

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of St Michael's Church of England School held on Monday 18th May 2020 at 7:00pm

Present	Ms Aurora Bryan (AB) Rev Ifeanyi Chukuka (IC) Ms Riana Gouws (RG) (Head) Mr Ben Leslie (BL) (Vice Chair)	Mrs Tilie Bentil-Mensah (TBM) Mr Dare Faleye (DF) Ms Sandra Jempson (SJ) Mrs Louisa Miller (LM)
Adviser / Observer	Ms Jacqui Gillespie (JG) Rev David Howland (DH) Ms Dionne Paul (DP)	
Clerk	Mrs Nicole Galea (NG)	

		Action
1	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>RG welcomed those present to the meeting being held via videoconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She reported that Beryl Fielder (BF) was unable to attend the meeting; it was RESOLVED to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold virtual meetings until normality resumes • Consent to BF's absence • Ben Leslie (Vice Chair) to chair this meeting • Dionne Paul to attend as an Observer <p>Governors welcomed Nicole Galea as the Clerk for this meeting, she advised that the meeting was quorate.</p>	
2	<p><u>Declarations of interest</u></p> <p>The Vice Chair reminded Governors of the need to declare any interests for items on the agenda; no declarations were made.</p>	
3	<p><u>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising (4.11.19)</u></p> <p>It was RESOLVED to defer the approval of the minutes of the last meeting (4.11.19) and any actions arising to the next face to face Board meeting.</p>	
4	<p><u>Board Members Matters</u></p>	
4.1	<p>Clerk Vacancy</p> <p>RG advised that NG had undertaken to cover this meeting but was unable to take on the post beyond that due to other commitments. Governors discussed recruitment options for filling the vacancy on a long term basis. DH reported that he had checked the NGA but there are no local candidates. It was agreed to continue to investigate all options which, it is hoped, will increase when things return to normal following the pandemic. RG undertook to make enquiries with the Diocese.</p>	DH / RG
4.2	<p>Confirm appointment of Aurora Bryan</p> <p>DH advised that Aurora Bryan's nomination as the Authority Governor had been approved by Lewisham Council and that it is now for the Board to ratify the appointment. Governors RESOLVED to ratify the appointment of Aurora Bryan as the Authority Governor with immediate effect. DH undertook to confirm the appointment with Lewisham Governor Services. Governors welcomed Aurora to the Board.</p>	DH

4.3	<p>Progress on filling vacancy for Foundation Governor SJ reported that the PCC had not met due to the coronavirus but that the vacancy will be an agenda item for a meeting due to be held tomorrow. It was agreed to defer this item until the resumption of normal business.</p>	
5	<p><u>Head Teacher Update</u> RG reported that the government advice is that Governing Board meetings should consider only time critical matters during the pandemic. She stated that it would be more logical to defer this item until after the Business Manager had given his report. Governors agreed to vary the agenda.</p>	
5.1	<p>Headteacher's Report RG referred Governors to the report published on the Hub in advance; she advised that she had updated her report for the cancelled March meeting and included Covid-19 related updates. This item was discussed after item 6.</p> <p>Ofsted RG advised that the Ofsted inspection report, which had judged the school to be 'Good' had been published on 12/5/20. She thanked staff and governors who put in so much to support the school through the inspection but noted that unfortunately, the outcome has been overshadowed by the pandemic. The report will be uploaded onto the school's website but the intention is to delay officially writing to parents until September when there will be an opportunity to focus on the celebrations more fully.</p> <p>Following Ofsted, the school is very positive and happy and the curriculum continues to develop. As a reflection of the impact of the pandemic on the curriculum, pupils and staff, the likely focus from the autumn will be on a recovery curriculum which will provide support for reintegration back into school and help address the variety of needs anticipated. RG stated that the SLT are in the process of planning how to support bereavement, mental health issues, gaps in learning etc. . .</p> <p>Re-opening of schools RG stated that the government advice is that primary school's should begin inviting pupils in nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 back into school from 1/6/20; if it is safe to do so and pending confirmation on 28/5/20. The school has been open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children.</p> <p>RG advised that they have begun looking at what the school would look like and how the re-opening could be managed. Over the last week the views of both staff and parents have been sought. DP advised that feedback from 'check in' phone calls to parents, many of the families stated that they feel that it is too early to send their children back, but Governors noted that the school must be prepared for these views to change and to be in a position to welcome the children back if this happens. RG expressed that DH has highlighted that due to the difficulty in putting safety measures in place, caution must be taken and the school should consider very carefully whether it is the right thing to open the school at this point. RG expressed the view that, as Headteacher, she feels vulnerable in making decisions on this without the support of the Board.</p> <p>RG highlighted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government accepts that the 2 metre social distancing rules cannot be maintained in schools, especially younger children • Pupils will be grouped into bubbles with members of staff which will run on similar arrangements to a household within which they should maintain 	

distance as far as possible, not share equipment and any items that cannot be easily cleaned (such as play doh, soft toys etc) should not be used.

- The suggested bubble size is 15, but the school will be aiming for a bubble of 10 pupils; they will have the same member of staff each day and avoid mixing with other bubbles with staggered start, break, lunch and end times.
- Schools should plan to re-open from 1/6/20 but there will be flexibility around the school's context. There is much in the way of guidance but this needs to be filtered according to each school's circumstances.
- Schools can plan for a phased return of the priority groups. JG is looking at the risk assessment for those children whose parents have confirmed that they will return.
- There are implications for staffing (breaks, PPA, continuation of online learning provision, numbers available due to self isolation and shielding) and for pupils (SEND needs).
- The Risk Assessment has been used as the basis for the plan to re-open, to ensure that the school is as safe as possible.
- Parents will be advised that schools cannot promise the 2 metre distance rules and that there is still a risk; it will be the parents' decision to take.
- If parents initially state that their child will not be returning at this time but then change their mind, they may need to give notice to enable arrangements to be made.
- DP advised that there are some vulnerable families that would have liked their children to return but are unable to due to their living arrangements such as having moved out of the area. The school is in regular contact to check that they are fine.

Governors agreed that the decision should be jointly made by the Board and the Head. The following points were raised and discussed -

- **IC commented that as a government funded school, if they are told to re-open then a plan should be made but we must be mindful that 1/6/20 is a conditional opening date.**
- **Concern was raised that there are risks to re-opening but also, for some children, there are also risks of not re-opening.** RG commented that the school has a moral obligation to those children who have not had the support needed at home and for those that have faced difficult situations.
- **Governors asked if the re-opening can be gradually built up.** RG advised that the proposal is to welcome back Y6 in the first instance and when they are happy that it is working, to follow with Y1 and then Reception. If less pupils come forward than expected, pupils from other year groups could be invited.
- **AB asked what school would look like on return.** RG stated that there will be a 'recovery curriculum' with fun activities and a readjustment phase including a review of their learning. It is anticipated that support will be needed for anxiety and mental health issues both for staff and pupils.
- **LM asked if staff are ready to cope with the return.** RG stated that some are willing, others are less sure.
- **LM asked how the school is supporting the disadvantaged pupils who have not been in.** RG reported that Eunice Asante has worked hard to maintain relationships and continuity; she has just managed to persuade another vulnerable family to return.
- **TBM asked if staff who cannot return due to shielding – for themselves or others or who have childcare responsibilities will continue to work from home.** RG stated that there is a lack of clarity in the advice regarding this; the aim is to be balanced and fair towards all staff.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC asked if staff have access to PPE. RG confirmed that they do have some PPE but the advice has been that it is not fool proof, in particular masks, and enhanced hygiene is as potentially just as effective. <p>In conclusion, Governors supported SLT in planning to welcome more pupils back from 1/6/20 if it is deemed safe to do so but that the operational decisions would be left to SLT to decide.</p>	
5.2	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>RG advised that Eunice Asante had provided the Spring Term Safeguarding Report in advance on the Hub. She stressed that as Safeguarding Lead, EA has worked very hard to stay in contact with families during the lockdown. She has also been 'on call' for any safeguarding concerns beyond the 3 days per week that she works, liaising with the relevant external agencies.</p>	
6	<p><u>Business Manager Update</u></p> <p>DH provided Governors with a verbal update.</p>	
6.1	<p>Premises</p> <p>Approval has been received for the bid for VA School Funds to repair the Infant's toilets' roof. The Architect will begin tendering for the work to be completed over the summer holidays.</p> <p>DH advised that the bid for the work to the Nursery was unsuccessful; applications for the funding was heavily oversubscribed with strict criteria set.</p>	
6.2	<p>Finance</p> <p>Funding and Budgets</p> <p>DH referred Governors to the presentation on the Hub showing the outline budget 2020 / 2021. He highlighted that there had been discussion at the previous meeting on the significant financial challenges facing the school. Staffing is the single biggest cost and the impact of salary increases will result in a significant deficit in the coming years.</p> <p>Following discussion with the Local Authority's Finance team last week, the school was asked to revise the pupil numbers assumptions upon which the budget is based from 30 in Reception for September 2020 down to a more realistic 25. Currently only 16 places have been offered and accepted.</p> <p>DH advised that the budget figures provided represent a snapshot of the position if no changes are made and discretionary expenditure is cut to almost zero. A surplus of £108k was brought forward from 2019 / 20 but this will be almost completely wiped out by the 2020 / 21 year end if no significant changes are made and the deficit will build up in the years thereafter. Substantial change is needed to address this structural deficit and enable a balanced budget to be set.</p> <p>The Strategy and Standards Committee met last week to review the position and discussed new ways of marketing the school to fill the vacancies. Funding for this year is based on the October 2019 census and the revised September Reception intake of 25. Each vacancy represents a loss of £3,382 plus other funding streams. However, there have been some enquiries within the last week for places in Reception, Y2 and Y3 which is promising.</p>	

	<p>Governors' Fund Account DH reported that the Governors' Fund currently stands at £3,600; the Diocesan planned maintenance schedule contribution is not included.</p>	FGB
6.3	<p>Health and Safety DH confirmed that there were no items to report.</p>	
7	<p><u>Nursery Update</u> DH advised that the bid for alterations to the Nursery was unsuccessful. Marcus Cooper at the Diocese is investigating alternative possibilities for funding but it is unlikely that there will be any other opportunities within the current financial year. The next round of applications will be in the Spring Term of 2021.</p>	
8	<p><u>MAT Update</u> RG expressed the view that the current situation may have been easier if the school had already joined a MAT but the finances forecast may now impact on how favourable they would be viewed by a MAT. She stated that one of the benefits of a MAT is the way in which services such as HR, SEN etc are centralised; one of the stresses being faced at the moment is that the SLAs for schools' services are expensive and of varying quality. RG advised that she has discussed this and the possibility of amalgamation with another school with Marcus Cooper; the SDBE are more likely to support St Michael joining a MAT rather than an amalgamation. Governors supported the proposal of pursuing due diligence as a precursor to the process of joining a MAT as it is cost free and would indicate how favourably the school would be viewed.</p>	RG / DH
9	<p><u>Policies</u> The following draft polices had been published on the Hub in advance: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour – written statement • Data Protection Policy (GDPR) • Equality Policy • Equality Statement • Financial Management Policy • Pay Policy 2019 • Protection of Biometric Information of Children Policy • Admission Criteria 2021 / 22 (formal determination) <p>It was RESOLVED to ratify them as presented.</p>	
10	<p><u>Correspondence and Governors' Training</u> There were no items to report.</p>	
11	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p>	
	<p>The Clerk advised that the following terms of office were due to come to an end:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beryl Fielder (SDBE) 30/6/20 • Peter Vennard (PCC) 31/7/20 	

	<p>The Clerk stated that advice is that renewal of terms of office would not be considered until the start of the autumn term when schools are expected to resume normal business. [POST MEETING NOTE: The DfE subsequently clarified that terms of office cannot be automatically extended and that the appointing body is responsible for appointment / re-appointment in the usual manner].</p> <p>There were no further items and the meeting concluded at 9:20pm.</p>	
12	<p><u>Dates and Items for Future Meetings</u></p> <p>Dates to be confirmed.</p>	

Signed

Date