



THE MARCH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meeting of:	Local Governing Body		
Date and time:	Monday 25 th January 2021 at 6:00pm (by Zoom conference call)		
Governors Present:	John Proctor (Chair), Mrs N. Metcalfe (Head), Justine Howard (Vice Chair), Rachel Bryan, Mary Isgar, Rod Hague, Josie Bannister, Briony Pocock, Rachel Hawes, Liz Coin.		
Others in attendance:	Annie Park (Clerk),		
<u>Quorum</u> :	6	Quorum met:	Yes

Meeting Commenced: - 18:04pm

Item		Action
1.	<p><u>Prayer</u> The meeting opened with a short prayer.</p> <p><u>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</u> The Chair welcomed the Governors to the LGB. There were no apologies as all Governors were present. The Governors introduced themselves to the new parent Governors and welcomed them to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair explained to the new Governors that they must complete a Code of Conduct and also undertake Safeguarding Training. The Chair explained that there was a level of confidentiality to the meetings.</p>	JB/BP
2.	<p><u>Declarations of interest</u> Governors were reminded to declare any interests that became pertinent during the meeting. There were no new declarations from the Governors.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Acceptance of Minutes and Action from 30th November 2020</u> The Governors confirmed the minutes were a true and accurate record. The Minutes were proposed by MI and seconded by RH. Chair to sign the minutes and email to the Headteacher.</p>	JP
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portacabin - There are issues with fixing this before it can be given to the school. This is ongoing. • Code of Conduct - This has been signed by all the current Governors. Once the parent Governors have signed this the Governing Board will be sent on to DCAT. • Admissions Policy - The Admissions Policy is out for consultation and closes this week. There have been no comments as yet. • Meeting Date - Moved from the 3rd May to 26th April 2021. 	
5.	<p>Leadership & Management – Headteacher’s Report, Achievement, School Development Plan The School returned on the 4th January and just prior to this there was a lot of talk on the news about Section 44 and a lot of the Teacher’s Unions had issued Section 44 letters. This gave teachers the option not to come</p>	

back into school due to a health and safety risk of a high transmission of COVID-19. Not one member of the teaching team sent a letter. All staff were coming in on the 4th January, and all turned up on the 4th, along with all support staff and admin staff. The school was very cold on the 4th January and the boiler had gone and the control panel had stopped working. There was no heating or hot water in school. The risk assessment says there has to be hot water for hand washing, so the school had to be closed. The majority of parents understood but there were a couple of very shocking emails calling the school liars. The Headteacher personally phoned those parents and said that all staff were there. A parent turned up with heaters for the school as the staff stayed in school. The lockdown was put in place at 8pm that evening.

There are very high levels of key worker children and vulnerable children in school. There was a survey of parents on the evening of the 4th January as jobs have changed since the last lockdown. This came back immediately. On average, the Government say that 2% of pupils are in primary school, the March are at 47.8% of the school and are full. This is a very high amount compared to local schools who have on average 10% in. There are more in at the lower age end of the school. The school are at capacity and this has caused problems with some parents who wanted their children in. The school are still going through this with parents.

A Governor noted that the request from the survey was 70% of the school population wished to be in school. The Headteacher, Chair and bursar had a conversation on how to resolve this and restricting the numbers in school and took advice on this. The Headteacher noted that a lot of the parents work in the health profession and this is also a transmission risk

There were 86 children in today. There are children who are isolating, and the numbers vary each day. In the first lockdown the maximum was 40 pupils and some days it was very low. People were more cautious and kept their children home, but this time there is a work pressure and home learning is very hard and they want their children in school. There have been conversations with several companies, such as Rolls Royce about the COVID-19 guidelines, and if the parent is not a critical worker to the COVID-19 support then the children cannot come in.

The first two weeks there were three members of staff at home isolating. This was a very testing week. All staff are now back in school. Primary is very different to secondary, as most is home learning, but staff are teaching classes. They are not on a Rota they are teaching full time and also teaching home learning. There are members of staff double teaching. Online learning is mirrored, whatever is done in the classroom is also done at home. There is no difference to the learning.

Q – How is stress levels in school as teachers are doing very long hours?

A – This is not something that is known. This is a very hard job at the moment as teachers are teaching twice. This is very hard.

Q – What about the children that could not be accommodated, were they offered a place at Central?

A – Yes they were but they did not take this up. The Headteacher called Central and they were all offered places at Central and Lancastrian and the parents did not want the place. They were offered a buddy system, but the parents were not willing.

A governor noted that staff wellbeing is discussed at every meeting and staff wellbeing is on the minds of the governors and the Trust and there is a counselling support system set up by the Trust which the staff can make use of and the governors try to reduce the workload but the teachers are highly dedicated to the school and the pupils. The staff governor noted that the staff were trying to maintain a work life balance but the lockdown this time is very difficult.

The Headteacher noted that the staff have stepped back from the subject leadership role at this time to manage the workflow. Staff will be given a leadership day next half term out of school to help with the workload.

Q – Have any teachers accessed the DCAT counselling and do staff know it is there?

A – Mark Talbot, CEO, sent all staff a letter and the Headteacher also sent this out. This is confidential. Do not know if staff access this and the school should not know as should be completely confidential. The Trust will not know either.

Headteacher confirmed they will send the details out again tomorrow as a reminder and this will be done once a month. The Chair noted that there is a Chairs meeting with DCAT this week and it will be suggested that the counseling system keeps running for as long as needed.

Remote Learning

There has been a survey done of the parents this weekend. This went to all parents about parental perception of remote learning. The Headteacher shared the results with the governors. There were 61 responses. There were less responses from Year 6, and the school think this is because the survey was put into Google Classroom and the Year 6 pupils did not tell their parents. The survey talked about what devices the children use and the majority are using laptops and tablets. No one is using a phone. 9.8% are using loaned devices from school. The 'No Device' does not mean they do not have a device, normally means that the parents do not want them on a computer, so they have a paper pack. The school understands this. With regards to the amount of work 96.7% say it is about right or too much, two parents said too little.

Q – The children that the school are worried about, about too little work, do you know which children this is, and can anything be done?

A – The answers were analysed and the staff have pinpointed the children and the Headteacher has had a conversation and the parent had not realised there were assignments and the other is one who would like the child to be working 8-6 like the parent does so there will be a conversation about the appropriate hours of working for a child.

RB left the meeting at 18:50pm

Teacher Feedback response - 83% said it was about right, 13% said there was not enough feedback from teachers. It is difficult to mark on google classroom so the school are looking at which year groups / parents feel this, and conversations will be had. It was noted that the children have to look for the feedback, it does not automatically pop up.

Q – Can you opt out of getting feedback from the teachers, can parents opt out?

A – The school could do this, but then there would need to be a list of who wants feedback and who doesn't. Sometimes it is quick, but the feedback is generally on Maths and English.

The Chair noted that Ofsted will look to ensure that there is feedback given and there needs to be clear evidence of this.

Q – On the google classroom is there way to feedback to google classroom about the challenges of the system?

A – This is run by google itself. Every Friday there is a team buzz day where google staff have to come up with new ideas. The school can feedback, but it is a worldwide platform.

The Headteacher gave an indication of the comments that had been received on the remote learning. The comments will also be shared with the staff as the comments were very positive. The school had asked for

	<p>ways that the home learning could be improved, and the comments will be analysed and if there are any ideas that can be put in place. There were some comments that were very easy to fix which has been a positive.</p> <p>The Headteacher noted that there would be an online celebration assembly on a Friday, and one certificate will be shared for a home learner and an in-school learner, house captains will be involved, there will be some Timetables Rock Stars.</p> <p>The challenges that the school is facing with remote learning is that the school internet speed is extremely bad, and the school had made an application to be upgraded to a GB connection and have been waiting 12 months. BT have done the survey and the cable needs to be laid, but the school is still waiting. This makes live teaching very difficult.</p> <p>The staff have been issued with the COVID-19 testing kits. The staff will be testing on a Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoon. If anyone comes back positive, have to go to the full testing center. If they test positive the bubble stays home.</p> <p>Q – Have there been many cases are the school? A – Only one child has tested positive and this was over Christmas. Some parents have tested positive and some children are self-isolating due to track and trace.</p>	
6.	<p>Leadership & Management – Finance</p> <p>The Chair of Governors updated the Governors on Finance as the Bursar had had to leave the meeting to attend the school. The Finance Committee met this morning for a substantial meeting and went through the current Management Accounts. The school has spent extra in some areas and less in some areas, all related to the pandemic. There have been grants received which have eased some of the pressure and the Committee have looked at the 5 year rolling budget forecast. This is looked at twice a year and was last done in August 2020 and was re-forecast today. Looking forward for the next 5 years, the school is in a balanced budget position. This is a change as previously it looked like a deficit in year 4 and 5. There have been assumptions that the school population number will be 205-210, and that expenditure will only rise in line with known inflation and looking 5 years out it is impossible to see what the disruption from the pandemic will be. This budget will be submitted to DCAT, following checking with the central finance team. This is very good news given the amount of schools currently setting a negative budget.</p> <p>Q – Is it like the MOD where if you do not spend it, you lose the money? A – No, any money unspent is rolled over. But the school does not aim to underspend as every penny that the school is given should be spent on the current pupils. It is prudent to have a small reserve to be safe, but this is a low amount. When the school converted to an academy, there was £100,000 (one hundred thousand pounds) reserve, but this has slowly been reduced. There are specific items that are ring-fenced and if not spent are reclaimed but these are very few. Over 80% of the budget is staffing and the running of the school is done on the remaining 20%.</p>	
7.	<p>Leadership & Management – Building & Premises (Inc. Health & Safety)</p> <p>The Health & Safety Audit from Exat was forwarded to the Governors prior to the meeting. This was a three day H&S Audit. These are set priorities rated 1-4. Level 1 have to be actioned immediately and there are only two outstanding, and these are due to COVID-19 restrictions. There is a Site Manager for the four Cathedral Hub schools and he is working through the Audit and the Premises Officer will action these with the Site Manager.</p>	



	<p>A power cut has blown the alarm system this evening and this cannot be reset remotely so staff have had to go into school this evening. The Vice Chair offered to be a contact for emergency situations as they live close to the school.</p> <p>The school has been allocated Capital Spending from DCAT so the unsafe decking outside Classes 4,5,6 will be replaced. Three quotes have been received. This will be replaced with composite decking and the underneath will be checked at this time. There will also be new handrails. This is sealed off at present so the children cannot use it and work must be started by 31st March. The School are also planning the Year 2 toilets as the drains are unsuitable and the smell can be overwhelming. The children do not like the outside toilets, and this is affecting their concentration. The school has made the decision to put new doors on the Year 2 toilets so they can be indoor and outdoor toilets. There has been funding allocated for this.</p> <p>Tree survey has been done and a tree was removed last week. There is a new outside gym embedded into the school field and this is very positive. There is a double sided goal system put up for the field and playground. This will be very exciting for the pupils when they can come back to school and this has come from Sports Premium funding.</p>	
8.	<p>Leadership & Management – Peer Review Feedback</p> <p>The DCAT has a peer review process across the Trust and staff at all levels can work with their counterparts at the other schools. In the peer review in November 2020 other Headteacher's come in to review the March School and look at lesson plans, speak to subject leaders and review books and data, as well as reviewing the SIP. This was completed virtually due to lockdown and while this was challenging it worked very well. There were Early Year discussions and subject lead interviews, and this was all fed back to DCAT following which a list of strengths and weaknesses were compiled. Tomorrow will be meeting with Justin Smith to go through the results of the Peer Review and the strengths and weaknesses. This is excellent preparation for Ofsted. Actions from this will be fed back at next LGB Meeting.</p>	HT
9.	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>The Chair of Governors noted that the Chair and Vice Chair had completed the Safeguarding Governor visit and the SCR check for the spring term. The report has been completed and this will be sent to DCAT shortly. On the Central Record there are two columns, one for the old CRB check which was superseded in 2012 by DBS check. All of the staff checks fall under the DBS column, but some of the entries are pre-2012 so should be in CRB column and given the age of the checks and that the quality of check is different under the DBS system anyone who has not had a check since 2012 will have a new DBS check. The two new parent governors will also need to have a DBS check.</p> <p>The safeguarding at the March in the Chair and Vice Chair's opinion is outstanding. There are exceptional procedures and processes in place, and these are a credit to the Headteacher and staff. The staff are very well informed on this. There is a system called My Concern in place and staff will be having training in the summer. The school are meticulous about putting information into the system. The Headteacher is the lead DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead), there are two Child Protection Officers and there is yearly and refresher training and Mark Talbot, the CEO of the Trust, is the lead of safeguarding for the Trust. This is positive for the school DSL staff as if there are concerns, or if a situation is particular disturbing, the staff can contact Mark for advice and support.</p> <p>Clerk send over abbreviations sheet to the Governors.</p> <p><i>MI left the meeting at 19:34pm</i></p>	Clerk



	<p>There is one specific safeguarding concern at present with a Child Protection Plan in place.</p> <p>Q – Are the school missing any safeguarding issues due to COVID-19? A – The school phones families consistently, the vulnerable pupils, and the other pupils that the school know about and the teachers are very good at following this up.</p>	
10.	<p>Staffing This item was covered earlier in the meeting.</p>	
11.	<p>Policies for Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove Learning Policy – The Chair confirmed this is a DCAT Policy. All Governors agreed the Remote Learning Policy. 	
12.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Governor Mentors – The Governing Body need to appoint mentors to the new Parent Governors. Chair to speak to existing Governors and appoint mentors and ask them to contact the new Governors. <p>The Governors thanked the Headteacher and the staff for all their hard work and effort.</p> <p>Date and Time of Next Meeting – 1st March 2021 at 5:30pm</p>	JP

The meeting closed at 19:40pm

Summary of Agreed Actions:

No	Action	By	Status
1	The Chair explained to the new Governors that they must complete a Code of Conduct and also undertake Safeguarding Training.		
3	Chair to sign the minutes and email to the Headteacher.	JP	DONE
8	Actions from Peer Review and Strengths & Weaknesses will be fed back at next LGB Meeting.	Head	Mar 21
9	Clerk send over abbreviations sheet to the Governors.	Clerk	Feb 21
12	Chair to speak to existing Governors and appoint mentors and ask them to contact the new Governors.	JP	Feb 21

Signed

Date 1st March 2021