



MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, 29th March 2021 at 6.15pm

Participants:

Lucy Ashby	Jane Nicholls
Uel Barclay	David Petrie
Alison Bateman	Helen Taylor
Sara Bromfield	Dan Wells (Vice-chair)
Helen Taylor	Tanya Williams
Michèle Marcus (Chair)	
Francis Neal	Rushabh Haria (Observer)
	Rebecca De'Ath (Clerk)

“We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair.”
 (2 Corinthians, 4:8)

1. PRAYER

The Vice-chair led the meeting in a prayer chosen to reflect today's verse from 2 Corinthians.

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Fiona Whiteside (the school's Inclusion Manager), here to give the Governing Body a presentation on SEND and PPG pupil groups. She also welcomed Helen Taylor who had just been confirmed by Southwark Diocese as our new Foundation governor, and Rushabh Haria, who had toured the school last week and was observing this meeting in consideration of joining the governing body.

Joe Lowther sent his apologies for being unable to attend the meeting

Jane Nicholls joined the meeting at 6.24pm

3. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED & DISABILITY PRESENTATION

The presentation focussed on giving governors a snapshot of Special Educational Need (SEN) and Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) groups at the school, and the actions taken to support them during the periods of national lockdown in response to the pandemic.

As at 24th March 2021, there were the following SEN pupils at Holy Trinity:

- 11 pupils with a Statement of SEN/EHCP (3.1%) rising to 15 (3.8%) by end of May (LBR average 3.0%)
- 32 pupils at SEN Support (6.5%) (LBR average 7.8%); of this group 5 pupils were being supported 1:1, 1:2 or 1:3 for part of their school day and were on a potential pathway toward an Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP);
- 17.4 % of pupils at Holy Trinity have an EHCP, were on SEN support or were included in Wave 2 interventions for SEN. Within this broader profile one year group stood out – Year 4 with 29.8%;

- Main characteristic needs – 1/3 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), 1/3 Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH).

Since March 2020 there had been an increase in the numbers of disadvantaged children from 9.0% to 13.6%, which had reversed the trajectory of this number in the school's community – previously a consistently-reducing percentage over the last 5 years. A possible cause of this might be linked to the pandemic, but this was being explored.

Actions taken for the **SEN** group during the periods of national lockdown in response to the pandemic:

- All pupils with SEND were included in the school's vulnerable children's lists.

EHCP group

- Risk assessments carried out;
- 50% in school - 29% took up a full time place, with 21% taking part-time places following the rolling programme of weekly calls and contacts;
- 50% of the EHCP group parents preferred their child to remain at home. This increased in percentage terms, in the second lockdown in January 2021, to 55% learning at home.

SEN Support group

- At the start of the academic year around 6% of pupils were identified at SEN Support. This figure was well below that national average of 13%, but also below the LB Richmond average (8%), which was unusual for our cohort;
- By Spring 2 the SEN group population had increased to 8.1%;
- There was an increase of pupils in the SEN support group in school during the second lockdown period. Numbers increased from 17% of pupils with full or part-time places in the Spring and Summer 2020 terms to 50% in Spring 2021.

Actions taken for the **PPG group** during the periods of national lockdown in response to the pandemic:

In school support

- The Pupil Premium Review – Quality First Teaching (i.e. Teacher actions and delivery in the classroom to maximise progress)
- The Pupil Premium Review highlighted and praised Holy Trinity's Forest School nurture intervention targeted at the disadvantaged group - during the initial school closure these interventions were extended;
- Additional art and DT projects – Wellbeing Wednesday.

At home support

- Stationary packs
- IT enhanced for this group - laptop for every pupil

Q: You said that the SEN group of pupils had grown. Is this an ongoing trend, or do you think this rise has ended? *We will be focussing on data to determine whether this trend might continue, and will be reviewing the November assessment outcomes. We are seeing a larger number of pupils not making good progress across core areas of the curriculum, and have to determine whether this is the effect of lockdown, or whether it means some of the pupils might have SEN needs. There have been some benefits to higher parental engagement in supporting pupils at home, as some parents have sought private SEN assessments, following concerns raised during supported learning, several of which have identified needs, for example in the ability to attend and concentrate.*

Q: Is the Pupil Premium Grant based on our October pupil numbers? If so, it would have not captured the subsequent increase in PPG pupils, and therefore we would not get funding to cover the additional pupils? *No – there is a difficulty in that the grant is based on the financial year, not the academic year, so we calculate this based on numbers in the January census, we do however have an adjustment (catch-up point) following the October census.*

Q: The PPG review requested of AfC in November 2019 identified that the school might ensure that all staff are aware of the pupils' specific needs and backgrounds, which you have evidenced in the presentation - but how can this be taken forward and embedded in regular school practice? We have had specific training for Teachers to improve inclusion in the classroom and to enrich their teaching. We are half-way through this reflective training with the Teachers. Each classroom has an Intervention Folder which is used regularly and which identifies relevant pupil groups and their needs, and we continue to report on those pupil via record-keeping and sharing information amongst ourselves. There is still work to do on personalising this information so that it is meaningful to Assistant Teachers and supports transition.

The meeting discussed the fact that the vulnerable pupils who came into school during lockdown had a great deal of attention in small groups from the Assistant Teachers; likewise, some pupils may have benefitted from being at home. Some parents had fed back that their pupils who had attended school during lockdown had enjoyed the space and had grown in confidence; however, some pupils on the other hand had difficulty adjusting to being back in busy classrooms once the school fully re-opened. Wellbeing Wednesdays were a useful initiative during the lockdown and the focus during the initial return to school was pupil well-being and re-building relationships with the children.

The Chair thanked the Inclusion Manager for her much-appreciated presentation; if governors had any further questions, they were invited to email them directly to her.

9. DRAFT BUDGET (2021-22)

This agenda item was taken out of order since the Resources Committee Chair had to leave the meeting at 7pm. The draft Budget for 2021-22 and the two years thereafter had been circulated before the meeting; the financial position was summarised by the Committee Chair:

- It had previously been anticipated that the school would be c£175k in deficit by this point for the year, however the financial situation had improved since then and a positive swing of £100k was expected, as a result 2021-22 was expected to conclude with a positive reserve balance to carry forward of c£100k.
- There remains however an ongoing structural deficit which will mean the school using all its Reserve funding over the next three years.
- Given the year that schools had just had, Holy Trinity was considered to be in a good place financially; credit was due to the Finance Officer, Head teacher and SLT who had successfully managed the situation, with the help of the PTA income and the Kingfisher initiative.

Assumptions made for next year were:

- That Teacher numbers would remain flat (despite an increase last year), with a focus on decreasing the use of agency staff year-on-year.
- Pupil numbers were expected to be 407 for next year, and efforts would be made to increase this total further.
- The three-year outlook was broadly balanced, with a forecast to use up the Reserves, (but with an aim to identify and deliver opportunities to build the reserves back up).
- The plan is subject to Covid uncertainty and its impact on funding.

Governors asked how realistic the underlying budget assumptions were. They were informed that the key figure was the anticipated number of pupils. The Local Authority had reported a drop in applications across the borough this year, and there was a risk that Holy Trinity might not achieve the expected numbers, which would affect its income.

The Resources Chair concluded by saying that the committee had given the figures a robust challenge, and he recommended that the FGB approve the 2021-22 budget. This was approved unanimously.

The FGB Chair thanked the Resources Committee for its scrutiny, and the SLT who had made the required financial adjustments that resulted in the good outcome this year.

Dave Petrie left the meeting at 7pm

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Joe Lowther had sent his apologies for missing the meeting; his apologies were accepted.

5. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

There were no business interests declared relating to tonight's agenda items.

6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (8th February 2021)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record. The Clerk would mark them as "signed" on Governorhub, and the Chair would follow this up with a signed hard copy for the file.

7. MATTERS ARISING

The actions from the previous meeting had been completed. In addition, in relation to the decrease in admissions application numbers this year in North and South Richmond, the School Improvement Partner (SIP) had reported that the AfC Associate Director for School Planning (Matthew Paul) was monitoring that situation, as well as the impact of the proposed local housing development on future pupil numbers in the locality.

The Finance Officer was in the process of writing to parents who had Standing Orders into the Kingfisher Fund asking them to check whether they had inadvertently assigned an end date to stop their donations to the school (many donations had inexplicably ceased in December.)

8. HEAD TEACHER'S WRITTEN REPORT

Wellbeing

The Nursery was fully-open by half term, and the rest of the school returned on March 8th; it was lovely to welcome pupils and staff back. However, sadly, one week later there were 2 confirmed cases of Covid among the pupils, resulting in over 90 children and 6 members of staff having to be off school to self-isolate. Remote learning kicked in very quickly, however.

Attendance had been very high:

Week 1 = 97.98%

Week 2 = 96.61 %

Pupil Numbers

Two members of Year 5 would be leaving to go to private school after Easter. There seemed to be an increase in the number of applications to the private sector (relating to Covid perhaps), and this, along with reduced applications to schools across the borough, was concerning.

Q: Could you clarify the number of applicants who have applied to the school as their first choice, and those that are likely to meet the school criteria and be accepted? *There have been 30 such applications, and of these, 17 are based on sibling criteria. There are 9 Foundation applications on top of this, although some of these may well be aiming for Catholic schools, not ours.*

Q: Do you think the school will fill all its places? We are vulnerable of not doing so.

Governors discussed the importance of Holy Trinity Nursery children staying on and entering Reception. They heard how the school had been strengthening its Early Years offer, and how the Nursery and Reception were now more united.

School Vision

Loving God – the school had organised a Virtual Prayer Space for the children last week, and parents had volunteered to lead some online sessions across the year groups. This involved activities relating to the school's vision and values, and gave pupils a valuable opportunity to be able to reflect on their worries, hopes and fears.

SIP Visit

During her recent visit the school's SIP had met with several leaders; her Report will be available after Easter.

Assessments

Further formative assessments had taken place in school this week, and year 6 had completed more SATs papers.

Behaviour

Engagement with online learning had been consistently high throughout lockdown and children had returned to school positive and ready to resume learning.

School Self-Evaluation (SEF)

This document was new, and was being reviewed by the SIP. Governors discussed examining the SEF in more detail in the summer term, and perhaps reviewing it section by section over several meetings. It was a working document and was being continually updated, and the Head teacher said that she would welcome governor input as to the impact of the priorities and actions contained within. **ACTION**

The meeting discussed the outcome of the SEF, and whether the rating should be altered.

The Head teacher was thanked for her Report.

9. Budget 2020-21 (see page 3, above.)

10. POLICY REVIEW

Behaviour Policy

This policy had been reviewed recently by the PP&C Committee, who recommended that the FGB approve it. Governors agreed that it was very interesting to read and was a good, helpful document. They thanked those who had drafted it. (The date of next review needed to be amended.) The policy was approved.

ACTION

Admissions Policy (2022-23)

The 2021-22 policy had been approved by the FGB in May 2020, and the admissions criteria was subsequently reviewed over several meetings when Foundation places and distance rules were discussed (but no changes made.) Recently the policy had been scrutinised by AfC in terms of updating the application process (rather than any substantial policy content), and amendments had been made in terms of adding information about applying online, and removing obsolete information.

Q: Looking at the recent statistics for applications to Holy Trinity, it would seem that if we had increased the distance criteria, we would have had more families eligible for entry. We are currently worried about the level of admissions, so should be re-open this discussion? We still receive applications from people who live outside the distance we set, so the official distance criteria does not seem to be putting applicants off from applying to a particular school.

Q: Will people still get an open place if they miss out on a Foundation place? Yes. If they apply for a Foundation place and live beyond 1500m from the school, they are eligible for an open place (based on distance.)

Q: Once we approve this policy, am I right in thinking that it cannot be reviewed again for some 3-4 years? This policy looks ahead to 2022-23, but in 12 months' time we will have to review the policy again as every 7 years we have to consult on it with local schools, and we are due to repeat this process starting this autumn. By then we will also have a clearer picture of the level of applications to local schools, and whether any schools are going to be reduced to two-form entry.

The FGB approved the policy, and agreed that it be tabled at the meeting in Autumn 2 to review data in preparation for the next consultation round. **ACTION**

11. FEEDBACK FROM RECENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Governors noted the contents of the minutes; they had no questions or matters to raise.

12. CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

FGB Membership

There were two Foundation governor vacancies – one position had just been confirmed by the Diocese, and there was one prospective candidate for the second vacancy.

Governors' Visits to School

The Chair thanked the Link Governors who had spoken with their subject leads (Music, Science, SEND and PE.) Another link governor had met with the Early Years leader this morning and her report would be available shortly, as would the report on RE. An English visit was planned for next term. These visits were recognised as being a valuable part of governance monitoring and gave an excellent picture of what was happening at the school.

Kingfisher Donations from Parents

The cumulative income raised to date was £26k, for which the school was very grateful.

Governor Diversity Monitoring

Governors were asked to fill in an e-questionnaire (anonymously) so that the extent to which the governing body reflected the local community could be determined. **ACTION**

Schools' Funding Letter to MPs

There had been a local initiative by Richmond and Kingston schools to send a letter to local MPs about schools' financial difficulties and their challenge to balance their budgets. 57 schools (including Holy Trinity) had agreed to be signatories to the letter. Local MPs subsequently sent an onward letter of support to the Secretary of State for Education asking if he could address this underfunding.

Governors applauded the fact that local schools had come together to address a common issue; they asked that this news be shared with previous Associate Governor, Claude Scott, who had long advocated for such action. **ACTION**

Governor Effectiveness

The FGB Chair, Committee Chairs and the Clerk continue to improve upon the self-evaluation grid at the end of each set of minutes which aims to capture examples of effectiveness in leadership and governance.

13. GOVERNOR TRAINING

AfC were carrying out a survey to determine whether to continue courses online next year or to revert to face-to-face training at their training centres.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

School website – the Deputy Head teacher had been working to update the website, and the Chair thanked her for her hard work and achievements to date. The review had been undertaken with the help of a former parent who had designed the original website. Changes made included:

- designing it for parents and prospective parents
- basing it on WordPress website software
- producing a cleaner design with better quality photos
- designing it for mobile phone users
- adding new Nursery page
- embedding the school's vision and values

Sara Bromfield had reviewed the website and had worked with the Deputy Head on suggestions for improvements; she reported that Lucy and Jenny had done a fantastic job at modernising the site.

Governors were asked to give their feedback once the new site was completed, and to help with providing good quality photographs if they were able to.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting, and wished everyone a Happy Easter.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 17th May 2021 at 6.15pm

Supporting meeting papers are electronically-filed on the GovernorHub web portal.

*The meeting closed at 20.01hrs
Attendance was 92%*

Signed:

Date:

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Item 8.	<u>Head teacher's Report (SEF):</u> FGB Chair and Head teacher to decide on a means of review of the SEF at future meetings. Clerk to add this to the agenda for the FGB Summer 1 meeting. All governors to review the SEF and suggest "impacts" for the priorities and actions.
Item 10.	<u>Behaviour Policy:</u> Head teacher to ensure that the Date of Next Review was updated on the policy. <u>Admissions Policy:</u> Clerk to ensure that this policy is on the agenda for review at the FGB meeting in Autumn 2.
Item 12.	<u>Chair's Report</u> <u>Funding Letter to MPs:</u> Chair to inform Claude Scott of this matter. <u>Governing Body Diversity Questionnaire:</u> FGB Chair to analyse results and Clerk to add to agenda for next PP&C meeting.

ANNEX 1

EVALUATION OF GOVERNORS' DISCUSSIONS IN SUPPORT OF SCHOOL SDP PRIORITIES AND THE SCHOOL'S CHRISTIAN VISION

SDP Objective	Agenda Item	Discussion Topic	Impact On School Improvement	Linked Aspect of Vision
To continue to upskill Subject Leaders	12	<u>Chair's Report – Governors' Visits to School:</u> Link Governors had spoken to subject leaders to find out more about the curriculum and how subjects are taught and assessed.	Governors better informed and can focus their challenge and support in the future. Subject Leaders can demonstrate the quality of education in their subject and articulate the intent, implementation and impact on learning.	Loving Learning
To implement the reviewed curriculum in all foundation subjects so that the school can self-evaluate the quality of education as Outstanding	8	<u>Head teacher's Report – School SEF:</u> Governors deciding to scrutinise the SEF in more depth over a series of FGB meetings, and challenging the school's performance rating. Prayer Space successfully took place.	A more robust evaluation of school performance. School is confident to self-evaluate the quality of education as Outstanding. It is steered by the Faith Group which includes governors, and underpins the Loving God value and the aim of embedding the school's vision.	Loving Learning Loving God
To progress the Five-Yr Strategy to ensure that the school has an aspirational focus for the future... ...with a focus on... celebrating the diversity of our community	9 12 8 & 10 14 12	<u>Budget:</u> Governors challenged the assumptions that the budget was based on. <u>Chair's Report - GB SEF:</u> The governing body evaluates each FGB meeting, and their performance as a critical friend at all governance meetings. <u>Head's Report/Admissions Policy Review:</u> Governor challenge to the admissions criteria. Also, challenging the application data to ensure understanding. <u>AOB: New School Website:</u> Governor reviewing (challenging) the website and suggesting improvements, and supporting the hard work undertaken. <u>Chair's Report – Governor Diversity Monitoring:</u> Questionnaire filled in by governors.	A robust budget to support the school's aspirations. Improved governor effectiveness in leadership to better challenge and support the school. All school places filled. Risks identified. Governors understand the data they are presented with. An improved website to meet the school's aspirational aims and to meet the information needs of the (parental) community using it. The results of the questionnaire will determine if the make-up of the governing body reflects the school community and can take action if required.	Loving Learning Loving One Another Loving One Another Loving One Another Loving One Another