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 27th September 2023 at 6pm.

Invited Participants:

Governors:	Alice Evans (AE)	* Jackie Evans (JE)
	Chris Edwards (CE), Chair	*Jill Noakes (JN), Vice Chair
	Dan Jenkins (DJ), Headteacher	Martin Bell (MB)
	* Evonne Pavey (EP)	*Tamara Al-Khalili (TA)
	Georgia Martin (GM)	
Other Participants:	*Amelia List (AL), Trust Co-ordinator	
	*Donna Ridley (DR), ELAT LGB Clerk (*part)*	
	Totty Brobyn (TB) and Sarah Sukkum (SS), Prospective Governors	

*Indicates remote attendance via Microsoft Teams

Item	Details of Discussion	Decision or Action
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Consent** CE welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year. Apologies were received from Rachel Shaw (RS).	
2.	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest pertaining to any items on the agenda.	
3.	**Local Governing Board Matters** **CE** was re-elected as Chair for the academic year 23-24. This would be the last year that CE wanted to stand as Chair. If anyone was interested in the Chair role then they could speak to CE outside of the meeting. **JN** was re-elected as Vice Chair for the academic year 23-24. <u>Governing Board Membership</u> CE reported that at the end of last year Carolyn Rowe and Martin Rich had stepped down as community governors. Governors thanked both for their work. Totty Brobyn (TB) and Sarah Sukkum (SS) were appointed as Community Governors. CE suggested that TB took on the role as Lead Safeguarding Governor with CE as shadow governor and for SS to take on the role as SEND Governor. A shadow could be put in place if required and would be discussed later in the meeting.	

	CE noted that while the board technically only had two designated parent governors, it was heavily weighted towards parents of the school, and restated the importance of the LGB's focus remaining strategic rather than operational. **CE** All training for new governors was online and ran through the National College. JE and EP were introduced as the Staff Governors. <u>Skills Audit</u> The previous Clerk had put together a Skills Audit for the LGB's to identify any gaps in their knowledge. All governors needed to complete the audit so that it could be collated so that the relevant training could be booked. **Q AE Would ELAT Trust look at the recruitment of governors through the Trust (similar to Ted Wragg Trust)?** **A** Clerk to take back to Trust. <u>Named Governor Roles</u> Safeguarding – **TB** with CE shadowing SEND – **SS** with JN shadowing Health and Safety / Premises – **MB** EYFS – **TBC** All other role assignments will remain the same <u>Statutory Requirements</u> All governors needed to ensure that their declarations and confirmations were completed on Governor Hub (PI, Code of Conduct and KCSiE). **Q JE My husband is on the list of contractors for ELAT, would this be a PI?** **A DJ** He has been part of the tendering process so yes that would need to be declared on a PI form.	All All All
4.	**Minutes of the previous meeting 21st June 2023** The minutes of 21.6.23 were **approved** as a true record of the meeting. <u>Matters Arising:</u> Any matters arising would be dealt with throughout the body of the meeting.	**Decision:** Minutes 20.6.23 approved
5.	**Headteacher's Report** DJ shared his report, highlighted the following and invited questions: <u>Attendance</u> Rachel Shaw had been speaking to the Trust about attendance post-covid and the change of attitude towards attendance and wellbeing from families. 96% was the pre-covid target for attendance. Last year the national average was 92%. School was very pro-active with attendance and were very aware of the families that struggled with attendance. Devon	

monitors any attendance under 90%, it was important that parents recognised the impact on learning that poor attendance had. Learning was built on prior knowledge so it was easy to fall behind when missing days. Home visits and pick ups had been offered to support families. If the family was not engaging warning letters would be sent and fines could be issued by Devon. School continued to focus on meeting the needs of the children. With a high percentage of EAL children within the school, every leave of absence would be looked at on a case-by-case basis to see whether it was a trend or a one off.

AE If parents had children at the school during Covid their attitude towards attendance could be more relaxed. The importance of attendance was something that needed to be reinforced to parents.

SEND

The big target this year was a focus on SEND and ensuring that these children were able to achieve well in their reading, writing and maths. The gap between PP and non-PP had widened and steps had been put in place to address the gap.

Relational Policy

The Relational Policy had been implemented due to the large number of children with mental health need and additional needs. It enabled the adults to have access to a wide range of strategies to help manage those needs. There are now four safeguarding Leads within the school.

Q CE There are new whole school schemes in history, geography, ICT and art, what was the bedding in period for these and are they costly?
A DJ This was part of ensuring wider curriculum consistency and making sure coverage of all required knowledge and skills was secure. The schemes would cost in the region of £200 each but it would save the teachers time in planning. It would give the teachers time to adapt the lessons for the pupils.

Child on child incident

After an incident an external investigation had been commissioned to look at the school policies and practice. Rachel Shaw and the Trust will be commissioning a separate investigation into it in more detail.

Q AE Where are we with numbers? The young carer number is high, how are they being supported?
A DJ There had been a number of leavers and joiners. We have had a push on identifying young carers, they are being supported by Ellie.

Q AE Do you have any additional safeguarding protocols in place for young carers?
A DJ We follow the safeguarding procedures for all the children.

Q AE Do you have concerns about the Year 1 numbers?
A DJ It was a low birth rate year.

Q JN The English Lead has been appointed to the University was there any staffing implications?
A DJ No we are paid to cover the staffing costs. We are encouraging our teachers to share their best practice.

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	Q TB When children miss school are you giving them any mental health support? **A DJ** Ellie has now qualified as a mental health champion and is doing talking & drawing therapy with the children. We are doing all we can to meet the emotional needs of the children and try to get the balance of academic rigour and also having the resilience and skills to succeed in life. **A JE** I see all adults on a daily basis supporting children when they need it. <u>SDP</u> The SDP had been uploaded to Governor Hub. **CE** governors needed to be aware of what the priorities are and what had changed from last year. **DJ** Will create a flyer with the priorities on to be shared with governors, this can be referred to on their monitoring visits. **DJ** Opal had been a very positive addition to the school. <u>Priorities</u> 1. SEND – staff would be encouraged to support each other to try the walkthrough methods out. The vision was to make sure that teachers were able to coach each other and to try things out. Staff meetings would be more CPD based with a self-improvement model. 2. Subject Leaders – subject leaders need to build up their subject knowledge to become experts in the new scheme. DJ to support teachers. 3. ELAT Teaching and Learning principles – core revisits, using the visualisers, sharing the child's work to be engaged in the core model. Supporting the children with SEN and PP. 4. Relational Approach – meeting the emotional needs of the pupils in the class. **CE** these would be the strategies that governors would be monitoring throughout the year. Governors **approved** the strategies. <u>End of year data report</u> **Q CE Are there any concerns with the KS1 greater depth results?** **A DJ** Yes, writing was tricky as it was teacher assessed. Teachers are honest and their assessments are honest. We need to know where we are. Greater Depth is working substantially above your peer group, if 30% of the children in school are EAL and 28% Pupil Premium it is hard to get to greater depth. Last year we were moderated so it was an honest picture of where that class is. **A JE** Greater Depth was hard to get to at writing. <u>Premises update</u>	DJ **Decision:** SDP approved

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	School had been awarded a grant and all the fire doors had been replaced and a new fire alarm system installed across the premises. There was some work to be carried out on the doors to make them accessible for all children. There had been some reports of teenagers coming on site after hours which was anti-social behaviour. The videos have been sent to the Police and the fence was being looked at.	
6.	**Safeguarding Update** Covered in the Headteachers Report	
7.	**Staff and Pupil Wellbeing Update** <u>Staff Workload/Wellbeing Survey</u> **CE** Rachel Shaw had shared the results of the wellbeing survey. CE proposed that the survey discussion be deferred to the next meeting and in the meantime the wellbeing governors could undertake a monitoring visit. Governors noted that the results looked pleasing. Some of the flagged areas had been addressed such as freeing up teachers' time, support where SEND was concerned. **Q AE Had any more concerns been addressed since the report?** **A DJ** Freeing up time is tricky, the school is very flexible with work life balance. The marking policy was very modern and Ofsted had been very happy with that and staff wellbeing was reflected positively in the report. There had been a shift in how SEND children were supported with TA's having a more flexible approach. St Thomas is a welcoming school and we are accepting more SEND children which some parents have not been happy about. DJ is dealing with this as there are some concerns about parents currently.	Wellbeing visit Agenda
8.	**Pupil Premium Strategy Report** **CE** The report would be deferred to the next meeting. The trend in PP data was currently not where it should be so would be preferable to come back to the next LGB with a report and a plan. **DJ** The Whole School data for PP on target with combined was 40%, ELAT was 22%, National 20%, so PP data is good, but the gap between those not meeting RWM and those who are has widened again this year by 5%. **DJ** The objective of the Trust was to narrow the gap which we haven't been able to do. In the future the PP report should be on the 2nd agenda of the term.	Agenda
9.	**Sports Premium Report** **CE** The Sports Premium Report had been shared.	
11.	Item 11 was taken out of order of the agenda. **Governor Monitoring** <u>Reports on Completed Visits</u>	

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	GM had completed a monitoring visit on PE and had uploaded her report to governor hub. *Adjournment 19.35 – 19.45 whilst there were technical issues.* **GM** Had met with Mrs Skinner (KS). She showed GM the equipment and where it was stored. It seems that staff could do with some extra support outside. Netball was very dominant, could the sports offer be changed around? <u>Planned/Suggested Visits</u> **CE** will undertake a PP visit soon. **JN** will get in touch with JE to arrange a Science visit soon. <u>Visit Report Template Updates</u> There would be some changes to the template to incorporate Safeguarding into every monitoring visit.	CE
10.	**Policy Review** (School Based Policies) - Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy – **Approved** but not on the school website. - Relational Policy – **Approved**, DJ to share summary page with parents - Asthma Policy within Medical Needs – **not ready**, defer until next meeting - Intimate Care Policy - **Approved** - School Admissions Policy 24/25 – **Approved** pending amendments. - Outdoor Education Policy - **Approved** - Equality Statement (Equality Objectives) – **pending review**, defer until next meeting. - Hiring/Lettings Policy – **Approved** pending amendments. **Trust Policies** - Child Protection/Safeguarding Concerns - Low Level Safeguarding Concerns - Whistleblowing	**Decision:** Policy approval as noted DJ Agenda Agenda Noted
12.	**Governor Training** <u>Feedback on Courses Attended</u> TB had attended the Safeguarding training and noted that although it was a long session it was very positive. <u>Upcoming Training</u> SS and TB would need to undertake their new governor training with the National College. Training was open to all governors and they were encouraged to book training as desired.	
13.	**Risk Management** <u>Risks to School Business Identified</u>	

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	- Potential reputational risk after the incident investigation - Succession planning for a new Chair - Parent WhatsApp groups - High percentage of parents on the LGB not being best practice **Q AE Was there any mitigation that could be done with regards to the WhatsApp groups?** **A CE** They are not school owned channels so need to look at other approaches to tackling it, such as education and awareness.	
14.	**Communication with Trust Board** **CE** Any items can be raised at the Chairs Forum.	
15.	**Any Other Business** <u>Library</u> **DJ** The Community Builders had put out a plea as the St Thomas Library was closing. Could the school facilitate having a separate library built? DJ had a look and there is a little bit of room that would allow for St Thomas Library to be built on the land. **Q AE have you got a site location?** **A DJ** It was more of an offer; we are presuming that if Rachel Shaw thinks it is an option, then it is something that we could consider. It would have lots of positives for the children and the community. There would be access on the boundary outside of the school site. The land could be leased by the school and could generate an income stream. We would lose some space which was a negative. Can we say that we may be able to help? **JE** Potentially saying yes isn't committing and it was something that could be explored. **Q AE If the library does have to shut quickly could we offer any storage?** **A DJ** There may be ways we could help. Governors **agreed** that it was an idea that should be explored. <u>Website</u> **Q DJ Could anyone help with keeping the website up to date?** If governors have any time then let DJ know.	All
16.	**Date of Next Meeting** 15th November 2023 24th January 2024 6th March 2024 15th May 2024 19th June 2024	

Meeting closed at 20.17pm

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Agenda item	Action	By Whom	When
3	Complete skills audit and return to CE	All	Asap
3	Assign EYFS lead governor	All	Asap
3	Complete statutory declarations PI, KCSiE and LGB Code of Conduct on GH	ALL	Asap
5	Create flyer with SDP priorities	DJ	Asap
7	Wellbeing Governor visit	Wellbeing governors	Asap
7	Add survey results to next agenda	Donna	Next LGB
8	Add PP strategy to next agenda	Donna	Next LGB
9	Add safeguarding questions to governor visit template	CE	Asap
10	Share relational policy summary page with parents	DJ	Asap
10	Add Asthma Policy to next agenda	Donna	Next LGB
10	Add Equality Statement to next agenda	Donna	Next LGB
15	Website help	All	Asap