

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, 14th March 2024 at 7 pm at the school.**

Present:	Aarti Basnyat (AB)	Parent Governor
	Sam Callard (SC)	Staff Governor
	James Carter (JC)	Co-opted Governor
	Michael Dent (MD)	Co-opted Governor
	Sarah Haden (SH)	Parent Governor
	Jo Holmes (JH)	Staff Governor, Head
	Bruce Huggett (BH)	Foundation Governor
	Elizabeth Hurrant (EH)	Parent Governor – arrived 7.15 pm
	Fr Darren McFarland (DM)	Foundation Governor, Chair
	Georgina Montgomery (GM)	Parent Governor
	Amanda Robertson (AR)	Parent Governor
	Chris Smowton (CS)	LA Governor
	Jennifer Strawbridge (JS)	Foundation Governor

In attendance: Paul James (River Learning Trust - RLT CEO) – left at 8.xx pm
Lucy Dickinson (**LD**) – Clerk

The meeting was quorate (13 Governors were present out of 14 in post).

		ACTION
1.& 2.	Welcome and Apologies for absence DM welcomed Governors to the meeting and introduced CS and PJ . Apologies were received and accepted from Anneka Fisher (AF : Co-opted Governor) The meeting started at 7.00pm.	
3.	Notified Business: none.	
4.	Pecuniary interests and Declarations: none declared for this agenda.	
5.	Academy discussion: PJ gave a presentation about the RLT (further information on their website: https://riverlearningtrust.org/19/about-the-trust). He also spoke about possible reasons for wanting to join a MAT and the benefits of working within RLT in particular noting the underpinning principles of the Trust	

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<p>(better, faster, together) along with the understanding that schools will maintain their own identity. He outlined the support for schools including for educational standards (team of support and challenge partners and a director of primary education who assist as needed and help to add to leadership capacity)</p> <p>(7.15 pm EH arrived)</p> <p>PJ explained that the biggest change would be for HTs and the School Business Manager with different systems for operations and central support for governance (training etc). The size of the RLT means that they have around £3.5 million a year to allocate to capital investment projects including the school estates, and the Trust can plan projects based on need.</p> <p>He talked about how the Trust works – describing the approach as aligned autonomy – HTs continue to ‘own’ the school but the Trust shares best principles. There are no centralised curricula but there does tend to be a degree of convergence. Performance is mixed at KS2 with several excellent schools but some which have high levels of disadvantage (9 of the 19 primary schools were compelled to join due to poor Ofsted and outcomes). The Trust aims to be socially responsible in addressing inequalities, and there is a degree of staff movement within the Trust (not forced) to help schools which are struggling.</p> <p>Governance continues to operate through school Local Governing Bodies, but with additional layers of Trustees (independent not from school boards) and Members overseeing them. There are shared templates for policies which schools are free to adapt subject to checking by the central team.</p> <p>The top slice is currently 4.75% with a consultation currently underway to increase to 5%. They are currently in discussions with two other primaries about joining – PJ suggested that SLT and Governors should talk to other schools, governing bodies etc. The next stage would be to consult with parents regarding joining the Trust which Governors choose. This would take about four weeks, then the request would go to the DfE, and due diligence would start. The only barriers would be large capital projects or financial issues. Governors asked:</p> <p><i>Q. Is there a geographical restriction to schools joining?</i></p> <p><i>A. There was recently a query from a school in Bicester, but it had been suggested that it might be best for them not to join alone. The recent additions in Swindon are likely to lead to a Hub in this area. Primary staff tend to find it more difficult to work with other schools in the Trust if they are separated by too great a distance.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Do you have any special schools and if not is this something which you regret?</i></p> <p><i>A. The RLT is currently working on a proposal for a new alternative provision setting for 4–8-year-olds and investing heavily in SEND. They don’t regret not having taken on a special school at an earlier stage, as the intention is not to ‘horde’ resources or places for RLT pupils.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What are exclusion rates like across the RLT?</i></p> <p><i>A. Broadly speaking rates are below national, although this is an issue for some schools with more disadvantaged populations. All conversations about permanent exclusions (PEX) go through the Director of Inclusion.</i></p> <p><i>Q. How does the in-year fair access process work?</i></p> <p><i>A. This is collaborative – the Director of Inclusion is happy to lead in contacting other Trusts and the LA and they have found that having a single person leading on this means that they have more traction and can be more effective in championing inclusion.</i></p> <p><i>Q. What might the schools already in the Trust say doesn’t work well and how have any concerns been addressed?</i></p>	
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	<p><i>A. There have recently been issues with the new Payroll system which have been frustrating but are being resolved. PJ also felt that the procurement rules required a period of adjustment for schools – a certain purchasing framework has to be used which can initially feel as if it limits choice, but ultimately it does deliver better value. PJ felt that there were very few complaints from Headteachers.</i></p> <p><i>Q. How many of the Primary Schools are C of E and is there protection for Christian distinctiveness?</i></p> <p><i>A. Seven out of nineteen. The LGBs continue to include Foundation Governors and at Trust level one of the Members is the Diocesan Board of Education (as a corporate member) and up to 3 of the Trustees are appointed by the DBE. Protection is written into the Articles of Association and a relationship with the Diocese is maintained.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Is there much staff movement to outside of the Trust?</i></p> <p><i>A. PJ felt there was a healthy amount for staff development and progression. Staff absence is lower than the national average, but some schools do face challenges. He spoke about the wider commitment to local communities.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Does the Trust have a maximum proposed size?</i></p> <p><i>A. No, but they do feel that the sense of connection is important, and for this reason they are unlikely to grow about around 40 schools or to move nationally.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Is there a sense of competition between schools?</i></p> <p><i>A. PJ feels that it is a very challenging time for Heads and staff with low funding, staff shortages and high SEND and other needs. The RLT believes that some of those pressures can be alleviated by working collaboratively and this support is one of their main aims.</i></p> <p>PJ thanked Governors for their time and left at 7.55 pm.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2024</p> <p>DM went through the minutes of the meeting dated 1st February 2024, 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>None – all actions completed.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Headteacher’s report</p> <p>The report had been circulated and JH invited questions:</p> <p><i>Q. Could you clarify some of the acronyms appearing?</i></p> <p><i>A.MTC – Multiplication Tables check (the statutory test for Year 4 pupils: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/multiplication-tables-check)</i></p> <p><i>FSM – Free School Meals</i></p> <p><i>PACE – Playfulness, Curiosity, Acceptance and Empathy training for helping to support children’s emotional development (as distinct from the Safeguarding meaning for the same acronym: Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation)</i></p> <p><i>Q. How have there come to be 33 children in Year 3, and is this an issue?</i></p> <p><i>A. One child left and was replaced with twins, then two appeals were successful. JH said she has very little say in allocation as admissions are handled by OCC. They looked at the ‘status’ of the class which has an experienced teacher and does not have high needs. The class may continue with 33 children through to Year 6, but if any children leave they will not be replaced until numbers drop below 30.</i></p> <p><i>Q. If we were part of a Trust, would they manage admissions, and would this change the likelihood of having increased class sizes?</i></p>	

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	<p><i>A. The Trusts do have their own admissions policies and there is a difference between Faith and Trust schools – this is something to ask more about during the information gathering process.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Has a new SBM been appointed as Jane Burd is leaving?</i></p> <p><i>A. Yes, Maryanne Coyne (currently the administrator) has been appointed and is having an effective and helpful handover period. Her role will be advertised after Easter for a September start.</i></p> <p><i>Q. The school characteristics section shows that both EAL and EHCP are now significantly above average – is this having an impact?</i></p> <p><i>A. Yes, it is a staffing challenge as additional support is required. The number of applicants (44 first choice) for September was also noted – several families have already come in to discuss EHCPs.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Is there any way to look at the absence rates in more detail?</i></p> <p><i>A. JH gave a verbal update on the breakdown including for EHCP and non-EHCP pupils as well as EAL and FSM as discussed and minuted at the recent TLIS meeting. In general all rates are at around 96% with EAL and FSM being just below. The severely absent rate (147 out of 224 schools) and unauthorised absence rate (108 out of 224 schools) refer back to specific issues with individual children last year – this year the school has one pupil on a reduced timetable. Authorised absence has increased since before Covid and includes illness, bereavement, religious observance, and visits to relatives overseas.</i></p> <p>JH also gave a verbal update on the two suspensions (one internal and one external) both of which involved a member of staff being hit. The internal suspension was possible because the child was able to self-regulate. JH also explained that rather than just sending home a letter, she had asked the parents in to discuss and offer support.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>SDP/SEF</p> <p>Updated versions were circulated, but budget implications for next year have not yet been worked through. All staff want to stay, but there will be a decrease of one class as the bulge year is moving on. The budget is currently being prepared, with a number of scenarios having been shared with the school bursar.</p>	<p>Agenda</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Budget monitoring- Period 10</p> <p>The current picture is positive with a deficit of just £61 so that the carry-forward should be the same as last year. The capital budget will also have a carry-forward (around £4k) in part due to reduced need for spending on ICT equipment. <i>A Governor asked about the SASA contribution and fundraising for the playground equipment and JH confirmed that while the work has been carried out (and paid for in order to get the discount available as the contractors had time in their schedule), SASA should be encouraged to continue fundraising for the project in order to recoup the money spent from elsewhere.</i></p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Reports from committees and Governors with special responsibilities:</p> <p>11.1 Teaching Learning Inclusion and Safeguarding: draft minutes from 7 March had been circulated and EH outlined the main discussions. The closure day for the move from Headington Quarry has ratified by a senior LA official and will take place on 24 July. This falls within staff working days. The committee also discussed the Curriculum, RSE and Learning Feedback policies).</p> <p>11.2 Finance Personnel Premises (including H&S and Well-being): draft minutes from 4 March were circulated and BH outlines the main topics. The annual discussion of staff absence insurance had taken place. Following discussions with other local school and modelling of various scenarios and</p>	

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	<p>consideration of the available cover within school, it was decided not to take out the insurance this year but to put some funds into supply staff costs.</p> <p>A meeting is taking place next week to discuss the boiler installation.</p> <p>11.3 Safeguarding: draft minutes from 7 March were circulated. All staff will have a childcare disqualification check before September as the school will have under 5s on site. There has also been 'dip sampling' of websites accessed which has been reassuring and suggested that the monitoring is working.</p> <p>12.4 Ethos committee: not met since last LGB meeting.</p> <p>12.5 Communications group: nothing to report at this time.</p> <p>12.6 HQFSS move to St Andrew's: there is a 3-stage project plan and Governors were invited to join the celebration events which will include trees being exchanged. The class will be known as Reception rather than Rainbows once they are at St Andrew's. Information for parents needs to be ready for after the Easter holidays when places are allocated and announced. The phased start for new pupils will continue.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Chair's items: DM reminded Governors to sign up for slots at the parents' consultation evenings on 26 and 27 March.</p>	<p>Govs</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Head's items including Health & Safety updates</p> <p>JH explained that policies have been grouped into more helpful categories on the school website (https://www.st-andrews-pri.oxon.sch.uk/policies/) with governor and staff related policies being moved into the Governor pages (https://www.st-andrews-pri.oxon.sch.uk/policies-4/). Governors agreed that this was easier to understand and search.</p> <p>JH has also been working on a policy for children who want to fast during Ramadan using a policy from another neighbouring school. This will come to the next TLIS meeting. She explained that it will probably only apply to children in Years 5 and 6 and that most parents have already been in touch to discuss this with the school. Governors asked what would happen if the parents wanted a child to fast, but the child came to staff and said they were hungry and wanted to eat. JH said they would contact the parents but added that the policy is respectful of the cultural needs of pupils. The lunchtime supervisor has a list of those who are fasting, and the school will continue to act in the best interests of the children.</p> <p>JH told Governors that mock SATs were taking place next week and reminded them that for the real exams (from 13-16 May) some Governor presence would be appreciated to monitor the processes and offer support. Governors to let DM and JH know if they can cover one of these sessions.</p>	<p>TLIS agenda</p> <p>Govs</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Academy status</p> <p>Governors discussed their impressions of the presentations from both RLT and ODST as well as the likely timescales and possible next steps. It was agreed that staff and governors should continue to organise visits to schools (ideally C of E) from both Trusts (JH and MC had been to the Blake School in Witney (an ODST school).</p> <p>Governors asked for clarity about the drivers for academisation and JH spoke about the reduced support from the LA as well as within the Headington Partnership. It was agreed that Governors and SLT need to consider what they want to retain and what they hope to gain from joining a Trust.</p> <p>Governors agreed to think about some more detailed questions to ask including those related to their link roles and the committees (SEND, inclusion, Safeguarding etc) and to collaborate on a shared feedback form for visits to ensure that information is recorded and useful.</p>	

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15.	Governor vacancies: one co-opted vacancy and an election will take place for a parent position later this year.	
16.	Governor training: AR, MD, BH, DM and AB attended Safeguarding training by JH directly before this meeting – LD to update personal profiles to record this.	LD-done
17.	Governor visits: visit reports to be written up and sent to LD for uploading to Governor Hub.	Govs
18.	Headington Partnership: JH was unable to attend the last meeting, but the new Oxfordshire SEND lead (Deb Smit) had presented. SH has offered to open up her autism training to members of the Partnership.	
19.	Discussion: what decisions have been made which further the aims and vision of the school? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Governors discussed a number of areas relating to inclusion, including the Fasting policy and questions about support for inclusion within Academy Trusts- Questions were also raised about preserving the Christian distinctiveness of the school	
21.	Review of items for next meeting (25 April 2024): budget	

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm

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