



GOVERNOR EFFECTIVENESS REPORT 2017/18 ACADEMIC YEAR

Introduction. This is the third annual Governor Effectiveness Report.

Summery: challenges from the 2016/2017 Academic Year. In 2016/2017 OFSTED found governance at St. John's in need of improvement. Governors were failing to monitor pupil progress with sufficient rigour and needed to improve their capacity to hold the school to account where children were under-performing, specifically children in receipt of Pupil Premium and high achieving children whose progress had stalled. As OFSTED made clear, the numbers involved may be small, but governors were failing those children. Governors acknowledge that their grip on the 'stats' was not up to scratch and pupil progress reports discussed at governors meetings required much stiffer analysis.

Governor visits, whilst plentiful, also lacked rigour in that the written reports were too descriptive. Whereas report writing by governors *had* improved considerably in in the years prior to OFSTED, the bulk of the historic reports were considered to be too descriptive. To quote from the 2016-2017 Report:

- " 1. Reports were descriptive and focussed on the teacher.*
 - 2. Reports were not evidencing pupil progress and the effectiveness of the implementation of teaching strategies.*
 - 3. Reports failed to identify specific groups of pupils who were making insufficient progress.*
- Governors were not, therefore, holding the school to account for the small number of pupils who were failing to thrive. "**

Addressing this shortcoming has been the focus of our activities this year and is reflected in our 'in-house' training, monitoring visits and the content of our discussions in all meetings.

Budgetary Challenges. At the same time, governors had to contend with a £70,000 hole in the school budget for the 2017/2018 academic year triggered by a significant drop in pupil numbers in the previous year, together with fewer children than expected coming on to the books of the new Orchard Court nursery extension.

2017/2018 Senior Management and Governors the weaknesses identified in governance in order to provide the very best provision for our children.

Multi-Academy Trust Status. Governors had invested considerable time, training and research into the possibility of joining a multi-academy-trust (MAT) during the 2015/2016 academic year. Our focus on pupil progress land the Ofsted Improvement Plan led to a decision to 'park' the multi-academy trust focus for the time.

Our focus for was pupil progress and improving our capacity to make sound judgement on the basis of a solid, accurate data.

1. Governor numbers, recruitment and retention in 2018

At the end of the 2016 – 2017 academic year we had 9 governors and 2 associate governors. A new governor was recruited in the spring of 2018.

At the end of the 2017-2018 Academic Year we had 8 governors and 4 associate governors. Two further governors were recruited during the summer 2018 term, one of whom replaces the foundation governor who has since moved on. All have professional backgrounds and bring a range and depth of appropriate experience. They will begin service at the start of the autumn term. We trust they will find their time at St. John's rewarding and they will be able to move school improvement forward.

I am sorry to report that the governor recruited in the spring term has resigned due to work pressure issues.

2. Governor attendance at meetings

Governors are required to attend all Full Governing Body meetings unless they are associate governors. They serve on one of the two committees and are expected to attend all meetings.

Ed. Welfare Attendance 2017-2018 – 5 Meetings held (membership 5 governors & 1 Associate governor – CT, WT,KD,DHL,KS,KW)

14 th Nov.	Present – 4	Absent – 2 (1 governor & 1 associate governor)
16 th Jan.	Present – 5	Absent - 1 (1 governor)
6 th Mar.	Present – 4	Absent – 2 (1 governor & 1 associate governor)
8 th May.	Present – 4	Absent – 2 (1 governor & 1 associate governor)
20 th Jun.	Present – 5	Absent – 1

Average attendance – 5
Average absence – 1

Business Committee Attendance 2017 – 2018 (membership 5 governors and 1 associate governor – JG, WT,KD,JI,CT,CW)

8 th Nov.	Present – 6	Absent – 0
11 th Jan.	Present – 4	Absent – 1 (governor)
19 th Mar.	Present – 7	Absent – 0 (new governor joins)
17 th May.	Present – 5	Absent – 2 (2 governors)
5 th Jul.	Present – 6	Absent– 1 (1 governor)

Average attendance – 5
Average absence – 1

Full Governor Attendance 2017 – 2018 (11 governors in total.)

27 th Sep.	Pres. 9	Abs. 2 (1 assoc. governor & 1 foundation)
29 th Nov.	Pres. 9	Abs. 2 (1 assoc. governor & 1 foundation)
31 st Jan.	Pres. 8	Abs. 3 (2 assoc. & foundation governor)
22 nd Mar.	Pres. 8	Abs. 3 (1 foundation, 1 assoc. and one other governor.)
23 rd May.	Pres. 10	Abs. 1 (1 governor)
11 th Jul.	Pres. 9	Abs. 2 (1 governor , 1 assoc. governor)

Average attendance – 9
Average absence - 2

Commentary on Governor Attendance. One highly valued local authority governor who struggled to attend regularly for professional reasons is now an associate governor. A foundation governor was unable to attend any meetings. He has now left and his replacement begins work in the autumn.

3. School Visits & Monitoring the Post-Ofsted Action Plan Governor Visit Reports Submitted during the Academic Year 2017 - 2018

Monitoring of the Post-Ofsted Action Plan takes place through the submission of information to governors by the Senior Management Team, the review of that information at committee level and in individual meetings; and through observations made in formal Governor Visits.

Governor Visits. The Governor Visits Policy requires 3 visits per governor per year with a reports to be submitted electronically.

The Governor Visits during 2017 -2018 focused on the Post Ofsted Action Plan. At the start of the year the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher agreed a programme of visits for the entire year. This was a development from the previous two years where the visits programme was agreed on a termly basis. The initial programme outlined a total of 18 visits. This means 3 reports each for the 6 non-staff governors. This was pared back somewhat in the spring and summer terms.

The following written reports were received by FGB in the 2017 – 18 academic year and are logged in the school office.

i. Monitoring the Teaching and Learning of Children in receipt of Pupil Premium.

ia. 1st December 2017. A meeting with the SENCO to discuss the base lines for measuring progress of children in receipt of pupil premium. A discussion of the intervention programme in terms of evidence of its effectiveness. Discussion with respect to pupils making insufficient or no progress.

ib. 7th December 2017. A meeting with the SENCO to review the progress of Year 2 children in receipt of PP. A detailed examination of the Literacy work of 4 children of particular concern utilizing their exercise books. Comparing their written outcomes with the outcomes recorded on Pupil Tracker.

ic. 15th March 2018. A meeting with the SENCO to review current progress of children in receipt of PP, to review the data on the PP Provision Map and to discuss the effectiveness of the interventions of the autumn term. An examination of pupil work also took place.

id. 22nd March 2018. Learning Walk with subject leader with respect to writing. Review of sample of exercise books to look at evidence of progress with PP children and those exceeding ARE.

ie. 10th May 2018. Review of the written work of two Year 1 children and four Year 2 PP children, one pupil exceeding, three pupils now making accelerated progress (one Yr 2 high and one Yr 2 low, one at ARE. Also one child in Yr 1 who needs to make two points of progress. **Three governors** took part in the review, which also included a review of the effectiveness of the PP Provision Map.

ii. Monitoring Pupil Progress.

ii.a. 18th Dec 2017. Observation of a Pupil Progress Meeting. Observing how pupil progress is reviewed by the headteacher and other senior staff, together with the individual class teachers. Observation of the review of samples of pupil work and comparing book progress with entries made on Pupil Tracker by the member of staff. The meeting also included the negotiation of any necessary interventions.

ii.b. 16th March 2018. To Review the effectiveness and accuracy of School Pupil Tracker with respect to the autumn and spring terms. A meeting with the deputy head to review the measures taken to ensure consistency and accuracy of entries.

Reviewing processes for governor access to Pupil Tracker and setting up a system whereby governors regularly access agreed data. A review of the information and training that governors will need to be sure data is understood, together with the factors that impact progress.

iii. Reading & Writing.

iii.a. A meeting with the SMT responsible for Reading and Writing with respect to PP children to review the interventions currently in place, **in particular those introduced by Sarah Cook, a consultant for the Somerset Literacy Network.** A review of the current book scrutiny undertaken by SMT member, together with target-setting for individuals and the cohort as a whole.

iii.b. 18th Jan. 2018. Literacy Learning Walk. Visit to monitor the effectiveness of phonics and spelling sessions (Read Write Inc) in meeting the needs of pupils through effective differentiation, next-step marking and individualized target-setting. Observation of Year 1 and Year 2 children. The written work of 3 pupils was reviewed after the observations to support observations made in the classroom.

iv. Safeguarding.

The Governor responsible for Safeguarding (SG) met with the head teacher once a term. The main focus of the visits was the **inspection of the Single Central Record.**

iva. 30th November 2017. Annual Governor Safeguarding Lead Visit The Safeguarding Governor carried out a whole day visit and talked to the staff responsible for Safeguarding, a number of children and other members of staff. In addition to this all relevant documents were reviewed. An 8 page report that covers all the required safeguarding matters was produced. The report is available from the school office.

V. Health & Safety Visits.

v.a. Wednesday 15th November 2017. General Site Inspection. In overall terms the school was found to be in good order. A number of minor issues were raised by the two governors who conducted the visit.

v.b. Tuesday 13th March 2018. General Site Inspection. A professional inspection was carried out by SSE Services, accompanied by a governor. SSE submitted a report now held in the school H & S files.

vi. SIAMS

vi.a. 30th November 2017. Siams 'Understanding Christianity'. A discussion with the headteacher with regard to the new 'Understanding Christianity; R.E. curriculum.

vi.b. 13th December 2017. Siams 'Understanding Christianity - Incarnation'. Three classes were observed with regard to the teaching of 'Incarnation'. Children were found to be well-informed on the Nativity Story, with plenty of visual aids to hand to support their learning. Children responded well to questions asked about the special nature of Jesus.

vi.c. 4th December 2017. Siams 'Observation of a Collective Act of Worship'. A visit with regard to the Siams mid-term review of October 2017. An account of the assembly with detail of childrens' participation.

vi.d. 6th February 2018. Siams 'Why are some places special?' The visit related to children's experiences of and responses to a visit to a church. Children were also asked about their understanding of the Jewish faith, also being studied. It was apparent that the topics were engaging and stretching the children.

vii. Governor discussions with Class Teachers before FGB meetings.

In 2018 Governors decided that keeping abreast of pupil progress needed to be 'across the board' and regular. A brief meeting with staff would now take place at the start of each FGM with each governor assigned to a different class. **At the FGB Meetings of 23rd May and 11th July 2018 and governors met with staff to discuss pupil progress. Governors are expected to have accessed the School Pupil Tracker governor section to review the progress of their designated class and prepare questions.** Discussions take place in the first 30 minutes of the FGB. Outcomes were passed to the Clerk of the Governors who appended brief report on the outcomes of the discussions to the minutes.

16 governor visit reports were submitted during 2017-2018.

4. Monitoring Safeguarding

During 2016 – 2017 the head teacher, as Safeguarding Lead, reported on the on-going updating of policies and procedures in line with recommendations received from the various Government and Local Authority agencies.

The governor Safeguarding lead met with the headteacher on a termly basis **to check the Single Central Record.**

Safeguarding Training. Governors received Safeguarding training on Wednesday 22nd February 2017. Five governors attended in addition to the head teacher. All governors have received safeguarding training within the last 18 months.

The **Annual Safeguarding Audit for 2016 – 2017** was due for submission during October 2017. Owing to a system failure at County this was not possible.

The new detailed **Safeguarding Governor's Annual Report for 2016 – 2017** was carried out at the same time. The Safeguarding governor spent the equivalent of a full day in school and interviewed the Safeguarding Lead, members of staff, including lunchtime supervisors and children. The report is submitted electronically and stored in the school office.

What was evident in discussions with children is that children feel happy and safe at the school and consider themselves to be listened to and with adults that they consider approachable. Despite the focus on academic progress for our more vulnerable children there is no evidence that we have taken our eye off their social needs.

5. Monitoring Pupil Progress - ensuring that pupil learning outcomes are appropriately evaluated by governors.

The Education Welfare committee monitors pupil progress in a number of ways. The first is via school visits and reports and online data analysis (**School Pupil Tracker**).

Governors have received training in accessing and interpreting data on SPT and now utilize it to brief themselves on individual class progress prior to their meetings with staff at Full Governor Meetings.

Governors also receive regular reports on pupil progress data at the Education Welfare Committee meetings with detailed summaries also discussed at FGM.

Detailed analysis of data also takes place in the various governor visits. Ed. Welfare Minutes for 2017 – 2018 as compared with the previous academic year clearly **demonstrate that governor skills in interpreting and interrogating data have evolved significantly.** Governors have also become more pro-active in questioning the allocation of resources with respect to pupil progress

Documents discussed at Education Welfare Committee Meetings include:

i) Pupil Premium Reports, including PP target-setting and Pupil Premium Impact Reports and Pupil Premium Provision Maps. (14.11.17. ; 16.01.18.: 08.05.18,

- ii) School Pupil Tracker updates, including detailed analysis of end of term progress for each year group, with discussion both of current attainment and expected outcomes. (16.01.18)
- iii) Pupil Tracker Data. (all meetings)
- iv) Class by class Assessment Snapshots for Literacy & Maths (most meetings). (see the minutes of 08.05.18 for evidence of interrogation of these reports by governors.

6. Monitoring School Finances

The Business Committee is responsible for the detailed analysis and day-to-day decision – making in respect of the school finances. The Business Committee reports to the full governing body at each meeting where financial decisions are made that require the approval of the FGB. The Business Committee met five times during the course of the year.

We begin this report by thanking Anne Durbin, who has kept governors fully informed of the threats and opportunities presented by the annual budgets. Her forward thinking, together with some hard decision-making by governors and senior management have averted what looked like a slow car crash twelve months ago. **Balancing the Budget.** The year began with a ‘sigh of relief’ with the Finance Officer, Ann Durbin informing governors that that contingency fund would now be sufficient to cover the £75,000 shortfall in the budget for 2018 – 2019. The work done by all parties over the past two years to keep the books balanced has paid off.

At the same time governors were pro-active in asking for and examining the changing patterns of children on roll, together with local birth rates and pupil recruitment at other local schools. Positive action was taken as a result in terms of advertising and working on the school public persona generally. **Numbers on roll have climbed this year and nursery numbers have increased in line with the forecast expectations of the three-year Business Plan written by governors and the Nursery Manager.**

The Orchard Court Nursery was very much an actualization of the school vision of providing a high-quality provision for two-year-olds, together with taking a one-off opportunity to ‘grow’ the school. Our thanks go to Somerset County Council both in terms of their generosity in creating the space, their input in envisioning the project and their extension of the rent holiday.

Nursery Deficit. Our negotiations with SCC in respect of the costs of running the Nursery Extension in Orchard Court, an extension of the rent holiday has been agreed. This and other actions with respect to staffing and the service charges has brought down the Nursery deficit to an acceptable level. The loss for the current financial year is expected to be in the region of £17,000. This is about half of the projection twelve months ago.

Business Plan for Babies. In line with our expansion vision, **Governors and the Nursery Manager drew up a business plan to accommodate babies**, together with extending the Nursery opening periods during school holidays.

In the end, the decision was taken not to go ahead at this juncture because of the general issue of extended pressure on a reducing staff. This is a watching brief, however.

Planning for 2018-2019. The Business Committee agreed a budget for the 2018/19 financial year after several months of necessary adjustments. The settlement negotiated

with SCC with respect to rents and expenses for the Orchard Court nursery extension boosted the carry-forward from 2017/2018 to £196,727. The carry forward was also boosted by an increase in pupil numbers and an increase in Nursery funding. Governors were also able to report that no compulsory redundancies were necessary in order to achieve the savings.

7. Policy Reviews

Only the required statutory policies were actively reviewed by governors during the 2017-2018 academic year. With regard to the majority of statutory policies and their updates, the model statutory policies provided by SCC are now used as the template, owing to the increasing complexities and changes.

The school maintains a policy calendar to ensure that the policy review cycle is up-to-date. **An up-to-date calendar of statutory policies was circulated to governors in March 2018.**

2016-2017 saw an intensive cycle of approvals for policies. The 2017 – 2018 year only necessitated the approval of a small number of statutory policies that require annual approval.

Business Committee.

8th November 2017 – None

11th January 2018 – Review of Finance Policy by AD on behalf of the governors.

Ed. Welfare Committee.

14th November 2017 – None

16th January 2018 – None

6th March 2018 - **A list of the policies at present on the school website was circulated.** It was agreed to do further research, including checking the latest advice available from Somerset Governor Services. A spreadsheet to be produced to identify which policies need amendment or review. This will be circulated for approval.

8th Mat 2018 - None

26th June 2018 – None

Full Governors.

27th September 2017 – updated Child Protection Policy approved.

Policy approval programme circulated. Pay Policy circulated.

29th November 2017 – None

31st January 2018 – None

22nd March 2018 – None

23rd May 2018 - None

11th July 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation approved.

(17 statutory and non-statutory policies were reviewed and approved in the 2016-17 academic year.)

9. Governor Training

2017-2018

1. **27th Sept. 17** - It was agreed that the focus of internal training for governors would focus on accessing and interpreting data with respect to pupil progress. There would be an emphasis on the use of Pupil Tracker. KD undertook to plan and deliver the training, the detail of which is set out below.
2. **29th Nov. 17** – CT and KS attended training by KD in online data via **Accessing and using Pupil Tracker**. Training took place on 16th November. JG attended ‘Prevent’ training.
3. **31st Jan. 18** – KW attended training on the new ‘Understanding Christianity’ curriculum.
4. **22nd Mar. 18** – LN attended **Governor Induction training**. CT & KS attended training with KD on **Pupil Tracker analysis**.
5. **23rd May. 18** – None reported
6. **11th Jul. 18** – Governor induction procedures to be reviewed in time to induct the two new governors. **GDPR Data Protection Training** was cascaded by KD to all governors.

Governor Training is now on a ‘pay as you go’ basis.

10. Website and Communicating with Parents.

At present there is no governor with the specific responsibility for monitoring the school website or the content under ‘Governors’. A past governor with website management experience was being paid to update the site but this arrangement is now at an end. Governors agree that the website is now dated in appearance and some of the content needs updating.

The matter was discussed in detail at the Business Committee Meeting of 5th July 2018 with KD recommending that **E for Education** be asked to provide a new website. This will need populating and regular review of all content. This is a matter for review in the first FGB meeting of the autumn term.

11. Parental Complaints to Governors.

A complaint was received from a parent at the start of the 2017-18 academic year. The complaint was initially handled by SMT and passed on to the chair of governors in late October. There were some communications by email in the first instance culminating in a meeting with two governors and the writing of a report that was passed on to SMT. A long delay followed and it was a few weeks after Christmas before the parent received a detailed response to the issues raised. A governors panel followed, chaired by a governor from another school. An apology was issued to the parent by the chair and headteacher.

The governors found that the school had no case to answer with respect to the initial complaint. The apology was for a failure to handle the complaint in a timely manner.

The existing Complaints Policy lacks clear guidance with respect to a time-line for handling such matters and needs to be more clearly defined in terms of process. This was the first formal complaint during the tenure of the present governor team.

12. Governor Skills Audit.

No skills audit has been carried out for two academic years, largely because there has been little change in the governing body since the last audit. This situation has changed and a new audit is overdue. **Audit forms will be issued at the first FGB of the autumn term.**

Chair of Governors Summary: Issues for 2017 - 2018

a) Governor Monitoring Visits. A regular pattern of visits is now well established and published on an annual basis and adjusted termly.

The processes and reports with respect to monitoring pupil progress have improved considerably, following training in data analysis and the review of actual work by pupils. Governors are expected to review the data on a regular basis with respect to their assigned class.

Whereas the majority of reports listed were submitted, the workload needs more even distribution. The concentration of the task on fewer governors leaves us vulnerable.

b) Monitoring Pupil Progress. The minutes of Education Welfare and Full Governor Meetings clearly demonstrate that monitoring pupil progress was the forefront of our concerns in 2017-18 and the governors are more skilled up in reviewing and challenging data. This applies particularly to Pupil Premium data. The focus is very much now on pupil progress with this group of children, whereas in the past it had focussed on social and behavioural outcomes. We have become much better in checking out the evidence that children are getting the support they need and it is achieving the desired outcomes. Where pupils are working below Age Related Expectations we are getting better at wanting to know why.

c) Safeguarding. Safeguarding awareness is an issue for all governors in all visits and they are asked in the visit reports to comment on any Safeguarding issues. The new annual safeguarding governor visit and report ensures that all statutory issues are investigated during the full day visit. This is a considerable improvement; it reduces workload and concentrates the necessary information into a single and readily accessible document.

d) Complaints to Governors. The parental complaint received during this year was not handled in a satisfactory manner. The Complaint Policy needs re-writing. At the same time it was necessary to employ an external chair as the school chair had not appeared impartial. The initial investigatory process needs reviewing such that governors do not form their opinions solely on information drawn from school staff.

e) Monitoring the progress of children in receipt of Pupil Premium. Monitoring the progress of children in receipt of Pupil Premium and critically evaluating the outcomes of interventions to support the children were inadequately carried out in the past. The systems

focussed on social outcomes and evidencing behaviour, attendance, tackling low-level neglect and so on.

Governors now monitor the expenditure of Pupil Premium specifically in terms of pupil progress outcomes and this year has seen the development of detailed systems for ensuring that outcomes are clearly evidenced and understood. As well as evaluating the reports as issued, governors have targeted areas of concern by observation, data analysis and monitoring the new Pupil Premium Provision Map. We are in a much stronger position than twelve months ago.

Of concern, however, is coming to a balanced approach with respect to the new data protection requirements. This has already reduced the information available to governors. A balance needs to be struck here in terms of ensuring that data keeps the capacity for robust analysis by governors whilst ensuring the school does not fall foul of the legislation. This is a new development and exploring best practice elsewhere should help get the balance right.

f. Website & Parental Communication. *Governors have not been effective* in monitoring the website. Some structured oversight is needed with an assigned responsibility to ensure that, at the very least, the governor section is up-to-date.

With the exception of this published report governors communicate with parents indirectly and irregularly. This requires remedy. **Governors have agreed that a termly addition to the newsletter directly from governors will be introduced in the 2018-19 autumn term.**

g. Holding School Leaders to account for not addressing weaknesses in order to ensure good outcomes for all groups of pupils. Governors have become more effective in holding the school to account in terms of the numbers of children who are behind in terms of ARE or are failing to otherwise progress. It is my belief that internal comparisons can now be made effectively across the academic year.

We must be mindful that what drew fire in the Ofsted inspection was national comparisons. The date is on an improving scale and we owe it to our children to ensure that all outcomes compare favourably with what children are achieving elsewhere

Chris Trwoga, Chair of Governors
September 2018