



Confirmed

THONGSLEY FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ST PETER'S SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY



TUESDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.00 PM

Action

Governing Body Members Present: Christopher Bennet (Head Teacher St Peter's School), Phil Cox (Chair for this meeting), Emily Davis, Mark Goodridge (remote access), Bill Hennessy, Sarah Jane Hilton, Rachel Hurst, David Jones (Head Teacher, Thongsley Fields), James Singleterry and Anne Sutton

In attendance: Stephen Munday (CEO of the Cam Academy Trust), Paul Lawrence (Director of Education for the Cam Academy Trust), Carolyn Ducket (School Business Manager) and Lorraine Barr (Clerk).

Observers:

Lauren West (Deputy Head Teacher Thongsley Fields)
Paul Sadler (former Parent Governor)

The meeting was quorate throughout.

In advance of the commencement of formal business, the Chair of Governors expressed dissatisfaction with the late circulation of two papers, and the negative impact this had on the effectiveness of the LGB. His concern and frustration was echoed by other Governors. It was agreed to enforce the requirement that the agenda and papers should be circulated a minimum of 7 days before the meeting to afford members the best opportunity to read the material and be able to have meaningful discussions at the LGB. The Head of Thongsley Fields suggested that it might be best to deal with the discussion about the circulation of papers 'off-line' rather than publicly in front of the governing body and others who were in attendance. The CEO of the Trust concurred with this.

LB

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received as all members were present.

2. Declaration of business interests

There were no declarations of interest pertaining to the business to be discussed other than those already noted.

3. Head Teacher's report St Peter's School

In advance of the meeting, the Head Teacher's report had been circulated and questions on its content were invited. Members noted that some of the usual detail of the report was not included due to the proximity of the meeting to the beginning of a new academic year, and the lack of examination outcome data from the summer.

Progress

Following a challenge regarding student progress, members were advised of the solid progress that had been made by last year's Year 13 students against the national average in both academic and vocational courses.

Similar solid progress had been made by KS4 students.

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In addition, Governors were delighted to note the improvement in performance of the significant cohort of Young Carers at the school. The Head Teacher re-emphasised the focus on this group that had occurred last year and the greater support they had received, which it was felt had contributed to this improvement.

Attendance

The Head Teacher reported that current attendance patterns reflected the national picture with the absences becoming greater in the second week of term than in the first. He commented that the school has a few COVID testing kits and these are being used to support attendance and ensure that safeguarding of students is maintained.

The Head Teacher stated that there were only two students in Year 13 who were NEET, with one of these being for medical reasons. The final figure for Year 11 is awaited, since some students who had moved to local colleges were becoming disenfranchised by the current delivery methods. The Local Authority and St Peter's School were supporting these students.

The Cabin and SEND provision

Members noted that student numbers in the Cabin and SEND had increased and recruitment to leadership positions within this area was underway.

Staffing

Following a query, Governors were advised that the school is fully staffed and there were no teaching vacancies – 22 staff had been recruited over recent months and the pastoral team will continue to be enhanced as student numbers grow. There is one vacancy for a Head of Year for which five external applications had been received – interviews to take place 28th and 29th September 2020. Recruitment for a Maths teacher had taken place earlier in the day.

Behaviour

In response to a challenge from Governors, the Head Teacher advised that the particular theme of challenging student behaviour had not been specifically raised in staff exit surveys. The mechanisms in place to support challenging students were described. It was suggested that, in order to maximise retention, a survey of teaching staff to ascertain how safe they feel might be beneficial. The Director of Education for the Trust advised that the Trust wide survey that had been carried out in January 2020 had given a clear indication of the positive staff perception of behaviour at St Peter's. The former Parent Governor observed that the community perception of the school is now positive, it having changed significantly over the past few years. He reported that in the current uncertain times the organisation and behaviour of the students he had witnessed was exceptional.

Premises

Members were informed of the successful installation of a new CCTV system. Relevant staff training had been completed.

4. Head Teacher's report Thongsley Fields

In advance of the meeting, the Head Teacher's report had been circulated and questions on its content were invited. Members commented that the delay in receiving the report did not allow for an informed discussion.

The Head Teacher advised there were currently 273 students on roll, 28 in Reception, five applications pending and the Nursery intake due in January.

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Attendance during week one was 99% and this week had lowered to 96%. Claims for FSM had increased and more children with EHCPs were on roll.

New structure of the school week

The new structure of the school week had been implemented and the anticipated benefits of the Wednesday afternoon closure were being realised - greater flexibility in the deployment of staff and support of students was taking place. The smaller groups that had been created in Reception had afforded pupils a positive start to the year. Governors were informed of the current array of free activities provided, e.g. music lessons, sport coaching and an expansion of the Forest school curriculum. Activities for the next half-term were already being planned and will be advertised to parents.

In response to a challenge from Governors, the Head Teacher advised that in week one 31 pupils had remained in school on the Wednesday afternoon, and in week two this had risen to 40. The provision was operating in year group bubbles and targeted intervention had been identified. Feedback from parents had been positive and this will be continually monitored as part of the ongoing review of the initiative. Governors remained concerned at the low uptake of the provision, especially since one of the aspirations was to enrich the curriculum for all pupils. The Head Teacher detailed how the positive outcomes of the activities will be communicated to parents and pupils in order to improve attendance levels.

There was considerable discussion about how best the impact of the changes to Wednesday afternoon might be quantified. Governors expected that clear improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, e.g. a positive impact on reading, should be transparent, quantifiable and communicated to Governors.

DJ

The Head Teacher was asked for the names of other educational providers in which the school week had been shortened, using different models, and resulting in positive outcomes and Ofsted judgements. The Head Teacher agreed to forward these following the meeting. It was noted that another local primary school had also introduced a half day closure. It was agreed that the review of the Thongsley Fields initiative should be a standing agenda item and be discussed at the Curriculum and Standards committee. DJ agreed to invite Emily Davis to the committee's next meeting.

DJ

Agenda/DJ

Safeguarding

The Head Teacher reported that there had been an increase in safeguarding concerns upon the return of students following the summer break. It appeared that the social care referral service was regaining capacity lost during lockdown and four investigations were ongoing.

The single central record had been updated.

Premises

Work to the entrance gates and internal fencing had been completed during the summer.

The Trust and Local Authority had visited the school to review the COVID risk assessment – no follow-up actions had been identified.

Behaviour

Confirmed

The Head Teacher advised that the behaviour of the children had been better than expected, bearing in mind the amount of time that had elapsed since closure and normal routines had been established.

School improvement

Governors were informed that the school development plan is due to be updated by the senior leadership team before half term. Major foci continue to be: curriculum development; subject leadership; reading and phonics; Early Years and revamping the learning environment.

Academic performance

Following a challenge regarding last year's performance, the Head Teacher advised that a meeting of the Curriculum and Standards committee had taken place the previous week at which the teacher assessments had been considered. These showed continued progress that would exceed all targets set in the Autumn term. The moderation progress had been rejuvenated to promote consistency.

Current arrangements

The Head Teacher informed those present of the current arrangements in place to provide a COVID safe environment for staff and pupils. Phase bubbles and flexible groupings had been created with staff members staying within their grouping. Staggered start and finish times had been introduced. Assemblies had not been reintroduced, but replaced with class circle time sessions instead.

Staffing

The new staff who had begun in September were having a positive impact on the provision.

5. Current arrangements – reopening of schools

This agenda item was covered in the Head Teacher's reports above.

6. Strategic planning

Governor strategy day

Members discussed the LGB effectiveness review report and other important strategic developments affecting both schools. It was agreed that a Governor's strategy event should be planned for January 2021 covering the following aspects:

- The challenge for post-16 provision and increasing student numbers
- Collaboration between schools and development of a local hub
- Governance structure including subcommittees/working parties to enable a greater strategic focus to be taken by the LGB (to include consideration of the findings of the effectiveness review conducted by Rachel Hurst)
- The role description for Governors along with induction and training arrangements should be considered
- The skills leavers will need for future employment

Phil Cox agreed to put together an agenda for the event and communicate a date. It was decided that a face to face event, to include Trust representation, would be preferable.

Sixth form

The Head Teacher of St Peter's School advised Governors that collaboration with Comberton Village College regarding Sixth form provision was progressing and consideration was being given to available expertise, the curriculum offer and

Confirmed

technology gains. The enhancement of post-16 provision for St Peter's students will need to be highlighted to existing students. Governors noted that the current Year 11 cohort was the least academically able that had progressed through the school for many years – of 188 students only five were HPA.

7. Trust Matters

Reopening of schools

The CEO of the Trust reassured members that a Trust sub-committee had met in August and signed off the COVID risk assessments submitted by all schools within the Trust. Schools were operating appropriate procedures, maximising the safety of staff and students under the current government guidance. The Trust was reviewing the additional costs incurred in so doing and would assist where possible, utilising reserves across the Trust.

Closer working relationships

Members were advised that developments were being considered for stronger joint working relationships between the two schools and those in Hartford, and this was being facilitated by Chris Jukes, with the hope that Trustee and Governor involvement might also be possible. A meeting was planned for 1st October 2020 and it was agreed that the Vice Chair of Governors would attend this.

PC

Sixth form provision

It was confirmed that a meeting was to take place later in the week regarding the future Sixth form provision for the Trust. Plans and actions were being considered for greater joint working that would be for the benefit of all post 16 students, for example, broader curriculum offers and increased use of remote learning. These plans would tie in with the anticipated development of a significant sixth form facility at Cambourne Village Collage, due to be completed for 2023.

Governors were encouraged by these initiatives and the drive for improvement. It was also agreed that where possible, if meetings such as this were taking place, it would be advantageous for all Governors to be informed of the actions points/minutes in order that they could all keep abreast of developments and the effectiveness of the LGB could be enhanced. This should be included as an agenda item for the next meeting and could also feed into the Governor strategy day being planned for January 2020.

Agenda

The CEO of the Trust advised that discussions were underway involving himself, the Head Teacher of St Peter's School and the Local Authority. These pertained to future provision, and its funding, at St Peter's, bearing in mind the increased student number prediction over coming years that had been provided that afternoon. This, would not only entail an increase in entrants as the opening of a school in Alconbury Weald was delayed, but also, as a result of more HPA students coming through the school, an anticipated increase in the number of students remaining in the Sixth form. This would lead to a greater demand on the infrastructure of the school. The obligations of the LA, the expansion of the canteen facilities already being planned for next year, and the possible further development of areas of the site were discussed. It was suggested that an assessment of the site should be carried out to explore facility development possibilities under different scenarios. Members agreed unanimously that the study of the site should be progressed as a matter of urgency. The CEO of the Trust agreed to take this forward and the School Business Manager would follow this up in her discussions with the Trust's Premises Manager the following week.

SM
CD

There was nothing further to report under this agenda item.

8. Membership

- Consideration was given to the appointment of a new Health and Safety Governor and a new Pupil Premium Governor. Anyone interested was asked to write to the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors.
- The appointments of a new Vice Chair of the Governing body, and Chair and Vice Chair of the Resources committee, were deferred to the next meeting.
- A letter to advertise the current vacancy for a Parent Governor is due to be sent out this week. Depending on the number of nominations received, an election may need to be organised, or the Trust consulted about further membership possibilities.

Agenda

LB

Structure of the LGB

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that a Curriculum and Standards committee for St Peter's School should be established. Anyone interested in becoming a member of this committee should write to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Governing Body. Members requested that additional guidance covering the commitment required should be communicated.

Members/
PC

9. Strategy day

This item was addressed in minute 6 above.

10. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body which had taken place on 7th July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

11. Matters arising

There were no matters arising

12. Reports from Committees

Resources Committee

The minutes of the St Peter's School and Thongsley Fields Resources Committee meetings that had taken place on 14th September 2020 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Their content was noted. The Head Teacher of St Peter's school explained the changes to and implications of allocations of catch-up funding for the school, detailing the amounts involved.

Both schools had presented balanced budgets and reserves for 2019/20.

13. Annual child protection monitoring report – Thongsley Fields

The Head Teacher of Thongsley Fields explained that he had been informed by the LA that the submission of this annual return was no longer required. Following advice from the Trust's Director of Education that this information is required as part of the safeguarding framework, it was agreed that the report should be prepared and submitted to the LGB for the next meeting.

DJ/Agenda

14. Policies

The following policies had been circulated prior to the meeting and these were approved unanimously:

St Peter's School policies:

Category 2:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Attendance

Category 3:

- Independent learning

Thongsley Fields policies:

Category 2:

- Safeguarding (this had already been approved at the Curriculum and Standards committee on 17th September 2020)

15. Governor training

There was nothing to report under this item.

16. Governor visits and reports

The Vice Chair of Governors, and SEND Governor, reported back on the Head Teacher's Head of Department review meetings which they had attended. These provided a useful insight into the respective departments (Humanities, SEND, Business Studies, Science and STRIVE) and their development plans and priorities.

17. Chair's Business

There was nothing to report under this item.

18. Any Other Business

There was nothing to report under this item.

19. Date and time of next meeting:

Tuesday 24th November 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

These minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

Mark Goodridge

Chair of Governors: 24/11/20