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 24th January 2024 at 6pm.

Present:	*Tamara Al-Khalili (TA)	Dan Jenkins (DJ) **Headteacher**
	Martin Bell (MB)	*Sarah Sukuum (SS)
	*Totty Brobyn (TB)	*Evonne Pavey (EP)
	*Alice Evans (AE)	
	Chris Edwards (CE) **Chair**	
In Attendance:	*Anna Cooksey (Clk) Governance Professional	
	Rachel Shaw (RS) Chief Executive	
	Kathy Skinner (KS), Deputy Headteacher	

*Indicates remote attendance via Microsoft Teams

Item	Details of Discussion	Decision or Action
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Consent** CE welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jill Noakes and Georgia Martin. Governors consented to these absences.	
2.	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest pertaining to any items on the agenda.	
3.	**Local Governing Board Matters** Skills Audit – This had been previously circulated to the board, CE thanked Governors for completing the audit and shared the results. Summary shared with Governors. The areas that scored under three (out of five) are the areas for Governor focus: • Disciplinary panel – training to be circulated to the Governors to facilitate this. • Experience of Governance in another school – this is not unusual to score low as Governors tend to support the school as it is their local. • Experience of Chairing a Board and committee – Governors were reminded of the imminent change of Chair. Governors commented on the wish to nurture and train, COG asked if anyone aspired to become a Chair of Local Governing Board in September 2024. COG explained the role of the Chair of Governors and Chairing the Forum and asked for anyone to raise an interest after the meeting directly. • COG - With sufficient time to get it ready, we could advertise for a specific skill – being mindful of the gaps highlighted on the summary. • DJ commented there were some people on the Inspiring Governance website, if the Board could not find a replacement. • COG will give some thought to recruitment of a COG. • DJ/RS suggested at the next meeting the COG should be decided or the Trust consulted.	**Action:** Circulate pupil exclusion training **Decision:** COG Succession Planning **Action:** Raise Interest

4.	**Minutes of the previous meeting Tuesday 21st November 2023** The minutes of 21.11.23 were **approved** as a true record of the meeting.	**Decision:** Minutes 21.11.23 **approved**

Matters Arising:

3	Monitoring roles to be updated on Gov Hub	Clerk	ASAP	**Complete**
3 C/Fwd.	Complete skills audit and return to CE	As outstanding	December 2023	**Complete**
3 C/Fwd.	Complete statutory declarations PI, KCSiE and LGB Code of Conduct on GH	As outstanding	ASAP	**Complete**
3 C/Fwd.	Wellbeing Governor visit (as per discussion in item 9)	MB/AE	24.01.2023	**C/F**
3 C/Fwd.	Upload relational policy & intimate care policies to website	Headteacher	ASAP	**C/F**
3 C/Fwd.	Carry out Website Audit	AE	24.01.2023	**C/F**
6	School safeguarding action plan to be shared with governors and safeguarding monitoring visit undertaken particularly around filtering standards	Headteacher/ TB/CE	24.01.2023	**C/F**
7	Review of the Emergency and Evacuation policy to be added to Safeguarding Action plan.	Headteacher	24.01.2023	**Complete**
7	To share learning points from the Bowhill funding audit	PW	ASAP	**Complete**
8	To carry out a Health and Safety Walk with Kelvyn Bond	DJ and MB	24.01.2023	**Complete**
9	Staff room Wellbeing poster contacts to be updated	Headteacher	ASAP	**Complete**
11	Communication Item to be added to future agendas in relation to sharing governor updates with parents	Clerk	Ongoing	**Complete**
12	To focus on the red/amber areas of the monitoring schedule	All	24.01.2023	**Complete**
12	To define next steps on Local Governing Body Handbook	CE	ASAP	**C/F**

5. **Headteacher's Report**

Governors received a Headteacher's Summary Report.

Headteacher Summary

Headlines:

- Attendance has improved by 2% from last year, due to building relationships approach – conversations with parents and being as creative as possible, home visits, working with grandparents, setting clear timeframes and realistic expectations and solution focused. There is often an underlying reason – there is a significant problem with mental health.

The difficulty is having the non-negotiable conversations that the child must be in school. 5 parents had formal invites and the school has met with the EWO. The steps are clear to parents. The final meeting has a 6-week time period with clear targets and is then re-assessed after a further 6 weeks. Families targeted with historically low attendance.

- CE commented that 94.4% was in line with National but still the lowest in the Trust. Persistent absence is higher because of one child with an EHCP on reduced timetable.
- External exclusion 14 days this year, 1 child is currently in alternative provision.
- One long term staff absence on phased return and one occupational health referral. Short term sickness is relatively low.
- DJ is ensuring the policy is clear relating to trigger points, meetings, and process to encourage good attendance and monitor staff needs.
- CPD is a key focus.
- KS has been accepted on NPQH qualification.
- Opal training is a success story with MTA inclusion.
- Due to the limitations of daytime training school will provide some twilight virtual training sessions for Teaching Assistants to enhance the culture of teaching and learning school.
- COG – review of SEND pupils provision technology has taken place included how to scaffold teaching for SEND pupils, following an external advisor visit.
- School has purchased 17 iPads and trolley.
- DJ staffing structure – KS is regularly freeing up teachers to model and coach. Teachers' confidence, wellbeing and equality has increased.
- Risk register has been updated 9.1.2024 - 18 first choices in reception now increased to 26. We are expecting to be full in Reception.
- Governors congratulated the school for another success.
- DJ commented on statutory data, areas for monitoring –
  KS2 data - three new joiners, all EAL. Support in place to close the gap.
  Phonics KS1 – small cohort so results were easily impacted.

Q. COG – are there any other areas to be focussed on by the governors?

A. DJ advised school to have more dialogue and monitoring of Teaching and Learning in the classroom. School is to move PSHE and RE to Kapow following recent book looks. The Devon syllabus is not fit for school purpose, the triangulation would be more successful it is believed with Kapow.

Q. COG – cue card of leadership question – how well does the data match what we see in the lessons?

A. DJ confirmed, otherwise Senior Leaders would question the data. It is understood the teachers are particularly stringent with assessment.

- Q. COG – How do you use the data to impact the classroom?

A. DJ confirmed the school values to keep up not catch up :

- small intervention groups e.g. read write inc. / colourful semantics.
- Training for all children that need it.
- Pupil progress meetings take place, and every child is discussed to understand any potential barriers to learning.
- Half a term interventions and reviewing every five weeks to measure the impact.

- Q. COG – Do all governors check safeguarding at every visit?

A. Now included on each visit proforma e.g. monitoring of the signing in procedures and monitoring of displays.

	• RS commented attendance at parents' evenings historically looks quite low. Non attending parents are offered open door chats and telephone calls that is not included in the report. In future we will update with the subsequent meetings. • DJ advised there is a potential new volunteer – previously COG at West Exe –and has worked for the trust. Very experienced and will bring relevant skills – school would like to discuss being a potential governor further building relations with the local community.	
6.	**Attendance** See section 5.	
7.	**Safeguarding Update** Q. A governor asked as a new governor should I need to know about a safeguarding claim against the school? A. DJ confirmed the case had been mentioned, in general terms to the governing board. RS confirmed the safeguarding trustee had been included in investigations. Senior leaders had been included in the reporting of the incident. "The best feedback we can give is the Trust are satisfied with the actions that have been taken. The Trust had commissioned a safeguarding audit and everyone is satisfied. Lessons have been learnt. The school's reaction has been very strong and proactive." COG confirmed the two main reasons to restrict – any complaint over a period of time may lead to a governor investigation and need the Governors to be independent / have no prior knowledge. For legal reasons details should be kept to a minimum. <u>Safeguarding Reassurance for Governors:</u> Debbie Buckingham - an independent visitor stated they were asked for photo ID. This was the only school in the trust that asked for photo ID. Debbie was impressed. The staff are reminded that even if you know the staff member / governor they should still be asking for photo ID. Filtering and monitoring is now in place following the action plans. DJ receives daily emails – any search that is blocked. There have been no concerns so far. DJ – there is a regular safeguarding meeting, and the culture - safeguarding is a priority. There is a significant amount completed to date - this is largely helped by capacity of Senior Leadership Team being increased. Prevent Strategy – COG confirmed this is updated every two years. Whole staff body on home office training and prevent strategy has been reviewed.	
8.	**Pupil and Staff Wellbeing** • There are no further updates, other than there is a governor visit booked next half term.	**Action:** Carry out wellbeing visit
9.	**Policy Review** Governors thanked staff for making it so clear on the policies where changes had been made whilst retaining the substantive policy:	

	PSHE – Recommended change to Kapow, to ensure up to date with legislation. A governor asked if this needs to be consulted with parents? DJ confirmed not necessary as statutory content will remain the same. Can this policy be revisited in the Autumn term following the change? **Approved with changes.** **Online Safety policy** - Approved **Anti Bullying** – Approved	**Decision:** Policies **Approved**
10.	**Links with Parents and Community** • Dates are being finalised for the usual quizzes and summer fair date is set. • Raised over £1000 at Christmas fair (in two hours) • Small group of growing volunteer parents in reception class for succession planning (FOS). • DJ working with Theatre Alibi to a new library opening (link school) to encourage drama. • Working with local artists for sculpture and theatre for half term events. • Holiday camp is taking place again this year. • Lettings are increasing – good income for the school.	
11.	<u>Governor Monitoring</u> **Health and Safety** – MB had undertaken a visit and had been very reassured. All outstanding tasks were completed e.g. the light and side gate. There had been a concern raised about the darkness particularly during discos, this has been resolved and the doors repaired. **Safeguarding** – TB gave a verbal summary. 2 Safeguarding visits had taken place. The focus had been on the action plan from the previous audit. Single Central Record (SCR) was reviewed and a health and safety walk took place. One area of concern – uneven paving slabs – **actioned**. There was a requirement to undertake Safer Recruitment – **actioned.** Second visit had focussed on Safeguarding at lunchtimes. There were no concerns raised in previous report. Opal looked to be working very well. No concerns were raised on this visit. CPOMS was checked. March 20th 2024 was set for a further visit with a focus on Single Central Record, Filtering and Monitoring and how to raise the profile to parents enabling them to raise safeguarding concerns.	**Action:** March 20th include filtering and monitoring

12.	**Governor Training** COG reminded Governors to share courses with each other and relevant slides can be uploaded to the Hub. New governors confirmed they had undertaken all expected so far. COG reminded Governors to keep reading up to date e.g. CST updates as a form of CPD.	
13.	**Summary – Risks and Opportunities**	
	COG asked governors to consider any risks or any communication opportunities which arose MTSfrom the meeting. Risks Identified: • Year 6 and Year 1 data potential impacts, as mentioned earlier. • Chair of Governor succession planning. Governor Content for newsletter: COG asked if the schools that are coming in to review Opal could be published to the school community. QUESTION : A Governor asked to mention how many governor visits take place? QUESTION: A governor asked if it is possible to review how many people are reading the newsletter on Dojo? Can this be compared for a Monday issue to a Friday issue as previously was done.	**ACTION:** Updates to the newsletter & number of readers
14.	**Communication with Trust Board** COG asked for Chairs forum next month is there anything you would like to be raised? There were no questions raised. COG mentioned the Governors Induction handbook is being updated to ensure it is fit for purpose, as it is still quite lengthy. April 22nd away day for as many governors / trustees / head teachers all together look at key school and Trust documents. Can all those who would like to attend record it with the clerk?	**ACTION:** Clerk record those who wish to attend on April 22nd 2024.
15.	**Any Other Business** There were no further items raised.	
16.	**Dates of Next Meetings** 6th March 2024 at 6pm 15th May 2024 at 6pm 19th June 2024 at 6pm	

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

Agenda item	Action	By Whom	When
3	Circulate training for pupil disciplinary panels	COG	ASAP
3	Governors to raise any interest in Chair of Governors role succession planning	Governors	ASAP
5	Governors to include safeguarding on visit reports and to visual assessments on each visit	Governors	February 2024
11	March 20th Safeguarding visit to include filtering and monitoring	COG/TB	March 20th 2024
13	Review how many parents are reading the newsletter on a Monday and compare to the numbers that opened it on a Friday	DJ	Next meeting
13	Update the newsletter with the number of governor visits and school visits to observe Opal	DJ	Next meeting
14	Governors to confirm their attendance for April 22nd away day to the Clerk	Govs / Clerk	Next meeting