



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 132nd meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 18th March 2021 starting at 1700 on Zoom.

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)

Lisa Weeks (Head Teacher)

Kenneth Chan

Amanda Garlick

Margaret Connell

Mark Hutchins

Martin D'Souza

In Attendance: Dominique Wells (Clerk)

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 led by the Chair

2. Apologies for Absence

Paul Gribben, Cat Hardiman, Michelle Wilson, Fr David Camilleri

3. Declarations of Interest in items in this Agenda.

None.

4. Review of Minutes of the last meeting, held on 19th November 2020:

4.1. Confirmation of Accuracy

No amendments.

4.2. Matters Arising

Item 8: Pam Fearnley's visit (update)

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Was the data analysis on children who did not engage with Seesaw carried out after Christmas?

A: This has been done.

Item 16: Any other business

Desktops have been donated by a Governor's company and are being used in school.

The minutes were agreed by all to be a true record.

5. Head Teacher's Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Head Teacher highlighted the following:

- Remote learning during the Spring Term has exceeded the DfE expectation. Feedback has been very positive.
- A pupil in Year 1 won a national drawing competition – a great achievement.
- International Day took place over remote learning
- The outdoor classroom is continuing.
- Special thanks to Miss Lennon for her donation which has gone towards the KS1 playground.

Governors expressed how impressive it had been as to how the remote learning had come together and the use of technology. The staff have been great and MFL and Music have continued over remote learning.

The DfE allocation of laptops (5) was received on Monday.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Is there any update on the CIF bids?

A: These are for water distribution and heating distribution works. The bids have been put in – the application deadline had been extended so it is anticipated that the decision will be announced at the beginning of May.

Governors thanked the Head Teacher for her report.

6. School Re-opening post Spring Term lockdown

The re-opening of the School was discussed.

The Head Teacher reported that all children are now back in school, including those who had been previously cautious. 100% attendance is achieved.

Most children appear excited to be back and have settled back quickly as if they had never been away. There are higher numbers than expected in the After School Club.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: After the first lockdown, the children's mental wellbeing was a focus. Is this still the case?

A: School is a safe place for the children, providing routine and structure. There are no worrying trends. Some Y2 and Y3 children who had been unsettled after the first lockdown were unsettled again and signposted to Trailblazers where appropriate.

Otherwise, there are a few practical issues (e.g. sitting properly on chairs) but generally children are ok.

7. Umbrella Trust

Pam Fearnley was informative and helpful and focussed on maintaining the School's Outstanding status. She considered the Spring pupil performance data to be exceptional and looked at the development of teaching strategies and reading skills, addressing the difference between girls' and boys' progress in reading and writing, and disadvantaged and SEND pupils. Her analysis was based on 2019 data – as the School is small, the data is very much cohort-led and tricky to show improvement in this year, whereas the 2020 data will show huge progress. There is no trend.

Confidential item.

8. Holding the School to Account

8.1 Quality of Education

It was noted that the SEF is an important document for Ofsted. The subject leaders' reports identify any gaps in their areas and outline how these will be addressed.

In Reception, Mrs Richards has continued to ensure the children read – they had reading sessions on Zoom, individually (with a parent in attendance) or in groups. Any children who have not been reading have been targeted for daily reading now they are back in school.

All subjects that are possible are continuing to be taught. Swimming, gymnastics, dance and cooking is not currently possible and music has to be adapted. However, the curriculum continues to be followed.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: What is planned regarding the children who have missed out on swimming? (The School has to report which KS2 children can and can't swim.)

A: It is thought that the DfE will issue guidance on this. Perhaps there will be catch-up funding or a sports premium. It is accepted that some areas have to be put aside for now.

8.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

It is thought that Pupil Voice could have been better during the first lockdown, but has been much better during the second lockdown with the increased interaction with the teachers during live lessons. Now back at school, the School Council and Eco Committee have already met.

There has not been any report of access to inappropriate online platforms during lockdown.

The single central register is up-to-date and maintained regularly by the Finance Officer. The Head Teacher carries out a monthly electronic check also.

Confidential item.

8.3 Personal Development

The Equal Opportunities & Inclusion Statement/Disability Equality Policy applies to all pupils and stakeholders of the School. Everyone in school is treated with respect,

dignity and equality. The children are encouraged to challenge themselves and have aspirational targets. The School responds to the children's diverse needs to overcome barriers. The Head Teacher has attended conferences such as the Firm Foundations.

If there are any wellbeing concerns, the Head Teacher will contact parents and signpost families to outside support (e.g. Trailblazers) where appropriate.

There is high attendance and no concerns here.

Pupil Premium children had access to vouchers for school meals during the lockdown, organised by the Finance Officer.

8.4 Leadership and Management

SDIP Spring Term review – some items have had to be on hold and there are no actions. Catch-up funding will be used to help fill gaps and some children are accessing tuition before, during and after school.

Much virtual CPD has been taken up and has been free – it is considered that there are benefits to remote CPD.

Remote learning has been hard on staff and quite isolating having to sit in front of a screen to interact with the children. Now everyone is back at school, staff are much more positive. The lateral flow tests, masks and other protection help them feel safe. External support has been accessed where necessary, but on the whole everything feels much more 'normal'.

9. Chair's Report

The Chair noted Pam Fearnley's recommendation that Governor training should be encouraged and that a record should be kept. The Firm Foundations course is free.

Thanks were given to Governors for their continuing support.

10. Budget Monitoring Reports - Covid-19 Catch Up Funding

Covid catch-up funding spend is below budget. It is hoped that the School can apply for further grants.

Questions asked by Governors:

Q: Funding of £80/pupil – is this 'use or lose'?

A: No and we have allocated to spend all of this by 2021.

Q: There is a spend of £31K on 'Brought in services other'?

A: Yes, although £15k has been set as the budget, more has been spent on Pam Fearnley and HR services etc. and £23k has been spent on the insurance works regarding the flood. 'Other' expenses are non-curriculum based expenditure and the original budget was too low. This is offset against income at the end of the year.

The Finance Officer invited Governors to email her should they have any questions.

Thanks were offered to the Finance Officer for her hard work behind the scenes.

11. Committee Reports

The Children and Learning and Resources and Audit Committees have met this term and the minutes from these meetings will be approved at the next meetings of these committees.

12. Subject Ambassadors / Link Governors Update

Usually Link Governors meet face-to-face with subject leaders but it is suggested that this be done over phone or Zoom at the beginning of the Summer Term. Link Governors were requested to arrange a meeting with their subject leader by emailing the Head Teacher, copying in the school office.

With regard to newer Governors, their subjects were confirmed as follows:

Martin D'Souza – History, Geography

Elizabeth Williamson – Art, DT

The Chair would also request that Paul Gribben (Health and Safety Governor) receives the water checks done by the caretaker and reviews the results. This will require him to attend a legionnaire safety training course – the Finance Officer would research an appropriate course.

Action: Amanda Garlick

13. SEND Funding

Confidential item.

SEND funding has gone mainly into CPD, of which much has been undertaken, including spotting attachment disorder and return to school wellbeing. SALT has been provided for some children.

14. Policies

The policies presented were accepted by the Board and signed by the Chair.

15. Reports

15.1 School Garden Report

Informed by Mrs Deasy this is covered in the Head Teacher's Report (Item 5).

15.2 Forest School Report

Informed by Mrs Richards this is covered in the Head Teacher's Report (Item 5).

Mrs Richards is undertaking training so that Reception can benefit from Forest School.

Forest School was vandalised earlier in the term, but has now been secured and cleared. The Caretaker checks it every morning.

15.3 Subject Leaders Reports

Taken to next term.

16. Any other business

None.

17. Dates of next meetings

Ofsted Governor Training	Tuesday 23 March at 6.00pm
Resources & Audit Committee	Tuesday 4 May at 4.30pm
Children & Learning Committee	Tuesday 18 May at 4.30pm
Full Governing Body	Thursday 17 June at 5.00pm

18. The Closing Prayer was led by the Chair

The meeting closed at 18:07