

St Matthew's Primary School

Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting, Wednesday 6th October at 6:00pm, in School

PRESENT:	D Lucarelli Stockwell (DLS) - Chair	
	R Mottershead (RM)	
	J Murphy (JM),	
	R Warwick,	
	J Parkin (JP)	
	R Herbane (RH)	
	C Jagger (CJ)	
	K Hehir (KH)	
	A Grieve (AG)	
	A Vedi (AV)	
	C Bates (CB)	
	T Davies (TD)	Headteacher
	L Steel (LS)	Assistant Headteacher
	K Spencer-Allen (KSA)	Assistant Headteacher
	A Lewis (AL)	Assistant Headteacher

CLERK: B Darkey

1. Apologies for absence

The co-chairs welcomed and thanked all governors' for attending the meeting. There were apologies for Neil Perry (NP) who was unwell and Richard Warwick (RW) declined.

2. Declaration of direct or indirect pecuniary interests in any of the following items

Tony Davies (TD) had a declaration for the governors' to sign and all signed at the beginning of the meeting.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Rosa Mottershead (RM) and Deborah Lucarelli Stockwell (DLS) were both happy to stand as co-chairs for another year. They were unanimously appointed by all governors. Vice chair Ricardo Herbane (RH) was also happy to stand again. He was unanimously appointed as vice chair.

Action: RM and DLS unanimously appointed as co-chairs for another year
RH unanimously appointed as vice chair

4. Governance Part One – co-option of governors

All governors agreed to co-opt RH, John Parkin (JP), Christina Bates (CB) and Katie Hehir (KH) as the staff elected governor. JM made all governors aware that she will be standing down as a governor when her term ends, RH thanked Julie for being a governor and being able to give insight from the office which has been a great addition. Linda Jones (LJ) was offered the position of Local Authority governor and accepted the position. There is an audit coming in November which is going to be looked at the resources meeting next week. A governor asked if there is anything that needed to be actioned for the resources committee for the audit, which there wasn't. RM said that she and DL had received a paper from the LA about outcomes and recommendations from recent audits that she would share with TD and the School Business Manager.

Action: RM to share paper re recent audit outcomes with TD and SBM.

Action: RH,JP,CB AND KH co-opted as governors

Action: LJ will become local authority governor

5. Attendance Policy

The Attendance Policy was last reviewed in 2019 before Covid, Annabelle Louis (AL) explained to everyone what is on the Attendance Policy, there have been no changes to the old policy. JM and AL monitor absence rates and letters are sent out to pupils who have an attendance under 90% every term. There a 60 children with attendance below 90% but only 20 will receive a letter due to circumstances of the absence e.g. letters are not sent to pupils who have had covid. Non covid illnesses such as coughing and diarrhoea are common at the moment. Letters are also sent out to pupils with multiple lates these have been sent out to parents. Letters 1, 2 and 3 have been prepared by the team at the county and written with correct legal wording. Parents do not like the wording of the letter as it can come across as harsh and direct. The message being portrayed in the letters is that the children miss out on learning with poor attendance and being late. As the year has just began it is hard to calculate poor attendance as 1 or 2 days off can make attendance go below 90% so a more accurate representation of poor attendance e.g. having multiple days off can be seen later on in the year. However, parents can still be cautioned if the percentage is below 90%. This also

means the attendance rates will look better over a longer period of time.

A governor asked if having granted time off contributes to the percentage being lower and receiving a letter. Granted time off does contribute to this. AL explained that anyone that wants time off during term must come and discuss this and can sometimes be granted depending on the nature of the reason. They want to be compassionate and grant time off where possible, the child's attendance is checked before the time is granted.

A governor asked if wording on the letter could be changed regarding authorised and unauthorised absence and getting fines. The other governors did not agree. If a child has 3 non-consecutive unauthorised absences they could receive a letter and a fine.

Action: AL will clarify wording of the policy to make it clear that authorised absence and does count towards the overall absence calculation and so does effect discretion to grant requests for leave of absence.

Action: Policy Ratified by Governors

6. Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 13th July 2022

-Matters arising and agreed actions update

The meeting approved the minutes from the last meeting.

Mark Tinkler will not be continuing as a governor.

Flowers were sent to Vicky. Caroline Bailey was on holiday so didn't receive them but she will be sent some.

Still looking for a new clerk.

Action: send flowers to Caroline Bailey

7. Head Teacher's Report

AL left the meeting.

TD explained that **the** number of children on roll is really healthy with only one space available in the whole school and there are waiting lists for spaces in some years.

The covid catch up has had very positive results with children catching up on their learning.

The model is different this year due to less funding and unexpected pay raises for teachers and support staff. The Government funds 60% of the NTP, however this is decreasing to 25% next year which will mean budget cuts will be needed in some areas of the school.

School streets is becoming permanent after positive results. Parents had found it difficult at the start of the term to get used to the new rules and timings. The timings at the end of the day have been modified to 3:10-3:40 rather than 3:00- 3:30 to try and miss the most traffic. A governor asked if this has moved the problem or solved it. This has made it safer near the school however, it has moved the traffic up the road which, while safer because away from the entrance of the school, can continue to be dangerous for cyclists and has made traffic worse at the top. On a few occasions this has stopped a pupil who gets a taxi from forest school unable to get back into the school on time due to being stuck in traffic. LJ suggested it would be a good idea to talk to Andy Caddy (policy and regulation engineer, transport strategy and network management for Cambridgeshire) and send him some photos and see what he thinks would be best as he pushed for this scheme. A governor asked if any support can be offered. This could be done by getting more volunteers and liaising with the parent volunteer group.

Everyone is happy with the report and actions.

Action: Monitor traffic and impact it has on everyone

Follow up with Andy Caddy for guidance

Liaise with parent volunteer group and Andy Caddy

8. Resources for Learning

- Finance Update and September Budget Monitoring Report
- 2022-23 Pay Policy (to ratify)
- Raise Awareness of:
- School Contract and Procurement Regulations, Financial Regulations for Schools and Cambridgeshire's Scheme for Financing Schools

There is so much uncertainty regarding budget and finances due to raising electric and gas bills and unexpected Teacher and staff pay rises.

The government has suggested a 5% pay award for teachers which was more than anticipated at the time of budget setting where a 3% award was assumed on the Orovía Budget Setting software. The increase this was announced on July 19th. Alongside this, the uplift to support staff salaries (averaging approx. 8%) to bring all pay scales above the living wage has been agreed by the Local Government Association and is to be backdated to 1st April 2022. This will cause the school budget to go into deficit as outlined in the report governors were considering.

The governors all agreed to go ahead with the 5% pay award for teachers. Governors said that this was strategic in that it could not afford to be at a disadvantage in recruitment and retention compared to other schools which would have a cost in itself. As other schools are doing it and the pay will be different to other schools which may encourage teachers to leave. It was noted that this was unanimous among non-staff governors. Everyone agreed they don't want teachers to be in a position where they have to leave or get another job. This was in addition to other points governors noted about the potential impact on staff morale that awarding less than recommended but the STRB and accepted by the government would have.

ESPO have advised that from October electricity is expected to rise by 50% and from April 2023 gas by 300%. Governors stated their concern that these rises can affect the health and safety of the children. The school will get further advice from Espo for budgeting electric and gas as they have not yet been able to explain how the above will be affected by the government price caps for energy for schools and businesses.

The cash flow has been calculated for the next few months and it should be okay as there is additional funding to come in. At some point in the financial year, if the expected deficit arises, cash flow will become an issue. It is at this point that the school will seek further advice from the LA regarding applying for deficit licences. With this impacting so many schools, it is hard to know whether usual procedures for this will be used.

At the end of the financial year the school is expecting a £39,000 deficit. This isn't where the school wants to be but there is not much that can be done to change this figure significantly in the current financial year. It is likely that the school will be applying for a deficit licence and associated with this a plan will be put in place to bring the school out of deficit over an agreed time period. A governor asked whether the LA had the authority to force a school to implement a deficit reduction plan. TD said that at this point the LA is advising schools to "hold their nerve" in terms of their current financial position as so little is known about how the government will react to this crisis. It is likely that the picture will become clearer in January or shortly thereafter once the funding position becomes clearer.

Due to funding the school is struggling to respond with challenges related to special needs children joining who need significant additional support but who do not have additional funding.

A governor asked if parents had raised any concerns. TD says he hasn't received any concerns. Parents have been donating to the school and Tony went to the PTA AGM to explain the situation and but have been told not to as the school cannot fulfil plans. Money is given directly to the PTA for any donations or events. Financial procedures have been updated which will be discussed at a resource meeting next week.

TD explained what EPM was to all governors - that it is a provider of specialist HR support to schools. RM questioned Annex C as TD hadn't included last year's one. TD said he would include it. Annex E is still applicable which is a £250 reward to teachers who are below a certain pay level. TD is going to strike out space for alternative pay ranges as the 5% pay award has been agreed.

Action: TD to include last year's Annex C in this year's pay policy
All agreed to Ratify pay policy

All voted for the recommended pay award as recommended by the STRB and outlined in the draft pay policy.

9. Raising Standards

- School Development Plan – update on progress so far

Governors considered the actions taken so far on the SDP as outlined in the Head Teachers Report. This will be discussed further at the TLOC meeting. be spoken at the next TLOC meeting. There was an initial look at statutory Assessment data from summer 2022 which are very positive, as shown by the green boxes in the the columns. Reception and Year 1 has the most amount of significantly challenged children and learning has been affected by the pandemic and will continue to be felt throughout the years.

10. Safeguarding Update:

- Draft Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (to ratify)
- Draft St Matthew's Whistleblowing Policy (to ratify)
- eSafety Policy (raise awareness of)

The policies have been changed on the website as there have been some changes so the policies are now the same. Child on child abuse is a new part of the policy and includes the process to follow if this occurs and what do if there aren't any senior staff in the building. LS explains the importance of making sure children know what healthy relationships are and about things that are wanted and unwanted and how to respond to this.

A governor questioned when behavioral management becomes a safeguarding issue. There is overlap between the two as safeguarding is broad. It is about how you respond to situations. For example, if a child has been violent towards another child it is making sure the victim is safe and the other child's behaviour can be managed using the behavioral policy.

Everyone agreed it would beneficial to attend the safeguarding training, there will be a updated PowerPoint in January.

The whistle blowing posters in the toilets need to be updated as they don't have the numbers for whistleblowing on them.

The eSafety policy hasn't changed so it hasn't been ratified.

Action- Make sure all governors have safeguarding training.

All agree to ratify the safeguarding and child protection policy

All agree to ratify whistleblowing policy

Update forms on toilet doors for whistleblowing

11. Governance Part Two

- Committee Membership and Link Governors (including committee for head teacher's performance management)
Parent Governor Election

TD has put a list together of the people to contact for link visits and what to do.

The resource committee have added to the agenda to appoint a chair and co-chair. LJ has agreed to go on the resource committee. All governors are happy with their roles as link governors. CJ and another governor are going to discuss sharing roles. JP is staying on to govern target areas which are: TLOC and lost learning from covid in early years and key stage 1. All governors have been encouraged to do a link governor visit this term and when there are new governors there will be a chance to share out roles between governors.

The new behaviour policy is going to be updated on the website and AV has agreed to become link governor for behaviour.

TD declared that he needed 3 governors for his performance management these have agreed to be: Linda Jones, Andrew Grieve and Neil Perry.

A governor raised concerns about the toilets on the first floor as students, parents and the morning cleaner have complained that they are below standard. A governor explained that toilets are checked after play and lunchtime and the toilets are being cleaned more frequently. However,

there are concerns that the cleaners at the end of the day aren't cleaning them properly.

A governor alerted everyone that the photographer is coming in Tuesday.

Action-LJ is going on the resource committee

LJ, AG, NP are doing performance management for TD

AV is becoming link governor for behaviour

12. Any Other Business

13. Dates of future meetings

- Date for Resources Committee: 19th October 2022
- Date for TLOC: 10th November 2022
- Meeting ended and thanked for staying after time allotted.

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