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 21st June 2023 at 6.00pm.

Governors Present:	*Tamara Al-Khalili (TA), (joined 6.45pm) Martin Bell (MB), Chris Edwards (CE), Chair Dan Jenkins (DJ), Acting Headteacher	*Georgia Martin (GM), *Jill Noakes (JN) *Carolyn Rowe (CR)
Other Participants:	*Rachel Shaw (RS), CEO, (joined 6.38pm) *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. Apologies had been received from Jenny Downing (JD) Alice Evans (AE) and Evonne Pavey (EP). Governors **consented** to these absences. 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 noted this was the last meeting for JD and a new staff governor had been identified who would start on 1.9.23. CE formally thanked JD for her time and commitment in her role as Governor for the school. CE highlighted this was the last meeting for CR and noted her significant contribution to the Governing Body and the school and formally thanked her for all her time and commitment in the role. CE highlighted the need to ensure the appropriate skill mix within the Governing Body and to be mindful of this during recruitment of new governors. DJ advised there was a meeting for new parents to the school on 27.6.23, 1.30 – 2.30 pm where governors could make a short presentation and a letter was also to be sent outlining how parents could support the school which could include the governor role. JN advised she would be happy to step down from the Vice Chair role in September if another Governor wished to take this role for the next academic year. Governors discussed recruitment and **agreed** to defer this until after the results of the LGB skills audit which would be completed in September.	**Action:** All to complete skills audit in September
4.	**Minutes of the previous meeting 3rd May 2023** Review / Approval of Minutes – Governors **approved** the minutes of 3.5.23.	**Decision:** Minutes 3.5.23 approved

	Matters Arising: • JN advised she would contact the University regarding possible Governor recruitment in September following LGB completion of the skills audit. • CE noted most declarations had now been updated on Governor Hub. • Registration on Governor Hub – Governors noted MR's registration remained pending. • Accessibility Audit – DJ advised that the final item was the installation of LED lighting which was scheduled for the Autumn term. • Play Policy – to be uploaded to website.	**Action:** JN contact University post skills audit **Action:** MR to register **Action:** KP upload play policy
5.	**Chair's Update** CE highlighted that lead governors to the roles of early years foundation stage (EYFS), special educational needs and disability (SEND) and safeguarding would be required from September. CE advised he was happy to remain as Chair for the 2023 / 2024 year especially in light of St Thomas taking their turn to chair the Chairs Forum in 2023 / 2024, but he would stand down as Chair following this, but was prepared to take the role of vice chair for the final year of his term of office to support succession planning. CR advised there may be value in a preschool staff member joining the LGB due to their experience in EYFS.	
6.	**Headteacher's Update** School Development Plan (SDP) Update - Governors noted the previously circulated Headteacher's summary which was also available on Governor Hub. DJ highlighted progress made against targets within the SDP noting significant progress made in the area of SEND in school and across the Trust. Governors noted the progress with the OPAL target and that funding bids were submitted to support this to Southwest Water, Greene King and Tesco. Governors watched the short video which accompanied the bid submissions. DJ advised that the development of middle leaders continued, Governors asked if this was a Trust wide initiative, DJ advised it was local to St Thomas but was supported by the Trust's subject leader handbook. Governors noted the developments of science with the introduction of the PZAZ scheme, the development of clear progression throughout the school for all subjects, and the development of the timetable to allow equity for all subjects. DJ noted the work done to raise the results of pupils when subject areas were combined, highlighting the improvement in year 1 phonics outcomes from 53% to 82% of pupils now reaching the required level following a change of teaching methods introduced after the Spring review. *RS joined the meeting at 6.38pm.* Governors noted the current data as shown within the presentation. Behaviour – Governors noted the current profile of pupils within the school from the presentation. DJ noted the significant time required to support behaviour management for some pupils and two staff members had received "Thrive" training to support this and the "Thrive" programme was being linked into the Relational Policy. Safeguarding - DJ advised that the currency of training for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL was being maintained. Governors noted the evacuation policy was being reviewed, and the local Church Hall had agreed to be the evacuation point for the school if required. Governors noted this policy would be formally approved by Church Trustees during the summer.	

	DJ advised there had been one incident of child-on-child abuse, external support had been obtained and an external review of safeguarding procedures was also commissioned for the school. DJ advised there was an increase in abuse towards staff from parents and the Trust had engaged a legal team in Exeter to provide support and advice for any incidents. *TA joined the meeting at 6.45pm.* Attendance – DJ advised a letter was now sent to parents if a child was late to school. Arrival after 8.45am attracted a "late" register mark and after 9.00am was recorded as unauthorised absence. Governors noted the attendance figure was gradually increasing and now showed 93.08%, against the national average for primary schools of 93.6%. DJ advised that this was primarily due to a group of 10-15 families who had attendance levels of approximately 80%. Governors noted that an attendance level of below 97% would attract early intervention and graduated response as required. DJ advised that following advice from the education welfare officer (EWO) the school would introduce a penalty notice letter for non-attendance, however each case would be reviewed individually and specific circumstances considered before sending a penalty notice. Governors noted the improved attendance since March 2023 following the increased intervention from the school. Reportable Incidents – Governors noted two reportable racist incidents and three pupil suspensions. Alternative provision and support strategies have been put in place to support these children on their return to school. Additional interventions include therapy dog visits twice per week, weekly cricket sessions, a planned two-year programme to support mental health week and ongoing Thrive interventions. Home School Agreement - DJ highlighted the new home school agreement to support parental engagement. Governors asked why there was thought to be an increase in the level of verbal abuse from parents towards staff, RS advised there was an increase nationally in the level of verbal abuse from parents to school staff which may be due to the regular contact between parents and the school. Governors discussed the impact of social media and parental behaviour, in modelling behaviour for children which was later copied. Governors noted the value of the home school agreement in clearly defining the acceptable boundaries for all parties. DJ advised this was due to be sent to parents at the end of the week and requested any comments from governors as soon as possible. Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) Bid – DJ advised the school would receive £146,000 work in upgrading the fire safety facilities in the school which was due to be completed during the summer holidays. Governors noted the school's contribution of £45,000 to this work. RS noted the impact this work would have on the ability of St Thomas to host the holiday club and advised that this would now be located at Bowhill School for this summer. Staffing – Governors noted the changes as listed within DJ's presentation. Asthma Friendly School – DJ advised he was currently working towards the school being certified as an Asthma Friendly School, by ensuring the school was supporting pupils and staff with asthma.	
7.	**Safeguarding Update** Governors noted this was contained within the Headteacher's Update.	

8.	**CEO Update** RS advised of staff changes within the Shared Services team which included the employment of two staff to support human resources work, which had been very effective during the recent high level of recruitment, and the resignation of a senior finance officer. RS reported that John Persant was coming in to support the Trust whilst a new staff member was appointed to this role. Governors noted that Kelvyn Bond, Premises Manager, would be leading the Trust's part of project management for the CIF bid work. RS advised that SEND would remain a Trust wide priority for the following year and all schools were receiving an external audit regarding SEND. Support would be in place to allow teachers to provide adaptive teaching for pupils with SEND within the classroom. RS noted the employment of three new deputy headteachers to the Trust and that her secondment to Devon County Council (DCC) would end on 31.12.23. Item recorded under a confidential minute.	
9.	**Staff and Pupil Wellbeing** Governors asked whether the results from the recent survey were available, RS advised there had not been a high level of response from staff and agreed to forward the results from St Thomas to Governors. DJ noted the leaving do for staff members planned for 3.7.23 which included Justin Stone as the retiring Headteacher.	**Action:** RS forward staff survey results **Action:** KP to include survey results in Sept agenda
10.	**Governor Monitoring** Maths Visit – Governors noted the previously circulated report which was also available on Governor Hub. JN advised that she also looked at the role of middle leaders and subject leads as part of the visit including their support and induction process. JN noted the visit was very positive but highlighted a slight lack of clarity around the subject leader role which had now been addressed by the Headteacher. Governors noted the challenge of the role being taken midyear and the impact of Ofsted upon this for the 2022 / 2023 year. RS advised that induction meetings would normally occur as part of the first professional growth meeting of the year but clarification regarding subject leadership roles taken on mid-year was required. DJ noted the development of the subject lead role would continue to be a focus on the SDP for 2023 / 2024. Governors asked whether subject lead actions plans were expected to be available, DJ confirmed this and advised this was in progress for all subject leads. Science and Technology Visit – JN advised this visit was pending. Pupil Premium Visit – CE advised this visit was pending. PE Visit – GM advised this visit was pending. Governors asked whether there was a visit report template, JN confirmed this. EYFS Visit – CR advised this was cancelled due to staff illness and therefore deferred. Governors discussed the possible value of having an EYFS parent governor as lead EYFS governor but **agreed** this was felt not to be best practice.	**Action:** JN, CE and GM to undertake visits

	Safeguarding Visit – Governors noted the previously circulated visit report which was also available on Governor Hub. Governors asked whether a yearly walkthrough was undertaken by the safeguarding governor, CR advised that a walkthrough was very helpful in increasing understanding of the school environment, ethos and atmosphere but regular discussions with the DSL and DDSL were also required. DJ noted that general safeguarding points could be included on the visit proforma such as adults wearing correct lanyards, security arrangements on arrival etc. CR highlighted the value in all Governors being involved in safeguarding visits as it was a collective responsibility. CE and DJ **agreed** to add appropriate points to the visit template to support safeguarding monitoring. CE thanked CR for her work and noted the value of her contribution.	**Action:** DJ and CE add safeguarding points to visit proforma
11.	**Policy Review** Asthma Policy within Medical Needs Policy – DJ advised the school was starting to develop a procedure for effective asthma management within school and reported this would be ready for approval in September. Governors asked who was responsible for the policy, DJ advised he was working with representatives from the NHS in developing the policy. CR noted the importance of ensuring the emergency inhaler in school remained in date, DJ confirmed the emergency inhalers were currently in date. Relational Policy – DJ advised this was currently being finalised and not currently ready for approval. Governors asked when it was hoped for the school to have the policy in place, DJ advised this was from the start of term. Governors asked if there had been any consultation with parents regarding the policy, DJ advised this had not occurred, but staff had been very involved. Governors asked whether the policy had been discussed with pupils, DJ confirmed this. Governors asked if the final page could be sent to parents, DJ advised the summary of changes and policy overview could be sent before the end of term. Governors **agreed** that the policy should be finalised following the parental consultation and then reviewed and formally approved via email by Governors in readiness for September.	**Action:** Include asthma policy in Sept agenda **Action:** DJ send policy to parents **Action:** Governors to approve finalised policy via email
12.	**Links with Parents and Community** Governors noted there were no updates for this meeting.	
13.	**Governor Training** CE reported practice in other Trust schools regarding sharing information obtained from Governor training courses onto Governor Hub, and recommendations being shared within the LGB regarding useful or less useful courses to attend. Governors noted the existence of a “Governor Training” folder on Governor Hub and the use of the notice board facility to share information. Governors noted no training courses had been attended since the last meeting. CE encouraged all governors to review the available courses from the National College and try to attend one. Governors asked if additional training information was available, KP advised that information received from Devon Education Services was posted onto Governor Hub via the Resources folder with a notification sent to all.	
14.	**Communication with Trust Board**	

	CE advised he had chaired the recent Chairs Forum in the absence of the current Chair. CE invited governors to contact him with any items for the next Chairs Forum meeting to be held in the autumn term.	
15.	**Risks to School Business Identified During the Meeting** CE highlighted the need to fill the lead governor roles for SEND, EYFS and safeguarding and the issue of effective governor recruitment. Governors noted the future risk of needing to elect a new Chair when CE steps down as Chair at the end of 2023/2024 academic year. Governors asked regarding the budget risk following the CIF bid being awarded and the resulting financial contribution required from the school, RS advised that the Headteachers and Trust Board were reviewing the possibility of pooling surplus resources between all Trust schools in the future but advised that for this bid the funding would be from current school reserves and there would be no impact upon the planned budget.	
16.	**Any Other Business** No items were raised for discussion.	
17.	**Date of Next Meetings:** • Wednesday 27th September 2023, 6.00pm at school	

Meeting closed 8.05 pm.