Head Teacher carried out an internal review and found teaching to be outstanding – there are no barriers to teaching.
- No reports of racism or homophobia to report. Five cases of bullying had arisen, of which four have been dealt with and not recurred. The fifth is recent and being dealt with. It was recognised that the word 'bullying' is an emotive one and therefore any concerns are taken seriously and dealt with on case-by-case basis.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: In which year groups does bullying happen?*

*A: Usually in lower KS2 – factors such as maturity and interpretation come into play.*

*Q: How does it come to the School's attention?*

*A: Via parents, children or the Listening Ear.*

*Q: Are parents satisfied with the outcome of investigations?*

*A: Yes, on the whole - the emphasis is on transparency, communication and discussion.*

- Prevent training has been undertaken by staff and Governors. British Values are embedded within the School and are visible around the School. Words such as 'radicalisation' and 'extremism' are considered more appropriately used at KS3 level and therefore avoided where possible, but if they are brought up, they are discussed in a child-appropriate way. Philosophy for Children teaches the children tolerance and respect for others' opinions even if we don't agree with them. 'Educate against Hate' provides resources for pupils, teachers and parents.
- There are six Post-Looked After children and no CAFs have been completed.
- There are six children with persistent attendance issues and help is given to the families to overcome difficulties. Punctuality is constantly monitored.
- There are no staffing issues – appraisals have been carried out.
- All staff have seen and had input into the SDIP, which has a new format.

## **8. R.E. Report**

The Deputy Head Teacher outlined the events and initiatives which had taken place / are taking place around R.E. These included:

Questions for Fr David assembly, external speakers from Cafod and the Hindu faith, Golden Promises and Faith in Action, Y5 and Y6 leading worship, whole school masses, KS1 prayer bear, Harvest Mass with donations to Orpington Food Bank, RE Ambassadors, Little Way Week, RE questionnaire, Wednesday Word, prayer day, Umbrella Trust cluster group, Y4 cake sale for Macmillan, link with the Parish Council.

## **9. Chair of Governors' Report**

The Chair's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

The Chair highlighted points in her report as follows:

- The Governors table on Goal Sharing Day was very worthwhile – thanks offered to Governors who gave up their time for this.
- A hygiene spot check of the kitchen resulted in 5 stars being awarded by the environmental officers.
- There is more structure in the Afterschool Club, with the new 20-minute homework session having positive feedback.
- Governor afternoons and mornings would be instigated for the next Governor morning.

Parent Pay was discussed but is considered too expensive to implement as the providers take a percentage of the income. The Bursar advised that it was financially easier not to use Parent Pay in a small school as funds clear more quickly and it is easier to account for the amounts without it.

## **10. Trustees Report**

The Bursar highlighted main aspects of the Trustees Report and Annual Accounts for the Governors as follows:

- Regulation has increased due to fraud being more prevalent in schools. The regulation doesn't differentiate on size of school.
- The School has no fixed assets – we have a right to occupy – and so the accounts presented are simple. There are no debts or rent owed – only rates are paid on the buildings.
- At the end of the year, the School had £306k in current assets (cash and debtors) vs. £107k in creditors (including electricity, gas and outstanding amounts from the toilet refurbishment which were not paid until September), leaving net assets of £199k (compared to £109k last year).
- The pension liability is made up of our portion of the LBB pension deficit, funded over a rolling 11-year period.
- The two KPIs used are the ratios of current assets vs current liability and staff costs vs grant income.

- The audit report was unqualified, meaning that there were no significant issues and the School is a going concern. The School currently has a strong position but there are uncertain times ahead regarding future funding.
- The School is compliant.
- The surplus is held in deposits, not investments.

Thanks were offered by the Head Teacher on behalf of all the Governors to the Bursar for his hard work and willingness to continue working out-of-hours where necessary while the Finance Officer has been on long-term sick leave.

## **11. Committee Reports**

The minutes from the recent Resources & Audit Committee and Children & Learning Committee meetings would be emailed to the Chair and Governors before the end of term. Thanks were offered to the Clerk for her work and fullness of reporting.

The Terms of Reference for both Committees had been reviewed and signed.

## **12. Governor Reports – Subject Ambassadors**

12.2 New subject ambassadors and Link Governors were appointed as follows:

- Paul Gribben – Link Governor; Health and Safety; website overview
- Mark Edwards – e-Safety
- Margaret Connell – Literacy, French & Spanish
- Carlette Victoir-Nijjar – Humanities
- Jo Gibson – Staff & Pupil Wellbeing; Community Cohesion; Governors' section in school newsletter
- Mary Hutchinson – R.E.; P.E.; SEN; Safeguarding
- Bobby Jasper – British Values
- Fr David Camilleri – Spiritual Direction

Subject ambassadors would meet with the relevant teachers in January – Governors were requested to email the office to arrange a suitable time.

The SDIP would be distributed to Governors.

## **13. Policies for Review**

Policies had been reviewed and revised in Committee, and were presented for signing by the Chair.

**All policies were adopted.**

## **14. Umbrella Trust**

The external reviewer appointed last year was found to be unsatisfactory, and a new one has been appointed. She will start in January, and the School will have one review in the Spring Term and two in the Summer Term. She may wish to speak with

Governors, the main question being 'what impact do Governors have on the school?' Knowing the data is key for Governors.

*Questions asked by Governors:*

*Q: Is our data sufficient that OFSTED will not need to come?*

*A: OFSTED visit on a three-year cycle, but outstanding schools are sometimes not visited for years. However, they may do spot checks. Nevertheless a lot of work can be carried out by OFSTED without the need to visit.*

*Q: Is Parent View worth doing now?*

*A: If OFSTED give the School notice, there will be time to send this out. Likewise the R.E. inspection.*

*Q: How is the Governors' input linked to pupil outcomes?*

*A: Governors have links as subject ambassadors. Governor training and feeding back on this training can also have impact.*

Training is regularly offered to Governors, ad hoc booking being the cheapest option rather than the package offered.

One UT meeting was cancelled – another date is yet to be fixed.

The Head Teacher has attended three meetings with the other Head Teachers which were positive.

It was decided that speech and language provision would be co-ordinated as a Trust for the schools in the Trust.

## **15. Any other business**

Tickets for the Eucharistic Congress are being arranged.

The Deputy Head Teacher would attend a conference for R.E. subject leaders.

Prevent training would be sent out again for Governors who had not yet completed this.

Jo Gibson is in charge of the Governors section of the School's weekly newsletter. She invited input from Governors, especially from the Resources Committee.

## **16. Dates of next meetings**

Resources & Audit Committee	Tuesday 23 January at 4.30pm
Governor Morning	Tuesday 6 February at 9.15am
Admissions Committee (to endorse process used for admissions)	Tuesday 27 February at 4.00pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 27 February at 4.30pm
Full Governing Body	Thursday 15 March at 5.00pm

## **17. The Closing Prayer** was led by Fr David Camilleri.

**The meeting closed at 18.40**