



St Paul's Church of England Primary School

MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

held via video conferencing at 6.30pm on Tuesday 23rd March 2021

(Governors having previously agreed unanimously by email that Standing Orders should be temporarily waived to allow 100% governor attendance by remote access for the duration of the COVID 19 situation)

Governors Present: Beverly Jones – Chair, Sarah Abrey, Hilary Aldred, Tom Auld (Associate Member), Michael Beckett, Andrew Blake (Associate Member), Suranga Chandratillake, Helen Darrell (Headteacher), Simon Jarvis, Liam Kelly (Associate Member), Sharon Geva, Nick Giesler (Associate Member), Kate Sharkie, Alex Smith and Virginia Weston.

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Stefanie Florczyk (Deputy Headteacher) and Andrew Read (Diocesan Director of Education) for part of the meeting.

(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold)

1. Apologies for Absence

NOTED: apologies for absence were received from Katie Barron. Eleanor Carne and Russell Re Manning were also absent.

[After the meeting it was noted that Russell Re Manning had tendered apologies to the Chair on the day of the meeting to confirm he had the wrong date in his diary, but they arrived too late to be considered by the meeting.]

AGREED: to accept apologies tendered.

2. Declarations of Interest

NOTED: there were no declarations of interest in relation to the meeting.

3. Church Schools

NOTED: this item had been placed early in the agenda to enable the Diocesan Director of Education to engage with the meeting. **The Chair introduced him and summarised recent governing body activities in relation to the faith aspect of the school.**

NOTED: Andrew Read thanked the governors, on behalf of both Diocesan Bishops, for all their efforts on behalf of the school both long-term and during the recent challenges of the pandemic. The issue of Christian distinctiveness was raised. Half the Church schools in the area were experiencing falling rolls, while half were seeing an expansion in numbers. The DfE was aware of the situation, especially in the city of Cambridge where falling rolls were being experienced widely. Andrew Read highlighted some ways in which schools might address the resultant financial shortfall and stressed the need to keep the Diocese informed of the school's position.

NOTED: Governors commented that the school was not being judged fairly because of



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the previous, and now out of date, OFSTED judgement. They wanted to know, what, if anything the Diocese could do about it? The Chair highlighted that she had already discussed this with Andrew Read and could provide an update of their discussion at a later date. Other governors asked that, as it was not just St. Paul's experiencing falling rolls in Cambridge City, could the Diocese be pro-active and offer additional support to Church schools in Cambridge, including the formation of a Federation? Whilst wishing to avoid the political sensitivities inherent in the Academy debate, Andrew Read pointed out that half the church schools in the area were part of a MAT. The possibility of at least some Cambridge city church schools forming a MAT had been discussed previously, but had been dropped because of the negative response. A hard federation was unlikely to be supported because the government favoured Academies and MATs.

NOTED: the Chair thanked Andrew Read for talking to the governing body and for joining with it in celebrating the significant improvements the school had made, whilst acknowledging the frustrations of the current financial situation. Andrew Read indicated he would be happy to attend a further meeting to take discussions further.

Andrew Read left the meeting at this point.

NOTED: governors asked whether the school could expect a SIAMS visit this summer? It was deemed unlikely, given the current OFSTED position.

AGREED: Virginia Weston would speak to Caroline Vinall at the Diocese to see if a date for a SIAMS visit was known. **Action: V. Weston**

4. Governor Appointments and Vacancies

NOTED: the Diocese had re-appointed Bev Jones as a Foundation Governor from the start of the Spring Term 2021 to the beginning of the Autumn Term 2024 (6th January 2021 – 1st September 2024).

AGREED: to ratify Bev Jones' re-appointment to the governing body as a Foundation (Diocese) Governor.

NOTED: Eleanor Carne would be standing down as a CSoC Foundation Governor at the end of March 2021. **An application to the forthcoming vacancy was being considered by CSoC.**

NOTED: a governor asked if Alex Smith had been appointed as an LA governor? The Clerk advised that the appointment had been confirmed at the December meeting and was only to have been brought back to governors if the LA nomination had not been received. The matter could be discussed under matters arising from the previous minutes.

5. Identification of AOB

AGREED: no issues of AOB were raised.



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6. Email Approvals

NOTED: governor approval by email in January 2021 of the school's updated Safeguarding Policy.

AGREED: to ratify the approval of the Safeguarding policy.

NOTED: the majority of governors had emailed the Clerk to confirm they had read and understood the recent changes to the KCSiE document, but three governors had not responded: Michael Beckett, Eleanor Carne and Kate Sharkie. Eleanor Carne would cease to be a governor at the end of the month. **Michael Beckett and Kate Sharkie confirmed orally at the meeting that they had read and understood the changes to the KCSiE.**

7. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 7th December 2020

NOTED: the minutes as circulated with the agenda.

AGREED: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th December 2020 as a true and correct record. The minutes would be physically signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safekeeping when circumstances permitted.

NOTED: the following matters arising:

- **Governor Appointments (Min. 3 refers)** – the LA nomination had been received in relation to Alex Smith's agreed appointment as an LA governor. His appointment for a period of four years commencing on 8th December 2020 therefore stood.
- **Appointment of Foundation Governors (Min. 5 refers)** – with the departure of a number of experienced governors, the proposed mentor arrangements were no longer viable. A buddy system was deemed more appropriate. Governors who felt in need of a buddy could contact the Chair. **Action: All**
- **Confirmation of Extension of Terms of Office (Min. 5 refers)** – this had been dealt with under minute 4 above.
- **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Min. 5)** - Eleanor Carne had not emailed a blank template of the "Cultural Passport" to the Headteacher, but the matter had now moved on.
- **Minutes of T&L Committee Meeting (Min. 5 refers)** – Virginia Weston had observed the Learning Platform training and had fed back her findings to the T&L Committee.
- **Governors' Roles and Responsibilities (Min. 5 refers)** - governor pen portraits received had been published on the school website. Governors whose portraits were still missing had been advised of this.
- The Headteacher and the Clerk had reviewed annual declarations received and the Headteacher had chased those governors whose declarations were outstanding. All had now been received.
- **Review of Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference (Min. 5 refers)** – Hilary Aldred had still to redraft the section of the Standing Orders on video-link participation to permit it post COVID 19, on the understanding that governors should attend the majority of meetings in person. The proposed changes would be brought back to the FGB for approval. **Action: H. Aldred**
- **Single Central Record (Min 5 refers)** - All governors had confirmed by email or at the



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meeting, that they had read and understood the KCSIE documents. Hilary Aldred was now double-checking the SCR.

Action: H. Aldred

- **Terms of Reference for T&L and F&P Committees (Min. 6 refers)** - the T&L Terms of Reference had been agreed with Russell Re Manning and circulated to all governors.
- **Minutes of T&L Committee Meetings: 6th October and 1st December 2020 (Min. 7 refers)** - raising the profile of the school's cultural capital activities remained a work in progress.
- The Chair, Headteacher and Clerk had discussed how best to highlight approved policies and approach the approval of policies.
- **Minutes of F&P Committee Meetings: 15th October and 17th November 2020 (Min. 8 refers)** – Alex Smith was still keen to hear from other governors about marketing proposals.
- **School Improvement Plan (Min 11 refers)** – had been considered at the subsequent T&L Committee meeting.
- **Vision and Values Statement, Governor Visits etc. (Min. 13 refers)** – the Vision and Values had been finalised and circulated to all governors.
- the Chair and clerk had discussed capturing and reporting on Governor Visits and Monitoring Activity.

Action: All

8. Minutes of T&L Committee Meetings: 26th January and 9th March 2021

NOTED: the minutes circulated with the agenda.

NOTED: some of the matters discussed and agreed at the meeting and in particular discussions and recommendations regarding increasing the number of link governors:

AGREED: Sharon Geva should take over the Science Link Governor role from Andrew Blake to allow him to focus on Maths and IT; Katie Barron should become link governor for History and Geography; Kate Sharkie should become link governor for Modern Foreign Languages and Bev Jones would incorporate Art and Design Technology within her previously agreed link role for Arts and Culture. The Link Governor for Pupil Welfare should also have regard to pupil behaviour.

NOTED: in relation to RSHE, the Church of England guidance was useful. The Chair thanked the clerk for informative minutes that were helpful in providing a clear picture of discussions at both committee meetings.

AGREED: to accept and ratify the minutes and actions of the T&L Committee meetings held on 26th January and 9th March 2021.

9. Minutes of F&P Committee Meeting: 5th March 2021

NOTED: the minutes circulated with the agenda.

NOTED: the matters discussed and agreed at the meeting and in particular the following:

9.1 Reporting – the committee was trialing new mechanisms for reporting. Outcomes so



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far were positive, but it was a work in progress.

9.2 PP and SP – had been discussed in detail. The overlap with the T&L Committee was noted, although the F&P Committee was focused on expenditure and value for money and T&L was focused on impact and outcomes.

9.3 School Finances – the outcome for the current 2020-2021 financial year was looking positive, with a comfortable surplus to be carried forward into 2021 - 2022. There were, however, significant financial challenges for 2021-2022. These would be discussed under item 11 on the agenda.

Michael Beckett left the meeting during the above discussions

9.4 SFVS – the document for 2021 had been discussed and approved. **A governor asked if there had been any further discussions about class contact time for teachers, which was low in comparison with benchmarked statistics?** The governor leading discussions said they had not yet taken place, but were due to be considered in the light of financial sustainability.

9.5 Staffing – Hannah Grief was leaving the school for a promotional role. She would be missed.

AGREED: to accept and ratify the minutes and actions of the F&P Committee meeting held on 5th March 2021.

10. Headteacher's Report

NOTED: the report circulated with the agenda. The meeting discussed the report in detail including safeguarding matters, attendance, communication with parents and a summary update of the SIP. A big issue for the term had been the OFSTED monitoring visit. **The Chair highlighted OFSTED's praise for the Headteacher's leadership.**

NOTED: 90% of the cohort had passed the phonics test, which was a significant increase on previous years' figures. **Governors congratulated the Headteacher and the staff on their success.** Remote learning had proved successful and the Headteacher highlighted the work by Sarah Abrey in terms of the development and use of Google Classrooms. Attendance for March was at 95.9%, which was above both National and Cambridgeshire averages. EYFS had been signed off by the LA as no longer needing additional support. The Challenge now facing the school was the decline in pupil applications and the financial impact of the same. **Governors asked how 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice applications would evolve into actual enrolments?** It was difficult to predict. 1st choice applications should become enrolments, but with most Cambridge City schools experiencing a decline in applications it was difficult to predict whether any 2nd or 3rd choices would join the school. The number of pupils on roll in October 2021 would inform the budget for 2022/23.

NOTED: Governors queried why areas of the SIP, such as outdoor learning, were red when activities were happening? The Headteacher advised she had marked it as red as the specific actions listed in the SIP had not taken place because of lockdown.



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NOTED: Governors queried the fluctuating staff numbers and were advised they were a headcount, rather than an fte figure. **Two part timers covering a single position would therefore result in higher numbers.**

NOTED: questions were asked about disadvantaged pupils, including how their numbers were calculated and whether their attendance figures were known. The school confirmed their attendance was included in the global school figure, but could be disaggregated.

AGREED: the Headteacher would show a figure for disadvantaged pupil attendance, as well as whole school pupil attendance, in her next report. **Action: H. Darrell**

AGREED: Nick Giesler as the relevant Link Governor, would also consider disadvantaged pupil attendance. **Action: N. Giesler**

NOTED: in response to a question from governors, the meeting discussed summer term parents evenings and whether they might take place in person or virtually. The school was considering the use of School Cloud, which seemed to work well for other schools. It seemed particularly well-suited to secondary schools, but the school favoured face to face contact for a longer period where possible.

NOTED: governors asked whether any positive experiences during lockdown could be carried over into the return to 'normal' schooling? The positive aspects of Google Classrooms were highlighted.

NOTED: a governor raised the issue of the timing of the new national policy re. Collective Worship and RE. The school felt their current policies needed to be reviewed and refreshed and wished to keep to the agreed timescale for doing so. They could be reviewed further once the national policies had been launched. **Governors supported the approach of making sure current policies reflected current practice.**

11. School Budget 2021-2022

NOTED: the Chair of the F&P Committee provided a summary of the current financial situation including falling rolls for the last few years creating a £150k deficit for the next financial year. The school was in a manageable position for the next twelve months because of its current surplus but longer term the position was not sustainable. It was felt both the previous OFSTED inspection and the pandemic had worsened the decline in applications to the school. The F&P Committee had considered the situation and possible responses to it and was proposing maintaining a 7 class school for 2021/22, but then undertaking defensive budgeting for 2022/23 and beyond. The proposal was not without risk, but was deemed to be the best for both financial and educational reasons. The process of budget approval for 2021/22 was to discuss the matter at this meeting, then to hold an extra F&P Committee meeting to consider a finalised budget, followed by an extra full governing body meeting to approve the budget before May. The Headteacher advised she had consulted the LA over both financial and quality matters. Both Ray Byford and Anne Fisher supported the outline plan: Ray Byford in terms of its financial aspects and Anne Fisher in terms of maintaining and developing quality prior



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to the imminent OFSTED inspection. In order to maintain 7 classes in 2021/22, the school would need to plan for 5 classes the following year to accommodate lower pupil numbers. **The Chair of F&P stressed the importance of all governors being fully aware of the financial position as the governing body as a whole would have to approve the 2021/22 budget.**

NOTED: Governors asked if the LA was willing to support the school? The Chair advised she had spoken to both the Director and the Governance Adviser, but so far had not received a response. Further questions asked by governors included possibilities for further income generation and increased marketing activity, the possibility of working with CSoC to find a solution and the need for a three year rolling budget. The Headteacher confirmed that the budgetary model the school was working to showed a three-year position. **Governors queried the possibility for late enrolments, given historical trends and if pandemic conditions improved so overseas families connected to the University could return to the UK. The benefit of running courses for parents (such as English conversation) to make the school a more attractive prospect was also raised. The Chair highlighted that the school was already planning to capture marketing and fund raising ideas from governors as part of its planned marketing strategy.**

AGREED: the Headteacher would circulate the current marketing document to all governors.

Action: H. Darrell

NOTED: Governors highlighted that St. Paul's was not the only Church school in the City facing falling rolls and that the school should be mindful of other schools' potential responses.

NOTED: The Chair of F&P summarised the position as follows: it was for the school to draw up a budget, not the governors, but governors needed to scrutinize it, test it and approve it; marketing and income generating ideas from all governors would be sought; budget plans should cover three years; 7 classes should be maintained for 2021-22, but the school should aim for financial sustainability longer term; The F&P Committee would consider Andrew Read's comments about collaboration and the Academy model at its next meeting; the school should produce a draft budget for consideration by the LA and the F&P Committee; the F&P would make recommendations to an extra meeting of the full governing body for final approval of the budget.

NOTED: The Chair of Governors thanked all present for the positive discussion.

12. Policies

NOTED: the Publication of Equality information document circulated with the agenda. The name of an equality Link Governor needed to be inserted.

AGREED: that Hilary Aldred should take on the Equality Link role on the understanding that she might from time to time have a conflict of interest because of accessibility issues in relation to her son.

Action: H. Aldred

AGREED: the Publication of Equality information document, subject to the insertion of Hilary Aldred's name as the Equality Link Governor and Helen Darrell's name as the lead



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member of staff.

Action: H. Darrell

NOTED: governors questioned whether school data was available to evidence the gender gap? The Headteacher confirmed the gap was visible in top layer data and data could be produced at a more detailed level as part of the policy's implementation. She would give consideration as to what could be discussed at future meetings.

13. Governor Visits and Monitoring Activities

NOTED: the recent flurry of governor monitoring activity. The following reports and documents had been circulated with the agenda:

- PP Update
- SIAMS
- Collective Worship
- Virtual Assembly
- Early Years
- Remote learning
- Anti-Bullying
- Monitoring Report Record

In addition, there had been reviews of Health and Safety, Science, Art, Design Technology and Music, Maths and Computing and English, but these reports had not been provided to the Clerk in time for circulation with the agenda or had not been provided to the Clerk as yet. The Clerk would circulate all outstanding monitoring reports received by her within the deadline to the next FGB meeting and would update the monitoring record report accordingly.

NOTED: the Chair recommended that everyone read the NGA guidance on governor visits. The governor role was to monitor, not inspect. Governors should ask questions, not make judgements. Governors who were concerned by something they had observed should refer the matter to the Headteacher. Monitoring should be light touch and should neither be onerous for governors or for staff. She highlighted her last review had only taken one and a quarter hours, including writing up her report. One governor felt he could not complete a monitoring activity in less than half a day, but another reiterated that governors were not qualified to inspect and should only monitor and should expect to be advised by the school if they were challenging too vigorously or at an inappropriate level. The Chair reiterated that a link governor did not need to be an expert in their link area and that if they did not know where to start they should allow school staff to introduce them to their area. The staff governor highlighted that governor monitoring activities were new for some staff and in that case the review should be a team effort between the staff and the governor.

14. Governor Training

NOTED: The Training Link Governor would circulate the training record to all governors shortly. Governors had been undertaking training since the last meeting. Governors were invited to highlight any training they had found particularly useful. **NGA training was seen to be helpful. Three governors had attended the recent governor conference. A useful presentation on PP and disadvantaged children from the conference had**



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previously been circulated by Suranga Chandratillake.
AGREED: Nick Giesler as the PP link governor would talk to Simon Jarvis about the topic.
15. Term Dates 2021 -22
NOTED: the Term dates for 2021-22 as circulated with the agenda.
AGREED: the Term Dates for 2021-22
16. AOB
NOTED: no one raised any items of other business
17. Date and Time of Next Meeting
AGREED: the next scheduled meeting of the FGB was Tuesday, 6 th July 2021 at 6.30pm, but an additional meeting would need to be called before May in order to agree the 2021-22 budget.
NOTED: a governor queried the timescale for signing off the 2020/21 SIP and agreeing the 2021/22 SIP if the next meeting was not until July. The meeting discussed the process of finishing one SIP and drawing up another, with final data not available until well into the first term of the next academic year.
AGREED: the Headteacher would circulate details of the process to all governors so that the process was transparent and governors were able to see when they would be able to comment on the documents.
NOTED: The Chair thanked all governors for their efforts and input.
The Meeting concluded at approximately 8.55pm

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
24th March 2021

Approved by The Governing Body on:

Date:

Signature (Chair):