

**Meeting of the Governing Body of  
St Mark's CE Primary School (held via Zoom)  
Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
Minutes**

**Present:**

Mrs M Cammack (Foundation Governor)  
Mr T Ward (Chair)  
Mrs S Miller (Foundation Governor)  
Mr G Day (Foundation Governor)  
Mrs S Matthews (Foundation Governor)  
Mr Bill Wood (Foundation Governor)  
Mrs S Brooke (Vice-Chair)  
Mr K Robson (Parent Governor)  
Mr P Barfoot (Headteacher)  
Mrs J Grant (Staff Governor)  
Canon A Whittaker (Ex-officio)  
Mrs Jennifer Gregory (Clerk)

Guests: Rev Craig Bentley (observing)  
Joanne Tattersall (LA General Advisor) Providing Training

**21/22 20. Apologies for Absence**

Mrs Sue Matthews joined meeting at the start but was unable to stay due to technical issues with Zoom. She sent her apologies, which were accepted.

**21/22 21. Declarations of Interest**

None declared

**21/22 22. Welcome and Prayers**

TW opened the meeting in prayer.

**21/22 23. Chair's Comments**

These followed training from Joanne Tattersall. TW reminded the GB that they all come with a lifetime of experience and wisdom and that inspection preparation should not dominate all meetings as there is so much else going on in school.

**21/22 24. Inspection preparation training with Joanne Tattersall, LA General Advisor**

- PB introduced Joanne Tattersall, LA General Advisor, who provided inspection preparation training for the GB. JT will be providing training for teaching staff later in the week.
- The training looked at Ofsted's new focus on the curriculum and how members of the GB can work with senior leadership team.
- The main points shared were:
  - Inspections should be seen as a positive, an opportunity to share strengths of the school.
  - It is a team effort – Inspectors will engage with members of the GB, staff, parents and pupils, and consider the whole school community.
  - Inspectors will look at the school's development journey, considering areas of improvement raised at last inspection and what has happened since.
  - Inspectors are aware of the impact of the pandemic on monitoring and progress and will take this into consideration.
  - Members of the GB should be able to describe the school's curriculum journey, the rationale for their unique curriculum.
  - The inspection will focus on the broad school curriculum and how the school uses its unique environment and community.
  - Members of the GB should be involved in development of the curriculum by asking questions of the leadership team.
  - JT recapped areas of improvement from previous the inspection: to ensure teachers are given further support in teaching Maths and pupils' attendance and persistent absentees.
  - Members of the GB will be asked to give examples, and evidence (a case of 'show me').
  - Inspectors may ask to look at the minutes of GB meetings. Members of the GB encouraged to ask questions during FGB meetings.

- **Q:** A member of the GB asked about the new GB members who may not be aware of the work gone into development of maths.
  - JT highlighted that the current version of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) makes reference to the impact of Covid pandemic.
  - JT highlighted the three “I”s - Intent (planning – what’s your hope for your children), Implementation (How does learning build, how are topics put together and what checking of learning is in place? How is it organised? How are teachers supported and are the topics delivered at the right time?) Impact (what difference does it make, what do they now know and remember and how do you address gaps in learning? What does the school do to help pupils learn and remember?)
  - Inspectors will look at the behaviour and attitudes of the children.
  - Inspectors will look at plans on the website and they will look at leadership and management.
  - The school website is first port of call for inspectors.
  - The inspectors will consider the impact of leaders, and what has happened to implement changes. They will consider how members of the GB were involved in making and implementing these changes.
  - The inspectors will consider how have subject leaders been supported and how the school has reached its curriculum framework.
  - Inspectors will have activities with school staff, they will go into lessons with senior and subject leaders and will look at the progression of the curriculum design. They will look at their learning, their books and talk with the children about their subjects. How do teachers help them learn and remember?
  - Inspectors will look at how the school meet the needs of all their children. How will their experiences in school help them learn, and how will some be able to develop and explore subjects at a deeper level?
  - Inspectors will look at subject leaders and the impact of their teaching. They will look at how subject leaders are trained and what difference this has made to quality, delivery and response.
  - They will look at any after school enhancement, visitors, trips and the difference this has made.
  - JT provided questions to help members of the GB to analyse the school’s unique curriculum.
- **Q:** A member of the GB raised concerns that members of the GB might be overwhelmed and asked how many G are expected to be involved?
- **A:** (JT) The GB would need to organise 3/4 members of the GB to come in to meet with the Inspectors, there is no expectation that members of the GB should know everything. JT recommended choosing GB members to represent a breadth of knowledge.
  - JT explained the format of a section 8 inspection and how they will give 24 hours’ notice and use triangulation. JT emphasised the importance of members of the GB asking good questions about the HT report.
  - JT has sent examples to PB of the types of questions Ofsted Inspectors ask headteachers in the initial 90 minute phone conversation the day before an inspection.
  - JT asked how members of the GB were feeling and members of the GB gave their feedback.
  - JT recommended that members of the GB find out where they can find information in preparation for an inspection.
  - JT offered to come in and help have a practice inspection in the new year.
  - PB clarified that Middle Leaders are Subject Leaders and that every teacher in the school is a subject leader. PB has plans for the role out of support to teachers.
  - JT highlighted that there is now a greater involvement with pupils. Inspectors will ask pupils questions about the curriculum, consider the breadth of curriculum and the transitions between each year group.
  - JT highlighted the role of members of the GB in strategic decisions, the importance of minutes of meetings and how well members of the GB are informed about the success of the curriculum in preparing pupils for the next stage.
- PB reflected on how much work there is to do still on the development of the curriculum framework.
- A member of the GB suggested making the curriculum front and centre of FGB meetings, making Curriculum a standing agenda item for FGB meetings as well as T, L & A committee meetings.
- A member of the GB suggested a separate section on the HT to highlight the curriculum.
- TW – looking at the HT report – suggested adding a separate section on Curriculum matters. Preparation for deep dives needs to be for the T, L & A committee.
- **ACTION: Clerk to include Curriculum as an item on the agenda for each FGB meeting.**
- **ACTION: PB to give Curriculum a specific section in the HT report.**
- The training session ended at 7.00 p.m.

Minutes of the FGB meeting held 18.10.21 were accepted as a true record. No amendments.

## 21/22 26. Matters Arising:

- 21/22 (11) Security Policy has been sent to staff.
- 21/22 (11) GIAS has been updated to show school has nursery provision from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.
- 21/22 (11) Copies of Whistleblowing procedures have been sent to teachers.
- **21/22 (11) Action PB carried forward: convene Parents' Forum for discussion of issues related to protected characteristics and development of the Single Equality Scheme**
- **21/22 (12) Action FGB carried forward: agree appointment of a Chair for the Teaching, Learning and Assessment committee.**
  
- 21/22 (17) National College accounts have been set up for BW and SM.
- 21/22 (19) Local Government Reforms 2023 – Cumbria County Council to become two separate unitary authorities:
  - Cumberland
  - Westmorland and Furness.
- PB to attend meeting for HTs with the LA and will report back as to the expected impact and implications for education.
  
- A discussion following the preparation for OFSTED training was had.
- PB reflected on the work still to be done together with the school and members of the GB.
- A member of the GB highlighted how the curriculum is a continuous development process. It was agreed that a good discussion was had as a result of the training and that members of the GB and the leadership team need to continue to have these conversations.
- A member of the GB suggested the leadership team share with members of the GB where they are up to with the curriculum framework in the next FGB meeting. They could share subject audits, planning and assessment documents and topic webs with all members of the GB.

**ACTION: Clerk to add Curriculum framework and development as an agenda item for the next FGB meeting.**

## 21/22 27. Correspondence

- Letter received from Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education. His letter highlighted how seriously the DfE were taking school attendance. PB noted the school's relatively positive current attendance levels when compared to the national figures (School 93.7%; National 91.5%)

## 21/22 28. Headteacher's report

The HT's report had been distributed in advance. PB provided an update and highlighted the following points:

- Attendance is relatively good and hovering around 94%. COVID related absences are now included in these figures. Close contacts of people testing positive are now advised to self-isolate. There is now a new legal requirement that close contacts of anyone who tests positive for the new omicron variant need to self-isolate. PB explained how holiday absence from September becomes a smaller proportion of the whole attendance record over the year. PB confirmed that he has addressed certain persistent absentee cases and progress is being made.
- Q: A member of the GB asked what 'Decider Skills' training was.
- A (PB) Barnardo's run some mental health training and Decider Skills provides training on emotional responses. The provider working with one individual child already, had offered training for a wider group of staff and so did an afternoon with the Year 4 staff team.
- PB highlighted the Nursery provision which is now Governor-led. The GB is now the employer of the 4 Nursery staff. Members of the GB now have duty of care to these members of staff.
- Following the inspection preparation training PB will add a dedicated Curriculum section to HT reports.
- **ACTION PB: Add dedicated Curriculum and Nursery sections to the HT Report.**
- Q: A member of the GB asked how we have brought the Nursery staff into the fold.
- A (PB): This is happening slowly. There were so many aspects which had not been thought of and there are differences in culture to recognise and work with. All members of the Nursery staff team have signed up for the staff Christmas meal, hopefully this will help them to feel more a part of the whole staff team.

- JG talked about how Kate Clarke (Nursery manager) had been teaching in YR while DT completed her first-aid training. This was a very positive experience and helped towards the goal of building a good relationship and consistency of practice between YR and Nursery.
- PB tries to meet regularly with KC to discuss Nursery matters.
- PB explained how the Nursery curriculum needs to be joined up with the curriculum in YR as together they make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is an opportunity to plan in meaningful progression within these first two years. PB gave an example of how YR's new climbing equipment is a step up from equipment provided in Nursery's outside area. PB highlighted how from now on everyone needs to think of and factor in the Nursery when planning.
- JG gave another example of how the Nursery children now eat in the school hall with the older children and highlighted the positive impact this has on the transition from the Nursery to School.
- TW has written to the Nursery staff to welcome them all to the school team.
- PB: building plans – SCA bid to the Diocese for provision of welfare facilities – toilets for Nursery staff and children and dedicated changing facilities for 2 year olds. Cowan and Co. have visited, drawn up plans and submitted a bid on behalf of the GB.
- Q: A member of the GB asked if inspectors will look at the Nursery during a Section 8 inspection.
- A (PB). In a full section 5 inspection they would be looking to make a specific judgement of Early Years (EY provision). A section 8 inspection is shorter. Unsure how much time would be spent looking at the EY (Nursery or Reception) in a Section 8 inspection. This represents a big change in thinking for the Nursery manager and staff who had been used to full inspections of the Pre-School provision.
- Q: A member of the GB asked if any of the former trustees of the nursery would be interested in becoming members of the GB.
- A (PB): There is a vacancy for one LA governor at the moment. KC is co-opted on to the C & W Committee and writes reports for them.
- JG noted that it would be good to build relationship with KC as Deputy Headteacher and Year 1 teacher.
- PB highlighted that they have been able to maintain support hours for the two pupils who left in November and have used these extra hours to offer more support in Y6 (with a high proportion of children in receipt of the PPG).

## 21/ 22 29. Committee related items

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

- PB updated members of the GB on this year's round of Teacher Appraisals. Teacher Appraisals start on 30/11/21. Each teacher has a 45 minute meeting arranged with PB. These meetings lead to a report with objectives set for each. Teachers' Appraisals can impact the pay grading of certain eligible teachers but only one member of staff would be eligible for a pay increase this time. Planning for this has recently been finalised and is based on the policy which has just been agreed by the L & M Committee.
- PB updated the members of the GB on the appointment of an Administrative Assistant. This position is still to be filled. Following some research by the SBM it has been confirmed that the school is unable to have an apprentice in this role as CE VA schools do not contribute to the local apprenticeship levy. Other options are being considered.

### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Appointment of Chair to the Committee**

**ACTION FGB: Appoint Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.**

## 21/22 30. Safeguarding and appointment of Online Safety Governor

- Following adoption of the new Online Safety Policy the FGB needs to appoint an Online Safety Governor.
- PB proposed that it could form part of SB's Safeguarding role.
- SB agreed and explained that it was something that they already covered within the role, albeit in a less formal way.

**Agreed: SB now Online Safety Governor.**

## 21/22 31. Staff Wellbeing

- PB briefly referred to the DFE Wellbeing Charter  
**ACTION: C & W Committee to have a close look at the DFE Charter and whether the GB could adopt it in its current form.**

## 21/22 32. Academy Status

- PB explained how there is currently a national consultation about how the Government funds school improvement activities. Currently funding is given to the LA who run services for schools. One of the proposals is for the funding to be a part of every school's budget which would reduce the role of LAs even further.
- Academisation can only be as part of a multi-academy trust. In the Carlisle Diocese CE schools would have to join the Good Shepherd MAT (DBE sponsored). PB currently unsure if this limiting of options is likely to continue. The GB may like to consider the option of a MAT of local CE primary schools if it were ever to be offered.

**21/22 33. Time and Date of Next Meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 @ 6.00p.m.**

**21/22 34. AOB**

- TW spoke about the Christmas Hamper which members of the GB traditionally contribute towards. Members of the GB offered to bring specific items to fill the hamper.  
**ACTION: PB to collate the list and prepare the hamper for the raffle.**
- Clerk asked members of the GB if they would be happy/willing to have their mobile phone numbers added to the Teacher 2 Parent communication system. There is a specific group for members of the GB and occasionally important messages are sent out as texts.  
**ACTION: Members of the GB to send Clerk an email with their mobile number if they are happy for these to be included in this system.**

**21/22 35. Confidential Item**

Meeting finished at 8.20 p.m.