

## St Mark's CE Primary School, Natland

### Meeting of the Governing Body of St Mark's C of E Primary School to be held on Monday 13th July 2020 at 6.00 p.m. online via Zoom

#### Present:

- Mr Tim Ward (Foundation Governor and Chair), Mr Peter Barfoot (Headteacher), Mrs June Grant (Staff Governor), Canon Angela Whittaker (Ex-officio), Mrs Hilary Atkinson (Foundation Governor), Mrs Sarah Brooke (Parent Governor), Mr Keith Robson (Parent Governor), Mr Steve Barber (Foundation Governor), Shirley Miller (Foundation Governor), Mary Cammack (Foundation Governor), Graham Day (prospective Foundation Governor)

#### 19/20 – 52 Apologies for Absence

- Local Authority Vacancy

#### 19/20 – 53 Declarations of Interest

- None declared

#### 19/20 – 54 Welcome and Prayers

- TW welcomed everyone present and opened the meeting with prayer.
- TW welcomed Graham Day who is interested in the role of Foundation Governor.
- PB checked all briefing papers had been received and read.

#### 19/20 – 55 Chair's Comments

- TW asked if everyone was well, and gave special thanks to school staff for working so hard during these unprecedented times.

#### 19/20 – 56 Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th May 2020

- No corrections to be made. Accepted as a true record by all present.

#### 19/20 – 57 Matters Arising

- PB updated the members of the Governing Body:
- **19/20 - 48**
  - PB noted the report on the school's provision of childcare to vulnerable children and children of key workers. The school has been open every day since lockdown and staff need a break during the long summer holiday. PB expressed his gratitude that the Government have recognised this, and he also expressed his personal gratitude to school staff who have worked so hard, going above and beyond what has been expected of them.
- **19/20 - 48**
  - PB highlighted the free school meal (benefit related) voucher scheme which thanks to a national high-profile campaign will continue throughout the summer. PB explained that families will receive a one-off payment at the start of the holidays to see them through.
  - PB explained the interesting responses the school had received about home learning. Parents had been discouraged when the government backtracked on its decision to send all children back to school for the last month of the summer term
  - Update on temporary disapplication of certain legal requirements:
    - From September, laws around attendance will be reinstated – the expectation is for all pupils to be in school.
    - Year 6 SATs and all statutory assessments had been cancelled and there are no league tables this year, but everything will be back on track for next summer. PB highlighted that he thinks this needs a national a re-think as the groups to be tested will have missed out on at least 4 months of teaching. PB explained that there are various petitions asking the Government to change this policy which is in many ways contradictory to the other expectations the Government has on schools to consider pupil mental health and well-being on the return to school, not academic success.

- **19/20 – 49**
  - Water safety - the school continues to have a contract with IWS (a water company which provides monthly testing) and the water in school has been tested and is safe as it has been all the way through the summer term.
  - Staffing – MOSAICS staff furloughed but will return in September as there will be provision for wrap around care. MOSAICS will create year group zones to maintain “bubbles”.
  - Premises and Capital works– shed roof repaired and the new main school sign put up. New lettering signs for the main reception and nursery still to be completed.
  - Contractual issues during school closure
    - Public Procurement Notification (PB explained that as the Government do not want businesses to go under, the school is still paying Orian Catering Services out of funds received for all Free School Meals)
    - Issues have arisen with Orian (catering) as the charges made under the PPN scheme need to be looked at closely. The Finance Team will need to discuss this as a point of principle.
- **19/20 – 49**
  - PB noted that there is no SEND report for this meeting but explained that there had been a EHCP review meeting recent weeks.
- **19/20 – 50**
- GDPR training – Some members of the GB still need to complete this introductory GDPR training. **ACTION Clerk** – to resend the link to the members of the governing body (**action completed 14.07.2020**)

#### **19/20 – 58 Correspondence**

- PB provided update from the Revd. Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer of Church of England re the SIAMS inspection programme who confirmed that they have suspended their inspection programme to 2021. There will be no inspections for the remainder of 2020. This does mean there will be two terms of backlog which SIAMS will need to catch up on and they will need to re-work their future scheduling timetable.
- PB read out an email of gratitude he had received from a parent.
- PB updated members of the Governing Body on the Government’s new statutory guidance on Relationships Education. Up until last week schools had been obligated to start teaching Relationships Education from September 2020, now the government’s advice is that “if schools feel ready and have done all their due diligence” they should start and if not then they should start teaching it when they can. PB reflected that it had been good to have the time pressure but that there is no longer any need to rush.
- PB confirmed that OFSTED had suspended all school inspections apart from emergency inspections, and they have also been suspended for next term. OFSTED inspections will resume in the Spring term 2021. In the meantime, they will be visiting some schools (all those currently rated as inadequate and then only a random selection of schools in the grades (Outstanding/Good/Requires Improvement). During these visits they will have a conversation with the Headteacher about the schools’ plans for reopening and catch-up teaching. There would be no judgements made on provision during lockdown, there would be no lesson observations and no school rating given, instead a letter would be sent out to the parents. This may not happen but if it were to happen it would probably be from October onwards. PB explained that his current understanding was that an OFSTED visit of this nature would not involve the Governing Body. Full details have not been finalised.
- Q (HA): asked for clarification around OFSTED visits. PB clarified.

#### **19/20 – 59 Headteacher's report**

- PB updated the members of the Governing Body.
  - The school has seen big cohorts going out and small cohorts coming in which has been a concern. However, the number of new starters has now increased to 20 and the total roll for the school from September is now expected to be 166.

- Full school attendance had not been formally registered or accounted for during the period of school closure, but was above the GB target of 96% in February.
- PB highlighted that OFSTED inspectors are very likely to ask what the school is doing about persistent absentees. Attendance of children in this category in February will be closely monitored in the new school year
- School Direct – positive cohort numbers for September. PB reflected that the teaching workforce would hopefully benefit from recent events as people look for a career change. PB confident that they filter candidates well to ensure a successful programme.
- Q (AW): [with regards to attendance] Are any parents reluctant to send children back? Any absentees anticipated? A (PB) There are currently a few families who, despite the opportunity (Reception, Year 1 and Year 6), have chosen not to send their children to school. However, the recent ‘Meeting up and Moving on’ sessions have been well attended and positively received by parents. Pupils have met their new teachers for September and this process has reassured people.
- TW suspected the challenge may be around holidays, it may be possible that there are more requests to take children out next year for family holidays during school term.
- Q (SB): [concerning subscription to the National College] What has the uptake been on courses? A (PB) National College has primarily been lined up as a source of training for September. Participation has been ad-hoc up to now but from September it will be more directed. Members of the Governing Body have access to courses from National College. **ACTION PB - to send Clerk link to forward to all members of the Governing Body.**

#### 19/20 – 60 Committee related items:

- **Leadership and Management (Premises & Business)** (PB gave a verbal update)
  - LCVAP bid (Diocesan managed fund for maintenance and capital works) This is the first time in 14 years the school has not been successful in a bid. Intention had been to use the funds for new fencing and doors, but other schools clearly had greater need. This means there are jobs to tackle now with limited resources. Jobs will need to be prioritised and will not be done this summer. PB noted that the overall LCVAP fund dispersed by the Diocese had been reduced centrally again.
  - Premises Risk Assessment – this will be updated this week. There will be an addendum to the current RA issued and recommended by the LA. PB will send it out but no major changes are anticipated.
  - Water and Legionella – see above.
  - Doors and fences (elements of the project be completed at some point in the autumn term)
  - Urgent roofing work necessary after a leak discovered from the Hall roof. On inspection, about 50 broken tiles were identified. Quote has been received and work to be completed in summer break.
  - Q (TW): Is the damage 15/16 years old? A (PB): damage probably dates back to 2003, soon after the Hall was built, possibly caused by group of teenagers known to be using roofs of public buildings to skateboard at that time.

#### **Leadership and Management (Finance & Staffing)**

PB gave verbal update on the budget: impact of school closure

- The impact of the partial school closure and Covid-19 on school’s finances is complicated, there have been some extra expenses and savings. It is hoped that some expenses can be recouped as the Government has a fund in place. An initial claim has been submitted put (Mainly for Category 3 expenses, resources and equipment). Careful records and receipts have been kept throughout the period in case an explanation to the DfE is required.
- Savings: the school has core contracts for the staff which are expanded with temporary hours as necessary. Very few extra hours have been worked in the last 4 months.
- Furlough payments – MOSAICS agreed 80% (no extra expense). As a service run separately to the school budget and for which no public funds are received. MOSAICS staff will return to work in September.

- Energy costs – the heating system has been replaced and the account with Scottish Power settled. A full ‘normal’ year of school occupancy needed before a real pattern of energy costs can be identified.
- PB gave update on Staffing for September 2020
- **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**
  - PB updated the members of the Governing Body and highlighted how difficult the term had been and how so much normal school activity and development had had to be put on hold. He explained how one of the immediate key issues is how to assess where each child is in their learning and progress in September and how staff are going to work most effectively to get them to where they need to be. He highlighted the challenge of doing this while maintaining class group bubbles, as mixed ability based groupings will be very difficult to organise.
  - HW: raised the plans to help involve parents reading more with their children, she also raised the point that planned GB learning walks and preparations for OFSTED have not been able to go ahead.
  - PB reassured members of the Governing Body that the curriculum audits have been completed by subject leaders. Once these are collated and action plans formulated, each committee will be clear as to their monitoring role going into a possible inspection year.
  - PB highlighted how now we have a parent body, many of whom have had to struggle first hand with matters of teaching and learning, the hope is that communication about learning between teachers and parents may be improved.
  - The church is to pick up on the plan to advertise for and try to encourage volunteers to be trained to support reading in school. **Action AW and PB.**
- **Community and Welfare**
  - **Relationships Education.** TW thanked JG and AW for the work on this.
  - PB provided context to the new statutory Relationships Education curriculum for primary schools in England(which is separate to sex education)
  - For St Mark’s there had been a need to refresh the whole wider PSHE curriculum so the decision was made to include Relationships Education element in the new PSHE curriculum, using resources from the PSHE Association (to which school has now subscribed). The PSHE association provide two different tracks, one thematic and one question-based. Teaching staff chose overwhelmingly to adopt the question-based approach as this is consistent with the existing approach to teaching all the humanities subjects across the school. The Governing Body has a statutory duty to inform parents about the new Relationships Education curriculum and how and when it will be taught. The statutory timetable for this process has been relaxed in new guidance from the Government giving more time to do this.
  - JG updated the Governing Body about the details of the planning for the introduction of the Relationships Education curriculum. Teaching staff were asked to look at the programmes of study and the learning objectives in the PSHE Association materials. Each class (Y1 to Y6) will have 6 units of work to cover, one in each half term. They have been asked to provide their long and medium term plans to JG by the end of the summer term, including the ways in which aspects will be linked to themes in the cross-curricular topics. Teachers have the summer break to look at the materials available to them.
  - PB provided further context to Relationships Education:
    - St Mark’s is a ‘church’ school which is not the same as a ‘faith’ school. The purpose of a church school is to provide inclusive education. There is a Christian religious foundation and a clear set of Christian values guiding the school’s work, but there is no expectation that children or parents adhere to a particular set of beliefs or biblical interpretation within the breadth of Christian tradition and understanding. The school has to reflect a complicated and diverse world, our values of reverence, justice and compassion need to be prioritised over any particular religious view of certain aspects of gender

identity, family structures and relationships. PB referred to the Equality Act 2010 and reminded the Governing Body of the core concept of the protected characteristics (gender, faith, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation)

- TW emphasised that we need to encourage parents with concerns to speak to the school (PB or members of the GB directly).  
TW checked that each member of the Governing Body felt they had had enough information on this issue and received questions.
- Q (HA): Parents may have concern over age appropriateness, where does this leave parents who genuinely believe children are not ready? A (PB) Parents can only withdraw children from RE and sex education, parents do not have the option to withdraw children from Relationships Education and it would be classed as an unauthorised absence if a parent kept a child away from school to avoid a particular lesson. Education in England is organised chronologically rather than based on a child's maturity. PB emphasised the need for school to have discussions with parents and engage parents as much as possible. PB noted that we owe it to children to prepare them for life in a world which is far from perfect, but is rich and diverse.
- TW would hope that teachers have good conversations with parents and also that they know the children well enough to teach the content appropriately, sensitively and effectively. He emphasised the need to listen, understand and respond to concerns.
- JG explained that when teachers have put the content of the programmes of study into topic planning, we will have a clearer picture of what the information to send out to parents of children in each year group.
- TW asked the Governing Body if they agree with this proposal. All members were in agreement
- **PB gave a verbal update on summer term committee responsibilities**
  - Behaviour – monitoring and reminding children of expectations needs to be high on the agenda from September. One challenge will be getting children back into school and learning routines.
  - Ethos Audit – confirmation that SIAMS inspections have been suspended.
  - School Improvement Plan – Action Plans from each section of the SEF / SIP to be provided to each committee for the first meetings in the autumn term.
  - New Reception Class transition activities. Normal programme of activities was not possible. Staff met with has met with each individual family outside school to and talk through the information usually given at a meeting in June. Parents appreciated the opportunity to meet.
  - MOSAICS update – full wrap around care will be in place from the start of term in September. MOSAICS manager stepping down, prospective manager approached.

## 19/20 – 61 Confidential Item

## 19/20 – 62 School full re-opening in September 2020

- PB provided a verbal update.
- PB explained that a Covid-19 safe version of school has worked well over last few weeks, so fully re-opening in September should be a natural move.
- PB explained that there is thought needed over visitors to the schools, such as incoming music teachers etc. as the school is limited by the lack of extra rooms and the requirements for social distancing. PB highlighted that we do not know how long the next set of guidelines will last for. The school needs to consider virtual learning platforms. **ACTION PB to access a webinar to look at all the options.**

## 19/20 – 63 Safeguarding

- PB provided a verbal update –
  - PB completed Level 2 refresher training with our safeguarding training providers Safe Haven. A long list of actions to work through in the autumn term.
  - There will be a new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The members of the Governing Body need to know this document and their responsibilities. The new version will be released in September, till then the school is to work with the 2019 version.
  - PB highlighted the importance of this document.
  - PB reminded members of the Governing Body that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and so everyone involved with school needs to constantly be refreshed, updated and regularly formally trained.
  - PB receives monthly NSPCC summaries of serious case reviews which are sent out to all members of staff. **Action – PB to include Clerk in these mailings, to forward on to the all members of the Governing Body.**
  - The next FGB meeting will be a full-length meeting. JG (DSL) and PB (Deputy DSL) will give a full safeguarding update at the start of the school year, to include an assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of our children and families.

### Closing Comments:

Q: Could we change the day of governor meetings?

PB would still like to have a set day of the week for all Governing Body and committee meetings.

TW: Everyone to let PB know the preferred days and times members of the Governing Body can meet and whether these meetings should be via Zoom or in person.

PB: Governance work through Zoom has been effective. It has been an efficient way of working during the school closure and wider lockdown.

**ACTION: PB, TW and Clerk – to send round a questionnaire for members of the Governing Body to give their preferred days, times, and format for future FGB meetings as well as their views on use of online tools for meetings (*Action completed – 14.07.2020*)**

TW made sure every member of the Governing Body felt they had had opportunity to air their views.

All members of the Governing Body gave thanks to PB, JG and all school staff for their hard work. PB thanked members of the Governing Body as has felt genuinely supported during these challenging times.

Q (SB): Have we given Year 6 a send off? A (PB): Yes, a package of things put together this week for Year 6 including a special SATs style 'bacon butty' breakfast, a visit to the church building by each of the two groups for a special service and a lunchtime BBQ with a special ceremony. The usual leavers' gifts and awards to be given at a ceremony for the whole class on the last day of the summer term.

**Time and Date of Next Meeting: TBC (following analysis of responses to GB questionnaire)**