



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malmesbury
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
(virtually via MS Teams)
7 July 2021 at 6.30pm

Present

Gregory Fauvarque - Chair (GF)	Rachel Copeland - Vice (RC)	Steve Boughton - Vice (SB)
Sue Woods (SW)	Colin Kershaw (CK)	David Bryson (DB)
Helen Lever (HL)	Janine Birkin-Hewitt (JBH)	Kieron Lillis (KL)
Nuala Oughton (NO)	Theresa Adams (TA)	Nicki Warne (Clerk)

Minutes		ACTIONS
1.	Opening Prayer and Welcome NO opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2.	Apologies Steve Croft (SC) (accepted)	
3.	Register of Business Interests All governors present confirmed they had no changes to declare for the Register of Pecuniary Interests. Governor Training Record The clerk confirmed that the training record was up to date.	
4.	Minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the FGB held on 25 March 2021 were accepted as a true record. (To be signed by GF)	GF
5.	Matters Arising & carried forward The chair confirmed that all actions from the last FGB were complete with the exclusion of those carried forward below and with the following notes and comments: A staff survey would be held in the autumn, with a view to formalising actions at M,V&E. Carried forward: SB had been tasked with developing some guidelines regarding the structure and recruitment into committees. He agreed to circulate this by 19/07 with a view to agreeing offline in advance of the next FGB.	TA SB
6.	Notification of AOB a. RC - website review b. RC - inconsistencies in minute taking.	
7.	Governor Matters a. SIA term 4 visit – Leadership & Governance The Chair updated Governors on the School Improvement Advisor's (SIA) visit to school, where she spoke to a number of governors. The Governor extract of the report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The feedback was generally positive, but areas for improvement were identified including focusing on the strategy, which remains an ongoing action as part of the Strategic Review, and which would be revisited in September. There was some feedback on the Induction Policy and these were in the process of being implemented. Governors felt that her advice regarding preparations for Ofsted were particularly useful, and much more detailed than advice previously received.	

The final discussion centred around the SIA advice to streamline the link governors to align with core subjects, statutory requirements and the SDP as this would help Governors focus on the priorities for the school. A governor questioned whether reducing the number of link governors would prevent governors from having a well-rounded view of the school. However, it was suggested that in training the latest thinking was that too many link governors could be quite distracting and quite an overhead on the school, and focusing on core priorities would mitigate against this.

b. Link Governors – clarification of processes and role

The Chair explained that link governors were the liaison between the school and the Governing Board; helping the Board to hold the staff to account and to truly know what is going on in the school. Therefore, a link governor visit should be a professional visit that appraises progress. However, currently the link governor visits aren't always focusing on the SDP and there was a discussion surrounding how to focus visits more keenly onto areas for improvement.

SW offered all governors guidance about the content of a link governor visit in advance of their visit to the school and suggested that governors speak to her before their meeting with their curriculum leader.

It was also suggested that the addition of a box for final feedback from the HT on the Governor Visits Form (where the HT could outline actions) would demonstrate that governors are closing the loop of communication and leadership.

Governors were informed that the SIA had provided a useful and more directing template for the Governor Visit Form, which was being explored.

This would be circulated in advance of the next FGB after feedback from SW and RC.

Governors were keen to have some training from **SW** on this how to improve link governor visits and this would be looked into in September.

RC informed Governors that L&S would be setting a process for the review of Governor Visit Forms in September. This would feed into an update of the Governor Visits Policy. **SW** and **RC** to review.

SB said the Diocesan guidance on link governor visits was really useful and agreed to send to the clerk for circulating to all.

The Chair actioned all Governors to consider the focus of the list of link governor roles in advance of the next FGB.

Link governors were currently listed as such:

<p>Pupil Premium & SEND – JBH Safeguarding, Child Protection & Looked After Children – RC EYFS: NO – linked with Becky Just Writing / Phonics /Reading: DB Catholic Ethos, Parish Links & Chaplaincy Team – SB + NO Assessment & Tracking – GF</p>	<p>Pupil and Staff Wellbeing – TA IT – GF PE/Sport – TBC Maths – TBC Science – CK Behaviour – NO Website – RC Creative Arts – TA Humanities – KL</p>
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c. Ofsted – ongoing preparation

The Chair had shared two documents with the Board in advance of the meeting. He shared his experience of the LA Ofsted training he undertook earlier in the year and the slidepack was shared. He encouraged all governors to undertake the training in the coming year and dates for the 2021-22 Ofsted for Governors training would be circulated with the minutes. The second document, the Governor LA checklist for Ofsted preparation, was provided by the SIA and was an empty form that would need to be populated in order to gather evidence for an Ofsted inspection.

GF outlined the sort of challenging questions that an Ofsted inspector might ask. The Head said Governors need to think about the evidence that can be gathered to answer these questions.

ALL

GF, SW, RC

SW

SW, RC

SB

ALL

ALL

GF suggested that in order to prepare and be ready to respond to questions that Ofsted are likely to ask, the Governing Board should – over the next 12-18 months – go through the LA checklist. The questions on governance should be RAG-rated as per the template and evidence collected against each question. He proposed taking three questions per FGB, and review feedback at the following FGB. Therefore, for this FGB it was agreed to start with the first three questions under accountability. All governors were actioned with preparing for these questions ahead of the October FGB:

1. How effective is your GB with regards to monitoring and holding the leadership team to account?
2. How does the GB seek evidence in relation to pupil progress and attainment?
3. The HT's report is a useful way of monitoring relevant key indicators and measuring impact. What information is provided to Governors and does it effectively support Governors in your role?

ALL

The Chair requested that Ofsted became a standing item at all committees going forward.

**ALL
CHAIRS**

A governor asked when the SWOT analysis would be circulated and was informed that this would be revisited and circulated in September with a view to moving forward with the Strategic Review in September. This would include engaging outside speakers (from the Diocese and the LA).

JBH

d. Governor meeting dates 2021/22

Proposed dates had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that the sub-committee dates would be for L&S only, to allow more time for the meetings, and the clerk would add start times to the document.

It was agreed that Resources would schedule meetings for a separate time, in order to give more time for quality discussion at L&S. These could be scheduled in the school day (early or lunchtimes) to reduce the number of evening meetings, if possible.

JBH to speak to Anita about key dates for financial reporting and to finalise the dates for the Resources meetings with the committee in September.

JBH

e. Succession planning

GF confirmed that he would be happy to stand as Chair next year, if required. However, his term would come to an end on 16/05/22 and he would not be looking to renew his term. Therefore, if he was elected Chair for 2021-22 there would need to be an Acting Chair for the remainder of the 2021/22 academic year. It was discussed that this role could be filled by a Chair of Committee, rather than any Vice Chair.

RC was also happy to continue in the Vice Chair role and support the Chair, but would not seek to stand as Chair of Governors at any point.

JBH would be happy to continue as Chair of Resources.

SB informed Governors that he would not be renewing his term in November due to huge pressures at work and in the Parish. He would however remain connected with the school through the Parish.

Therefore the position of Chair of M,V&E would need to be filled in October.

GF asked all Governors to give the matter of leadership positions serious consideration over the summer.

ALL

There was a discussion surrounding moving to a more strategic and less managerial style of governance and this would be explored through the Strategic Review. This should result in a lighter-touch governance, which could be just as, if not more, effective. This should make governance less onerous in both Governors own time and in their interactions with the school.

	<p>It was suggested that future recruitment for Foundation Governors should be focused on recruiting for future leaders of the Board. SB to consider in upcoming advertising.</p> <p>f. Recruitment to committees (SB) This remains an ongoing action, see above.</p> <p>g. Scheme of Delegation review, inc Resources and Climate Agenda The clerk reminded the Resources committee that it had been agreed at the Oct 2020 FGB that the format of Resources' Terms of Reference would be updated to align with the rest of the document for 2021-22. JBH was tasked with this and asked to send to the clerk by 24/09/21. All committees should also review their sections of the Scheme of Delegation at their first meeting and any update should be sent to the clerk by 04/10/21. NW to email committee chairs.</p> <p>A governor raised the issue of making the Climate Agenda a standing item at one of the committees to ensure that the issue remains a focus for the school. It was agreed that this would sit with M,V&E who would appoint a governor to link into Resources and L&S on the issue. SB agreed to include this in the Terms of Reference for M,V&E as part of the Scheme of Delegation review and RC offered to link with him on this. CK offered to continue conducting climate change lessons in the school.</p> <p>h. MAT: Diocesan strategy update A MAT strategy presentation from the Diocese had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the Chair outlined the Diocesan approach. Governors were informed that pressure from the Diocese to integrate all schools into a MAT was increasing, with a target to have all schools in MAT by 2025; with three MATs in the Diocese and at least two secondary schools in each MAT. This marks a change in the Diocesan strategy in that it seems less voluntary than previously. However, the Diocese would be offering a lot of support throughout the process.</p> <p>GF invited comment from Governors on the Diocesan approach. Governors felt it was a real change in direction from previous discussions with the Diocese, where a good school with a strong Catholic ethos would not have been put under undue pressure to join a MAT. This change in approach is in line with recent announcements by Education Secretary, who had outlined a new drive to get schools into MATs. However, there may be plenty to change in this regard between now and 2025. A governor suggested that with a Catholic head, a solid staff base and a strong Governing Body, St Jo's shouldn't be the focus of the Diocese in this matter. However, if it was required down the line, the Diocese would have to support the school through the process and bear the cost of conversion. A governor counselled that there are elements of a MAT which could be beneficial to the school and so it would be important to look at the opportunities available through this process.</p> <p>It was agreed that NO would send the clerk all MAT-related work done previously for archiving.</p>	<p>SB</p> <p>JBH ALL CHAIRS</p> <p>NW</p> <p>SB</p> <p>NO</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Headteacher's report A detailed report and updated School Development Plan (SDP) had been circulated prior to the meeting and the HT invited questions.</p> <p>The Chair praised the Head for the report and the additional data that had been added. The Head invited questions.</p>	

	<p>A governor queried the circumstances that led to the increase in pupils with SEND and pupil premium. Was this a trend and change in the demographic and would Governors need to plan for this continuing to increase in the future?</p> <p>HL informed Governors that there was an increase in SEND nationally. However, with such small numbers in the school the data can also be skewed quite easily. As a non-teaching SENCo, HL has had more time to dedicate to the role and so the school has been quicker off the mark in identifying SEND, making referrals and putting the right support in place. She explained that all pupils requiring further additional support are automatically on the SEND register. There were a number of children on the SEND register leaving for secondary this year and the school was already reaching out to nurseries and families of the new Reception intake to identify any SEND needs coming into the school.</p> <p>Governors praised the school for their efforts in identifying needs and getting support in place expediently.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Resources Committee</p> <p>a. To review minutes and actions where necessary</p> <p>JBH invited questions following the circulation of the minutes. There was an explanation of some of the acronyms with relation to the successful SCA (School Condition Allocations, formerly LCVAP) bid for the re-build of the toilets and the new Reception area and the costs to the school were clarified, which amounted to £4,950 from school funds. The total project cost was £110k.</p> <p>There was a query over the decision not to move forward with the WWT funding and it was explained that it was a project that wasn't planned for and the timing wasn't right, especially in relation to the upcoming works to the school. The cost of maintenance for the project also continued to be an ongoing concern.</p> <p>b. School Budget</p> <p>The budget had been agreed by the Resources committee, signed by the Chair of Governors and was submitted to the LA on 27/05 – to meet their deadlines. The budget now needed to be considered and approved by the Governing Board. Governors were informed that the SCA grant had been approved since this budget. JBH invited questions on the budget. There were none and all were happy to approve.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Learning & Standards</p> <p>a. Review minutes and actions where necessary</p> <p>RC invited questions following the circulation of the minutes and thanked governors for the flow of link governor reports.</p> <p>There was a query over whether the SDP is created in agreement with the SIA. It was decided that the wording should be clarified to say the SIA reviewed the SDP. RC to update minutes.</p>	<p>RC</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Mission, Vision & Ethos</p> <p>a. Review minutes and actions where necessary</p> <p>NO invited questions following the circulation of the minutes. None were forthcoming.</p> <p>b. Admissions Policies</p> <p>The clerk explained that, in order to comply with recent amendments to the School Admissions Code (which had been applied retrospectively), the following text had been added to the end of Note 2 on page 6 for both the current 2021-22 and the 2022-23 Admissions Policies: "including those who appear to the governing body to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted."</p>	

	<p>Both affected policies had been circulated with the updated wording in advance of the meeting. Governors voted to adopt the amended Admissions Policies 2021-22 and 2022/23 unanimously. Clerk to post on website and circulate to necessary bodies.</p> <p>c. Code of Conduct</p> <p>The wording surrounding confidentiality on the Code of Conduct had been updated, and approved, at M,V&E and now reads: "We will observe complete confidentiality at all times, especially with matters concerning specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school". The updated document was brought to FGB for final approval and had be circulated to all governors in advance of the meeting. The circulated document had been amended to reflect the sign off date as 07/07/21.Governors voted to adopt the updated Code of Conduct unanimously.</p> <p>A governor suggested that new Governors should be required to sign the Code of Conduct before attending their first meeting. This was agreed and would be added to the Induction Policy currently being reviewed. NO, KL and HL to take offline and approve by email by the end of the year.</p>	<p>NW</p> <p>NO, KL, HL</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>a. RC would be conducting a website review and asked for advice on guidance, which was duly given.</p> <p>b. RC raised the issue of inconsistencies in minute taking especially with regard to identifying governors in minutes. There was a discussion surrounding the use of the phrase 'a governor said' in minutes. The clerk would seek best practice advice from LA and Diocese and discuss at next FGB.</p> <p>c. The Head shared some good news that the school had received a generous donation from the Dyson Foundation of 32 laptops that were only two years old. The PFA would be providing a new laptop trolley for these.</p> <p>d. The clerk informed governors that NO's term of office would expire on 31/08/21. As this would be the end of her fourth term as a Foundation Governor she was required to retire as a Governor in line with a directive from Clifton Diocese. Governors thanked Nuala for her huge contribution to the school over the last 16 years. NO thanked all of the governors in return.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The meeting closed at 8.25pm.</i></p>	<p>NW</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Date of next meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. EFGB – 8th July b. EFGB – 22nd July c. M, V & E – 23rd September d. Learning & Standards – 30th September e. Resources – TBC f. FGB – 14th October 	