



HORSINGTON CHURCH SCHOOL

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

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HEADTEACHER: Mrs Kelly Barge

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2023

The meeting started at 6:00pm.

Present: K. Barge (KB), J. Dickinson (JD) (via TEAMS), E. Hardwill (EH), M. Holden (MH), C. Hurt (CH), J. Mortarotti (Chair) (JM), P. O'Gorman (PO'G), K. Rogers (Vice-Chair) (KR).

In attendance: N. Edwards (NE) (CEO of Bath & Wells MAT via TEAMS), R. Jacques (Clerk), S. White, who has submitted an application to become a Foundation governor, and J. Weston, who has submitted an application to become a MAT appointed governor.

AGENDA ITEM		DECISION/ ACTION
1	JM welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced NE explaining that she would be attending as an observer as part of a Local Governing Committee review process. The governors introduced themselves to NE as did S. White and J. Weston who had been invited to attend as observers whilst their applications are being processed. KR opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2	Apologies Accepted. None Received.	
3	Conflicts of Interest. Non-declared.	
4	Minutes of Last Meeting 1st December 2022. The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.	<i>Minutes approved</i>
5	Matters Arising. A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting: 5.1 Safeguarding Training modules: PO'G and KR confirmed they have completed their training. CH confirmed she has completed one of the modules. 5.2 Curriculum and Assessment Committee meeting dates: The Clerk confirmed the date of the next meeting had been moved from 2 nd March to the 27 th April which is shortly after the next Data Drop. A governor noted that this is also the date of the next Strategy Committee meeting, which will need to be re-scheduled.	<i>CH to complete the Educare modules Strategy Comm meeting to be re-scheduled. JM</i>
6	Safeguarding. 6.1 Safeguarding Update: KB confirmed she has been working on the online Safeguarding Audit and it is nearing completion. It just needs some input from JM on the governance sections. JM agreed to meet with KB in the next few days to complete the sections and to review the small number of areas requiring action that	

have been identified so far. KB confirmed the audit is on course to be completed by the deadline at the end of the month and the action points identified so far can be easily dealt with. ***The remainder of this item is confidential.***

6.2 Single Central Record check: JM confirmed she will carry out her termly SCR check after the half term break. KB reminded her that there are some additional volunteers working in the School whose records have been added to the SCR.

- 7 **Headteacher's Report:** The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The governors noted the report.

KB noted that 2 children (from the same family) will be joining the School, 1 into Year 1 after the half term break and 1 joining reception in September. **A governor asked** if the School knew why the child will be joining mid-year. KB explained that the family are moving to the area and had heard good things about the School.

KB invited EH to provide a verbal update of the developments with phonics. She explained the teachers are using a new system this year (Little Wandle) and once familiar with it, agreed it would be of benefit to run phonics workshops for the parents to inform them of the system and how it works. Two workshops were arranged, one for the parents of KS1 and the second for KS2. They were well supported and addressed why and how parents can support their child's reading at home; the parents were also given phonics resources. EH was pleased to report she had seen the benefit of running the workshops already in the children's reading. Governors asked the following questions which were answered by EH.

Are the parents encouraged to engage with the reading in a specific way? EH replied that the workshops informed the parents how phonics is taught in the classroom and explained ways in which it can be supported at home. Some resources were provided for the parents to use with their children.

How can the parents that were not able to not attend the workshops access the information? EH replied that all of the resources used are available on the website and also on request.

Would it be possible for a list of the phonics terminology used to be emailed to the parents? KB considered it to be possible and will investigate how/when it can be done.

Is there a correlation between the pupils who struggle with reading and the parents who do not engage? EH confirmed there is some correlation in many cases.

Do you have enough volunteers to listen to the children read? KB answered that a request in the recent edition of the Villager and the fortnightly School newsletter resulted in more volunteers coming forward (from parents and the local community) and so currently there are enough.

Have you had any feedback from the workshops? KB replied, not specifically, but the parent survey will be sent out shortly which will hopefully provide some feedback. **What form will the survey take?** KB confirmed it will be online.

KB added that following the success of the phonics workshops, the School is aiming to provide similar workshops for parents for maths.

A governor observed that as an attendee of the KS2 workshop, it was, disappointingly, not as well attended as the KS1 workshops but had been very informative. KB and EH were thanked for their reports.

8 **Headteacher's Appraisal mid-year Review:** JM explained that the first part of appraisal process to agree the targets took place last term. Recently she met with KB and CH to carry out a mid-year review of the targets that had been set. Part of the review referred to leadership and JM had sent out a staff survey to identify any issues staff were experiencing with the change of Headteacher. The results of the survey were very positive with all responses and particularly relating to how the staff feel about the School leadership. The responses indicated that the staff appreciate KB's approach to settling in and that she is taking onboard the values and ethos of the School. JM confirmed that there will be another review in the summer term.

A governor observed, that on a visit to the School, there seemed to a feeling of lightness and growth.

JM reported that one of the other targets was about communication. The evidence of this can be found in the phonics workshops and the 'Show and Share' open afternoon, which is taking place next week. The children will show their parents their work. EH reminded governors that this had also taken place before the pandemic and had been very popular, children really enjoy showing their parents their work. The governors discussed other ways that have been used in the past or in other schools to encourage parents to engage. They included:

- Books at bedtime in the School;
- Movie nights;
- Open afternoons/coffee mornings.

A governor was concerned about the impact of running after-school activities on the staff time. KB replied that currently it is manageable and she is mindful of avoiding the organising of additional events during already busy times for teachers e.g. weeks with meetings etc. She tries to plan carefully, but staff are keen to be involved. She gave the example of the School disco last term, when all staff volunteered to help. KB provided clarification - in general, if events are organised by the PTFA then staff do not need to attend but she will. For School organised events staff are usually required to attend.

9 **Marketing update:**

KB reported, in an attempt to raise finance, she had advertised for School sponsors in the recent newsletter and although no-one has come forward as yet, she is hopeful that there will be some interest. Two governors expressed an interest in providing sponsorship during the meeting.

KB added that she is also investigating buying a book vending machine. The children would be awarded tokens which can then be used to 'buy' one of the books in the vending machine. However, initial research has shown the machines to be expensive at over £1,000. There are various schemes available from book and machine suppliers as it is becoming increasingly popular in schools. Hiring, currently, is too expensive and so not an option. A number of options are being researched.

A governor enquired if the machine is specifically designed for books. KB replied that she thought the vending machines are a standard design which has been reconfigured to stock books.

A governor suggested that holding a monthly coffee morning for new parents may provide an opportunity for some feedback to the School and a way for those new to the area to become acquainted with those that have lived in the area for a while.

10 **Chair's Update:**

10.1 JM had read the slides from the recent MAT Chairs' briefing and highlighted the following points:

- The MAT will provide feedback to the Headteachers and Chairs from attending/observing the LGC meetings which will focus on areas to develop.
- Governor recruitment – with the 2 new governors, the LGC has a full board.
- 3rd March the MAT has organised a Leadership day for Chairs and Headteachers at the Haynes Motor Museum. JM and KB intend to attend.
- Earlier in the day, a Wellbeing conference had been organised by the MAT. JM unfortunately, was unable to attend but KB did. KB reported it had been an excellent day, she had gained a lot of information from the guest speakers which she will be able to share with the staff in due course.

A governor observed that, if you are working, attending the events expected as a governor can be very demanding. JM agreed, but noted the MAT is quite flexible and makes the slides used during training sessions accessible for governors to watch at any time. Including evenings and weekends.

10.2 Admission Arrangements Published: JM confirmed that the arrangements for 23/24 are unchanged and published on the School website.

10.3 Proposed Industrial Action: EH reported that the teachers had collectively written a letter to parents explaining that they would not be striking on 1st February, it was a personal choice and they are fully supportive of the teachers that were striking. They particularly support the industrial action with respect to the funding for schools and other public services, which has eroded over time.

The governors discussed the media coverage of the industrial action with the focus being on pay and not balanced with education funding issues.

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Visit Reports:

Visit reports for SEND, Maths and Health and Safety had been circulated.

11.1 Health and Safety: MH reported he was impressed with the systems in place which he saw during his visit and that it breeds confidence in the MAT's approach to the management of Health and Safety in the School. His first visit had been to go through the findings of the audit, but the focus of subsequent visits will be determined by the related issues at the time. KB pointed out the damp in the classroom, which has been ongoing for more than 10 years; various ways of rectifying it have been used but none had lasted for very long.

A governor was asked if there was anything that the governors could do to help. KB explained that the issue is complicated and being investigated by a firm contracted by the MAT.

11.2 Maths: PO'G reported that she had spent her visit talking with the children about maths and sitting in on lessons during which she observed the children and heard them using the maths terminology taught in the lessons. She said that she enjoyed the visit and would like to visit again. She wished to thank the teachers very much for their support.

11.3 SEND: PO'G reported that she meets with the SENCO every half term.

A governor commented on how long it takes for an EHCP to be arranged and the work involved. PO'G agreed, and said that most children are not given an EHCP until Year 5 or 6 because of the amount of evidence that needs to be collected. However, an EHCP has been approved recently and another is expected soon.

JM reported that she will carrying out a classroom monitoring visit next week. She will be visiting every class for a 20 minute period and will see some maths and phonics lessons. KB will accompany her.

- 11 **Governor Training attended:** See 5.1 of these minutes. No further training had been completed. The Clerk tabled a copy of the MAT's training schedule and reminded the governors that it can be found on Sharepoint. She also advised the Foundation governors that the Diocese had recently sent information about training.

- 12 **Committees:** Minutes from the meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted by the governors.

11.1 Strategy Committee 8th December: JM summarised the meeting, explaining that, amongst other issues, time had been spent discussing uniform ideas because the current uniform is very similar to that of another local school. The governors consider it important for the School to try to stand out as being different as it is part of the marketing of the School. The discussion is ongoing.

11.2 Curriculum and Assessment Committee 19th January: JM thanked JD for stepping into the role as Chair of the Committee.

- 13 **Policies:**
The following MAT policies were noted by the governors:

13.1 Data Protection Policy.

A governor wanted to know if the MAT has a good internet security system. KB replied that it does, it is run centrally and works very well for all of the schools. **The governor asked if** the School has a server on site. KB confirmed that it does.

13.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

13.3 Freedom of Information Policy:

- 14 **Dates of Next Meetings:**

- Ethos Committee 1st March 2.00pm t.b.c.
- School's Resources Committee 9th March 9.00am (School)
- LGC 23rd March 6.00pm (School)
- Strategy Committee t.b.c.
- Curriculum and Assessment Committee 27th April (School)

- 15 **Any Other Business:**

A governor asked NE if there has been an increase in the number of schools in the MAT. NE replied there has, currently there are 36 schools with 7,616 children and 1,553 staff. The smallest school currently has 40 children and the largest 600. The MAT receives lots of enquiries from schools that are currently with local authorities and feel they are not being provided with the support they need. In addition, the cost of the limited local authority support is high and increasing. She reported that the Bath and Wells MAT is in a strong financial position and has been graded as good by the DfE.

The governor asked what the MAT's strategy for growth is. NE replied that the strategy for growth is on the website and it is to grow by 4 schools a year with flexibility for an additional 2. The estimated sustainable number of children of a MAT

is considered to be 10,000. The MAT is trying to maintain a balance of the number of schools who are not doing so well with those doing well.

NE thanked the governors for accommodating her request to observe the meeting and for the work they do in the School.

The meeting closed at 7:40pm