



WITTERSHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Held Virtually on Thursday, 11th March 2021 at 6.30 pm

*On a voyage of discovery: together we learn,
grow and achieve*

Christian Values of
Respect, Self-worth/Perseverance, Love,
Kindness, Forgiveness

PRESENT: John Collins (Chair), Jennifer Maynard (Vice Chair), Claire Frost (Headteacher), Lucy Avena (AHT/Staff governor), Rev'd Judy Darkins, Sue Mash, Johanna Dadson, Donna Clifton, Stephen Rogers and Rachel Georgiades

CLERK: Jane Phillips

The meeting commenced at 6.32 pm and was quorate.

ITEM	PROCEDURAL	ACTION
1.	<u>WELCOME, APOLOGIES, QUORUM</u>	
1a	The Chair welcomed governors and Rachel Georgiades to the meeting which was opened with a prayer. Governors had previously been asked to ensure that they were in a suitable environment which enabled each to maintain confidentiality.	
1b	Apologies had not been received for Oliver Walker. There were no other apologies for absence	
1c	The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.	
1d	The meeting would be recorded in the event the link with the Clerk was lost.	
2.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST</u> Sue Mash declared she was a governor of Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre. There were no other declarations of business or pecuniary interest made against any agenda item.	
3.	<u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2021</u>	
3a	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate account and would be signed by the Chair in due course.	
3b	<u>A Review of Governor and Clerk's Actions Arising</u> Item 2. The SEND governor to virtually meet with the SENCO on 24th March 2021 to review the Mainstream Core Standards for SEND. Remaining actions had been completed or would be discussed during this meeting.	SEND Gov
GOVERNANCE		
4.	<u>LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPOINTMENT</u> Rachel Georgiades (RA) was invited to introduce herself to governors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The candidate lived locally to the school. An accredited dog trainer and owner of a pet shop in Tenterden. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A background in academic research and Divisional Management where she would oversee the grant application process for science research. Prior experience of financial management of a research grant portfolio, HR management and assisting the Head of Division with strategic planning. <p>RG was asked to step out of the meeting whilst governors considered her appointment.</p> <p>The Chair reported on the successful outcome of the Local Authority Governor Nomination Panel meeting in February 2021 when RA's nomination had been agreed.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed to appoint Rachel Georgiades as their Local Authority governor. Her term of office would conclude on 10th March 2025.</p> <p>RG re-joined the meeting and was congratulated on her appointment. Introductions were made.</p> <p>Action: The Clerk to send Governor Services a copy of the minutes of this meeting to evidence the Local Authority governor appointment.</p> <p>Action: The Clerk to send RG her governor appointment paperwork, statutory documents and items of interest.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT		
5.	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING</u></p> <p>(Some discussions were considered confidential and were contained in part two of the minutes.)</p> <p>The Headteacher (HT) said there were no incidents, issues or concerns to report. The HT presented a safeguarding overview to governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a strong awareness that safeguarding priorities had taken on an added significance with the pandemic increasing the risks to some of the more vulnerable families nationally. It was also affecting families from very different backgrounds. For example, families might start to face unemployment which would have a knock on effect of possible stress and deprivation to children which might not have been faced prior to the pandemic. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) continued to keep abreast of safeguarding updates, the additional advice and the resources available. This would ensure the school remained updated on safeguarding and additional needs and was in a position to provide the best possible support for the school community. There had been one online safety concern for a pupil engaging in remote learning. The HT had taken advice from the Local Authority Online Safety Lead and then met with parent and child. The matter was resolved to good effect. On the children's return that week, all classes had viewed the NSPCC 'Speak out Stay Safe' which was a virtual assembly. It was considered important because it gave an acknowledgment and normalised how the children might be feeling in an age appropriate way. It also reinforced finding an adult to speak despite unusual circumstances and also referenced Child Line. It was considered an impactful and effective way to regroup the children that week. 	
6.	<p><u>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</u></p> <p>The HT provided a verbal report on the full reopening of the school from Monday, 8th March 2021.</p>	

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The Number of Children and Staff in School

- All staff were back and were working as per their contracted hours.
- There were 136 pupils on roll. Current indications were that the school would be oversubscribed for the September 2021 Year R intake for the third year running.

A governor understood that an earlier indication of pupil numbers had been lower. The HT explained that early numbers had been released to schools through a different platform by Kent County Council. Indicative numbers had been below the school's PAN (published admissions number) of twenty. Numbers were subject to change once the offers went out in April. Some families might have moved away whilst others would be looking to join the school.

Remote Education Children Considered Clinically Vulnerable

- Currently there were no pupils who were considered clinically vulnerable.
- A remote learning plan was in place which would be actioned should a child need to be absent for Covid related reasons.

Wellbeing Across the School Community

Pupils and Parents

- As reported previously to governors, staff had undertaken a range of training related to the impact of Covid on pupils with a focus on anxiety and grief. One of the Teaching Assistants had recently completed a course on Talking & Drawing therapy and was able to work 1:1 with a vulnerable child who had attended school during lockdown.
- Wellbeing events were planned into the remote learning to include 'Wellbeing Wednesday' and celebrations for World Book Day. On snow days outdoor activities had been set. As a staff, it had been decided that teachers would regularly and purposefully build wellbeing into the learning planned at home and in school. Daily feedback and contact with their pupils meant teachers could be highly responsive in their planning and to adjust plans accordingly. If there was a sense that the class was becoming fatigued, there was then a shift in the balance with the setting of more artwork or outdoor activities. Given the size of the school, the teachers were very adept at picking up on nuances and knew the children well.
- The pupils had largely appeared very resilient. However, a number of pupils, particularly in Year 1/2, had become quite fatigued during the last week before the February half term which had manifested itself in a variety of ways to include behaviour at home. Advice and practical and emotional support was provided which was very much based on the family context and individual needs.
- The children had returned on Monday, 8th March and seemed resilient and happy to have returned. The HT commented that the children's return had been joyful.
- A whole school strategy had been put in place in the two weeks preceding 8th March to help pupils transition. This was either for the whole school or for the children at home. For the children at home, social stories were shared with the children which would explain the emotions they were feeling about returning to school. The HT had also recorded and shared a video message with the children on Sunday, 7th March which acknowledged their feelings, provided reassurance and welcomed them back. Specific families or children were also identified who might need additional support where there were individual phone calls home or individual messages on the Class Dojo.

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- Careful consideration had also been given to the planned transition for those pupils who had been in school throughout given they might find the change to their environment hard. The children had become used to small groups, increased adult attention and a quieter environment which had been a real shift for them. Strategies used by teachers included counting down the days and making 'Welcome Back' posters. Smuggler class children had made name plates for those children who were returning so that they felt very involved and were part of welcoming the children back. This was considered to have worked particularly well.
- The SENCO had worked closely with families throughout the lockdown both for children with known SEN needs but also for some children whose behaviours flagged new concerns for parents.
- The HT had attended an Ashford Partnership meeting. Part of the research presented and statistics from Kent indicated that parents' mental health had particularly suffered during the second lockdown. This was linked to the associated stresses, pressures and feelings of guilt that might surround the home support of remote learning. The Senior Leadership Team had discussed this, to include individual support such as a chat on the phone, suggesting resources, speaking to the children on the parents behalf or the sharing of external links. For example, the previous week a free wellbeing webinar from the DfE had been promoted about children's emotional wellbeing at times of uncertainty. This included reflection on parents' own emotional needs.

Wellbeing for Staff

- The SENCO continued to work through Kent's Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing Toolkit for staff and would lead a staff meeting on this the following week. The action plan would be taken forward.
- Supervision for wellbeing continued to be in place for the SENCO and EYFS teacher.
- A very transparent approach with good communication around Covid had been helpful in reducing staff anxiety. There was also a clear line of communication with the HT if there were any personal concerns. The staff felt very much a part of the decision making.
- External links for wellbeing support were shared with staff. This was in respect of general wellbeing or specific to Covid.
- The workload for teachers continued to be high on the HT's agenda. The need to protect this as far as possible was paramount at a time where lockdown and Covid had added additional workload pressures for teachers. The HT explained that during lockdown there had only been two staff meetings where considered absolutely necessary. Parent consultations had taken place by video link the previous week and had taken place during the afternoons so that the HT could cover the teacher in class and to avoid two late evenings for teachers.
- The HT was taking part in a twelve week wellbeing coaching course every Monday evening in order to equip her with a better understanding of self-care and what optimal wellbeing looked like. The HT said she was now six weeks into the course and was finding it very useful.

The Clerk asked if consideration would be given to continuing with video parent consultations or other current practices once life returned to a degree of normality. The HT said when consultations returned to normal, she intended to send out a questionnaire to parents to get a sense of what they would prefer. Current thinking was to offer both face-to-face and video consultations. There were parents who liked to come into school, look at the books and meet with the teachers. There were many parents who would find

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	<p>video consultations more convenient. The consultations were also limited to ten minutes which helped to focus the conversation. Telephone calls had also been offered to parents where they were unable to access the video links.</p> <p>A governor referenced the TA who had recently completed a course on Talking & Drawing therapy who was working with one particular child. Would the therapy be available to other children now that school had reopened. The HT said lots of children would benefit from the therapy over time.</p> <p>A governor said he had received a copy of the SENCO's information on resilience and wellbeing which would be presented to staff the following week. It was understood that in the Mainstream Core Standards for SEND, there was an expectation that schools would work through the Kent Resilience and Wellbeing Toolkit. It was very apparent from the documentation provided that the SENCO had made good progress in this regard.</p> <p>A governor reported he had viewed an Ofsted presentation which looked at SEND remote learning. The presentation looked at the research on remote learning and SEND children during lockdown and what was considered best practice. Based on the HT's reports during previous meetings and the SEN governor's previous meeting with the SENCO, it was evident that the school was modelling best practice.</p> <p>Governors reiterated their thanks and appreciation to the HT and staff for all that they'd done when faced with such challenging circumstances over a prolonged period. The HT was asked to convey this to staff.</p> <p>The HT was very pleased to report that a parent had nominated the Year 4/5 teacher for the Pearson National Teaching awards 'Lockdown Hero' award which was considered a lovely acknowledgement.</p> <p>The staff governor said the ongoing efforts to reduce teacher workload had been greatly appreciated.</p>	
7.	<p><u>RISK ASSESSMENT</u></p> <p>The updated Risk Assessment and lateral flow testing Risk Assessment (RA) were circulated in advance of the meeting (filed with the minutes). Any amendments had been highlighted in green.</p> <p>The HT reported that the RA included all control measures for the school's reopening on 8th March. It continued to be a living document and was amended against national guidance and against local context. All staff members were consulted and were encouraged to contribute or question.</p> <p>Referencing the home testing, a governor asked if there was a deputy for the Covid Registration Assistant if this person became ill. The HT said the majority of the job description for the roles of Covid Coordinator (Headteacher) and Covid Registration Assistant (Office Manager) were very much about the initial setting up, distribution, the completion of risk assessments and training. The HT explained that if she became ill, staff would report to the AHT. The HT could also step into the Registration Assistant's role if needs be.</p>	
8.	<p><u>SEF/SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP) 2020/21</u></p>	
8a	<p><u>The School's Recovery Plan – An Assessment of the Impact of Covid-19</u></p> <p>The school's 'Re-balancing March' Reconnection Plan was circulated in advance of the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>The HT said the children had only been back in school for 4 days and that it was too early to report back in any depth or detail on the gaps in the children's learning and what interventions would need to be put in place. Teachers were in the process of carrying out low level assessments such as 1:1 reading, benchmarking assessments for reading, work in small phonics groups and</p>	

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	<p>observations of child initiated play. The teachers would need the time to teach, to assess gaps and misconceptions, to re-teach and to teach it well.</p> <p>The HT said staff members had found that some of the children seemed more needy as they had become used to having 1:1 adult support whilst at home. As a generalisation, the children were more demanding of the teacher's time and that it was necessary to re-develop their independent learning skills. Reading seemed quite strong as an early indicator. The children were also considered to be engaged in Maths during lockdown but that some misconceptions had been picked up. The quality of handwriting would also be a focus as the quality had dropped.</p> <p><u>Priority Actions for the Recovery Phase</u></p> <p>The HT said the priority actions were contained in the Re-balance and Re-connection Plan.</p> <p>8b <u>Any Updates in Respect of the SDP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Focus 1</u> Work on oracy and Maths mastery was continuing. The school also continued to engage in external Maths mastery training. The next would focus on Early Years. • <u>Focus 2</u> The new Re-connection Plan had been revised from the September 2020 start back and re-introduced for March. Staff were considered to have worked effectively with families and children expressing anxieties around the pandemic and school. • <u>Focus 4</u> The focus on staff wellbeing had been covered earlier in the meeting. 	
<p>9. 9a</p>	<p><u>GOVERNOR MONITORING</u></p> <p><u>Virtual Monitoring Update</u></p> <p>The Safeguarding governor's virtual monitoring report of 8th March was provided as a supporting paper for the meeting. There were no questions arising from its contents.</p> <p>As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the SEN governor's virtual monitoring with the SENCO had been rearranged to take place on 24th March.</p> <p><u>Website Compliance Check</u></p> <p>A governor reported that he had completed a check of the school's website against the Department for Education guidance provided by the Clerk. The governor confirmed that the website was fully compliant with the published guidance.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>SIAMS/CHRISTIAN VALUES AND DISTINCTIVENESS</u></p> <p>The HT said the school continued to focus on Collective Worship and the use of Diocese resources and others which the school had sourced. The school community and wellbeing together with the evident love of the children and love and support returned from the parenting community was part of the school's Christian ethos and distinctiveness. The school continued to be far more than its four walls which the pandemic had clearly demonstrated.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the HT's article in the 'Outlook for Oxney' was considered excellent. The community should know more about the school and this was considered a good way of achieving this.</p>	

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11.	<p><u>FINANCE/PREMISES/HEALTH & SAFETY/GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)</u></p> <p>The HT provided a verbal report on the following items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance Committee had retrospectively agreed to an expenditure which was above £8,000 for the new interactive smartboards. • There had been an external Fire Risk assessment review in February and the written report was currently awaited. Cost £430. The external review was completed bi-annually. • Other external and statutory risk assessments had been carried out: a water risk assessment, emergency school lighting and a fire survey. There had also been an internal/external survey of play equipment. • A site condition survey had been carried out which had been commissioned by the Diocese. • There was damage to the roof of the swimming pool changing rooms which the Site Manager would follow up on. Additional costs were anticipated to clear foliage enabling access to the roof and repairs to be undertaken. • The Site Manager had spent three days clearing brambles which had grown over from the Church site into the school field. This had reduced the risk to children as well as clearing additional space on the field for play. • New blinds had been fitted in all windows across Smugglers and Vikings classrooms at a cost of £675. The money was considered well spent. • Maintenance work was needed in the Nature Garden at a cost of £200. • The display panel on the alarm needed replacing at a cost of over £400. • There would be painting and decorating costs associated with the changes from the big projectors and screens to the new smartboards. Quotes would need to be obtained in due course once the installation had been completed. • There were no items to report in respect of General Data Protection Regulations. 							
12.	<p><u>POLICIES/PROCEDURES</u></p> <p>The policy due for review was circulated in advance of the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>Governors agreed the following policy without amendment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="276 1391 1353 1458"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Policy</th><th>Next Review</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a)</td><td>Recruitment policy (Cantium model policy)</td><td>March 2023</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Policy	Next Review	a)	Recruitment policy (Cantium model policy)	March 2023	
	Policy	Next Review						
a)	Recruitment policy (Cantium model policy)	March 2023						
OTHER								
13.	<p><u>GOVERNOR TRAINING</u></p> <p><u>Training Undertaken Since the Last Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction for governors on Mainstream Core Standards for SEND – 14/2, 25/2 (DC) • Pupil Premium – 4/2 (DC) • Every Interaction Matters (Well-being for education return) MindEd – 1/3 (JC) • SEND – Remote Education (Ofsted) – 9/3 (JC) • Governor Visits to Schools – 11/3 (SR) • Safeguarding: the governor’s role – Learning Link module (JM) 							

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	<p>A governor presented a summary of the governor training event on Mainstream Core Standards for SEND.</p> <p>Action: DC to forward a copy of her training report to the Clerk for onward circulation to governors.</p> <p>The Chair reported on his participation in the Ofsted and MindEd webinars in March.</p> <p><u>Training Due to be Attended</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education People (TEP); Clerks' Conference – 19/3 (Clerk) • Understanding Key Stage 2 Data – 24/3 (DC) • NGA Clerks Conference – 30/3 and 31/3 (Clerk) • Monitoring Visits – 24/5 (DC) <p>The Chair asked governors to review their self-development and consider those areas where training would increase their effectiveness.</p> <p>Governors were reminded to add any training undertaken to their record held on GovernorHub from where an overall report could be downloaded.</p> <p>The Chair said the commissioning of bespoke training for the board would be a consideration once a sense of normality returned.</p>	DC/ Clerk
14.	<u>WEBSITE/MONTHLY BULLETINS/COVID UPDATES</u>	
14a	<p>The Education People's February 2021 bulletin was recirculated for information.</p> <p>The Clerk had highlighted a number of items of interest and links from the TEP February bulletin which were contained in the meeting agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that the Safeguarding Team had transitioned to a new website (link provided) and that all governors should familiarise themselves with the website content and regularly review it.</p> <p>Governors had also been made aware that the Pupil Premium (PP) funding rates would remain unchanged and would be based on the October 2020 Census rather than January 2021 Census. The HT said there were five children who had become eligible for PP between the October and January Census which reflected just under £7,000 of funding which the school wouldn't now receive until the next Census year.</p>	
15.	<u>CHAIR'S ACTIONS/CORRESPONDENCE</u>	
	<p>The Chair reported that the Clerk had been nominated for a National Governance Award by the governing board of Sissinghurst C.E Primary School. The Chair said he had written to the Chair of Sissinghurst in support of the nomination. The Clerk was very pleased to report that six governing boards had now come forward in support of her nomination.</p> <p>There were no other Chair's actions or correspondence sent or received to report.</p>	
16.	<u>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</u>	
	There were no matters arising.	
17.	<u>CONFIDENTIALITY</u>	
17a	Some discussions contained within agenda item 5 (Safeguarding) were considered confidential and were contained in part two of the minutes.	
17b	There were no papers which were considered confidential.	
18.	<u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u>	
	The next full governing board meeting would take place on Thursday, 13th May 2021 at 6.30 pm	

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	<p>The Chair thought it probable that virtual meetings would continue for the remainder of this academic year. The Chair said the Zoom meetings had proven to be successful over the course of the year and that advantages of this had become apparent.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that the term 1 (2021/22) meeting would be face-to-face. The meetings taking place in terms 2, 3 and 4 would be virtual with face-to face meetings resuming in terms 5 and 6.</p> <p>Governors agreed the Chair's proposal.</p>	
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The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Signed: _____
(Chair)

Date: _____

ACTION SUMMARY

ITEM	AGENDA ITEM	TO BE ACTIONED BY	ACTION
1.	3b	SEND Governor	To virtually meet with the SENCO on 24 th March 2021 to review the Mainstream Core Standards for SEND.
2.	4	Clerk	To send Governor Services a copy of the minutes of this meeting to evidence the Local Authority governor appointment.
3.	4	Clerk	To send RG her governor appointment paperwork, statutory documents and items of interest.
4.	13	DC/Clerk	To forward a copy of her training report to the Clerk for onward circulation to governors.

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