



Thorner's CE VA Primary School

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting in the Latch on **27 September 2021** at **5.30 pm**.

Present: *Foundation Governors:* John Vercoe JV (Chair); Helen Jones HJ; Anna Morley AM; Caroline Morrish Banham CMB; Heather Goffee HG; Rev. Jane Williams JW until 6:40; Nicole Forbes Marshall NFM.

Headteacher: Mike Sitch MS.

Parent Governors: Amy Toms AT; Lisa Metcalf LM.

In attendance: John Alexander JA (Clerk).

1. Welcome and Prayer

JV welcomed all present and introduced JA as the new Clerk.

2. Apologies

Authority Governor: Peter Strange PS. *Staff Governor:* Felicity Smith FS. JV and JA also apologised to LM, who had inadvertently not been sent the meeting pack.

3. Minutes of Meeting on 21 June 2020

These were unanimously agreed as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

- i) *Governors to email office to indicate they had read KCSiE and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:* HJ had checked with the school office and all but two Governors had done this. **ACTION: These two were asked to rectify this as soon as possible.**
- ii) *JV to contact James Sharpe JS about continuing as an Associate Member in future:* JV reported that JS now lived too far away for this to be feasible.
- iii) *Foundation Governor reappointment status update:* JW had not yet received final confirmation of this from the Diocese. **ACTION: CMB to contact Diocese.**
- iv) *Update Governor Induction Pack:* JV, MS and HJ had reviewed this and decided it was no longer fit for purpose. MS had rationalised and updated the pack, which now referred readers to the school website for documents that change frequently. The pack would be held in the school office. It was noted that, with regard to induction, OFSTED places great emphasis on mentoring, and on introductory meetings with the Chair, Headteacher and Clerk. HJ agreed to act as focal point for the mentoring of new Governors.
- v) *Agree schedule of meetings for 2021-22:* This had been previously circulated and was approved.

5. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business

None declared.

6. Declaration of Interests and Annual Review

There were no interests declared in respect of the Agenda. In terms of the annual review now due, JA asked any Governors who had not done so to notify him of any changes to their record, or to confirm that no changes need to be made. **ACTION: All.**

7. Correspondence

JV noted that an extra one day holiday had been announced for 2022 in recognition of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Schools could nominate the date, and the Collaboration had provisionally chosen 27-5-22. This would be confirmed at a later date following consultation with parents. No other correspondence had been received.

8. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

JV was re-elected as Chair, and NFM was elected as Vice Chair. Both were unopposed, and both elections were unanimous.

9. Safeguarding Update

HJ reported that she had checked the single central Safeguarding record with the school office. It was fully up-to-date and complete, with all checks recorded.

10. Chair's report

JV began his report by reminding Governors that this was their first in-person meeting since March 2020, and to meet again was very welcome. He complemented and thanked everyone at the school for providing a safe and effective learning environment since the start of the pandemic, in very difficult circumstances. He noted that while school visits were an important part of the role of Governors, Covid 19 remains a threat and visits were therefore still a challenge for school staff. Governors should therefore continue to consider virtual meetings rather than in-person visits where possible.

Ethos: The new school vision had been agreed and welcomed. Drawn from Psalm 23, the Vision was:

By working hard together, our small steps will build your path to the future

"The Lord is my Shepherd...he guides me along the right paths"

Older children will explore the underlying messages behind the vision and ethos more fully in the "Open the Book" Assembly at the start of each term, with JW and their teachers. "Big Q" sessions were also taking place with some children, after school on Mondays, at which the Bible was studied and discussed more deeply.

Finance: The Finance Committee had met on 21 September and the minutes were in the meeting pack. Five months into the financial year, there was a £48k in-year surplus which was broadly in line with projections.

Health and Safety: JV explained that the school's Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Dorset Council provides for a full Health and Safety Audit, with a report and action plan, every three years. As the most recent audit had been in 2016, another was now being organised, and a Council officer had made a pre-audit visit on 20 September to highlight the issues upon which full audit would focus. The Council officer had no significant issues of concern, but had noted that health and safety record keeping needed improvement in some areas. A separate Fire Safety audit would also be arranged. Staff health and safety training would be booked for January 2022. AM asked if the Audit would include inspection of the outside areas of the school, and MS confirmed that it would.

11. Headteacher's Written Report

MS referred to his written report, which had been included in the meeting pack, and highlighted the following:

- *Attendance:* 2020-21 overall attendance was 97%. Current attendance was 94.1% since the start of the 2021-22 academic year, slightly higher than the national average for Primary Schools of 93.5%. There were no cases of persistent absence. It was anticipated that attendance would remain at or above the national average.

- *Admissions:* One new child had signed up for the Reception class over the summer holidays. A younger sibling would soon join Fledglings. The school was receiving emails from parents enquiring about school places up to two years in advance. Thirty percent of enquiries were from families outside of the catchment area – testament to the school’s good reputation.
- *Return to school:* All children had returned for the Autumn Term. There were no ‘bubbles’ and the children could mix freely outdoors. Assemblies and hymn practice had restarted. Covid ‘catch up’ sessions were being provided for Years 4, 5 and 6 at breakfast times – two sessions per week for each year group. This was funded by the Covid Premium. After school clubs had returned, and MS thanked all staff involved and said how encouraging it was to see some of the colour returning to school life.
- *Teaching and Learning:* Seven new schemes of work were now in use for the foundation subjects. Using one scheme of work for each subject across the school enabled pupils to build their knowledge and skills in a particular subject more fluently than would be possible with teacher generated planning. The schemes also provided teachers with better materials, reduced their workload, compensated for any knowledge gaps they may have and helped to support new members of staff. MS said that individual Subject Action Plans would be presented to the next FGB. **ACTION: MS.**
- **Questions and Challenges:**
 - **Governors commented that the new schemes of work represented a big change, and asked if they were affordable and whether external support was provided.** MS agreed that the schemes were expensive and prescriptive, but said there was both support and a requirement from OFSTED for this approach, which would be regularly reviewed. Other Collaboration schools were following the same approach, and economies of scale may therefore be possible in future. The schemes were affordable, due to the number of NQTs at the school and the large Year 6. The cost was a one-off expenditure.
 - **Governors asked how the Discovery Area was currently being used.** MS replied that it was being used for lessons by each class at least once per week, although he noted this was easier for younger class groups. He said that there was no reason, however, that National Curriculum lessons (e.g. Literacy and Maths) could not be held outdoors.

12. Policy Review

Behaviour Policy: Governors confirmed they had read this. JV noted a mistake on page 3 in the paragraph headed “External exclusion” in which the word “her” needed to be changed to “his” in reference to the Headteacher. **ACTION: MS to rectify this.**

Early Years Policy: This hadn’t been located. **ACTION: MS to look for it.**

Code of Conduct for Governors: All Governors need to sign and submit a copy to the school office, and JV would sign the master copy. JV distributed copies to Governors for signing. **ACTION: All.** HJ noted that the document was a particularly useful resource for new Governors.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy: All Governors needed to read this and a copy was in the meeting pack. **ACTION: All.**

JW left at 6:40.

13. Governance Issues

Governor Monitoring 2021-22 and Governor Link Roles: the proposed link roles and new monitoring schedules were discussed, amended and agreed. **ACTION: JV to summarise the outcomes of the discussion. JA to circulate the summary to Governors.**

Skills Audit 2021: There was a discussion about the new Skills Audit process and proforma that had been published and promoted by the NGA, and whether engaging with this process would

add value to Governor activities over the coming year. It was agreed that JA would research this further and feed back to the next FGB meeting in November. **ACTION: JA**

14. Clerk's Notices

None

15. Any Other Business

JV reported that The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators, one of the Livery Companies of the City of London, had a School's Programme of which Thorner's was now part. They were offering some sponsorship for STEM subject-related projects involving water management. It was proposed that a shed be built in the Discovery Area that would catch and store rainwater. Governors were attracted to the idea. Any further ideas would be welcome, and Governors agreed that the relationship with the Company, which was a charity, should be maintained and developed.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

29 November 2021, 5:30pm

The meeting closed at 7:15pm.

| Item no. | Action | Owner | By when |
|----------|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| 4 | Governors to email office to indicate they had read KCSiE and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. | All outstanding Governors | Half term |
| 4 | Contact SDBE re. CMB's appointment | JW | Next FGB |
| 6 | Send revisions to DBI to JA, or confirmation by email that no revisions are required | All outstanding Governors | Next FGB |
| 11 | Present Subject Action Plans to FGB | MS | Next FGB |
| 12 | Make correction to Behaviour Policy | MS | Next FGB |
| 12 | Find Early Years Policy | MS | Next FGB |
| 12 | Sign Code of Conduct and return to school office | All | Next FGB |
| 13 | Summarise/ circulate Governor monitoring arrangements and link roles | JV/ JA | Half term |
| 13 | Research/ report on benefits of NGA Skills Audit | JA | Next FGB |