



WITTERSHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Held Virtually on Thursday, 28th May 2020 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, Johanna Dadson, Sue Mash, Stephen Rogers and Dr Alan Lloyd-Smith.

CLERK: Jane Phillips

The meeting commenced at 6.32 pm and was quorate.

| ITEM | PROCEDURAL | ACTION |
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| 1. | <p><u>WELCOME AND PRAYER</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting. Dr Alan Lloyd-Smith, Foundation governor was warmly welcomed to his first governing board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair explained that it had been necessary to schedule this meeting during the half term holidays to provide Schools Financial Services with sufficient time to prepare the three year budget plan and for it to be ratified by the full governing board prior to 31st May 2020. The Chair extended his thanks to the Headteacher and staff governor for participating in the meeting at this time.</p> <p>1a Governors individually confirmed that they were in a place from where they could speak confidentially.</p> <p>1b The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>1c The remainder of the meeting would be recorded in the event the link with the Clerk was lost.</p> | |
| 2. | <p><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>Apologies were retrospectively received and accepted for Donna Clifton and Oliver Walker. There were no other apologies for absence.</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTERESTS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of business interest made against any agenda item.</p> | |
| 4. | <p><u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30TH MARCH</u></p> <p>4a 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.</p> <p>4b <u>A Review of Governor and Clerk's Actions Arising</u> All actions had been completed.</p> | |
| GOVERNANCE | | |
| 5. | <p><u>MEMBERSHIP</u></p> <p>5a <u>Succession Planning</u> The Chair proposed and governors agreed that in the event both the</p> | |

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| <p>5b</p> | <p>Chair and Vice Chair became incapacitated during Covid-19, Foundation governor Oliver Walker would step into the role of Chair.</p> <p><u>Any Other Items</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p> | |
| <p>6.</p> <p>6a</p> <p>6b</p> | <p><u>TERMS OF REFERENCE</u></p> <p>The Terms of Reference (ToR) were circulated as supporting papers for the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>The Chair explained that both the FGB and Finance Committee ToR had been agreed the previous year and were based on the Local Authority template and contextual information pertinent to the school. The ToR had since been updated to reflect changes in membership.</p> <p><u>Terms of Reference: Full Governing Board</u></p> <p>Governors agreed the ToR for the full governing board without amendment. The ToR would be reviewed again in May 2021.</p> <p><u>Terms of Reference: Finance Committee</u></p> <p>The ToR had been reviewed by the Finance Committee during their preceding meeting when the committee agreed that they would recommend the ToR for approval by the full governing board.</p> <p>Governors agreed the ToR for the Finance Committee. The ToR would again be reviewed in May 2021.</p> | |
| <p>7.</p> | <p><u>GOVERNANCE MONTHLY BULLETIN/COVID UPDATES</u></p> <p>The April 2020 governance monthly bulletin was provided as a supporting paper for the meeting. The following was noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department for Education (DfE) would not be making any changes to the statutory governance functions in any upcoming regulations relating to Covid-19. • The DfE urged governing boards to be pragmatic in what they covered in meetings and to be proportionate in the decisions that they were planning to take. • The DfE’s consultation on ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ was withdrawn on 31st March due to Covid-19. • The NGA’s Goldline advice service was available to all governing boards that had questions about maintaining their business in the current circumstances regardless of whether they were members of the NGA or not. <p>Governors had also been sent the weekly updates and commentaries provided by The Education People via GovernorHub. A governor commented that updates were both useful and succinct and provided a number of helpful links.</p> | |
| SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT | | |
| <p>8.</p> <p>8a</p> | <p><u>HEADTEACHER’S REPORT</u></p> <p>The HT provided a verbal report on the function of the school under Covid-19 Department for Education (DfE) guidance.</p> <p><u>The Partial Reopening of the School for Reception, Year One and Year Six</u></p> <p>The HT reported that currently there were four key worker children in school. Following the completion of a parent questionnaire, there would potentially be six key worker children in total, nine Reception children, eight Year 1 children and eleven Year 6 children. The HT anticipated that these numbers might</p> | |

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increase once businesses began to reopen.

During a meeting attended by the HT the previous week, the Local Authority had suggested either a one or two week review for those families who could potentially have changed their minds. The government had advised that the priority was key worker children followed by Reception, Year 1 and then Year 6. The HT explained that based on the size of the rooms and staffing levels, four bubbles could be staffed. At present there was some capacity for the fifth classroom which would enable an additional bubble to be added if the number of key worker children were to rise.

The HT said there were two question marks in respect of pupil numbers.

- What would happen if more and more families started to feel increasingly comfortable with their children coming in after having initially said that their children would not return? The HT proposed a two week review for those parents who had changed their minds. However, any additional key worker children or children who had since become vulnerable would return to school immediately. The issue would be if pupil numbers were to exceed the government guidance when it might then become necessary to ask Year 6 to no longer come into school.

The HT said some parents had wanted to send their children back but had been worried about their wellbeing given the school day and environment would be very different. Conversely, parents had also asked if they could subsequently change their minds if they no longer wished their children to remain in school. The HT had explained that it wasn't compulsory for children to return until such time as it was considered to be an unauthorised absence.

- The government's ambition was to open up schools to other year groups prior to the end of this academic year. However, very few primary schools would be able to meet this based on the limitation of at most fifteen children per class and that there were an insufficient number of classrooms and staff.

The School's Risk Assessment

The risk assessment was circulated to governors prior to the meeting (filed with the minutes).

The Chair provided clarification on the risk assessment. It was an operational decision for the school's leader to open the school. The governing board's role was to test the robustness of the risk assessment. The risk assessment needed to contain the following:

- that there were sufficient measures which minimised the contact and mixing of pupils and staff.
- that procedures were in place to ensure good hygiene practices and that there was adequate and regular cleaning.
- that steps had been taken to minimise contact with anyone experiencing Covid symptoms.
- that any additional measures had been put in place to protect staff and pupils, including those with underlying health issues.

A governor asked if the nursery was also intending to reopen. The HT said that it was and that she continued to be in regular contact with the nursery to incorporate their families arrival and departure times and to provide their children with space outside. Whilst the nursery wasn't contained within the risk assessment, it remained part of the HT's planning.

The HT explained that whilst steps had been taken to minimise the risk of Covid-19 based on the government's guidelines, it wasn't possible to entirely mitigate against the risk. The risk assessment had been RAG rated based on the level of

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risk where most aspects were considered amber.

The Chair said the Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education had provided clarity on the issue of liability.

"For a child, the school owes a duty of care to the pupil both in loco parentis terms and as a visitor to site. On the former, the parent has made the decision to send the child in and is therefore consenting. They will be as aware of the national issues and therefore their case would be one of negligence where the school has fallen short of the standards that could be reasonably expected of it in the circumstances.

For staff, this is again to do with liability. Any claim would likely be related to failures under health & safety at work legislation to provide a safe working environment and appropriately consider and mitigate known risks. Any such claim would be made against the employer. Please remember that in the nature of our school, by virtue of legislation, the governing body acts as the first employer with Kent County Council being the second employer. Thus claims will be made sitting both employers. Governing bodies will have corporate status and your school will have appropriate indemnity insurance in place. Therefore, it is essential that communication within the school is clear when governors are fully aware of decisions which are being taken within the school."

In light of the two aforementioned paragraphs, the Chair said the letters and communication which the HT had sent to parents from the very beginning of the pandemic had been very clear and explicit in that it was about having confidence in what the government was saying. The school was following the guidelines which the government had put in place. The risk assessment mirrored the school's response to these guidelines.

The HT said her proposal was to open the school from Monday, 8th June which would ensure that there was sufficient time to prepare to open safely. Schools were taking several different approaches to the date when they would open which had included Monday, 15th June.

Subject to governor agreement, the HT explained that staff briefings would take place during week commencing 1st June, parents would be written to explaining the staggered starts and those steps which would be taken to ensure that all measures were in place.

The HT said that during conversations with the Local Authority, it was understood that some schools were intending to close for a full day or half a day each week. The HT proposed that the school would be closed on a Friday afternoon for Years R, 1 and 6 but that it would remain open for the key worker children. The HT commented that ninety six children would remain at home based on current numbers. The teachers would require planning and contact time with these children and that learning would still need to be set.

The HT further explained that the TAs would remain with the key worker children on a Friday afternoon enabling the teachers to have two hours of planning time.

The HT said some schools were reintroducing a year group per week. The HT thought this unnecessary for the school based on pupil numbers and the plans to open. Whilst key worker children would remain throughout, the HT and AHT thought Year 6 children would return on Monday, 8th June and then Year 1 followed by Reception later that week. By having staggered starts, it would provide an opportunity to test out the staggered starts and the way in which people moved around the building. It would also provide Reception children with a slightly shorter first week given a full first week would be quite difficult for them.

Governors agreed unanimously that whilst it was the Headteacher's operational decision to reopen the school to Years R, 1 and 6, they had every confidence in the robustness of the school's risk assessment. This

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| <p>8b</p> | <p>was based on the informed knowledge governors had of the school and risk assessment, the KCC return to school guidance and government guidance. (Some minutes within this item were considered confidential and were minuted separately.)</p> <p><u>The Number of Children in School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been a maximum of four key worker/vulnerable children who had been in school so far. <p><u>Staffing Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing had been maintained on a skeleton rota based on the number of children in school and comprised a class teacher and TA each day. • The AHT had been at school every day which had ensured that there was a member of the Senior Leadership Team/a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on site. • The Site Manager had increasingly been on site when needed. On the days when neither the teacher or TA were qualified to administer first aid, the Site Manager had been able to deliver first aid as necessary given he was qualified to do so. • The Finance Officer had worked from home following the setting up of remote working prior to the school's closure. This was considered to be working well. • The Office Manager had undertaken a mixture of working from home and coming into school depending on the tasks. The Office Manager had increasingly found it necessary to come in. • Mid-day Leaders had not been required to come in. • The SENCO had been willing to come in but had mainly been working from home. Again, this had worked well. • Several staff members had chosen to come into school given a better WiFi connection and/or access to resources. All had taken a sensible approach to social distancing and remained in their own class so as not to place an additional burden on the school site. One TA wished to continue to be involved and had undertaken some outdoor activities such as gardening. • Teachers had continued to work from home on their planning and setting of the children's learning. Teachers and TAs had also taken the opportunity to complete a significant amount of CPD (Continuous Professional Development) which had been led by the AHT. <p>The AHT said staff had productively undertaken a broad range of CPD to include Covid related training and that some extremely useful feedback had been provided. The HT commented that there had been a nominal cost for some of the training but that within the education community nationally, there had been a huge amount of free CPD which presented great opportunities for personal development.</p> <p><u>The Provision of Care for Vulnerable Children, Children with EHCP's and Key Worker Children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school continued to send out weekly FSM (Free School Meal) vouchers of £15 per child for those families who were eligible and that regular contact with all families continued. Some families had become vulnerable as a consequence of Covid-19 where details of local and national support had been provided. • Basic stationary packs had also been sent home tailored to individual year groups. The school had offered to provide further stationary items if families | |
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found them in short supply at home.

- The key worker children had remained in school throughout and had been following planned activities with adult support. The school had offered to remain open during both the Easter holidays and half term. However, it had not been necessary for any of the key worker children to come in. The HT commented that a large number of staff had volunteered to give up their time and to come in and work with the key worker children during the Easter break if it was needed.

Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welfare of Pupils, Staff and Stakeholders

- Mental health had been built into the risk assessment for staff, parents and pupils. Key members of staff had undertaken very specific CPD around Covid anxiety, bereavement and in post trauma for those children who had found it especially difficult to be at home. Links and support networks had also been shared either via the school's website or sent to specific parents.
- The HT said she had maintained a virtual open door policy with both parents and staff by email or by phone. The HT had telephoned all ninety five families at least once during lockdown to touch base and check each family's wellbeing. Class teachers had then completed follow up calls where necessary.
- The Class Dojo had been introduced. It was a secure platform used by many schools where the class teacher could communicate with each of their pupils subject to the agreement of their parents. The children and teachers could then securely post videos, pictures and messages enabling each to share their experiences. The staff had also been able to read picture book stories to the children.
- Class teachers had prepared a weekly newsletter on a Wednesday which were more informal and focussed on the children's wellbeing. It was understood from feedback provided by parents, that the children had really enjoyed the weekly newsletters as it provided a further connection with their teachers.
- Child friendly information would be sent out the following week so that the children's expectations were managed and they would understand what school would be like when they returned. It was thought that it would be most difficult for the Year R children given their learning environment was usually child initiated and involved free flow play. However, following guidance received, it had been necessary to put away their play and learning equipment and the children would no longer be able to move around the classroom completely freely.

The first phase was called the 'reconnect phase' where the first few days would be wellbeing and hygiene centred, establishing routines, the rules so that the children could understand what was expected of them. The children would work on the same learning projects as had been sent home.

- The HT explained that as part of the staff audit on the school's wider reopening, staff had been asked to contact her if they had any concerns in respect of returning. It was very much their choice to consider how they felt about returning.

The Support Being Given to Parents to Help Them Education Their Children at Home

- The HT had previously provided governors with examples of the Rainforest learning projects which worked well given it provided a whole school focus from Year R to Year 6.
- V.E Day had been included within the class newsletters. Athletics and Spellodrome continued to be used. Some of the children had also challenged

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| | <p>their teachers on the time taken to complete Times Table Rock Stars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children had also been directed towards BBC Bitesize and the Oaks Academy links. The school was very aware that not every family had access to technology and that paper packs containing a broad range of activities had also been sent home. <p>The AHT said the children were able to send messages via the Class Dojo if they were experiencing issues in accessing some of the learning projects and that the school had offered to print off hard copies which could then be safely collected from outside. Reading books and printed packs of writing had also been provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HT reported that school reports had been completed and revised in consideration of Covid-19 and had been sent home following the Easter holidays. Every parent had been offered a telephone consultation with the class teacher which focussed on academic education and behaviour for learning. No adverse pressure had been placed on parents. The school had facilitated learning and had been cheer leading from the side whilst not wishing any parents to feel overwhelmed. The other skills the children were demonstrating had been celebrated and were valued. The AHT said staff had wholeheartedly agreed to this approach as teaching professionals. The HT said the feedback from parents had also been overwhelmingly positive which would be shared with staff. <p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>The HT reported that there were no specific safeguarding concerns with the exception of one family who had been referred to Early Help. The situation had since been resolved.</p> <p>It had been considered inappropriate to conduct virtual Zoom meetings with children and that this had not been pursued by the school.</p> <p>The HT and AHT were the named DSLs within the school and were constantly available. The SENCO was also fully trained if the need were to arise. In the event that the DSLs should contract the virus, a reciprocal arrangement was in place with Egerton C.E Primary School to share DSLs. Staff were also able to contact the Local Authority directly as per the contact numbers contained in the Child Protection policy.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the HT for her incredibly comprehensive report. The governing board's grateful thanks were extended to the HT, AHT and all staff members who had all worked incredibly hard during these challenging times.</p> <p>A governor said that whilst the HT's focus was on the wellbeing of her staff, she should also ensure her own wellbeing. The HT said these were particularly difficult times for Headteachers given the stresses and challenges which they faced. The HT said she was extremely fortunate to have the people she worked with and that the AHT had been a tower of strength.</p> <p>The AHT said it was only possible to support the HT to a certain extent but that the burden was on the HT for decision making. It was thought that once some form of normality returned, the HT should be given some time out to catch her breath.</p> | |
| <p>9.</p> <p>9a</p> | <p><u>BUDGET CLOSEDOWN: 2019/20</u></p> <p>The year-end balance sheet was provided as a supporting paper for the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p><u>Year End Revenue Budget (Actual)</u></p> | |

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| 12. | <p><u>POLICIES/PROCEDURES</u></p> <p>The policies due for review had been circulated in advance of the meeting (filed with the minutes).</p> <p>Governors ratified the following policies without amendment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="256 293 1334 622"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Policy</th> <th>Next Review</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a)</td> <td>Updated Child Protection Policy and Covid-19 Addendum</td> <td>October 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b)</td> <td>School Emergency Management/Business Continuity Plan</td> <td>March 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c)</td> <td>Appendix 1 Subject Access Request Procedure (GDPR/Data Protection Policy)</td> <td>December 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d)</td> <td>Behaviour Management & Positive Handling Policy</td> <td>May 2021</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | Policy | Next Review | a) | Updated Child Protection Policy and Covid-19 Addendum | October 2020 | b) | School Emergency Management/Business Continuity Plan | March 2021 | c) | Appendix 1 Subject Access Request Procedure (GDPR/Data Protection Policy) | December 2021 | d) | Behaviour Management & Positive Handling Policy | May 2021 | |
|--------------|---|---------------|--------|-------------|----|---|--------------|----|--|------------|----|---|---------------|----|---|----------|--|
| | Policy | Next Review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a) | Updated Child Protection Policy and Covid-19 Addendum | October 2020 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b) | School Emergency Management/Business Continuity Plan | March 2021 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| d) | Behaviour Management & Positive Handling Policy | May 2021 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OTHER | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. | <p><u>GOVERNOR TRAINING</u></p> <p>The Clerk made governors aware of online training opportunities during term 6. (Governors to reserve a place via CPD Online)</p> <p><u>Live Webinars:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>GV 20/119 - Questions and Challenge Webinar</u> Thursday 4th June 2020 18:00 - 20:00 • <u>GV 20/120 - Be Prepared and Knowledgeable for Ofsted Webinar</u> Wednesday 24th June 2020 18:00 - 20:00 <p><u>Pre-recorded Webinars (GV 20/ reference to follow):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Training for Governors (11th June 2020) • Managing Complaints (25th June 2020) <p><u>Other Historic Webinars</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Safeguarding during the Coronavirus Pandemic' – Governors for Schools https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/ <p>Governors were asked to record their training on GovernorHub.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. | <p><u>CHAIR'S ACTIONS/CORRESPONDENCE</u></p> <p>The Chair said he had remained in close communication with the HT during the pandemic and had received copies of all communications to parents and staff.</p> <p>The Chair had agreed the partial reopening of the school for Years R, 1 and 6 from 8th June 2020 as a chair's action which had since been agreed by the full governing board under item 8a of the minutes.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. | <p><u>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS/CRITICAL DECISIONS</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. | <p><u>CONFIDENTIALITY</u></p> <p>16a Some minutes contained within item 8b (Headteacher's Report) were considered confidential and were minuted separately.</p> <p>16b There were no papers considered to be confidential.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. | <p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | The next virtual meeting would take place on Thursday, 9th July 2020 at 6.30 pm. | |
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The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Signed: _____
(Chair)

Date: _____

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