



Dr South's CE Primary School

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Nurture, Educate, Inspire

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Minutes of the Local Governing Body (LGB) meeting held on Monday 28th November 2022 at 7pm at school

<u>Present:</u>	Kathryn Campbell (KC) [Foundation], Chair Jon Conibear (JC) [Foundation] David de Mestre (DM) [Parent] Liz Halsey (LH) [Staff] Steve Hayes (SH) [Foundation], until 8.05pm Lavinia Janke (LJ) [Co-Opted] Filiz McNamara (FM) [Parent] Calum Miller (CM) [Community] Huw Morgan (HM) [Co-Headteacher] Jonathan Nicholl (JN) [Foundation] Hannah Penwarden (HP) [Foundation] Alastair Searle (AS) [Foundation] Helen Watson (HW) [Co-Headteacher]
<u>In attendance:</u>	Bryony Thomas (BT) [Clerk]
<u>Apologies:</u>	Eamonn Gearon (EG) [Foundation]
Confirmation of Quorum – Quorum was met	

No.	ITEM	ACTION
1	Welcome and opening prayer KC welcomed everyone and SH opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2	Introduction of new governors David de Mestre and Filiz McNamara, new parent governors, and Lavinia Janke, a new co-opted governor, were introduced and welcomed to the board.	
3	Receipt of apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Eamonn Gearon.	
4	Declaration of any new interests including related party transactions (RPTs) There were no new declarations of pecuniary interest.	
5	Review of the RPT register There were no new RPTs to review.	
6	Notification of any urgent business None was raised.	

7	Approval and signing of the minutes from the previous LGB meeting held on 26th September 2022* The minutes were approved, with no amendments, and signed as a true record of the meeting.	
8	Discussion of matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere Enrichment activities will be included in the heads' report for the January LGB meeting. Governors were asked to complete the declarations section on GovernorHub, together with the confirmations section including confirmation that they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education and that they will abide by the governors' code of conduct. Governors will be asked to complete a skills audit later in the year that is run by ODS.	HM/HW All govs
9	Receive and discuss report from the Finance, personnel and premises committee (FPP)* Minutes from the recent meeting had been circulated. AS and EG are working on the decarbonisation report commissioned by ODBE. The cost of reducing the school's carbon footprint is high, so the committee are looking at what the school can afford, while the culture of decarbonisation is embedded within the school. High levels of inflation are causing an upward pressure on all costs, including salaries that make up 80% of the school's budget. The trust has said that schools should not be overly concerned at present and should not adjust their budgets. Otherwise, the budget is in a healthy position. The school's generous donors ensure that the enrichment activities continue, which include cooking, art, music and the Forest school. The trees surrounding the school are now 25 ft higher than they should be and will be heavily pollarded over the Christmas holidays. A small amount of work is to be carried out on the school website. The website is good but with overall numbers of children of school age dropping, the site will be improved to ensure that it is attractive to prospective parents. JC to ask Sarah Pearson, a former governor, for any possible material she may have from the work she did on marketing the school. <i>Q: There is a paragraph in the FPP minutes that discusses staff weariness at present. Does this reflect a serious concern or simply a bad week? Is there anything governors can do?</i> <i>A: There is a lot of sickness amongst children and staff at present, so remaining staff are very stretched. The low morale reflects the current situation in most schools. The staff are tired and some may be struggling financially. It is hoped that the pay rise coming in to effect on Wednesday will help morale, particularly that of the support staff where the pay rise is backdated to April.</i>	JC
10	Receive and discuss report from the Teaching and learning committee (T&L)*	

	Minutes from the recent meeting had been circulated. The committee ratified two policies, and reviewed attendance data. Attendance is higher than for the same period last year. Autumn data was discussed – a few new pupils have joined the school who are still being assessed. Sections of the self-evaluation form (SEF) that T&L are responsible for were graded. Governors took a cautious approach, with most areas marked as good rather than outstanding. Two items have been brought from the committee to the LGB for further discussion. An additional question has been added to the pupil questionnaire: I enjoy computing. A further question about diversity, equality and inclusion is wanted but the wording could not be agreed at T&L and is discussed below. Governors agreed that if an additional question, I am happy at school, is added this should be separate to the question, I enjoy school, rather than replacing it. Governors asked whether there are any Ukrainian pupils at school. There are currently three, and the member of staff who speaks Russian has been able to talk to the parents, which has helped with transition of the pupils into school. It is thought that the school will receive an additional £7000 for the three pupils, which has not been included in the budget and is not ring-fenced. This money will help fund the school meals for the pupils, and can be used to help with school uniforms and translation. It is unlikely that there will be any further additional money.	
10.1	Discuss wording of new inclusivity question for pupil questionnaire* Governors discussed various options for the wording of the new question. Concern was expressed that the question could raise issues that will need to be followed up, but the school is happy to do this. It already has a system in place from previous surveys to discuss issues. A standard marketing survey would ask participants to consider the previous year, but the survey is for the pupils, not market research. Parents are already asked about inclusion and equality in their questionnaire. SH and HM will discuss the matter further.	SH/HM
11	Review action plan* The heads prepare a report for governors three times/year. There is no set format for the report, but at present the report is based on the Ofsted framework. The report includes attendance data and an overview of pupil attainment. Governor visits are also referenced within the report. The reports feed into the grading of the SEF, which then leads to development of a school action plan. This year's action plan, drawn up and approved in September, has three priorities. Governors are responsible for the monitoring of the plan, and forms will be sent to all governors listed on the plan detailing what they need to check and hold the school to account for and when. The first set of monitoring needs to be completed by February and the action plan will then be updated. Priority 3, to improve the physical environment of the school, continues to evolve and there is an appendix for this priority listing areas to be considered. HM to send the latest version of the plan to BT for circulation to governors.	HM/BT
12	Review SEF and agree gradings for LGB-monitored section* The LGB is responsible for monitoring the leadership and management section of	

the SEF, based on the Ofsted framework, and governors discussed evidence for the various statements.

- High expectations of all pupils can be witnessed in the assemblies led by pupils and attentively listened to by the rest of the school.
- The focus of leaders on education is borne out by the fact that both heads teach.
- With regard to continuing professional development, teachers responsible for subject leadership are attending ongoing Zoom training sessions. Phonics training took place in July to ensure staff were ready for September and to ensure a consistent approach. Training for the new writing scheme will follow a similar approach.
- Coherence and consistency within the school are shown in the maths and phonics schemes used across classes. The school improvement partner from ODST recommended a similar approach be taken in writing and the school is currently trialling a new writing scheme by Jane Considine. This is working very well at present and is popular with the children. There is also a set handwriting scheme in place across the school, ensuring a coherent and consistent approach.

Q: Are you confident that these schemes are effectively taught and well-implemented across the school?

A: Yes, and governors have witnessed pupil enthusiasm for the writing schemes when visiting the school for monitoring purposes.

- The annual parent questionnaire, together with a visible presence on the playground at drop off and pickup, indicate a desire to engage with parents. Parents attending class assemblies will now be able to tour the school and visit their child's classroom, not possible during the pandemic. This had been raised at a meeting of the Friends of Dr South's (FODS) and governors encouraged the heads to reflect on the life of the school before Covid to check that nothing else has been dropped. New parents are approached when regular school events are being planned, and class representatives are very helpful for parental communications.
- That leaders take into account the workload and wellbeing of their staff is evidenced by the care given when staff return from sickness and the attempts to protect staff from being overwhelmed when covering for absent colleagues. Staff wellbeing surveys are completed annually. Governors suggested that when there has been a period of prolonged widespread sickness and absence, action plan goals should be adjusted accordingly and the heads should alert governors if any adjustments are needed. The additional teaching assistant (TA) has proved very useful, and the possibility of

	a supply TA was touched on. Governors suggested consideration of a list of bank TAs, formed from volunteer parents, that could be called on at short notice to ensure TA cover is maintained. DBS checks and some training would be needed for this. Parents could also help with some of the maintenance issues such as sweeping up the moss. • A high level of 1:1 support and the high ratio of TAs within the class indicate the ambitions of the school to include all pupils. All teachers know which are the pupil premium children in their class. The pupil premium was explained for the benefit of new governors. The premium, triggered by certain deprivation factors, doesn't have to be used for the sole benefit of the pupil premium child. Typically, it is used to fund some 1:1 or small group support. It can pay for some activities and may pay for specialist help and advice. The school receives a total of approximately £16,100 at present for the pupil premium. Attainment is tracked at pupil progress meetings. There is a legal obligation to publish use of the pupil premium on the website and T&L have recently approved the latest report. • It was agreed that the statement 'governors all understand their roles' should be graded as amber (needs watching) in recognition of the high number of new governors. • A culture of safeguarding was recognised in a recent informal visit to the school by an Ofsted inspector. All statements were graded as green (good) except for the statement about governors, as indicated above.	
13	Safeguarding	
13.1	Receive update on current position* CM, as safeguarding governor, held fruitful discussions with HM and his report has been circulated. Two visitors from ODST have discussed aspects of safeguarding and their feedback has been positive. The paperwork for new governors is being processed. KC has completed safer recruitment training. SH left the meeting at this point.	
13.2	Approval of the Annual Safeguarding report The Annual Safeguarding report needs to be submitted to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) by 16th December. Governors agreed that because of the size of the school, it is more appropriate that CM, as safeguarding governor, is responsible for approval of this year's submission. KC to help if required.	CM/KC

13.3	Confirm governors who attended Level 2 safeguarding training provided at school prior to the LGB meeting KC, JC, DM, SH, LJ, FM, CM, HP, AS and BT all attended the level 2 safeguarding training provided at school before the meeting. HM, LH, HW and JN all have designated safeguarding lead (DSL) training. EG is booked on ODSST safeguarding training on 7 th February.	
14	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	
14.1	SEND update* A brief update had been circulated before the meeting. There is a high number of pupils with complex needs at present. The dynamics of a class can change but it is very affirming to see how welcome all pupils are at Dr South's, with staff and pupils working hard to accommodate all pupils. The variety of needs is wide, more than LH has previously known, requiring a high level of specialist visits. FPP has agreed that the cost of five educational psychologist assessments, totalling £4250, will be met and LH will book these as soon as possible. FODS have been extremely generous in their support of SEND within the school, paying for an unlimited licence for Literacy Gold, along with other resources. Clicker 8 is of benefit to pupils with slow processing and difficulties in writing and five licences have been purchased for 3 years. The programme will be installed on i-pads shortly. ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) training is ongoing throughout the year. Governors questioned whether ELSA was introduced post Covid. In fact, the programme has been used for some time in school, but there has been higher uptake since Covid. Looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLAC) attract a different stream of funding, and this is ring-fenced for each child. The school has 33 pupils with SEND and governors expressed their gratitude for the care LH and teachers show for these children. <i>Q: Is there a reason for such high numbers? Is it coincidence or early diagnosis?</i> <i>A: There are a variety of reasons. Covid has had an impact and children with difficulties are being picked up early, even at Nursery age, with a rigorous screening programme. Nationally, there are a lot of socialisation and language problems in the pre-Reception year group as a result of Covid.</i> The relatively high number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) has budgetary implications. Where there is a statutory requirement for 1:1 support, the school has to fund the first 15 hours/week. When a 1:1 TA is off sick, a TA is taken from elsewhere and the impact on lunchtimes can be particularly marked. Governors suggested that parents could be approached to help at lunchtime.	
14.2	Approve SEN Information report* The report was approved.	
15	Receive update on health and safety	

	The health and safety concerns were covered under the report from FPP. The governor health and safety walkabout takes place on a monthly basis. It is a useful inspection, as a fresh pair of eyes, and can take place at various times in the day. Governors will receive an email from Chrissy Robertson in the office when it is their turn on the rota. <i>Q: Is the school vulnerable to being sued if an intruder falls over and suffers injury?</i> <i>A: Yes. It would be worth checking to see what is required to prevent a lawsuit.</i> DM and EG to check on this.	DM/EG
16	Governance	
16.1	Receive update on new governor appointments There is one vacancy for a co-opted governor.	
16.2	Review governor roles and appoint governors for SEN and safeguarding LJ was approved as SEN governor. CM will continue as safeguarding governor.	
16.3	Review subcommittee membership DM will join FPP. LJ and FM will join T&L.	
16.4	Update on governor visits and training undertaken All governors are now trained to at least level 2 in safeguarding, except EG, who is booked to attend ODSST safeguarding training on 7th February. KC has completed safer recruitment training. Both SH and HP have visited the school, SH to monitor writing, handwriting and maths, and HP to meet with LH and to attend the Harvest festival. Yellow forms need to be completed after each visit and are then loaded onto GovernorHub. Yellow forms can be completed by any parent governor attending a formal school event. Visits can be arranged with HM or HW and can be for a formal monitoring visit or simply to look round the school.	
16.5	Discuss possible future focus topics Previously, it has been found useful to set aside some time within a meeting to focus on one aspect of governance. The opportunity for a less formal environment can be beneficial. Various ideas were discussed and the January LGB meeting will decide on a subject for discussion at the March meeting.	
17	Any other business Governors were invited to various upcoming events at school: • Christingle service on Tuesday 6th December at 9.15am in the church • Performance of carols, including the school orchestra and all children singing, on Monday 19th December at 2.30pm with mince pies • Nativity and carol service in the church on Tuesday 20th at 2pm • Nursery nativity play on Wednesday 14th December at 9.30am at school.	

	Meeting closed at: 8.40pm	
	Proposed dates of next meetings: LGB – Mon 23rd Jan at 7pm (27th March, 15th May, 17th July) T&L – Mon 13th March at 7pm (22nd May, 10th July) FPP – Mon 30th Jan at 7.30pm (6th March, 24th April, 3rd July)	

*Indicates documents are associated with this item. *Italic text highlights governor questions, and the answers given.*

Red text highlights action points arising from the meeting.

Quorum required: At least 5 governors, one of whom should be a Foundation LGB Member

Action points arising from the meeting

Enrichment activities to be included in the heads' report for the January LGB meeting.

Governors to complete the declarations section on GovernorHub, together with the confirmations section including confirmation that they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education and that they will abide by the governors' code of conduct.

JC to ask Sarah Pearson, a former governor, for any possible material she may have from the work she did on marketing the school.

SH and HM to discuss the new pupil question on diversity, equality and inclusion further.

HM to send the latest version of the school action plan to BT for circulation to governors.

CM to approve the Annual Safeguarding report ready for submission by 16th December 2022. KC to help if required.

DM and EG to check on what is required to prevent a lawsuit if an intruder hurts themselves.