

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL  
ON THURSDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2015 AT 6.15 P.M.**

**Present:** Zoe Thorn (Chair), Carole Mills (Vice Chair), Kevin Blencowe, Jill Tuffnell, Neil Perry, Lucy Walker, Emily Evans, Melissa Hatcher, Joanna Dean, Sarah Ransome, Mark Tinkler, Sam Wilkes Read, Gavin Ayliffe, Tony Davies (Headteacher), Annabelle Lewis, Liz Steel and Kate Spencer-Allen (Assistant Headteachers), Ruth Platt (PSHE Co-ordinator - for item 6), Anne Maskell (Clerk to Governors)

Zoe welcomed Ruth Platt to the meeting.

**1. Apologies for absence**

**ACTION**

None received.

**2. Declaration of pecuniary interests**

Governors had no additional direct or indirect pecuniary interests to declare relating to items on today's agenda. It was noted that there will be new forms for governors to use for the initial declaration of interests at the first meeting of the autumn term, and that the register will then be published.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Sam asked that the minute relating to employment of a new clerk/part-time admin assistant be amended to show that it was agreed the two posts would be advertised separately. Tony said that he had checked with Carol Peel about practice in other schools – she said that she estimated that about half had a clerk who was also a member of the office staff, the other half was divided between those who used Cam Clerks and those who had appointed a parent in the role. The only time a conflict of interests might occur would be if there had been the necessity for disciplinary action against the Headteacher, and it was then felt appropriate for someone other than a member of staff to clerk that particular meeting. With this amendment the minutes were agreed and the minute book would be signed by the Chair.

**4. Matters arising or agreed actions update**

The new Instrument of Governance had been distributed with the agenda, along with a revised governor list showing the new terms of office. Anne will double check with Governor Services whether those governors beginning a new term should begin it in May (when the reconstitution was agreed) or September (when the new Instrument comes into force).

**Anne**

**5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Kevin chaired this item until the Chair had been elected. Two governors had declared their intention to stand in each category:

Chair                    Zoe Thorn, Sam Wilkes Read  
Vice Chair            Carole Mills, Sam Wilkes Read

Governors agreed by a show of hands that the process should be carried out by secret ballot. Candidates left the room for each vote and this was carried out. The results were

Chair – Zoe Thorn, Vice Chair – Carole Mills. Anne will notify Governor Services.

Anne

## **6. Raising Standards – Health Related Behaviour Survey Presentation**

Ruth Platt, PSHE Co-ordinator, presented a Power Point update on the results of the HRBS survey carried out last year with year 5 and 6 pupils. Questionnaires were completed electronically, with adult support where required, at the end of September/beginning of October. Results from other schools in Cambridgeshire were included for comparative purposes, although not as many schools had participated as had been anticipated. Results for St Matthew's were very positive, and higher than the County comparisons in most cases, and this reflects the success of the anti-bullying work which has taken place in school and other PSHE work. Our child-friendly anti-bullying policy is now used as an exemplar for PSHE training in Cambridgeshire. Ruth ran through the action points which had been identified, and some of the changes that had already been put in place to address them. It was recognized that the timing of the questionnaire, with children only just in their new year group (and in some cases new to the school), may impact on their ability to answer some of the questions. Children will complete the questionnaire again in year 7/8 at secondary school.

Governors asked if School Council representatives know about agenda items for future meetings in advance so they have planning and discussion time. Tony confirmed that this is the case. They also asked how results will be fed back to the children, and Tony said that the aim is to have an assembly or presentation in due course. It was agreed that a summary presentation should go on the website.

Tony

Governors thanked Ruth for her most informative presentation.

## **7. Raising standards**

### **a) Headteacher's report**

Tony highlighted the main areas of his report, which had been circulated with the agenda. Since writing the report SATs results had been received - an initial analysis had been made and a report was distributed. Areas highlighted in green are above the national averages (2014). Data is provisional at this stage, and Raise Online figures will be received in October, enabling a full report to come to the Curriculum Committee in due course. An initial breakdown of EFSM and SEND figures has also been given. Overall there is a strong performance in both KS1 and KS2 and the gender gap in writing is not so pronounced this year, although this is still an area on which we could wish to focus. Governors asked if we received figures from Cambridge City Schools in addition to the County figures. Tony said that we do sometimes get figures for South Cambs and the City.

Lucy asked if Tony could give governors more information on Target Tracker, which has been adopted as the new assessment system. It was felt that this would be a good agenda item for an open Curriculum Committee meeting in the future.

Carole/Tony

Tony said that mobile air conditioning units have been installed in the classrooms and are proving effective. We are hoping that work on the new fixed units and on the windows will take place over the summer and are awaiting confirmation from the County. Adrian has sent Sam figures from recent utility bills – an estimate of running costs for the air conditioning units will need to be factored into the budget in due course.

## **b) Draft attendance policy**

Annabelle said that our cluster of schools has collaborated on the new draft attendance policy, amending the model where appropriate (changes highlighted in yellow) so that there is parity on this subject across all schools in our cluster group. Some personalisation of the policy still needs to be added. There are few significant changes to our previous policy other than the option to fine parents if their child's attendance is poor and they take unauthorised absence and refuse to engage with support to improve attendance. It was noted that the government figure for 'persistent absence' is set to change from September from 85 to 90% - our PA level has however always been low compared to other schools nationally. Annabelle explained that children in Nursery, or in Reception but below compulsory school age, are marked as X (attendance not required) if they are away, so do not impact on attendance figures. The school's policy is however to encourage good attendance habits from Nursery upwards.

Governors asked if the school had considered attendance awards, and Annabelle said that this was something that was under discussion. It was also felt that the letter accompanying the request for leave form should make it more explicit (in bold) that leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Governors also wondered how they would be able to monitor implementation of the policy. Annabelle said that attendance information is included in statutory returns and a link governor visit could be arranged with her to look at these. Governors may wish to consider the appointment of a link governor to focus on attendance at the next meeting. Governors approved the draft policy.

All

## **c) Curriculum Committee minutes**

Draft minutes of the last meeting, held on 17<sup>th</sup> June, had been circulated with the agenda. There were no points governors wished to raise.

## **8. Resources for Learning – LA Admissions Policy and payment for additional sessions**

The new County Nursery Admissions Policy for 2015-16 had been distributed with the agenda, together with the school's proposed policy on charging for extra sessions, where available. It was proposed that, if the Nursery is not full, parents may be given the option to buy into extra sessions to top-up the government-funded 15 hours per week. This would be offered on a termly basis and the criteria to be employed for assessing requests would be broadly similar to those in the LA policy. Governors agreed that this arrangement should be trialled for the next academic year. The draft "Charging for Additional Nursery Sessions" Policy was agreed.

## **9. Process for appointing a new clerk**

Zoe said that she felt the interview panel should consist of herself, Tony and one other governor, and it would be helpful if the same team could undertake shortlisting. Thank you to all governors who offered to take part – it was agreed that Sam would join the panel. Shortlisting would take place on 13<sup>th</sup> July, with interviews on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Sam said that he was concerned that the requirements listed in the person specification were too rigid and may have restricted the number of applicants, and that 'essential' experience should have been amended to 'desirable'.

## **10. Feedback forms from governor training**

Feedback forms from the termly briefing for governors and from the webinars on FFT Aspire: overview for school governors were received from Joanna Dean and Sarah Ransome.

## **11. Moving forward – how the Governing Body operates**

Zoe said that she wished to give governors the opportunity to air their views with regard to issues they feel are currently impacting on the way the Governing Body operates and impeding its ability to work cohesively and effectively. Governors contributed their viewpoint and areas which needed addressing discussed, which it was hoped would help the body to move forward in an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation.

## **12. Meet the Head**

Tony said that he hopes to arrange the next meeting early next term, to share evaluation data from the questionnaires with parents and also give a further update about E Comms. Joanna asked that all school newsletters and governor information sheets should be circulated to all staff and governors, as well as parents.

**Tony**

## **13. Dates for next meetings**

Full Governing Body - Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> September at 6.15 p.m.  
Curriculum Committee – Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October at 5.30 p.m.  
Resources Committee – Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> November at 6.15 p.m.

## **14. School improvement actions and outcomes from meeting**

- Receive the results of the Health Related Behaviour Survey
- Approve the draft attendance policy
- Approve the draft charging policy for extra Nursery sessions
- Agreed the process for recruiting a new clerk

From item 11: Governors would

- Not seek to discuss governor business via email or meetings other than FGB and sub-committee meetings
- Ensure Link Governor visits are carried out according to an agreed schedule in the SDP.
- Carry out link governor visits ahead of the next FGB meeting if they are due
- Build Link Governor visits into the various action plans of the next SDP
- Appoint a Link Governor for Governor training and governors committed to attending relevant training
- Share attendance to the Termly Governor Briefings from Governor Services

