

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL
ON THURSDAY, 2nd OCTOBER, 2014 AT 6.15 P.M.**

Present: Martin Smart (Chair – items 1-4), Zoe Thorn (Chair – item 5 onwards) Carole Mills (Vice Chair), Jill Tuffnell, Lucy Walker, Kevin Blencowe, Samuel Wilkes Read, Joanna Dean, Sarah Ransome, Gavin Ayliffe, Melissa Hatcher, Emily Barratt, Mark Tinkler, Carrie Rice, Tony Davies (Headteacher), Annabelle Lewis and Kate Spencer-Allen (Assistant Headteachers), Anne Maskell (Clerk to Governors)

1. Apologies for absence

ACTION

None received. Jo said that she had attended recent governor training when she had been advised that reasons for governor absence should be recorded in the minutes and the governing body should then note that they are accepted.

(Post meeting note – apologies for absence were subsequently received from Neil Perry.)

2. Welcome to new governor

Martin welcomed new parent governor Gavin Ayliffe and other members of the governing body introduced themselves.

3. Declaration of pecuniary interests

Forms were completed and returned to Anne. She will send forms to those not present at today's meeting.

Anne

4. Election of Chair

Martin had announced that he did not wish to stand again as Chair. Zoe Thorn and Sam Wilkes Read had advised governors prior to the meeting of their intention to stand. Each gave a short statement in support of their application and then left the meeting. A confidential vote was then held and ballot papers were counted by Anne, following which Zoe was announced as the new Chair of Governors.

Tony said that he would like to record the huge contribution Martin has made as Chair, and particularly the invaluable support he and the school had been given during what has been a very busy and challenging time. Other governors endorsed Tony's thanks.

5. Model Governing Body Standing Orders 2014-15

These describe how our governing body functions and some extra detail was added into the model last year. Sarah said that she considered that the distribution of papers should be amended to 'the Friday before the meeting' as this more accurately reflected current practice. Governors also questioned whether four full meetings a year was sufficient. It was agreed that another meeting towards the end of the summer term would be scheduled. These amendments would be made and the standing orders redistributed.

Anne

6. Minutes of FGB, 8th May and of the Curriculum Committee, 18th June, and matters arising

Full Governing Body

Lucy asked that the minutes make more explicit the fact that the school has to fund the first £6K of each statement each financial year. Anne will add this in. With this amendment the minutes were agreed and Anne will arrange for Zoe to sign them in due course.

Anne

- E-communications. Several systems were viewed by governors and staff and E-schools emerged as the preferred option. This will offer an e-learning platform, new website, e-communications with paper back-up and the facility for online payments. The software is being installed tomorrow (3rd October) and it will then be thoroughly trialled before it becomes live. Designing of a template for the new website will begin soon and so will staff training. Thanks were recorded to the team who gave up so much of their time to investigate the best option for the school. As not all parents are currently on Parentmail Tony agreed that paper copies of all letters will continue to be sent out until the new system is in operation.

Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June had been circulated with the agenda. Carole said that the main agenda item had been a very comprehensive and interesting SEN update from INCO Sarah Barratt.

7. Headteacher's Report

Tony highlighted the main points of his report, which had been circulated with the agenda. He wished particularly to record his gratitude to staff for the way they have wholeheartedly embraced the new curriculum and the tremendous amount of work they have put in to planning and preparation for it.

School meal take-up has increased markedly with the new meals provided by Lunchtime UK and the introduction of universal free school meals for KS1 children. We still need to encourage parents who are eligible for pupil premium to sign up – only 65 children registered so far.

Numbers in our Nursery are steadily increasing and we are holding a number of applications for January places for children who will turn 3 by the end of December. The banner on East Road has been very effective and Kate said that she has good links with other nurseries and is in regular touch re vacancies. Governors asked if the school had considered admitting Funded 2s. Tony and Kate said that this is not viable for us at present. Other providers have encountered considerable difficulties and very different provision is required, with higher staffing ratios, etc.

Tony ran through the staffing update and said that an internal advertisement for SENCO has been displayed, following the resignation of Lindsey Lord. The three AHTs are covering until an appointment is made – which we aim to do by January at the latest.

8. School Development Plan and the Year Ahead

We are now into the final year of the last SDP and so are reviewing what has been achieved against the targets set and considering targets for our next SDP. Tony gave a PowerPoint presentation which summarised progress against the seven headline targets, focussing on success criteria and key actions. An appendix looked at governing body activities relating to the SDP – with agenda items covered to date and those scheduled for meetings until summer 2015. Tony said that our assigned inspector visited this week and looked at our data and felt that Ofsted would regard last year's progress as 'outstanding'. He noted however that this year's cohort under the 'vulnerable groups' category would find it more of a challenge to make the level of progress we would wish to see.

Mark said that St Matthew's is at the forefront of some very exciting developments in the field of music and he will circulate more details round to all.

Mark

Tony said that there has been little progress in resolving the problems linked to ventilation on the two upper floors of the new building. The temperatures being recorded do not breach the DBI standards, possibly partly due to measures being undertaken such as having blinds down for much of the day (which is of concern to governors due to the lack of natural daylight), and having four fans in operation per classroom. Teachers have to take children out of the classroom if temperatures are too oppressive. Tony is currently looking into a quote to have windows that open. It is not clear how much assistance we may get from the County, as Tony has been advised that their basic needs funding – anticipated as £36M for Cambridgeshire – has been cut to £7M. Adrian Loades has said that he will try to combat this with 'prudential borrowing'. It was agreed that this will be an agenda item for the next Resources Committee.

Tony/Anne

9. Dates for future meetings

Full governing body - Thursday, 4th December
Thursday, 5th March – both at 6.15 p.m.

Resources Committee - Thursday, 13th November (please note date change)
Wednesday, 11th February – both at 6.15 p.m.

Curriculum Committee – Thursday, 20th November
Thursday, 5th February – both at 5.30 p.m.

10. Annual policy review – Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Child Protection Whistleblowing Policy; Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse and Annual Child Protection Report to Governors

Model policies are put together by the Child Protection Service. There has been no change in practice – just some updated terminology and references to new documents. The Child Protection Report to governors demonstrates that all necessary training has been undertaken. The three Child Protection Officers are Tony Davies, Annabelle Lewis and Liz Steel.

The list of policies sent out needs to be checked as some of the dates seem to be incorrect.

Tony/Anne

11. Governor vacancies

We current still have one vacancy for a Community Governor and there will be two Parent Governor vacancies in January. Sarah and Jo advised that a recent governor

briefing gave notice of the need to reconstitute governing bodies by September 2015, so this is likely to be an agenda item for a future meeting. Anne will obtain more details.

Anne

Committee membership – Gavin will join Curriculum Committee and will assume the role of link governor for anti-bullying. Sam said that he would like to move to Resources from Curriculum Committee. Jo is considering a move from Resources to Curriculum.

Zoe said that it would be an opportune time for link governors to contact the relevant member of staff re organizing a visit.

12. Governor training

Jo and Sarah have been to briefing meetings and Lucy has attended child protection training. Jo and Sarah said that they felt there was insufficient time available at the end of meetings to fully brief governors on information from training sessions and it was suggested that circulating a report might be a better option.

Anne will look into which subjects are available for Whole GB Training this academic year.

Anne

There is still a vacancy for a link governor for training.

13. PTA News

The PTA AGM is on Tuesday, 14th October and invitations have been sent out to parents. The PTA is keen to attract more parent volunteers and would also be glad to have another teacher representative to attend committee meetings. Just over £2K was raised at the Extravaganza and the PTA has bought new staging and given an allocation of £100 to each class. At present they are busy planning the ever-popular Spooky Disco.

14. Any other business

- Some parents have expressed concern re the lack of play equipment. Tony said that about £1K of equipment and storage has just been ordered. This has been funded by the PTA.
- Jo said that feedback from Meet the Head meetings should be a standing agenda item but this has been missed from today's meeting.
- Sam said that he felt a Communication with parents policy or guidelines should be put together so that parents would know what to expect. Tony said he would look at policies on the school leadership website and within the cluster and report back.

Tony