

ST JOHN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL N20

MINUTES OF THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

MEMBERS

FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

Mr Jaime Goumal (*PCC*) (Chair)
Mrs Lynne Evans (*PCC*)
* Mrs Imogen Hall (*PCC*)
Ms Loretta Okpokiri (*LDBS*)
Mrs Alice Gavin Atashkar (*Deanery/Synod*)

EX OFFICIO HEADTEACHER

Mr Curtis Sweetingham

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mrs Catherine Mitri

* Denotes member NOT present

MINUTES

PART I

1. Attendance/Apologies

Apologies received and accepted from Imogen Hall.
Loretta Okpokiri to arrive late.

2. Election of Chair

The CoG REPORTED that the previous Admissions Chair had resigned from the Board of Governors. As such, a new Chair of Admissions Committee needed to be elected. The CoG nominated Jaime Goumal. The nomination was seconded.

The Chair ASKED Governors to vote.

The Governors voted UNANIMOUSLY in favour.

Jaime Goumal elected as Chair of the Admissions Sub Committee. The CoG handed over to JG to run the meeting, hereinafter referred to as "Chair".

3. Draft Admissions Policy on Website

The Chair RAISED that the draft Admissions Policy for 2019/20 is currently on the website, and the final version for 2019/20 needs to be published instead.

***Action: Final Version 2019/20 Admissions Policy
to be published on website***

4. Review of Admissions Policy for 2020/21

The Chair RAISED that the Committee needs to review the Admissions Policy to decide whether it is fit for purpose for 2020.

The Chair explained that there is a process for changing the Admissions Policy and the timescale to do so would be quite tight. There must be a six-week public

consultation, giving time to digest and assess anything arising from the public consultation, amend the policy taking in to account any feedback received and then make a final decision as a board whether or not to ratify the new policy. A final, signed off version of the Admissions Policy needs to be completed by the end of February 2019.

The Chair explained the timescales for the previous year's Admissions Policy consultation, and that if the Committee wants to make changes it needs to be done quickly.

A Governor ASKED the HT what changes he proposed.

The HT explained that the main problem is the list of qualifying roads, which does not include some new roads which do fall within the parish boundaries.

The HT also proposed as a possible future consideration that whilst in the juniors the number of places is at 30, and he would like to stay at 30, taking in to account the school's financial situation, it is worth being aware that by putting one or two extra children in the junior classes, accepting 31 or 32, could bring around £6,000 or just over per child, providing they are in on the census day. Increasing class size to 32 could mean £13,000 extra per year per class for four classes, meaning over £50,000 total.

A Governor ASKED whether any costs would increase as a result of that.

The HT ANSWERED it would be minimal cost. It would be more workload for teachers, with more marking, higher up the school, but small additional cost. The HT ADDED that there would be more children to work with putting in to interventions.

A Governor ASKED whether there would be a knock-on for things like trips, Breakfast and After School club, lunches, ratios and TAs.

The HT ANSWERED that it does, but he doesn't think it has a huge impact. He added that the biggest thing would be the teacher workload.

A Governor ASKED if you could put a limit on it and say that 32 is the absolute maximum.

The HT suggested that it could be worded so that the maximum still is 30, but with some sort of wording to suggest that it could go over. For instance, "We aim to be at 30." He added that there are already circumstances in which Barnet can intervene to give a child a place in the school, making the numbers above 30, so it can happen now, but the school can't choose to exceed 30 itself.

The DT RAISED that if the school takes a decision to go to 32, and then Barnet required them to take a Fair Access child, they could end up with 33.

The HT explained that this is maybe a consideration for the following year, not this year, but it is something to think about.

A Governor CHALLENGED that if the maximum is raised to 32 across four years, you could potentially end up with eight extra children, and that this would have an impact somewhere in the school in terms of resource costings.

The HT ANSWERED that there will be some impact.

The DT explained that marking would take around 15 minutes for an English or Maths book per child, so two extra children is an extra 30 minutes for English and 30 minutes for Maths per day.

The Governors discussed that this is quite a lot of extra workload for a teacher, around 10 hours more a week.

A Governor ASKED whether teachers would want higher pay because of this, and raised that unions would argue for this, as it's a 7-8% increase in workload.

The HT ANSWERED that maybe the school would have to consult with unions before proposing any changes to class sizes which would impact workload.

The Governors and SLT discussed the current emphasis on reducing teacher workload.

A Governor ASKED whether there is high absenteeism or sickness amongst the staff.

The HT ANSWERED that there isn't among teachers.

The HT AGREED that it would create more work, and the school is already stretched. The extra £50,000 could perhaps help make things less stretched, but as it would also bring additional work, may not. Potential double-edged sword.

The HT CONCLUDED that the roads included within the parish boundaries should definitely be reviewed, and the idea of increasing the maximum class size should certainly be considered the following year.

The Chair ANSWERED that expanding class size is a big project because it is necessary to find out who needs to be consulted. There will need to be a process to consult unions and teachers.

A Governor ANSWERED that it would be possible to do the necessary consultation within the timeline, but you need to know what you want, how you're going to communicate it, and what the process is.

The DT RAISED that you could create an environment where staff leave to move to a school where the class sizes remain 30.

The HT ADDED that parents might not want to send their children to a school with bigger class sizes.

The Governors and HT AGREED that the additional funding the increased class sizes would bring would be a big help, as the forecasting shows the school is headed towards a struggling position again. However, pastorally and morally it might not be the right thing to do, to put that on the already stretched staff who are doing their best.

The HT explained that he agrees and he isn't in favour of increasing class sizes, but he needs to make the Governors aware of the potential.

The Governors AGREED they need to be aware of these things, to consider them.

The DT ASKED whether the HT has any idea from the Mag 7 and the Hope Partnership what their feeling would be.

The HT ANSWERED that it was discussed briefly at the Hope Partnership meeting, where all schools have maximum class size 30 but do go over, with 31 in three out of four junior classes.

The DT RAISED that next year the picture could look totally different, because finances are probably going to get worse and worse.

The Governors AGREED and added that at least they are trying to pre-empt things.

The Governors discussed the precise wording on the existing policy and whether it is already possible to admit children on a waiting list above the 30 limit.

The Chair read from the policy:

"In September 2017 it is intended that there will be 30 children in each year group from Reception to Year 6."

The Governors and HT AGREED that this wording already permits Headteacher or Governing Board discretion on entrance.

A Governor RAISED that when it comes to in-year admissions, if you have people on a waiting list to join, there's probably no reason why the school couldn't admit them, and ASKED if there are any children on the waiting list for juniors.

The HT ANSWERED that he hasn't asked, because the school is currently full, but the school has just had two join, one in Year 6 and one in Year 4.

A Governor RAISED that if there is anyone on the waiting list for an in-year admission that could push the numbers to 31 or 32 then there is no reason not to accept them for one year.

A Governor ASKED whether these come through Barnet or directly to the school.

The HT ANSWERED that it all comes through Barnet, and explained that the office has access to the waiting lists.

The DT and HT RAISED that you have no information about the child coming in, or for what class.

The Chair ASKED if the Committee is confident that the current wording of the policy provides the flexibility needed on maximum class size.

The Governors and HT AGREED that the wording is fine for now.

The Governors and HT discussed the potential impact of new roads around the school, and possible pressure from Barnet to increase class sizes, and discussed the low attendance at another local school where classes are apparently closing.

A Governor reported that when the school had consulted with the borough in the past about the possibility of moving to two-form entry, the borough had responded that their trend forecasting shows that there are more than enough places in the schools locally to cope with the forecasts.

The Chair REPORTED that regarding the new roads within the parish boundaries, he has spoken to the LDBS and Barnet Council, who have agreed to provide an up to date list of the parish map and the roads in it, taking in to account all the new building.

The HT and Governors discussed whether or not the policy needs to be amended through a consultation process in order to reference the new updated road list.

The Governors confirmed that when the list is updated by LDBS/Barnet Council, the list to which the Admissions Policy will automatically update, so the roads will then be included.

A Governor ASKED whether there was still a need to expand or change the shape of the school catchment area from the long thin shape of the parish boundaries.

The Governors and HT discussed that another local school had considered changing their boundaries but ultimately decided not to, because the proposed change would have resulted in an area where residents were not covered by any school.

The Governors and HT discussed the other local schools and their catchments.

The HT explained that his main concern is that the roads within the parish boundaries currently missing from the list are added to the list, which is an easy fix and is in progress. He added that he's not so worried about the size or the shape, although it would be interesting just to look at in future.

The Chair RAISED that the school hasn't used the new 2019 Admissions Policy yet, so don't yet know how this new policy will play out, plus every year is different, so it's difficult to identify any trends.

The Chair explained that once he receives the new road list, he will check to see that it includes everything that you would expect to be included within the parish, then will circulate to the Admissions Committee to sense check and agree yes or no.

Action: JG to review new road list and circulate to Admissions Sub Committee

The Governors and HT discussed the implications on nursery places and the benefit of extending to developments just outside the current boundary to increase attendance.

The Governors and HT discussed the parish boundaries, whether the boundaries all meet, and whether there are any areas which fall outside of any parish.

The Governors and HT agreed on the importance of ensuring that it is totally inclusive, so the local community are all covered.

(LO joined the meeting)

5. Summary

The Chair SUMMARISED:

a) Road List

To be updated in line with new documents to be provided by LDBS/Barnet

b) Maximum Class Size – Policy Wording

Governors and HT happy with HT/Governor discretion in current policy

c) Parish Boundary/Distance from School Criteria

To be reviewed at a future date once the impact of the updated road list and the 2019 Admissions Policy changes have been assessed, with a possible view to changing from a parish boundary criteria to a distance around the school. Existing parish boundaries for St John's and surrounding parishes to be taken in to account.

6. Close

The Chair thanked Governors for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: TBC.