

## ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 7pm on Monday 22 September 2014

#### Constitution, Membership and Attendance

LA 1	PARENTS 2	FOUNDATION 6	STAFF 4
Susan Chappell	Lucy MacArthur (Chair)	Jeff Hopkin Williams	Stuart Campbell (Headteacher)
	Ben Driver	Ieke Hilmy	Tom Holmes
		Hugo Clark	Katy Welsh
		Jonathan Jones	Jane Tomlinson
		Robin Shute	
		Neil Stirling	

**Apologies:** None  
**Absent without apologies:** None  
**Also attended:** Kate Nepstad (Clerk)

	<i>The governors were led in prayer by Jeff Hopkin Williams</i>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	The Clerk received no apologies for absence.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS</b>	
	The annual Register of Business Interests form was circulated for completion.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR</b>	
	<p>The first action was to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the year. Two nominations had been received prior to the meeting:</p> <p>Lucy MacArthur was nominated as Chair by Stuart Campbell and seconded by Ben Driver. There were no other nominations and Lucy MacArthur was elected unopposed as Chair for 2014-15.</p> <p>Jonathan Jones was nominated by Stuart Campbell and seconded by Jeff Hopkin Williams. There were no other nominations and Jonathan Jones was elected unopposed as Vice-Chair for 2014-15.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b>	
	Governors were reminded to declare an interest in any item on the meeting's agenda. None were declared.	

<b>5.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</b>	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting dated 23 June 2014 were agreed, subject to the following amendments:</p> <p>7.4) Ieke H clarified that she did not visit a lesson but had an informal meeting with Stuart Brampton, in which she was showed the method used in the school for teaching French.</p> <p>8.b) Ben D requested that the wording under Expansion Plans should read “no problems foreseen” instead of “none foreseen”</p> <p>8.c) Ben D noted that there was no need to recirculate the RE Policy as long as the very minor amendments and additions were made.</p>	Kate N Clerk, to amend
	Neil Stirling arrived at 7.15 pm	
	<p>8.d) Neil S clarified the carry-forward figure in answer to a question asked at the GB meeting on 23 June 2014.</p> <p>For the past few years, the strategy of the Finance Committee has been to run a surplus carry-forward between years in order to offset the annual negative deficit between income and expenditure. The longer term aim of the committee and the SLT has been to balance the in-year budget into the black. This is now a possibility through good financial management standards and close working between the committee and the SLT and SBM.</p> <p>It is the intention of the SLT and the committee to start to decrease the large carry-forward figure through selective use of the funds in the most appropriate way, e.g. supporting SDP initiatives, IT capital purchases to support the new Computing curriculum and ICT contract as well as general investment in the school.</p> <p>Other factors involved are the addition of a new non-PFI site in the last two years which has enabled capital purchase to be used for the Middle site - which has not been possible on the other two sites.</p>	
	The confidential minutes of the meeting dated 23 June 2014 were agreed.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<p><u>Instrument of Government and Reconstitution</u></p> <p>The Chair expressed the GB’s desire to reconstitute as soon as possible. Despite the proposed Instrument of Government being submitted to LDBS at the end of last term, they responded only one week ago and stated that the GB could not reconstitute with the same number of governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LDBS insist that the GB should reduce in size. This is not reflected in the regulations for reconstitution but the LDBS</li> </ul>	

	<p>would like 12, or 14 as a maximum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GB understand that LDBS approval is required, prior to reconstitution.</li> <li>• We are obliged to reconstitute by September 2015.</li> <li>• There are advantages for reconstituting sooner – it gives us more say about whom we have on the GB, specifically regarding the candidates appointed by the LDBS and the Local Authority, in terms of the skills we require.</li> <li>• The foundation parent category will no longer exist but LDBS state that they might be ways to appoint them under other categories; eg 1x LDBS appointed and 2x Trustee appointed.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair outlined her suggestion to rearrange the GB to fit the LDBS preferences, minimising the loss of current governors.</p> <p>Governors queried the implications of these changes:</p> <p><b>Q. How does this affect candidates currently being considered for Trustee appointments?</b></p> <p>Their applications should be stalled until the LDBS has been consulted</p> <p><b>Q. Would the LDBS consider appointing an existing governor?</b></p> <p>Yes, this is an option that they would consider. There was some discussion around the likelihood of the LDBS considering appointing an existing governor as their candidate.</p> <p><b>Q. Is the GB required to reduce the number of staff governors?</b></p> <p>The LDBS has advised that this is the case. As Associate members of the GB, staff would be able to contribute to committee meetings but would be unable to vote at a full GB meeting. There was general agreement that the presence of the Deputy HT was a practical necessity.</p> <p><b>Q. Could the GB reduce its overall number over a number of years?</b></p> <p>The explicit recommendation from LDBS is to reduce the number before reconstitution. The Chair reminded the GB that this follows popular thinking that a condensed GB is more effective. There was general agreement that it did not automatically follow that a smaller GB would be more effective.</p> <p><b>Q. What steps has the GB taken to evaluate the comparative practicality of a smaller board?</b></p> <p>The Chair reminded governors that a Standing Committee had been considering the reconstitution carefully over the past year. A skills audit was carried out and the optimum size of the GB considered in</p>	<p>Stuart C to contact LDBS for clarification</p>
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	<p>consultation with the head of the LA's Governor Support team.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Chair stressed that this discussion about reducing the overall size of the GB was a direct result of pressure from the LDBS. All members of the GB are valued very highly and every effort would be made to retain all 13 of the current governors. It is hoped that by changing the categories, the overall membership should remain the same.</p>	
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Strategic Vision Workshop</b></p> <p>Lucy M to circulate minutes at the next meeting.</p>	
<b>6.3</b>	<p><b>Critical Incident Plan</b></p> <p>Katy W reported that the postcodes had been added and that the annual review date was going to be changed to September and therefore the Plan would be reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee in due course.</p>	
<b>6.4</b>	*CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE*	
<b>6.5</b>	*CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE*	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>COMMITTEES</b></p> <p>Lucy M urged committee chairs and members to consider their Terms of Reference and in particular to include the school website. She urged committee chairs to take responsibility for the information available on the school website, relating to their committee's area of interest.</p>	All committees
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>c) Ethos Committee</b></p> <p>As the only committee to have met since the last full meeting of the GB, Jeff HW described the ongoing endeavour to link spirituality with the school's activities.</p> <p><b>Q. Has the new prayer and creed been implemented?</b></p> <p>Stuart Campbell answered that this was the case.</p> <p>Ethos Committee will be looking at the School Mission Statement. Lucy added that this is to be part of the School Development Plan and pupils will be given the opportunity to contribute to new wording, as agreed in the Ethos meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>h) Record of Visits</b></p> <p>The Chair expressed her hope that members of the GB would continue</p>	

	<p>to make regular visits: one visit each term was suggested. Ieke H and Ben D have recently reported back from visits. All visits should be well planned, focussed and should have a specific staff point of contact.</p> <p>Lucy would particularly welcome a Safeguarding Visit. Susan C confirmed that she had some availability but only during the week of 20th October.</p> <p>Ben Driver described two visits made by him and the Chair on 23/24 June 2014 to attend the Pupil Progress meetings. He was particularly impressed by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How well the staff knew the pupils</li> <li>2. That the pupils were considered holistically and their progress was discussed in far wider terms than purely academic.</li> </ol> <p>Lucy M reiterated these impressions and the fact that needs for interventions were also discussed. A good understanding of the child's needs was evident.</p>	<p>Susan C to arrange a visit.</p>
	<p><b>i) Standing Committee</b></p> <p>There are no dates currently in place, but the Chair will undertake to contact the committee chairs and give sufficient notice for them to attend, if a standing committee is required. A meeting may be required about confidential item 6.5.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF COMMITTEES AND DESIGNATED GOVERNORS</b></p> <p>Chair informed the GB that she had received a letter of resignation from Lesley Prior, who described how much she has enjoyed working with the GB but whose work commitments were preventing her from continuing to serve as a governor. Her contribution was acknowledged and her resignation accepted.</p> <p>Lucy M stated that she was not in a position to confirm the Committees but she would be contacting the current Chairs to discuss possible new appointments.</p> <p>Lucy urged members of the GB to consider the vacancies listed in the circulated document and specifically requested new designated governors for the following positions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able and Talented</li> <li>2. EYFS on the SDP</li> </ol> <p>There were no volunteers for these positions.</p> <p>Tom Holmes stressed that Able and Talented was run exceptionally well by Anne Turner who undertook to write a report for the governors every year. The designated governor would be required to ratify this impressive programme.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was probably no need to fill the PFI liaison</p>	

	vacancy in the School Development Plan, since the appointment of Johanna Van Otterdijk.	
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL TRIPS INTO CENTRAL LONDON</b></p> <p>Stuart Campbell asked the governors for their support in making a decision whether school trips into central London should go ahead at times of 'severe' terrorist threat.</p> <p>Members of the GB discussed the issues involved in making this decision and concluded that it would not be reasonable for the school to cancel all school trips into central London.</p> <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents might prefer to make their own decision and could do so by opting out of a particular school trip.</li> <li>• Previous attempts to avoid travelling by tube have been impractical: the prohibitive cost and extreme inconvenience of coach travel into central London makes this less attractive option.</li> <li>• If the threat level were to rise from severe (terrorist attack likely) to critical (terrorist attack imminent), it is likely that the GB would recommend that school trips into central London would cease.</li> </ul> <p>The GB voted 12 out of 13 majority to continue the school trips into central London.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p><b>How to Monitor the School: Qs and As for Ofsted</b></p> <p>The Chair explained that Ofsted was now (during September) making no-notice inspections, and that notice (when given) was only one day. The new focus on judging governance alongside leadership meant that members of the GB should be well prepared to answer questions.</p> <p>The triggers for an inspection can be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An unanswered complaint</li> <li>2. Concerns about safeguarding</li> <li>3. The data provided by the school causing concern</li> <li>4. Not having a Chair of Governors.</li> </ol> <p>The Chair circulated a document which compiled data from across the school. She pointed out examples of excellent results to be celebrated, especially</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At level 5 eg Maths at 91% compared to local authority average</li> </ol>	

	<p>of 59%</p> <p>2. Level 6 results achieved (this level is not expected until yrs 8 and 9)</p> <p>3. KS 1 results are back up after a dip last year, when they were at national average. They are now higher than national average again.</p> <p><b>School Development Plan</b></p> <p>The first draft of the new SDP will be circulated shortly.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday 1 December 2014. The meeting finished at 8.30pm.</p> <p>Governors joined in saying The Grace.</p>	
	<p>Subsequent to the meeting Jonathan Jones volunteered to become designated governor on Able &amp; Talented. This will be fully minuted and ratified at the next full GB meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December.</p>	