



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 27th March 2023 at 7pm at school

<u>Present:</u>	Kathryn Campbell (KC) [Foundation], Chair Jon Conibear (JC) [Foundation] David de Mestre (DM) [Parent], from 7.25pm Eamonn Gearon (EG) [Foundation] Liz Halsey (LH) [Staff] 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], from 7.40pm Helen Watson (HW) [Co-Headteacher]
<u>In attendance:</u>	Bryony Thomas (BT) [Clerk]
<u>Apologies:</u>	Steve Hayes (SH) [Foundation]
Confirmation of Quorum – Quorum was met	

No.	ITEM	ACTION
1	Welcome and opening prayer KC welcomed everyone and HP opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2	Receipt of apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Steve Hayes. Two governors had notified the LGB that they would be late.	
3	Declaration of any new interests including related party transactions (RPTs) There were no new declarations of pecuniary interest.	
4	Review of the RPT register There were no new RPTs to review.	
5	Notification of any urgent business None was raised, but it was noted with gratitude that the staff had provided biscuits and cakes for the meeting in thanks for the staff social in March funded by governors.	
6	Approval and signing of the minutes from the previous LGB meeting held on	

	23rd January 2023* The minutes were approved, with one minor amendment, and signed as a true record of the meeting.	
7	Discussion of matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere	
7.1	Update on website revamp JC and HW are due to meet on 28th March to discuss plans and material for the website.	JC/HW
7.2	Update on bank of volunteer parents as emergency cover for teaching assistants (TAs) This is not required at the present time, as the school currently has a full complement of staff. A member of staff may be recruited in the future to cover the period 8.30-9.15am. It was noted that volunteers are still very welcome to help with reading and other activities in school.	
7.3	Update on addition of artwork to foyer to emphasise Christian focus of school HM will address the addition of a Christian focus to the reception area during the Easter holidays.	HM
8	Additional Meeting Focus: Staff wellbeing* The Dignity at Work and Wellbeing and Stress Management policies had been circulated prior to the meeting as back ground reading. Governors were divided into small groups to discuss three main questions on staff wellbeing and then feed back to the whole group. DM and AS joined the meeting during these discussions. <i>1. Why is it important to support staff wellbeing?</i> Everyone has a right to good wellbeing, and as a church school, care of staff should be part of its ethos and culture. It also has a positive impact on pupils if their teachers have good wellbeing. Staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction. Staff wellbeing can affect their attendance at school, with poor attendance having an impact on the rest of the staff as well as the children. Poor wellbeing has an impact on quality of work as well as staff retention. Unhappy staff are less likely to 'go the extra mile', less likely to stay and can also affect the general environment and culture of the school, making it more difficult to recruit staff and less likely that parents will want to send their children to the school. <i>2. What can cause strain on staff wellbeing? Are there particular issues at our school?</i> Strains can arise from unrealistic demands, heavy workloads including time spent working outside of the school day, problems in the balance between autonomy and support, leading to a sense of isolation, not fitting in, not feeling appreciated or valued, dealing with challenging children and a relentless focus on results. Difficulties in caring responsibilities away from the school can have an impact on wellbeing at work. Staff, particularly support staff, are very well-utilised at school so there is very little slack in the system. This can mean staff absence has a greater impact on the rest of the team.	

	Dr South's is a small school with a small staff who work closely together. This may cause strains in the event of a staff member wishing to raise a concern. However, it was noted that ODST can provide a variety of external resources and SH is very accessible if staff need to talk to someone other than a colleague. Pay is a constant strain, having been frozen for several years. Staff are used to the issue, but poor wellbeing can amplify the sense of being undervalued and the cost-of-living crisis has increased the problem of low pay. Governors discussed the effect of the pandemic, during which staff continued working. Generally, staff were grateful to have a secure job, and felt valued at that time. In more normal times, schools are less valued, though parent governors raised the difficulties they have of showing appreciation to the staff. <i>3. What can school leaders and governors do to support staff wellbeing?</i> Constrained by the budget, what can be done? The meeting agreed that appreciation of staff can be shown by small acts as well as larger ones. Staff were hugely grateful for the social event in March funded by governors, which felt disproportionately special and was attended by all staff bar two. The letter sent previously by CM as chair of governors to all staff was also much appreciated. New things have more impact, as regular events/acts can become an expectation rather than a boost to morale. The Friends of Dr South's (FODS) have a positive impact on teachers as well as pupils through their ongoing support for the school, for example by giving each class a budget. It was agreed that a wish list should be developed which could then be sourced from freecycle or possibly from grants from local businesses. Class representatives, if they know what is wanted, can discuss the needs with other parents. The meeting also discussed the importance of a quiet space for staff. LH, in particular, has nowhere of her own for confidential conversations. A separate staffroom could also be used for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. Governors will discuss the feasibility of a separate space on school grounds for teachers. Governors will continue to consider measures that can be taken to support staff wellbeing.	
9	Receive and discuss report from T&L* Minutes from the recent meeting had been circulated. Highlights from these were briefly discussed: • The pupil questionnaire had been completed. • Policies had been approved. Two had a statement of the school's values and it was agreed that the statement should be added to all policies going forward. ODST are not happy that such a statement is added to policies that shouldn't	

	be amended. • Governors need to complete their monitoring of the school action plan. • The spring data was reviewed. Year 4 has made significant improvements. Years 3 and 5 were discussed, where there has been less progress. Year 5 was badly affected by illness before Christmas and Year 3 has had several new children, with some pupils taught out of year group. • Attendance is at 94%, which is higher than attendance at the same point last year. Last term, attendance was 93%; nationally it is low. • The self-evaluation form (SEF) was reviewed. One statement, 'The curriculum and care practices meet the needs of the range of children who attend, particularly any children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)', was downgraded from blue (outstanding) to green (good), because of the difficulties in sourcing educational psychologist assessments. These are now taking place on 30th March. Two items were upgraded from green to blue: 'Staff develop children's communication and language through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing games' and 'Staff develop children's love of reading through reading aloud and telling stories and rhymes'. • Governors questioned the statement 'For a pupil to be formally categorised as having SEN, they will be at least 12 months behind age-related expectations'. It was clarified that the minute was of a conversation about what level of academic need would lead to a pupil being categorised as having SEN, but it was made clear that it is also possible for children to have medical or social needs which may not necessarily affect their academic performance. There are currently 28 children on the SEN register.	
10	Review updated SEF and agree gradings* Governors reviewed the final section of the SEF on leadership and management. It was agreed that the statements could be graded as in the autumn, good except for the statement 'Governors all understand their roles and perform these in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school', which remains at amber (to be watched) as not all of the new governors have completed induction training. The school improvement partner, Nilofer Khan, had recently met with the subject leaders and given them the questions that Ofsted may ask, generating a useful action plan for moving forward. She was positive about the school's work on the curriculum. Governors questioned what would allow the green to move to blue (outstanding). It was suggested that the gradings in all other sections would need to be blue for Leadership and Management to be blue. It was agreed that the grading is not as important as establishing the evidence for each statement.	

	Before the final summer LGB meeting, a small group of governors will meet with HM and HW to determine the evidence for each statement within the Leadership and Management section.	Govs
11	Review updated school action plan* Many of the actions within priorities 1 and 2 have taken place. The finance, personnel and premises committee (FPP) continue to monitor and work on priority 3. At the start of the year, governors had been sent individual letters detailing what was required in their monitoring of the action plan. Yellow monitoring forms should be completed for every visit, and these are uploaded onto GovernorHub so are accessible to all. Monitoring of the action plan, checking that actions have taken place, allows triangulation. Limited monitoring has taken place to date, and governors were encouraged to complete their allotted tasks by the May LGB meeting. HM will resend the monitoring letters.	All named govs HM
12	Receive and discuss report from FPP* The minutes of the recent meeting had been circulated. • Work continues on a carbon reduction action plan, and AS has met with Mike Bingham of ODST. • The staff survey had been carried out. Previously, support staff had not been clear on how the school works but initiatives to address this have clearly engaged staff. • Governors had discussed at length the draft budget for next year and the options open to the school. It was unanimously agreed that the trustees of Dr South's Charitable Trust Fund should be approached for the outstanding overspend, to allow the school to continue to function as it does, with the current level of classroom support and its enrichment programme. It was also agreed that the school will do all it can to increase pupil numbers, as the funding from more pupils would address the deficit.	
12.1	Review initial budget draft and discuss priorities for coming year* Since the March FPP meeting, The Department for Education has indicated that wages may rise significantly, and must be budgeted for, but have not indicated whether schools will receive the necessary additional funding. ODST has notified the school that we need to increase the allowance for salary costs by £19,000, increasing the deficit in the first year to £57,000. Governors agreed to follow the FPP recommendation of approaching the Trust Fund for the overspend in the short-term, in the hope that there will be more funding forthcoming from the government, and that there will be a concerted effort to recruit more pupils. The FPP will look again at the budget at its meeting on 24th April in light of any new information on funding from the government, ready for the LGB meeting on 15th May, when the budget will need to be approved. KC and JC will write to John Howell, Member of Parliament (MP) for Islip, setting	KC/JC

	out the impact of the increases in salary costs and the need for information from the government about how these increases will be funded.	
13	Receive update on safeguarding* An update had been circulated. There were no questions raised.	
14	Receive update on health and safety There were no major updates. The governor walkabouts continue. The school has decided not to proceed with additional signage.	
15	Update on governor visits and training undertaken EG visited Jacobs Field and HP attended a school assembly. All governor visit forms are loaded onto GovernorHub.	
16	Any other business Governors were encouraged to check their photo and short biography on the school website. The end of year social with staff will not take place this year but, instead, governors are invited to attend and provide lunch for staff on Tuesday 5 th September, the third INSET day in September.	All gobs
	Meeting closed at: 9.15pm	
	Proposed dates of next meetings: LGB – Mon 15th May at 7pm (17th July) T&L – Mon 22nd May at 7pm (13th July) FPP – Mon 24th April at 7.30pm (3rd July)	

*Indicates documents are associated with this item. 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

JC and HW to discuss plans and new material for the website.

HM to address the addition of a Christian focus to the reception area during the Easter holidays.

A small group of governors to meet with HM and HW to determine the evidence for each statement within the Leadership and Management section of the SEF, before the final summer LGB meeting.

All named governors were encouraged to complete their allotted monitoring tasks for the school action plan by the end of May. HM to resend monitoring letters outlining the governors' tasks.

KC and JC to write to John Howell, MP for Islip, setting out the impact of the increases in salary costs and the need for information from the government about how these increases will be funded.

Governors to check their photo and short biography on the school website.