Exeter Learning Academy Trust
Creating our future together

St Thomas Primary School
Local Governing Board

Minutes of the Local Governing Board meeting for St Thomas Primary School held at the school on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at 6.00pm.

Governors Present:	*Tamara Al-Khalili (TA), *Martin Bell (MB), *Jenny Downing (JD) Chris Edwards (CE), Chair Alice Evans (AE),	Dan Jenkins (DJ), Acting Headteacher Georgia Martin (GM), Jill Noakes (JN) *Evonne Pavey (EP) *Carolyn Rowe (CR) (joined 6.38pm)
Other Participants:	Pauline Woodbridge (PW), CFO, *Kim Palmer (KP), Governance Professional.	

*denotes attendance virtually via Microsoft Teams

Item	Details of Discussion	Decision or Action
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Consent** CE welcomed everyone to the meeting. Governors noted that Martin Rich (MR) was not present.	
2.	**Declarations of Interest** No additional declarations of interest were made.	
3.	**Local Governing Board (LGB) Matters** Governing Body Membership – CE welcomed EP to her first meeting as a staff governor. EP introduced herself and outlined her roles within school. Governors noted that JD would continue as a staff governor until the end of the summer term, CE formally thanked JD for continuing in this role until the end of the year. Governors noted that CR was stepping down from her role at the end of the year which would leave vacancies as named the governor for early years foundation stage (EYFS), special educational needs and disability (SEND) governor and named safeguarding governor. CE advised he would liaise with new parents ahead of September with a view to governor recruitment, DJ advised the date of the new parent induction was on 26.6.23. AE noted the value of having posts on Facebook to support governor recruitment. Governors highlighted the need to be explicit regarding the remit of the role and the time requirements. Governors discussed potential locations to approach regarding recruitment, JN **agreed** to contact the University regarding potential governor recruitment. KP **agreed** to forward the Inspiring Governance website information to DJ and CE. CE noted that previous governor recruitment information for the school was available, and AE **agreed** to review this and add or amend pictures as required.	**Action:** CE liaise with new parents **Action:** JN contact University **Action:** KP forward website info **Action:** AE review and amend info
4.	**Minutes of the previous meeting 8th March 2023** Review / Approval of Minutes – Governors **approved** the minutes of 8.3.23.	**Decision:** Minutes 8.3.23 approved

	Matters Arising: • CE noted the need for AE, MR and CR to update their declarations on Governor Hub. • Registration on Governor Hub – Governors noted MR's registration remained pending. • Code of Conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) declarations – Governors noted that this remained outstanding for MR, CR and TA • General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Courses – CE note that there had been a good response to this being completed.	**Action:** AE, MR and CR update Governor Hub declarations **Action:** MR register **Action:** TA, MR and CR update Governor Hub
5.	**Chair's Update** CE advised the Ofsted inspection report had been published and a "Good" judgement was given to the school in all areas, with the opening statement of "Pupils enjoy attending this caring school". Governors noted the report highlighted that they performed their role effectively and appropriately, and CE noted the need for governors to continue to ensure they remained strategic. DJ thanked KP for clear minutes that highlighted challenge from Governors. CE noted the points for development raised from the inspection were issues already highlighted within the school development plan (SDP). Governors noted that comments made on parent view were very positive. Governors asked who the parent view questionnaire was sent to as the response rate appeared low, DJ advised the school had 196 children and 37 responses had been received which Ofsted considered a reasonable level of response and indicated that 25% of families had responded. DJ highlighted the questionnaire was only available for 1.5 days. Governors noted the nature of a self-selecting sample in terms of respondents. DJ reported that the inspectors had noted a comment from a parent highlighting the school's "obsession" with attendance which the inspectors was very pleased to read. JD highlighted that 92% of respondents would recommend the school to others which was very positive. JD noted that some parents had attempted to access the parent view questionnaire but had been unable so had sent letters into school. MB highlighted the very positive nature of the report. CE advised governors that Justin Stone's retirement due to ill health, effective from 31.8.23 was now confirmed and in the public domain, and plans for an appropriate send-off were in progress. Governors noted the interviews for a new Headteacher were scheduled for 5.5.23, five governors were involved in the day and CE thanked governors for their input into the interview process. CE advised that, depending on the outcome of the Headteacher interviews, further interviews for a deputy headteacher may be required and a potential date for this had been identified of 25.5.23.	
6.	**Headteacher's Report** Governors noted the previously circulated Headteacher's Report which was also available on Governor Hub. DJ presented an overview of progress against the SDP priorities. Priority 1, SEND – DJ advised this would remain on the SDP for the next year. The "bubble room" was being effective with pupils, the targets for all pupils with SEND had been reviewed to ensure these remained SMART, and SEND co-ordinator and senior leadership support had been provided for this review. Regular learning walks	

	focusing on SEND were conducted within the school and any areas noted for attention were addressed. *DJ left the meeting 6.30pm.*	
15.	**Communication with Trust Board** (Item taken out of order due to DJ being temporarily unavailable) No items were raised.	
16	**2023 / 2024 LGB Meeting Dates** (Item taken out of order due to DJ being temporarily unavailable) Governors reviewed and **approved** the suggested dates, noting the slight delay of the Summer One meeting from that originally suggested. 2023 / 2024 meeting dates were **confirmed** as: 27.9.23, 15.11.23, 24.1.24, 6.3.24, 15.5.24 and 19.6.24 all to start at 6pm. *DJ re-joined the meeting at 6.37pm.* *CR joined the meeting at 6.38pm.*	**Decision:** 2023 / 2024 LGB meeting dates approved
6.	**Headteacher's Report (continued)** Priority 2, OPAL Play Initiative – DJ thanked TA and GM for their input, noted a meeting with parents to explain the initiative was planned and highlighted that training for staff regarding risk management was in progress. DJ noted that old pieces of equipment were being used to stimulate children's play and the available outdoor spaces were being repurposed to be used in the most effective manner. Governors noted that the play initiative was aimed at all age groups and provided older pupils with an alternative to sport as an additional activity. DJ reported he had visited Beaford Primary which was a silver level OPAL school which the working group were also visiting. DJ highlighted the initiative allowed children the freedom to control their own behaviour and the challenge for staff was to increase the level of trust in the children, to allow children to be their own play leaders and appreciate that if a child couldn't be seen during a breaktime it didn't always mean they were being "naughty". Further developments included pupils being play ambassadors, obtaining pupil voice, and the further increasing of play resources and areas. AE advised that Southwest Water had two funds available which the school may be eligible for which provided up to £1,000. AE **agreed** to forward the information to DJ. DJ advised the school was also applying for funding from Tesco and contacting local business for support. AE noted "Little Exeter" was another example of items being repurposed for children's play. Priority 3, Middle Leaders – JN advised that she would look at the support for the subject leader role for maths as part of her upcoming visit. DJ noted that the Trust had developed a subject leaders handbook to develop consistency within the Trust however this needed a little "tweak" to ensure it was relevant to the school. Governors noted a Trust wide "Teams" channel was also set up for subject leads. Priority 4, Improvement of the combined subject score – DJ advised that year 1 pupils were falling a little behind on their targets and additional daily phonics work and parent support meetings were now in place to address this. DJ highlighted other aspects from within the Headteachers Report. Governors noted that 17 languages were now spoken within the school and funding had been received from the Ukrainian Grant to support children from Ukraine. Eight children within the school currently had education and health care plans (EHCP) in place, and the new	**Action:** AE forward information regarding SW Water grants

	September intake had three pupils with a EHCP and a further one pending. DJ highlighted that St Thomas had been noted within the community as a school who provided strong SEND support and one family had been recommended the school on this basis for their child. DJ noted that the school was using a relational policy which was working well for behaviour management and advised that it was planned to review the existing behavioural policy in light of this and ensure the information was fully relevant to the school. Governors noted the mentoring and support for the early career teachers was in place, school improvement visits had continued and the school continued to link with the other schools within the Trust. DJ highlighted that safeguarding information was contained within the Headteacher's Report and that CE had visited the school to review the single central record (SCR). DJ highlighted that the school linked with all external agencies as required and attendance remained a strong focus for the school. Challenges in obtaining external support was noted and the resulting impact upon staff time. Governors noted the improved attendance levels but that these remained slightly below national figures. Governors asked whether a child on a part time timetable impacted upon the school's attendance figures, DJ confirmed this and noted that reception year were very low because of this and noted that several children within the school had very complicated presentations. DJ reported that attendance to the parents evening was 87% and the school had provided a very flexible approach to facilitate parental attendance which had worked well. Six incidents of pupil suspension had been recorded – one pupil with a total of nine days of suspension. Governors noted that 15 days of suspension triggered a hearing and that the school had liaised with external agencies for this child which included alternate provision. No bullying or homophobic incidents had been recorded. DJ noted that process for dealing with behavioural incidents had changed to include early intervention strategies such as the bubble room or one-to-one intensive support for a short time period. Governors noted that staff illness had led to £41,000 of cover being required. DJ confirmed that Justin Stone, Substantive Headteacher, would formally leave the school on 31.8.23 and Sarah Prince had been in a secondment post as Deputy Headteacher since 21.2.23 which was working well. A staff member was also being seconded from St Thomas to Bowhill for the next academic year which was a positive step for the Trust. DJ reported that summer term events were now scheduled to run over a longer time period to support staff wellbeing and the school summer fayre was on 30.6.23. Governors supported the increased timespan for the summer term events. Governors asked whether the outcomes regarding the quality of education for the spring term were as expected, DJ advised that 36% of year six pupils showed greater depth for reading, 25% - 30% showed greater depth for maths and four pupils showed greater depth in their combined scores. Governors asked whether the accessibility audit had been completed, DJ advised this had not yet been completed but highlighted it was considered when the five-year premises plan was reviewed with the premises manager.	**Action:** DJ complete accessibility audit
7.	**Safeguarding Update** Governors noted this was contained within the Headteacher's Report.	
8.	**Financial reports**	

	Governors noted the previously circulated financial reports which were also available on Governor Hub. PW advised that the review of the year end forecast was ongoing, and she would forward the information once available. Governors noted the December review suggested an expected overspend of £30,000 due to staffing costs. 2023 / 2024 budget – PW advised that currently there were many unknowns including staff pay, whether any additional funding from the education and skills funding agency (ESFA) could be expected and what form this may take. PW advised the final staff structure for next year had also not been finalised which meant it was not possible to provide a final budget. Governors noted that known costs had been used wherever possible and an expected increase to the general annual grant (GAG) of 3% had been added on a yearly basis. PW advised that 2023 / 2024 showed a surplus of £29,000 but a £62,000 overspend on year two and a £111,000 overspend in year three. PW highlighted the impact of pupil numbers on these figures. Governors asked the implication for the school if the worse prediction became reality, PW advised that Bowhill had been required to plan to reduce the classes by one from 2024 to balance the budget. DJ noted that 21 pupils had joined the school during the academic year with a further potential three expected before the end of term. Governors asked whether pupil numbers and in year movement would be a problem if other local schools had spaces, DJ advised that some pupils had left the school during the year, but the picture was very changeable. Governors asked when the budget showing a £62,000 loss would be addressed, PW advised that schools were not permitted to set deficit budgets therefore plans would need to be in place to address this prior to the budget being submitted. Governors noted the significant impact of staff pay rises upon the budget predictions.	
9.	**Premises Report** Governors noted the previously circulated reports which were also available on Governor Hub. No additional questions were raised.	
10.	**Staff and Pupil Wellbeing** Staff Wellbeing & Workload Survey – Governors noted the level of staff absences as recorded within the Headteacher's Report. Governors asked whether the staff survey results had been received, DJ advised that theses had not yet been received. Governors discussed this and **agreed** for this to remain on the agenda to ask Rachel Shaw, CEO, at the next local Governing Board meeting and then remove from the agenda if no information available. Governors asked staff governors whether there were any additional issues to highlight on behalf of the staff, EP advised that staff were very positive following the favourable Ofsted inspection and noted there had also been increased interaction between the staff team. CE noted the wellbeing information available in the staff room and DJ noted that the repurposing of rooms to include the breakout room for year 1 and the new furniture to the staff room had been very positive and improved the atmosphere within the staff room.	**Action:** KP to include in agenda for next meeting
11.	**Governor Monitoring** Single Central Record (SCR) Visit - Governors noted the previously circulated visit report and that this was also available on Governor Hub. Governors asked the frequency of this visit, CE advised ideally termly. PW advised that a tab would be added to the SCR regarding supply teachers following the Ofsted visit which would be done across the Trust.	

	OPAL Working Group – DJ advised that TA and GM had visit the school as part of the OPAL play initiative. Governors asked whether this was a monitoring visit, DJ advised it was as part of the working party rather than to provide challenge or monitoring. Maths Visit – JN advised this was planned for 17.5.23 and she hoped to complete as science and technology visit also. CE noted that JN had previously liaised with DJ regarding the subject lead role and available support. Governors discussed the positive value of pre-visit questions and JN **agreed** to ensure these were recorded within her visit report. Pupil Premium Visit – CE advised the timing of this was to be confirmed with DJ. PE visit – GM advised she was planning this before the end of term and would liaise with the subject lead to confirm a visit time. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) / Safeguarding Visit – CR advised she had a EYFS visit pending but had met with the Parent Support Advisor prior to the end of term regarding safeguarding and the report was pending.	**Action:** JN include pre-visit questions in report **Action:** CE arrange PP visit **Action:** GM arrange PE visit **Action:** CR complete safeguarding visit report **Action:** CR complete EYFS visit and report
12.	**Policy Review** SEND Policy – CE highlighted amendments shown via "Tracked Changes". Governors asked whether removal of some phrases indicated a change of intent within the policy, DJ advised that all amendments had been reviewed by the SEND team in the Trust and the School Improvement teams. Governors discussed the implications of stating that "no child would be refused a place on the basis of SEND need" and the need to ensure the school was protected from accepting a child were the school was unable to meet the child's needs despite all best endeavours. Governors noted the policy currently showed named governors from other schools. Governors discussed this and **approved** the policy subject to the named governors being corrected within the policy to show St Thomas governors. Governors thanked the team for the work involved in reviewing the policy. Play Policy – Governors asked whether TA and GM should be listed within the policy as parent or governor play leaders, DJ advised that a parent meeting was planned to explain the OPAL ethos. Governors **approved** the policy. Governors noted the supporting documents to the Play Policy, no questions on these were raised. Behaviour Policy – DJ advised this policy was under review and would be retitled "Relational Policy". Governors asked whether there was sufficient time for this policy to be presented to the June meeting, JD advised that staff training was scheduled for 23.5.23 and therefore there was sufficient time. Governors **agreed** to defer this to the June meeting to ensure it was in place for September.	**Action:** DJ to ensure SEND policy governor names are corrected **Decision:** Policies approved – SEND Policy Play Policy **Action:** DJ present Relational policy to June LGB

13.	**Links with Parents and Community** Parent Survey – AE advised she had discussed with DJ an annual survey which was used by another school and tracked the information received to identify trends. Governors noted the format used showed an agree / no view / disagree option for each question. Governors discussed the value of having a qualitative aspect to the survey but the need to ensure easy tracking of data across years to show trends and progress. Governors noted the potential value of sentiment analysis to analyse results, the requirement for anonymous completion and the importance to identify the most appropriate time to conduct the survey.	
14.	**Governor Training** AE reported she had completed bystander training which related to the perceptions of women and how these views impacted upon the behaviour of women and their perceptions. AE advised this training was being introduced to various organisations such as the University and other local school Trusts. AE advised that currently this was not offered as governor training, but she was able to share the information if requested. GM advised she had completed the general data protection regulations (GDPR) training.	
15.	**Communication with Trust Board** Governors noted this had been previously discussed. CE invited governors to contact him with any items for the next Chair's Forum meeting.	
16.	**2023 / 2024 LGB Meeting Dates** Governors noted this had been previously discussed.	
17.	**Any Other Business** PW advised that new staff had been appointed to the central team to provide Human Resources (HR) and Trust Administration support. PW noted the staff had started after Easter and had a positive impact on the work regarding staff appointments and ensuring the appropriate HR processes were followed. Governors asked regarding the plan to replace the staff member due to be seconded to Bowhill from September 2023, DJ advised the secondment position had been advertised and there had been a good level of interest in the post. CE advised governors of two staff absence requests which had been discussed with DJ and approved by CE on behalf of governors.	
18.	**Date of Next Meetings:** • Wednesday 21st June 2023, 6.00pm at school – NB change from original date of 28.6.23 AE noted her apologies for this meeting.	

Meeting closed 7.58pm.