

**Minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of the Wessex MAT held via Google Meet on
Thursday 29 April 2021 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	Miles King MK
	Co-opted	Tom Amery TA

In attendance: Natalie Green NG (Clerk), Moira Bearwish MB (DHT), Michelle Cheeseman (MC)
Prospective Co-opted Governor.

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, formally welcoming Co-opted Governor MK whose appointment had now been approved by the Wessex MAT Trust Board. MC had also been invited to attend as a prospective Co-opted Governor and would join the meeting shortly.

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2. Apologies for Absence

None. All governors were present.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were approved virtually as an accurate record.

4. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business

CS noted one item which would be for non-staff governors only. Governors who were also staff would be asked to leave for this item.

5. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in respect of the Agenda.

6. Trust Board Issues

6.1 *Receive Policies* - the MAT Pay, Whistleblowing and SEND policies were received.

6.2 *Budget Report* - CS said that MAT Finance Director Jan McKie (JMCK) was currently off sick and would be leaving the MAT at the end of June, so the reporting was not in the usual format. RB said that she felt that the reports were not easy to interpret and would like to see the information in a different format. CS suggested that a small sub group meet to discuss the interim arrangements that are in place in JMCK's absence and to look at the report ahead of the next meeting to gain a greater understanding. CS would share a suggested date with RB and MM.

7. Matters Arising & Action Plan

1. 7 4 (4 (4 (7))) CS to provide a report on Guided Reading. CLOSED as the focus had shifted to writing and this would be reported to governors in Learning Groups.
2. 7 4 (4 (4)) SD to ensure that all governors undertake Safeguarding Training- NG would register MK as a member on the NGA website and send him the modules to complete, TA also needed to complete the Safeguarding module and would undertake to do this ASAP. ONGOING
3. 7 (8) CS to inform governors of dates of forthcoming virtual Harmony Workshop/s - a virtual session on 20 May at 4pm was being offered to parents and later sessions could be offered if parents requested them. CS would send a link to governors. ONGOING
4. 7 (10) SLT to inform link governors of dates of Curriculum and Inclusion SLGs - CS gave governors the following dates: Thursday 13 May for Curriculum SLG (SD would meet with MB following this with the plan that MC took on this Link role once her appointment was approved); Inclusion on 6 May with LG attending; Pupil Outcomes had taken place on 28 April and MM had met with Ellie Goodridge (EG) following it and next one was scheduled for 9 June after which EG would again meet with MM. COMPLETED
5. 10 CS to inform GB when governor monitoring in school can re-commence - CS asked governors to make contact with their link staff and she would check with the staff members concerned. COMPLETED

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8. Correspondence

None.

9. Headteacher's Report

9.1 Headteacher's Written Report

(Advance written questions from governors and CS's written responses are highlighted in bold below).

CS referred to her report, noting the following:

She thanked governors for their advance comments on the report. She noted how much parents were enjoying seeing children's achievements and that the school team had realised how many new skills and confidences they had learned during the periods of lockdown.

The numbers for the September 2021 intake had now been confirmed and DFS had a full cohort of 90 new Foundation children registered with an additional waiting list again this year. **Q/C Do you know what the waiting list is? Has there been any update on when the additional class will be introduced? CS: I think after allocation Round 1 it was 6 but this may increase after Round 2.**

The situation in the CCN Base currently involved a high and challenging workload. CS explained how children accessed the Base via admission panels and noted that three children had highly complex needs - CS gave fuller details to governors in her report. A discussion followed on how governors could assist the school and the children concerned. **Q/C Are they being placed at Damers or are parents asking to attend the Base? CS: Some children are placed with us when parents have requested specialist provision but admission panel have deemed specialist resourced CCN provision appropriate. Others have been placed with us for a 'period of assessment' but this hasn't been followed up by DC when the placement has been identified as unable to meet need. Others have been refused a base place, have accessed the mainstream school with an EHCP and then the school has had to find a way to meet complex need within the mainstream when specialist provision has been deemed appropriate.**

CS appreciated governor's positive feedback on the website but noted that some areas of it were in need of attention and an overhaul was planned.

Learning Groups would be resumed from the following week and members would be sharing their current lines of enquiry to steer the research focus and intended outcomes of these groups. The focus of each group would remain aligned to the 4 key priorities within the LDP. **Q/C Does each member have a certain number of lines of enquiry? Are all of these linked to their individual CPD? CS: Everyone has a minimum of one LoE, some have 3. All are linked with their own CPD and the LDP.** She added that staff were all aware about how they could drive improvement through their own performance and that of others, and how this also linked to governor monitoring. **Q/C Governors asked about how they could see that these lines of enquiry followed the LDP in an addition to CS's report.** CS agreed to provide an anonymised report.

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MB was currently working with individual subject leaders to ensure that their action plans were updated in light of the current context and plans for recovery. Subject leaders had also been asked to refresh their messages and guidance around assessment tracking in their subject areas to ensure that all teachers were using a holistic picture of children's current attainment levels across the curriculum. **Q/C Is there a timescale for this so that Governors are able to timetable link role visits? CS: Yes - this will hopefully be informed through your discussions with MB around monitoring.**

During the lockdowns it had been a challenge to keep a connection with books and reading in some homes as a significant proportion of children only experienced books in school. 'Virtual Libraries' had now been introduced. This also linked to the Harmony curriculum within the context of story. Teachers had set up a virtual library including books they had chosen around their theme and then shared with families via blogs. Governors commented on what an engaging resource this was. **Q/C Is this available to every year group? How has it been communicated to parents? CS: Every year group has been asked to publish one each half term now. Some already had them on the go during lockdown and for others they have only introduced them this term.**

There had been a good response to the remote learning provision questionnaire and the results would appear in the newsletter. CS noted the headlines: 88 families had responded to the request for feedback; on a scale of 0-10, 95% of families judged the quality of our remote learning provision as an 8 or above and over half rated the quality as '10'; parents and children clearly welcomed and appreciated the daily contact with teachers and classmates and this was reported to be the most significantly successful element of the provision; 46% of families who responded felt that the lockdown had not had a negative impact on their child's mental health, however this view has changed for some families following the return to school. **Q/C Does this mean 54% felt a negative impact, or were there some neutrals? CS: No neutrals. 8% felt that lockdown had impacted their child's mental health 'significantly'. Q/C What is the scale of (mental health concerns) in this? What is in place to support children? CS** responded verbally that it was hard to measure as it was distinctive for each child. The toughest weeks were before Easter, with a range of reactions from children who had been in school with greater adult intervention and those learning at home. It was clear that children had lost a significant amount of independence and stamina. Some children were struggling coming back to school and presenting behaviours not seen before in them so the staff were using some refined strategies to overcome this. She noted that they seemed happier since the return after Easter as everyone was on the same starting point and appeared to be more settled.

In terms of Enrichment, CS said that due to Covid restrictions the school was still awaiting further guidance / reassurance around the planning of school trips that term, including the Leeson House visit. Teachers continued to explore virtual links with enrichment opportunities and a number of exciting 'visits' had taken place already as seen in the Skipper 3 celebration. Year 1 would be visited by a traveller story teller the following week. She added that the Skipper 3 Great Works 8 Wonders of Dorset showed the breadth of the curriculum even whilst confined to school. The Surfers Against Sewage founder had spoken to children virtually and this approach would enhance the curriculum going forward. She cited this as an example of the kind of approach which would not have been considered prior to lockdowns. **Q/C What is the timescale for reintroducing after school clubs? CS: We are hoping that further guidance may be published after 17 May and that we can begin to plan for the final half term.**

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9.2 Evidence Informed Governance - next steps

CS referred governors to the EEF guide in the pack, and recommended that governors read this before their next monitoring visit.

9.3 Safeguarding including Looked After Children (LAC) Report

MB noted that it had only been 34 school days since the last report and she highlighted the training listed in red since the last report. LAC had now increased from 1 child to 3. She showed governors the figures from My Concern, noting that there were 224 categories related to a concern on 167 children’s profiles. Pupil Premium and Free School Meals children showed the highest number of concerns but some children had more than one flag pertaining to them. Y4 made up 44% of concerns and was much the larger figure - MB mentioned that a couple of children with several incidents of concern could affect this; MB showed categories of concern from My Concern that day showing a wide range. **Q/C Governors asked who reported to My Concern - MB said that Teachers, TAs and MDS’s all updated it.** MB presented the LAC report - she noted that she was finding the virtual school link EPEP system more effective and it included up to date information and reports. She noted the additional work for teachers in terms of teaching children in care, which required specific and rigorous monitoring and reporting.

Operation Encompass - MB explained that this was a Safeguarding partnership between police and education which ensured that any domestic abuse issues affecting families were notified to schools directly. She outlined the process involved, the training undertaken, the secure communication system set up and stressed that this was a huge step forward and a positive partnership which enabled the school to support any relevant children much more effectively. CS noted that parents had been made aware that the school was linked to Operation Encompass via the newsletter and the website. **Q/C Governors asked if this was a national project, which was confirmed. Q/C Governors asked if this would create additional pressure for the Safeguarding Leads.** MB said that the team were trained in domestic abuse issues in any case and due to the nature of the school demographic was a part of the concerns encountered. SS added that she and other members of staff had completed the Trauma Informed Schools training and were therefore part of the skilled support response.

9.4 MAT / DASP Update - CS noted that the MAT was advertising for a new Finance Director as JMCK would leave at the end of June. The MAT had appointed a Data Protection Officer, which would be a very useful resource. The DASP Executive would take place in the week following and CS would report to governors at the next meeting.

10. Governance Issues

10.1 Link Governor Reports - LG would meet with Rachel Nesbitt following the next Inclusion SLG and the report would be in the next meeting pack; MM had met with EG to look at Pupil Outcomes following up on data from pre-Easter assessment. Her written report would follow but she gave a brief overview. She said that EG would share a data update at the next meeting. The number of children working at Age Related Expectations (ARE) across the school was a lot lower than expected at present with writing being the key area of concern followed by Maths. KS1 children seemed more impacted by the first lockdown but KS2 children were now more affected. The SLG meeting noted issues with consistency across the three classes in the Year Groups and staff had found virtual meetings challenging - this would be addressed via moderation with year leaders. Book looks had dropped off due to lockdowns and this would now be a priority for targeted children, aiming to look forward rather than

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look back, to see where the children needed to go next. There would be a focus on basic skills but within a broad and balanced curriculum. Summer Term assessments would include SATS for Y2 which would not be reported back, but would provide data on progress and a measure to work with. CS added that this would sit within the normal tranche of assessments which always took place annually. Y1 children appeared to be thriving and only slightly below where they would be expected to be - they were able to access live teaching three times daily which could have had a positive impact. Y2 and Y3 were the main focus of attention in terms of catch up. SD thanked MM for this report.

10.2 Governor Training Feedback - SD noted that she would be writing an annual Chair's Report to the Trust Board and would be reporting on governor training. She asked governors to review the NGA modules and complete any further relevant ones, reporting completion to the Clerk.

10.3 Updated Governor Monitoring Schedule - SD noted that she had updated this for May and July 2021 with the date reports need to be completed. She notified relevant governors. SD was also compiling a more detailed monitoring plan for 2021/22. Monitoring activity would also be included in her annual report to the Trust Board.

10.4 Succession Planning/Governor Induction - MK had now formally been appointed as a new Co-opted Governor and NG would liaise with Karen Weir MAT Company Secretary about the new governor induction programme. MK would give feedback on this. The GB agreed to recommend the appointment of Michelle Cheeseman as Co-opted Governor to the Trust Board - SD would follow this up with the MAT.

10.5 Clerk Role - NG had confirmed in writing that she would leave the Clerk role at the end of term. Vicky Smyth (VS), Clerk to the Trust Board and THS and Bere Regis schools would clerk for DFS from September 2021. NG noted VS's knowledge and experience and welcomed this news.

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

At 7.45pm MC, AH, SS and LG left the meeting, leaving a quorum of SD, CS, MM, RB, TA and MK remaining. The final item was recorded as a confidential minute.

12. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 27 May 2021 6pm

This meeting would take place virtually on Meet, with a view to the final meeting of the year on 1.7.21 being in school and in person.

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

Action Plan following the Local Governing Body meeting held on 29 April 2021

Action to be Taken	Minute No.	Governor/Staff Member Involved	Suggested Completion Date
1. Ensure that all governors undertake Safeguarding Training.	7 4 (4 (4))	MK/TA	ASAP

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2. CS to send link to governors to take part in forthcoming virtual Harmony Workshop/s	7 (8)	CS	By 20.5.21
3. Provide anonymised report on how Lines of Enquiry followed the LDP	9.1	CS	By next meeting
4. Governors to review and complete relevant NGA training modules	10.2	ALL	ASAP
5. Governors to contact their staff link before conducting monitoring report	10.3	Relevant governors	ASAP
6. Register MK as NGA member and send training link details	10.4	NG	COMPLETED
7. Liaise with KW ref Governor Induction	10.4	NG	COMPLETED
8. Follow up appointment of MC as Co-opted Governor with TB	10.4	SD	COMPLETED

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