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Why we have produced this policy?

School governing bodies have important responsibilities and powers. These include the school budget, raising standards, training, individual pay arrangements, staffing, premises, performance management and the curriculum. It is essential therefore that we are clear about our purpose, our objectives and our understanding of what being a governor means.

We have prepared this document for two reasons:

1. To share with and to explain to everyone who is involved with John Ball the work of its governing body and how it contributes to the life of our school.
2. To act as a concise handbook and reference for John Ball governors.

This policy document is not set in stone, but is meant to evolve and change along with the functions and needs of John Ball and the governing body. It currently reflects the partnership between John Ball and Torricon Junior School and therefore refers to an Executive Head (for both schools) and a Head of School for John Ball. This began on April 4th 2014 and will be in place for seven terms.

This document should be read in conjunction with the document "Governors' handbook, for governors in maintained schools, academies and free schools", published by the DfE in January 2014

This document gives a full overview of all of the legal and statutory duties of Governing Bodies.

Who makes up the Governing Body?

In May 2014, amendments to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 and the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 were made and laid before Parliament. The Department for Education (DfE) also published statutory guidance on the constitution of maintained schools which governing bodies and Local Authorities must have regard to. 1.2 The amendments require all governing bodies of maintained schools to be constituted under the 2012 Constitution Regulations or the 2012 Federation Regulations, as appropriate, by 1 September 2015.

John Ball Governing Body reconstituted in January 2015 and it was agreed to maintain 17 governors. The Executive Head Teacher is a governor ex officio but all other governors hold office for four years unless they resign or fail to attend a meeting for six months or in the case of a staff governor, stop working at the school. The law allows parents governors to finish their term of office even if their children no longer attend the school.

Instrument of Government

1. The name of the school is John Ball Primary School
2. The school is a community school.
3. The name of the governing body is "The governing body of John Ball Primary School".
4. The governing body shall consist of:
 - 6 parent governors
 - 1 LA governor
 - 1 staff governor
 - 1 Head teacher
 - 8 co-opted governors

Total number of governors 17

6. This instrument of government comes into effect on 28 April 2015.
7. This instrument was made by order of Lewisham Local Authority on 14 January 2015.
8. A copy of the instrument must be supplied to every member of the governing body (and the Executive Head teacher if not a governor).

Parent Governors x 6

A parent governor is a representative or typical parent, not a representative of the parents. Parent governors are elected by the parent community.

Parents who are a Lewisham councillor or who work at the school for more than 500 hours in a school year and can no longer be a parent governor at the school.

Staff Governors x 1

This category includes all staff. Staff governors are elected by the whole staff community. Other members of staff can be brought onto the Governing Body as co-opted members. We currently have 2 members of staff in this position.

Local Authority Governors x 1

An LA governor is someone who has been appointed to the governing body by Lewisham's Mayor and Cabinet.

Co-opted Governors x 8

A co-opted governor is someone who is not necessarily a parent, member of staff or appointed by the LA but someone who has been identified as having the skills required by the GB to fulfil certain roles and duties. The GB carries out skills audits on a regular basis to identify the kind of skills we require, hence people we will need on the GB.

The Executive Head as Governor

- The Executive Head is the main professional adviser with an automatic *ex-officio* right to sit on the Governing Body.
- The Head of School implements policies, keeps the governors informed and manages the school on a day to day basis in conjunction with the Executive Head.

The Chair of Governors

- The Chair is the leader of the Governing Body team and as such co-ordinates its activities.
- The Chair represents the Governing Body in its dealings with others.
- In cases of urgency, action may be taken on the Governing Body's behalf which cannot await its next meeting. This falls in law to the Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, to the Vice-Chair. This, by definition, is a rare occurrence and is done in close liaison with the Executive Head teacher.
- The Chair is the principal link between the Governing Body and the Executive Head teacher. Meetings between Chair and Head take place on a regular basis outside of formal meetings.
- The Chair is elected every year by the Governing Body and can only be removed by a majority vote of the Governors.

- The chair has the same duties and obligations as other members of the governing body and normally has no greater powers than any other governor. Like other governors, the chair may only take decisions on his/her own if the governing body has delegated that authority to him/her and it is a decision which can be taken by an individual.
- However, there might be an occasion when an emergency decision is needed, no delegated power has been given, but yet there is no time to convene a full governing body meeting.
- In those circumstances, (and subject to certain limitations) the Chair can take a decision on behalf of the full governing body.

What are some examples of when the Chair might need to use the Power to Act?

- When a permanent exclusion of a pupil has been made, but where it is not practical for the pupil discipline committee to meet before the date of a public examination that the student is due to sit, the chair of governors, using their power to act in an emergency, may consider the exclusion and determine whether to reinstate.
- The headteacher suddenly needs to spend more money than they have been given delegated authority for, and delay would be detrimental to the pupils.
- Preparing a response for the press on behalf of the governing body in the event of a sensitive incident.
- Approving a revised Administration of Medicines policy (for example), following some new guidance from the local authority just before a residential trip.

What are NOT examples of appropriate use of the Power to Act?

- Closing the school because of snow or industrial action (this is an operational decision, to be taken by the headteacher, even if they choose to discuss it with the chair)
- Taking the decision to exclude a child (Only the headteacher has the power to exclude a child. Governing bodies perform the key role of determining whether an excluded pupil should be reinstated. This involves reviewing the decision of the headteacher)
- Approving the budget, cannot be legally delegated to an individual)
- Unilateral decision to change the name of the school (*as above*)
- Appointing a vice chair – cannot be delegated

- Suspending a governor – cannot be delegated
- Setting up a new committee (as above)
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against the headteacher (This is a role given by separate regulations under which the chair is designated the “case manager” for such a situation. The governing body is bound by law to abide by local authority guidance on safeguarding, so this guidance may well also specify that the chair is responsible for dealing with allegations. The full GB would not be involved even if there were time to convene a meeting, so it is not an action taken under Chair’s Powers to Act.)

When does the Chair need to inform the governing body? This is not currently specified in regulations, so a common practice is “at the next full governing body meeting”. This can of course mean a delay of several months.

The Vice-Chair

- The Vice-Chair may need to deputise for the Chair and so the preceding points which apply to the Chair also apply to the Vice-Chair, including election every year.

Associate Members

An associate member is someone who has been appointed by the governing body as a member of a committee but who is not a governor. An associate member is entitled to attend governing body meetings and their appointment is an opportunity to widen the expertise of the Governing Body.

Governing Body Committees

The Governing Body has two main sub-committees, whose terms of reference are defined in this document:

Co-ordinating and finance committee: The membership comprises the Executive Head, Head of School, Chair of Governors, Vice Chair of Governors, Chair of the Personnel Committee and the responsible officer (a member of the GB).

The committee’s key functions are to oversee finance, to direct workload to other committees and to decide priorities for the main meetings, to act as advisors and ‘sounding boards’ for the Executive Head and Head of School, and to deal with any business as directed by the Governing Body. The School Business Manager attends this committee to report on the school’s current budget situation.

Personnel committee: leads on employment issues and advises the Governing Body on personnel policy, oversees the recruitment process and makes recommendation to the Governing Body on individual staffing issues. The Personnel committee has one regular subcommittee, the Pay Committee.

The committees above shall report to the Governing Body at least once per term and shall undertake occasional tasks not set out in the terms of reference as directed by the governing body.

Other statutory sub-committees comprise the Pupil Discipline committee, the Executive Headteacher's Appraisal committee, the Staff Discipline/Capability committee, and the Staff Discipline/Capability (Appeals) committee. These are convened, when required, in line with the Governors Handbook (Dept of Education 2014).

'Link' governors are also appointed to monitor the school improvement plan (SIP). Each SIP target has one or more governors linked to it. Governors then visit the school to find out how each target is progressing and from these visits report back termly to the full governing body via the EHT report.

Governors may also establish short life working groups to work on various projects which arise from the school improvement process. Recent groups have included the expansion of the school, tendering of afterschool care provision and IT.

Policies required by statute, the responsibility for authorship and the committee or body responsible for the policies review and recommendation to the Governing Body, are set out in Appendix 4. All statutory policies shall be approved by the Governing Body.

Finance

The school gets its budget from the local authority as well as additional direct funding.

Each school's budget is worked out according to an agreed formula which allocates money largely on the basis of the number and ages of the pupils. The Governing Body is responsible for spending the budget 'as it sees fit' for the purposes of the school.

Staffing

Lewisham's Directorate for Children and Young People is the employer of staff and as such is entitled to offer advice in a number of circumstances but the law gives the Governing Body extensive staffing powers.

The responsibilities of the Governing Body include:

- Agreeing the number of staff to employ;
- Appointing the Executive Headteacher in conjunction with Torridon Juniors;
- Appointing the Head of School in conjunction with the Executive Head
- Agreeing rates of pay for staff in accordance with the law and national and local agreements;
- Performance management;
- Deciding that someone working at school should be dismissed;
- Following currently agreed disciplinary rules and procedures for staff;
- Deciding on capability issues;

The Curriculum

Every school must provide religious education, collective worship and the national curriculum for all pupils. The Governing Body shares responsibility with the Executive Headteacher, the Head of School and the local authority for making sure these regulations are complied with, that the National Curriculum is followed and maths and English frameworks and that assessments are carried out in accordance with the Government's wishes.

Pupil Discipline

To understand the role of the Governing Body in the exclusion of pupils please see the Exclusions Policy on the school website.

Premises

The school buildings are owned by the local authority but the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the building is maintained and all Health and Safety procedures and regulations are adhered to. There is no Premises Committee however the Premises Manger reports directly to the Executive Head teacher and then provides a full report to Governors in the EHT report.

Where there are large scale projects, such as the school expansion, a working group of school staff, LA reps and Governors is set up to manage these.

Management responsibilities of the Governing Body

There is a very important distinction between the responsibilities of the governors and those of the Executive Head and the Head of School.

Governing bodies have responsibility for the overall direction and management of school policies the Executive Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring continuous improvement in standards of education throughout the school, and the Head of School has a clearly defined 'day to day' management responsibility. We have constructed our policy for governing John Ball to take careful account of this fundamental principle.

The Governing Body has a collective responsibility for ensuring that all policies concerning the successful running of John Ball School are produced, communicated and followed.

Our responsibility is towards everyone who is a part of the whole John Ball community.

This includes:

- The children – first and foremost
- Their parents, guardians and carers
- The staff – both teaching and support
- The Governing Body
- The LA (i.e. Lewisham)
- The wider community in which John Ball is situated

General

The functions of the governing body are set out in the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013.

The John Ball Governing Body Code of Conduct is provided in Appendix C. This outlines the expectations for all governors of the school. All governors will be asked to read, sign and agree to these on an annual basis.

The Governing Body and all sub-committees should keep their terms of reference ie this policy, under review and shall recommend to the Governing Body any necessary variations.

The Executive Head Delegated Authority

The Executive Head Teacher and Head of School shall have authority to agree expenditure within the budget as adopted by the Governing Body. The School Finance Manual outlines the procedures; this document is held by the School Business Manager. The Governing body appoints a responsible officer whose responsibility it is to meet with the SBM and SLT to closely monitor the school

budget in line with the finance Manual. The responsible officer is a member of the GB.

Terms of Reference for the Co-ordinating and Finance Committee

General

- To consider the actions and recommendations arising from the sub-committees and to plan the agendas of main Governing body meetings accordingly.
- To take any actions within delegated responsibilities which need resolution before the date of the Governing body meeting.
- To make due arrangements for extraordinary Governing Body meetings where actions/decisions are required before the date of the next scheduled meeting and where these actions/decisions are not within the delegated powers of the committee.
- To undertake all those duties that would normally fall within the remit of a school Finance Committee. Please refer to the school's financial manual for a full list of these duties.
- To provide informal support to the Executive Head Teacher and Head of School in exercising their operational responsibilities.

Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee

General

- To monitor and ensure that the school is appropriately staffed to deliver the school's curriculum to support pupils' learning, achievement and welfare.
- To agree any personnel implications within the annual School Improvement Plan with the Executive Head for recommendation to the governing body, and to monitor its implementation.
- In consultation with the Executive Head and Head of School, to draw up and recommend to the governing body a management structure, and to keep this under review.
- Where a teaching vacancy arises, to decide and recommend how the post should be advertised (having considered the management structure and consulted the co-ordinating committee of any financial implications if necessary).
- To recommend to the governing body procedures, embodied in these Governing Body Terms of Reference, for the appointment of staff (e.g. size and composition of panels, delegation to Headteacher, responsibility for induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)). N.B. The appointment of a selection panel for Executive Head and Head of School cannot be delegated to a committee.
- To consider procedures for recommendation to the full governing body for requiring the Local Authority (LA) to carry out dismissals and redundancies and to hear grievances and premature retirement.

- To ensure that the school strives to offer relevant role models to all pupils in its distribution of teachers and others within its staffing and management structures, including the allocation of curricular and other responsibilities.
- To ensure that each member of staff has a job description which is reviewed annually and to ensure that job descriptions are reviewed automatically when vacancies occur.
- To keep under review the profile of the workforce, ensure that statistical data is available on race, gender, disability, age and other factors such as absence rates, to ensure that personnel policies are effective.
- To ensure that the governing body does not discriminate on grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality and marital status in all areas of employment, e.g. recruitment and selection, conditions of employment, benefits (including promotion and training), discipline, grievances and capability and dismissal procedures; that the governing body follows employment law and acts within the school's own policy of equal opportunities.
- To keep the governing body's pay policy under review including differentials, in consultation with the Executive Head, ensuring that it meets necessary contractual and statutory obligations and the recruitment and retention needs of all staff.
- To keep all other governing body policies relating to staffing under review, (e.g. discipline and grievance, capability, equal opportunities, appointments etc). Refer to Appendix 1 to ensure that consultation takes place where necessary with recognised trades unions for teaching and support staff.
- To arrange for the undertaking of employer functions where they have been devolved from the LA.
- To recommend to the governing body a policy on performance management within the school and to receive an annual report from the Executive Headteacher on the effectiveness of the school's Performance Management Policy and the training and development needs of teachers identified as part of the process.
- To consider the Executive Head appraisal statement, together with any other relevant statement provided by the Executive Head, and to recommend to the governing body, with reference to the Pay Policy, any changes to the Executive Head's pay grade. The EHT's appraisal committee shall consist of the Chairs of Governors of both schools and another governor from each GB. A Professional Advisor shall advise this group. Governors on this committee must not include staff governors. See further section below outlining this process.
- To seek advice from the Executive Head and to decide/recommend any changes needed to the management structure, which posts should be part of the leadership group, who should fill any new posts and whether they should be advertised.
- To undertake tasks from time to time as directed by the governing body.
- To report back to the governing body at least once a term.

Terms of reference for the Pay Committee

Membership

The Committee will comprise of 3 governors, one of whom will be a finance governor and one whom will be a governor with responsibility for the Performance Review of the Executive Headteacher.

Quorum: The quorum for meetings of the Committee is 3 governors.

Meetings

The Committee will meet at least once a year during autumn term 1, with additional meetings as necessary. Minutes from Pay Committee meetings will be restricted to the committee members, Chair of Governors and Headteacher.

Responsibilities:

- to achieve the aims of the whole school pay policy in a fair and equal manner;
- to recommend to the governing body the annual budget needed for pay, bearing in mind the need to ensure the availability of monies to support any exercise of pay discretion and pay progression for all eligible teachers;
- to receive reports from the EHT and HOS relating to the quality of teaching and appraisal outcomes from the previous academic year;
- to apply the criteria set by the whole school pay policy in determining the pay of each member of staff at the annual review;
- to observe all statutory and contractual obligations including hearing representations from teachers regarding pay outcomes in the role of 'Decision Maker' and appearing as a 'witness' at formal pay appeal hearings to clarify earlier decisions made, if necessary;
- to minute clearly the reasons for all decisions and report the fact of these decisions to the next meeting of the full governing body;
- to take account of the following documents when reviewing pay recommendations
 - Teachers Standards Guidance
 - School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document
 - School's Pay & Appraisal Policies
- to keep abreast of relevant developments and to advise the governing body when the school's pay policy needs to be revised;
- to work with the Headteacher to ensure that the governing body complies with the Appraisal Regulations 2012 (teachers)

- To ensure confidentiality of all pay matters is maintained.
- To take appropriate action on any other relevant matter referred by the governing body.

Financial responsibilities

For a full outline of all financial management functions please refer to the School Finance Manual.

Publication of Governor's Details and the Register of Interests

The John Ball Governing Body will adhere to new regulations as below relating to Governor's Details and the Register of Interests:

Governors hold an important public office and their identity should be known to their school and wider communities. Governing bodies should therefore publish on their website information about their members. The information they should publish should, as a minimum include for each governor:

- their name;
- their category of governor;
- which body appoints them;
- their term of office;
- the names of any committees the governor serves on; and
- details of any positions of responsibility such as chair or vice-chair of the governing body or a committee of the governing body.

Governing bodies should also publish this information for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees they serve on.

From 1 September 2015, governing bodies will be under a duty to publish on their website their register of interests. The register should set out the relevant business interests of governors and details of any other educational establishments they govern. The register should also set out any relationships between governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives.

Governing bodies should make it clear in their code of conduct that this information will be published on their governors and, where applicable, their associate members. Any governor failing to reveal information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute. In such cases the governing body should consider suspending the governor.

Curriculum and the school improvement plan

John Ball does not have a curriculum committee. Instead, as outlined above, governors are linked into the SIP targets. Governors then monitor aspects of the school's curriculum through visits to the school which involves observing learning, speaking to subject leaders and members of the SLT. As well as this they will speak to pupils about their experiences.

As well as this the governing body monitors the following statutory requirements via an annual report presented to governors by the SLT in the summer term:

- Identify relevant priorities and targets for inclusion in the SIP for recommendation to the governing body, and to monitor and evaluate progress and implementation.
- To consider equality issues, in particular the need for all pupils to have access to the curriculum and the opportunity for all pupils to make progress.
- To ensure that there are effective systems for assessing recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress, and that this information is used to inform curriculum planning.
- To consider in detail policy documents for sex education, drugs education, marking and assessment, and to recommend to the governing body whether they should be adopted/revised.
- To monitor the school's compliance with the national curriculum requirements, including assessment and testing arrangements.
- To monitor the school's spending of the Pupil Premium and Sports Premium funding.

Particular responsibilities for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Again through link governors the governing body must:

- take a close interest in SEN provision within the school
- monitor and ensure the budget for SEN is appropriately managed for the needs of SEN pupils.
- monitor and account for the budget(s) allocated to support pupils with special educational needs.
- liaise with the Executive Head, Head of School , Assistant HT -Inclusion (SENCO), Link SEN / LAC governor and staff on any special needs issues which affect curriculum planning and the need to meet the curriculum requirements of all pupils on the SEN register.
- keep under review the school's SEN policy and to ensure that the SEN Code of Practice is implemented and that SEN pupils receive appropriate support.
- ensure disability obligations are being met within the school
- make recommendations on procedures for dealing with SEN matters.
- ensure that all SEN pupils have equal access to a board and balanced curriculum.

Staff Discipline/Capability/Grievance Committees

The Governing Body has adopted Lewisham Council's Disciplinary, Capability and Grievance policies in order to deal with any matters relating to situations where the School's Leadership team feel these are necessary. Equally members of staff may feel the need to use the grievance procedures and governors may need to follow these policies in dealing with the Executive Head teacher.

The committees referred to in these policies shall be convened from a pool of Governors which has been identified. Membership of these committees will depend very much on the availability of governors at any one time.

In certain situations it may not be appropriate for the Chair of Governors to sit on a first panel but be used for any subsequent appeals.

Please see these policies for a full outline of procedures to be followed.

Complaints

The school has a full Complaints procedure written in line with the DfE document, "School Complaints Toolkit 2014". Please see a copy of this for all procedures to be followed in the case of complaint being made to the school.

Committees required to hear complaints will be convened in the same way as above.

School Admissions

All school admissions from Reception to Year 6 are handled by the LA, including where there are appeals. The school manages and handles all admissions to its nursery class and follows the same admissions code as the LA for this process.

Because the school manages the admissions into its nursery class a Nursery Admissions Appeal committee will be formed when an appeal is made. This Committee will be drawn from available governors and should include the Head of School. Any further appeal should be made to the Executive Headteacher.

How we carry out our responsibilities

Setting the Agenda for Meetings:

- The agenda is set by the Coordinating and Finance committee
- We identify deadlines, to allow other Governors' input
- We try to prioritise items and estimate meeting length

Meetings (including committees):

The rules governing how we conduct ourselves are laid down The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 and The Governors' Handbook 2014 published by the Department for Education. These outline what we can and cannot do in any given circumstances.

We have one full governors' meeting in the autumn term, one in the spring term and two in the summer, totalling four each year. These meetings are clerked, meaning that we have in attendance an administrator from the LA's Governors' Services Unit.

Committees (Coordinating and Finance and Personnel) meet quarterly and working parties meet as and when necessary in line with the SIP.

Through experience, we have decided to keep a reasonable control over the length of meetings. We aim for a duration of around 2 hours, but accept that discussions may go on longer and don't want time limits to limit discussions.

We always aim for a prompt start to our meetings.

Information for consideration and discussion is to be made available prior to the main meeting and by the agenda setting date.

Preparation (i.e. reading the paperwork and preparing documents or reports) is to be completed prior to meetings. We aim to circulate paperwork two weeks prior to the meeting

Skill Sharing:

We must identify our individual skills and experience in order that we are able to utilise and allocate them to their maximum advantage. A skills audit of governors is undertaken periodically. Appointments to the GB should be in line with where we have skills gaps.

What we expect from governors:

- Each governor should attend all the main meetings of the governing body and the half-day self-evaluation and planning session held at the beginning of the autumn term
- Each governor should be a member of at least one working group or committee
- Each governor should make at least one school visit per school year
- Each governor should go on one learning walk per school year
- Each governor should attend one governor training session each year

The Governors Code of Practice (Appendix C) describes the expectations in full.

Governors' Allowances

The Governing Body has decided not to award itself allowances in respect of subsistence or travel.

However, in exceptional circumstances where a governor could be prevented from undertaking their duties, the Governing Body may pay for childcare expenses. Any such payment would be at the discretion of the Chair or Vice-Chair of Governors and would be for a maximum of £5 per hour. In using their discretion the Chair/Vice Chair will take into account the nature of the duties to be undertaken, personal circumstances, alternatives considered, the age of the children and previous payments made. Where possible this childcare will be undertaken by the John Ball After School or Breakfast Club.

Payments can only be made on production of a receipt giving details of the name and address of the childminder. Payment will not be made to family members. The Governing Body accept no liability for any childcare arrangements and reserve the right to review this policy.

Communication between the Governing Body and the John Ball Community

Contact between the full Governing Body and parents:

- Via regular items in JBuzz and letters relating to specific issues
- The minutes of Governing Body meetings are available at the school and on the website for anyone wishing to look at them.
- We publish and make available a range of information via our website and paper copies can be provided on request.

Contact between Parent Governors and parents:

Parents Governors are available to parents to ask questions of and share ideas about the school parent governors may also consult and feel the temperature of the parent body relating to developments. Parent Governors should ensure that when a parent contacts them with specific concerns, complaints or issues that these are fed directly back to the SLT of the school and handled through policies such as the Complaints policy. Where this happens Parent Governors will alert the SLT to ensure that they are aware.

We make parents aware of who our Parent Governors are through newsletters and the Governing Body Photo Board in the main school entrance.

Parents Governors attend events such as summer fairs etc and wear a badge so that parents know who they are.

Contact between governors and staff:

- Visits, reports back and working groups where appropriate including an annual Governors Day
- Minutes of governors' meetings and staff meetings exchanged
- Governors visit informally and/or help at *ad hoc* sessions. This helps governors to know what goes on in school during the day and become really involved in class and school activities
- If important issues are being discussed by the staff, governors have a chance to attend those meetings so that there can be joint governor and staff discussions
- Invitations to each inset training days where appropriate

Contact between governors

- We use email, phone and text messaging contact. It usually means we can get messages round the Governing Body in minutes if we need to.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a method commonly used within education to see if everything is working the way it was planned. By running down the checklist below and asking ourselves if these points are being met properly, do they work, are they true and so on, we are then in a better position to gauge the well-being of the Governing Body and also to focus our attention on areas for development.

20 questions every governing body should ask itself

Governing body effectiveness

Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the governing body?

1. Have we completed a skills audit which informs the governor specification we use as the basis of governor appointment and interview? Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?
2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?
3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing body's induction and development needs?
4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?
5. How do we make use of good practice from across the country? Role of the chair: Does our chair show strong and effective leadership?
6. Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair's performance and elect the chair each year?
7. Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than two terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every six years?
8. Does the chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the body's performance?

Vision, ethos and strategy: Does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?

9. Does our vision look forward three to five years, and does it include what the children who have left the school will have achieved?
10. Have we agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?
11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing body's activities and agenda setting?

Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?

12. How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?
13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing body to our parents and local community?
14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

Effective accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?

15. How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data) so we can properly hold school leaders to account?

16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?

17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?

18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?

19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?

Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?

20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing body's contribution been to this?

Appendices

Appendix A – other useful sources of information

Details of the rules and regulations for schools and school governors are contained in The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 and The Governors Handbook 2014 published by the Department for Education, and the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, and guidance.

These and other information on the work of governors can be obtained from the:

Governors' Services
Lewisham Directorate for Children and Young People
Laurence House
1 Catford Road
London
SE6 4RU

Telephone: 020 8314 8313

Appendix B – a list of current governors

In order to ensure that the list is up to date, it is printed separately. Please ask the school for a copy.

Appendix C

John Ball Primary School Code of Practice for School Governors

This code sets out the expectations of and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

The purpose of the governing body

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

The governing body:

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
 - Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
 - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives including aspects such as safeguarding, health and safety and finance
 - Ensuring that the curriculum meets statutory requirement
 - Setting targets for attainment and progress
 - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
 - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
 - Progress towards targets
 - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement plan
 - The budget and the staffing structure
- Ensures accountability by:
 - signing off the school's own self-evaluation report
 - responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
 - holding the Executive Head teacher and Head of School to account for the performance of the school
 - ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
 - making available information to the community
- Appoints and performance manages the Executive Head teacher and Head of School who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement

strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.
- Willing to undergo a **DBS** check

The role of a governor

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority community, foundation), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

General

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Executive Head teacher and Head of School as set out above
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We will familiarise ourselves with the John Ball 'Use of Social Media' policy and agree ensure that we comply with it.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups. We will take responsibility for at least one school improvement target each academic year and will report on progress at each Governing Body Meeting.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities. The Executive Head teacher is an ex officio member but all other governors will hold office for four years unless they resign or fail to attend a meeting for six months or, in the case of a staff governor, stop working at the school. Parent governors may finish their term of office even if their children have left the school.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the Executive Head teacher and Head of School. A new governor will be taken on a guided visit of the school in their first term of office.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training. This will include the 'Training of New Governors' session run by Lewisham Local Authority within their first year of office.
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Executive Head teacher and Head of School.

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Executive Head teacher and Head of School, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community. Regular updates will be provided for parents through JBuzz and the school website.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school

- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body’s business in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

Breach of this code of practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 17(1) of the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school governor and of Schedule 6 to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 relating to the disqualifications from the role of school governor (held as a separate document)

The Governing Body of John Ball Primary School adopted this code of practice on 15 July 2014. Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each calendar year.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.

Signed

Printed name

Date:

Appendix D: The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Appendix B –

Appendix E: Protocols and Expectations for Governing Body Meetings

We will:

- arrive on time for the start of the meeting;
- read all relevant papers before the meeting;
- make contributions through the chair;
- avoid having “side conversations”;
- switch mobile phones off or to silent;
- be aware that all governors should have the opportunity to contribute and that they may be prevented from doing so if individuals dominate the discussion;
- wherever possible, inform the chair or clerk before the meeting if we want to place an item on the agenda;
- only raise items under the “urgent business” agenda item that are urgent;
- be polite and courteous to others;
- respect the views of others, verbally and non-verbally;
- be aware of the constraints of time;
- make a note of any tasks we agree at the meeting to undertake;
- exercise extreme caution when naming individuals and be aware of the implications for grievances/complaints/disciplinary and other panel hearings;
- take collective responsibility for decisions of the governing body, whatever our personal opinion may be.