



Dr South's CE Primary School

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Nurture, Educate, Inspire

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Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting held on Thursday 24th September 2020 at 7pm using Zoom

<u>Present:</u>	Calum Miller (CM), Chair [Foundation] Kathryn Campbell (KC) [Foundation] Rob Dallison (RD) [Co-opted] Liz Halsey (LH) [Staff] Huw Morgan (HM) [Headteacher] Matthew Nicholson (MN) [Foundation] Mandy O'Sullivan (MOS) [Parent] Hannah Penwarden (HP) [Parent] Ruth Sibly (RS) [Foundation] Helen Watson (HW) [Co-opted]
<u>In attendance:</u>	Sara Holland (SH), School Improvement Partner, ODS Bryony Thomas (BT), Clerk
<u>Apologies:</u>	Jon Conibear (JC) [Foundation], Steve Hayes (SHa) [Foundation], Jonathan Nicholl (JN) [Foundation]
Confirmation of Quorum ~ Quorum was met	

No.	ITEM	ACTION
1	Welcome and opening prayer CM welcomed everyone and introduced Sara Holland from ODS, present at the meeting to formally end the work of the Emergency Advisory Committee that had been formed to undertake governance of the school during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. HM opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Jon Conibear, Steve Hayes and Jonathan Nicholl.	
3	Notification of any urgent business None was raised.	
4	Elections	
4.1	Election of chair Calum Miller was re-elected as chair for a further year.	
4.2	Election of vice-chair With the resignation of Sarah Pearson (SP), a new vice-chair was required and Mandy O'Sullivan was elected.	
5	Updates from Head	

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5.1	Review of risk assessment for school September opening, previously circulated The risk assessment is similar to the one circulated in July, but is an ever changing document as it is amended as circumstances require. The school had received a spot check from Health and Safety and the risk assessment for the opening of the school was approved. <i>Q: Have the amendments to the risk assessment altered the size of the bubbles? Governors had expressed concerns in July over the increase in bubbles from year group to key stage.</i> <i>A: No. A local school, organised in a similar way, has had a positive test for Covid and Public Health England has required self-isolation of the class rather than the zone. Mixing between classes within the bubble is outside or in the large hall only, so of low risk.</i>	
5.2	Head's report on summer term* The report had been previously circulated. Governors questioned the acronym TAF, which is team around the family. The meeting briefly reviewed the report. <i>Q: Has the school been able to address the difficulties of remote learning provision in Early Years?</i> <i>A: Emergency learning is currently available, with links to videos such as phonics sessions, but this remains a challenge. Turn IT on are currently in the process of adding pupils to Microsoft Teams to allow more interactive sessions.</i> <i>Q: There has clearly been a significant delay in the migration to Teams. Can this be accelerated?</i> <i>A: Turn IT on will be chased, but have been overwhelmed with so many schools improving their remote learning provision.</i> <i>Q: This report is retrospective, the risk assessment looks to the future. How is it going in the school right now?</i> <i>A: Well overall, a major challenge is to maintain social distancing between staff.</i> The meeting discussed the challenge further, as the risk of transmission is highest between staff members, and the LGB has a duty of care to staff as well as the drive to keep the school open. Governors questioned the ventilation being used, which has been considerable and will need to be reduced with the advent of cold weather. Doors will be closed (but opened at break and lunch times), but windows will remain open. Masks were discussed but current guidance is that they shouldn't be worn in schools. Some schools are requiring parents to wear masks at drop-off and pickup, but it was agreed that social distancing between parents is currently good and the risk of transmission outside low. Governors recognised that the challenge is an operational matter, but were keen to help if needed, such as giving a presentation on the need to socially distance. Staff could be encouraged to wear masks outside of the classroom, or classrooms subdivided, and targeted conversations could be held. Attendance was questioned – there are no children absent at present due to worries about COVID.	
5.3	Verbal report on remote learning This was covered above.	
6	Review of the headship arrangement with Bletchington	

The chair of governors at Bletchingdon had been in touch with CM to brief him of the school's plans. The FGB had been focusing on developing a vision and ethos for the school, and from this had considered two options for its future leadership: to embed the partnership with Dr South's and join ODSST or end its partnership with Dr South's and any plans for academisation with ODSST, and opt for a teaching head arrangement. The FGB decided on the latter, and would therefore like to end the partnership at Christmas.

Governors discussed the reasons behind this decision - Bletchingdon needs a head who is always on site and knows and understands the families attending the school, and a teaching head is the only way to achieve this.

Q: How has the experience been? Would we like to try such a partnership again in the future?

A: We entered into the arrangement as an experiment, and need to do a thorough evaluation to assess whether the school might consider this again. Certainly any school entering into the arrangement should be clear on the type of leadership they want.

Dr South's had entered into the partnership with a view to ensuring the safe financial position of the school and succession planning, with the possible longer term benefits of more career opportunities for staff across the schools and shared resources. One immediate lesson was that the scale and nature of the needs at Bletchingdon had not been fully assessed before the partnership commenced, and HM had had to reprioritise his time accordingly.

For the partnership, HM had gone to 5 days across the 2 schools from 4 at Dr South's, and HW had gone to deputy head 5 days/week from 1 day/week as head. The financial savings had not been great. The government is suggesting significant restoration of funding to schools, and Dr South's position has benefitted from positive parental reaction to its approach during the lockdown, with pupil numbers rising. At present, there is no need for the school to enter another partnership for financial reasons.

LH and HW left the meeting temporarily at this point, to allow HM to share a document outlining costing options for the remainder of the academic year after the partnership has ended. The contracts with HM and HW had been arranged for the 2 years of the experiment, and had not contained the same clause for one half-term's notice as the partnership contract.

HM left the meeting at this point to allow governors to fully discuss the options available to the school.

Governors decided that legally and morally both contracts should be honoured. HM will return fulltime. The costs of this will be partly offset by the catch-up money to be provided by the government to support pupils whose learning was interrupted during lockdown, as HM will provide all catch-up teaching.

Bletchingdon may also purchase some of HM's time to support the new head there, which would again offset some of the costs, but this is a possibility only. Any charging would be at a rate to cover all overheads, since the schools are no longer in partnership. The additional pupils will bring in more funding, and an experienced head on site fulltime will be of benefit to the school in such challenging times, and improve its resilience.

Future leadership plans for 2021-22 will be discussed at further meetings to be completed by the end of February. The LGB may need to meet without the teaching governors.

HM, HW and LH returned to the meeting and told of the decision. Plans for the medium term will be addressed at the next meeting.

7	School priorities for 2020-21 The main priority for the coming year is to keep the school fully functioning and concentrate on staff and pupil welfare, and filling the gaps in pupils' learning that have arisen because of lockdown. Further goals are maths mastery, particularly in more able pupils, and completion of curriculum development, but these are secondary to the main priority. HM/HW to draft a plan for sign-off at the next meeting.	HM/HW
8	The Governors' Strategic Plan The plan had been drafted pre-Covid. It had not been possible to progress this further, but CM will contact the group involved in finalising the plan and hopefully bring a discussion document to the next meeting.	CM/KC/ JC/RD
9	Declarations of Interest (with completion of forms) and Related Party Transactions (RPTs)* There were no new declarations of interest. BT requested all governors to complete the declaration of interests section on GovernorHub, so that she can complete the register of interests that has to be published on the website. No RPTs were declared.	All govs
10	Review of the RPT register There were no RPTs to review.	
11	Appointments	
11.1	Agree committee terms of reference* These were unchanged from last year, and were approved.	
11.2	Membership of committees (incl governors for head's performance management) Membership of the committees remained unchanged (except that SP, chair of FPP, had resigned as governor). CM and MOS will carry out the head's performance management, with an external adviser. CM proposed that he considers the skills matrix with BT and then reviews the seven possible candidates for the current governor vacancy in the light of any skill gaps, and governors agreed to this.	CM/BT
11.3	Appointment of specific governors for safeguarding, SEN, RE/SIAMS, pupil premium and Health and Safety RS will continue as safeguarding governor, HP as RE/SIAMS governor and MN as health and safety governor. JN has not been able to undertake the role of SEN governor so this remains vacant. Scrutiny of the pupil premium expenditure and outcomes will remain the responsibility of the LGB rather than an individual governor.	
12	Approval and signing of the minutes from the previous meeting (held 16th July 2020)* These were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.	
13	Matters arising from the Minutes not arising elsewhere:	
13.1	Enabling home internet access for all A survey had been carried out to determine pupil access to facilities at home, which had proved better than anticipated. A sizeable proportion of pupils have access to the internet, though it is not yet clear how much this access has to be shared with other members of the household. Some simply have access to a shared mobile. The plan is to prepare work for a week, with live interaction at	

	the start of the week to introduce the work and then at the end to finish it. Governors questioned whether pupils should be sent home with equipment, but the problem seems to be more with patchy internet rather than lack of equipment. No pupil would qualify for the government laptop scheme. MN to discuss mobile hotspots with HM.	MN/HM
14	Policies and reports	
14.1	Child Protection and Safeguarding policy* Approved.	
14.2	Designated teacher statement* Governors were pleased to note Katie Rayner is a Deputy DSL but the document should record that she is not a teacher. With this minor amendment, the statement was adopted. Governors questioned whether refresher safeguarding training should be given at a future meeting. Instead, HM will allocate each governor a course on SmartLog.	HM HM/BT
14.3	Confirm Whistleblowing policy/procedure is in place The policy is on the board at school, and was referred to in the staff briefing in September. It includes a range of direct line numbers of people to consult if needed.	
14.4	Looked after children report* There are no looked after children in school.	
14.5	Pupil premium report* The report had been circulated previously. <i>Q: Are eligible pupils identified earlier in the year now, as this has previously been an issue.</i> <i>A: A new website has helped with this, but the number of pupil premium pupils is always going to be an estimate at the start of the year that gets more accurate as the year progresses.</i>	
14.6	Sports premium report* It is harder to justify some of the spending because of lockdown, and the action plan will have to change because of the resignation of Mrs Brees. Governors agreed to adopt the retrospective part of the plan as a starting point, and the action plan will be suspended for now. When the report has to be published will be determined; it will be brought back for approval to a future meeting.	HM
15	Safeguarding including Keeping Children Safe in Education* All staff are required to read Keeping Children Safe in Education, and it is good practice for governors to do so. Governors were therefore asked to read the section provided and then confirm they have done so using the declarations section on GovernorHub. <i>Q: With the focus on mental health, are there any pupils the school has particular concerns about?</i> <i>A: Vulnerable pupils have already started to receive interventions.</i> Governors noted the very positive impact of the interventions last year and encouraged the school to look at whether it needed to expand what was being offered if further resources were made available.	All govs
16	Health and Safety update, including new rota for governor health and safety walkabouts*	

	The Covid NHS app has been released and as the school is deemed a public body, it is required to give contact information on pupils and parents. HM to inform parents of this. The rota for the governor walkabout has been circulated and governors will receive a reminder e-mail at the start of the month. Governors questioned what visits were appropriate at the moment. The health and safety check will be done after school. Governors can meet with HM in his office where there is space to socially distance, and T&L governors will be able to enter the library if they need to monitor books. Visits to classrooms are not appropriate at this time.	
17	Governor training Training details had been circulated.	
18	Any other business Governors queried how the new school dinner provision was faring. This is going well at present, with improved variety, quantity and quality. Governors felt there was no reason why EiG courses could not move online via Teams or Zoom. CM to e-mail ODST, asking for a renewed effort to provide online training, and SH will also feedback the views of the LGB. Governors requested that documents that are long and similar to previous years' versions, such as the Child protection policy, should have any changes highlighted. HM explained that highlighting had been removed from the policy when it was personalised by him, and he will ensure it is retained in future. Finally, governors asked when the changes at Bletchingdon would be made public. Staff will be informed at both schools tomorrow, and parents next Friday, at Bletchingdon via a letter and at Dr South's in the newsletter. Governors, however, felt that the news should be given using the same means as previously when the partnership was first agreed. CM will therefore draft a letter to send to parents for next Friday.	CM/SH HM CM
	Meeting closed at: 9.05pm.	
	Dates of next meetings: LGB – Thursday 3rd Dec at 7pm (4th Feb, 18th March, 20th May, Tues 20th July) T&L – Wednesday 30th Sept at 5pm (16th Nov, 10th March, 5th May, 12th July) FPP – Thursday 8th Oct at 7.30pm (19th Nov, 21st Jan, 4th March, 6th May, Tues 6th July)	