



**Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of the Wessex MAT held on
Thursday 23 January 2020 at 6pm**

Present	Elected Parent	Sophie Duke SD CHAIR
	Co-opted	Sandra Scott SS until 8pm
	Co-opted	Tom Amery TA
	Headteacher	Catherine Smith CS
	Co-opted	Ruth Bettenson RB
	Co-opted	Margaret Moss MM
	Staff	Tom Bracey TB

Apologies: Joanne Wibley JW, Lesley Goldsack LG, Vicky Needham VN

Absent: Marian Zvara MZ

In attendance: Mike Foley (CEO of WMAT) MF until 6.45pm, Rachel Nesbitt (AHT) RN, Moira Bearwish (DHT) MB, Natalie Green NG (Clerk)

Q/C - Question/challenge

1. Welcome

SD welcomed all present.

2. Apologies for Absence

These were received and accepted from LG, VN and JW.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising & Action Plan

1. NG to update Summary of Business Interests for school website - COMPLETED
2. SD to set up monitoring schedule - ON AGENDA
3. NG to initiate Skills Audit process - in progress
4. Tim Oram to set date for Online Safety Group for Sept 2019 and identify a parent to sit on this group - this would initiate following policy adoption on 23.1.20. REMOVE
5. SD/MM to discuss Data Protection Officer Role - COMPLETED
6. Provide report on impact of sickness and absence - IN DUE COURSE
7. Review more Able Pupil Premium at Spring 2 Meeting - - ONGOING
8. MZ to provide report of H&S visit in Visit Report format - COMPLETED

5. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business & Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

6. Correspondence

CS reported that a resignation letter from a TA had been received.

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7. Headteacher's Report

Mike Foley to give MAT update - MF was welcomed to the meeting. He acknowledged the additional work required as part of the conversion process and noted that the WMAT was very much a fledgling Trust and still a work in progress. He appreciated the forbearance of governors in this regard. He was meeting with CS each week and Finance Director Jan McKie (JmK) would join every other of these meetings to pick up early teething problems and offer support when needed. The Trust now consisted of Thomas Hardy School (THS), Bere Regis and Damers and MF was hoping that St Osmund's would join shortly but the conversion date had been affected by election purdah. Some further delays had been experienced with the Diocese. **Q/C Governors asked about religious issues and admissions to the Trust - MF said that the Trust would support St Osmund's as a C of E school but that such issues would not apply across the Trust in general.** MF said that WMAT's ambition was to bring all DASP schools into the Trust but some faith schools were anticipated to present problems. MF noted the 'spine' of Damers, DMS and THS in terms of strong working relationships especially regarding SEND and disadvantaged pupils. MF explained that he had been asked by directors to draw up a MAT staffing plan, which had now been approved, and he was working these roles up. Currently MF and JmK were doing a couple of days of the week for WMAT and building a stronger central infrastructure was necessary. Longer term, the MAT planned to have its own HR and Finance operations, and the recent appointment of a Health and Safety Manager was a Trust wide appointment. This pattern would continue with new appointments. A Governance Compliance and Policy Officer post would be created and MF gave an overview of the role. He noted the WMAT policy bank and the need for a person to generate policies, adding that some policies would be localised to the school but that MAT wide policies would save considerable duplication of time and effort. Centralised compliance work was noted with examples of what this could look like such as SARs and absence management. He added that the finance team had recently expanded to release more of JmK's time. **Q/C Governors asked about expected lead times for MAT expansion.** MF said that this was hard to say as the Diocese was currently controlling the time scales but gave some potential projections. **Q/C Governors asked whether the staffing plan was public yet and MF said that elements of it were still confidential.** **Q/C Governors asked about the impact for Damers whilst the MAT was still developing.** MF acknowledged that CS was still needing to do work which the MAT should take on and her time constraints were the main issue. **Q/C Governors asked if the LGB minutes would still be published on the school website,** which MF confirmed, noting that it was good practice in terms of transparency. **Q/C Governors asked what the impact was on children at Damers of the school joining a MAT.** MF said the quality of teaching and learning linked to the quality of leadership and the MAT would fully support leaders in running the school effectively. He also noted the benefits of personalised MAT level services in time. Shared staff development work and shared best practice between schools would also be a key benefit. **Q/C Governors asked about timescales for MAT services and MF said that the MAT would be working on delivering these over the following year.** Governors thanked MF for his visit and MF stressed that he was open to questions and happy to visit a future meeting.

(At 6.45pm MF left the meeting).

Office Report - The numbers of Foundation children were noted as low with 4 less than last year. CS confirmed that census issues were not a long term concern and that numbers were low in general across the town this year. She added that for the 2020 admission, over 90 children had Damers as their first choice, so the low cohort for 2019 was not expected to have a long term negative impact. She noted that

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numbers were lower in other local first schools. **Q/C Governors asked about the effects of the Poundbury development progress.** TA said that he would make some enquiries to the Duchy in terms of demographics. **Q/C Governors asked about the reasons behind other children leaving,** two moving out of the area and one into a different setting, which CS described. TA mentioned googling Dorchester schools and would have a look to see how Damers scored and report back. CS mentioned appeals noting one which had recently been turned down. The child involved had significant needs and this would have adversely impacted a year group with many other children who also had significant needs. An In Year Fair Access panel was noted. CS had refused this and explained her rationale for doing so given a cohort with 9 EHCPs and 3 CCN Base children. CS explained changes to this process due to MAT conversion which put the school in a stronger position. **Q/C Governors asked about work on targeted pupil attendance.** CS said that the score was slightly up this year and she was ensuring that processes were tight. A discussion followed on issues around persistent absence.

New Ofsted Framework - CS had provided two links to governors in pack. She noted the Ofsted framework presentation which gave an effective overview and explained the key changes / updates, noting that Safeguarding remained at the heart of inspections. SD noted that governance was key in this regard. A discussion followed on policies in terms of MAT policies and localised policies. CS noted that those in the pack for adoption were holding policies awaiting overarching policies from the MAT. She noted further points on what Ofsted would look for in the curriculum, Intent, Implementation and Impact with a particular focus on the development of ‘cultural capital’. Governors noted that CS was positive about the new framework and she felt that it took a more holistic approach which better suited the ethos of the school.

Safeguarding Update

MB noted Safeguarding training as follows: on 14.1.20 a DASP DSL briefing had taken place which explored safeguarding practice and the critical role of the DSL when managing concerns; an update on the new reporting tool in My Concern; Information sharing; Ofsted case study. On 14.1.20 DASP governor safeguarding network had taken place and on two further dates MB had delivered volunteer training.

Safeguarding activity had included a review Child Protection conference, a core group meeting, 4 Child in Need meetings, 8 Team Around the Family meetings and an invitation to an initial Child Protection Conference. This activity related to a total of 17 children from 13 families.

The total number of concerns reported from 3.12.19 - 23.1.20 were 101. **Q/C Governors asked what the main concerns were categorised as.** MB said that these were labelled within our reporting tool as ‘home issues’, with governors noting that it would be useful to see a further report on this drilling down into specific patterns.

MB noted the new Online Safety Policy due for adoption in the meeting, and the Online Safety Group - a consultative group that had representation from across the school community. SD would represent governors on the group. It would be responsible for issues regarding online safety and the monitoring of the Online Safety Policy and would report to the LGB.

The Safeguarding Audit had been re-written by the Safeguarding and Standards team. MB said that she was unhappy with the survey and CS noted that DASP colleagues were making a complaint about it.

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The annual Safeguarding Self-assessment Audit 2019/20 was due to be submitted by 31.1.20 at 4pm

LDP link: L and M objectives – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children

-Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the LDP, the development of the new curriculum and the embedding of the new assessment system

8. Chair’s Report

No report.

9. Review of Sensory Room Expenditure

RN and the Base Leader had submitted an impact report prior to the meeting. **Q/C The Chair noted the clear benefits of this resource to Base children and asked about the options for extending its use across the wider school.** RN said the key purpose of the room was to meet the high level needs of Base children. However, scope may be there for all children to use it once the high level needs had been met, as these took priority. It was in use all day and consideration could be given to the wider school using it at lunchtimes. RN described the extensive use of the room for Base children. CS felt that this proved the value of the expenditure. The use of a 360 camera was discussed to assist children with transition, visits etc. Governors expressed their wish to monitor the use of the room going forward and SD would add this to the new monitoring schedule.

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-Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the LDP, the development of the curriculum and the embedding of the new assessment system

10. Policy Adoption

- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy

Adoption of the above policies was agreed.

11. Trust Board Issues

Terms of Reference for LGB - the Clerk noted that this document had been generated by WMAT and now required approval and sign off. This was agreed.

Budget Report - a report by JmK and narrative had been included in the pack and there were no further questions.

Support Grant Sign Off - this was agreed and signed off.

MAT/Governance Update - the Clerk noted some ongoing governance matters in terms of conversion and that she was continuing to work with the Clerk to the Trust Board to achieve a standardised approach where applicable.

12. Governance Issues

A. Governor Monitoring Activity Update

Monitoring Plan for 2019/20 - SD presented her plan, which was well received by governors. She requested further feedback and for governors to let her know of any problems in terms of fulfilling their monitoring tasks. 30 minutes would be allocated to discussion on monitoring on each LGB agenda

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going forward. It was agreed that specific issues raised through monitoring activity could then trigger a learning walk.

(At 8pm SS left the meeting).

B. *Governor Visits and Learning* - Visits reports had been included in the meeting pack and there were no further questions.

C. *Training and Skills Audit* – SD said she had noted some local training opportunities throughout the year with some suggestions as to which governors may benefit. The list was included in the pack. The training record on the Governor Overview document had also been included in the pack and governors were asked to review their record and report any omissions to the Clerk, including informing the Clerk of when they had undertaken any training. Governors who had not yet completed the Skills Audit form were asked to do so, and the Clerk would aim to present collated results at the next LGB.

***LDP Link L and M objectives** – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children*

-Establish a clearly defined role for all governors in securing accountability across the school

13. DASP

CS noted the Schools Partnership Project, a 3 year programme which was now at the end of its first year. She and MB, with TB as Improvement Champion were working with a small group of DASP schools reviewing particular lines of enquiry relevant to each school. The training taken up by TB had been very effective. CS was leading the process at partnership level at present and would be handing it over shortly. The project was now ready to start the second year and it was noted as very positive work which was funded by DASP.

A DASP training day for TAs and the DASP AGM would take place in February 2020.

***LDP link: L and M objectives** – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children*

14. Clerk's Notices

None.

15. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 12 March 2020 6pm

Items for Next Meeting: More Able Pupil Premium

Action Plan following the Full Governing Body meeting held 23 January 2020

Action to be Taken	Minute No.	Members Involved	Suggested Completion Date
1. Complete Skills Audit process	4 (16)	NG	ASAP
2. Provide report on impact of sickness and absence - referred from Finance, Staffing & Environment	4	CS	In due course

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Date

3. Review more Able Pupil Premium at Spring 2 Meeting - LG would conduct a visit and submit a report and NG to note for LGB Agenda for 12.3.20	4	LG to visit and complete report NG to note for Agenda	By 12.3.20
4. Make enquiries with Duchy ref development and demographics in Poundbury and google schools to see how Damers appeared.	7	TA	ASAP
5. Governors to complete Skills Audit Form	12		By the end of Feb 2020

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Date