St Thomas Primary School Local Governing Board

Minutes of the Local Governing Board meeting for St Thomas Primary School held at the school (with a virtual joining option) on Wednesday 19th June 2024 at 6pm.

Present:	*Jackie Evans (JE)	Dan Jenkins (DJ) Headteacher
	Martin Bell (MB)	*Tamara Al-Khalili (TA)
	*Chris Edwards (CE) Chair	*Totty Brobyn (TB)
	Alice Evans (AE)	*Jill Noakes (JN)
	*Sarah Sukkum (SS)	Allan Hart (AH)
		Georgia Martin (GM)
In Attendance:	*Emma Hilton (Clk) Governance Professional	
	Rachel Shaw (RS) Trust CEO	
	*Sandy Chenore (SC) SENDCo	
	Kathy Skinner (KS) Deputy Head	

*Indicates remote attendance via Microsoft Teams

Item	Details of Discussion	Decision or Action
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Consent** CE welcomed governors to the meeting, which would be the last one of the academic year. Apologies were received from Evonne Pavey. Governors consented to this absence. JN joined the meeting late as communicated in advance to the Chair.	
2.	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest pertaining to any items on the agenda.	
3.	**Local Governing Board Matters** **Governing Board Membership changes** AH had been appointed at the last meeting and now had access to GovernorHub, The National College, and his governor email. CE updated governors on the position of Chair for the 2024-25 academic year. Trustees were aware of the approach of the board for a "rotating chair" for next year. CE reported to governors that although trustees were supportive of the interim rotating chair approach, governors needed to note, "someone had to have overall responsibility". For the rest of the academic year this would be CE, and for the new academic year CE and MB would discuss what this would mean, and how they would deal with this going forward. Trustees were supportive of the interim measures put in place for the Chair position, but they wanted the school to recruit a permanent Chair within a reasonable time frame and if this was not satisfied, there was a risk of the St Thomas Local Governing Body having to merging with another LGB within the trust. CE met with the Chairs Forum recently and there would potentially be two new Chairs from September, across the four schools. The Terms of Reference were in the process of being updated for the Forum. Going forward, the Vice Chairs would also be invited to the meetings, as well as the Chairs, to allow more continuity and support. Each school would decide whether they wanted to send one or two people to each meeting.	

It was noted that the Chairs Forum was an informal, information-sharing group, which looked at local issues.

Consider vacancies to fill and recruitment
JN would be resigning from the board, and this would be her last meeting.
CE thanked JN for stepping in to serve the school, she had brought a lot of rigour and challenge to the process, and the board would miss her contributions.

CE asked AE whether she would continue on the board when her term of office finished in November. AE confirmed that she would be very busy in September and October, but she was happy to stay on the board until November but would probably be leaving after this. AE would confirm her decision by November to the governing board.

DJ noted that as this was the last meeting as Chair for CE, he wanted to thank CE for his role as Chair of the board. CE had been a great support to DJ both personally and professionally as the head and his thoughtful, pragmatic, considered and clever approach as Chair and his wise words had been much appreciated.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting Wednesday 1st May 2024**

Decision: Minutes 01.05.2024 **approved**

The minutes of 01.05.2024 were **approved** as a true record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising to be discussed.

DJ thanked governors for completing SATs training and for coming in to the school to help support the monitoring of the SATs.

Matters Arising:
There were no matters arising to discuss, both the action points had been completed.

Agenda item	Action	By Whom	When
12	Governors to confirm availability for SATS week	LGB	8/5/2024
13	CE to circulate link for Governors for the exclusion training	CE	ASAP

5. **Headteacher's Update**

5.1 Headteacher Update
DJ presented a PowerPoint to governors, with a School Development Plan update, it was an informal update, the formal update was presented at the start of every term and the next formal update would be in September.

SDP
Area 1 - SEND and the quality of wave one teaching, and how to adapt - DJ showed governors a practical example of schemas, which supported recall, recap, and assessment. Teachers in the school used these in their daily practice.
Area 2 – OPAL Play – The school had purchased scaffolding boards and had introduced a "Tidy-O-Meter" which was working well in the whole school. The school would be assessed for their Silver Accreditation on the 24th June.
Area 3 – Subject leadership and trying to build excellence in their subjects in school - The school had been accepted for maths mastery approach for number fluency in KS1, run by the Jurassic Maths Hub and five teachers at the school would be involved.
The Exeter University teacher training program phonics lead, the current Year 1 teacher Kathryn Morgan, has worked with DJ to have 30 PGCE teachers coming to the school for a day to see phonics in action, and in return, the school would receive £800.
Area 4 – Reading/Writing/Maths – the SATS results were not out yet, but the school's phonics results for Year 1 were much better than anticipated, and DJ acknowledged the hard work of all the staff in achieving the results.

Attendance

Whole school attendance was 94.95%, which was higher than last year and higher than the national average figure for the first time in two years. The school had taken ownership of the attendance process, with the ELAT attendance policy, clear flow charts, letters, and a relational approach to attendance, knowing the families at the school and understanding their situations. DJ felt that attendance this year was a real success in the school, and the children really wanted to come to school.

DJ took governors through the safeguarding issues and concerns at the school currently.

There had been a pupil exclusion, and the school had now put measures in place, which had led to success for the pupil since the exclusion.

Staffing

DJ took governors through the staffing structure from September, and this would be shared with parents shortly.

Due to a fall in SEND funding at the school with children on EHCPs leaving, three Teaching Assistants on fixed term contracts had been made redundant. The school had been able to re-deploy two of the staff members and had completed a formal absence hearing for one staff member, chaired by MB and the process had been followed successfully.

CE asked what the timings would be for the staffing structure to be released to parents.

DJ confirmed parents would be advised before transition day.

DJ also updated governors on an upcoming staff maternity leave in the Autumn term, and the cover that would be put in place.

Building Improvements

The broken CCTV had been replaced, and DJ updated governors on a break-in at the school in half term, where police had attended.

A suspended ceiling in the lunch hall would be completed over the summer holidays, reducing noise at lunchtime, and various other improvements in classrooms and flooring would be completed. This work was as a direct result of a pupil survey in the Spring term which highlighted noise levels in the hall as having an impact on pupil wellbeing.

A holiday club would run during the summer holidays at the school, which would benefit the school in terms of the school being occupied in the summer months.

CE confirmed with governors that there were no further questions on attendance, safeguarding, and pupil and staff wellbeing.

5.2 Quality of Education SEND Review

A report had been uploaded to GovernorHub, and SC joined the meeting and gave governors a summary of the report and an update.

SC presented a PowerPoint slide show to the governors. The school had 41 pupils on the SEND register, and 8 on an Educational Health Care Plan. The school had support from Speech and Language therapists, physiotherapists, Educational Psychologists, Occupational therapists, and Emotional, Social and Mental Health team. The morale of the Teaching Assistants in the school was high. The areas the school had focused on this year were all recommendations from the SEND Audit.

CE asked about ordinarily available provision and questioned whether this was about knowing what the baseline was for all pupils, so that the starting point for any additional provision would be known.

SC confirmed that this was what was available for all children, but essential for some children, who needed extra support. SC gave an example of the visual timetable, which would have only been available for children with an identified need in the past, but was now available for all children, as it was a useful tool to use.

	AH asked if the logistics of the help offered to pupils would put extra pressure on staff at the school. SC confirmed the aim was to put less pressure on the staff, with training and knowledge embedded, so children who needed additional support received it and as children were having all their needs met, there would be less behavioural problems. RS noted that a lot more children with additional needs were coming in to mainstream education now. Schools had to think about resources, setting up classrooms, and making sure there was a base of equipment for children to access when they needed it, making it better for children with additional needs, while not affecting the needs of other pupils in the school, and supporting as many pupils as possible. DJ noted that the logistics of timetabling was tricky to ensure TAs could support children. The feedback received from the staff was positive, TA's were having extra training, running their own intervention groups, assessments and feeding back to teachers, and were invited to higher needs meetings, were enjoying the challenges and felt more included and listened to. CE pointed out a comment in one of the reports regarding SEND children making expected progress, and asked how could the school make sure that this continued when a TA was going to be dropped in September. DJ fed back that the TA position was no longer sustainable because children with EHCPs had left the school, leading to a cut in the funding received. SC confirmed that the school would look at the progress made, follow the graduated response, and look individually at children. If they were not making the progress expected, there was a process in place to be able to support them, and the school would respond to the need, within the constraints of the school budget. RS confirmed that all schools were facing budget constraints, and falling pupil numbers, so compromises would have to be made, unless more funding was forthcoming. SEND was also in a national crisis. The board would need to look at what compromises the school had to make, to understand decisions the school may have to make in the future. JE pointed out to governors that even though the school would be losing a member of staff that all staff went above and beyond every day. They all wanted the best for the children and would ensure the children's needs were kept to the standard they were at the moment. **5.3 SEND Information Report** This report had been uploaded to the website, and CE wanted SC and DJ to look at some amendments he had suggested, and he would send an email to SC and DJ with the suggestions on. SC left the meeting at 6.38pm. **5.4 Impact of Sports Premium** KS took governors through the Sports Premium Funding 2023-24 document, which had been uploaded to GovernorHub, and highlighted how the sports premium budget was spent in 2023-24. The main spend was part funding of spaces on the afterschool clubs at the school, the idea being the encouragement of higher participation rates, and more opportunities for the disadvantaged pupils. There had been high attendance from these pupils at the clubs. One of the governors asked what percentage of Pupil Premium and SEND children now attended a school club. KS did not have the figures to hand but would find out and get back to governors. New PE equipment had been purchased and a partnership had been formed with West Exe and all year groups had participated in at least one sporting event there. The school had held their sports day there recently and sports leaders had received gymnastics CPD from West Exe. CE asked for clarification on the amount spent on the partnership from the report. KS confirmed that it was a £1000 partnership with West Exe, to provide day events, after school events and staff training.	Action: CE to email SEND Information Report updates to DJ and SC Action: KS to provide figures for percentage of PP and SEND pupils attending afterschool sports clubs

	Some of the grant had been spent on employing the OPAL Play leader. In the 2024-25 school year, the sports grant would be spent on the West Exe Partnership, swimming, after school sports clubs and the school hoped to change the sport program currently used. The current program was repetitive, and the school had narrowed the choice to two and were looking at which one to use. KS left the meeting at 6.44pm	
6.	**Attendance Update** See section 5.	
7.	**Safeguarding Update** See section 5.	
8.	**Pupil and Staff Wellbeing.** See section 5.	
9.	**Policy Review** 9.1 Governors reviewed the following polices, in line with the school policy schedule: • SEND Policy – CE had taken the version from the school website and DJ would confirm whether this was the most up to date version and get back to governors. • Looked After Children Policy – governors adopted and **approved** the policy subject to formatting. CE asked governors for their opinion on whether the school should have a Looked After Children named governor, or if this should be covered under safeguarding. TB was happy to cover this and add it to her safeguarding role. AE noted that it would be useful to have a grid for policies which clearly showed when they had been updated, and when they had to be reviewed. AE had sent this suggestion in more detail in an email in May to governors previously. 9.2 To Receive Trust Wide Policies via GovernorHub Resources The following Five policies had been received for governors' information: • ELAT low level safeguarding concerns 2023-24 • ELAT Professional boundaries with pupils policy 2024-26 • Acceptable Use 2024-25 • Data Breach Policy 2024-25 • Data Retention Policy 2024-25 CE updated governors on a data breach, where a governor's personal email had been accidently published on a policy. This had been corrected, and DJ would report this as a low-level data breach. The governor had not received any emails following this breach and confirmed they had been notified. 9.3 Website Audit Updates Covered already in this section following AE's findings and recommendations being sent to KS.	Action: DJ to send the latest version of the SEND policy by email and governors would approve remotely. Decision: Governors approved LAC Policy Decision: LAC role assigned to Safeguarding governors Action: DJ to report the publishing of a governor's email on a policy as a low-level data breach

10.	**Governor Monitoring:** 10.1 Monitoring visit reports and updates: • Safeguarding - TB had visited the school and carried out a safeguarding monitoring visit (copy on GovernorHub). The next safeguarding visit would be booked for the new academic year. CE raised a next step from the report, regarding planning permission for the fence – DJ confirmed that he had weekly check in meetings about this. Although this was a next step, TB confirmed it was not an urgent safeguarding issue; it was more about people accessing the site when the school was closed, not children getting out of the school. DJ had been provided with signage for the fencing and an account had been set up with a company called Secure Force. The signage and having people on site with the holiday clubs had meant the amount of people accessing the site out of hours had reduced significantly. Feedback would be given to the local councillors at the local community hub about the lack of facilities for children and teenagers in the school holidays in the area. • Wellbeing – AE had carried out a wellbeing monitoring visit in the school and had focused on the teaching staff side of wellbeing. • English – CE had carried out an English monitoring visit at the school, and areas of concern identified in the data had already been addressed, with interventions in place. Next steps would be to monitor the refurbishment of the library and the reading ladder. • OPAL – TA had attended a meeting regarding the accreditation. • Maths – Following the departure of JN, AH would take over the maths monitoring and JN would forward her last report to AH, who would then book a visit for the new academic year. 10.2 Other planned visits SS had a meeting planned with SC on the last day of term. Governors reflected on the visit tracker for monitoring governor visits.	**Action:** Feedback to local community Hub about lack of facilities for children and teenagers in the area
11.	**Governor Training and Development:** 12.1 To discuss the Local Governing Body's requirements for training and development in line with school development priorities. MB had completed the suspension and exclusion training. TA was booked for Play Work Essentials training. AH would book governor induction training with RS after the meeting. CE asked governors to upload certificates on to GovernorHub once training was completed, to enable the board to keep track of and evidence training. 12.2 To receive feedback from governors who have attended training courses since the previous meeting. See above. 12.3 To plan/reflect on any National College/NGA Learning Link Courses that may increase LGB skills (suggestions below). CE had included some training available to governors on the agenda from Schools Choice that they may want to access.	
12.	**Communication with Trust and Community** 13.1 Trust Away Day summary CE and DJ had attended a Trust Away Day and had spent time with trustees and governors from other schools, and work had been carried out around vision and values. Discussions had taken place on changing the name of the trust from Exeter Learning Academy Trust to a name that did not limit the trust geographically. Governors discussed ideas for the name.	

	RS acknowledged a decision had been made to refresh the identity of the trust, and not anchor the trust to an area geographically. Discussions had taken place on values, especially the values of courage, ambition, and kindness. Any ideas would be gratefully received from governors. 13.2 Risks Identified for Trust Monitoring CE asked if anyone had uncovered a risk or opportunity during the meeting. No risks were discussed. 13.3 Opportunities for Communication to Parents and Community Governors agreed that it was great to hear in the meeting that the school was being noticed, and used as a model of good practice, with other schools wanting to come to St Thomas and see OPAL Play in action, and the 30 PGCE students to observe the phonics. These would both be great to share with parents as well as acknowledging that attendance was above national level. DJ pointed out that sharing the news about attendance would need to be relayed to parents carefully, and DJ would have a celebration of attendance segment on the final newsletter. DJ also would mention governors whenever anything positive was mentioned in the newsletter, so parents knew that governors were involved in a positive way in the school. TB asked if there was any data that showed a positive correlation between increased attendance and wellbeing or morale or learning outcomes that could be used to show parents. DJ advised that children at the school were always positive about the school, they wanted to come to school, and enjoyed the learning, friendships, community, relationships, memories, and experiences.	
13.	**Any Other Business** There was no other business to report on.	
14.	**Dates of Next Meetings** RS would feed dates to the schools for September, as currently there were no further dates in the calendar for meetings. MB and CE would work together and plan the agenda for the first meeting of the 2024-25 academic year. RS thought it would be beneficial to have all six meetings for the new academic year planned out and in the diary. Governors agreed that Wednesday at 6pm was still the best time. Governors discussed whether having blended, virtual or face-to-face meetings would be the best option. Governors decided that the first meeting of the term in September and the last meeting of the academic year would be face-to- face in person, but still with the option of joining virtually if needed, with the other meetings as fully virtual. CE thanked MB for agreeing to chair for the first term in the new academic year. JN thanked governors and had enjoyed working with the board, and thanked RS, DJ and CE for their help, and wished the school and board all the best for the future.	Action: To finalise six meeting dates for the new academic year

The meeting closed at 7.59pm

Agenda item	Action	By Whom	When
5	CE to email SEND Information Report updates to DJ/SC	CE	ASAP
5	KS to provide figures for percentage of PP and SEND pupils attending afterschool sports clubs	KS	Next meeting
9	DJ to send the latest version of the SEND policy by email and governors would approve remotely.	DJ	ASAP
9	DJ to report the publishing of a governor's email on a policy as a low-level data breech	DJ	ASAP

10	Feedback to local community Hub about lack of facilities for children and teenagers in the area	DJ	ASAP
14	To finalise six meeting dates for the new academic year	RS/CE	ASAP