

**Notes of the Meeting of the Governing Body of St Mark's CE Primary School
held on Monday 30th November 2020 at 5.30 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 Sarah Brooke (Parent Governor)
Mr Keith Robson (Parent Governor)
Mr Steve Barber (Foundation Governor)
Mrs Shirley Miller (Foundation Governor)
Mrs Mary Cammack (Foundation Governor)
Mr Graham Day (Foundation Governor)

Clerk: Mrs Jennifer Gregory

Vacancies:

- Local Authority Vacancy
- Foundation Governor Vacancy

20/21 21. Apologies for Absence

- No absentees.

20/21 22. Declarations of Interest

- None declared.

20/21 23. Welcome and Prayers

- Clerk asked a Governor to open meeting with prayer.

20/21 24. Election of Chair

- Members of the Governing Body elected TW as Chair through secret ballot.

20/21 25. Chair's Comments

- Chair encouraged other members of the GB to consider the position of Chair as believes it is time to pass the baton on.

20/21 26. Election of Vice Chair

- Members of the Governing Body elected SB as Vice Chair through secret ballot.

20/21 27. Minutes of the meeting held in October 2020

- Spelling correction made to page 3.
- Minutes were accepted and approved as a true record by all present.

20/21 28. Matters Arising

Verbal update given, main points as follows:

- Currently 56% completion of Staff Declarations of Business Interest. **Action: PB to chase.**
- MOSAICS – special thanks to KC in her new manager role, doing a fantastic job steering them through an unprecedented time and providing an essential service to parents.
- Lunch Shop – initially had started well. School will continue to remind parents to complete their online orders in time.
- School able to maintain as much normality as possible, highlights included:
 - Yr 6 Ancient Greece Day
 - Bikeability programme for Y6 with external providers
- School's claim for additional expenditure from COVID19 school closure in the 'other' category has been declined
- Schools are now able to claim for staff cover for COVID19 related absence
- School Direct – current cohort down to 16, as one student has deferred.
- 3 students already recruited for next year's School Direct cohort, very strong candidates.

- Teacher Appraisals have been completed
- As appraiser, PB made recommendations on pay to L & M committee, but this year the Government have advised that there should be 'no detriment to pay due to Covid-19' and anyone who is eligible must move to next pay point.
- Cowan and Co have re-submitted of door and fence replacement project bid on the GB's behalf
- New set of 16 leased laptops have arrived. The previously leased set is now owned by school and has been distributed. Following the results of a school survey to see which families would most benefit from a school laptop in the event of a long term school or bubble closure.
- The first meeting of the newly established Parents' Forum was very useful and PB will meet with them next week to look at PSHE Education and Protective Characteristics from parent point of view.
- Staff Wellbeing – a questionnaire was put together and sent out which took on board advice from the GB.
- Evaluation of Zoom collective worship was carried out with the children in October. There were lots of ideas from the children and most have been acted on. Pupil voice therefore involved in worship.
- Clerk now in communication with Designs at Beck Cottage and can now send GB related documents to update the school website.
- Record of training to be held by MI. **Action: all members of the GB to inform MI of all training, particularly if Governor Services have contacted individual members directly.**
- **ACTION: Clerk to communicate with MI about training prior to FGB meetings.**
- Chair asked for questions.
- **ACTION: Admissions Policy for 2022. School policy now need to reference in-year admissions and this needs to go to consultation February. C&W Committee to consider Admissions Policy 2022 in their January meeting.**
- A member of the GB asks for the Teacher Appraisal report to be circulated.
- **ACTION: Clerk to circulate this report and GB to agree via email.**

20/21 29. Correspondence

- Chair communicated to the GB that SBa has will step down as Foundation Governor at the end of March 2021. Chair thanked SBa for his involvement and work over many years.
- HT noted the high level of correspondence from the DfE and LA during the pandemic
- HT received two letters, from Dan Barton (Assistant Director – Education) and Sue Sanderson (Member of CCC with responsibility for schools and education). Both understand the pressures schools are facing and are putting pressure on the government for clarity on the assessment process planned for the summer of 2021.
- HT noted that schools are under pressure in Cumbria, highlighting that St. Mark's has been very fortunate as no year group bubbles have had to close and very little additional cover has been needed for Covid-related teacher absence. Re-opening and keeping schools open is putting a huge toll on many school staff.

20/21 30. Headteacher's report

HT gave verbal update

- Organisation taking up a lot of time as there are big issues to consider due to COVID-19.
- HT highlighted the school's 98% attendance rate as very pleasing when compared with 90% in local primaries, and 83% nationally.
- No instance of staff or pupil testing positive for COVID-19 yet.
- There is a big pressure to provide quality remote learning for children in the case of the closure of year group bubbles. From 22.10.20 the Government has made this a statutory expectation. The government's £1500 voucher scheme appeared good, however there was limited training (2 hours) on the MS platform which had been initially designed with business, not education, in mind. The training was not long enough to show how this platform could be adapted to the school context.
- School has chosen an (initially) free platform called Seesaw. Seesaw will allow for teachers to provide feedback to individual pupils. There are lots of other potential applications to Seesaw, and it is good for parent/teacher communication. This is an improvement on Padlet, the platform used during the first lockdown.
- This platform will be trialed in the first few weeks of December. The hope is that this can happen before any year group bubble closure.
- JG shared her experience of the initial MS training and of Seesaw. Highlighted how Seesaw provides tutorials and already has a bank of activities freely available online which can be adapted and differentiated.
- HT: The government has funded EdTech Demonstrator Schools, which have been charged with supporting schools in setting up their remote learning platforms. HT has attended webinars led by staff from a local Cumbrian school which have been helpful.
- HT emphasised that this need to plan for provision of remote learning is an extra pressure on schools at an already difficult time.

- Catch-up programme – the school will receive funding based on school numbers.
- Teachers have undertaken assessments in reading, Writing and Maths – difficult to assess reason why children might be behind or have gaps in their learning: is it related to COVID19 school closure or would they have been struggling anyway? The Government has given schools complete discretion as to how to use this money.
- Hall being used for Catch-up groups. Each year group already has a dedicated table in the current MOSAICS set up for maintaining bubble integrity.
- The Catch-up programme is being delivered mainly by existing members of staff.
- HT declares that some of the catch-up hours are being delivered by Rachael Sutherland, a literacy consultant, writer and teacher who has worked in school in the past.
- Initial indications are that the programme is working well.
- JG shared her perspective of the catch-up sessions. It is working really well as all children identified are receiving the extra support and no one is left out. Staff working with the children have experience working with the particular year groups.
- HT highlighted the disquiet among staff about the lack of use of the school hall for PE and has had to explain to how important it is to maintain infection control measures.
- The recent round of Parent / Teacher conferences were held by phone, with almost 100% parental involvement. From the teachers' notes collated by the HT these calls were clearly meaningful and successful.
- Parent governors provided their feedback on these. Highlighting that it was nice for both parents to be able to join in (as usually for face to face meetings, one would need to stay at home for child care) and that not much was lost with it being over the phone rather than face to face.
- On balance a positive outcome from the PT conferences by phone and hopefully a one-off.
- Staff wellbeing – The staff survey was conducted in the context of COVID and the weight of worry that has brought with it.
- Children have been fantastic all the way through, they came back keen, wanting to learn, showed natural curiosity and they had missed all aspects of school. Some days it feels like normal school! Staff team doing an incredible job.
- HT asked how the GB could thank Staff team. **Action: GB members to consider how best to express the thanks of the GB to staff**
- Recent in-year admissions have settled well. Total pupil number now 170 which is really encouraging.
- Staffing – not much change. One member of the MDS team is returning from maternity leave in December.
- JG confirmed MDS came back for keeping in touch visit and will be working each Thursday lunchtime.
- HT: school music service continues, now only two staff but they are teaching extra lessons and additional instruments. Woodwind now being offered, high take up for the flute in lower KS 2.
- HT explained that he has had to undertake a lot of online training in light of the many new ways of working and extra increase in expectations on schools.
- School Events – Remembrance Day a highlight as the whole school was together in the playground for the first time since March.
- School Direct – one student in the current cohort has now deferred, now 16 trainees. All training sessions this year are via Zoom. HT recently delivered Church of England education session. Recruitment is underway for next year. 3 students have already been recruited for next year's programme
- Floor opened for questions.
- (Question asked) A governor asked how many pupils are on the catch up programme. (A) HT: This number keeps changing as a big part of the programme, will check and inform the GB.

20/21 31. Committee related items (minutes of recent meetings sent in advance)

- **Leadership and Management (Finance & Staffing): Teachers' Appraisal update**
- **Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Covid-19 update (Remote Learning offer and Catch-up Programme)**
- HT informed members of the GB about the Government funded Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) for children in Reception who are assessed as being behind with their language development. The school had put in a successful bid for staff training and resources for this programme. The intervention programme uses an app which teachers work through with individual children. Catch-up funding could be allocated for releasing staff for training in the spring term.
- A governor suggested working with the Nursery on this.

- **Community and Welfare: Staff wellbeing survey and update**
- This survey was based on a NEU model. There were a number of questions with scales and then by adding the scores HT and staff could reference this against a stress score. Average score range from this survey (58 to 123) shows that staff are experiencing school in different ways.
- Chair informed members of the GB about the Christmas hamper to be raffled to raise money for the PTA, and reminded the members of the GB to get involved in this.
- Chair highlighted the LA Governor and Foundation Governor vacancies. Members of the GB asked that if they know anyone who may be interested and suitable in these roles.
- **ACTION: Governor vacancies to be advertised in the School Newsletter.**

20/21 32. Nursery Provision (Kate Clarke, Manager joined the meeting)

KC gave verbal report and highlighted:

- Nursery re-opened in September with full staff team, and, to date there have been no Covid-19 cases
- Attendance excellent, both children/families and staff.
- KC had supervision and wellbeing meetings with staff last week, the staff report feeling safe and supported.
- The Nursery staff have welcomed the support from school staff.
- Nursery has received funding for outdoor storage furniture which is coming soon.
- Parent consultations by phone planned for this week. KC encouraging staff to take time with these calls.
- **ACTION: Clerk to distribute KC's report to all members of the GB.**

20/21 33. Safeguarding

- The Child Protection Policy and Procedures have been updated and checked.
- **ACTION PB to send to Clerk for distribution. All members of the GB to read document and send the Clerk an email confirming this has been read and understood.**
- Chair thanked Sarah Brooke for her work as designated Safeguarding Governor.

20/21 34. Staff Wellbeing (see above)

20/21 35. Governor Election and Training

- HT reminded all members of the GB to inform MI about any training.
- HT confirmed from a list provided by MI which training the members of the GB attended.
- A governor highlighted how an induction pack for Governors and a Governors' Handbook would be useful, that documents ought to be sent through 7 days in advance, asked for questions to be anonymised in the minutes and relevant documents for this meeting to be sent through.
- **ACTION: Clerk to distribute documents and anonymise questions in minutes going forward.**
- Chair highlighted the importance of governors asking questions in meetings.
- **ACTION Clerk to minute questions as "Question asked" going forward.**

20/21 36. Training session: Protected Characteristics –

- HT briefed all members of the GB on this but the full training session has been postponed due to time constraints.
- HT briefly highlighted:
 - The concept of Protected Characteristics which is enshrined in the Equality Act 2010
- **ACTION: HT to send briefing papers to Clerk for distribution to the GB. Training session to be rearranged, Clerk to send out email with proposed date/time for this.**
- Time of next FGB changed to 5.30pm.

20/21 37. Time and Date of next meeting: Monday 8th February 2021 @ 5.30 p.m.