

GOVERNING BODY MEETING, Tuesday, 5th February 2019



Potential Attendees	Initials	Position	Comments
Andrew Bloodworth	ABL	Headteacher	Present
Robert Hemsworth	RH	Parent Governor	Present
Paul Jarrett	PJ	Co-opted Governor (Joint Vice Chair of Governors)	Apologies
Lucy Meardon	KLM	Parent Governor (Joint Vice Chair of Governors)	Present
Ian Newberry	IN	Parent Governor (Chair of Governors)	Present
Sarah Anstee	SJA	Staff Governor (Teaching)	Present
Jacqui Royse	JSR	Deputy Headteacher (Non Governor, SLT Representative)	Not Present
Douglas Smith	DS	Member Appointed Governor	Present
Peter Villiers	PJV	Member Appointed Governor	Present
Lesley Wall	LW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Lucy Fitzgerald	LF	Member Appointed Governor	Present
Sam Meeson	SM	Member Appointed Governor	Present
Rachel Higgs	RHI	Staff governor (Teaching)	Present
Jo Pateman	Clk	Clerk to Governing Board	Present

MINUTES

2018-19/ GOV/35	Apologies	Apologies were received and sanctioned from Paul Jarrett and it was noted that Robert Hemsworth would join the meeting at 10am.	I
2018-19/ GOV/35	Conflicts of Interest	None.	I
2018-19/ GOV/37	Minutes and Matters Arising	<p>2018-19/GOV/25 SIP – percentage perception in terms of cohort is too high, it is 15 to 18% at best.</p> <p>2018-19/GOV/25 SIP - Numeracy plan – to be amended to <i>'there is a plan to develop a numeracy strategy that will aim to be as rigorous as numeracy'</i>.</p> <p>2018-19/GOV/28 MAT – should read 'they have a deal with the <i>TED RAG MAT'</i>.</p> <p>2018-19/GOV/28 MAT – board is the <i>trustees' board</i>.</p> <p>The minutes were then agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>Q – Has the condition survey conducted by the MAT been completed? It is not back yet. A building arm of DCC have visited the school and had primary discussions regarding the all through school.</p> <p>SLT minutes relating to the SIP – JMP to add to governors' folder on the T drive. Tonight onwards and add to T&L agenda to be worked through at each meeting.</p>	<p>A</p> <p>A</p> <p>A</p> <p>A</p> <p>D</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p>

		Actions review – governors agreed that SLT strategic minutes relating to the SIP would be added to the Governor folder on the T drive by the clerk, with effect from today.	A
2018-19/ GOV/38	Committee Matters	<p>Teaching & Learning – nothing to raise, thank you to Rachel for providing an excellent presentation on her faculty.</p> <p>Resources – adverts for maths and science had previously been agreed, in addition we have agreed for an outstanding teacher advert, leaning towards humanities. TDC have now agreed that the heating in the sports hall needs to be replaced and the dining hall corridor roof will be replaced.</p> <p>Q – Will TDC pay for the sports hall heating? No, we are eligible for 50%.</p> <p>Governors discussed the possibility of the school taking on the sports hall and astro turf, however there would be an expectation that both would need to be in good working order. A decision could take time as we are receiving conflicting information. DS offered to raise at a local council meeting.</p> <p>Q – Has anything further happened with regards to the emergency evacuation plan? A meet is scheduled with Andy and Mark later this week.</p>	I I Q Q
2018-19/ GOV/41	Plastic free	<p>Jon Buss has been meeting with Chartwells who are keen to help the school. We are looking at using bowls instead of pasta pots, another issue is pre-packaged food sent from London which is chopped and served here. Our junior leadership team are discussing plastic free and we are recycling crisp packets and batteries. We do lots of recycling and have won awards for this, we believe we could stop the use of single use plastic, but being totally plastic free will be difficult.</p> <p>Governors discussed in detail, they were keen to support plastic free but recognised the wish not to replace one problem with another i.e. alternative materials can sometimes need to be transported distances to be recycled, this would increase our carbon footprint. Doug informed the meeting that he had recently contacted the Governing Matters team after realising that their magazines are sent plastic wrapped. They are keen to help and issue around 45,000 magazines each year. They have referred Doug to their printing company who produce magazines for other companies too, if we could encourage them to use biodegradable bags we could make a real impact.</p> <p>Action – Doug to meet with Jon Buss and Nigel Rowtcliff in school to discuss recycling and plastic free.</p>	I I A
2018-19/ GOV/39	Communication	<p>Lou Leonard joined the meeting at 9.52am. Governors have discussed communication on many occasions and Ian had invited Lou to meet with the governors and explain how she communicates and promotes the school.</p> <p>Transition - Lou advertises the Year 5 and 6 days by sending flyers to pupils in years 4 – 6 and postcards to admin staff in primary schools with dates for their diaries. We advertise in the Primary Times which is a free magazine given to all pupils in Devon schools, both a joint advert with other local schools and our own advert at a later date.</p> <p>Q – Do you send flyers to pupils in feeder schools only? No, we have sent flyers to other schools however they are schools from whom we have taken pupils and we have been careful to build relationships with staff and not simply 'cold call'.</p> <p>We advertise and publicise pupil work in the Torrington Crier, this is predominately English work however we encourage all subject areas to submit good work. Governors discussed the Crier and Doug offered to discuss this further with the local council. GTS also advertise in the North Devon Journal and Gazette as a joint advert with other local schools. We visit primary schools and take flyers direct to pupils in Years 5 and 6, this takes a huge amount of time but pays dividends and is valued by pupils and parents.</p> <p>Our Aquathon and Stephen Shield events are huge and have helped us build excellent relationships with other schools. Lou produces a school newsletter at Christmas, Easter and in the summer. The Rotary club and Cavaliers are brilliant in helping promote and the school online by commenting or sharing information.</p>	I I Q I I

		<p>Exclusions were discussed, we are currently looking at the benchmark for fixed term exclusions and whether we are getting our thresholds right. We have reviewed last years and felt we were quite consistent, although some of the wording could be more inflammatory than it perhaps could have been.</p> <p>Q – On an individual basis, how effective do you feel exclusions are? Where there is good parenting, an exclusion can be very effective and parents follow up with repercussions at home. In some cases, a child may want to be at home and we then decide whether it would be better to keep them in school. We don't want to change our practice simply to make our stats better, it is about the individual effect on each child.</p> <p>Q – Do we have a record of internal exclusions? Yes, we have all of this data and it can be added to future safeguarding reports. We track anti-social behaviour and bullying and communicate this to parents via a series of letters and if reaching a threshold, is then shared with County.</p> <p>Q – Have many of these letters gone out? Yes a few, parents are happy to be notified and feel the system is working.</p> <p>DBS applications and safeguarding induction numbers were discussed, the SCR was checked by ABL on 13/12/18, which hadn't been listed on the report. LF has kindly agreed to be the second safeguarding governor. The clerk to investigate safer recruitment training for LF and DS too. In the audit level 3 and 4 multi-agency abuse training had been raised, DA has now looked into this, we are 3 and practice managers are level 4, so there is no action for us on this point. Action point for future meetings – we need to ensure that termly safeguarding meetings with LF, LM, ABL and DA are minuted.</p>	I Q Q Q I, A
2018-19/ GOV/45	Items Through the Chair	SM raised transparency, clarity and responsibilities of governors. She felt it was hard to know what the Chair should be doing and what should be fed back to all. She felt that the decision for Tracey to work in Holsworthy had initially been agreed by all governors as 1 day each week and she was surprised to learn that it had actually been 2 or even 3. IN confirmed that it had been 2 and that ABL and JSR had made up a third day between them. IN apologised and advised that he was sure this had been discussed at previous governor meetings, however it may have been raised at Resources, which SM does not attend.	I
2018-19/ GOV/42	MAT	<p>At the extraordinary governor meeting last week, governors voted to join the Dartmoor MAT. This has been communicated to staff, but not yet to the wider community. ABL wishes to communicate some of his worries to the governors, particularly surrounding finance.</p> <p>ABL feels that the due diligence process was thorough and it would be a sensible decision to join the MAT, however the finances are of great concern to him. There are lots of unknowns, we could have poor results again and be taken over, there could a change in government direction and we could be forced to join a MAT, however we don't know any of this and we are potentially driving ourselves into a significant financial hole.</p> <p>Q – Are we legally able to make a decision as governors which puts the financial position of the school at risk? As a director we have to make risk managed decisions. Our reserves are greater than the forecasted 5 year budget plan from the MAT, so legally we would cover our accounting but auditors would want to know how we came to the decision to spend our reserves.</p> <p>DMAT are reporting that none of the other schools are struggling with the top slice. They insist we would gain significantly from joining but how do we quantify that. A lengthy discussion followed, governors were concerned that there is no coming out of the MAT. Daryll Chapman has tried to reassure us that we would save in a number of areas where costs could be transferred to the central budget and that we have resources in GTS which could be used across the MAT and for which they would pay.</p> <p>Q – Why has the top sliced increased from 3% to 5%, is this simply because Crediton have decided not to join? The DMAT were looking to recruit a COO (Chief Operating Officer), however they are not doing this at the present time. There are so many things we just don't know, there is no service level agreement, things they are offering may never materialise, we could possibly be placing</p>	I I Q I Q

		<p>ourselves in huge debt and be unable to recruit new staff.</p> <p>Q – What do the SLT team think about this? They have similar concerns regarding the finances. Governors agreed that IN and PJ must go back to the DMAT, we need to know how the top slice is calculated, how it is spent and historically why it has changed. We would also like to see the budget of other schools in the MAT to see how the top slice is really affecting them. They are mostly LEA Schools and may already be accustomed to paying 5% to the LEA. We have worked incredibly hard to be where we are today, which is back to a balanced budget, however we've had to make tough decision to get here and staff have had to do more. We are in the position where we were about to start reinvesting in the school, where else can we cut back?</p> <p>The meeting agreed that IN would inform Daryll that the brakes had been carefully applied on this decision. We need to be clear with the MAT otherwise they may want to claim back any legal costs they start to incur by beginning the process of us joining. IN and PJ to meet with the MAT as soon as possible and ask for clarification of the top slice. Governors voted and all agreed to this course of action. Governors must then meet as soon as possible afterwards to hear back from IN and PJ and make their final decision as there is sufficient unease amongst the governors.</p> <p>RH left at 12.10pm. The meeting paused at 12.13pm for a break and reconvened at 12.24pm.</p>	<p>Q</p> <p>I</p> <p>D</p>
2018-19/ GOV/43	Governors Vision Day	<p>Following the Governor Visioning Day on 15th January 2019, a document had been produced showing the links between governors and faculties. Governors were due to meet with the HoF's and HoP straight after FGB to introduce themselves and agree dates for a termly visit to the school. Governors should select an item from the SIP, or individual HoF SIP, and ask to see that in action. Governors should report back to FGB (T&L would be more relevant but not all governors attend), with an overview of the visit. The first visit should be to get to know the faculty team. All governors were asked to notify the clerk of their visit dates so that these could be added to the diary and checked for clashes. All feedback reports should be emailed to the clerk to be shared with governors at FGB meetings as a standing agenda item.</p>	I
2018-19/ GOV/45	Items Through the Chair	<p>IN wanted to provide an explanation to his role as Chair and transparency to other governors following an item highlighted in the audit. With regards to a staffing matter, IN had met regularly with TRA and had obtained advice from HR, an agreement was reached and auditors highlighted that this should have been minuted. It now has. IN was unable to communicate this to governors as there was the possibility of governors being needed to make up panels, in which case they could have no prior knowledge of the case. In addition, once an agreement has been signed by a member of staff, there is a confidentiality clause which prevents IN from discussing this with other staff and governors. IN did speak regularly with LM, as vice chair, to keep her fully a breadth of the situation and also discussed this with PJ as chair of finance, and the school business manager.</p> <p>IN meets with the Head each week, he is kept informed of fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions. He cannot share this information with governors as they may be called to an appeals hearing. LM and PJ undertake the Headteacher appraisal, which wouldn't normally be shared with governors, other than to advise it has taken place. IN signs off any expenses for the Headteacher and also signs for the Governors account. IN would be consulted for any emergency decisions, for example ABL contacted him on Friday to discuss whether the school should be closed in the event of snow. This would be fed back to governors at a future meeting but can't always be communicated immediately.</p> <p>The pay committee is made up of IN, PJ and LM and deals with an overview of PDPM and staff pay rises. IN is currently involved with a parent complaint but cannot communicate this to governors at the present time in case they are needed to make up a panel.</p> <p>IN requested that all governors notify him of agenda items that are 'large' before a meeting so that they can be added and governors can ensure they are properly prepared.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>A</p>

The meeting closed at 12.47pm

Action Log

WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN	Reference
Clerk	SLT strategic minutes relating to the SIP to be added to the governor folder on the T drive	Starting 05.02.19	2018-19/GOV/14
Doug Smith	Meet with JMB and NR re: plastic free and recycling.	Next FGB	2018-19/GOV/41
Clerk	Investigate Babcock training regarding CIC and PP governor	ASAP	2018-19/GOV/44
Clerk	To contact the Dartmoor MAT and schedule a meeting between Lucy Fitzgerald and their CIC and PP governor	ASAP	2018-19/GOV/44
Clerk	To ensure the safeguarding report is circulated to governors 1 week (preferably 2) prior to each FGB	Next FGB	2018-19/GOV/40
Clerk	To ask DA to add internal exclusions to future safeguarding reports	Next FGB	2018-19/GOV/40
Clerk	To add a standing agenda item to future FGB 'Governor and Faculty Visits'	Next FGB	2018-19/GOV/43

Signed as a true record Committee Chair