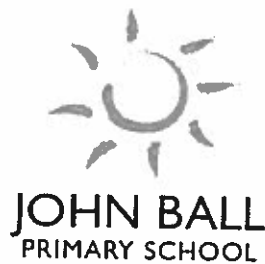


## THE GOVERNING BODY OF JOHN BALL SCHOOL



Minutes of a meeting of the John Ball School Governing Body held at the school on Tuesday 19 April 2016 at 7.00PM.

### Present

Vanessa Amuah  
Louise Atkins  
Rachel Austin  
Angela East  
Matthew Fields  
Sandrine Marionville-Jaines  
Catherine Mulcahy  
Dame Erica Pienaar (Chair)  
Jarlath Pratt  
Michael Roach (Executive Headteacher)  
Linda Yue (Vice Chair)

### Also present

Leona Eley (Clerk)  
Julia McCrossen (Head of School)

### 1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were accepted from Ian Blight, Cassie Kiely, Tom Weddell and Beverley Hards.

### 2. TO AGREE THE BUSINESS FOR THE MEETING

A change to the order of business was suggested by the Chair. It was **AGREED** to consider items 1 to 7, followed by item 10 (policies) then return to item 8 (academisation). Academisation would be followed by the update from committees and then the remainder of the agenda.

These minutes reflect the order of items in the original agenda.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the minutes of the governing body meeting held on 26 January 2016 and to sign these as a true record.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

There were a number of items arising from the minutes of 26 January 2016.

It was noted that the Executive Headteacher had arranged for the Safeguarding Policy to be positioned more prominently on the school's home page on the school website.

It was noted that the school letterhead now made reference to safeguarding in a strap line.

All other actions from the governing body meeting held on 26 January 2016 had been completed or are otherwise referenced within these minutes.

## **5. GOVERNING BODY MATTERS**

### **(a) Vacancies on the governing body**

The Executive Headteacher updated governors.

Governors were thanked for contributing their governors' pen portraits.

The governors' pen portraits would be placed on the school website and would provide useful information about John Ball governors.

The pen portraits would also serve to inform parents who might wish to stand for election to the parent governor vacancy, as to who the current governors at John Ball school are.

The Executive Headteacher said that he would arrange for the parent governor election to be held before the May 2016 half term holiday.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

Once the parent governor election had taken place, the unsuccessful parent applications would be sifted through and if a John Ball parent had the correct balance of skills and abilities, then this person might be considered to fill the co opted governor vacancy on the governing body.

A further update on vacancies would be given at the next governing body meeting.

**Action: Clerk to list**

### **(b) To agree the Pay Committee and Pay Appeals Committee membership for 2016/17**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Pay Committee membership would be:

Dame Erica Pienaar

Linda Yue

Catherine Mulcahy

It was **RESOLVED** that the Pay Appeals Committee membership would be:

Vanessa Amuah

Matthew Fields

Angela East

### **(c) To agree the membership of the Headteacher's Appraisal Panel for 2016/17**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Executive Headteacher's Appraisal Panel would be:

Dame Erica Pienaar

Linda Yue

Jarlath Pratt

Alongside an external adviser

### **(d) Forming the staff grievance committee, staff discipline committee, staff discipline (appeals) committee, pupil discipline committee and complaints committees**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint all governors to the staff grievance committee, staff discipline committee, staff discipline (appeals) committee, pupil discipline committee and complaints committee.

If the need arose to convene one of these committees, governors would be selected based on their availability and suitability, for example, excluding those with any prior knowledge of the case, any conflict of interest and if the matter concerned a staff member, then no staff governor could be included.

## **6. EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

The Executive Headteacher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It contained detailed information under each of the following headings. A summary of this information is included for the purposes of these minutes.

### School roll

The total number of children on roll at John Ball school as of April 2016 was 579.

### Attendance

The Executive Head noted that Debbie Parish, Pastoral Care Manager, had prepared a detailed briefing on attendance and the strategies being employed to improve attendance at John Ball. This information was included within the Executive Headteacher's report and noted by governors.

### Finance

Finance would be covered under item 7 below.

### Staffing

The Executive Headteacher noted that staff had until 31 May 2016 to tender their resignations if they wished to leave John Ball school after the summer holidays.

Other staff matters were reported as follows:

- Beth Budden remained on secondment to the SLT of St Mary's COE PS in Lewisham. She would return to John Ball school in September 2016.
- Amy Lucas had been appointed as Acting Phase Leader.
- Symeon Spooner would be leaving John Ball school at the end of the Summer term to work in China.
- Jack Wilton, Assistant Premises Manager, had resigned his post during the Easter break. An advert would be run for a replacement.
- The school would be recruiting two permanent and two temporary teachers during the next half term.
- Sophi Cole and Thea Simons would go on maternity leave during the 2016/17 academic year.

### Achievement / Teaching and Learning update

The Executive Headteacher drew governors' attention to the Challenge Partners' report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Challenge Partners' team had been highly complimentary about John Ball school and had highlighted lots of outstanding practice at the school. Linda Yue endorsed this view as she had attended the post review meeting.

The Challenge Partners' report had found that the quality of teaching and learning at the school was outstanding. It had also rated outcomes for pupils as outstanding.

It was noted that Michael Roach would begin running the local Challenge Partners hub and it was hoped that more schools would be recruited to it. There were currently twelve schools in the hub.

### Report from the school council

Angela East noted that all the pupil groups were meeting every week now.

It was noted that the new cohort of Pupil Parliament had been voted in and had met once. Pupil Parliament was represented by two members from each class from Year 2 to Year 6. (It was felt that Year 1 were too young to take part.)

### Update on the school improvement plan

The SIP contained seven targets:

1. Target 1: to continue to develop and embed our curriculum in line with national developments
2. Target 2: Partnership Shared Target: to continue to develop and embed new school based assessment systems in line with national developments
3. Target 3: Partnership Shared Target: to improve and develop provision and strategies to support pupils experiencing social, emotional and attachment difficulties
4. Target 4 Partnership Shared Target: to increase the amount of OS learning and teaching practice over time through lesson study
5. Target 5: Partnership Shared Target: To continue to develop leadership capacity across the partnership
6. Target 6: Partnership Shared Target: to celebrate learning and achievement by developing the learning environment
7. Target 7: Partnership Shared Target: to review the schools' anti bullying strategy and related policy / curriculum provision

The Executive Headteacher's report contained a current position statement for each of these elements. All targets were being progressed.

### Update on premises

The Executive Headteacher's report contained an update on premises.

It was noted that the school library was now finished. It was noted that shelving had been installed in the KS 1 corridor. It was noted that additional railings had now been installed above the wall in the KS 1 Playground. Prior to this, there had been a concern that Reception children were trying to scale the wall.

It was noted that the shelters in the EYFS Playground had suffered damaged during high winds last term. The damaged panels had been replaced and the existing units re secured with additional fixings.

### Fire drills

The following times for fire drills were reported in the Executive Headteacher's report:

Main School : 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 – 2 minutes

EYFS : 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 – 1 minute 10 seconds

French School : 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016 – 2 minutes 15 seconds

Superkids : 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 - 1 minute

### Update on the partnership with Torridon school

It was noted that the partnership between John Ball and Torridon Juniors would be ending on 31 August 2016.

## **7. UPDATE ON THE 2015/16 FINANCES and THE 2016/17 BUDGET**

The update on the 2015/16 budget and the item on the 2016/17 budget were considered together.

The Co ordinating and Finance committee had recently met to consider both these areas.

The Chair, Dame Erica Pienaar, reported back from the C & F committee meeting.

Dame Erica said that the current carry forward was in the region of £72K however, £20K of this was committed spending. Therefore, the carry forward at the end of the financial year was likely to be around £50K.

The school had received payments of:

- (a) approximately £16K resulting from an insurance payment to cover staff who had either been sick or on maternity leave during 2015/16
- (b) approximately £5K payment from Neilcott (Neilcott were the construction firm employed on the John Ball school expansion project)
- (c) approximately £33K in payments from Lewisham council

The combined amounts of these payments had resulted in a healthier than expected carry forward at the end of the 2015/16 financial year. It was not possible to say what the exact amount would be as the financial year had not quite ended and a final figure had not yet been obtained.

Rachel Austin said that once the 2015/16 financial year had ended, she would produce budget information charts providing final details. The budget charts would be circulated to governors.

**Action: Rachel Austin**

The Chair wished to place on record her thanks to Michael Roach and to the school business manager Julie Joyce for their effective management of the school budget.

Plans for the 2016/17 budget were well underway. Tough decisions had been taken to reduce costs. For example, in relation to swimming, it would no longer be the case that all members of a class would attend swimming lessons all year. Instead, after a term, children would be assessed and those who had not achieved the required standard in swimming proficiency would be targeted for additional swimming lessons. Those within the class who had reached the expected standard, would not attend any further swimming lessons.

The Executive Headteacher said that the school budget in future years would be significantly tighter. Schools were anticipating cost increases in relation to pension and national insurance contributions and increased teacher pay awards.

It was also expected that, following the consultation period, changes would be recommended to the National Funding Formula for schools. Under the most recent proposals, London schools were likely to see their funding reduced.

The Executive Headteacher said that with all these factors combined, the likely outcome for John Ball school may amount to a 1.5% budget cut.

The Executive Headteacher said that it would become necessary to review staffing structures for future years in the light of these anticipated financial pressures. More details are contained about this in the confidential section of these minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer approval of the 2016/17 budget to the Co ordinating and Finance committee.

**Action: C & F Chair**

An update on the 2016/17 school budget would be reported on at the next GB meeting.

**Action: Clerk to list**

## 8. ACADEMISATION

Dame Erica began by saying that she would circulate the notes from the conference that she and Michael Roach had attended on academisation.

**Action: Dame Erica**

Dame Erica said that the conference had been useful in understanding the options available to John Ball school.

The overall impression given to delegates at the conference was that becoming an academy was more of a business decision than an education decision.

Dame Erica went on to say that with the increasing pressures on school budgets, one option that might prove attractive would be to combine resources with another school or group of schools. In this way, cost savings could be generated for each of the schools in the partnership. For this reason, forming a multi academy trust with a group of schools could provide potential cost savings at a time of financial constraint.

In terms of the options available to John Ball school, primarily these were:

1. To wait and see and take no immediate action
2. To become a single school academy
3. To join with other schools in a multi academy trust
4. To join with an existing academy chain
5. To form an umbrella academy trust – (it was believed that this option was not recommended / likely to be withdrawn by the Government)

Dame Erica reported that the timeframes given by the Government were:

- o 2020 – schools should be on track to become an academy
- o 2022 – schools should be an academy

Dame Erica advised governors that there was no need to rush into any decisions and instead, the governing body should take time to consider what the best option for the school was.

As governors were already aware, an Education Commission had been set up in Lewisham to look at, amongst other things, the future of schools' management in Lewisham.

The Lewisham Education Commission was due to release some initial findings at the annual Governors' Conference on Saturday 14 May 2016 from 8.45 am to 1.30 pm at Bonus Pastor Catholic College. Governors were encouraged to attend this session if they so wished.

**Action: All governors**

Dame Erica would attend to hear the Commission's initial thoughts on 14 May 2016 and would circulate her notes from this session afterwards.

**Action: Dame Erica**

The Executive Headteacher reported that he had attended a session where the Regional Schools Commissioner Dominic Herrington had briefed Lewisham headteachers on some of the options available to them and the processes involved. Also in attendance at this session had been the Chief Executive of the STEP academy chain in Croydon, Mark Ducker.

This had been a useful session.

The Executive Headteacher said there were still some areas that required further clarification, for example;

- o how staff pensions would be managed

- timeframes involved in converting
- costs of converting and funds available for schools wishing to convert
- finance and how finance would be managed
- how external contracts would work and be managed
- what HR support would be available for schools who are academies
- Staff terms and conditions
- Estate management and improvement
- Curriculum and standards

Of these "unknowns" Dame Erica reported that she felt very confident that the excellent high standards in teaching and learning would remain under the stewardship of the John Ball leadership whichever option was chosen to take.

In response to a question from Sandrine Marionville-Jaines, Dame Erica reported that she had met with the staff governors (who had been unable to attend the last governing body meeting or this governing body meeting). Dame Erica had advised the staff governors that she would continue to keep staff informed of all developments.

It was noted that there was something of an anti – academy view held by some of the Lewisham labour councillors and also by unions operating in the locale (and nationally). This was something to be mindful of and to carefully consider when reviewing the various options.

A useful contact who could be approached for more information regarding academisation was Dr Calvin Pike, Education Adviser to Open Academy, Free Schools and Broker, Department for Education.

In terms of next steps:

1. It was agreed that Dame Erica would attend the annual Governors' Conference on Saturday 14 May 2016 and following this, circulate her notes and advise governors of any pertinent points
2. It was agreed to undertake due diligence in order to better understand each of the possible options available to the school and the implications for the school arising from each
3. It was agreed to write to staff and parents to make them aware of the fact that governors and leadership were considering all of the options available to the school.
4. It was agreed to discuss the issue again at the governing body meeting in July 2016.

**Action: Clerk to list**

5. It was agreed to consider having academisation as a key topic to be discussed at the governors' self evaluation day in September 2016.
6. It was agreed, in the future, consider holding an information evening for parents on the future options for the school

## **9. UPDATES FROM THE COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

### **(a) Co Ordinating and Finance Committee**

The C & F Committee had met on 21 March 2016.

The main item for discussion had been the budget and the school finances which have already been considered in these minutes.

The committee had also discussed the impact of the school's finances on staffing. Details of this discussion are included in the confidential section of these minutes.

### **(b) Personnel Committee**

Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 10 March 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting by Linda Yue.

The committee had considered how to accommodate the likely reductions in the school budget in future years, whilst still maintaining the excellent standards of provision. More details about this discussion can be found in the confidential section of these minutes under item 18.

**(c) Communications Working Party update**

The Communications Working Party would report back following the parent governor elections.

**Action: Clerk to list for the next meeting**

**10. POLICY APPROVAL**

**(a) Food Policy**

This policy had been referred back from the previous governing body meeting. Changes had been made to the policy and Debbie Parish and Angela East were thanked for their input.

**Linda Yue asked a question about including popcorn in the food policy as a snack food item?**  
The response from Angela East was that popcorn was sometimes considered a healthier option than crisps. It was unlikely to trigger a nut allergy. Therefore popcorn had been included on that basis.

**Rachel Austin queried the section that stated cake sales would be limited to one per half term?**  
She asked if the policy could be amended to one cake sale per playground per half term. Cake sales were a good way of raising money for the school.

**Catherine Mulcahy asked if the policy could be condensed to enable parents to easily understand its key points and to ensure that the key messages contained within the policy were clear to parents?**

The Executive Headteacher agreed that the policy needed to be well communicated to staff and parents and that condensing the key messages down into bullet points would be a good idea. The bullet points could then be sent out to parents in the school newsletter.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the Food policy.

**(b) Complaints Policy**

A revised version of the Complaints policy had been circulated prior to the meeting.

**Ian Blight, who could not attend the meeting that evening, had raised a question about the inclusion of the process regarding vexatious complaints.**

Dame Erica would speak to Mr Blight after the meeting about this aspect of the Complaints policy.

**Action: Dame Erica**

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the Complaints policy.

**(c) Inclusion policy**

The Inclusion policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Linda Yue praised the policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Inclusion policy.

**(d) Attendance policy**

The Attendance policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that there was a repetition of a paragraph on pages 1 and 2 and this would be amended in the policy.

The Executive Headteacher said that he had wanted to revise this policy in order to address an issue with some parents bringing their children to school after 9AM but before the registers were submitted to



the school office at 9.10AM. There was currently something of a loop hole in the time period between 9AM and 9.10AM whereby parents could claim that their child was not, in fact, late. Revisions to the Attendance policy were intended to close this loophole. Now all children would be regarded as late and marked as such if they arrived at school after 9AM.

Catherine Mulcahy suggested that the Attendance policy should be broken down and divided into (a) expectations of parents and children in relation to attendance and (b) school processes and procedures to monitor and record absence and lateness.

This was agreed and Catherine Mulcahy agreed to undertake this piece of work.

**Action: Catherine Mulcahy**

Catherine Mulcahy also raised the question of rewards being given to children for good punctuality and attendance. It was suggested that such an approach might reward the wrong types of behaviours, such as bringing a child into school when they were sick.

Governors discussed whether it would be appropriate to reward children who had improved their attendance or punctuality, perhaps during a celebration assembly. It was felt that for some children, this would be welcome and for others, perhaps not. The approach of rewards for attendance and punctuality would be taken back and discussed with staff and a decision would be reached on whether to continue with rewards or not.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

The Executive Headteacher noted that he had discussed with staff the type of tone that they should adopt when issuing letters regarding attendance and punctuality.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Attendance policy would be further revised and then circulated to governors for approval electronically.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

#### **(e) Health and Safety policy**

The Health and Safety policy had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting, however, there was some confusion as to whether the correct version had been circulated.

Julia McCrossen would review which was the correct version of the policy.

**Action: Julia McCrossen**

It was noted that manual handling (or positive handling) training was only rarely required for children at John Ball school and was undertaken on a need basis.

Areas connected with comforting children (hand holding for example) were covered in the Safeguarding policy.

Comments on typos and grammatical mistakes were submitted by governors and two governors, Catherine Mulcahy and Louise Atkins offered to proof read the Health and Safety policy before the next governing body meeting.

**Action: Catherine Mulcahy and Louise Atkins**

The Health and Safety policy would return to the July governing body meeting for approval.

**Action: Clerk to list**

#### **(f) Financial procedures**

It was **RESOLVED** that the financial procedures would be deferred to the Co Ordinating and Finance Committee. C & F would review the procedures and approve them.

**Action: C & F Chair**

#### **11. SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD UPDATE**

It was noted that the SFVS was returned to the local authority by the deadline of 31 March 2016. All elements of the SFVS were compliant.

#### **12. UPDATES ON GOVERNOR TRAINING**

None to report.

#### **13. UPDATES ON GOVERNOR VISITS**

Sandrine Marionville-Jaines and Louise Atkins had jointly visited the school in their capacity as Link Governor for Looked After Children and Deputy Link Governor for Looked After Children. A fuller report on their visit is contained within the confidential section of these minutes.

Angela East had visited the school to assist with the new school library and to meet with Chartwells in relation to schools lunches.

Rachel Austin had visited the school in order to undertake the Responsible Officer Review and to assist in undertaking the Schools Financial Value Standard.

#### **14. NEW REQUIREMENTS REGARDING DBS CHECKS FOR GOVERNORS**

Existing school governors are now required to have an up to date DBS check in place from 1 September 2016. New school governors are required to have a DBS check in place within 21 days of his or her appointment or election.

Vikki Amner from the John Ball school office had confirmed that all John Ball governors had up to date DBS checks.

#### **15. ANY ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

##### **(a) LEWISHAM GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

It was noted that the annual Governors' Conference would be held on Saturday 14 May 2016 from 8.45 am to 1.30 pm at Bonus Pastor Catholic College and the theme would be 'Schools Working Together in Partnership'.

The cost would be £35 per person (including lunch) for which schools would be invoiced. Governors wishing to attend should secure a place by returning the training booking form.

##### **(b) SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD**

It was noted that Matthew Fields visited the school for his termly meeting in the autumn term and checked the single central record then. The record was found to be correct and up to date.

Mr Fields was scheduled to visit the school in the summer term and would re-check the SCR at that point. This would be reported to the July 2016 governing body meeting.

**Action: Clerk to list**

##### **(c) GOVERNORS INFORMATION PACK**

The governors' information pack would be issued by Lewisham council shortly. The governors' information pack and the summer term governor training schedule had been issued as separate documents this term.

#### **16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

#### **17. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 5 July 2016 at 7PM.

## Action list

Approve 2016/17 budget within C & F	Dame Erica
Circulate notes from academisation conference to all governors	Dame Erica
Circulate notes from LGA session 14 May to all governors	Dame Erica
Speak to Ian Blight regarding his comments re the complaints policy	Dame Erica
Review the Financial procedures within C & F	Dame Erica
List vacancies for the next meeting	Clerk
List 2016/17 budget for the next meeting	Clerk
List academisation on the agenda for the next meeting	Clerk
List communications working party update for the next meeting	Clerk
List H & S policy for next meeting	Clerk
Arrange parent governor election	Executive Headteacher
Condense food policy into bullet points for parent to be included in school newsletter	Executive Headteacher
Discuss issue of rewards for attendance and punctuality with staff and make a decision on whether to retain it within the policy	Executive Headteacher
Circulate an updated version of the Attendance policy to governors for electronic approval	Executive Headteacher
Proof read the Health and Safety Policy before the next meeting	Catherine Mulcahy and Louise Atkins
Circulate the correct version of the Health and Safety policy, send to Catherine Mulcahy and Louise Atkins for proofing	Julia McCrossen
Work with the Executive Headteacher to break down the Attendance policy into two sections	Catherine Mulcahy
Once the 2015/16 financial year has ended, produce budget information charts providing final details and circulate to governors	Rachel Austin

Chair Erica Fenwick Date 18.7.16