St John’s Church of England Primary School Governing Body

Full Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Meeting: **13/7/20@5.30pm** in the playground

Present: Vanessa Hamilton, Lynn Charlton (Chair), Sophie Constable, Lulu Esua, Katie Kwateng, Greg Limna (Vice Chair), Mark Stafford, Elena Sanchez, Corinne Singh, Karl Rutlidge, A-V Warren, James Gay, Libby Lazenby (Clerk)

Apologies: Simon Hamilton attempted to join by phone but had to drop out (unable to hear as outside), Katie Kwateng left at 6.20pm, Karl Rutlidge arrived 5.45pm

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| Item | Discussion/Action (Details of action) | Who | Time Scale | Completed Yes/No | Comments |
| 15/20 | MS opened the meeting with a prayerThere were no apologies initially (see above)All Governors signed a declaration of interests form and there were no interests to declare.LC welcomed Vanessa Hamilton as a new Governor and Vanessa was officially appointed to the FGB with the following words:‘I can confirm that AfC, working on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, would be happy to nominate Vanessa Hamilton as the LA Governor based on the endorsement of the Board’.LL read these words and no member of the Board had any objections to Vanessa joining the Board. Vanessa was, therefore, officially appointed to the Board |  |  |  |  |
| 16/20 | The Chair asked Governors for any comments on the minutes of the meetings 1/4/20 and 28/5/20. There were no comments other than a question from the Chair who wondered if the free school meal vouchers ever arrived? LE responded no and the school had had to cover the cost of that. It was suggested that a letter of complaint is written.The Minutes for 28/5/20 and 1/4/20 were then signed and also the minutes of 28/11/19 which Governors had looked over on the phone (at the meeting 1/4/20) but had not been able to meet in person to sign. | LC/JG |  |  |  |
| 17/20 | Headteacher’s ReportLE started by referring to the numbers on roll and that the school is still filling up for next year. Staffing - the school is well-staffed for next academic year. John Hastings has stepped down with immediate affect so staff will take their own music going forward and if the opportunity arises and there is budget capacity in the future the school will look to get another specialist. Training will be given to staff the first week back in September.Curriculum – home learning – the decision was taken to take the approach that the school did with the technology the school had available and also following the safeguarding advice from AfC. Looking forward the school is planning for a return of all children in September but also looking at what to do if a lockdown situation should ever arise again. The school will continue to implement Google Classroom for KS2 and padlet for KS1. When in school in September children will be facing forward and the child at the front will be 2m away from the teacher. With the upcoming inset days staff will look at the suggested recovery curriculum for September – for September staff are most concerned about the emotional recovery of the children. There are those who have engaged but at what cost? And those who have turned off completely. Even with home learning they have all missed out. Over the Summer holidays a project is usually set but this Summer the school will concentrate on key based skills and reading and encouraging every child to put pen to paper – handwriting has been really affected by this time. School wants to make sure that the basic skills are not lost. A Governor **asked** LE to confirm that if nothing changes the children will all be back full time in September. LE responded yes. The Governor went on to **ask** about the use of the church if the situation with small bubbles should ever arise again - especially for the younger children. There had been some queries from parents as to why the church had not been used this time around. LE responded that the issue was staff – at least two members of staff would be needed in the church and at the point of another outbreak she would be working with less staff if anything. The Governor continued that he felt it was important the school pre-empted a Plan B if ever a situation arises where we have to go back to 2m distance and smaller bubbles - it is important to keep parents on side. Another Governor continued that communication with parents is so important and it is vital that the school share their reasons behind decisions eg not using the church due to staffing and insurance issues. The original Governor expanded on that to say it was important to have the communication to parents ready to go, previously communication has come a bit later and parents would understand and not question so much if they understood the reasons behind decision at the time. The governor went on to explain that whilst some parents may understand and accept the reasons why timings or provision at school may have to be changed, others may find this more difficult to accept. In such instances, timely communication and information from the school, sent as far in advance as possible, should help to increase understanding and wider acceptance of changes that have to be made because of Coronavirus restrictions.One example of how fuller explanations might create greater understanding, would be for the school to set out the reasons why it may, or may not, have been possible to use the church for a ‘socially distanced’ group ‘bubble.’ MS added that the church was good to go and he had discussed it with the school but it is a staffing and insurance issue. LE reiterated that this was the case. LE continued that in Sept subject leaders would start by looking at key skills and the rest of ‘catch-up’ should fall into place from there. A Governor **asked** how the staff were? The Staff Governor responded that although it has been a struggle to balance everything at home and at school they are okay. It is nice to see people although it is all a bit odd and not ideal but the staff are looking after each other and pleased to be back. The anxiety that was there in June has largely gone. LC thanked LE for the Headteacher’s Report and asked if LE had had the opportunity to update the SDP. LE responded that she will review it and send it out again. It will pretty much stay the same and can then be reviewed in the Autumn Term. Staffing Update has been covered. |  |  |  |  |
| 18/20 | Finance update:Current Financial Situation.GL talked Governors through this and explained that the main hit has been in Nursery . There was supposed to be a full Nursery in Sept but some have withdrawn. At the time there was some discussion about whether the Nursery would be able to open in full and therefore parents withdrew their children and that hit funding. The Nursery should now be able to reopen in full. With this hit in Nursery funding the school is looking at a loss and that loss is on the basis of no additional Government funds. As it stands at the moment you get no extra funding unless you actually have an outbreak. LE added that the Nursery top-up children have been affected too, hopefully we will gain ground in September and begin to re-coup. A full After School Club will also make a difference. GL continued that during this time ASC has been an expense as it had to be run but there were not enough children using it to make a profit. A Governor asked how ASC will work with the bubbles? LE explained that ASC and BC will move to the hall and set out tables one for each class. The other clubs will not be able to take place certainly for the first half of the Autumn Term. MS suggested that the church was used for these other clubs. A Governor said this would not help as because the clubs are cross year-group they cannot take place anyway. A Governor outlined the importance of advertising for the Nursery. LE agreed. LC asked for any other thoughts on the financial situation - there were none.  |  |  |  |  |
| 19/20 | Treasurer’s Report:ES told Governors that there is £11,500 in the account. A cheque is about to go out for £4500 for maintenance contribution to SDBE. There is £1000 to come in Gift Aid. This leaves the fund a little lower than in previous years but it was decided that it was wrong to chase up parental contributions during this time – it is not appropriate and hopefully next year it will get back to normal. A Governor **asked** f the Governors contribution still stood at 10%, ES confirmed yes.LC explained to Governors that due to ES and KK standing down from the end of this academic year we have vacancies for a Treasurer and a Chair for the T&L Committee. LC asked Governors to think about it and let LC/LL know if they are interested. LC asked KK if the Chair of T&L position was onerous? KK responded no and that it is interesting . There is one more meeting a term and they look in more detail at data and books etc. LC asked the same question of ES about the Treasurer position. ES responded that there are points with more activity but that with ParentPay it is a lot easier . |  |  |  |  |
| 20/20 | Committee Update:1. Nothing to report as Resources Meeting was cancelled
2. Admissions Update – LC asked how many children have accepted offers? All – Reception is full for Sept. Nursery has been discussed above. LC went on to talk about the recent letter to all FGBs of Diocesan Schools from SDBE asking that CofE schools revisit their Admissions Criteria for 20-21/21-22 due to the fact that churches have been closed and attendance impossible. We have to review our documentation and update it on the website. MS added that he felt it was not his position to refuse to sign the SIF form – if people come to church they come but the depth of their spirituality is not his business it is between them and God. He does not want it to turn into a popularity contest. He therefore signs if he feels they have met the attendance criteria and if this means distance decides those that get places then so be it. It is arbitrary but it works. LC went on to say that with the shutting of the churches for lockdown we will have to look at those families who have attended until Feb 20 and then March-Sept. MS added that the church is opening now and the Children’s Group is happening now. LC together with MS and LE will look at the diocese’s suggested wording for the website (post meeting SDBE issued clear direction on admissions policy and SIF for the reasons stated above – the school have completed these actions).
3. Nothing to report as T&L meeting was cancelled.
 | LC/LE/MS |  |  |  |
| 21/20 | PolicyGovernors were asked for their comments on the attached policies. A Governor recommended that policies should be changed so that they don’t refer to individuals by name eg ‘Lynn Charlton’ but ‘Chair of Governors’ as otherwise they quickly become out of date. The Governor also **raised concerns** about the name of the ‘Home School Agreement’ which, in this period of home schooling, has come to mean something else and perhaps the name should be changed. A Governor suggested ‘Family School Agreement’ as a better name. A Governor talked about the ‘Freedom of information’ policy which lists what is available on the website. He suggested that the school check that these items are actually available on the website and, if not put them on or change the policy. Another Governor **raised queries** over the ’Uniform’ policy which says ‘there can be exceptions due to gender identity’ – should the same be said for religious identity? A discussion followed about whether it was necessary to list clothes under ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ – perhaps a general list of uniform is given and pupils choose what they feel is appropriate to them. A Governor **raised concerns** over the ‘RHE’ policy and the fact that, despite many attempts, it is still not clear to parents what they have the right to withdraw their child from. The actual legislation does not make it clear either. LE suggested that she felt it was important that parents knew they could come and talk to her about it if they had concerns and any issues could be dealt with that way as with conversation it is easier for people to understand. LE to put the policy on the website but also a note on the newsletter to say parents are welcome to come and talk to her about the RHE policy should they wish. **A Governor queried** whether parents had the right to withdraw from it ? LE responded that it is not taught as ‘Sex Education’ for that reason - it is taught as RHE and Science and that way parents don’t have the right to withdraw their child but the school does have an ‘open door’ policy with it and invites parents to come and talk if they have concerns. LE will go back and make amendments to the policies and co-ordinate with LL. | LELE/LL |  |  |  |
| 22/20 | Governor Matters:A/B. GB Membership and Succession Planning.LC thanked ES/KK/A-VW and KR for their contribution – they are all stepping down. A-VW offered to stay on until a replacement can be found. LC talked about Eugenia Shaw who has been suggested for a position and LC will make contact with her. MS talked about contacting Jonathan Wilkes re the All Saints replacement. Governors mentioned concern about filling positions eg T&L Chair, Treasurer etc in September as you can’t expect new people to do it straight away. ES said she was happy to support a new treasurer initially. There was some discussion around the filling of the gaps in September and if we will be quorate – which we will. A Governor mentioned the skills lacking and how it was important to try and recruit to those gaps as it makes the whole process run easier. LL mentioned the updated skills audit and the gap in HR experience. There was a discussion about trying to get new Governors that weren’t also parents at the school and the Vicar was asked to bear this in mind when looking for replacement Foundation Governors. C. LC went on to talk about the Governors’ responsibility to performance manage the Head Teacher. It is recommended that three Governors are trained in this and currently it is just LC. SH volunteered for this and one other volunteer is still needed. LC will carry on. LC explained the process for this - you talk to the SIP and then take a view on LE’s overall assessment. There is training available (see below)D. LC asked for a volunteer for a new Governor Mentor for VH and GL stepped forward. E. LL to send an email with suggested dates for meetings for the 20-21 academic year.F. Training dates not yet published and LL will send on once she receives.  | LC/MSLL |  |  |  |
| 23/20 | Standard Matters,1. Safeguarding – LE mentioned how the school had tried to reach out to vulnerable children during lockdown.

B/C/D/E/F.Obviously lockdown has prevented the school’s usual activities. With regards to Faith Group activities – reflective sessions were sent as part of Home Learning, MS also sent powerpoints each week which some children have participated. In September it still won’t be possible to do Collective Worship as normal and school and MS need to talk about this. |  |  |  |  |
| 24/20 | Incidents/Complaints/Correspondence.**A confidential item has been minuted here**. There are no incidents to report. |  |  |  |  |
| 25/20 | A.O.B.It was decided that minutes should be published on the website with a confidential section which is kept back. LL to look at what other schools do. Parents have the right to view the accounts if they wish – they have the right to see everything except safeguarding. LL will type the minutes with confidential sections and these won’t be published and will be filed separately. | LL – done |  |  |  |