



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 23rd MARCH 2023

The meeting started at 6:05pm.

Present: K. Barge (KB), J. Dickinson (JD), 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: R. Jacques (Clerk).

AGENDA ITEM

DECISION/ ACTION

- 1 JM welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

Apologies Accepted

S. White had sent her apologies by telephone.

- 2 **Declarations of Interest.** Non-declared.

KR arrived at 6.10pm

- 3 **Minutes of Last Meeting 2nd February 2022**

The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

*Minutes
approved*

Matters Arising

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting:

Safeguarding Training modules: CH confirmed she has not completed all of the required modules. JM requested the modules be completed as soon as possible.

*CH to
complete
the Educare
modules*

- 4 **Governance and Education Strategy Update**

JM reminded the governors that the agenda had contained a link to the Strategy which is available on SharePoint. She explained, the Trust had produced the Strategy with the expectation that all of its schools, including the staff and governors, will understand it and engage with it. The recent LGC meeting observation by the CEO of the Trust, Nikki Edwards (NE), was part of monitoring the governors' engagement with the Strategy. JM reported that she had received feedback from NE about the meeting by email and through meetings, both on her own and with KB. The meetings were positive and constructive and helped her and KB to see ways in which the LGC can improve. From the meetings and the written feedback, JM had produced a list of action points for the LGC which she tabled. As she went through the list, she offered suggestions on how each one could be achieved (appendix 1).

JM emphasised the Trust is not asking the governors to do more work but to be more efficient.

5 **ADE Visit Note**

KB explained that Faye Bertham is the School's Assistant Director of Education (ADE) and her visit in March was cancelled because of the snow, consequently there was no report for this meeting. She will visit half termly and write a report which the governors will receive.

6 **Accelerating Plan**

KB reported that following Trust assessments of the School in the autumn term which identified different areas which needed to improve more quickly than they were, the Trust has categorised the School as an 'Accelerating' school. It was previously 'Embedding'. There are many reasons for the change including a new headteacher, a new EYFS teacher, some issues with phonics data/teaching etc.

A consequence of the change in category is that the Trust has appointed an Accelerating Board (AB) to monitor the School's progress. The AB will meet half termly and include many of the senior personnel within the Trust plus KB and JM. Reports from the AB will be circulated to the governors. The School has been given an Accelerating Plan (AP) which will include some of the elements of the SDP and also priorities that have been identified as requiring support. The SDP will be on hold whilst the School is in this process. KB tabled the first page of the AP which detailed the Priorities and Milestones for the first 6-week period.

The Priorities are:

1. Embed Little Wandle Phonics across EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 enabling all children to develop robust phonics skills.
2. Develop the role of the Middle Leader, to ensure there is a consistent and confident approach to leading a curriculum subject.
3. Ensure there are robust safeguarding procedures in place and these are effectively monitored.
4. All governors to extend their knowledge and understanding of their role with a training plan and monitoring cycle in place.

KB advised she will send the full report to all governors by email and invited them to send any questions they may have to herself and/or JM.

A governor enquired how long the Accelerating process would take. KB replied she is hopeful it will be finished by the end of the summer term. The Accelerating Board wants to see progress in a term.

A governor wanted to know how the governors are expected to monitor the progress. JM explained it is expected that governors will take the lead for a priority and monitor the progress made within each 6-week period.

The governors discussed the priorities and ways in which monitoring progress could take place. Referring to the term 'Middle Leaders', KB explained it means Subject Leaders. The initial plan is that by the Summer term, the Subject Lead for one subject will have put in place all of the required plans and paperwork and it will be used as an exemplar format for the other Subject Leads to follow. All subjects have been allocated to staff and they are in the process of creating actions plans for each of the subjects. Some staff will have more than one.

A governor asked if the SDP priorities will need to be monitored at the same time as the AP. KB confirmed the AP monitoring will be instead of the SDP for the time being.

Referring to 2.1 of the Milestones, **a governor asked** if the Education Consultant will be provided by the Trust. EH replied that the staff have already met with the consultant: he had explained to them how to be a middle leader, what the role entails, how to write an action plan and how to carry out an effective 'Learning Walk'. She said it was very helpful and the staff are now developing their skills by putting the training into practice. He will be returning for a second visit in April.

The governors expressed concern about the expectation that governors monitor the AP progress from a strategic point of view. JM explained the information during the meeting had, by necessity, been delivered very quickly and the governors will need to take time to go through the AP in more detail when they receive it. She emphasised that is important that everyone, staff and governors, keep focussed on what is required and if they have any questions they should ask her or KB.

JM reminded governors that NE had said all governors should be visiting the School as per suggestions on the Action Points document attached.

The governors discussed the AP priorities and the following Lead Governors were decided:

Priority 1: Phonics - JD

Priority 2: Middle Leader development - MH

Priority 3: Safeguarding - JM

Priority 4: Governance: all governors

A governor wanted to know if they should continue with monitoring maths. JM and KB agreed that they should.

Referring to the visit from the Education Consultant, **a governor asked if** the visit had been arranged because of the School being categorised as Accelerating. KB replied that the Trust had arranged for the consultant to work with its schools some time ago as developing middle leaders is one of the priorities for all of the Trust schools.

JM concluded the section, by saying the Trust is investing a lot in external consultants to support its schools. She and KB had attended a conference and found the speakers delivering it enthusiastic and inspirational.

7

Headteacher's Report

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The governors noted the report. KB explained she had used the Trust format and added some sections of her own.

The following questions had been sent in advance of the meeting and were answered by KB:

Q1 Section 1 Safeguarding - where is the pupil voice coming from? Did the School Council represent their peers, and if so, are they truly representative of children in the School? KB replied the staff considered the School Council has a wide range of children in terms of age and ability and so did represent their peers. During the Safeguarding Audit, a meeting was held with the team and the School Council, they spoke directly to the children. They also met with KB, JM and all of the staff. The audit was very positive, with only a few action points required which includes the Behaviour policy and the CPOMS software. However, the School is still waiting for the final report to be sent.

Q2 Section 5 Parents and Community - I am amazed by the amount of money raised for new books. What is the strategy behind it? How are the new books chosen? How are children introduced to the books? Is there a scheme for children

to be allowed to borrow the books? Could the big intake of new books be used as an incentive for children, e.g. tokens? **Clarifying the questions, the governor asked** what impact will the new books have? KB explained, the teachers looked at the book catalogue and selected the books for their own class. The type of book varied and included poetry, geography, topic related books, picture books and advance fiction. Each class teacher will decide how the children will use the books. EH commented that she, personally, had chosen books for her class in line with the curriculum and topics as well as picture books to please the children. She liked the fact that the arrival of new books has created conversations between the children about reading.

Q3 Can you explain what is Adaptive Teaching? KB explained, it is essentially Quality First Teaching. It involves using many strategies to support every child in the classroom, including those with SEND and other barriers to learning. **Are there any new techniques?** KB and EH confirmed there are no techniques.

Q4 (asked during the meeting) Section 11 Health and Safety – what is happening about the outstanding actions from the audit? KB answered she has not yet compiled a ladder register but the glazing which was cracked has been replaced.

Q5 (confidential minutes)

8 **Safeguarding**

JM confirmed she had not been able to attend the Teams Lead Governor training session but had viewed the recording available after the session. JM also attended the S/G Audit in School and answered questions; she met with KB afterwards to discuss the Audit. A visit report will be written when the Audit report is received in School.

9 **Governor Visit Reports**

Visit reports from the following Lead Governors were circulated prior to the meeting: SEND, EYFS, Phonics (Curriculum and Assessment), Pupil Premium, and SDP Priority 4 - relationship with parents.

Referring to the Pupil Premium funding visit report a **governor asked if** there had been discussion about the funds used specifically for individual children who are eligible for the funding. KB and CH confirmed that their discussion had been mostly about how the funding is used to support the eligible children ensuring they receive the help they need during their time in School. Specific examples were not provided on the report because of confidentiality.

10 **Committees**

Minutes from the meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted by the governors.

10.1 Ethos Committee 22nd February: KR reported that the committee had been considering the preparation needed for the next SIAMS inspection. Specifically, how evidence of the School's values can be evidenced. To help with this, the visit report form has been modified to include comments from governors on where they observe the School's values in evidence during a classroom visit or a discussion with a teacher. He asked them to use the value terminology specifically eg perseverance, kindness etc and not to use generic comments. In addition, with staff mental wellbeing in mind the Committee has also added a box for reflections with the class teacher which could be used to include a comment on how the governors can provide support to the teacher.

10.2 School's Resources Committee 8th March: There were no updates.

11 **Governor Training attended**
The Clerk tabled a copy of the MAT's training schedule and reminded the governors that training details can be found on the Trust Newsletter and on SharePoint. JM confirmed she had viewed the Safeguarding training slides.

12 **Policies**
12.1 Separated Parent Policy (Trust) was noted by the governors:
12.2 Safeguarding Policy (School appendices 1 and 2): KB reported that there may be Trust changes to the appendices and asked for them to be on the agenda for the next meeting. This was agreed.

*Agenda
item for the
next
meeting.*

JM reminded governors that the Governors' Allowance policy is on the School website and they are able to claim for expenses incurred in their role as a governor. She advised them to look at the policy for details.

13 **Dates of Next Meetings**

- Curriculum and Assessment Committee 27th April 4pm
- School's Resources Committee 11th May 9.15am
- LGC 18th May 6.00pm

Strategy Committee. JM confirmed the Strategy Committee meetings will be cancelled for the remainder of the year because of the need for more frequent meetings with the Accelerating Board.

14 **Any Other Business**

14.1 PO'G tabled the Ofsted Report from the recent inspection of the Somerset SEND Department. She expressed concern that the inspection report indicates that the department has not made progress in two of the nine areas that had been previously identified as being unsatisfactory. She explained that this has an impact on the children with SEND in the county, including the School.

14.2 CH thanked JM for all the additional support, which is very time consuming, she is giving the School during the Accelerating process.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

ACTION POINTS FOR GOVERNORS TO CONSIDER AFTER NIKKI EDWARDS' OBSERVATIONS

(JM's comments and suggestions of how they can be achieved in red)

- Read the Governors' Handbook produced by the Trust. Make sure you understand your role as a parent, MAT, staff or Foundation governor.
Essential reading for all governors and easily available on SharePoint.
- Read again the code of conduct. Re-read it regularly. Make sure you are truly familiar with it.
Re-read the code of conduct.
- Some training, like Safeguarding, are non-negotiable and a priority in a governor's role. They are to be treated as a priority.
Trust emphasises it is essential that all governors complete the three modules – Safeguarding, Child Protection and Online Safety on Educare.
- Discuss timing of the LGC to fit in better with everyone's diary; LGC meetings don't have all to be at the same time and on the same day.
Varying the timings of the meetings may make it easier for governors to attend.
- Make better use of the school's calendar to conduct monitoring visits (school's events, celebrations, parents' workshops...). *Ask Kelly to provide a school calendar with main dates at the beginning of the year.*
By sharing the dates and times of school events it could mean that governors can attend more of them and use that as a monitoring visit. Monitoring visits do not always have to be carried out in the classroom. For example, it could be attending a school organised Church Service, taking part in the audits for H&S and Safeguarding, talking to parents during coffee mornings etc. A visit report form should be completed after each visit.
- Refer more often to pupil voice. When doing visits, instead of concentrating on the teacher's technicalities, ask pupils for their comments with open questions (What have you learnt? Do you understand what you have to do? What parts of the lesson do you enjoy or not?...) *When governors are visiting, use the opportunity to talk to the children and record some of their comments on the form.*
- During LGC meetings, focus on strategic questions. Potentially all governors to attend a training on "asking effective questions" and "being strategic" delivered by Rachel or Faye.
It is important for governors to ask strategic questions and training is available from Rachel or Faye. All governors expressed that they would like to receive some training on how to ask effective questions.
- When preparing for the LGC meeting, read the documents provided by Kelly with the aim of asking/interrogating at least one and probably two effective questions; ask yourself: Is this the right question? What will I learn from the answer? What impact will it have? These questions could be linked to your leading role (Safeguarding, H&S, PP, SEND, Ethos..) to reinforce your monitoring on your priority. Send these questions in advance of the meeting, so Kelly can prepare answers and timings stay succinct.
This is particularly relevant to the Headteacher's Report. Prepare one or two questions on the governor's lead area.
- Reinforce the role of staff governor by using their expertise more effectively, for example by doing a presentation on a specific subject each time.
It was felt that the staff governor needs a more defined role. It might be presenting about progress with an SDP priority at each meeting, or talking about staff wellbeing etc.
- Pairing new governors with already established governors for a few weeks/months so good practice is passed on.
Essentially this is a 'buddy' system. This was welcomed by the governors. Many expressed that they found joining the LGC quite daunting to begin with.



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