

## THE GOVERNING BODY OF JOHN BALL SCHOOL



### Minutes of meeting of the John Ball School Governing Body held on Wednesday 21 October 2015 at 7PM

#### Present

Vanessa Amuah  
Louise Atkins  
Rachel Austin  
Matthew Fields  
Kate Jenkins  
Cassie Kiely  
Sandrine Marionville-Jaines  
Catherine Mulcahy  
Dame Erica Pienaar (Chair)  
Jarlath Pratt  
Michael Roach (Executive Head teacher)  
Tom Weddell  
Linda Yue (Vice Chair)

#### Also present

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

#### 1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies (with consent) were received from Beverley Hards, Ian Blight and Angela East.

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated in advance with the agenda papers.

Governor Austin wished the question that she had asked on 14.7.15 to be amended to read, "Governor Austin asked, what percentage of children in EYFS had been graded as "exceeding"? In the data all that was reported were those children who had been graded as "expected" **or above?**".

This amendment was made and it was **RESOLVED** to sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting on 14 July 2015.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING

##### • Update from Annual Self Evaluation Day / GB Self Review

Governors received an update from the Self Evaluation Day which had been held on Saturday 5 September 2015. Following the Self Evaluation Day, the Executive Headteacher had sent all governors an email which set out which governors linked with which School Improvement Plan targets.

**Governor Yue asked, when would the Research Group report back?**

The response was there would be a report to the April 2016 governing body meeting. The Executive Headteacher explained that there were a lot of models to be considered by the Research Group, ranging from soft and hard federations, multi academy trusts, academies and others.

**Action: Clerk to list report back from Research Group for the April 2016 governing body meeting.**

- **To give governors any update from review of the procedures re calling parents to query child absence**

The Executive Headteacher noted that a review of the procedures for calling parents to query child absence had taken place and the review had identified no major problems. On occasion human error might result in a misplaced call but that was rare and the Executive Headteacher was happy that the system was robust.

- **To update governors on the percentage of children who had absence that was significantly down (to provide the figures please)**

This information would be sent by the Executive Headteacher following the meeting.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

- **To give governors an explanation about the unallocated funds for September staffing**

The Executive Headteacher noted that the C&F committee had received information about the unallocated funds for September staffing. The information would be sent out by the clerk after the meeting.

**Action: Clerk to send**

- **To give governors details regarding what percentage of children in EYFS had been graded as “exceeding”**

This information would be sent by the Executive Headteacher following the meeting.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

#### **4. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

The clerk took the chair for this item.

The clerk read out the following election procedures, which were that;

- Nominations will be taken at the meeting, or where possible, Governors will also be invited to forward nominations to the clerk before the meeting if they wish to do so.
- Any Governor standing for election must withdraw while the item is under consideration.
- Single nominations will automatically be elected
- In the event of more than one nomination there would be a vote by secret ballot.
- The term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair would be one year
- The clerk will take the chair for the election of the chair

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the election procedures.

It was **RESOLVED** that the term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair would be one year until the start of the Autumn term 2016.

#### **b) To elect a Chair to serve from Autumn 2015**

Governors Yue and Pratt nominated Dame Erica for the position of Chair of the governing body.

Dame Erica left the room whilst her position was being considered.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Dame Erica as Chair of the governing body for one year until the start of the Autumn term 2016.

Dame Erica re-entered the room, was congratulated and took up the chair.

#### **c) To elect a Vice Chair to serve from Autumn 2015**

Dame Erica and Governor Jenkins nominated Governor Yue for the position of Vice Chair.

Governor Yue left the room whilst her position was being considered.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Governor Yue as Vice Chair of the governing body for one year until the start of the Autumn term 2016.

Governor Yue re-entered the room and was congratulated.

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

### School roll

The Executive Headteacher began by recording his thanks to Vikki Amner in the school office who had done a tremendous job working on the school roll to ensure that as many children as possible were on roll and the number of spaces was at an absolute minimum. This was a huge task and the school was very grateful for Ms Amner's hard work. The school was therefore as full as it could be.

It was noted that two children who could have joined the Reception class in September 2015 had places deferred until January 2016.

The Executive Headteacher noted that there were spaces in the nursery. One reason for this was because the session times did not always work for working parents. As a result, there was an anticipated loss of income of around £8,000. When the second census was completed in January 2016, and more children joined, it was hoped that the figures would look more promising.

### Attendance

Attendance was at 96.9% set against the target of 97%. A joint meeting with Torrison school had taken place regarding attendance and to share good practice and learning in this area. Debbie Parish would attend the next governing body meeting to provide an update on attendance and actions that the school is taking.

**Action: Clerk to list**

### Special Educational Needs

Under Special Educational Needs, it was noted that two children had started Reception with complex needs. One child had already had a request for assessment by their pre-school turned down and John Ball was in the process of collecting evidence to reapply for this assessment. Resources and strategies were being implemented to support the children and the class teams. For the time being, the school was meeting the costs of this extra support.

### Finance

On finance, the school would be reimbursed over £100,000 from the local authority due to costs relating to the expansion. The contingency currently stood at £34,000.

### Staffing

One item on staffing would be considered under the confidential section.

It was noted that Ellen Griffin, Nursery teacher, has resigned and would be leaving in December to travel abroad. The recruitment of a new member of the EYFS team was underway and was being covered until the summer term when a former student would take up the permanent role.

### Achievement

A further report back would be made in January 2016. Learning Ladders was working well.

### **Governor Yue asked how the teachers were finding using the new system of assessment?**

The response was that the teaching staff were feeling positive about the new system and that it was working well.

### Teaching and Learning

Very positive observations of teaching staff had been carried out. It was positive that teachers were aware of their own abilities and areas for further development, the "even better ifs".

Staff would be supporting each other in small groups of three to provide feedback and learning to each other and it was expected that this would further improve teaching standards.

#### Behaviour and safety

A note on exclusions is contained within the confidential section of these minutes.

#### Pupil Council

A report on the pupil council was included in the Executive Headteacher's report.

#### School Improvement Plan

Updates on progress made with the seven targets was contained within the Executive Headteacher's report.

It was noted that Governors Yue and Jenkins were talking to the children about well being and bullying and a conference for the children would be organised for later in the year.

#### Premises

A full premises report was contained within the Executive Headteacher's report.

Communications to parents about the metal railing in the playground would be sent out and action would be taken to address this part of the playground.

It was noted that the Friends of John Ball School had a fund of some £21,000. Some of it would be used to pay for a new art installation. The curtains in the large hall would be replaced and money would also be spent on furniture and the playground.

It was noted that a Fire Drill was conducted on the Main Site on 16 September 2015 and the EYFS block on 18 September 2015. The EYFS/ Nursery evacuated within 120 seconds. The Main School evacuated within 90 seconds. This included use of the new evacuation routes to accommodate new parts of the building.

## **6. UPDATES FROM COMMITTEES**

### **• C & F Committee**

The Chair reported that the C & F Committee had met to consider the budget in depth.

A report on the whole budget would be sent to governors.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

It was noted that the budget was very tight.

A review of ICT hardware was being carried out. This would identify where future spend was required and the current state of hardware within the school.

The C & F Committee also considered the partnership with Torrington school. In the future, a group of John Ball governors and a group of Torrington governors would meet to discuss the future situation with the partnership.

### **• Personnel Committee**

The update from the Personnel Committee is contained within the confidential minutes.

## **7. UPDATE FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON COMMUNICATION**

Prior to advertising the parent governor vacancy, it was important that the pen portraits of current governors were completed as this would provide those parents wishing to stand for election a better understanding of the existing governing body.

It was noted that the Chair was coordinating governors' pen portraits for the school website. Governors who had not already sent their pen portrait in were encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

**Action: all governors**

The parent governor vacancy would be advertised at a later date.

## **8. POLICY REVIEW / APPROVAL**

- **Pay policy**

It was noted that this policy had been reviewed within the Personnel committee.

This was a Lewisham model policy which had the approval of the unions.

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

- **Teacher Appraisal Policy**

It was noted that this policy had been reviewed within the Personnel committee.

This was a Lewisham model policy which had the approval of the unions.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Teacher Appraisal policy.

- **Sex and Relationships policy**

This policy had been reviewed in a previous governing body meeting and since then, some amendments had been made to the policy.

### **Governor Mulcahy queried the policy's review cycle – would it be reviewed in two or three years?**

The Executive Headteacher noted that the policy would be reviewed every three years and this would be included on the policy.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

### **Governor Yue asked, what information would be imparted to parents prior to any sex and relationships education taking place?**

The response was that all parents would be written out to and given options to remove their child from this education (opting out). Parents would also be given the opportunity to have a discussion with their child's teacher in advance and also to review the teaching materials.

Governor Austin noted that letters in the bags could sometimes be an unreliable way of conveying information to parents. The Executive Head noted this and said that many forms of communication would be used, for example text, twitter or email.

Governor Atkins offered to look through the SRE policy and make some of the language more parent-friendly.

**Action: Governor Atkins**

With these provisos, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Sex and Relationships policy.

- **Learning and Teaching policy**

The Learning and Teaching policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the agenda papers. Governor Marionville-Jaines commented that the policy was very good and inspiring.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Learning and Teaching policy

- **Assessment policy**

The Assessment policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the agenda papers.

Governor Yue asked for the acronyms used within the policy to be made clear. It was agreed to do this.

**Action: Executive Headteacher**

With this proviso, it was **RESOLVED** to agree the Assessment policy.

- **Environment For Learning policy**

The Environment For Learning policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the agenda papers.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Environment For Learning Policy.

- **Equality Objectives**

The Equalities Objectives had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the agenda papers. The Executive Headteacher noted that the current staff body was as diverse as it had ever been.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Equalities Objectives.

## **9. SAFEGUARDING SELF AUDIT**

Governors were reminded that under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, key organisations have a statutory responsibility to make arrangements to ensure their functions are carried out with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

John Ball school had completed a section 11 audit and this had received the input of the Safeguarding link governor, Governor Fields, who was thanked for his efforts. The audit had revealed the good practice that already existed with regard to safeguarding at John Ball school.

The safeguarding audit would be returned to the local authority in time to meet the deadline.

## **10. PUBLICATION OF GOVERNORS' DETAILS AND REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS**

Governors were advised that from 1 September 2015 governing bodies have a duty to publish key information about their members and associate members and their register of interests on the school website.

The clerk had emailed a Governors' details for the website document with the agenda.

Governors were asked to review this document and to submit any changes to the clerk as soon as possible.

**Action: all Governors**

The clerk sent around the new Register of Interests form. All governors were encouraged to complete this form and return it back to the clerk at the end of the meeting.

**Action: all Governors**

Governors were reminded that information given in the form would be placed on the school website.

Once all the forms had been returned, Vicki Amner would log the details on the register of interests template for the website.

**Action: Vicki Amner**

## **11. GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT**

Given the new Government regulations, governors were being recommended to consider reviewing their Code of Conduct. The Code should now include references to the requirement to declare conflicts of interest and for governors' details and the Register of Interests to be published on the school website.

The clerk would send the appropriate paragraph to the Executive Headteacher and this would be added into the Policy for Governing John Ball School.

**Action: Clerk and Executive Headteacher**

The Policy For Governing John Ball School would return to the next meeting for all governors to sign.

**Action: Clerk to list**

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

The following governor training was noted:

- Louise Atkins had attended Safeguarding 1 and British Values training
- Dame Erica had attended a briefing for chairs
- Linda Yue had attended Kidscape anti bullying training
- Louise Atkins and Catherine Mulcahy had attended Ofsted training

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

Governors Marionville-Jaines and Atkins would be visiting Jackie Noakes at the school shortly in connection with their roles as Looked After Children link governor and deputy Looked After Children link governor.

Governor Jenkins had been volunteering in the Reception classes.

### **14. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

#### **a) Governors' Information pack**

Dame Erica referred governors to the pages in the Governors' Information Pack that were particularly relevant.

It was noted that there had been staff Prevent training.

The Chair noted that school finance had been thoroughly reviewed at the Schools' Forum and London schools should expect a reduction in their funding over the next 3 to 5 years and also the source of funding to be changed from metropolitan districts to shires.

The Chair noted that National Leaders of Governance support was on offer in Lewisham should a future need arise.

#### **b) Revised school complaints toolkit**

The Chair noted that John Ball school had an up to date complaints policy and procedure in place.

#### **c) Governor representatives needed for Schools' Forum**

It was noted that the LGA was seeking a primary school representative and a special school representative to serve on the Schools' Forum.

However Dame Erica noted that as she and the Executive Headteacher were both members of the Forum, it was unlikely that another John Ball governor would be accepted. The information was noted nonetheless.

### **15. SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD**

Governor Fields who is the Safeguarding Link Governor noted that the single central record was up to date for all new staff who had started at John Ball school. Governor Fields would be having a further meeting in two weeks time and as part of this would review the SCR again.

### **16. DATES FOR GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS 2016**

Governors **NOTED** the following meeting dates:

Tuesday 26 January 2016 at 7PM

Tuesday 19 April 2016 at 7PM

Tuesday 5 July 2016 at 7PM

### **17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.