

Ratified

St Andrew's C E Primary School

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**Meeting of the Full Governing Body
held online on Thursday, 3rd February at 7 pm.**

Present:	Jude Bennett (JB)	Staff Governor, Head
	James Carter (JC)	Parent Governor
	Sarah Haden (SH)	Parent Governor
	David Hodgkinson (DH)	Parent Governor
	Jo Holmes (JH)	Staff Governor
	(left at 8.50 pm)	
	Bruce Huggett (BH)	Foundation Governor
	Helen Kidd (HK)	Parent Governor
	Fr Darren McFarland (DM)	Foundation Governor
	Chris Morris (CM)	Co-opted Governor
	Keith Ponsford (KP)	Co-opted Governor

In Attendance: Lucy Dickinson (**LD**) Clerk

The meeting was quorate (10 Governors out of 14 were present throughout).

		ACTION
1.&	Welcome and Apologies for absence	
2.	Apologies were received and accepted from Elizabeth Hurren (EH : Parent Governor), Gena Leveson (GL : Co-opted Governor), Roz Smith (RS : Local Authority Governor and Jennifer Strawbridge (JS : Foundation Governor). The meeting started at 7.03pm.	
3.	Notified Business: none.	
4.	Pecuniary interests and Declarations: none	
5.	Minutes of meeting held on 2nd December 2021: DM went through the minutes of the meeting dated 2 nd December which were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. DM will sign the minutes and pass them to the school for filing.	DM
6.	Matters arising: JB gave more details relating to a question about unauthorised absence. For the year to date (until 28 January) there had been 211 unauthorised absences (these are for half day sessions). Absence is reported via the census and daily returns to the DfE. In response to questions about the reasons for absence and what JB is able to authorise, she reminded Governors that Heads have no discretion to authorise holidays. Other reasons recently cited for absence included travelling back from holidays where delayed, day trips, being tired, oversleeping, being worried about Covid rates. However, holidays remain the main reason. The persistent absentee list looks significant as a results of Covid absences – there have been 73 positive tests amongst pupils since September (accounting	

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	<p>for 334 days or 668 sessions of missed education). Due to the long period of absence required for Covid, if pupils have also had another illness this year, that can easily make the overall absence rise into the levels for persistent absence.</p> <p>The overall school figure last Friday fell to below 95% attendance for the first time, which was concerning. However, the LA figure is now at 87.9%, and Oxfordshire is also lower than the national figure (89%), so St Andrew's is still holding up comparatively well. Attendance is currently a hot topic nationally with a consultation currently out for comments. An attendance policy will become statutory (St Andrew's already has one of these), and reasons for absence will become more standardised, so there will be less issue for Heads in having to decide what to authorise – JB thinks this will give clarity and is a positive step.</p> <p>St Andrew's has joined a pilot scheme (WAND?) which collects data from SIMs and analyse it before submission to the DfE. It is anticipated that eventually this will decrease the workload for schools (although at present both reporting systems are running side-by-side).</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>3-Year Overview/SDP/SEF:</p> <p>The 3-Year overview had been circulated via Governor Hub – JB explained that she always writes such a plan in order to give an overview of where the school wants pupils to be. She hoped that the document would be helpful in giving Governors a steer on what to think about and possible skills in the new SLT appointments. DM suggested that some of the vision and ideas from this plan could be included in the HT recruitment pack. There were no further questions about the overview, but Governors appreciated the summary and context information included in it.</p> <p>The Self- Evaluation and Recovery Development Plan had been updated to include some additional context on mobility on page 3. The percentages of pupils who have attended the school continuously during the year had varied significantly between classes, with the Year 4 class (who joined in September 2017) showing particularly high mobility – only 78% still at the school. Governors asked:</p> <p><i>Q. Has JB looked at this figure in the past?</i></p> <p><i>A. No, not really. The IDSR section on school context mentions high transience, and staff were already aware that the Year 4 cohort were a priority in terms of addressing equalities and access. JB feels that this figure should continue to be monitored and included in future reports.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Does the school get sufficient information and assessment data from previous schools?</i></p> <p><i>A. Yes, there is always contact regarding safeguarding, and St Andrew's receives the UPN (unique pupil number), along with any available data and paper files. National data is automatically sent on, and previous schools are called for further information as required. JB also noted that new starters are always considered as a sub-group in the weekly inclusion meetings.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What about international moves – do these cause any issues in terms of information passed on?</i></p> <p><i>A. JB noted that there is a big mixture of routes for incoming pupils, with some coming from elective home education, others arriving from overseas but having had short periods at other schools before St Andrew's. Those coming directly from overseas tend to be the children of visiting academics and may only stay for 1-2 years. The school always obtains as much information as possible.</i></p> <p>JB will be writing a list of school priorities, and feels that more should be done for those joining the school in upper KS2 without speaking any English – this can be challenging, and more intervention programs need to be in place.</p>	

	<p><i>Q. Has the introduction of the KS2 reading champion been effective in helping reluctant readers?</i></p> <p><i>A. JB explained that the TA who has been employed for additional hours for this intervention reports back to the literacy lead (Mary Wright). She cautioned that the results are a bit nebulous, but felt that the aim of engendering a love of reading was working. The reading champion matches books with the children's interests and is very enthusiastic, and the sessions are popular with the children. The initiative is targeted at those who may not have access to books at home or be encouraged to read by parents/carers.</i></p> <p>The SEF Quality of Education section had also been updated and circulated.</p> <p><i>Q. Could JB comment on the current debate around phonics teaching?</i></p> <p><i>A. JB feels that the school teaches phonic well, and this is reflected in the results in both phonics and reading. The Read Write Inc. program used is one of those accredited by the DfE. She agreed that synthetic phonics is a way in which many/most children learn to read, but noted the tension between the need to use reading books which are linked to the phonetics approach, versus enabling children to read more widely and for the love of reading. It was agreed that a rigid approach was not beneficial, and Governors felt that the current system worked for the pupils at St Andrew's.</i></p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Sports Funding report:</p> <p>The report had been circulated and included a review of 2020-21 as well as the plan for 2021-22. JB felt that the new Sports lead had done well in thinking about fresh targets and updating the plan. Governors were alerted to the fact that not all the funding has been spent; JB has earmarked some for further swimming catch-up sessions and will be prioritising trying to book additional swimming slots, as she feels this is a core skill. One of the current classes being taken to swimming lessons has 21 non-swimmers. She also highlighted the introduction of the Marathon kids track and the Cross-country running at St Edwards. Governors asked:</p> <p><i>Q. The Fun Run is not mentioned in the report, although this is a popular annual event which involves everyone.</i></p> <p><i>A. JB agreed that this should be added.</i></p> <p><i>Q. The importance of daily exercise is mentioned, has this been possible with Covid restrictions?</i></p> <p><i>A. JB acknowledged that the bubble systems etc. had made this challenging. The setup of the Marathon track has helped, and the use of the zoned lunchtime set up with a wide range of sports and activities meant that the playground was buzzing at lunchtimes.</i></p> <p><i>Q. During discussions a couple of years ago, the issue of non-engagement of some girls (particularly higher up the school) had been mentioned. Has there been progress on this?</i></p> <p><i>A. JB felt that there weren't really any issues around this now, and JH (Year 6 teacher) agreed - she mentioned the Year 6 rugby event for girls which had good participation, as well as the Marathon track and cricket coaching. While it was recognised that swimming can sometimes be an issue for cultural reasons, this was not currently a problem with any of the St Andrew's pupils.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Is there any data on the uptake of the Marathon kids program?</i></p> <p><i>A. JB agreed to bring participation data to a future meeting. The issue of whether parental sign-up had been a barrier was also mentioned, but JB explained that this had been circumvented and that many children who didn't want to join in with team sports were using the circuit to run or walk at lunchtimes.</i></p>	<p>JB</p> <p>JB</p>

	Governors thanked JB for the comprehensive report and approved it for publication on the website.	JB
9.	Budget monitoring: an overview had been circulated, and BH noted a small but welcome decrease in the deficit. There is a current anticipated surplus of £40,515. Governors asked whether the current issue with rising energy costs is being managed. BH said the school is on a fixed deal until April, after which a 35% increase is possible. It was noted that the solar panels are helping to keep electricity costs down.	
10.	<p>Benchmarking: BH had run the benchmarking report using the same 11 local schools as last year and the results had been circulated (BH noted that this report used the 2021 data so was timelier than in previous reports). There were no major surprises or action points, and overall, the school compares well with other similar schools. The main points noted and discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending is higher on areas which benefit pupils the most (teaching and support staff, maintenance of premises) • Self-generated income has been badly hit by Covid closures (down from £858 to £311 per pupil) • High staff workforce – JB noted that there was currently lots of 1-to-1 support in helping to address Covid recovery • Whether maintenance and premises costs could be reduced. It was noted that with a largely Victorian building this might be difficult <p>A Governor asked whether these benchmarking results get looked at centrally, but it was clarified that this is an exercise which governing bodies are encouraged to carry out annually to help look at their own financial performance. DM thanked BH for his work on the report.</p>	
11.	<p>Reports from committees and Governors with special responsibilities:</p> <p>11.1 Teaching Learning Inclusion and Safeguarding: draft minutes had been circulated, and KP noted that many of the items discussed had also been covered earlier in this meeting. The updated Schedule of Work had been agreed and added to Governor Hub. The committee had looked at the Home Learning, SEND and Teaching and Learning policies, as well as reviewing the impact of the Pupil Premium funding. The revised EYFS curriculum was discussed, with SH reporting that this allowed staff more direct contact time with pupils.</p> <p>11.2 Finance Personnel Premises (including H&S and Well-being): draft minutes had been circulated. CM said that the main topic for discussion had been the proposed Co-op site hotel planning proposal, and updated Governors on the situation. OCC had arranged for a planning consultant to visit who had written a very helpful objection, but he had also indicated that he thought it very likely that the plan will be approved. There are many concerns about safety (during demolition/construction) and ongoing safeguarding once the hotel is in operation. A construction management plan will be needed, and a local planning officer has been contacted. Safeguarding issues also need to be embedded both during development and use – it is hoped that OCC will have input into this.</p> <p>CM noted that technically the period for public involvement/consultation is over, and also that any objections need to come from within the community rather than being organised by the school. DM thanked CM and other FPP members for their time and effort on this issue.</p> <p>11.3 Safeguarding: HK reported on the termly Safeguarding meeting which had taken place in January. The group had looked at the online safety policy and the ICT acceptable use policy, and decided to streamline the documentation for sending to parents into one document. This will go to parents with the admissions</p>	

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	<p>information in Year 1 (or when pupils join the school), as well as in Year 5 when starting to use the internet in IT lessons.</p> <p>TAs had taken a cyberbullying course, and it was reported that JC had attended the Safeguarding meeting (and will continue to attend in future) – bringing his professional knowledge to help support the group.</p> <p>11.4 Ethos: draft minutes had been circulated. The group has been working on the spirituality statement, as well as the Collective Worship policy. These will be sent to HK (?) to go on the website. It was noted that SIAMs inspections had been suspended until the end of January, but that St Andrew's is unlikely to be affected.</p> <p>11.5 Communications group: it was agreed that the parent survey should be delayed until the autumn when a new HT will be in place, but the pupil survey will go ahead.</p>	DM, HK?
12.	<p>Head's items including Health & Safety updates: JB explained that she had been sending a daily email to parents during the recent spike in cases in the school. This had been appreciated by parents, but as the infection rate is starting to decrease, communications are being reduced to twice weekly. 70 pupils were positive at the peak, with numbers down to around 40 now, but the drop off/return rate was lower than anticipated as most children have continued to test positive on days 5-10, so that an early return is not possible.</p> <p>Online learning has resumed alongside classroom teaching where absence in a class has been in the double figures. There has been no negative feedback from parents. Most children who are home with Covid are not too unwell to participate in some learning. It has been challenging for teachers with pupils both in school and learning online to decide how much to repeat and how to manage rolling absences. Staff have been encouraged to wear masks if this makes them feel more confident in being in school. JB felt that the risk assessment written by the school and based on the local context and site knowledge should still stand, and that she will continue to respond robustly on behalf of staff.</p> <p>The school is maintaining its readiness for Ofsted, with St Andrew's continuing to be in the waiting window. JB is also thinking about handover, and will discuss this in the HT mid-year appraisal panel next week.</p> <p>The Government have confirmed that all statutory assessments will go ahead with data being collected centrally but not published or used for national comparisons. Schools are being advised to treat the data with caution.</p> <p>Finally, JB raised her concerns for families struggling with rising food and energy costs. She noted that the foodbank during the Covid lockdown had been very well received and an important support for families, and suggested that a fund could be collected in school to help address the huge disparity in experiences of the different children in school. Governors were supportive of this idea, but also concerned about handling it sensitively. It was agreed that any scheme needed to recreate the feeling which had existed during the initial Covid period of people helping each other. The term Family Support Fund was suggested, and the involvement of the Home School Link worker to help identify families with needs was agreed.</p>	JB, appraisal panel
13.	<p>Academy status: nothing to report, but it was noted that this may arise during HT recruitment discussions.</p>	
14.	<p>Governor vacancies: one Co-opted vacancy, and GL's term of office ends in July. The potential for adding diversity was noted, but it was also felt that while the Governing Body should not continue with too many vacancies, filling the position was not currently a top priority. The NGA self-evaluation still needs to be</p>	

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	completed (when group work is possible at a face-to-face meeting). The skills audit had been carried out after the October meeting.	Agenda
15.	Governor Training: SH, DH, BH, EH, GL, CM, KP and JS had done the HT recruitment training and recorded this on Governor Hub. Other training has been booked, and Governors were encouraged to continue to record their own training and/or notify LD.	
16.	<p>Governor visits: HK had visited before Christmas and met JH and MW as Phase Leaders to talk about the Mastery Curriculum. A report has been added to Governor Hub, and HK commended the thorough and detailed work done on the curriculum.</p> <p>SH had reported back to TLIS regarding her visit to talk to Annie Arnold (AA) about the EYFS and the PHSE curriculum. She has sent reports to JB (?) for checking before uploading to Governor Hub. They had discussed the NELI language program, noting that the pupil assessment outcomes had correlated well with what staff already thought about individual pupils. The interventions have now started. The methodology regarding emotional development was also discussed, with evidence that this is well embedded and happens throughout the school, ably supported by AA's leadership.</p>	JB, SH?
17.	Headington Partnership: JB has initiated arrangements to move the financial budget for the Partnership to another school so that a new Headteacher does not have to deal with this.	
18.	<p>Review of items for next meeting: HT report, HT mid-year appraisal, no stakeholder feedback, NGA self-evaluation and results of skills audit – Governing Body succession planning.</p> <p>(8.50 pm: JH left the meeting)</p>	
19.	<p>Chair's items: DM updated Governors on the arrangements for the HT recruitment. JC, HK, EH and SH had prepared a letter to parents to gather stakeholder feedback about the desired attributes for candidates, this will also go to staff and will be discussed with pupils. Pupils' comments will be used in the recruitment pack to give a child-centred approach to the process. Governors were also encouraged to send their thoughts to DM.</p> <p>HK, SH and EH will work together on the design of the pack this weekend, and DM also asked that KP do some work on the HT requirements. The aim is to get the advert up on the OCC website by the middle of next week.</p> <p>Governors also discussed the various avenues for national adverts, noting the desire to ensure a wide and robust process. The TES costs were felt to be very high, but E-Teach could also be considered. Governors discussed various other options which will all be considered once costs are confirmed.</p> <p>(8.55 pm: EH joined the meeting)</p> <p>DM explained that the panel would have external support/advice from Karen Metcalfe (Diocese) and Jane Ratcliffe (OCC), who had already been very helpful and clear regarding the process. He asked for Governors approval for the panel as follows: DM (to Chair), HK, JC, KP and JS</p> <p>Governors approved the panel. They also agreed the decision to complete this recruitment before advertising the Deputy Head position, as the new HT needs to be central to this recruitment.</p>	Governors

The meeting finished at 9.10pm

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