

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of
Toddington St George Church of England Academy
held on Tuesday 30th June 2015 at 7.30 pm**

Present:	Tony Williams (Chair)	Bob Heal (Vice-Chair)
	Jane Spencer	Rev Anne Crawford
	Richard Phelan	Luke Mitchell
	John Keith	Clare Brown
	Miriam Drahmane	Kirstie Meachem
	Clare Oakley	Dee Curtis
	Norman Costain	
In attendance:	Liz Collins	Louise Taylor
	Jo Tillin	

Action

1. Clerk

Governors thanked Alison Leigh (Clerk) for her hard work and commitment to the school. Flowers will be sent from the Governing Body.

TW

Apologies

Miriam Drahmane (MD) apologised for arriving late (7.50 pm).

Register of Pecuniary Interests

The Register was circulated and signed by Governors present. No new pecuniary interests were advised.

Notification of Any Other Business

None.

Opening prayer was given by Rev Crawford (AC).

2. Academy Review: where are we after two years?

In response to Jane Spencer's (JSp) question, Bob Heal (BH) explained that there are four Member Trustees within the Academy (John Keith, Tony Williams, Bob Heal and a Diocesan Representative). The remaining Governors are elected onto the Board.

Mr Williams (TW) invited Governors to consider the school's current position two years after converting to an Academy. Governors were split into four groups and provided with six key questions to discuss. (See attached sheet.)

BH suggested that the issues highlighted by each group could be discussed at a Strategy Day. Governors felt it would also be beneficial to focus on how to move the school forward. TW suggested meeting in early October to allow new Parent Governors to be appointed. Governors agreed to meet on Saturday 10th October 2015 at 9.30 am at Eversholt Hall (subject to availability).

JSp

signed by the Chair.....

3. Minutes and matters arising from the full meeting held on 10th March 2015 and Sub-Committees

Full Meeting

The Admission arrangements for 2016/17, Freedom of Information Act and Equality Act policies had been circulated (5.i-iv). An Equality Plan needs to be written (5.iv).

JSp

The School Development Plan (SDP) is being RAG-rated prior to being added to the school's website and circulated to Governors. (6.i)

The children referred to in (6.iii) had been located. Governors need to be aware that they may be asked about missing/absent children during an Ofsted inspection.

JSp confirmed that the SEF is being updated in the new format. (6.iv)

The Pupil Premium letters had been sent to parents. (6.iv)

It was noted that there is an eighteen month window in which the Head Teacher review can take place. A SIP needs to be appointed. (8.c) **TW**

A number of Governors' Focus visits had taken place since the previous meeting. TW reminded Governors to provide written reports. (8.d)

The bid for a new courtyard canopy had been unsuccessful. (8.e)
Clare Oakley (CO) questioned why the bid failed. JSp explained that the successful bids were from schools with increased pupil numbers. Although a Chartered Surveyor had been engaged to help with the bidding process, a more formal submission may have had more success. Greenfield and Pulloxhill had recently submitted successful bids for funding. A meeting will be arranged with the two schools to discuss how to write bids.

Luke Mitchell explained that the side gates would be repaired during the summer break at a cost of £150. Security at the front of the building and in the car park needs to be considered. Staff ensure all gates are shut every day. Liz Collins (LC) suggested that additional signage would help visitors. JSp confirmed that signs would be ordered during the summer. (9.i)

Parkfields Middle School had been approached regarding a shared Parent Support Assistant who would be responsible for lower level Safeguarding issues. JSp will report back to Governors when final costings had been received. (9.i)

JSp

Kirstie Meachem (KM) met with JSp to discuss the new SEND legislation and with the SENDCO for an understanding of the impact the new changes will make. (9.iii)

Minutes for the meeting held on 10th March 2015 were agreed and duly signed by the Chair.

signed by the Chair.....

Minutes of the Personnel & Finance Sub-Committee and the Building Sub-Committee were circulated prior to the meeting.

Building Sub-Committee

Due to the increased maintenance needs around the school, LM felt it would be beneficial to seek help in locating additional funding streams and grants. Recently, the Site Agent had written a bid to Jewsons for a small project. The bid was unsuccessful. Miriam Drahmane (MD) suggested contacting St James Place for a donation and offered to provide the relevant contact details. Governors discussed approaching banks, large businesses and supermarkets for support. TW stressed the need to actively search for grants. Clare Brown (CB) suggested Governors write individual letters for specific projects. KM recommended involving the children in fund raising activities. TW suggested a priority plan is written and individual Governors are asked to take ownership of a particular project.

MD

TW/LM

Richard Phelan (RP) was thanked for his generous donation of four ipads.

All Governors present agreed the Sub-Committee minutes.

The Community Cohesion Plan was agreed.

4. Chair and Head Teacher's Report to the Full Governing Body

4.1 Quality of Teaching

- i) Pupil Premium (PP)
JSp and KM had a meeting to discuss the current level of PP funding and how it had been spent. KM attended a course on raising attainment for PP and SEND children. Some children required 1:1 academic support while others required social support. JSp explained that staff have PP priorities and a record was kept of the clubs that vulnerable children attend.

- ii) SEND
JSp and Lisa Mallett (LM)(Nurture Group) attended a SEND conference at the University of Bedfordshire. The conference focused on practical ways to support parents and a representative from the Special Needs Action Panel (SNAP) explained how funding was directed. A meeting with parents will be arranged in due course.

Currently there are 39 children at Stage 1, 20 at Stage 2 and 4 HI pupils with Statements. There had been a reduction in the number of HI Statemented children this year. Some HI support staff had transferred to Middle Schools with the children.

Two twilight ASD training sessions had been held at the Chiltern School. The Educational Psychologist had led

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a staff awareness session on ADHD.

iii) Observation updates
Last year's observations were checked by the School Improvement Partner (SIP). This year staff had worked in pairs for joint observations and had shared ideas and expertise. The final observation will take place next week. **TW questioned whether the observed lessons were good or generally outstanding.** LC confirmed that the lessons were generally outstanding although some points had to be addressed and one weaker point could easily be resolved. JSp referred Governors to the full summary in the Head Teacher's Report (5.2).

iv) Governor Focus visits
CO and RP recently undertook an IT visit. They were impressed with the teacher, Mr Davis, who brought the subject to life for the children. The children were working collaboratively while still being challenged.

KM, RP and LM met with Mrs Woods to discuss how Maths was taught, assessed and how progress was monitored.

On their visit, CO and Dee Curtis (DC) viewed Humanities files and photos and learnt about the History Day. Geography is embedded into all subjects.

TW reminded Governors to provide a short report following each visit.

4.2 Data Update/Performance

JSp explained that children were now assessed using Age Related Expectations (ARE). Pupils were assessed as working below ARE, at ARE or above ARE. Iprofile and G2 systems were used for the assessments, however, due to a number of problems with G2 staff would be using Target Tracker from September.

- i) Early Years
It was noted that:
- the group contained one child with medical needs, 6 boys and one girl with Speech & Language (SP/L) needs. Support will be offered to this group.
 - there is a gender imbalance with 40 boys and 20 girls.
 - there is a 20% difference in attainment between boys and girls in Communication and Language (CL).
 - there is a 15% difference between the genders in Physical Development (PD) and Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PESD).
 - although the Literacy result is slightly down from last year, the year group had improved.
 - the next step is for small groups of children to work on their phonics.

signed by the Chair.....

JSp explained that children's progress year-on-year would be judged on these results, therefore, baselining must be accurate.

MD questioned whether parents had been informed that if they miss one SP/L appointment there is a risk that further specialist support will be withdrawn.

JSP confirmed that parents had been told and that school staff offer support and help. JSp added that the Communicators were invaluable.

ii) Year1/Year 1 (Phonics)

This year 91% of the Year 1 children reached the required level in their Phonics test.

It was noted that:

- 58 children were tested
- 2 children were dis-applied due to their HI and/or ASD needs.
- 5 boys did not achieve the required level.
- of the SEND group, one girl and 2 boys succeeded but 2 boys did not.
- one PP pupil reached the required standard.

JSp praised the quality of the phonics teaching within the school.

iii) Year 2/KS1 SATS

Phonics

It was noted that:

- 18 children re-sat the Phonics test; 64% passed, 36% did not reach the required standard.
- 2 PP/SEND children passed but one Safeguarding pupil did not.

MD questioned whether staff required additional training. JSp replied that staff had undertaken Dyslexia training and worked hard to maintain the children's confidence. The next steps were to target those children whose route into learning was not phonics-based. More word packages, tactile work and 1:1 support programmes may be required.

Year 2 data

There had been no change to the staffing levels in Year 2 despite staff absences.

It was noted that:

- 50% of the cohort were summer-born.
- SEND and PP pupils produced good results, however, the gap between PP and non-PP pupils was significant. These results will be broken down further for comparison purposes.

TW questioned whether 50% was particularly high.

JSp confirmed that it was but there were a number of very able summer-born children who positively affected the

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percentages.

In response to KM's question, JSp confirmed that the SEND pupils were predominantly boys. JSp believed that as the Primary Curriculum is writing-based it favoured girls.

KS1 ARA

JSp explained that the percentages on this report would appear on Raiseonline in the Autumn.

iv) Year 3
Results were still being analysed. A report will follow.

v) Year 4
JSp explained that if pupils are dis-applied at KS1 then they will be score zero in KS2.

It was noted that:

- there were more girls than boys in the cohort.
- there were 2 Statemented boys, 2 boys with Statements and School Action Plus and 6 boys on School Action.

JK asked if the National data included SEND children.

JSp confirmed that next year's KS1 data would include SEND. LC questioned whether the new test takes into account the needs of SEND pupils.

JSp explained that the KS1 test was marked internally but will be marked externally next year in line with the KS2 tests.

TW asked for confirmation that the data was currently unvalidated. JSp confirmed it was. The data would be used to identify priorities for next year.

JSp informed Governors that the new National Curriculum Levels had changed and there was a concern that pupils would appear not to have made any significant progress. Parents would be informed of the changes.

Governors discussed their concerns about the effect testing had on the children.

4.3 Behaviour and Attendance

LC reported that there were no exclusions this term.

Currently there were 28 children on the Behaviour Log. Staff were working in partnership with parents of 14 of the pupils.

Previously, pupils were given three warnings before interventions took place. Now there is only one warning and parents are promptly involved.

There were fewer children recorded in the Behaviour Log during

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the Spring Term, possibly due to staff absence.

Four children were now managing without behaviour plans but one pupil still has one. One child was being supported at lunchtimes.

TW questioned whether there had been any further racist Incidents. LC confirmed that there were none.

- i) Safeguarding
LM advised Governors that the school site must be made secure.

Pupils' attendance is adversely affected if their parents have mental health problems. In these cases extra support is available for the children.

The Relay phone system is operational whereby staff can be alerted quickly to any domestic violence incidents and initiate the necessary support for pupils.

4.4 Leadership

- i) Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)
JSp sits on the DBE and reported that:
 - a new Church school is about to open in Watford.
 - the DBE Director, John Reynolds, will be retiring shortly. School will contribute to his leaving gift.
 - a new report on Collective Worship and RE is due out soon.JSp felt that Church (or Faith) schools were under pressure or threat of closure.

JSp

AC informed Governors of her recent meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop visited the local area and met with the Head Teachers of all the Church schools. In addition to speaking about his Economist background, the Archbishop spoke about the quality of teaching, leadership and management of Faith schools. AC felt the meeting was very affirming.

- ii) HAST
TW informed Govenrors that at the recent meeting a list of priorities and suggestions had been discussed. BH was pleased to see so many staff at the meeting as their input is useful.

JSp explained that currently, school pays £288 for every Educational Psychology assessment. This means only a few children can be assessed each year. As staff cannot diagnose Dyslexia a specialist is required for two days a term. JSp asked TW to request additional funding from HAST. TW agreed to make the proposal on behalf of the school.

TW

signed by the Chair.....

A SP/L specialist had been appointed. TW mentioned that recruitment had taken many months due to the legal issues resulting from the specialist needing to report back to the Health Service

TW explained that HI/VI unit is run on behalf of the Local Authority; funds received are used to benefit all the children.

As the cost of school visits is high, CB felt a coach would be a useful purchase.

iii) School Site

LM explained that Governors need to decide what the new Portacabins would be used for and where they would be positioned.

Governors were provided with two outline plans and were asked to consider that:

- there are fewer HI children being admitted.
- the Nursery is not yet financially viable (fewer children but staffing levels maintained).
- option one would mean losing the pond.
- option 2 would mean moving the trim trail and the broadband connection.

Governors discussed both options. JSp said that the Portacabins could be positioned near the HI unit or the trim trail. There may be issues with building regulations if the Portacabins are linked to an existing building. In addition, the level of expenditure needs to be considered if the broadband connection had to be moved.

JSp stressed the urgency of putting together a business plan for the Early Years. JT explained that funding levels need to be investigated in light of the Government's plan to offer children 30 hours free Early Years education. Wrap around care would be a useful funding stream for the school.

**LM/BH/
JK/JT**

LM suggested a Sub-Committee was formed to drive forward the introduction of wrap around care. Governors would also need to meet with Toddington Childcare to ensure any decisions made do not adversely affect them. BH and JK agreed to join the Sub-Committee.

BH/JK

LM proposed and BH seconded that Governors accept Option One subject to the pond area being suitable.

It was agreed to move forward with the wrap around care proposal so that it is in place by September 2016.

signed by the Chair.....

iv) Academy Budget

The proposed 2015/2016 budget was circulated prior to the meeting.

TW, BH and JT met to discuss the assumptions underpinning the figures. Governors agreed it was a prudent budget but expressed concern about the reducing year-end surplus. All Governors present agreed unanimously to accept the 2015/2016 budget.

JSp reported that Jackie Springer would be away from school for the foreseeable future. Additional Reception staff are required. One member of staff has reduced the number of days she works.

It was planned that a Nursery Nurse (NN) would begin her Teacher training in September. However, the course booked did not include the Early Years. An alternative course is being sought. JSp asked Governors to agree to employ the NN as an Unqualified Teacher (UQT) from September 2015. JK felt that any alternative would be disruptive for the children. **MD questioned how long the NN would be an UQT.** JSp replied that the NN would be unqualified until the completion of her course.

v) Parents

LC informed Governors that there were currently 6 parent helpers working across the school. They help with reading groups, filing and work in the library. Feedback from the parents was being sought to identify any needs.

Parents Forum

KM was thanked for Chairing the forum. Parents were invited onto the forum and came from a wide range of backgrounds. There were representatives from each class. A key theme is discussed at each meeting. LC then identifies any queries/questions from the minutes and decides on the necessary response or action. For example Year One parents know that the children are tested in Year 2 and have requested more support for their children prior to changing year group. The Homework policy has been updated to reflect concerns raised by parents. Fixed Penalty Notices and Universal Infant Free School Meals had also been discussed. LC produces a feedback letter to parents at the start and end of each year. JSp said that parents appreciate LC's continued support.

There were Work Experience students currently in each class.

JSp took the opportunity to thank all teaching, support

signed by the Chair.....

and admin staff for a fantastic year and the good results.

MD stepped down as Parent Governor. TW thanked her for her hard work and commitment to the school.

5. Parish and Community Links

Parish

AC reported that:

- the Messy Church continues to do well and supports parents.
- the Meditation Group is popular and will resume in September.
Some teachers and support staff had joined the group.
- some support staff were keen to learn more about the basics of the Christian faith. Possibly a short course for adults could be offered.
- following the Abbey visit, some children had enquired about Baptism.
- the Deanery sometimes arrange for KS2 children to visit Whipsnade's Tree Cathedral to experience worship outdoors.

AC is working with the Royal British Legion to re-vamp the Remembrance Sunday service on the green. It is hoped that the younger children will have a more visible role to play.

Community

DC reported that a number of community opportunities had arisen since the last meeting, namely:

- the Big Litter Pick of the school site and the village
- pupils attended the Spring Festival
- the choir sang at the Ploughman's Lunch
- pupils helped in the community garden behind the Methodist Church
- the village Summer Fete

6. AOB

None.

TW distributed a list of meeting dates for the next academic year.

The meeting closed at 10.30 pm.

signed by the Chair.....

signed by the Chair.....