

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, 22nd March 2018 AT 6.15 P.M.

Governors: Zoe Thorn (Chair), Carole Mills (Vice Chair), Kevin Blencowe, Neil Perry, Melissa Hatcher, Rosa Mottershead, Angel Gurria, Debora Lucarelli, Lucy Walker, Ricardo Herbane, Tony Davies (Head Teacher)

In attendance: Liz Steel and Annabelle Lewis, (Assistant Head Teachers),

Clerk: Lis Silver

Item		ACTION
1.	Apologies for absence	
	<p>There were apologies for absence from Trish Lloyd and Christina Bates who were not at the meeting due to sickness. Kate Spencer-Allen is currently on maternity leave. Gavin Ayliffe and Mark Tinkler were also absent.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Ricardo Herbane the new Parent governor and all the other governors introduced themselves.</p>	
2.	Declaration of direct or indirect pecuniary interests	
	<p>Neil advised the Board that St Matthews's school have expressed an interest in obtaining Transition support from Romsey Mill where he is CEO. He would not be directly involved in the delivery of the service but since there would be a payment involved this was a pecuniary interest.</p> <p>No other Governors had additional direct or indirect pecuniary interests to declare relating to items on today's agenda.</p>	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2017	
	<p>The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and agreed as a comprehensive and accurate record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.	Matters Arising & Agreed Actions Update	
	<p>Parliamentary Review Invitation</p> <p>The Head advised that the school had sent a reply in line with the issues discussed at the last Board meeting expressing the Board's concerns about the nature of the invitation. A copy of the letter sent was included in the papers circulated to the Board. He thanked one of the governors with legal skills for their assistance in preparing the reply. No reply has been received.</p> <p>The Head advised that a copy of the reply was also sent to our local MP Daniel Zeichner (DZ) who has offered his support. He shared our concern that schools were being asked to pay (and some presumably have already paid) to take part in the Parliamentary Review and that the names of several prominent Ministers are quoted to give credence to the project. He advised that there has recently been an investigation in the Daily Mirror by a law firm who felt that they had been part of a similar misleading invitation. He is willing to follow this up on behalf of the school and would be willing to raise a question in the house. He was interested to know the following from the Board:</p> <p>What do we want to do?</p> <p>Do we think it is a good idea to contact the Daily Mirror to see if they are interested in a continuation of their previous story?</p>	

	<p>Tony advised that he has also raised the matter at the local Heads meeting and he will send an email to other schools so they are aware of the financial implication attached to the invitation. Other local schools have been approached in the past.</p> <p>One of the governors who runs an educational business advised that such companies are also targeted in this way by the Parliamentary Office and asked to pay for an article in the Procurement Guide but that they were then making a legitimate choice as to whether to invest in advertising in this way. This is appropriate for businesses but not for publically funded schools.</p> <p>The Board decided that since this is a more general concern and wider than just St Matthews (and we have suffered no financial loss) that it would be more appropriate to ask DZ to raise the matter in a parliamentary question. TD advised that he has notified the local authority although he has not spoken directly to the new Director of Education. The Board noted that they felt the matter was disgraceful and were keen that it was resolved.</p> <p>Action: The Head on behalf of the FGB will ask local MP Daniel Zeichner to pursue this matter on our behalf (through a parliamentary question).</p> <p>Co-opted Governor Vacancy 3 of the governors including the Chair have met to discuss how best to recruit for the co-opted governor vacancy. A suitable letter has been drafted and they have identified a number of local businesses that this can be sent to.</p> <p>Action: Co-opted Governor invitation letter to be sent out to relevant businesses</p> <p>In answer to a question it was noted that there is a process in place for recruitment if there were several people interested in the vacancy. The applicants would be invited to submit a statement, which the FGB could review and the most suitable applicants would be invited to attend an interview with a panel of governors; last time the panel was made up of the Chair and Committee Chairs (if available).</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement It was noted that this has been reviewed by the TLOC and now needs to be updated on the website.</p> <p>Action: Annual Governance statement to be put on website</p>	<p>Head</p> <p>Chair and 2 Govs</p> <p>Head</p>
5.	<p>Head Teacher's Report</p>	
	<p>Budget Setting Timetable TD advised that the deadline date for the school budget is now a week earlier than in previous years (4th May 2018). This will impact the date of the Resources Committee.</p> <p>Action Resources Committee rescheduled for 25 April 2018 FGB meeting scheduled for 2nd May 2018</p> <p>School Performance Inspection Dashboard This summarises data previously discussed, taken from Analyse School Performance – statutory data assessment analysis tool for schools. The new Dashboard gives governors an overview of school performance against key indicators.</p>	<p>Head/ Govs</p>

One additional piece of data now available that was not available at the time of previous discussion is the attendance data and persistence absence rate for 2017-2018, which is below average. Our attendance figure for 2017-2018 was 95.4%, an improvement on 2016-2017 figure of 95.3% but below the national average of 96%. This year so far has seen a rapid improvement. Attendance is currently 96.4%. A child is said to be persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90%. 58 children (11.9%) were recorded as persistently absent in 2016/17 against national average of 8.7%). Analysis of the data indicates that this figure is elevated by children enrolled who never joined the school and children that have left during the year plus one child with serious health issues. Once our figures are adjusted to take this into account, a more realistic persistent absent rate of 6.92% is reached, the figure for children who were on role in St Matthew's throughout the year. Currently persistent absence for 2017-2018 is 5.51%, well below last year's national average.

Governors asked for more information about how absence is dealt with by the school and whether fixed penalty notices are routinely used (as happens in some schools for 3 or more consecutive unauthorised days).

Tony advised that one of the Assistant Heads has responsibility in this area but fixed penalty notices have only been used on one occasion. The penalty was issued in May and only went to court in October so there is a significant lag time involved if it is challenged. In addition the cost of the fine is usually far less than parents have saved on the term time holiday. For these reasons the penalty is not viewed as very effective in improving the situation. The school is very aware that high levels of absence damage a child's education but the school needs to be clear what they are trying to achieve by imposing a fine on often the poorest families and potentially damaging a relationship that needs to be strong in order for the family to access the support it needs via the school. Currently absence is dealt with by contact with the parents and discussion about the priority placed on education in the family values. The school has authorised absence only in exceptional circumstances. The school follows up all absences immediately and in this way have often become aware if there is any deception going on such as parents saying the child was sick when really they were away on holiday.

School Funding campaign

A letter entitled "our children are not worth less" has been drafted and sent out regarding fairer funding for Cambridgeshire children. No replies have been received to date but there has been significant interest generated. The letter is not requesting that everyone receives the same level of funding but that the available funding meets basic requirements.

He noted that the next point when any increase is likely is the Comprehensive spending review in 2020. TD also noted that the campaign before the last election had been effective in bringing about changes that saw St Matthew's gain £70k of additional funding but that costs have gone up faster than the increases in funding.

Pupil Premium update

It was noted that Sarah Barratt is co-ordinating provision for pupil premium children. The Pupil Premium Link Governor will arrange a visit to see her in the summer term.

MUD Project

This very successful project has just finished – inspired by the Baptist Burials that had been found on the school grounds during the building of the new building. TD

	thanked Lucy and Mark for their contributions to the project and the linked musical performances. It was noted that the school now has a large and growing archive of local history, which can be used in future years.	
6.	<p>Resources for Learning – Draft minutes of the Resources Committee – 8 March 2018</p> <p>The meeting had reviewed the current BCR and noted that the predicted carry-over had increased from a budget of £34k to a approximately £57k; largely due to an increase in SEND funding of £14k plus the staff being very careful about what is purchased. It had also been noted that there had been a significant and unexpected rise in the number of children needing 1 to 1 support, which is not funded. Pay rises for staff are still to be agreed and this may have an impact on the budget since it was possible that some Teaching Assistants would see a 5% increase in pay, currently being negotiated with unions.</p> <p>The Head advised the meeting that work has started on the budget for the following year using the new budget setting tool and initial results show breakeven or a small deficit but that will include spending the full amount carried over from this year (which will not be possible in subsequent years). Lots of the smaller categories will need to be reduced or removed to achieve this result. There is expected to be a 3% rise in funding for 2018/19 – largely from an increase in funding for disadvantaged pupils. It had also been noted that capital funding for the full year is only £10k and this will not be adequate if replacement ICT equipment is needed or a significant maintenance problem occurs e.g. windows in the Victorian block. Resources for both Science and ICT are considered an issue by staff and sometimes impact delivery of lessons. Governors were advised that they were aware that staff were very good at “making do” but it is important that the impact of this is communicated to the governors so that they know where this is being done and the impact this has on the pupil’s experience. Staff members advised that to date the biggest changes had been in the loss of guitar lessons and bringing language teaching in house – however the teacher doing this teaching has now resigned and will need to be replaced. Governors requested that they get feedback on the items that are essential plus a wish list of what teachers would like.</p> <p>The meeting had reviewed a letter that the Head was proposing to send out as part of the Worthless? Campaign to improve school funding.</p> <p>The Governors were advised that the staff survey feedback would be coming to the next Committee meeting for review.</p> <p>It was noted that in the AOB section there had been discussion about a request from a local resident about being part of a St Matthews “Green” working group. Rosa Mottershead noted that she would be interested in becoming the governor representative if such a group was set up. This group could look at the increasing traffic problem around the school but also broaden its remit to other aspects of environmental awareness e.g. litter. The Head advised the meeting that litter picking is already being done around the school and that photos are taken and shown in assembly to raise awareness.</p> <p>Action: Letter to be sent out to Parents asking for volunteers for “Green St Matthews” group</p>	Resource Comm
7.	Raising Standards – Character Education and Teaching “Values Awareness at St Matthew’s	

Character Education Curriculum – work is being undertaken by working group to identify core St Matthews values and build “Character education” on these key virtues into a variety of lessons across the Curriculum. The plan is for this new enhanced curriculum to be taught from next September. A list of values and agreed definitions has been compiled for teaching value awareness. The school is aware that this is not a comprehensive list but this will be a core set of values that are promoted within the school that we believe are conducive to leading a positive and fulfilling life both for individuals and as members of a community. Children will be encouraged to think about, question and apply these values to their own lives. Children will be made aware that values are choices that we can make as individual.

“What do we mean by Character?” – the Head explained that the school has looking at a set of moral qualities that are distinctive in individuals. The list includes kindness, empathy, forgiveness, thankfulness, respect, curiosity, creativity independence, co-operation, responsibility, perseverance, self- awareness, assertiveness, integrity and enthusiasm.

The aim for the school is to support children in developing these attitudes, values and ways of thinking that will promote a sense of wellbeing, happiness and fulfilment. Some of the work has been developed from the book "Happiness" by Richard Layard. His work shows that high happiness scores correlate most closely with the following factors:

Family relationships

Financial situation – security and a sense of fairness

Work – sense of purpose/feeling that your contribution is valued

Community and Friends – social network

Health

In addition, there are 2 overarching aspects

Personal Freedom – political and economic

Personal Values – guiding philosophy for living e.g. religion

At 7.20pm Annabelle Lewis left the meeting

The work in school is to teach children awareness about personal values e.g.

Moral Values such as kindness, tolerance

Performance Values – Drive, resolve, ambition

No single value is always good for every situation and people need a balance of moral and performance values for happiness. TD gave an example of the sort of dilemmas that will be looked at in this work – there is a runaway train heading towards 5 people but you have the power to pull a level and redirect it to a line where there is only 1 person – what would you do? Making the decision to kill someone is a very difficult one – what is kind in a situation is not always straightforward.

The key values will be promoted in a variety of lessons throughout the curriculum.

The working party still has on going work on review of the curriculum but initial work has been done with the full staff team and will now be refined by the working group. Neil Perry is link governor for this work..

In answer to a question the Head advised that results from the curriculum survey indicate that all subjects, with the exception of English and Maths are struggling to find enough time to be fully developed. It is therefore not going to be a case of adding another subject to the curriculum but looking at how this can be further embedded in PSHCE and other subjects such as English e.g. using this as a writing

	opportunity. It may be that some things will be identified that will need to be reduced or removed from the curriculum.	
8.	Raising Standards – Developing our next School Development Plan	
	<p>A new Parent survey is being sent out to gather information for the new school development plan. It is planned to use the same questions as the last one so that a direct comparison can be made of the data. The questions used are taken directly from the Ofsted survey. The survey provides an opportunity for parents to give feedback on strengths and weaknesses and what they think priorities and focus in the future should be. The results will be a snapshot of the current position and will highlight progress made since the last survey. The last survey provided the school with a lot of useful feedback and information and by using the same format comparative data will be obtained. A child friendly version of the survey will also be done with all the children (as was done last time). There will also be a staff version with questions targeted to the role that the person has in the school.</p> <p>It is planned that the survey will go out early in the summer term. It will be done in the same way as last time with an electronic link to survey monkey and hard copies available for those who have let the school know that they cannot access Parentmail. In answer to a question about response rate TD advised that there were about 180/500 responses last time. The school has now grown in size but a similar return rate is anticipated. He advised the Governors that the Survey Monkey software analyses the data and provides a list of comments for each question. Advice given to parents will request that they do not provide information that identifies their children.</p> <p>Governors asked how the information will be used and Tony advised that it will inform whether</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there has been a change in perception as a result of work done under the current SDP • key issues for parents are being targeted in the next School Development Plan <p>He noted that last time the feedback had been overwhelmingly positive. The comments received had reflected what the school had already identified as areas for action and reflected that the staff were in touch with the on going issues. The largest number of comments were about the playground. TD advised that the Survey Monkey format both asks for a tick box response and gives opportunities for comments to be added. In response to adding a question about what the school is currently not doing TD suggested that this would be captured in the free form answers and we have to be careful not to give false expectations. One of the governors observed that the last question about the school development plan might not be clear to many parents and it was agreed that this should be reworded to “I think the priorities to make the school even better should be.....”</p> <p>The Head advised that once the data has been analysed there will be feedback to the Governors in the summer term, to parents and the results will be put up on the website. The information will be used to develop the next School Development Plan, which will be in place from September 2018. The feedback to governors will form the basis of a discussion about strategic aims and planning.</p>	
9.	Resources for Learning – Update re Clerk to the Governing Body	
	TD advised that a potential new Clerk for the Governing Body has been identified. He runs an organisation that clerks lots of schools in Cambridge and London. His	

	<p>background is in school administration and it is proposed to initially give him a 12-month contract.</p> <p>It was agreed that a face-to-face meeting should be arranged – Tony noted that he seemed very professional and suitable for the role but that it was likely to be more expensive than the current arrangements. One of the governors asked whether we would be getting the same person each time and Tony confirmed that this was part of what had been requested. It was noted that if he is clerking several school that dates for meetings might need to be arranged to suit his timetable. Assuming the meeting goes well a service level agreement would be put in place with a request for references and DBS check.</p> <p>TD confirmed that there was no one in the school office who was interested in taking on the role of Clerk.</p> <p>Action: Meeting with potential new Clerk to be arranged by Head and Chair</p>	Head/ Chair
10.	Raising Standards – Governor Training	
	<p>It was noted that the following training needs to be booked New governor Ricardo need to be booked onto an Induction course Chair – Safer recruitment update Termly briefings – one governor from each Committee to be identified to attend</p> <p>TD advised that the new director of Education sees School governors as an untapped source of resource for improvement for Cambridgeshire’s underperforming schools.</p>	
11.	Forward Planning – Dates of meetings for the Summer term & Agenda items	
	<p>Resources committee – 25 April – 6.05pm – Ricardo to join Committee Full Governing Body – Wednesday 2nd May – 6.15pm Teaching Learning and Outcomes Committee – 17 May 5.00pm</p> <p>Future date for FGB – 12 July</p>	
12	AOB	
	<p>TD advised that the Education Minister has recently made an announcement that teachers should not be spending time doing needless tasks, constant analysis or goal setting. It is hard to see how this can be achieved with the level of accountability that government is currently requiring from all schools as part of the League table system that they have introduced. It was agreed by all that the current culture however has led to issues with recruitment and retention of good teachers because of the very high workload expected.</p> <p>There was discussion about the level of marking that teachers need to put in and whether this can be reduced. It was noted by one of the staff governors that detailed marking is one of the things that inspires children to work hard and put in the effort needed to improve.</p>	

10	<p>School improvement actions and outcomes from meeting</p> <p>Approvals None</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head on behalf of the FGB will ask local MP Daniel Zeitner to pursue the matter of payment being required for the Parliamentary review publication (through a parliamentary question). • Co-opted Governor invitation letter to be sent out to relevant businesses • Annual Governance statement to be put on website • Meeting dates to be rescheduled (as noted in 11) • Letter to be sent out to Parents asking for volunteers for “Green St Matthews” group • Meeting with potential new Clerk to be arranged by Head and Chair 	
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Signed..... Date.....