



# John Blandy Primary School

<b>Meeting</b>	Local Governing Body	<b>Where</b>	John Blandy Primary School
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 22 May 2019	<b>Time</b>	19.00
<b>Attendees</b>	Lucie Belcher (LB, chair, parent governor), Sarah Thompson (ST, head teacher), Stephen Arrowsmith (SA, community governor), Helen Benson (HBe, support staff governor), Clare Butcher (CB, community governor), Hannah Boon (HBo, parent governor), Janice Simpson (JS, community governor), Suzanne Elliot (staff governor), David Hancox (DH, community governor), Jane Tidy (JT, parent governor), Kerri Treherne (KT, community governor)		
<b>Apologies</b>			
<b>Clerk</b>	Octavia Kelly		

## MINUTES

Meeting opened at 7.15 pm.

Action		
	<b>Welcome and opening business</b>	
	<b>Welcome, quoracy and apologies</b>	
	Meeting was quorate. There were no apologies.	
	<b>Urgent matters as previously notified to the Chair</b>	
	None	
	<b>Declarations of pecuniary interests</b>	
	None	
	<b>Minutes of last meeting (6 March 2019)</b>	
	<b>Approval of minutes of last meeting</b>	
	Minutes were approved.	

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	<p><b><i>Matters arising from minutes of last meeting</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing [this item was covered at the start of the meeting as it related to the update on building/admissions in 'matters arising']:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vacancies                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SE is acting up as a headteacher for 2.5 days per week, leaving a vacancy for her teaching hours.</li> <li>▪ 1 KS2 teacher has resigned.</li> <li>2 KS2 teachers who were already part-time will be starting a jobshare.</li> <li>▪ 1 KS1 teacher who had been on long-term absence since October has resigned.</li> <li>▪ Another teacher who had been on leave of absence for 2 academic years has also resigned.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Resignations are an opportunity to replace more experienced with more recently qualified and less costly staff.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 16 applications for a teaching post were received. 8 candidates were shortlisted, but one got a job elsewhere so 7 were interviewed and observed. Very strong field. ST and LB had the opportunity to observe one of the NQTs subsequently taken on while she was working in the 'real' environment of her last placement, and to speak to her mentor and the teacher with whom she was working, who gave very positive feedback.</li> </ul>	
	<p>KT came into the meeting at 1919</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruited:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2 internal candidates currently on temporary and zero hours contracts will be employed for 3 and 2 days respectively.</li> <li>○ 1 further teacher may be recruited.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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- The 2 definite recruits and the potential recruit comprise 2 NQTs and an N4. NQTs get an extra 10% PPA, so each NQT has a total of the equivalent of a full day's PPA per week. Some of the existing teachers will be covering this extra PPA for the new recruits, giving the NQTs' classes the equivalent of a day per week of teaching by a more experienced teacher.

- **Building/admissions update**

Admissions for September 2019 had been capped at 30 because the new building had not proceeded and therefore classroom space had not been increased.

OCC then sent a breakdown of the numbers shortlisted and rejected, which showed that as many as 11 children within catchment, some with siblings at the school, were going to be rejected and would instead have to go to Standlake, Hanney or Abingdon. This would have had a severe impact on the families concerned. ST received the following support of her decision to admit 40, rather than 30, children in September 2019:

- Anne Lynne of the Academy is keen to keep admissions as high as is feasible to maximise income
- OCC agreed to provide £55K for each of 2 years to fund an extra teacher even if the new building does not proceed and
- Since Oak classroom is officially large enough to accommodate 40 children aged 4-5 but the classrooms for Y1s and above are not, OCC has also agreed to pay for a temporary classroom accommodating up to 40 children and with its own gates and security if the new building is not complete by September 2020.

The annual intake has not officially increased from 30; the increase in intake to 40 is 'temporary'.

Until now, parents and prospective parents were informed that there was no alternative to capping admissions in September 2019 to 30, unless the new building was ready, in which case 45 children would be admitted. Parents might complain that, had they been aware that their child might be accommodated from Y1 upwards in a temporary classroom, they would not have made JBS their first-choice school. ST requested that prospective parents be informed about this possibility in letters from OCC offering places at JBS but it was not. Some parents were indeed upset, but a meeting between them and ST was positive, and ST is now looking forward to developing a workable, child-friendly

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	<p>environment where children work in 2 groups of 20, each under a qualified teacher, an unusually high ratio of teachers to pupils.</p> <p>OCC has committed to pay £55K for each of 2 consecutive years for a full-time teachers. However, once the cohort moves into Y2, the funding will discontinue if the cohort entering foundation in September 2020 numbers less than 40. This would mean 1 teacher to 40 children in Y2, and again in Y3, for the September 2019 entry cohort. One solution might be to mix some of that cohort with the year below, to a maximum of 30 in a class, since the maximum class size in KS1 is 30.</p> <p>The situation would be resolved with ease were the new building to proceed. There has been conflicting information from OCC and the Secretary of State for Education as to why s77 consent has not been forthcoming. OCC asserts that the Secretary of State has withheld consent on the grounds that building would reduce the amount of outdoor space available at the school to below the recommended area, but a response from the Secretary of State obtained by a parent suggests that there is another issue that OCC has not resolved to the DfE's satisfaction. If the problem is purely one of a lack of space, it is likely to be insoluble. The committee suggested the recreation ground next to the school could be used by the school, but that would be impractical, because, as it accessible to the public, the recreation would have to be checked before every use to comply with health and safety, insurance, and safe-guarding regulations. One member of the parish council has proposed that the school boundary be extended into the recreation grounds and will contact ST to that effect, but such a move is unlikely to be approved by the parish council as a whole.</p>	
	<p><b>Governing body</b></p> <p><b>Governance review</b></p> <p>The review was quite positive. ST and LB intended to meet to discuss what actions should be taken in response to the report. While that meeting has not yet taken place, ST has consulted Louise Warren, Director of Education and member of the review panel, about measures that could be taken to improve governance. It may be helpful to involve the entire committee in such deliberations, so <b>improvements to governance in the light of the review</b> could be put on the agenda for the next LGB meeting. An informal dialogue with the teachers should also take place.</p> <p>Points raised in the review:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P&amp;S committee minutes were not published online. Committee noted, however, that it had been agreed from the inception of the P&amp;S committee that discussions held at P&amp;S meetings would be kept confidential.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of financial situation was largely confined to the finance governor, DH. Committee noted, however, that while DH had a more detailed insight into the finances, other governors were aware of the main financial issues, in particular that the focus is on balancing in-year budgets and not on clearing or even significantly reducing the £100K historical deficit, which is not currently feasible.</li> <li>• Committee may be relying too heavily and unquestioningly on the headteacher's report; it should be challenged to a greater extent.</li> <li>• Committee too focussed on what is currently happening rather than planning for the future.</li> </ul> <p>Committee considered whether establishing more sub-committees, especially a resources committee, might give more time for planning. Smaller groups, reporting to the wider committee in advance of LGB meetings, can be helpful. However, committees can also represent demands on teachers' time, particularly as meetings are often held out of school time to accommodate working governors and can be ineffectual.</p> <p>Agreed it was better for lead governors to report to LGB at specified times and to ensure governors' challenges are documented. A template document needs to be drawn up to facilitate this.</p>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Draw up document recording lead governors' actions and challenges</b>	<b>ST/LB</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One governor said she had had difficulty in obtaining information from staff at the school who were not clear if releasing it to the governor breached confidentiality. The governor eventually got the information from Academy staff. ST agreed there might be some confusion about what was confidential and in what contexts but encouraged governors to direct requests for information to the Academy staff where possible, as the school pays the Academy a fee to provide such services.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Ensure ToR for LGB reflects responsibilities that were listed in minutes of P&amp;S meeting on 3 April 2019</i></b></p>	

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	<p>P&amp;S committee Terms of Reference does not include several duties normally carried out by such committees, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy approvals. However, policies are often drawn up by the academy, with little scope for input from, and hence little debate within, individual schools, so the committee did not feel it necessary to delegate approvals of policies from the LGB to the P&amp;S committee.</li> <li>• Safeguarding-related duties are carried out by KT in her role as safeguarding lead governor and she reports to the LGB, so, while the P&amp;S does not take responsibility for safeguarding, the wider LGB does.</li> <li>• P&amp;S will have met only 3, rather than, as is more usual for P&amp;S committees, 4 times, but the committee felt that meeting once after each of the 3 data points during the year was sufficient and there would be little point in a fourth meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Updated P&amp;S ToR to be approved at next LGB meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Governor visits</b></p> <p>JS was present to observe the administration of the SATs tests.</p>	
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>SA, PPG lead governor, to visit and produce annual pupil premium report. Proposed date: 3 June</b>	<b>SA</b>
	<p>LB has paid several visits.</p> <p>HB has walked round the school twice in her role as lead governor for premises and health and safety. Reports have been submitted.</p> <p>KT has visited in her capacity as safeguarding lead governor.</p> <p>While the governors are actively carrying out their duties, documentation of that is inadequate. A means of documenting governor visits and a place for the documentation to be stored need to be found. Sharepoint is not considered secure enough. Possible alternative repositories for documentation of governor visits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Google drive</li> <li>○ Confidential section of the school website, but creation of new pages on Primary Site is charged for.</li> <li>○ GovernorHub, which costs £400 per school but would be much cheaper if purchased by the academy, at £400 + £100 per school.</li> </ul>	

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<b>ACTION</b>	<b>ST to talk to heads over other academy schools about possible purchase of GovernorHub by Academy</b>	<b>ST</b>
	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p><b><i>Behaviour policy</i></b></p> <p>A governor asked for an explanation of the term 'Yeti' which is referred to in the policy. It is used to convey the 'power of yet' – ie that skills must be learned and some setbacks on the way to acquiring them must be expected. Otherwise the committee agreed the behaviour policy was excellent.</p> <p>Policy approved.</p>	
	<p><b><i>Headteacher's report</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Staffing</i></b> Please see building/admissions update under matters arising</p> <p><b><i>Forest School</i></b></p> <p>ST is keen to introduce forest school as the children do not have outdoor learning.</p> <p>Benefits anticipated from the forest school include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws in diverse groups of children</li> <li>• Goes beyond traditional activities and thus meets wider needs</li> <li>• Increased physical activity and improved mental and emotional well-being of pupils.</li> <li>• Improved attendance, depending on the cohort involved and the time of day at which the session takes place</li> <li>• A possible community benefit if parents become involved.</li> </ul> <p>One HLTA based in Oak class is already trained as a forest school teacher. A second member of staff is to receive the relevant training. Funding for the training, which costs £1K, will be from the sports premium, justified on the grounds that forest school enhances wellbeing and increases physical activity as well as having more academic applications. It was stressed that, while funding forest school training is an entirely legitimate use of the sports premium, it is so only if sufficient physical activity is incorporated into the forest school lessons.</p> <p>Training will be in the member of staff's own time; in return, she will benefit from the CPD and from taking the qualification with her should she leave. One</p>	

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governor questioned why the skills of the already qualified TA have not been made use of previously: there should be a well-defined benefit to the children and CPD should be positive side-effect of the initiative. However, the governor acknowledged that, alongside having the qualification, it is important that the teacher running the forest school has the appropriate all-round skills and that the school can release him or her from other duties to lead the sessions without a negative impact. To achieve its aims and avoid merely being a distraction from the classroom, forest school must be pursued quite intensively.

In its later stages, the training involves running a weekly forest school session. The intention at present is that sessions will rotate through each class in turn, though that system could be changed. The funding for cover for each half day session will also be from the sports premium.

As part of the training, the forest school teacher trainee must report to the governors on the impact of the forest school. The impact of the use of the sports premium will be measured through the data the school normally collects on progress and outcomes and on attendance, and through pupil and parent questionnaires. The trainee is liaising with Watchfield, another academy school introducing forest school, over the most effective ways of measuring the impact.

Limitations on space could prove detrimental to the success of the forest school. It was pointed out that creative use of space will be required to make the forest school a success, and that may involve additional funding.

### ***Pupil numbers***

Please see also building update.

ST wanted to ensure that 40 children were to be admitted, triggering the offer of £55K of funding for each of 2 years for an extra teacher, before agreeing to admit more than 30. Now 2 of the children who were to make the difference between 30 and 40 are no longer being admitted in September 2019: one has deferred and the other relocated. A third family received an offer of places at both JBS and Marcham for their child, though they have indicated that the child will be attending JBS. Despite these withdrawals, however, current data shows 44 children will be admitted in September 2019.

### ***Annual report on the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)***

ST had delayed the annual PP report until after the recent PP review by the Academy was carried out to get a better idea of what was expected in the

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report. The review included a meeting with SE and ST, examination of the data and meeting with the PP children. All children said they felt safe at school and each could name an adult to whom they could take concerns. KS2 children were able to describe what they learn and why.

A central issue is whether children from military families, who receive additional funding, should be included in the figures for PP children. Watchfield School, which has a large proportion of military children, does not incorporate them into PP figures, because the main purpose of monitoring of PPG data is to ascertain how great the attainment gap is between disadvantaged and other children, and being from a military family does not in itself represent a disadvantage. Free school meals may be a more accurate indicator of disadvantage, but it excludes some families that are socially disadvantaged even though the parents are working, and the children are therefore ineligible for school meals. JBS does currently include military children in the PP figures but will cease to do so as of the start of next year. The progress of each child at JBS is very closely tracked so it is, however, easy to identify children at whom resources, such as funding for the cost of trips, residential visits and after school clubs, should be targeted. In some cases, one child from a family is more in need than a sibling, illustrating the closeness of assessment required to target money to optimum effect.

### ***Performance and standards committee meeting report***

The committee discussed children's progress in detail.

Following the suggestion that 'experts' present on progress in the meeting, the maths teaching lead gave a breakdown of the data on progress in maths. All year groups are moving ahead, and booster groups are being used; mental maths is also being emphasised.

In literacy, some KS1 children are decoding words well but more work is needed on comprehension.

The data on low attaining children could be further subdivided to make the extent of their progress clearer.

HB's husband very kindly created a spreadsheet that, following input of the data only once, facilitates analysis in a variety of ways, for example by SEN or gender, by comparing any 2 data points or by separating by cohort or subject. ID numbers will be used rather than names. The spreadsheet should save teachers vast amounts of time formatting data in order to analyse it and demonstrates that the governors are striving to promote teachers' wellbeing.

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	<p>It is reassuring that, wherever the data shows a child has fallen behind, the teachers are aware of the situation and the reasons behind it.</p> <p>The minutes of the P&amp;S meeting did not adequately represent the amount of work that will be required for Y3 to progress satisfactorily. The year started at a low level and will continue to need extra help. There is a plan for this: an HLTA is giving specific interventions for one morning per week to children who are borderline expected level or greater depth to move up to those levels. Thanks to a reduced level of absence, more TA support is now available, which has been helpful.</p>	
	<p><b>Reports</b></p> <p><b><i>Finance governor's report by DH</i></b></p> <p>The budget focussed on achieving a balanced in-year budget; reducing the historical deficit is not currently realistic.</p> <p>The budget for this year envisaged a £17K in-year deficit. The deficit is now £22K and is falling following the return of staff and the receipt of additional funding for a further child. By the end of the year the deficit may indeed have reached £17K.</p> <p>An in-year surplus of £32K is projected for next year, though that forecast may have to be revised downwards following the recruitment of 2, or possibly 3, new teachers: additional staff have a considerable impact on the budget. Due to the complexity of the changes in staffing structure, ST is unsure of the implications for the budget of the new teachers, but the worst-case scenario is that the projected surplus is reduced by a few thousand pounds. More pupils will increase income and more experienced staff are being replaced by less experienced, cheaper staff. The following year (2021-22), however, the projection is for an in-year deficit as costs increase and income fails to keep pace.</p> <p>As the surplus is of income rather than capital, it cannot be spent on fixing the roof and the CIF bid for roofing failed. If academy numbers increase sufficiently, however, the academy will receive a capital allocation rather than having to make CIF bids, which should make such maintenance more financially manageable.</p> <p>2 new TAs have been recruited to cater for the increase in the numbers of SEN children and in children to be admitted into reception in September. The</p>	

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	<p>committee endorsed this move because the contracts are flexible and allow for a reduction in hours should there be a change in the current favourable circumstances, in which a justifiable need is coinciding with a surplus. The employment of the extra TAs should help avert criticism that has been received from parents that the school is failing to spend on contact hours even when in a financial position to do so.</p> <p>The financial position is good relative to other academy schools.</p>	
	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>None</p>	
	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Change in leadership structure</b></p> <p>ST will be reverting to working 2.5 days a week, as she did before the co-head went on maternity leave. Now that the co-head has resigned, SE will be acting up as head for the remaining 2.5 days a week and continuing to work as deputy head for the other 2.5 days a week. There will therefore be a built-in handover between ST's and SE's stints in the role of head. ST felt that there was pressure on her from the academy, but that she was not forced, to eliminate the handover period to save costs.</p> <p><b>Review of SATs 2019</b></p> <p>The children did their best and remained calm, and the tests went smoothly. Parents reported that their children did not feel under stress.</p> <p>1 child who was borderline 'greater depth' was absent for the tests, which may adversely affect the results.</p> <p><b>'Blandy Boffin'</b></p> <p>Made a phenomenal £1K.</p>	
	<p><b>Items for next agenda</b></p> <p>Meeting overran, so all items on the agenda for this meeting not covered above were deferred to the next meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> Wednesday 3 July 2019</p>	

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Meeting ended 2115.

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