

St Mark's Full Governing Board Minutes.

November 11th 2024, 5.30- 7.30 pm.



The Core functions that the governing board is responsible for are:

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.

Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff.

Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

St Mark's C of E Primary School Governing Board		Appointed/Term of office.
Foundation Governors	Christine Bartley Sebastian Dawson-Bowling Amanda Healey (Co-chair) Martin Lloyd Williams Allistare Smedley (Co-chair) Vacancy Vacancy	10/10/2019 – 08/10/2027 20/11/2020 – 19/11/2024 14/09/2017 – 13/09/2025 N/A 07/10/2019 - 07/10/2027
Parent Governors	Vacancy Helen Mapa Murch	08/02/2018 – 07/02/2026 05/07/2023- 04/07/2026
Staff Governors	Jane Fendley (Head Teacher) Jess Murch	01/01/2011
LA	Vacancy	

Delegation of responsibility to individuals - Terms of Reference:

- To liaise with the appropriate member of staff.
- To visit the school with the purpose of gathering information concerning their area of responsibility and to increase their knowledge of the school.
- To regularly report to the FGB on developments and progress within their area of responsibility.
- To raise the profile of the area of responsibility when related matters are considered by the FGB.
- To attend training as appropriate.

A: Governing Board organisational efficiency.

5.30-6.20

1	Welcome- and prayer. Any apologies for non-attendance. <i>Meeting is quorate with 5 or more governors attending.</i> CB, SDB, AH, HMM, JF and JM were in attendance. MLW sent apologies that he was going to be late to the meeting. Jo Browning (JB), the school's bursar was also in attendance.
2	Declarations of Interest, pecuniary or otherwise. None shared.
3	Freedom of Information Reminder: Governors were reminded that business should be conducted in an open way which will stand up to public scrutiny and that all non-confidential minutes may be published on the school's website.

4	Minutes of Previous Meeting: Minutes from previous full GB meeting (9/9/24) circulated to all for agreement by email/ One-Drive prior to this meeting. Minutes were formally agreed. Action: Signed minutes to be kept on file. Agreed minutes to be published on the school's website. Governors who have not completed photo consent agreement to do so via email. Governors to be reminded to acknowledge that they have read the KCSiE updates for 2024-25.
5	Actions from previous meetings not covered elsewhere: a. Recommendation from Resources committee- Governor allowance and expenses policy to be ratified. Policy agreed. b. St Cuthman's and St Mary's, Kemp Town to be approached for any potential candidates to fill the foundation governor vacancies. Potential foundation governor visiting the school this term with the vicar of St Cuthman's. c. Roedean staff to be approached to sound out if they would like to fill the LA governor vacancy. Governors discussed that potentially a volunteer at the school could stand as an LA governor. That this person has a background in teaching and learning. d. Election for parent governor to be organised for this term. Governors were informed that so far recruitment of a parent governor has not been successful. e. School to check whether GB contribution to boiler replacement work could be covered by contingency from water project in the summer term. Governors were informed that the school was still waiting for a response from the Diocese. f. Restructuring proposal to be agreed at next FGB (if the process has been started). The proposal is no longer necessary- no further action. Actions: Updates on recruiting foundation, LA and parent governors to be included on agendas until vacancies are filled. School to check whether GB contribution to boiler replacement work could be covered by contingency from water project in the summer term.
5	Chair's Communications or Actions/ Any urgent business notified to Chair in advance.
6	Urgent agenda item- to be covered in conjunction with B2- update re: B&H council/ LA's plan to federate schools across the city. Governors were informed that a letter from Dr Jo Lyons had been received in October, answering the queries about the LA's push for schools to federate raised by the Diocese. The letter outlines that, although federations are the LA and Council's vision for the future for B&H schools, the urgency to bring about this change has slowed. The letter shared that a working party to explore federations would be set up- and this would need to look at how to include C of E schools, their governance and their ethos and values in future federations as part of their investigation. That specific C of E federations could be an option to investigate. Governors spent some time discussing possible next steps for the school- that there was a need to start to review and research possible avenues that would safeguard the school and the service that it provides for the community. Governors were aware that other B&H schools had already decided on federating or joining an academy, that the school could be in danger of missing out on grants or having its options limited if an approach was not agreed soon. Governors also discussed how staff were feeling- that they were concerned about the future of the school, as well as their own futures. Some questions and queries had been collected by staff union representatives- these were shared with the GB: That staff would appreciate a timeline for changes. That they would like reassurance from the LA that the school would not be closed. That there needed to be succession planning for when key governors stood down from the GB. That the appraisal cycle needed to be completed by the end of July. That there needed to be a discussion with staff who had fixed term contracts. That there needed to be a commitment to Ray class SEN provision continuing.

Staff were also concerned that key staff were all leaving this term or this academic year which was unsettling. That this, along with the likelihood of an OFSTED this academic year was impacting staff well-being and was causing a lot of anxiety.

Governors thanked staff for this information. They asked that the message be shared with staff- that the GB is working through options, that any potential changes to the nature of the school would not happen for some time (with timescales set out by the DFE), that due diligence would be at the heart of any actions taken to get the very best deal for the school and the community.

Governors discussed how this work sat alongside the need to recruit a new HT by the end of this academic year- whether having the future of the school already decided might be an attractive option to a new head.

Actions:

A timeline document to be produced, giving staff a clear picture of the timescales involved in exploring and adopting potential models of organisational change at St Mark's.

Follow up meeting with unions, LA and Diocese to be organised to discuss potential changes, if possible, before the end of this term.

B: Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff

6.20-7.00

1 Strategic Discussions

Governors to have read Head Teacher's data report and any other documents circulated prior to this meeting.

[Comparison of St Mark's Y6 attainment and progress data with similar schools to be shared with GB when available.](#)

Governors thanked the Leadership team for the comprehensive information shared.

[How many children are currently in R?](#)

19.

[Is this data that has already been shared?](#)

Governors were reminded that they requested for comparative data to be presented at this meeting- that the only national comparative data available is for 2023 (as progress was not measured in 2024). The school shared that the data analysis was fed back to teachers for pupil progress meetings as well as informing actions on the current SIP. That the information was supporting teachers to take responsibility and ownership of the information and to use it to inform planning and assessment. That this way of working helped to keep track of and on top of agreed actions.

[Data that is closest to National average is SEND data- is the school's focus on this group at the detriment of others?](#)

Governors discussed this point at length. The school shared that its excellent support for SEN children was having a positive impact, that this along with Adaptive Teaching was supporting progress and attainment. That a very large portion of the school's cohort were children with SEND, EAL or both. That the majority fell into this category. The school shared that progress and attainment of children without SEND was an ongoing focus this year, and shared opportunities for governors to be involved in monitoring this- that SLT were working with staff to support them in focusing on what was working well, what needed to change, that this could be picked up in Governor learning walks and book-looks.

[How is progress in writing so positive?](#)

Governors were informed that writing progress had improved across the year as the school focused on raising standards of writing across all curriculum subjects, that this was also supported by the change to blocking planning, so quality time could be spent across the term/ year exploring a particular subject.

[How can parent be involved in supporting progress and attainment for all?](#)

Governors were informed that creative outreach events were 100% attended by parents, but the school struggled to involve parents in workshops focusing on reading or maths. Governors suggested that these creative outreach events could be used to involve parents in reading and maths, but in a creative way.

[Numbers of children in 2023-24 R class with additional needs is high- should this class be a focus for support?](#)

The school reminded governors how funding for children with SEND was allocated, that any allocated support was within the constraints of the budget, that interventions were impactful but were allocated by need.
 Should governors sign up to attend the school's CPD?
 Governors were informed that this would be helpful, supporting the focus on Maths and English on the development plan.
 Governors highlighted the recent visit and ensuing report from the school's SPA and the LA- that their view that quality of teaching in the EYFS was good, and the positive impact on the children who were coming in to school with very low language levels and life skills was very heartening.

Action:
School to look at using the visualisation element of the Power of Reading scheme as part of creative outreach events, as a way to involve parents in supporting progress and attainment of their children in reading.

2 SEND Report discussion.

Document circulated prior to the meeting.
 Governors thanked the school and the SENDCO for this comprehensive report. That the support given was having a clear impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

Action:
SEND report to be published on the school website.

3 DCAT (Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust) update.

See website for information- <https://dcat.academy>.

- a. Further questions from GB to be worked through with DCAT representatives to be formulated over the summer.
- b. Working party made up of staff and governors to be set up to visit DCAT schools and to share what they see with colleagues.
- c. School to talk to DCAT about how to share this information with the community in a positive way.
- d. Timeframes for future meetings with staff to be drawn up as soon as possible to address issues and concerns shared.

SEE A6.

C. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

7.00-7.10

1 Most up to date financial information to be shared with the FGB.

Actions from previous meetings:

- a. **Sports Premium information should be recommended for agreement at the next FGB.**

Governors thanked the school for the informative report.

Why is the wrong date on the document?

Governors were informed that the date was when the DFE published the format- not when the report was completed. Governors advised that the report should have the date on it, as well as the school's name.

When is the sports focus for this year shared?

The school shared that the sports plan was a live document- that information was shared at resources meetings. That this year, funding was being used to support areas like forest school, to support mental health.

- b. **Recommendation from Resources committee- budget information to be agreed.**

Governors were presented with most recent outturn- which illustrated that the school is spending within its agreed deficit. They thanked the school for the efforts that had gone into achieving this.

Governors discussed how staff changes had contributed to the current spend- and how recruitment packages for new members of staff would start at the bottom of the payment scale. That PPA was being covered by the HT and DHT to contribute to cost savings.

How will this work with the HT also being responsible again for safeguarding?

The school shared that this situation was not ideal, but information from the LA was clear, that schools spending outside of their agreed deficit would be targeted, and this needed to be avoided as far as possible.

Governors were pleased to hear that lettings income had doubled.

Have contracts been reviewed?

Governors were informed that the staff insurance contract had ended, with the well-being aspect from it being negotiated to remain. That the bins contract had also changed, with savings for the school. The CCTV system was very old, and the decision had been made to stay with the current contract so the equipment could be repaired, that the budget could not afford replacing the system.

The school shared that it was still waiting for all SEN top up funding to be received, that the application process was very long- that the budget spend was dependent on this money being received.

What pupil numbers were used to set the budget for this financial year?

Governors were reminded that the budget was based on receiving funding for 167 children- that there were currently 155 on role (in spite of 7 children joining the school- 3 children have left). The shortfall of 12 children amounts to -£71K, which will be reflected in next year's budget, on top of carry forward deficit.

Governors discussed ways of attracting more families to the school.

Governors asked for their thanks to JB to be noted, for all her hard work and commitment to the school.

Action:

Sports premium report agreed.

Ownership of the report to be worked on, and then report to be re-published on the website.

D. Governing Board effectiveness.

7.10-7.30

1 Governor Training.

Actions from previous meetings:

a. **Training records to be checked against BEEM.**

JM shared that they had attended the first day of the Oracy project run by Durrington school.

b. **Governors to be encouraged to sign up for safer recruitment training next academic year.**

How to access training to be shared with governors.

Action:

Governors to be encouraged to sign up for safer recruitment training- how to access training to be shared with the board.

2 Governor monitoring discussion- monitoring plan focus- to agree dates for Autumn and Spring monitoring actions.

Action from previous meetings:

a. **School to share specific dates for monitoring so governors can plan to attend.**

Governors commented that the monitoring plan was simpler and more achievable.

They agreed that elements of the plan could be covered in future FGB meetings- e.g. learning walks, looking at language rich environments, book-looks at Maths and English, and topic books.

Governors were invited to RE enlightenment days.

Action:

Governor monitoring to be allocated 20 minutes on all future FGB agendas.

3	Policy Ratification Any policies to be reviewed, ratified, or agreed. Action from previous meetings: a. SEND policy to be reviewed via email- to be formally agreed at this meeting. Policy was formally agreed. Action: SEND policy to be published on the school website.
4	Any confidential business- safeguarding, staff issues, pay discussions, parental complaints. Some Governors may be asked to leave.
Meeting dates- Autumn Term: Resources -29/11 (10.00-11.30)- date to be moved to December 6th, 9.30- 11.00.	Spring Term 2025: FGB- 20/1 (5.30-7.30); to be confirmed. Resources- 14/2 (10.00-11.30) Admissions- 25/2 (10.00-11.30).

Minutes prepared by John Parr
12th November 2024.

Action Log- St Mark's Full Governing Board meeting November 11th 2024



A: Governing Board organisational efficiency.		
	Responsibility of:	Completed by:
1.Signed minutes to be kept on file. Agreed minutes to be published on the school's website.	School.	ASAP.
2. Governor allowance and expenses policy to be published on the school website.	School.	ASAP.
3.Governors who have not completed photo consent agreement to do so via email.	School.	ASAP.
4.Governors to be reminded to acknowledge that they have read the KCSiE updates for 2024-25.	JP	ASAP.
5. School to check whether GB contribution to boiler replacement work could be covered by contingency from water project in the summer term.	JB	6/12
6. A timeline document to be produced, giving staff a clear picture of the timescales involved in exploring and adopting potential models of organisational change at St Mark's.	School.	End of term.
7. Follow up meeting with unions, LA and Diocese to be organised to discuss potential changes, if possible, before the end of this term.	JF	End of term.
B: Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff		
	Responsibility of:	Completed by:
1. School to look at using the visualisation element of the Power of Reading scheme as part of creative outreach events, as a way to involve parents in supporting progress and attainment of their children in reading.	School.	ASAP.
2. SEND report to be published on the school website.	School.	ASAP.
C. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.		
	Responsibility of:	Completed by:
1. Ownership of the Sports premium report to be worked on, and then report to be re-published on the website.	School.	ASAP.
D. Governing Board effectiveness.		
	Responsibility of:	Completed by:
1. Governors to be encouraged to sign up for safer recruitment training- how to access training to be shared with the board.	JP	End of term.
2. Governor monitoring to be allocated 20 minutes on all future FGB agendas.	JP	Ongoing.
3. SEND policy to be published on the school website.	School.	ASAP.
4. Resources committee to be informed of change of next date- to 6/12, at 9.30.	JP	ASAP.

Action log prepared by John Parr
12th November 2024.