

Ratified

St Andrew's C E Primary School

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We believe that 'Everyone is different. Everyone is special'. As Jesus taught us to love unconditionally, so we strive to nurture respect for all; to provide a rich and stimulating curriculum that considers the individual; and to care for the intellectual, social and spiritual well-being of our whole school community - encouraging positive engagement with the wider world, as affirmed through our school values and parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God ..." and, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Luke 10:27

Our inclusive values and ethos shape everything we do. Our school policies give structure to the community we are building, where diversity is celebrated and where children of all faiths, and none, benefit from the very best start in education.

**Meeting of the Full Governing Body
held on Thursday, 1st February 2024 at 7 pm at the school.**

Present:	Sam Callard (SC)	Staff Governor
	James Carter (JC)	Co-opted Governor
	Michael Dent (MD)	Co-opted Governor
	Anneka Fisher (AF)	Co-opted Governor – left at 8.55 pm
	Sarah Haden (SH)	Parent Governor
	Jo Holmes (JH)	Staff Governor, Head
	Bruce Huggett (BH)	Foundation Governor
	Elizabeth Hurrin (EH)	Parent Governor – arrived 7.05 pm
	Fr Darren McFarland (DM)	Foundation Governor, Chair
	Georgina Montgomery (GM)	Parent Governor
	Amanda Robertson (AR)	Parent Governor

In attendance: Anne Dellar (**AD**) – Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) CEO – left at 8.05 pm
Lucy Dickinson (**LD**) – Clerk

The meeting was quorate (11 Governors were present out of 13 in post).

		ACTION
1.& 2.	Welcome and Apologies for absence DM welcomed Governors to the meeting and introduced AD . Apologies were received and accepted from Aarti Basnyat (AB : Parent Governor) and Jennifer Strawbridge (JS : Foundation Governor). The meeting started at 7.00pm.	
3.	Notified Business: none.	
4.	Pecuniary interests and Declarations: none declared for this agenda.	
5.	Academy discussion: DM reminded Governors that after including academisation as a brief standing item for several years, the governing body have recently had more frequent and detailed discussions about this and had	

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invited **AD** to visit the school and attend this meeting in order to explain what joining the ODST would involve.

AD talked warmly about her visit to the school, then about the vision and values of the Trust and the importance of Governing Bodies considering how these would align with their school, as well as looking at more practical aspects and due diligence. She spoke about the differences between MATs and the LA. An information booklet had been shared with the meeting papers, and the slides from her presentation would be circulated after the meeting.

(7.05 **EH** arrived)

The ODST vision is “ A common vision for the common good”, and schools joining the Trust are encouraged to think about what they are good at which can be shared, as well as how they might benefit from joining. ODST has several local hubs, including an Oxford one with six (soon to be seven) schools which St Andrew’s would be part of. There are also subject networks and a current collective focus on SEND following the Oxfordshire SEND inspection. She described the Trust as not being ‘top down’. It is a majority Church MAT in which the Members are the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education – they appoint the Trustees but do not tend to get involved in the running of the Trust. However, the involvement of the Church at this level does confer values which should remain constant. The Trust also includes community schools (5 out of the 42) and the Church schools are very diverse – all schools and communities are welcome and valued. There is no set limit on the number of schools admitted, but they do aim to maintain a size which is consistent with individual schools and staff feeling recognised.

The top slice taken by the Trust is 5% (which is about average for a MAT) – Governors will need to do some due diligence to understand what they get for that money. The MAT is financially healthy despite having some small schools. Central services and support would include at least one school improvement visit per term (**AD** stressed that these were not inspections and advised that Governors and Leaders should talk to other HTs and Governing Bodies about this). All schools have Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) – this is not legally required but is central to ODST’s approach. Some LGB members are also on the Board of Trustees or on the MAT committees. There is a central team, but ODST is a Trust which empowers LGBs. Support is available, including for balancing the budget – surpluses/carry forwards stay with the schools, but Trust approval is required for significant additional spending.

AD spoke very highly of the quality of the HR team who know individual school staff well and treat them with dignity. There is good support for underperforming staff and difficult situations are handled compassionately. Each local Hub also has a named finance officer, and this is a supportive relationship for SBMs and Heads. There is a Governance lead (Francis Bartlett) and an admissions team as admissions are handled separately from OCC – the team supports with appeals and is very experienced (including experience from Voluntary Aided schools who have always handled their own admissions). Schools receive their own money based on pupil numbers as currently, but the Trust gets a block of Capital Funding allocated directly from the DfE – schools joining have condition surveys carried out and ODST allocates funding for buildings etc according to need.

Governors asked:

Q. What might the schools already in the Trust say doesn’t work well and how have any concerns been addressed?

*A. **AD** felt that some of the operations management such as Health and Safety and procurement (catering etc.) had been an issue in the past, but that this had already improved by using the knowledge and experience of some of the School*

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	<p><i>Business Managers. Issues were raised through staff surveys. She was also concerned that some of the support staff (TAs, mid-day supervisors etc) might not have a strong sense of belonging to the Trust but might feel more closely aligned with their schools. It was unclear whether this was a problem, but it is being investigated. In light of the Oxfordshire Ofsted SEND upcome, it was clear that SEND needs to be a focus – the Trust is looking at Hubs, alternative provision, and autism in particular. Governance is improving and the area of inclusion and the deployment of TAs is also a focus.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Are all the schools primaries?</i></p> <p><i>A. There is one middle school (which goes up to year 8), but all the schools have some primary phase element. There are no secondaries or special schools, but the Trust would like to include these as they believe it would enrich the shared experience across the Trust. Governors discussed the possible advantages of the Trust being focused on the Primary phase.</i></p> <p><i>Q. AD had mentioned that schools were able to maintain their individual characteristics and ethos – were there any ‘red lines’ for the Trust in terms of which schools they would consider admitting, and what features do prospective schools need to have to be considered?</i></p> <p><i>A. Love and joy! As well as some ability to demonstrate that they could break even financially, even if this is not currently the case. The Trust will not drain the financial resources of schools in order to support one school if it cannot show a feasible plan – hence the importance of the condition surveys.</i></p> <p><i>Q. In terms of communication, have you been aware of any issues for parents in terms of schools joining a Church based Trust?</i></p> <p><i>A. AD had not encountered any negativity – the Trust is very clear about its inclusive approach. This was likely to be less of an issue for a school which is already a Church school, but they recognised that some pupils and families might be from different religious backgrounds (or none) and this was addressed in their welcome materials etc.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What is the likely handover period and are there any common sticking points?</i></p> <p><i>A. There is currently a £25,000 grant for conversion which is taken by the Trust so that the change should be cost neutral for the school. The most common delays are due to land issues. AD noted that political decisions, including academy orders, will be halted once the election is announced, so this could cause a delay. The DfE committee meets once a month, and once the decision is made there would be no hold up – it would be possible for the school to do its consultation and due diligence afterwards if they wish to.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What does the consultation involve?</i></p> <p><i>A. Parents and staff to be informed and asked for feedback. ODST has a slide presentation and FAQs – schools usually have meetings and drop-ins. The Governors usually decide on a single option first and consult on this choice, rather than giving the option of more than one Trust.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What is the impact on staff?</i></p> <p><i>A. AD feels that this is one of the strongest aspects of being in a good MAT – it brings support, career opportunities etc. They run CPD for staff including aspirant Heads, subject leads etc. Staff are encouraged to visit other MAT schools, and this helps staff to feel valued and part of a structure, giving a sense of common good. TUPE takes place during the transfer from being employed by the LA – being employed by the MAT includes the potential for deployment in other schools (but this remains optional) and employees remain safe in that they are employed, have agency, and are empowered.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What are the retention rates for staff across the Trust?</i></p>	
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	<p><i>A. AD thought slightly higher than national (but not statistically significant). However, very few staff leave the profession from within ODST schools. There is an issue with the high cost of living in the area, so some staff do seem to move elsewhere for this reason. Exit interviews are carried out and staff satisfaction is monitored.</i></p> <p><i>Q. How often do the Heads meet?</i></p> <p><i>A. Once every short term – alternating between forums (for information) online and conferences. Hubs also have seminars every couple of weeks. The Trust aims to be supportive without burdening staff with additional meetings – attendance is not compulsory. There are two ‘live’ governor gatherings per year and three on Teams.</i></p> <p><i>Q. How do you support HT recruitment?</i></p> <p><i>A. This is done collaboratively with the LGBs. Small schools might be encouraged to look at Executive Leadership models, but for one form entry or above, replacement is likely to be ‘like for like’. Otherwise support is similar to that of the LA – they look at helping to put together adverts and recruitment packs. They do reserve the right to take responsibility for recruitment (if they feel that LGBs are going down the wrong path) but have never acted on this. AD feels that MATs generally help schools to feel more supported.</i></p> <p>DM thanked AD for her time. AD left at 8.05pm.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Minutes of meeting held on 7th December 2023</p> <p>DM went through the minutes of the meeting dated 7th December 2023, which were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. DM signed and passed to JH for filing. LD to send ratified version to Jane Burd for uploading to website.</p>	<p>LD- done</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</p> <p>JH had looked at the question regarding PP attendance and whether this was still an issue which needed monitoring. She reported that 23% of those children who were persistently absent were PP children although only 12% of the school are on PP – this suggests that PP children are overrepresented within those persistently absent by a factor of about two, and this will be closely monitored.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Sports funding and strategy</p> <p>The report had been circulated, and JH took questions from Governors:</p> <p><i>Q. Is there anything more which JH would like to consider doing with the Sports Premium funding?</i></p> <p><i>A. It was agreed that the sports leader (Andy Masters) continues to have a very positive impact. The possibility of using some of the funding to address the swimming requirement (including transport costs) was discussed. One Governor suggested focusing sessions on those children who could not already swim, but the subsequent discussion raised concerns that this would feel unfair to children and not inclusive.</i></p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>SDP/SEF</p> <p>Update versions had been circulated and were discussed at TLIS. The SIAMS related work will need to be included in next year’s SDP when the school enters the inspection window. School visits from external support partners will take place after half-term to see whether behaviour policy matches practise. Governors asked if there were any current areas requiring additional attention. JH highlighted the challenges around English – she feels that a lot of research and work has taken place, but the desired progress in writing is not yet being fully achieved. The English lead (Mary Wright) has some ideas around model texts and approaches which should help improve mastery without losing creativity and individuality of teachers, but greater clarity is required. Governors noted that</p>	

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	there are a wide variety of barriers to writing including physical as well as considerations of grammar, construction etc. This will continue to be a key area for development and support.	
10.	<p>Budget monitoring and School Financial Value Statement (SFVS)</p> <p>BH had provided a written report and noted that this had been discussed at FPP and the picture was positive. The figures for the end of Period 9 show a small surplus (compared to a deficit in the period 6 figures). Some additional funding had been received and some savings made on training.</p> <p>The SFVS had been circulated and was also discussed at FPP – this is a checklist from OCC which helps the school to monitor its financial effectiveness. Only one question was answered as ‘in part’ rather than yes relating to the financial knowledge and training of the governing body. Since the discussion at FPP, MD and AR have done the OCC governor training on school budget construction and monitoring, and it was felt that this question could now be answered positively. Governors approved the SFVS for submission – DM to sign and submit on behalf of Governing Body.</p>	DM
11.	<p>Benchmarking</p> <p>BH had circulated the benchmarking figures and presentation which was also discussed at FPP. A new collection of schools had been used for comparison this year which reflected the higher percentage of pupils with EHCPs now at St Andrew’s – 10 schools from other areas with similar characteristics had been chosen, along with 2 Oxfordshire schools with similar levels and 3 Oxford schools requested by JH. The tables compare financial data from 2022-23 on a per pupil basis. There were no surprising results or features which could not be explained by the context of the school – St Andrew’s was in the middle or bottom of the levels of expenditure in most areas. Governors asked:</p> <p><i>Q. What is the significance of the KS2 indicator which is highest for St Andrew’s?</i></p> <p><i>A. This is a measure of the progress made by pupils between the end of KS1 and KS2 – the average national level is zero, so anything above zero indicates higher than average progress. 4.5 is extremely positive.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Are there any big outliers in spending figures?</i></p> <p><i>A. The work force number appears high (52) however some staff have multiple roles and appear more than once. Some of the high site costs (occupation, maintenance etc) relate to the fact that the school currently has two sites to maintain and will probably decrease after the HQFSS move.</i></p> <p>The high level of self-generated funding was noted and applauded.</p>	
12.	<p>Reports from committees and Governors with special responsibilities:</p> <p>12.1 Teaching Learning Inclusion and Safeguarding: minutes are available and will be circulated. The committee had productive discussions about policy reviews and the HQFSS moving day.</p> <p>12.2 Finance Personnel Premises (including H&S and Well-being): the appeal decision regarding the hotel application for the neighbouring site was noted and governors thanked BH and MD for their efforts on this.</p> <p>The boiler installation is still scheduled for April. It was noted that there will be an impact on staff parking and options were discussed. Some staff are already cycling, and those living nearby have offered their driveways, but it was felt that local parents could also be asked about this. The SBM, Jane Burd, will be retiring at the end of this academic year – an advert has gone out for the post.</p> <p>12.3 Safeguarding: minutes had been circulated. JH to offer Safeguarding training for new governors from 6-7 pm before the next FGB meeting (14 March).</p>	JH, Govs

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	<p>JC mentioned the use of monthly dip sampling of internet usage to monitor sites being visited and support the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring.</p> <p>12.4 Ethos committee: met the previous week and are mapping the Collective Worship arrangements. Minutes to be circulated. Work is focusing on connecting up with school values, with work planned on greater pupil involvement and more spontaneity. It was noted that the Vision Statement needs to appear consistently on paperwork and should include the bible verse – this is being checked on policies and will be included on future governing body paperwork. The group is also considering the Vision visual – the current poster is now several years' old, does not include reference to the school Bible story and verse. The inclusion of the EYFS class could also be reflected.</p> <p>12.5 Communications group: nothing to report at this time.</p> <p>12.6 HQFSS move to St Andrew's: this had been discussed at TLIS and all Governors supported the position of not moving equipment etc. with children in the buildings. The safety of the pupils is paramount, and the issue of the HQFSS daycare (which operates during school holidays) was raised. The delegated hours of staff should also be considered – it was felt that unions would also back staff in not being compelled to carry out the move in their own time. The proposed day off was widely supported and had already been passed on to parents. Governors agreed to work with HQFSS governors and write a letter to the new Director of Children's Services, deputy, and other relevant leaders.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM, JM Govs</p>
13.	Chair's items: none	
14.	<p>Head's items including Health & Safety updates: the playground is being redeveloped including replacing the trim trail (which has reached the end of its useful life) – this will be completed over half-term. The computer room is being converted to a nurture space.</p> <p>(8.55pm – AF left)</p>	
15.	<p>Academy status: contact has also been made with the River Learning Trust (RLT) – a Zoom meeting with DM and JH will take place shortly and a representative will be invited to the next FGB meeting. Governors felt that the same questions should be asked as had been done today to ensure fairness and gain comparable information.</p>	DM, JH Agenda
16.	<p>Governor vacancies: Ros Smith had nominated the local Liberal Democrat City Councillor, Christopher Smowton for the Local Authority vacancy. DM shared a short bio with the Governing Body – Chris is already a governor at Cheney School and works as a software engineer for GitHub. Governors agreed to co-opt him to the Governing Body – DM to provide contact details and LD and school to start induction process.</p>	DM, LD, school
17.	<p>Governor training: AR and MD did Finance training. AB and AR to do Induction part B and governors who have not done recent Safeguarding to attend session ahead of next FGB meeting.</p>	AB, AR Govs
18.	<p>Governor visits: no further visits to report from this short term – visits in line with SDP to continue after half-term.</p>	Govs
19.	<p>Headington Partnership: the partnership had met and had a visit to Cheney. The local LA SEND lead will be coming to the next meeting. The group had discussed secondary school placements including guidance around pupils with EHCPs and also accessibility of the Cheney site for pupils with physical disabilities and accessibility issues. It had been a positive and helpful visit.</p>	
20.	Discussion: what decisions have been made which further the aims and vision of the school?	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Careful consideration of the possibility of joining a MAT including consideration of the ethos of both the school and the ODST and the fairness of the approach to this question- Fairness to staff with regards to the upcoming HQFSS move- Expressions of hope for the future in considering changes and planning- Inclusivity, e.g. in the discussions around pupil access to swimming lessons- Possibility for children to maximise their potential: investment in the playground and nurture space.	
21.	Review of items for next meeting (14 March 2024): visit from RLT, HT report	

The meeting finished at 9.15 pm