



Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of the Wessex MAT held via Google Meet on Thursday 26 November 2020 at 6pm

Present	Elected Parent	Sophie Duke SD CHAIR
	Headteacher	Catherine Smith CS
	Elected Parent	Vicky Needham VN
	Elected Staff	Annie Hardinge AH
	Co-opted	Lesley Goldsack LG
	Co-opted	Ruth Bettenson RB
	Co-opted	Margaret Moss MM
	Co-opted	Sandra Scott SS
	Co-opted	Joanne Wibley JW

In attendance: Natalie Green NG (Clerk), Moira Bearwish MB (DHT), Jan McKie JMK (Finance Director, Wessex MAT) to 6.25pm.

Q/C - Question/challenge

LDP Link Priority 4, Leadership & Management : *To further develop and strengthen the role of strategic leadership and governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children with a particular focus on curriculum design and disadvantaged pupils.*

Success Criteria: *Governors and middle leaders make an effective contribution to the overall leadership and management of the school leading to improved quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils, demonstrating a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement based on a secure evidence base. Governors are further equipped to robustly challenge key leaders in driving improvements and both Governors and middle leaders are uncompromising in their ambition.*

Action - *Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the LDP*

Intended Outcomes - *Governors robustly hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance, including the effective use of Pupil Premium and PESS funding through their tracking of 'focus pupils'; Local Governing Body establishes a more rigorous Self-Evaluation Cycle which focuses more closely on the achievement of groups and cohorts across the school.*

1. Welcome

SD welcomed all present, particularly new Staff Governor AH, who gave a brief introduction of herself to governors.

2. Apologies for Absence

These were received and accepted from Tom Amery TA.

Certified as a true record Chair

Date

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 were approved virtually as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising & Action Plan

1. CS to report back to governors on ‘Great Works’ celebration plans - CS noted the recent Harmony workshop for parents and the Advent Calendar. Work linked to the Harmony curriculum and the celebration of Christmas as well as a classroom insight had been documented in the pack. Governors were asked to keep an eye on the website for further activity and governors would be invited to virtually attend a further Harmony workshop with parents at a future point. COMPLETED.
2. CS to provide report on Guided Reading by February 2021 LGB - ONGOING
3. SD/MM to finalise HTPM process - on Agenda - this had now been completed and was pending approval of MAT Directors - COMPLETED.
4. SD to ensure that all governors undertake Safeguarding Training - TA was the only established governor yet to complete the mandatory Safeguarding module which was now in an NGA elearning format. NG confirmed that TA had received information of how to enrol and SD would follow up. **Q/C Governors asked whether staff governors should complete it and NG said that this was recommended as it focussed specifically on the governor’s role in relation to Safeguarding.** ONGOING.
5. NG to access MAT portal - NG now had access and had successfully uploaded the Register of Business Interests. She would liaise with Trust Board Clerk Vicky Smyth the following week to organise the filing system. COMPLETED.
6. TA to write to Chamber of Commerce ref governor vacancies. - TA not present to report back. ONGOING
7. NG to check Skills Audit for gaps and report back - on Agenda and COMPLETED.
8. Governors to raise questions on HT Report and LDP - CS requested that governors add questions with a 48 hour deadline so CS could give them her full attention. CLOSED.
9. SD to send out Link Roles with Minutes, share reporting format with governors - on Agenda and COMPLETED.
10. SD to draw up Governor Visits Schedule based on new link roles - on Agenda and COMPLETED.
11. SD/NG to draw up Governor Induction Pack - SD reported that she had spoken to MAT Company Secretary Karen Weir (KW) about this and Damers would be a trial school for a MAT process. COMPLETED.
12. SD/VN/NG to follow up new governor enquiries - on Agenda - SD and NG had spoken to Morag Evans, who was a hospital librarian with a background in teaching, she would join the next meeting and was then expected to make an application;, CS also was also in discussion with another candidate. COMPLETED.

Certified as a true record Chair

Date

5. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business

None.

6. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

7. Correspondence

None.

8. Headteacher's Report

CS referred to a number of documents she had included in the pack, one of which was the HT's Written Report as well as the Learning & Development Plan for 2020/21, plans for Christmas 2020, the current Risk Assessment and Core Subject Action Plans (these had been included for governors' information and CS suggested viewing them following the meeting).

Headteacher's Written Report

The following questions had been raised both in advance on the report, and during the meeting:

Q/C With regard to Pupil Premium Attendance, governors asked "could we have numbers to go with this so we can see the effect 1 person has on the %, or is this a GDPR issue if you have small numbers?" CS replied "the numbers for each group will be the totals that you see within the report so can be worked out by governors if needed but this is the average attendance across that group so will depend on the percentage for each child."

With regard to virtual Harmony workshops for parents, LG noted "This was such an excellent and informative workshop as you and MB explained the Harmony principles so clearly and visually. It was wonderful to see and hear how the principles are becoming deeply embedded across the school."

Q/C With regard to specialists attending school to carry out CPD, governors asked: "Are these specialists coming into school? Does that mean that there is the opportunity for other visiting teachers/ visitors to come into school?" CS replied: "Specialists who are essential to our everyday provision (eg a music teacher) still come into school but enrichment activities (such as Jem's Mindfulness sessions) are delivered virtually."

Q/C With regard to Performance Management, governors asked: "Do Lines of Enquiry (LoE) align with learning groups? How are teachers who do not have a subject responsibility 'assigned' a key priority from the LDP?" CS replied: "Yes, at least one LoE for each teacher will align with the Learning Group and Learning Groups are made up of a mix of teachers and specialists from across the school. For those where there is a direct link with a subject responsibility (eg Natasha in the Maths one) the link is clear but for others their subject responsibility is one of a number of factors to take into account when deciding which group they should be in. All teachers have a subject / area responsibility."

Q/C Governors also asked to see some examples of LoEs without them being linked to individual staff? CS said that she would provide some anonymised examples for the next LGB.

Certified as a true record Chair

Date

Q/C With regard to children of Safeguarding concern, governors asked: “Are the numbers for safeguarding concern higher as a result of COVID? Are there a new group of vulnerable children? Have practices had to change at all in the context of COVID?” CS replied that vulnerable families were better supported in Lockdown 1 as the school had more time to devote to vulnerable children but this had been significantly diluted since school fully reopened. There were higher numbers of CIN assessments and Safeguarding concerns in general. SS’s parent workshops could not currently run and some families were not coping well. Some Child Protection cases were reduced to CIN which MB considered surprising. She noted that thresholds were the same but there was a sense that interpretation and quality of decisions had changed. **Q/C Governors asked whether this could be fed back and could the MAT assist?** MB noted that in general, resources in other agencies in the safeguarding arena were also struggling.

With regard to the decrease in challenging behaviour due to changes to school day/set up due to Covid, governors noted that this was “amazing support from the community and the school.” CS replied: “This had had a huge impact on some of our most vulnerable families and has taken us down a different planning route in terms of how we create sustainable change. Great learning for us from incredible support and we’ll be modelling our Christmas support for families on this learning.” **Q/C Governors asked if there had been any negative effects on children not moving around so much? More time spent in their classrooms, not being able to play with friends from other classes etc?** CS replied: “yes and our Junior Governors are currently building a picture from across all classes about children's feelings around this.” She added that there were some disruptive and challenging behaviours from some of our most vulnerable children but felt that this was attributable to home circumstances rather than school routines..

Q/C With regard to current strains on staff, governors asked if there anything more they could do to support the SLT - or any delegation of other duties that could alleviate other areas under strain? CS said that the situation was challenging and everything needed to be re-thought and took up huge amounts of time. Parents also needed greater support due to high levels of anxiety which staff bore the brunt of. However, she stressed that the focus on quality teaching and learning was still strong, but it needed to be recognised that it was a highly demanding period.

Q/C With regard to staff isolating, governors asked if “when isolating but feeling fine, can the teacher interact with the class virtually?” CS replied that teachers who had lost days through having to isolate had been part of a job share and the partner had picked up the workload, some without pay and some for an exchange of time. It was very challenging for a teacher to interact with the class virtually given the age of the children affected and their ability to sustain virtual concentration.

Q/C With regard to the impact of catch up funding, governors asked “Is the additional funding part of the government tutoring scheme?” CS replied “there are two separate pots - the government tutoring scheme and the premium which comes straight into schools and can be used as the school sees fit. The government tutoring scheme seems to be much more viable in larger urban areas - we are hoping that there will be a greater supply of tutors / programmes in the new year. This is ideal as we needed this first term to truly know where our children now are.”

Q/C Governors asked about cover and was there an opportunity to share resources across the MAT. CS replied that the school had been able to provide cover through job shares, or using existing

Certified as a true record Chair Date



staff or regular supply. She would always look at internal staff movement before bringing in a stranger as this did not work for some children.

Q/C Governors noted the time spent on gate duty and asked if this was helping to manage issues in the classroom. CS replied that it definitely did, and opened a communication channel which families needed, and it was therefore easier to keep the lid on issues. **Q/C Governors asked if this was due to lockdown.** CS felt that it was an accumulation over a period of time and Christmas was a heightened emotional time for families against a difficult social and economic backdrop. MB added that in the previous lockdown it felt more under control, but the lockdown following a two week half term appeared to have led to some issues. **Q/C Governors noted Christmas initiatives including donations of hampers for disadvantaged families and asked if central government would help.** CS said that she was talking to the LA and it would probably run a voucher scheme, though the school would also offer food hampers through Hardyes, alongside a more luxury / treat version in school. She also noted the Christmas stockings which the PTA were supporting. CS noted the concerning levels of poverty in some parts of the school community. **Q/C Governors asked what would most benefit families in terms of donations.** CS said that more than anything families needed to know that the school was there and cared, prompting the question of did the school feel that more families needed help this year. CS said that there were around 25 families who needed focused help so increasing to 25 hampers would assist, she also noted that Brace of Butchers provided food for 20 families per week. Poverty was increasing as more people were out of work and still sorting out benefits payments. She felt that the situation was likely to get worse in January.

Safeguarding

Q/C Governors asked what happened with families of concern during school holidays who the school was monitoring. MB said that there was a system whereby the families could contact the school. DSLs picked up concerns as usual during holidays and would follow up anything of significant concern at any time.

MB then presented the audit she had completed with RB, which she considered to be more of a checklist. She added that RB had been supportive and robust. RB said that the grade descriptors would help to provide a greater detail. SD thanked MB and RB for completing this work.

'Great Works' celebration plans

This had been discussed at Item 4. SD asked CS to inform governors of the date of the next Harmony Workshop for parents.

9. Trust Board Issues

Receive Aim/Priorities of the MAT - these had been included in the pack and were agreed.

Receive MAT Policies - none had been received from the MAT. CS mentioned that policy work needed attention and NG offered to assist, which CS agreed to. NG would investigate and report any omissions or discrepancies to CS in due course.

Budget Report inc Aged Debtor Report - Diane Coker had included a headline report in the pack and JMK tabled a further report. She said that the recent audit report was due to be agreed and a copy would shortly be sent to the Trustees. JMK offered to help governors go through the report should this be

Certified as a true record Chair Date



necessary. JMK then presented the tabled financial statement and gave an overview of the breakdown of the £179k carry forward. **Q/C SD checked that CS was happy with the ringfenced figures, she confirmed that she was.** There was further discussion about the conversion of capital into revenue on joining the MAT. **Q/C governors asked if they would be able to see the staffing percentage.** JMK said it would be reported next year and was currently on target. RB suggested that governors could look at an aspect of the report and it was agreed that they would decide how to proceed when the new reporting system was implemented. It was noted that there were no aged debtors to report.

(At 6.25pm JMK left the meeting).

10. Governance Issues

Agree GB Priorities - SD noted that the Governor Action Plan had been included in the pack and that the LDP for was the driver for key GB priorities, which she considered to be supporting staff wellbeing and monitoring the LDP. This was agreed.

Link Governor Reports - MM had met with AHT Ellie Goodridge (EG) as part of her link to the Outcomes SLG. She referred to the outcomes report for EYFS which had been shared in the pack. This referred to Reception starters, baseline assessments and getting children back on track where there were gaps. Most children were coming in with writing and number work well below what would be expected, though there were some cases where parents had clearly made efforts to ensure that their children were school ready. **Q/C Governors asked if this was lockdown related.** MM said that EG felt that it was a lot to do with this, and lack of contact with adults as physical development scores were quite low. MM said that she did not get the impression from EG that the cohort had any development issues and CS said that the school would be monitoring the rate of progress but were expecting it to be rapid. Some disadvantaged children had made good progress, as they had been in school during the lockdown. Governors noted a thank you to staff and CS for getting children settled and tackling the ongoing challenges.

SD noted that link roles and link report templates were in the pack and she had included other helpful documents alongside a note of the date that the LGB meeting reports should go. This matched LDP milestones. CS said that she very much appreciated the level of work completed and the depth of understanding SD had demonstrated in doing it. In terms of link roles for SLGs - MM had now completed her report and the lead SLT member would contact governors with dates of the Curriculum and Inclusion SLGs. SD noted that JW's workload was high in terms of link roles, and asked that she should let SD know if this was problematic as new governors were expected to join the GB soon and so ease the workload. In the absence of a Web Compliance Link Governor, NG agreed to assist with web compliance work and would complete a web audit in due course.

Governor Training Feedback - NG showed governors the NGA website and Learning Link with the list of available modules.

Adopt Admissions Policy - the Dorset model was in use and CS now needed to localise and adapt it before publishing on the school website. Adoption was deferred to the next LGB.

Approve Performance Management - the task had been completed and governors were satisfied with the content in the HT Report, but the report format was still to be finalised as CS had only received it from

Certified as a true record Chair Date

the MAT a matter of days ago. A discussion took place on the challenges therein. CS would need to discuss further with MF and would report back.

Agree Governor Visits Schedule - this was discussed above and was agreed.

Succession Planning/Governor Induction/Skills Audit Gaps - succession and induction had been discussed in item 4 above. The recent Skills Audit results had been included in the pack for governor's information and NG noted the key skills gaps (scores of less than 3 on a scale of 1 to 5, five being strong):

- Strategic Leadership Section: *Experience of being a trustee/governor in another school or being a board member in another sector scored 2.*
- Accountability Section: *Experience of human resource (HR) policy and processes within the school sector scored 2.*

Clerk's Notices - a copy of the briefing report had been included in the pack and the key points were around GB support with Education Support Leads now working in localities, Virtual Governance inc preparation and planning for meetings and virtual monitoring; updates to the Governance Handbook noted.

11. Any other Urgent Business as declared at start of meeting

None.

12. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 14 January 2021 6pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm.

Action Plan following the Local Governing Body meeting held on 27 November 2020

Action to be Taken	Minute No.	Governor/Staff Member Involved	Suggested Completion Date
1. Provide report on Guided Reading.	4 (4 (4 (7)))	CS	By LGB February 2021
2. Ensure that all governors undertake Safeguarding Training.	4 (4 (4))	SD	ASAP
3. Write to Chamber of Commerce ref governor vacancies.	4 (4 (10))	TA	ASAP
4. CS to inform governors of dates of forthcoming virtual Harmony Workshop/s	8	CS	ASAP
5. NG to look at policy work and report to CS	9	NG	By end of December 2020
6. SLT to inform link governors of dates of Curriculum and Inclusion	10	SLT SLG Leads	ASAP

Certified as a true record Chair

Date

SLGs			
7. NG to conduct web audit	10	NG	By end of December 2020
8. Admissions Policy adoption on next LGB agenda	10	NG	By next LGB
9. CS to report back on Performance Management Report	10	CS	ASAP

Certified as a true record Chair

Date