



WITTERSHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Held Virtually on Thursday, 28th January 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 and Stephen Rogers

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 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 were received and accepted for Oliver Walker (work commitments), Apologies were retrospectively received for Johanna Dadson (broadband issues) and Donna Clifton (prior commitments).	
1c	The Clerk confirmed that 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 interest made against any agenda item.	
3.	<u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER 2020</u>	
3a	The confidential and non-confidential minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate account and would be signed by the Chair in due course. The Clerk would file at school.	
3b	<u>A Review of Governor and Clerk's Actions Arising</u> All actions arising from the previous meeting had been completed.	
GOVERNANCE		
4.	<u>MEMBERSHIP</u> The Chair reported that the school's Area Governance Officer had confirmed receipt of the Local Authority governor nomination form and accompanying minutes. The Governor Nomination Panel would next meeting in February, the outcome of which was awaited. At present there was one Foundation governor vacancy.	
5.	<u>TERMS OF REFERENCE</u> <u>The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Finance Committee</u>	

Initials and Date _____

	<p>The proposed ToR for the Finance Committee were provided as a supporting paper for the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>The Chair reported that the updated ToR had been reviewed by the Finance committee during their preceding meeting and their recommendation was that it should be adopted.</p> <p>Governors agreed the ToR for the Finance Committee without further amendment. The ToR would be reviewed again in one year's time.</p>	
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT		
6.	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING</u></p> <p>The HT provided a safeguarding update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SENCO was an experienced DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) from her previous school and was keen to continue in this role. The SENCO had completed her DSL training earlier that week. The HT remained the Lead DSL with the AHT and SENCO as additional DSLs which ensured good quality, high coverage of the school. • The school continued to work with external agencies such as Early Help and that all communication remained virtual. • As Lead DSL, the HT continued to attend online DSL catch-up meetings led by the Kent area Safeguarding Team. A number of external agencies reported which was considered helpful in ensuring that the school remained up to date. • Parents were able to reach out to the HT and teachers where they felt they were struggling. The school was able to support these families or signpost them to external support if this was thought to be needed. • Strategies were in place for those children who were considered vulnerable or were on the cusp of being vulnerable when there would be 1:1 time with staff. • There was a rise in safeguarding issues which was in line with the national picture. 	
7.	<p><u>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</u></p> <p>The HT presented her verbal report to governors on the function of the school under Covid-19 DfE guidance/lockdown.</p> <p><u>Pupils in School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty two pupils were in school that week which represented 31% of all pupils. A proportion were considered vulnerable or on the cusp of being vulnerable. <p><u>Staffing Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty three members of staff were regularly in school which included those who worked part-time or job shared. Overall, this represented the fulltime equivalent of nineteen members of staff. Four Mid-Day Leaders (MDLs) had indicated that they wouldn't work during this lockdown and that unpaid leave had been agreed for them. Remaining staff had been very happy and willing to come into school. • The SENCO was working from home given she didn't have a safe space to work in at school and was unable to work across bubbles under the current Risk Assessment. This arrangement was working extremely well. • The Finance Officer had encountered childcare issues following the closure of her child's nursery. The staff member was working from home and was efficiently carrying out her duties. 	

Initials and Date _____

- If teachers wished to work from home for part of the week, they were able to individualise the timetable whilst the TAs remained in class working with the children. An example of the Windmills teacher was provided who had been working from home for two days whilst she recorded multiple videos for phonics and letter formation which would then be uploaded.

The Wellbeing and Welfare of Pupils, Staff and Stakeholders

The HT said wellbeing would always begin with the managing of workload and creating a good climate for work which had always been a high priority in her role of HT. The teachers were feeling fatigued as they were managing the provision for those children in school where there were often specific needs in addition to the provision of remote learning and feedback to pupils. The HT was mindful of workload but that it was naturally higher given the current situation.

The HT said the school was engaging with the Kent School Toolkit for Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing which the SENCO was leading. The project aimed to provide a whole school approach with useful tools for schools to use to assess, plan, and review their journey; building a culture based on promoting resilience and emotional wellbeing for pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community.

The HT reported that whilst there weren't live lessons, following parental feedback, the teachers had started weekly live Zoom whole class wellbeing check-ins as the children had missed that connection. The children caught up on news, celebrated their learning and played games (twenty questions, what's in the bag?).

The HT said an extensive amount of CPD had been completed by teachers and TAs during the previous lockdown which focussed on the pandemic, anxiety, and bereavement for example. The staff were now very well prepared to support the need and increased anxieties in pupils. The HT commented that one of the TAs had recently qualified in Talking and Drawing therapy which had been identified by the SENCO as a valuable way to offer 1:1 support for pupils who had suffered additional trauma. Consideration continued to be given to further CPD opportunities.

The HT said there was also a range of links for mental health resources for both parents and children which were shared on the school's website. Parents would be made aware as further resources became available.

The HT said she had found parents to be mindful of the staff's wellbeing, either through positive messages or in acts of kindness to the school. This showed there was a strong culture of high regard for wellbeing between all stakeholders. However, there was an awareness that this was a prolonged lockdown and the uncertainty around school closures was having a negative impact on many families. There were a range of personal struggles which the school would continue to support or signpost to specialist support where appropriate.

A governor said it had previously been suggested that the HT might spend some time working from home. Had she been able to do this? The HT said she had worked from home that day in readiness for the earlier Finance Committee meeting. The HT commented that when she was at school she was office based with the exception of lunchtime duty and so couldn't be with the children in the same way. Whilst the HT had previously spent very little time working from home, her intention was to increase this for practical reasons.

The Provision of Care for Vulnerable Children, Children with EHCPs and Critical Worker Children

- All vulnerable and cuspy vulnerable children were in school. All pupils attending school were following a structured timetable and were accessing the curriculum with support from the class teacher or TA. Lunchtimes and outdoor play were running as usual. PE sessions had not been compromised and all Key Stage 1 and 2 children were having their full PE lessons.

Initials and Date _____

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where pupils had vulnerabilities, staff continued to recognise their needs and to give an individual the time and capacity to discuss their issues or feelings. There was one pupil with an EHCP (Education and Health and Care Plan) who was attending school fulltime. The child continued to be supported a 1:1 TA. Weekly external specialist interventions were being delivered remotely. The HT explained that following the government's announcement on 30th December 2020, she had emailed parents to ask that they identify themselves if they were critical workers and to request a place for the 4th January 2021 term start. Where there was some uncertainty from parents, the HT had made telephone calls to them over the New Year. Parent requests for places had continued during term 3 which were considered on an individual basis. 	
8.	<p><u>RISK ASSESSMENT</u></p> <p>The updated risk assessment was circulated as a supporting paper for the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>The HT explained this was a 'live' document which was constantly reviewed and considered, updates were made and the document shared with staff. The staff were invited to offer their own input or to flag concerns. The updates shown in green type acknowledged the current lockdown and new Covid variant. However, there were no other significant changes to report.</p> <p>The HT reported there was a second, separate risk assessment which covered the staff lateral flow tests.</p>	
9.	<p><u>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP) – 2020/21</u></p> <p>A governor asked the AHT/Rother class teacher to provide an overview of a typical day for children in school and those accessing remote learning. The AHT reported as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evening before, the next day's schedule would be uploaded to the class Dojo together with any resources which the families would need. This would enable parents to have sight of this beforehand so they were well prepared for the morning ahead. Packs were printed off where children were without access to a printer at home which were placed in a box ready for collection at 8.30 am. The teacher recorded herself talking through the daily schedule to include any additional information, any feedback from the learning which had previously been completed and uploaded together with any hints and tips. The teacher would handover to her TA to supervise the children's early morning work. Time would then be spent addressing any questions, queries, or technical issues on the class Dojo. Class worship took place at 9 am which was working well. The teacher would then introduce the lessons which were aligned to the work the children's remote learning. The children were encouraged to work independently or under the supervision of the class TA. However, as some of the children were vulnerable, there would be occasions when they required the support of both the teacher and TA. Time would be spent organising the next day's planning. The teacher was often then in class teaching on her own during the afternoon. Time would be spent after school responding to the children's learning on class Dojo and the uploading of the schedule and resources for the following day. <p>The AHT commented that the days were particularly intense for the teachers. It had been necessary to make adjustments to include being more desk based and the prolonged periods of looking at a computer screen.</p>	

Initials and Date _____

9a	<p>The AHT explained that the planning was taking longer as it was necessary to tailor the curriculum for both the pupils in school and the home learners.</p> <p>The AHT said the class Dojo was working well but for families with internet issues, there was often a flurry of the children's work during the evening. The AHT said she felt a responsibility to respond to their work that evening as it was important to keep the children's spirits up. However, this had extended the school day.</p> <p>A governor thanked the AHT for the useful insight and the balance which was needed for both school and the home learners.</p> <p>A governor understood that there was now a once a week Zoom meeting with the class. The AHT said it was working incredibly well and was considered particularly important for the wellbeing of the children. It had also provided a forum for the children if they found the current situation difficult.</p> <p><u>The Provision of Remote Learning</u></p> <p>The HT said she was extremely proud of the teachers for their absolute dedication and commitment to those children in school and those at home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership with parents was generally considered to be going well. The school was appreciative that some parents were also trying to juggle fulltime jobs and were working from home. • Ofsted had completed a research project on live lessons and had sent out a best practice for remote learning. The research had stated that there was a 'myth of best practice' that live lessons were best. Pre-recorded lessons were provided, either by the school's teachers or the excellent and government funded pre-recorded lessons from White Rose or Oak National Academy. • There were some children at home who were on the SEND Register. Adjustments had been made and the SENCO had sent out personalised learning plans for every family. Families were also telephoned when they were asked if they needed any additional support or resources. Teachers were also personalising their planning and sending out resources to those children who weren't working at age related expectation. • Either a teacher or TA would read from a book (for the younger children) or a chapter from a class book which would then be uploaded to the class Dojo so the children had a member of their teaching team reading to them every day. • Where a family was struggling for a variety of reasons, a class teacher had hand delivered work through the family's letterbox which had enabled the child to participate in the work which they might not otherwise have been able to. • In November 2020 a learning pack had been sent home to every child which included CPG workbooks for maths and English, exercise books and writing tasks. When the term 3 closure was announced, every parent had the pack ready to open. The school had recently invested in more maths workbooks which had been going out to parents that week. Dictionaries, rulers, further stationary were provided at the request of parents if it was considered a barrier to learning at home. • Feedback consisted of individual feedback to pupils on the work they had submitted via the class Dojo. Writing tasks were considered to need the most feedback. If teachers saw common areas where there were gaps in learning across the class, for example in punctuation, the class teacher would then incorporate more punctuation into her planning. The teachers were constantly looked at an assessment for learning and feedback. 	
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Initials and Date _____

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HT had applied and had been accepted by the DfE to receive funding for Google Classroom. The HT was currently awaiting contact from a consultancy firm which formed part of the process. Feedback from parents on the remote learning had been overwhelmingly positive. There had been huge support from parents to include copies of emails sent to Ofsted which were full of praise for the school's provision during school closures. The teachers also received regular emails of thanks from parents. <p>The Chair asked the HT to convey to staff that governors thought they were all doing an outstanding job. It was considered important to recognise and acknowledge this and gratifying that parents were also recognising this.</p>	
9b	<p><u>Covid Catch-Up Premium Spending Report</u></p> <p>The spending report was provided as a supporting paper for this meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>It was noted that this item had been discussed during the Finance Committee meeting earlier that evening, the minutes of which would be circulated to governors.</p>	
9c	<p><u>School Development Plan 2021-22</u></p> <p>The HT reported that all statutory testing had been cancelled for the remainder of this academic year. However, schools did have to administer the phonics screening tests to all Year 2 pupils who nationally missed the summer testing in Year 1 due to Covid. From that screening, the school had a 74% pass rate with one pupil absent due to isolating at home. The pass rate had been reported to the Local Authority.</p> <p>Priority 1.4 (Maths mastery) The school had just signed up for a maths hub mastery working group for this year called Firm Foundations. The focus was on Early Years.</p> <p>Priority 2.1 The September Step-up Plan had been very successful. The impact could be evidenced in how well the children had settled back and how well the learning was progressing up until Christmas.</p> <p>Priority 2.2 Attendance could no longer be tracked in the same way. However, it had hovered around 97% in term 3 and there had been very few absentees.</p> <p>Priority 4.2 The HT confirmed that staff wellbeing continued to be a priority in the SDP. The HT constantly reviewed the workload of colleagues to ensure that what was focussed on would make a difference to the pupils. There had been 100% attendance of teachers, no days of sickness and high retention rates which were positive indicators. However, it could not be underestimated what the toll of the current workload might have on staff.</p>	
10.	<u>GOVERNOR MONITORING</u>	
10a	The Chair's report on his virtual meeting with the HT on 18 th January 2021 was provided as a supporting paper for the meeting. A more detailed verbal update had been provided by the HT during this meeting and the preceding Finance Committee meeting.	
10b	<p><u>Monitoring Priorities in Term 4</u></p> <p>The Chair said statutory monitoring should continue albeit virtually.</p> <p>Action: The Safeguarding governor to meet with the HT in term 4.</p> <p>Action: The Chair to meet with the SENCO in term 4 to discuss the Mainstream Core Standards for SEND.</p> <p>The HT reported that the SEND policy links had been updated to reflect the Mainstream Core Standards.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>CoG</p>

Initials and Date _____

11.**SIAMS/CHRISTIAN VALUES AND DISTINCTIVENESS**

The HT said the school still operated and felt like a school community which showed that it was more than just a building.

The HT said she saw the school's Christian values and vision in action each day in how the staff cared for each other and how they cared for the child and the children's families. The school continued to value and develop the 'whole child' through the teachers' planning and pastoral provision, whether the children were in class or at home. The commitment was shining through what the school was offering.

Collective Worship remained a priority for those children in school and at home. Daily plans included links for Collective Worship. The highlights of the Church calendar continued to be celebrated to include a whole school Christingle service which was planned at the end of this term. There would be a live Zoom session when the children in school and at home would simultaneously make Christingle items. Reverend Judy Darkins continued to record services for the school to share with the children via YouTube.

The HT continued to work with the Diocese Rural Hub Project to include communications with the mini hub comprising four other schools (two in Kent and two in East Sussex).

The HT said the teachers had received excellent support from the Diocese's Schools Officer – Christian Character/SIAMS who was considered to have been tremendous. The AHT echoed the staff's appreciation to the Diocese.

12.**FINANCE/PREMISES/HEALTH & SAFETY/GDPR****12a****Finance Committee Meeting – 28th January 2021**

The Local Authority feedback to the six month monitoring and nine month budget monitoring report were provided as supporting papers for the meeting (filed with the minutes).

The Chair reported that governors had reviewed the six month feedback and nine month monitoring (December 2020).

Revenue Budget Projection

	(£)
Projected Revenue Income	705,562
Projected Revenue Expenditure	679,373
Revenue Balance	26,190
Revenue Balance B/F 2019/20	84,818
Revenue Balance C/F to 2021/22	111,008

Capital Budget Projection

	(£)
Total Capital Income	3,185
Less Capital Expenditure	3,185
Capital Balance This Year	0
Capital Balance B/F 2019/20	0
Capital Balance Carried Forward to 2021/22	0

- The predicted Revenue balance carry forward currently exceeded the school's BCM (Balance Control Mechanism). Given the exceptional circumstances, it was hoped the Local Authority would allow the balance over BCM to be rolled over.
- The Canterbury Diocese had commissioned a company to carry out a site condition survey for voluntary aided schools and that the school's survey had been completed the previous day.

Initials and Date _____

12b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A financial benchmarking exercise had been completed whereby the school was compared to schools of similar profile and all Kent schools by income and expenditure code for the 2019/20 financial year. The school was in line with the comparator schools with the exception of expenditure on catering staff which was attributed to the school having its own kitchen. <p><u>Health & Safety/Premises/General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</u></p> <p>This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting.</p>																			
13.	<p><u>POLICIES/PROCEDURES</u></p> <p>The policies due for review were circulated in advance of the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the Finance policy and recommended that the policy should be agreed as presented.</p> <p>The Home Loan Equipment Allocation policy and Acceptable Use policy for Remote Learning and Online Communication had been agreed as a Chair's action given a need to have these policies in place at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following policies without amendment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="272 757 1353 1025"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Policy</th><th>Next Review</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a)</td><td>Finance policy</td><td>January 2022</td></tr> <tr> <td>b)</td><td>Home Loan Equipment Allocation policy</td><td>January 2024 (if still required)</td></tr> <tr> <td>c)</td><td>Acceptable Use policy for Remote Learning and Online Communication</td><td>January 2022</td></tr> <tr> <td>d)</td><td>Lone Working policy</td><td>January 2024</td></tr> <tr> <td>e)</td><td>Working From Home policy</td><td>"</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Policy	Next Review	a)	Finance policy	January 2022	b)	Home Loan Equipment Allocation policy	January 2024 (if still required)	c)	Acceptable Use policy for Remote Learning and Online Communication	January 2022	d)	Lone Working policy	January 2024	e)	Working From Home policy	"	
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14.	<p><u>WEBSITE/MONTHLY BULLETINS/COVID UPDATES</u></p> <p>14a The Education People's December 2020 and January 2021 bulletins were recirculated for information.</p> <p>It was noted that the Clerk had previously sent governors the January 2021 update to the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.</p> <p>Governors noted the bulletin contents and there were no questions arising.</p> <p>14b <u>Website Compliance Check</u></p> <p>The HT reported that there had been a website check during November 2020. Following updated guidance provided by the DfE, there were three new items which had been actioned where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report on the Covid Catch-Up Premium grant. (Contained on the website.) A timetable for organising and hearing admissions appeals for the school. (Currently awaiting further guidance from KCC.) To state how many school employees had a gross salary of £100,000 or more. (A statement had been added to the website to say that this did not apply to any members of staff at the school.) <p>Action: SR to complete a check of the school's website prior to the next meeting to ensure that it was fully compliant with DfE guidance.</p>	SR																		
15.	<p><u>GOVERNOR TRAINING</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that a co-opted governor (DC) had participated in a CPD Online event on 'An Introduction to the Wellbeing for Education Return for School Governors' on Tuesday 15 December 2020.</p>																			

Initials and Date _____

	The Clerk had previously provided the latest list of NGA Learning Link modules. Action: Governors to each complete either a Learning Link module or alternative virtual training and report during the March 2021 meeting.	Govs
16.	<u>CHAIR'S ACTIONS/CORRESPONDENCE</u> The Chair said there were no other Chair's actions or correspondence sent or received to report.	
17.	<u>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</u> There were no matters arising.	
18. 18a 18b	<u>CONFIDENTIALITY</u> There were no minutes or papers which were considered confidential.	
19.	<u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u> The next full governing board meeting would take place on Thursday, 11th March 2021 at 6.30 pm	

The meeting closed at 7.28 pm

Signed: _____
(Chair)

Date: _____

ACTION SUMMARY

ITEM	AGENDA ITEM	TO BE ACTIONED BY	ACTION
1.	10b	Safeguard Governor	To virtually meet with the HT in term 4.
2.	10b	Chair	To meet virtually with the SENCO in term 4 to discuss the Mainstream Core Standards for SEND.
3.	14b	SR	To complete a check of the school's website prior to the next meeting to ensure that it was fully compliant with DfE guidance.
4.	15	Governors	To each complete either a Learning Link module or alternative virtual training and report during the March 2021 meeting.

Initials and Date _____