



Minutes of Business Meeting
Held on Wednesday 29th April 2020.
 (Held virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19)

Governors Present on Call	Sue Rudge (Co-Chair), Hilary Sanderson (Co-Chair), Sarah Jarman (SJ), Jessica Webb (JW), Chris Sanderson (CS), Sorcha Rayner (SRa), Stuart Davis (SD), Ben Willan (BW), Sue Read (SRe), Craig Wilkinson (CW), Mary Hancock (MH), Pippa Williams (PW); Nicola Bodnar (NB); Kim Fleming (KF), Stacey Miller (Clerk).
Apologies	None
Visitors	None

Matters Arising:

Item	Action	Responsibility	Deadline
7	Clerk to defer the GDPR policy to the next meeting / when ready.	Clerk	For next FGB / or when ready
7	SJ to report patterns of short term and long term absences for previous year and this year.	SJ	For July FGB

Minutes:

Item	Issue Raised
1. Welcome & apologies for absence/note of absenteeism	HS welcomed Sarah Jarman to the meeting who has started as the new Interim Headteacher (HT). There are no apologies, and the meeting is quorate.
2. Declaration of Interests	No new declarations of interest were declared.
3. Introduction from new Interim HT incl. priorities for action	SJ greeted the GB and thanked them for making her feel so welcome. The new Interim HT has been with the school for just over a week, but what she had planned to do in her first weeks at the school has somewhat changed due to the Coronavirus outbreak. SJ continued to cover the main priorities for action she has for the school. Class organisation to be ready for September, and will need to look at recruitment relating to this. SJ has been speaking to Ruth Garbutt (Deputy HT) about these issues. Pupil numbers for September are not looking good, which will have an impact on class numbers. The school has offered 29 places, but final numbers will be confirmed by Friday. This means the school will need to drop one class for September. A priority will be to settle in new reception children, which will require a different approach to the usual process. The plan is to do this in late July instead. Another priority is liaising with the Local Authority, planning a phased return of children in to school. There is no clear decision on this but we



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	<p>are taking direction from the Local Authority on how to do this. SJ has spoken to someone at the Diocese who is involved in these discussions and can provide some further advice.</p> <p>The return to school will look very different to what is normal ensuring we are able to socially distance properly. There has been speculation around how this will be managed but ultimately the DfE will provide direction on this and schools will be required to disseminate accordingly to local needs.</p> <p>Another priority is to provide clear communication to staff about expectations; this is essential. Some staff are on their two week break currently, and will be back on Monday. It will be easier to manage communication once all are back in. SJ has been working with Ruth Garbutt on staff rotas.</p> <p>The numbers of children attending school currently has doubled to 13 children this week. This trend may continue, possibly as those previously in isolation are now able to return to work.</p> <p>Another priority is the direction for school improvement – a priority is getting a new assessment system up and running. The school is using Pupil Asset and staff have put on their end of Spring term data.</p> <p>A Governor said they use it at Mepal and Witcham Primary School.</p> <p>A further priority is keeping children safe during the coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p>A governor asked how the school deals with families that are not classed as vulnerable, but have suspicions may be struggling. Unions have been talking about how the roles of teachers have changed and moved towards managing mental health etc.</p> <p>Also, the change in roles but with a reduced staff capacity.</p> <p>The school has to submit data to the Local Authority on the number of teachers available to work,</p>
4. Headteacher verbal report	<p><u>Staff and Headteacher Wellbeing:</u></p> <p>Some teachers who worked the Easter half term are at the end of a two week break this week. It has been hard to communicate with people whilst on their holidays. Hopefully this will be better next week.</p> <p>It's difficult for those with children and families, there are many challenges through this situation for staff currently, and tricky to get a good balance with wellbeing. The situation can change very quickly which poses challenges.</p>



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	<p>Due to the rapid distribution and action of former guidance, it didn't provide the time to think things through. However, holes are now forming as things have developed. SJ is now looking at the key issues to get sorted, including the key messages to parents and key learning for children as well as expectations for staff.</p> <p>SJ explained how some TAs have been feeling out of their depth if a teacher is not also in. Next week the HT will be working together with key staff to look at what people are learning at home, and then bringing that in to the school environment to provide more structure. For those attending school it is more than just a caring role.</p> <p>The death of a school parent has had a big emotional impact on some staff. Staff want to support the children and family but can't which is a challenge for those affected.</p> <p>A governor asked about the wellbeing of the new HT. Are you getting support from the Local Authority?</p> <p>SJ explained that she will be talking to the LA Advisor tomorrow and working with the Diocese for various types of support they can offer. She continued to explain that she is working later and earlier more than ever before, partially due to childcare issues during these times. She is having to contact people early in the morning and late in the evening due to this, for which she apologises as this isn't how she would normally work.</p> <p>A governor asked if there have been any behavioural issues in school.</p> <p>Staff are managing the children very well. There is an eclectic mix but all are behaving well.</p> <p>Social distancing measures have provided a set of rules that they respond to well, and some with behaviour problems are getting the level of attention they need. There has been only one incident when one pupil did not have their medication early enough which resulted in some poor behaviour, but this was resolved.</p> <p>A governor asked if this was an issue from the school?</p> <p>SJ confirmed this was not due to an action from the school.</p> <p><u>Vulnerable/FSM pupils:</u></p> <p>40 children are registered as FSM across the school. 35 families are accessing Edenread vouchers that parents can redeem at a supermarket. Katie McCullough has done very well at organising these. Those not accessing are in school and being fed there.</p> <p>The number of key worker families has doubled this week.</p> <p>We now have a much clearer procedure for safe and well checks.</p>



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	<p>A governor asked if this new procedure is working well.</p> <p>SJ explained that there is a requirement to do safe and well checks with families. Previously this was more ad hoc, but now they are working a better system with more effective recording and know how things can be followed up and escalated.</p> <p>There are 5 children with EHCPs who can access care in school if needed. Some have strong SEN needs and it was felt that the current school environment wouldn't be the best place for them as it is so different from usual.</p> <p>A governor asked if the lunch vouchers were up and running. Yes they are.</p> <p>Another family has come on with free school meals this week. This may increase as things progress and families start to struggle.</p> <p>SJ wanted to thank Katie for her work regarding this.</p> <p>A governor asked what engagement looks like for those children who are SEND or vulnerable at home?</p> <p>SJ explained she has raised this with staff who are working from home where this may not have been picked up by them previously, that there is still a need to engage with those SEND children. It has been identified that these children are not as engaged as others as they do find it difficult.</p> <p>A governor said they liked the newsletter that went out to parents. Has there been any feedback from parents?</p> <p>SJ confirmed she hasn't had any feedback, but staff may have done. A governor (staff) confirmed that parents liked the newsletter and liked that they were being communicated with. They felt it was a nice touch in a friendly manner.</p> <p>SJ clarified that she would usually be in the playground and talking to all but can't at the moment so it is difficult.</p> <p><u>Home learning:</u></p> <p>Class DoJo is the method for reaching out to parents and home learning is posted there, or work can be download from the school website. It is running well and parents have got used to it.</p> <p>We need a better balance of work expectations. Some parents have challenges at home that need to be considered.</p> <p>Have had to remind staff that actually if a child is not engaging for a couple of days this isn't an issue. Only if it has been more than a week someone should be making contact with them, not for a safeguarding concern but engagement.</p>



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	<p>Home learning is going well, and Leads on this have done a great job. But we are now working with the in-school learning leads. We have introduced two weekly themes for home and school learners.</p> <p>A governor asked if they have accessed Oak College lessons at all. SJ explained that they have been inundated with various links, but feel they do not want to overload parents with too much at this point. Will need to link any new additional resources to the current topic otherwise parents will be overwhelmed with information.</p> <p>A governor asked if there were particular times they expect children to be listening. No, can access whenever they can, whenever works best for them.</p> <p><i>[The zoom call paused while had to reconnect]</i></p>
5. Finance update:	<p><u>Mandate:</u> This is complete.</p> <p>A governor asked if it was just SJ and two office staff included as signatories. HS has also been added. SRu is not yet added to this.</p> <p><u>Credit card:</u> SJ explained that Tonia, and Anne Horwood had been removed.</p> <p>A governor asked who Tonia was. Used to be a finance officer a very long time ago.</p> <p>SJ explained the credit card had to be used to purchase a food order as we are not currently getting it through the supplier.</p> <p>SJ and Amy Tandon (Office Staff) will be added. SD included already as former Chair to GB.</p> <p>SJ confirmed they have kept the former HT's credit card open, but only SJ has the card. Will not cancel until they have the new ones as may need to be used again. Should receive these soon, but was very complicated to process.</p> <p><u>Budget:</u> The budget was approved on 16th April 2020 at FGB. SJ has a meeting with the school financial advisor and Leyla Newling to go through the budget to check what is in it and to also look at staffing for September.</p> <p><u>SFVS:</u></p>



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6. Ratify Terms of Reference	<p>This was submitted with a slight change. HS has been in to sign and it was sent to LA, who have not queried it.</p> <p>SRu explained that an action from the last FGB meeting was to send the new Terms of Reference to the GB and ratify by email. She explained that she has received a lot of responses and has dealt with some questions.</p> <p>A governor mentioned that after completing the LA governance survey, one question was regarding the performance management of the clerk. Is this done through the Local Authority? The clerk confirmed that this is done through the LA as the employer. She confirmed this is delayed due to the pandemic.</p> <p>A governor highlighted an error on page 6 - need a comma not full stop' – it should not be £5. SJ is aware and will change.</p> <p>A governor asked if these are the terms of reference for GB as a whole, there is no mention of safeguarding in the bullet points (page 3). There is an obligation for a governors' annual review of safeguarding. Another bullet point should be included 'Ensure the school maintains compliance with national and LA safeguarding requirements.'</p> <p><i>[CW left the meeting]</i></p> <p>Changes required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 6 – “£5.” Full stop needs to be changed to a comma. - Page 3 – Add a bullet point 'Ensure the school maintains compliance with national and LA safeguarding requirements <p>DECISION: The Terms of Reference was approved by the governing body pending the above changes.</p>
7. Policies	<p><u>Stress Management:</u> This policy was cross-referenced with the EPM version and had no changes.</p> <p>DECISION: The Stress Management policy was approved by the governing body.</p> <p><u>Recruitment & Selection:</u> The policy was updated in line with the EPM model policy.</p> <p>A governor highlighted that 8.4 and 8.5 was written in the second person, this needs changing 'you'.</p>



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	<p>Changes required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8.4 and 8.5 – needs to be amended from the second person for consistency. <p>DECISION: The Recruitment and Selection policy was approved by the governing body pending the above change.</p> <p><u>GDPR:</u> SJ explained that Officers were in the process of finalising this policy so will wait until it is ready. <u>Action: Clerk to defer this GDPR policy to the next meeting / when ready.</u></p> <p><u>Management of Sickness Absence:</u> The need to update this policy has occurred since SJ started at the school. Some staff have had to report absence but have come to SJ in an ad hoc manner as there was no clear process in place. SJ looked at the policy but it didn't provide a lot of guidance as what to do. SJ has therefore made these changes to put an appropriate process in place.</p> <p>In response to whether governors had ever received an annual report regarding anonymised staff absence, a governor raised that the reporting of patterns of short term or long term absence has not been reported to governors so far. Is this something you can do? This would usually be done on an annual basis to look at trends. SJ offered to undertake this for the previous academic year so can compare that to this year in July. The governors agreed this would be useful to see and understand. <u>Action: SJ to report patterns of short term and long term absences for previous year and this year.</u></p> <p>A governor questioned the school's protocol for cover when there is staff absence. SJ explained that some teachers within the school can provide cover, but only for a certain length of time. But after that time we would need a qualified teacher to run the class. We can utilise part-time staff in school if they wish to do the additional hours. If this wasn't an option, we would look to known supply teachers, where possible, for short-term cover. If there was a longer term absence, we would be looking at longer term supply from an agency. It often depends if it is a planned absence or not.</p> <p>A governor questioned whether the school uses the Bradford Index, as aware other schools use it. Have heard of it. Difficult between short term and long term absence, looking at reasons etc.</p> <p>A governor questioned 2.7 in the policy. HT has been struck out and put on line below. Is this HT only? This can be either HT or DHT. Up to day 7 would be self-certification.</p>



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	<p>The governor asked for this to be clarified in the policy.</p> <p><i>[BW left the meeting]</i></p> <p>A governor asked to clarify for notifying absence as in 3.2.1, staff are to contact HT and Finance and Admin. The Finance Officer and Admin staff are not usually in at that time.</p> <p>The Deputy HT teacher has been added in case the HT is not there. The Finance Officer and Admin staff need to know this information so they are notified for record keeping etc.</p> <p>A governor asked to clarify they all need to be notified at the same time.</p> <p>Yes, they all need to know for different reasons.</p> <p>A governor highlighted another instance 0.0.1.3 where it refers to line manager. This should be changed.</p> <p>A governor asked how the HT is expecting staff to communicate their absence. One email to all? Do they not need to call?</p> <p>SJ clarified that an email to all at the same time is expected.</p> <p>A governor expressed some concern that it is easier to send an email to say won't be in, than it is to call in.</p> <p>A governor highlighted further instances where line manager needs to be replaced by Deputy Headteacher and asks that this is checked throughout the policy.</p> <p>Changes required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.7 – clarify that it is either Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. - Ensure all cases of 'line manager' is changed with Deputy Headteacher throughout document. <p>DECISION: The Management of Sickness Absence policy was approved by the governing body.</p>
<p>8. Governor training and CPD Spring term</p>	<p>The clerk highlighted the recent additions to the training record.</p> <p>NB and PW are now registered with NGA.</p> <p>The Chairs encourage all to do one or two online learning modules and to send details and certificates to the clerk on completion so the training record can be updated.</p>
<p>9. Impact of the meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GB had the opportunity to meet the new Interim HT. - Able to review and ratify policies. - Received an update on staff wellbeing and pupil engagement. - Financial assurance that have met key dates. - Clear systems for staff clarified and governors are aware. - Transparent sharing of future priorities for the school from the Headteacher - a shared ownership of schools progression within school.



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10. Next FGB meeting	The date of the next meeting is left open as there are a lot of unknowns currently. We will schedule a FGB when appropriate.
11. AOB	Staff recruitment – SJ asked the GB if they are happy for her to continue to undertake a virtual recruitment process. Yes, the GB were all happy for a virtual recruitment process to take place, and understand there is no other option in the current circumstances and that we need the recruitment to happen.
12. Meeting close	8.10pm

Signed as a true record _____ (Co-Chair)

Name _____

Date _____