

Hotwells Primary School
Meeting of the Local Governing Body
Term 1, Thursday 12th October 2023, 4.35pm

FINAL MINUTES OF MEETING

Overall Objective of the Meeting: Understand position of school at start of academic year with particular awareness of financial situation.

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| <p><u>Governors Present</u> Zoe Bell Rhiannon Benson Chris Bond, Chair Anthea Bruges, Vice-Chair Kee Jones, Headteacher Daniel Monk</p> | <p><u>In Attendance</u> (non-voting) Matt Edwards, Assistant Headteacher Keira Stobie, Clerk</p> <p>Quorum = 3 (half in post)</p> | <p><u>Apologies</u></p> |
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Feedback on actions from T6 2022 - 2023 Meeting

| AGENDA NUMBER | AGENDA ITEM | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
|---------------|------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Welcome | EW and KJ to publicise Staff Governor vacancy | EW/KJ |
| 1 | Welcome | KJ to arrange Staff Governor elections in T1 | KJ |
| 4 | Improving Staff Areas | ZB to discuss improvements to staff areas with PTA | ZB |
| 4 | Improving Staff Areas | ME to share list of proposed improvements to staff areas with the LGB | ME |
| 4 | Improving Staff Areas | CB to investigate options for installing a water cooler within the staff areas | CB |
| 8 | Behaviour Changes | KJ and RB to discuss the Behaviour Curriculum Document | KJ/RB |
| 9 | Governor Area Updates | KS to report Governor feedback on CST Health and Safety documentation to SM | KS |
| 9 | Governor Area Updates | SM to convey Governor feedback on Health and Safety documentation to CST | SM |
| 9 | Governor Area Updates | RD to meet with SM T1 | RD |
| 9 | Governor Area Updates | RD and ME to complete policy work to ensure Policy Tracker is operational and Governors have access to all necessary policy documents | RD/ME |
| 9 | Governor Area Updates | ZB and KJ to discuss EYFS in T2 | ZB/KJ |
| 9 | Governor Area Updates | RB to meet with SH and KJ to discuss SEND and PP respectively | RB |
| 11 | Approval of Previous Minutes | KS to establish if a financial update is required on the agenda for the T1 LGB meeting | KS |

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| | and Matters Arising | | |
| 11 | Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising | RD and ME to continue work on Health and Safety and Pupils with Health Needs policies | RD/ME |
| 11 | Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising | KS to include the Behaviour Policy as an item on the T1 LGB meeting agenda | KS |
| 11 | Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising | RB to report on SEND/PP at the T1 LGB meeting | RB |
| 11 | Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising | CB to mark as signed on Governor Hub the final T5 minutes | CB |
| 12 | AOB and Close | KS to enter LGB meeting dates for 2023 – 2024 to the Governor Hub Calendar | KS |

| Item | Final Minutes of Meeting |
|------|--|
| 1 | <p>Welcome (CB)</p> <p>No apologies were necessary and the meeting was quorate throughout.</p> <p>DM was introduced as the new Staff Governor. He had previously been at the school as an LSA before completing his PGCE and now returns as a class teacher and Science and Computing Lead. The Governors expressed their hope that becoming part of the LGB would prove a valuable learning experience and emphasised that they would fully encourage exploration of any areas of particular interest.</p> <p>In general, the Governors felt that the LGB was still establishing its position within the structure of CST but that it remained very much grounded withing the community, championing local issues.</p> <p>Resignations had been received from RD and MS and their expertise would be very much missed.</p> <p>A potential Community Governor had come forward, and the school was asked to continue publicising the Parent Governor vacancy, following an initial advert in the school newsletter. Verbal enquiries had been received and would be investigated further.</p> <p>ACTION: KJ/ME to publicise Parent Governor vacancy.</p> <p>ACTION: ZB to follow up verbal enquiries regarding Parent Governor Vacancy.</p> <p><u>Feedback from Parents' Survey</u></p> <p>Although this highlighted that families were not aware who the Governors were, this was not felt to be a major issue, unless it also indicated concerns regarding transparency. Families being aware of the LGB, and how to make contact if needed, was important, especially since joining CST had added an additional layer of governmental structure to the school.</p> <p>It was felt that termly summaries from the LGB in the school newsletter and the reinstatement of the Governors' notice board in school when the outstanding vacancies were filled would both be valuable methods of raising the profile of the LGB.</p> <p>ACTION: CB to send termly LGB summaries to ME for inclusion in the school newsletter.</p> <p>ACTION: ME to reinstate the Governors' notice board once outstanding vacancies are filled.</p> |

Pecuniary Interests

Covered under Item 6, but none updated during this meeting.

Training undertaken

None was reported but Governors were reminded of the following sessions this academic year: Chairs and Vice-Chairs on 6th November 2023 and 6th March 2024.

All Governor CST Inset on 5th June 2024, for which more details would follow closer to the time.

Elections

AB agreed to continue as a Governor for a second term.

Proposed: RB

Seconded: CB

Agreed unanimously.

CB agreed to stand as Chair for the 2023 – 2024 academic year.

Proposed: AB

Seconded: RB

Agreed unanimously.

AB agreed to stand as Vice-Chair for the 2023 – 2024 academic year.

Proposed: RB

Seconded: CB

Agreed unanimously.

Governor Roles and Responsibilities

CB agreed to cover the Safeguarding Governor role and AB the Health and Safety Governor role until new Governors were recruited to take on these positions.

It was highlighted that ZB as EYFS Governor needed adding to the documentation.

Given the different priorities of the LGB since joining CST, a dedicated Finance Governor was no longer felt necessary. However, it was highlighted that targeting individuals with an interest in Health and Safety when recruiting future Governors would be highly beneficial.

ACTION: KS to update all records to reflect changes within the LGB for the 2023 – 2024 academic year.

2 Update on School Financial Position (KJ)

A written summary prepared by SM was circulated.

The Governors felt that, given the current financial position of the school, this matter needed to remain a standing item on LGB meeting agendas.

The actual 2022 – 2023 deficit was £76, 000 (seventy six thousand pounds), which represents an improvement on the £94, 000 (ninety four thousand pounds) predicted. This was predominantly due to income from grants, nursery and lettings being £11, 000 (eleven thousand pounds) more than expected. However, staffing costs had been £22, 000 (twenty two thousand pounds) over budget. Within this, educational support provided by BG10 moving up from BG7, representing costs of £19, 000 (nineteen thousand pounds), had been the main issue. The issue of providing cover for essential CST meetings and training sessions, which was calculated to have cost between £8 – 10, 000 (eight to ten thousand pounds),

had also been raised, and this year many of these sessions will now be held after school, resulting in financial savings, but adding to the strain on staff. Cover for EYFS provision had also required funding, but the changes to SLT following the appointment of KJ had created some savings.

Other expenditure had been reduced, with energy costs in particular being lower than estimated. Building maintenance had also been carried out as prudently as possible.

2023 – 2024 Forecast

A deficit of £173, 000 (one hundred and seventy three thousand pounds) is predicted, an increase of approximately £100, 000 (one hundred thousand pounds). Low pupil numbers have resulted in a £50, 000 (fifty thousand pounds) decrease in income received, while staffing costs have increased by a similar amount. £40, 000 (forty thousand pounds) of this was due to LSA and teacher pay increases, and only approximately £6, 000 (six thousand pounds) will be allocated from Governmental sources to compensate. Funding for pupils with SEND requirements was another factor, with the school receiving far less than was actually necessary to support each pupil following a top up application. This was illustrated by the example of a reception pupil recently assessed to require one to one support. This need had not been known when creating the current staffing structure, and yet the school would now need to make adjustments in spite of insufficient funding being available.

Governor Question: *Why was there such a discrepancy between funding required and funding received for pupils with SEND needs?*

The amount allocated is dependent on the onerous completion of a form by the SENCo and is completely beyond the school's control. In addition, the SEND department of BCC is currently operating within serious financial constraints.

Governor Question: *How tight are the deadlines for top up funding applications?*

These must be submitted by the end of next week.

Governor Question: *Could the school indicate that it was impossible to fulfil expectations?*

The school strongly felt that it was in the pupil's best interests to remain at the school now they were settled and that they should support them as required, whatever implications this had. Previous experience also indicated that while physical constraints, such as unsuitable buildings, were accepted as obstacles, financial and staffing constraints were not.

Governor Question: *Was there evidence of other schools finding themselves in similar positions?*

This has been widely reported.

Governor Question: *It appears that the number of pupils requiring one to one support represents a large percentage of the school population. Is it the case that the school has garnered a reputation for working successfully with such pupils and is therefore attracting disproportionately large numbers? If so, would it be beneficial for Governors to offer guidance of what is reasonable for the school to provide?*

The number of pupils registered with SEND needs is actually lower at the school than at most CST schools and it was felt that it would not be practical for Governors to steer in this way, but they could support the school should any debate with the LA arise.

The Governors acknowledged the ongoing substantial level of deficit and reiterated their gratitude for the support provided by CST.

3

Nursery Update (KJ)

The school had been approached by a local Montessori nursery which was closing at their current venue and looking for a new space to operate from. Both KJ and ZB had met with keen and enthusiastic representatives, following which CST had stipulated that a formal business case should be produced, hard copies of which were circulated.

It had proved challenging to calculate a representative rent due to the anticipated cross over of staff and existing pupils continuing within the provision, and the school was also aware that the issue of the

recurring issue of financial viability throughout the nursery's lifespan. There were currently 7 pupils with funding for 15 hrs per week and 7 with funding for 30 hrs per week, although they did not all attend for their maximum number of hours.

The school felt that while the concept would be favourable for both parties, they would need to be confident that it would be financially viable and to achieve this an annual rent of between £40,000 and £50,000 (forty to fifty thousand pounds) had been proposed. This had taken into consideration daily rates charged by local church halls and similar venues and therefore the response of an unsustainable suggestion of £1000 (one thousand pounds) per month had been unexpected.

It had been estimated that if the Montessori nursery charged pupils £5 (five pounds) per hour, this would equate to an income of £190,000 (one hundred and ninety thousand pounds) per year, meaning that the annual rent proposed by the school was actually very feasible and so it was hoped that this proposal would be reconsidered. It was possible that the suggestion of £1000 (one thousand pounds) per month had been based on premises being available for approximately £30 (thirty pounds) per day, but these were not equivalent to the space or facilities that the school would provide. It was suspected that Health and Safety issues would also be encountered at such locations, and that the nursery had not factored in the time and therefore expense of packing up and setting up each day.

Such a collaboration would raise the profile of the school and therefore, hopefully, also increase the likelihood of it reaching capacity, particularly as it was estimated that the current Montessori nursery had between 30 and 50 pupils on roll attending on different days.

Producing this business case had proved insightful for the school, exposing where the key costs of running the nursery lay. It had been calculated that to just be in profit, the nursery must be full, with 16 pupils, half attending for 30 hrs per week and the others 15 hrs per week. This is based on employing two members of staff.

If all 16 pupils attended full time then there would be more definite signs of profitability, but such a situation is extremely different from the current picture. Any more ambitious projections are therefore unrealistic at this stage, thus raising bigger questions regarding its financial feasibility, although it was recognised that some form of nursery provision offered a good way to attract pupils to the school in the long term. It also had to be remembered that running the nursery was stressful and time consuming for the school leaders, regardless of the financial position.

Governor Question: What is felt to be currently missing in the market? Is there a need that the school could capitalise on and target?

Offering the type of alternative provision that the Montessori nursery would represent was felt to be one option, although this is so specialised that specific training would be required and neither party wanted the school to become responsible for running such an enterprise. While the values of both parties might be in alignment, losing the recognisable Montessori branding and reputation would diminish the attraction of the nursery for families.

Governor Question: If a partnership with the Montessori nursery was established, how would this impact on the current staff?

There was only one member of staff in that area employed on a long term contract and various options for their redeployment within the school were available. The other staff involved could also probably be redeployed, potentially as cover supervisors to reduce costs in other areas.

The Governors thanked the school for this valuable work and asked that the issue be revisited at the next LGB meeting.

ACTION: KS to include an update on the nursery on the agenda for the T2 LGB meeting.

4 Improving Staff Areas (ME)

Staff really appreciated Governor interest and action in this area, however, installation of the water cooler had had to be delayed until next term.

ACTION: CB to follow up installation of water cooler in staff room.

The school had sourced a suitable table and the room had been painted since the last LGB meeting, but they were still waiting on a quote from a contractor following an initial scoping visit.

The PTA had been contacted regarding this initiative and it was hoped feedback would be received soon.

ACTION: ZB to raise issue of supporting improvements to staff areas at the next PTA meeting.

5 **Head Teacher's Report (KJ)**

The term had seen the start of a considerable amount of CPD and this was particularly important for those joining the school to ensure consistency of approach was maintained when delivering the CUSP curriculum etc.

The school had held a Democracy Day and it had been brilliant to see so many pupils putting themselves forward for election, demonstrating their confidence and ability to act out the values taught throughout the curriculum. It was felt that a realistic representation had been achieved and that many important aspects of the curriculum had been covered.

Class Dojo

In response to feedback that families wanted to be more aware of what happened within the school day, the school has introduced this application. It was quick and easy for staff to use, allowing immediate posting of material related to activities. It seems to have been received equally favourably by both families and staff. The school has carefully set boundaries for staff regarding the frequency of posting and each pupil has an independent portfolio which can only be accessed by those with direct links to them, although it has been great for involving families where some members live abroad (it can automatically translate material into different languages) or not with the pupil. Similarly, it can be used to reassure families when they have seen pupils having a particularly challenging start to the day. There is also a "school story" aspect which can be used to highlight whole school matters. Features such as notifications of when material has been posted are thought to have led to greater engagement than with the school's other social media channels and there is only one family who have chosen not to register for full access.

Governor Question: Are pupils aware of this initiative?

They are very enthusiastic, keen for their family members to look at any posts relating to them and they can also be signed up themselves.

Governor Question: Have issues arisen if one pupil receives more posts than others?

Staff are monitoring to ensure posts are equally distributed across the class and across the curriculum.

Governor Question: Will this be used for behavioural matters?

The school has taken the proactive decision that this would not be appropriate and to continue with the existing channels of communication instead.

Monitoring

The school has been particularly concentrating on presentation, which is a focus across CST schools as well. A fundraising initiative had allowed visualisers to be bought, enabling teachers to model outcomes to a class more easily and improvements had been noticed due to this. AB is scheduled to visit the school and complete a book look to provide an illustration of these outcomes.

Instructional coaching had begun and KJ was continuing work towards a qualification in this area.

Support with phonetics provided by the English Hub was also continuing.

Staffing

These matters had been covered earlier in the meeting.

Community engagement

The outcome of the most recent survey had been received, with communication the only negative aspect of overall favourable results, which were also more positive than those received by other CST schools. It is hoped that the introduction of Class Dojo will address these concerns, and this has been fed back to families in the form of a “you said, we did” message.

Pupil numbers

Overall, there was minimal change, with continued transience counteracting higher levels of recruitment. With 132 pupils currently on roll, a similar financial picture can be expected for the next academic year. This is a greater number of pupils than originally forecast and increasing Year 4 to 17 pupils is an especially noteworthy success.

Approximately 17 families have already participated in school tours, which SLT have enjoyed delivering. The sense is that these have been successful, and that there is more interest than in previous years. Therefore, the school is hoping to fill all available Reception places next September. More formal records have been kept this year, so follow up material personalised to a particular family can be sent. This includes invitations to events such as stay and play sessions, which have been well received. The school is also actively encouraging repeat visits, with different family members, or prospective pupils as appropriate. It was also recognised that larger tour groups and a full Class One created a more positive atmosphere. The Governors added their support to the school’s ongoing efforts.

Attendance

This was currently very good.

Data

The outcomes from recent statutory assessments were down on previous years, but remained in line with expectations, with clear explanatory backstories in all cases. Even where the higher standards were not achieved, substantial progress had still been made and all the school’s judgements had been validated by an external moderator.

In particular, the achievement of 58% at greater depth for reading was phenomenal, and well above the average for CST schools.

ACTION: KS to include Curriculum on the agenda for the T2 LGB meeting.

Governor Question: Did the school feel development of handwriting followed a linear pattern or was less predictable?

As it was very dependent on the individual pupil, explicit lessons were continued as needed, although this did not have such a critical impact on assessment outcomes as would appear from the raw data.

Governor Question: The data did not appear to report those achieving greater depth in foundation subjects. Was this purposeful?

This would be investigated further.

ACTION: ME to investigate reporting of data from foundation subject assessments.

High needs pupils

The school was continuing to work closely with other agencies, many of which had already been involved this term, representing a considerable workload for staff, especially with the number of pupils receiving SEND support increasing.

Safeguarding

The school was working to transfer CPOMS files within specified time limits and training had been delivered to all staff.

ACTION: Safeguarding Governor training to be updated by CB.

SDP

The priorities for the academic year are: EYFS, Teaching and Learning and Leadership. This is designed as part of a three year cycle, allowing a more long term focus on these areas.

Governor Question: Who sets these priorities?

These are decided through discussions with CST following Diagnosis Day.

It had been noted that the monitoring carried out by CST during the last academic year had seemed less rigorous than in some previous years and therefore this was expected to become more challenging, and therefore more useful, in the future.

The Governors commented how well set out this document was, allowing targets to be clearly identified and making it a pleasure to read.

Governor Question: Who is the target audience for this document?

Primarily Governors, who found it extremely informative and understood that it was following the CST format, but felt that it could be less in depth in the future.

6

Clerk's Business (KS)

Governor Handbook, Governor Code of Conduct and School Charter

Governors were informed that there had not been any updates to the Governor Handbook and that it was available to read on Governor Hub.

It was noted that the current Governor Code of Conduct did not match the role of the LGB.

ACTION: KS to research an improved Governor Code of Conduct.

No updates to the 2022 – 2023 School Charter were proposed and so this was agreed without any changes.

Proposed: RB

Seconded: ZB

Agreed unanimously.

ACTION: ME to provide KS with an updated copy of the 2022 – 2023 School Charter.

Self-Certification

Governors were thanked for their prompt action regarding this and additional instructions provided where necessary.

ACTION: All Governors to complete all Declarations and Confirmations under their profiles on Governor Hub.

ACTION: All Governors to complete CST Cyber training.

Policies

ACTION: KJ to bring the Behaviour Policy to the T2 LGB meeting for Governor review.

ACTION: ZB/KJ to update Governors on the EYFS Policy at the T2 LGB meeting.

ACTION: KS to re-send JT Policy Tracker to ME.

ACTION: ME to feedback instructions for the policy review process to KS.

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| | <p>ACTION: KS to follow instructions for policy review process.</p> <p>It was felt more appropriate to pause work on the First Aid Policy until a permanent Health and Safety Governor was in post.</p> <p>The Lettings Policy had been reviewed, however, Governors did not feel it was appropriate for them to approve all lettings and it was agreed to amend this to read that SLT would approve all lettings. With this amendment, the policy was agreed.</p> <p>Proposed: RB Seconded: AB Agreed, with amendment, unanimously.</p> <p>ACTION: KJ/ME to arrange for Lettings Policy to be amended.</p> <p>The Nursery Admissions, Online Safeguarding and RSE Policies had been reviewed and were all agreed.</p> <p>Proposed: AB Seconded: RB Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>ACTION: RB to review the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and the Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policies.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising (CB)</p> <p>No amendments were received and the Actions Arising were reviewed (see RAG rating at the start of this document). However, due to the resignation of RD, several of these have been discontinued.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed and approved.</p> <p>Proposed: CB Seconded: RB Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>ACTION: CB to mark as signed on Governor Hub the final T6 minutes</p> |
| 8 | <p>Governor Area Updates (including Safeguarding)</p> <p>CB had covered Safeguarding within termly discussions with KJ.</p> |
| 9 | <p>AOB and Close</p> <p>None raised.</p> |
| | <p>Meeting closed at 6.25 pm.</p> |

Signed as a true record:
Chair of Governors,
Chris Bond

Date:

DECISIONS GRID

| AGENDA NUMBER | AGENDA ITEM | DECISION |
|---------------|--|--|
| 1 | Welcome | To contribute termly summaries to the school newsletter |
| 1 | Welcome | To reinstate the Governor noticeboard. |
| 1 | Welcome | AB elected for a second Term of Office. |
| 1 | Welcome | CB elected as Chair for 2023 – 2024. |
| 1 | Welcome | AB elected as Vice - Chair for 2023 – 2024. |
| 1 | Welcome | Role of Finance Governor to be discontinued. |
| 2 | Update on School Financial Position | Update on School Financial position to remain as a standing agenda item. |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | School Charter agreed. |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | Lettings Policy agreed, with amendment. |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | Nursery Admissions, Online Safeguarding and RSE Policies all agreed. |
| 7 | Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising | The minutes of the T6 LGB meeting were agreed. |

ACTIONS GRID

| AGENDA NUMBER | AGENDA ITEM | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
|---------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Welcome | KJ/ME to publicise Parent Governor vacancy. | KJ/ME |
| 1 | Welcome | ZB to follow up verbal enquiries regarding Parent Governor Vacancy. | ZB |
| 1 | Welcome | CB to send termly LGB summaries to ME for inclusion in the school newsletter. | CB |
| 1 | Welcome | ME to reinstate the Governors' notice board once outstanding vacancies are filled. | ME |
| 1 | Welcome | KS to update all records to reflect changes within the LGB for the 2023 – 2024 academic year. | KS |
| 3 | Nursery Update | KS to include an update on the nursery on the agenda for the T2 LGB meeting. | KS |
| 4 | Improving Staff Areas | CB to follow up installation of water cooler in staff room. | CB |
| 4 | Improving Staff Areas | ZB to raise issue of supporting improvements to staff areas at the next PTA meeting. | ZB |
| 5 | Head Teacher's Report | KS to include Curriculum on the agenda for the T2 LGB meeting. | KS |
| 5 | Head Teacher's Report | ME to investigate reporting of data from foundation subject assessments. | ME |
| 5 | Head Teacher's Report | Safeguarding Governor training to be updated by CB. | CB |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | KS to research an improved Governor Code of Conduct. | KS |

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| 6 | Clerk's Business | ME to provide KS with an updated copy of the 2022 - 2023 School Charter. | ME |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | All Governors to complete all Declarations and Confirmations under their profiles on Governor Hub. | ALL GOVERNORS |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | All Governors to complete CST Cyber training. | ALL GOVERNORS |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | KJ to bring the Behaviour Policy to the T2 LGB meeting for Governor review. | KJ |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | ZB/KJ to update Governors on the EYFS Policy at the T2 LGB meeting. | ZB/KJ |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | KS to re-send JT Policy Tracker to ME. | KS |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | ME to feedback instructions for the policy review process to KS. | ME |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | KS to follow instructions for policy review process. | KS |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | KJ/ME to arrange for Lettings Policy to be amended. | KJ/ME |
| 6 | Clerk's Business | RB to review the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and the Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policies. | RB |
| 7 | Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising | CB to mark as signed on Governor Hub the final T6 minutes | CB |