

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, 12th DECEMBER, 2013 AT 6.15 P.M.

Present: Martin Smart (Chair), Carole Mills (Vice Chair), Joanna Dean, Sarah Ransome, Kevin Blencowe, Neil Perry, Zoe Thorn, Jill Tuffnell, Samuel Wilkes Read, Ashley Walsh, Melissa Hatcher, Carrie Rice, Emily Barratt, Mark Tinkler, Tony Davies (Headteacher), Liz Steel (Assistant Headteacher), Anne Maskell (Clerk to Governors)

Martin welcomed the following new members of the governing body: Samuel Wilkes Read (Parent governor), Mark Tinkler and Ashley Walsh (Community governors), Melissa Hatcher and Emily Barratt (Teacher governors) and Carrie Rice (Staff governor). Others present introduced themselves.

1. Apologies for absence

ACTION

Apologies for absence were received from Rifat Siddiqui and Lucy Walker, and for late arrival from Mark Tinkler.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

Anne will send out declaration form to new governors; others present had no additional interests to declare.

Anne

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The draft minutes of the last meeting, held on 19th September, were agreed as an accurate record and the minute book signed by the Chair.

It was agreed that consideration of an Allowances Policy would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Anne/Tony

4. Minutes of governor committees

Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November had been distributed with the agenda. It was noted that the premises update should refer to new mains water pipes being installed to supply the Reception classrooms – drinking water is already available. Zoe was elected committee chair at this meeting, and she reported that the main discussion items were updates on premises and the 2013-14 budget, and a review of personnel policies. Anne is contacting the Governor Support Service to see what whole committee training they are able to offer with regard to recruitment and selection procedures.

Anne

Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December, which was open to all governors, had been circulated. Carole reported that the main focus of the meeting had been to discuss in detail the performance of children at St Matthew's in the 2013 statutory assessments and the key issues that had been identified by the data analysis. Two groups – FSM and SEN – are not making the level of progress we would wish; governors asked if this would

adversely affect the school's ability to achieve an overall 'good' or 'outstanding' result from OFSTED. Tony felt that they would certainly want to look in detail at this area, and judgements can be unpredictable, but that this would not be their only focus. It is significant that over a quarter of our FSM children had very significant issues in their home life which impacted on their ability to achieve academically. The size of these groups is small and so a few children can cause big fluctuations in terms of percentages achieving different levels. This is something OFSTED may factor in when making judgements. Our LA Advisor has looked at the data and judged that it would result in an overall judgement of 'good'. It is hoped to have a SEN focus at the next meeting and to invite link governor Lucy Walker and our SENCOs Sarah Barratt and Lindsey Lord.

The committee also looked at how a Development Plan in response to the new National Curriculum would be put together, following the recent appointment of TLR post holders. The committee also received Rifat's report as Link Governor for Literacy.

5. Headteacher's report

Tony highlighted the main points of his report. A launch party attended by various arts organizations had been held on 27th November following the opening of 'The Factory' in the playground, which had been designed in collaboration with 30bird Productions and Public Works. Refreshments at the party were funded by 30bird, other arts groups and the school. There had been a very positive response from those attending, which it is hoped will lead to forging closer links with community groups and other organizations to encourage their use of the school site

The school is looking at revising its Attendance Policy in response to new DfE guidelines; Annabelle Lewis will bring a report to the next FGB meeting.

Annabelle

6. Pupil numbers

At present all places in the school from Reception to Year 6 are either filled or on offer and all places in our Nursery have been offered for January 2014. Additionally we are three children over our Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) in Year 5 as the LA lost three appeals from parents of children who already had siblings in the school. Appeals are heard by the Cambridgeshire Admissions Forum – the panel is independent and has members from different backgrounds. Our Chair Martin Smart is now a member and will attend his first meeting in the Spring. Admitting children over PAN gives rise to concerns on a number of fronts – the impact on the education of children in these larger classes; teacher workload and our relationship with other local schools which may have places available for these children. Tony said that he met Adrian Loades, Executive Director for Children and Young People's Services in Cambridgeshire. His view is that the PAN set across the city is sufficient and that he would be concerned if the panel is straying from the set guidance on admissions procedures. Martin said that he feels strongly that the PAN should be adhered to and that he will make this point when he attends panel meetings.

7. Anti-bullying policy

Copies of the new policy had been distributed with the agenda. The model comes from the PSHE Service – the previous model had been more than 30 pages long with very detailed guidance, this has been condensed and significantly streamlined so that the final policy is more digestible. It has been reviewed in Staff Meetings, and next term there will

be training which will result in a revised version of our current Behaviour Management Policy.

Jo said that she had concerns over the use of the term 'victim' and other governors agreed. Would 'target' be more appropriate? She suggested that it might be helpful if someone from Red Balloon could review the language used and advise us. She will arrange to talk to Carrie Herbert – Tony said he would like to come along to any meeting too, and he felt that any comments should be fed back to the County PSHE Service.

Jo

It was agreed that governors would approve the existing policy with the proviso that the language used could be amended in due course.

8.

Child Protection policy

There is no substantial change to practice –this policy is brought to governors for annual review. At present we have two Child Protection Officers – Tony Davies and Annabelle Lewis – Liz Steel is about to undertake training to become the third designated person.

Intimate care policy

Following LA guidance this policy is brought to governors for the first time in some years.

Both policies were approved by governors.

9. Annual Child Protection report

All staff, including those who have recently joined, are fully trained in this area and our policy has now been updated. In the last year we had one child subject to a Child Protection order and five classed as Children in Need (although it is felt that this latter figure does not reflect the true level of need). We made five new referrals last year, not all of which were successful. There is ongoing concern regarding Social Care's capacity to respond to referrals when but services are hugely overstretched.

10. Premises update

The new building has settled down well but we are still working through various snagging issues. The boundary fence is being replaced in certain areas and additional work on the gates is taking place. Work on the school library is proceeding and costings are not yet finalized – we are hoping to negotiate a discount and to persuade the LA to put in funding. There is still an ongoing issue with ventilation and temperature control.

Tony and Martin have discussed having an Official Opening and governors supported this idea. Suggestions for a possible candidate were invited – it would be important to have someone the children can relate to. It would also be a good opportunity to promote the need for more funding for redevelopment of the playground.

11. Governor vacancies

Keith Barrett has now resigned which gives a vacancy for another Community Governor.

Ruth Platt has also stood down from her role as Teacher Governor.
Martin will write to thank them for all they have contributed to the work of the Governing Body during their terms of office.

Martin

New governors were then invited to consider which governor committee they would like to join. It was agreed that Ashley, Sam, Emily and Mark would join Curriculum Committee and Carrie and Melissa Resources Committee.

Sam said he had an idea for a database similar to Future First, which parents could join and which would give a way for us to tap into the expertise in the parent body which could be brought into the classroom to help enhance provision. It would be helpful to have a member of staff to liaise with him on this. It could also lead to good interaction with the local community and business interests.

12. Governor training

Zoe reported that she has attended the governor course for New Chairs on 3rd December, and has booked onto the Advanced Financial Management course on May 12th next year. Jo and Sarah are both attending the termly briefing for governors in January, and Sam will be taking part in the Induction Course for New Governors, also in January.

13. PTA news

Members of the PTA Committee have been very busy organizing the Festive Frolic, which takes place tomorrow, Friday, 13th December. They would be very grateful for more parent helpers for all their projects – perhaps we could promote this in the newsletter next year?

14. Dates for future meetings

Full Governing Body – 3rd April and 8th May – both meetings at 6.15 p.m.
Resources Committee – 1st May at 6.15 p.m.
Curriculum Committee – already set as 27th March at 5.30 p.m.

15. Any other business

it was agreed that reporting feedback from Meet the Head meetings should be a standing agenda item. This could form part of Tony's Headteacher's report.

Tony

Jo has met Adrian, Tony and Martin re the newsletter and would welcome suggestions from other governors. It has been suggested that we have regular contributions from the Governing Body and the PTA and material from the children. The first contribution from governors could go into the January edition.

All

Work is continuing on reviewing catering arrangements at St Matthew's, and Adrian has sent out a questionnaire to parents and is collating responses. He has met with Zoe, Bee and Karine to discuss a plan of action.

There is strong advice from the County that secure access via the portal is the recommended option for sending out all governor communications. At present Anne is sending out a reminder to personal emails for governors to check their portal

accounts whenever papers for meetings have been posted there. However other material is routinely sent out to governors in this way so it is important that portal accounts are checked on a regular basis. Sam said that he has found a way to forward securely to his I Pad by setting up a separate email account on it, and he will send round details to governors.

Sam