Meeting – Part 1 Minutes			
Date/Time	25th May 2022, 6.00pm	Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting.

Governors:	I			Governors Attended.	Initials		
T Al-Khalili	TA	Co-opted Governor (joined 6.07pm)		G Martin	GM	Parent Governor	
M Bell	MB	Co-opted Governor		J Noakes	JN	Vice Chair – Co-opted	
C Edwards	CE	Chair – Parent Governor		F Radmore	FR	Staff	
A Evans	AE	Co-opted					
D Jenkins	DJ	Acting Headteacher					

Apologies	Initial	Reason (Category of Governor)
M Rich	MR	Co-opted Governor
C Rowe	CR	Co-opted Governor

Absent without Apology	Initials
J Downing	JD

In Attendance	Initials	(anyone who is not a governor/associate)
K Palmer	KP	Clerk
E Ralls	ER	DDSL/PSA
R Shaw	PW	CEO
P Woodbridge	PW	CFO

Minutes to
Attendees
Apologies
Academy Website
Trust Board.

No	Agenda	Led by
1	Welcome and Apologies:	Chair
2	Declaration of Interests:	Chair
3	Minutes of the previous meeting 9th March 2022 – Part 1:	Chair
4	Finance	Head Teacher / CFO
5	Accessibility	Head Teacher
6	Safeguarding	Head Teacher / CR / ER
7	Staff and Pupil Wellbeing Update:	Head Teacher / JN
8	Policy Review	Head Teacher
9	Governor Visits:	Chair / MR
10	Governor Training	Chair
11	Links to Parents & Community	Head Teacher
12	Communication with the Trust Board	Chair
13	Matters brought forward by the Chair – Staffing Part 2	Chair
14	Future Meeting Dates:	Clerk

Signature of Chair

Agenda Number	Details of discussion	Decision or Action
1	**Welcome and Apologies:** CE welcomed DJ to the meeting in his role as Acting Headteacher. Apologies were received from MR and CR. JD did not attend. Governors **consented** to these absences.	
2	**Declaration of Interest:** No declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda we made. *TA joined the meeting at 6.07pm.*	
3	**Minutes of the previous meeting 9th March 2022 – Part 1:** The minutes of 9th March 2022, part 1 were **approved** as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Matters arising: Governors noted that the company, DFR, which had been approved as the preferred contractor for the roofing work at the previous meeting was not a pre-approved company by the Trust however PW advised that she was confident the company was reputable and as such happy for the school to use DFR for this work.	
6	**Safeguarding Update:** Governors **approved** for this item to be taken out of order to support ER's attendance at the meeting. CE welcomed ER to the meeting in her roles as deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) and parent support advisor (PSA). Governors noted the safeguarding report available in the Teams folder. ER highlighted that that she and DJ had discussed how information regarding safeguarding was shared within school and agreed that ER would attend staff meetings on a regular basis to update staff and handover relevant information. Class teachers also now had access to the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) and the list of high needs children to enable them to have "at a glance" awareness of relevant issues. Weekly school safeguarding review meetings were continuing with information shared between the safeguarding and special educational needs and disability (SEND) teams as appropriate to ensure that any issues were identified. An ongoing safeguarding record was in place which recorded actions such as staff training and the sharing of information to demonstrate how safeguarding practice was embedded throughout the school. DJ noted that safeguarding was a standing item within the weekly staff meetings. ER noted work was due to start on a safeguarding leaflet given to all visitors on arrival to school which would also include details of the DDSL and DSL. Safeguarding Data: ER noted that 14 children currently had early help plans in place, and she was the lead for 12 of these cases which was very near her capacity. Governors noted the significant workload associated with this. Currently	

	two children had been listed as children in need and a further four were being assessed for need but it was anticipated that at least one child would be referred to child protection services. ER highlighted that she was working closely with the early help team to identify other professionals who could take the role of lead practitioner for some of the school's cases. Attendance: ER noted she had a good working relationship with the education welfare officer (EWO), however building relationships with some of the families had been challenging. Governors noted the attendance policy had been reviewed and was on the school's website. DJ advised there had been some instances where families appeared unclear regarding their requirement to contact the school to provide updates on illness absences. Governors noted the formal process of the school regarding non-attendance and that, to date, the parents of 23 pupils had been written to regarding non-attendance. From these two were placed on an education attendance order, a formal process involving the EWO, and a further is in progress. Governors noted the increased cases of persistent absence within school. DJ advised that various initiatives had been put in place, such as attendance bear and highlighting attendance targets in the parent newsletter, to encourage attendance. RS noted the national increase in absences post pandemic, often for children receiving free school meals or pupil premium children, and how initiatives such as early phoning by schools in the morning to "chivvy along" had shown positive improvements in attendance in some areas. CE asked if it was possible for governors to see the attendance figures on Arbor, RS advised she would arrange governor access for this. CE noted that CR had reported that the school safeguarding team was working well despite the recent change in DSL. CE thanked ER for her update, and ER and DJ for their continued focus in this area.	**Action:** **RS to arrange governor access to Arbor**
7	**Staff and Pupil Wellbeing Update:** Governors **approved** for this item to be taken out of order to obtain feedback from ER on this topic. CE asked if there were any issue to report regarding this, DJ and ER confirmed that there were no items to raise. *ER left the meeting at 6.25pm.*	
4	**Finance:** CE thanked PW for her notes, P7 report, and budgets, all of which were available in the Teams folder for this meeting. PW reported that the school had an £18,000 in year deficit at the end of March, a £16,000 deficit had been budgeted for so reducing the carry forward to £50,000. Increased funding had been received during the year via Covid catch up grant and the recovery premium however the school had an overspend on staffing of £12,000 reducing to £9,000 on receipt of the insurance funding, however there was a £6,000 spend on supply cover which followed the trends seen in the other schools. Staff costs had been saved by not replacing a teaching assistant. Governors noted the school had been unsuccessful in the condition improvement fund (CIF) bid therefore the £26,000 capital funds which had been allocated to this bid could be repurposed, PW noted that refurbishment of the toilets had been previously suggested. Governors noted that budget had been allocated for roof repairs, water system and a rolling refurbishment programme. CE asked what the next step regarding refurbishment of the toilet area was, PW advised that governors	

	should agree the most appropriate project and the scope of the required work. RS advised that Kelvyn Bond, premises manager, was finalising the premises plans and would be able to advise on priorities to support the decision making. PW advised that Trust would appeal the decision regarding the CIF bid. DJ noted the need for improved presentation of the communal areas was potentially a higher need than classroom refurbishment. Governors **agreed** to review the premises plan and discuss at a further meeting. CE noted the budget plans for 2022/2023 and highlighted that some aspects of these included staffing matters and therefore were confidential. PW noted that two budgets were presented, both based on the pupil numbers on the October 2021 census day. Governors noted the published admission number (PAN) was 30 and currently 23 pupils were expected to join reception in September 2022, giving a total number on roll (NOR) of 185 which was reduced from current numbers. Data regarding live births in the area suggested that 47 pupils were eligible to join the school, however budget predictions were based on 25 pupils entering the school each year. PW highlighted the impact of the significant increase in teacher salaries on the budget and that a pay increase of 2% had been included for support staff. The Trust had included a 1% increase to the general annual grant (GAG) funding however this increase was not confirmed from government. Governors noted that if no changes were made the school would have a £47,000 deficit within three years which would not be accepted by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). PW advised that using current prediction the NOR would be 181 in three years which equated to six classes rather than the current seven. Potential actions required to balance the budget included reduction of classes, reduction of support staff, increased marketing, improvement in the NOR, re-evaluation of job roles if staff members leave. PW advised that a budget showing six classes from September 2024 did balance but emphasised that if NOR increased the reduction in classes would not be necessary, however whilst not a preferred choice, this should be retained as an option. RS highlighted those seven classes would suggest a NOR of 210, but as NOR was currently 185 there was a shortfall of 25 pupils. Each pupil attracted approximately £4,000 funding, hence the significant shortfall within the budget. Governors discussed the impact of the lower NOR on the school budget and the importance of marketing alongside smartening the school to make it as attractive as possible to potential families. RS advised that a professional photographer had been booked by the Trust to take 100 photographs of the school for marketing purposes. CE proposed that the budget showing a drop to six classes in 2024 was recommended to the board and that the governors developed a clear marketing strategy to address the fall in pupil numbers. Governors **agreed** to recommend this budget and the course of action CE outlined.	**Action: Governors to review premises plans** **Action: Develop clear marketing strategy for the school.** **Decision: Recommend budget to Trust Board**
5	**Accessibility:** DJ reported that he had reviewed the school regarding accessibility from the perspective of the site and buildings, access to the curriculum and how information was shared. With respect to the curriculum changes had been made to ensure that diversity was represented in teaching and images used. Staff training had included	

	de-escalation behaviour techniques for pupils with SEND and Babcock training was booked for January 2023. Governors noted a new SEND co-ordinator was recruited, and staff had received training on "My Plans", though work to further embed this was required. Work had been done where possible to address issues provided by the physical environment although signage and improvements to the environment to support those with a visual impairment were still required. Future plans included replacement of poor-quality lighting and, longer term, to consider a powered door on the disabled toilet and induction loops if and when required. How to improve accessibility of school information was being addressed and external agencies were involved to support this. AE reported that an information guide outlining what people could expect when visiting the school regarding accessibility both during and outside core school hours may be of use. Governors supported this and AE agreed to send an example guide to DJ.	Action: AE forward information guide to DJ.
6	**Safeguarding:** - discussed earlier in the meeting.	
7	**Staff and Pupil Wellbeing Update:** - discussed earlier in the meeting.	
8	**Policy Review:** Outdoor Education and Visits Policy: CE noted that the school used the Devon County Council policy which still required governor approval for use in school. CE asked if 2020 was the latest version of this policy, DJ confirmed this and advised that a new version was due in September 2022. Governors **approved** this policy.	**Decision: Outdoor Education and Visits Policy approved.**
9	**Governor Visits:** Governors noted three reports from CR regarding safeguarding, SEND and early years foundation stage (EYFS), previously shared on Teams. CE asked whether the comment "less written observations" related to a reduction in paperwork or a reduction in evidence, DJ reported this was a response to the new EYFS curriculum advising that observation was increasingly visual and "in the moment". CE asked regarding the situation regarding teaching assistant (TA) meetings as the SEND report noted these were currently on hold due to staff shortages, DJ agreed to investigate this and report back to next meeting. CE reported MR had attended a survey visit by ESFA and noted that most items noted for action were routine however the need for a firebreak to be provided between the ground and first floor was identified. Governors requested that MR continued to monitor progress on this and report back to governors.	**Action: DJ to investigate situation with TA meetings and report back to governors.** **Action: MR to monitor progress regarding firebreak and report to governors.**
10	**Governor Training:** Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE): CE noted that MR's training remained outstanding and requested this was completed by July 2022. CE asked if FR and JD would have completed this as part of their teaching role, FR and DJ confirmed this. GM reported she had completed the KCSiE and the general data protection regulations (GDPR) training and wanted to attend the Developing Governors Skills training on 21.6.22, RS confirmed GM was booked on the course.	**Action: MR to complete KCSiE training**

11	**Links to Parents & Community:** St Thomas Facebook Page Update: AE highlighted the importance of the school having a Facebook presence in terms of marketing and increasing the school's profile. AE advised she had prepared a launch plan for the schools Facebook which was available on Teams. AE suggested the initial Facebook front page for the school, which was currently not accessible to anyone, clearly stated the "rules of engagement" for the page and what was appropriate or not to be posted, and that this was always pinned to the front page. AE advised that events should be posted retrospectively to maintain safeguarding requirements, although the page should not be allowed to go out of date as this would be counterproductive. AE suggested someone in school should managed the site however it should be made very clear that staff must not link their personal Facebook sites to the school account in any way. AE shared with governors work she had done on preparing the Facebook site and advised she was happy to put together a page template to support further development. CE thanked AE for her work on this and noted the importance of linking this to the 150-year celebration. Governors discussed the next steps for developing the Facebook presence; DJ noted the imminent marketing photographer visit, RS advised that photographs from class dojo could be used with a brief comment on a weekly basis to add regular content. DJ highlighted a concern regarding monitoring comments, especially if negative or inappropriate comments were posted. Governors discussed if these could be approved prior to posting and GM noted that Facebook tended to be used more responsibly now. 150th Anniversary Plans: DJ shared the poster for the event and advised that the "memories" website went live on 25.5.22 with automatic party invitations to anyone who posted. Information had been sent to the media and personal invitations would be given to those living in a four-street radius of the school. The Friends of the School had been very helpful, and support had been given by Underhills Estate Agency in advertising the event via their boards. DJ noted that the event was aiming to attract approximately 500 people and would have bands, jazz singer etc.	
12	**Communication with the Trust Board:** No issues were presented from the Trust Board. CE asked governors for any issues or questions to be raised with the Trust Board, no items were identified.	
13	**Matters brought forward by the Chair:** *FR left the meeting 7.38pm.* **Part 2:** Item discussed and recorded in part 2 minutes.	
14	**Future meeting dates:** Governors **confirmed** these as: • Wednesday 6th July 2022, **7.00pm** NB: please note later start time	

The meeting closed at: 8.07pm.

Signature of Chair

Date/Time of next meeting	Wednesday 6th July 2022, **7.00pm**	Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting- until further notice.

Signature of Chair