

Shebbear Community School
Minutes from the Part One Governing Body **Zoom Meeting**
Wednesday 28th April 2021 at 6.50 p.m.

PROCEDURAL

Present:

Mr N Alford (Head Teacher),
Co-Opted Governors: Mr A Goode, Mrs G Cooper, Mrs C Coward (Chairman), Miss N Derwin
Parent Governors: Mrs A Bernstone, Mrs T Brock
LA Governor: Mrs P Kirby (Vice-Chair and Chairman for part of this meeting).
Staff Governor: Miss R Curtis
Clerk to Governing Body: Mrs S Hawker (clerk).

Alumnis Multi Academy Trust:

Mr N Moir (CEO)
Ms R Sharpe (Head Teacher Clinton and Dolton Primary Schools)
Ms R Colpus-Fricker (Business Manager)

The meeting was quorate and all governors attended via Zoom.

1/04/20 Apologies:

Mr J Richards and Mrs L Marshall (parent governors) sent their apologies for this meeting; governors agreed to accept and sanction these.

2/04/20 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests:

No new declarations were made by existing governors.

STRATEGIC

3/04/20 Presentation from the Alumnis Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

Mr Alford explained to governors that the Alumnis MAT had approached him and following a meeting between himself, Mrs Coward and Mr Moir, he felt that it was appropriate that they gave a presentation to the full governing body to allow them to decide if joining a MAT was something that we felt would be beneficial to our school going forwards. He added that only this day the NAHT had said that schools should not feel bullied into joining a MAT, even though the Government is very committed to schools doing so. Mrs Coward reiterated that it was important that all governors had the opportunity to listen so that an informed decision could be made and that this discussion should be minuted.

Mrs Coward welcomed Mr Moir, Ms Sharpe and Ms Colpus-Fricker to the meeting who gave a presentation explaining why they believe that Alumnis MAT is very different to other MATs, adding that today Gavin Williamson had released seven policies to revive MATs and that the Government was releasing more financial investment in them. They shared their vision for the future including the staffing structure of the MAT with some in post and some yet to be recruited. Governors asked a number of questions:

Q: Has there been much change in staffing when schools join their MAT such as a high turnover or greater stability (GC)

Q: Does the MAT offer value for money? There seem to be a lot of positions that are non-teaching such as ICT or Marketing. Where does the money come from to support and sustain this? (ND)

Q: We are not hearing much about the children - can you tell me why we would be better off in the MAT than as we currently are, but please focus on the benefit to the children in your answer? (JQ)

Q: A lot is being funded outside the classroom and directly on the children, how does this offer value for money? (AG)

Signed:

Dated:

Q: Based on what you have said, if there is a really good teacher at one school would they then be expected to spend a lot of time outside the classroom upskilling other staff members? What happens to their class then and would they miss out if the class teacher was redeployed? (ND)

Q: How much autonomy does each Head Teacher actually have? (AG)

To summarise the answers, all three stressed that there could only be positive things about joining their MAT, however in most cases the answers did not satisfy governors as they were based around the 'refreshing outlook to remove barriers and find solutions'. Many of the positive examples cited we are already providing for our children such as a London residential and Chromebooks. In regard to autonomy, Ms Sharpe explained that she has autonomy over her curriculum and also the Sport and Pupil Premium aspects of her budget. She extended an invitation for governors to visit either of her schools if they would like to see the work in progress. Mr Moir concluded by saying that he felt that there were definitely alignments between ourselves and the Alumnis MAT, with us holding the same ambitions and like-mindedness.

Mr Alford thanked them for giving up their time to join our meeting and Mr Moir, Ms Sharpe and Ms Colpus-Fricker left the meeting.

Mrs Coward asked governors for their thoughts with the general feeling being that they didn't directly answer the questions posed. Mr Alford commented that today a 'try before you buy' membership had been suggested by the DfE, which was not mentioned by Mr Moir.

Mrs Cooper commented that she could not see that it would offer anything to our children that we don't currently offer and so could not see a good reason to change.

Mr Quance felt that we are currently in a privileged position with a strong budget and staff.

Mr Goode said that as far as he could see there was a lot of money being spent outside the classroom; he felt that if you have the right staff in the right place a school would succeed.

Mrs Coward asked if governors would vote on whether to pursue joining the Alumnis MAT further and all voted against doing so at this time, for reasons cited above. Mr Alford would contact Mr Moir to explain that at the present time we would not be looking to join, having taken into account the views of staff and governors, including parent governors.

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

4/04/20 Head Teacher's Report (documents available before the meeting on GovernorHub):

Mr Alford's report included Devon County Council and Covid-19 updated risk assessments, pupil attendance figures, inclusion figures and safeguarding.

Mr Alford confirmed that, as agreed before Easter, the children are now mixing on the playground at break times which is going very well and has brought the number of minor injuries down. He advised that we have had several enquiries from people relocating to the area with two new children starting in a couple of weeks, and two more likely in September.

He reported that the children have settled well and he held pupil progress meetings with all teaching staff today. The meetings focussed on the outcomes of recent pupil assessments. There is a definite correlation between the level of parental input during the lockdown periods and how much the children have fallen behind. There has been an impact over the last year, but he believes that it is not as significant as the school was anticipating. The children who engaged the least were generally the lowest achievers prior to the lockdown. Having studied the data, Years 3 and 6 were the most engaged with home learning, with Panda and Teddy class children engaging particularly well. Years 4 and 5 had the most disappointing levels of engagement and their attitude to learning was not so strong, therefore they need to be a clear focus going forward.

Signed:

Dated:

In answer to questions, he confirmed there was a very marked difference to the Year 6 pupils who demonstrated an excellent attitude throughout. Teachers will undertake end of year assessments and these will be moderated against other local schools to ensure these are accurate and provide a clear picture of pupil attainment and any gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed in the coming year.

One benefit of lockdown and home learning has been the tremendous upskilling of both staff and pupils in ICT which has already been noticeable in since the children returned.

He shared parental feedback from the recent home learning survey. The feedback was very positive both in terms of the quantity and quality of the home learning. Similarly, the consensus view was that the school had organised both the remote learning and in school learning well. The full report has been shared with parents/carers and is available to governors on Governor Hub.

He explained that OfSTED visits would be resuming from next week and that the end of our five year statutory period would fall in November, therefore we are likely to be inspected by the end of the next academic year at the latest. He reminded governors that although we are not part of a MAT, we are collaborating with a number of other local schools (Hatherleigh, Winkleigh, St Giles on the Heath, Halwill and Ashwater) and he would be attending a meeting next week to explore further ways to work together.

He concluded but saying that things are beginning to look more 'normal' at school and we are hoping to hold a sports' day, leaver' assembly etc. as we usually would this term. He thanked Mr Goode and Mrs Marshall, both of whom had undertaken some improvement works in school over the Easter holidays which has been very much appreciated by all.

5/04/2020 Governors' Reports:

New Governor Course (TB)

Mrs Brock's report is on Governor Hub; she confirmed that she found this course to be very useful, interesting and informative

Finance for Governors (AG)

Mr Goode said that he found this very good and useful, particularly with regard to looking at future school financing. He will complete a report which will be put onto Governor Hub.

SEN (AG and RC)

Mr Goode and Miss Curtis have met with Mrs Gough (SENDCo) twice during lockdown and reports are available on Governor Hub. Mr Goode reported that there is a widening of the gap, particularly in Teddy Class, however this remains similar to before. He advised that for future autism assessments two individual reports will need to be obtained, at additional cost, and there is currently an 18 month wait for assessment. This is cause for concern and is something that governors will need to be aware of and monitor.

ACTION: CLERK TO GIVE MR GOODE AN IMPACT OF LEARNING FORM FOR COMPLETION AND PUT ON GOVERNOR HUB (AG AND SH)

6/04/2020 Clerk's Report:

GDPR: The clerk confirmed that there have been no breaches to her knowledge since the last meeting.

Training: She drew governors' attention to available training via Devon Governor Services should anyone wish her to book them onto any sessions. She confirmed that she will be attending the Clerks' Update session in a couple of weeks' time. She concluded by thanking the governors who had completed and filled out their skills matrix form and asking that outstanding ones be completed and returned as soon as possible for collation, with results coming to the next meeting.

ACTION: GOVERNORS WHO HAVE NOT YET DONE SO TO COMPLETE AND RETURN SKILLS MATRIX ASAP

She concluded by saying that she continue to circulate the Governance Alert and DAG weekly emails to all governors.

7/04/2020 Financial Reports:

FRS: A FRS report showing Month 13 data was circulated to governors before the meeting via Governor Hub. This agrees with the Devon County Council data and shows a carry forward to next year of £44,782.

School Budget 2021/2022: Following the Resources meeting before the Easter holidays, the proposed budget for 2021/22 had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. This budget shows sustainability over the next five years, maintaining the current staffing structure and allowing for some increase in staffing (see Part 2 minutes). The clerk advised that we had learnt today that there would be no Flower Show so income in the sum of £138 needed to be removed. She also advised that the budget allowed for 6 hours of Educational Psychology and not 12 as we had last year. Mr Goode asked that this be checked with the SENDCo and increased by £562 if more hours were needed. Allowing for those two amendments, Mr Goode proposed that governors adopt this budget and this was seconded by Mrs Kirby and agreed by all.

The clerk asked governors for permission to remove the 'Learning Community' cost centre which has not been used for a couple of years and also to add a 'PPA Supply' cost centre to aid with reconciliation. Mrs Cooper proposed that governors agreed to these two requests, seconded by Mr Quance and agreed by all.

ACTION: CLERK TO CHECK WITH SENDCO ABOUT ED PSYCH HOURS AND AMEND ACCORDINGLY; CLERK TO REMOVE FLOWER SHOW INCOME FROM PROPOSED BUDGET. THE BUDGET TO THEN BE LOCKED AND PUBLISHED TO DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL BY THE 1ST MAY (SH).

ACTION: LEARNING COMMUNITY COST CENTRE TO BE REMOVED AND PPA SUPPLY COST CENTRE TO BE CREATED (SH)

STRATEGIC ITEMS

8/04/2020 Approval of Committee Structure and terms of reference; committee membership; governor recruitment:

There was no business for this section of the meeting.

9/04/2020 Approval of minutes of the last meeting(s):

The Part One minutes of the last two full Governing Board meetings held on Zoom on the 25th January 2021 and 3rd March 2021 were circulated prior to the meeting. They were agreed by governors present and will be signed as correct by the Chairman at the earliest future time.

The Part One minutes of the Resources meeting held on 29th March 2021 were circulated prior to the meeting. They were agreed by governors present and will be signed as correct by the committee Chairman at the earliest future time. Mrs Bernstone offered her retrospective apologies.

ACTION: PAPER COPIES OF MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY (CC and AG)

10/04/2020 Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting(s) including progress made on 'Actions':

There were no matters arising from the full Governing Board meetings, however there was one item from the Resources Meeting:

First Aid at Work: As agreed, the clerk has taken some advice from the training provider and also the Devon County Council Health and Safety Team, both of whom believe that we are very well catered for bearing in mind the type of establishment we are and also the type of injuries we generally deal with. Mrs Coward had spoken to her husband (a medical professional) who also indicated that he would agree as for anything serious we would call for professional help. Mr Goode proposed that for the time being we remain as we are, seconded by Mrs Cooper and agreed by all.

11/04/2020 Policy adoption and review:

The following policies/procedures/school documents were circulated to governors before the meeting:

School Vision;
Outdoor Education (including Standing Operating Procedures);
Physical Education;
Behaviour (including Covid-19 Appendix);
Virtual Meeting Protocol

After some discussion, Mrs Kirby proposed that these all be adopted, with the Behaviour Policy to be reviewed in the Autumn Term to see if the appendix can be removed. Seconded by Mr Goode and agreed by all.

ACTION: POLICIES TO BE SIGNED BY THE CHAIRMAN AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY (CC)

12/04/2020. Items brought forward by the Chairman for this meeting:

Heating System: The clerk advised that the setbacks continue as the Salix loan scheme ended at the end of March (with no warning), which means that we are left with looking at a VELP loan to help us with funding a replacement heating system. Mr Goode stated that he was in favour of going ahead if we could receive a VELP loan and is in favour of the RESDevon quote as they are a local firm and he is aware that they provide a good standard of work.

Mrs Cooper raised concern at the significant difference in cost between the quotes that we have received (about £10,000) and said that she felt unconvinced that the RESDevon quote offered the best value for money and felt that we should ask for more quotes. Mr Quance agreed, suggesting that a working party be formed to address this.

Mrs Cooper proposed that more like for like quotes be obtained, however within the yet to be determined VELP timeline; seconded by Miss Derwin and agreed by all.

The internet proved to be very unstable at this time and Mrs Coward left the meeting and did not return. She advised, via text to Mr Alford, that her server had blown up. Mrs Kirby took the Chair.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO INVESTIGATE VELP TIMELINE AND MORE QUOTES (SH).

Governor Training: Mrs Coward has booked on to an OfSTED preparation course in June. Both Mrs Kirby and Mr Goode asked to be booked onto the same session.

ACTION: MR GOODE AND MRS KIRBY TO BE BOOKED ONTO OFSTED PREPARATION (SH)

School Improvements/Capital Projects: Mr Alford confirmed that the SSSG have applied to South West Water for a grant to help develop and improve the pond area, he added that the fencing people are coming this week to replace the old fencing.

He said that we are looking to improve the Teddy garden area which is sloping and fairly unusable, with a view to landscaping with different surfaces and a sensory garden feel. Mrs Hawker and Mrs Fuller have been working together on a grant application to secure some funding to do this work.

He would also like to improve the Year 6 shelter garden area which is getting overgrown and rickety, he is keen to keep maintaining and improving the school's environment in order to keep the school looking appealing and attractive and to do this we are actively sourcing external funding where possible.

13/04/2020 Correspondence:

Email correspondence has been circulated to governors weekly and is also available on GovernorHub.

There was no correspondence for discussion at this meeting.

GOVERNANCE

14/04/2020 Approval of Chair and Vice-Chair's terms of reference and election Chair and Vice-Chair:

This was not required for this meeting.

14/04/2020 Impact from this meeting:

*The governors have explored the possible benefits of joining a Multi Academy Trust and, at this time, remain unconvinced that there would be any benefit to the education of the children at our school;

*The governors have set and agreed a budget for the forthcoming financial year, showing sustainability across the next five years and a commitment to providing good quality education for all of the children at our school;

*The governors have considered school improvements to improve the learning environment and grounds for all children and staff at our school.

15. Dates and Times of Next Meetings:

Full Governing Body: Monday 24th May 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Resources: Monday 14th June 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Pay & Performance: To be agreed (this should have followed this meeting but we were not quorate)

It is hopeful that these will be held at school, depending on lockdown restrictions.

These are available as separate files on Governor Hub and will be populated with paperwork nearer the time of each meeting. The clerk will email governors a reminder approximately one week before each meeting.

Mr Quance proposed that we move into Part Two, seconded by Mrs Cooper and agree by all, for confidential business to be discussed at this meeting.

Following the Part 2 business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

Signed:

Dated: