

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016 AT 6.15 P.M.**

**Governors:** Zoe Thorn (Chair), Carole Mills (Vice Chair), Kevin Blencowe, Neil Perry, Lucy Walker, Emily Evans, Melissa Hatcher, Sarah Ransome, Mark Tinkler, Gavin Ayliffe, Tony Davies (Headteacher),

**In attendance:** Annabelle Lewis (arrived during meeting), Liz Steel, Kate Spencer-Allen (Assistant Headteachers)

**Clerk:** Lis Silver (Clerk to Governors)

<b>Item</b>		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
	There were apologies from Jill Tuffnell.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration of pecuniary interests</b>	
	Governors had no additional direct or indirect pecuniary interests to declare relating to items on today's agenda.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015</b>	
	The minutes were reviewed for accuracy. The following corrections were noted:  <b>5. page 2</b> - typo should say "at a <b>time</b> when funding was reducing"  5. page 5 – bullet point 3 corrected to read "since there are <b>soon to be</b> 4 vacancies"  With these two corrections the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Matters arising or agreed actions update</b>	
	The following matters arising were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was noted that Zoe had done the Science Link Governor visit but that the Financial Monitoring visit was still to be done. H &amp; S visit has also been done by Kevin with Jo.</li><li>• Lucy noted that the minutes were very long and it was agreed that where possible they should be shorter in the future.</li></ul>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Headteacher's report</b>	
	Tony advised that because of the important business later in the meeting that he was only going to flag up the key issues and take any questions governors wished to ask after reading the report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Development plan – update included as an appendix to report. Overall message is that actions are on track and there will be a further update on progress at the final Board meeting of the year.</li><li>• Tony is running a conference for schools south of the river in June. The aims of the conference are to identify school development and CPD</li></ul>	

	<p>priorities within the cluster and possible partnerships to help with addressing these priorities. By working as a cluster it should be possible to identify and promote good practice and being in experts to help. It is planned to have Train the Trainer workshops to develop teachers' ability and confidence to disseminate best practice. This will be an excellent development course for teachers and enable those with particular expertise to learn how to train their peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony updated the FGB on recent successful teacher recruitment for the following year. He advised that further recruitment would be needed for Teaching Assistants for children with Educational Health Care plans. He noted that Becki Hills would be leaving her Nursery Nurse role to begin teacher training.</li> <li>• Boys Year 5/6 team have won the league and the Girls team are still to play due to a waterlogged pitch.</li> <li>• Tony advised that staff well being is an area of growing concern in Cambridgeshire with a high number of Head teachers either off sick or leaving the profession. Other local Heads have expressed concern about the well being of their staff team and as a result of letters sent to the teaching unions a group of Heads will be meeting in May with Christine Blower, NUT General Secretary at St Matthews. In addition letters are currently being drafted for sending to local MPs. A copy has also been sent to Heidi Allen to pass on to Nicky Morgan when she meets with her in the near future. Tony identified that new government statutory assessment guidance information has been issued every other working day since September that makes the workload extremely difficult and stressful to manage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Staff Well being</b></p> <p>Zoe suggested that the school should consider arranging in house training for staff on Staff Well being. Lucy confirmed that this issue had also been raised at the recent Governor briefing. Tony advised that there is a known recruitment crisis in the education world with 40% of new teachers leaving the profession within 3 years of completing their training. The Unions had come to the Cambridge Primary Heads meeting recently and talked about strategies that schools should be considering to help staff manage stress – many of which are already in place at St Matthews. However his concern is that the stress is not due to what is actually happening within the school but the uncertainty and changes that is being imposed externally. In response to a question he confirmed that the governors were providing as much support as was possible in these circumstances.</p> <p>Neil commended the Heads on the action taken in writing and asked whether individual Boards should also be writing to express their concerns. Zoe confirmed that this had also been raised at the informal Chairs forum that she attends. Gavin supported this action since he believes this would have even more impact than a letter from staff.</p> <p><b>Action: The Chair of Governors (Zoe) to contact National Governors Association (NGA) and the local forum to discuss writing a letter and agree wording at the July FGB</b></p> <p>Neil advised that he thought individual governing bodies should each send their own letter and Gavin confirmed he would be in favour of this approach. Mark</p>	<p>Chair</p>
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suggested that if a joint letter is to be sent then it should be from schools in Cambridgeshire and not just Cambridge city. Kevin advised that a single letter with multiple signatures can be an effective way of showing the level of concern and the important thing is to identify the key issues that it is addressing.

#### **Recent Incident**

Sarah requested further information from the Head regarding the recent letter to Year 6 parents about possible cocaine use in the toilets. Tony advised that there was no further information that would be appropriate to discuss about the recent incident where a group of children witnessed an incident other than to confirm that the matter has been discussed with the children and parents involved and advice and support sought from the Local Authority as appropriate. Governors need to be aware of the confidentiality issues. The child involved is not currently in school. Tony confirmed that he had written to the parents to acknowledge that the incident had taken place and prevent the information being circulated by rumour but that he could not add any further information. He noted that some of the governors might need to be involved in the eventual outcome. Lucy asked if following the letter any further action was required to bring closure and Sarah confirmed that she believed the letter had led to an increased level of discussion. Tony advised that in incidents of this nature it is important to try and get the right balance and whilst the letter may have increased the number of people who were aware of the incident it also provided factual information and that when the eventual outcome is known he will let the children involved know but is not planning to send a follow up letter.

Neil noted that the key issues in this situation need to be

- i) provision of care for the child and family involved
- ii) prevention of reputational damage

He suggested that the school should consider having a protocol that is followed in such incidents so that things like preparation of suitable responses for the local press is considered. Tony advised that to date there had been no responses from the local newspaper. The school does have procedures in place for such incidents which include seeking advice from the Local Authority Education Officers and, where necessary, with the Local Authority press office.

#### **Strike action amongst children**

In response to a question Tony advised the FGB that approximately 8 children had been involved in the strike day that had taken place the earlier that week. Other parents had informed the school that they would have liked to take part but couldn't because of work commitments. The planned strike had been on the Tuesday since this was the first official day of the window for KS1 tests.

#### **Attendance**

For current year attendance is 95.4% - at a similar level to that recorded for the previous year and this is viewed very positively.

#### **Volunteers**

Sarah asked about the response to the request for bilingual French speaking volunteers and was advised that none had been received. In response to a second question about how children learning French can be better supported Tony advised that Yasmin (from Reception) leads on modern foreign languages and is

	<p>planning to meet the Parkside teacher and to spend some time in the classroom to review the current provision. It is believed that there has been an improvement in levels of differentiation and assessment this year and that the current provision is good.</p> <p>Gavin asked Kate for some additional information on the 22 volunteers who signed up for the volunteer survey of whom 6 are able to make a regular commitment. He asked whether the requirement for 2 references has prevented any of the other 16 people from volunteering. Kate responded that the survey had been linked to identifying people who could commit to working as part of the catch up programme – a commitment of 15 minutes every day. The volunteers have all met with Sarah Barratt but were not able to commit to the required times and will be given the opportunity of other volunteer roles in the school. Sarah and Kate are already discussing what information should be sent out next time so that the information is more specific than on the initial survey.</p> <p><b>Meet the Head</b> Tony confirmed that Meet the Head would take place on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 9am.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Presentation and Discussion about DfE Proposals for Forced Academisation of All Schools</b></p>	
	<p>Tony advised the meeting that he and Zoe had attended a meeting to find out more about the process of academisation. At this meeting they had identified the different levels of responsibility within the trust:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Members</b> – 3-5 people with overarching responsibility for trust These people could be parents but not staff and are co-opted to this role. They control the trust under the rules of Articles of Association</li> <li>2. <b>Trustees</b> – 6-10 people including members. Scheme of delegation will give authority and they may include a teacher. Chaired by one of the Members and act in the role of Directors</li> <li>3. <b>Committees/local Governing Bodies</b> – flexibility as to how these are set up</li> </ol> <p>Academies may have an Executive Headteacher (possibly Head of one of the schools) with designated Heads for other schools in the Academy but other models possible but needs to be a named person with responsibility for each school. DfE advises that only the Executive Head sits on the main Board. There can be any number of schools in the Academy – range of 2 or 3 – 50 plus. Schools wanting to join a multi Academy trust need to become an academy before they can join. Originally single school trusts were permitted but this is no longer the case – DfE agreement would be needed and very unlikely. Costs of setting up Academy also mean this option is unlikely to be financially viable. Full audit of accounts is required as part of the process.</p> <p>In practice a group of schools now write to the DfE asking to form a Trust, with agreed Members. Local authorities can also initiate an academy trust. The Governing Bodies of individual schools each make the decision as to whether or not to join the academy trust.</p> <p>Tony advised that as a Governing Body the meeting needs to decide what they want to do – the choice however is more complex than just Yes or No to the choice</p>	

of becoming an Academy. In answer to questions he made the following points:

- Funding comes directly from Government to individual school not the trust but there may be an agreement to pay in for central services (typically 3-8% of budget). Central services may include but are not limited to HR, Finance, Procurement, CPD and Payroll.
- In addition to the Head teacher it is possible (not usual) to pay other trustees.
- Committees may include teachers and parents and their power is agreed in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Policies e.g. Assessment Policy or Curriculum Policy
- There are solicitors who are very familiar with the legal process of setting up an academy and provide advice to guide school through the complex and expensive process
- Once a school joins an academy then it is extremely difficult and takes many years to leave. However if the DfE thinks a Trust is not performing well then it can remove a trust and replace it with another
- Central government continues to own the Estates and schools will lease the land from them.

Gavin expressed significant concern that the proposed structure was elite with authority being delegated from the top down since Members write the Terms of Reference for the Trustees who in turn agree the scheme of delegation, which each school in the Trust has to work to. Scheme of delegation is set up at the start of the trust and is unlikely to change. Questions were also asked about what happens when the original members leave since this might change the ethos of the trust significantly and concern was expressed about how the DfE would manage the transition of all schools becoming academies by 2022.

Governors that were familiar with one of the local multi school trusts expressed concern that there appeared to be significant areas such as the importance given to some parts of the Curriculum e.g. Arts or Music that governors were unable to influence. It was agreed generally that becoming part of a Multi Academy trust (MAT) would involve giving up a significant degree of autonomy. If results are good then earned autonomy is built into some of the Schemes but MATs also have the power to close poorly performing schools.

### **Options for St Matthews Primary School**

Zoe highlighted the options for the immediate decision required from the Board

#### **1. Do nothing** – wait and see what happens

Risk is that if forced to academise then decisions may be rushed and options may be more limited e.g. may have to join existing MAT and lose option of being part of a group of schools that initiates a MAT. As more schools convert the local authority will be slimmed down and offer less services.

#### **2. Join an existing MAT** – local ones are mostly secondary schools (Parkside

Federation, Comberton and Swavesey) with primary school MATs at Histon/Longstanton and Diocese of Ely MAT which does include schools that are not faith based.

### **3. Establish a MAT on our own - other schools could join at a later date**

#### **4. Set up a MAT with other local primary schools**

Governors confirmed that they would be interested in establishing the views of other local schools in relation to Option 4. Tony and Zoe explained to the meeting that to progress this that they would need permission from the Board to approach other schools and for Adrian to spend time looking at the financial side of this approach (costs of academisation and available funding).

It was noted that there is another potential option – that there will be a change of government in 2020 and that the policy of forcing schools to become academies will be reversed. It was noted that for good and outstanding schools it may be possible to do nothing but that the White paper specifically states that in the case of inadequate schools they will be forced to become academies immediately and this may also be applied to schools that are seen as coasting in terms of performance.

*Annabelle Lewis joined the meeting*

Neil noted that in Cambridgeshire most of the secondary schools are already academies (or in the process) but that in other areas some primary schools have already converted. Schools are not limited to joining a local MAT and there are national MATs in existence. The school needs to be prepared since it is possible that existing MATs will approach primary schools to strengthen their numbers and bolster their income. There is a risk for schools that remain outside the academy system; they will need to identify available resources, as local authorities will have less resource for centralised services.

Lucy expressed her great concern at the consequences of academisation, seeing it as a regressive step with a dismantling of excellent resources that people have worked hard to get established and made the suggestion of fighting the process. If a change had to happen then the idea of a local authority MAT was seen as being one of the better possibilities since local authorities are already well set up to support schools. It is clear that in this new world all services, whoever they are provided by, will become traded. It was agreed that it would be sensible to find out what is the view of the Cambridgeshire local authority on the possibility of them setting up a MAT.

It was agreed that further research is needed in the following areas:

- i) Financial aspects
- ii) Timescale and likely resource needed in terms of manpower
- iii) Views of other local schools/headteachers and parents governors and staff at the school

Tony reported that Tim Coulson (Regional Schools Commissioner for East of England) had made a statement that “ most primary schools had yet to see that academisation was to their advantage.” When asked what would be the benefit to schools, he said it was collaboration . It was agreed by the meeting that effective collaboration could take place without academisation. Tony advised that even if

<p>the Board decided to fight the process that there was still a strong the possibility that the school would be forced to become an academy and if preparation is not done now then this could potentially be disastrous. From the viewpoint of benefit through collaboration then it is likely that a MAT that included local primary schools would be the most beneficial. In view of this Tony asked for permission to talk to other local primary school heads to see if there was an appetite to investigate this option. Zoe confirmed that she would be wishing to approach the Chairs of the Governing Bodies of local schools too. The advantage of setting up a MAT from scratch was that it is possible to influence the ethos of the MAT and help shape the terms and influence the top down system. It was agreed that whatever approaches are made that it is important that the Governing Body is kept informed.</p> <p>Mark asked whether there was an optimum size for trusts to balance the economy of scale against losing ability to influence decisions. Other options that needs to be explored were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local versus national network.</li> <li>• Best timescale – neither want to rush in or get left behind</li> </ul> <p>Lucy asked how MATs impacted catchment areas and prioritisation for secondary school places and it was noted that in established trusts terms for this would be laid down since Trusts currently manage their own admission requirements. Tony confirmed that this is true but that there are legal parameters that they must operate within. Gavin suggested that it would be helpful for the Board if there were case studies that could be circulated. It was agreed that Tony should look out for this information but it may not be available before the July meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that whilst it would be good to have informal talks there did need to be some caution since this could be misinterpreted as being a much more definite intention of the school setting up a MAT than is currently agreed but that it would be necessary to get a sense of what other schools are doing. One proposal was that Tony spoke to Trusts outside of the local area to get a better understanding from the inside of how the process worked. It might also be possible to get Tim Coulson’s office to provide a speaker.</p> <p>Mark suggested that the school should also be thinking about what services they would need in the new system; what are they currently accessing through the local authority and where might there be economies of scale. It was noted that local authorities do already offer services for academies at a cost.</p> <p>Tony noted that he needed to be clear about what should be said to Parents at the next Meet the Head meeting. It was agreed that this meeting should not get into detailed issues but that there should be an acknowledgement that the school was exploring options and the need for a plan to be in place by 2020. The benefits of academisation such as sharing of good practice should be noted at this meeting. It is important that the issue is addressed since some parents will be deeply disturbed by what is being said in the news.</p> <p><b>The Full Governing Body gave approval for exploration of the next steps to academisation in the following ways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adrian to be asked to look at initial costs/potential areas of savings and</li> </ul>	<p>Head/Chair</p>
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	<p>funding available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony to initiate discussions with staff (at a general level) - the level of information needs to be considered to ensure they don't feel left out and make staff aware that the issue is being looked at but not to add to their stress</li> <li>• Tony to initiate discussions with Heads of other local primary schools.</li> <li>• Tony to raise issue at next Heads meeting</li> <li>• Zoe to raise issue at next Chairs meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Resources for Learning</b>	
	<p><b>Minutes of the Resources Committee meetings</b></p> <p><b>a) 21 January 2016 meeting</b></p> <p>It was noted that the January minutes had been agreed at the April meeting. Terms of Reference for the Committee were discussed and agreed that there should be standardisation across the two Committees.</p> <p><b>b) 28 April 2016 meeting</b></p> <p>Agreed that Terms of Reference should come to the July meeting for approval. The meeting had looked at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out turn of 2015/16 budget</li> <li>• Plans for current years budget with a recommendation for approval by the FGB.</li> <li>• Benchmarking data – believed to be of limited value</li> <li>• H &amp; S Governor Link visit</li> <li>• Financial Value Standard – 2 additional questions</li> </ul> <p>Tony advised that the budget plan for next year is very similar to the last year with the only significant adjustments being for additional resource for supply cover, the office and for caretaking where resources had been very difficult this year. No major changes are proposed because of the uncertainty surrounding future funding.</p> <p><b>The Full Governing Body unanimously approved the 2016/17 budget</b></p> <p><b>c) Minutes of the Curriculum Committee meeting – 3 February 2016-06-08</b></p> <p>The work of the last Committee had included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A presentation from Kate about the use of volunteers at St Matthews.</li> <li>• Update on writing developments</li> <li>• Link Governor visit report for PE</li> <li>• Agreement on Link Governor visits; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICT with Maths – Carole</li> <li>SEND – Lucy</li> <li>Character Education – Neil</li> <li>Literacy – Gavin</li> <li>Curriculum Development – Mark</li> <li>Science – Zoe (Summer term)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation that the name of the Committee is formally changed to the Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee (TLOC)</li> </ul> <p><b>The Full Governing Body unanimously approved the change in name from Curriculum to Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee</b></p>	



8.	<b>Governor Training</b>	
	<p>Training for Governors is taking place the following week and at least two governors are planning to attend and between them will produce a report. Training for the new governors is taking place on June 18<sup>th</sup> and this will be brought to their attention following their election. The Clerk will also be attending the Clerks training in May. The Chair is also attending training on Effective Governance/Leading an Effective School.</p> <p>Jill gave feedback based on her report regarding items raised at the last Governors training session. The importance of adequate training for governors had been raised. It was noted that in some specialist areas e.g. that there was no training for the H &amp; S Link governor.</p> <p>It was agreed that training should be broadened out and the following were mentioned as being useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gavin suggested a trip to visit Red Balloon</li> <li>• IN house training e.g. to help understand Finance documents</li> <li>• Training on roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Training on staff well being</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that a register of training done by Governors needs to be maintained. This record used to be kept by Anne. In addition governors attending training should be bringing a written report and feedback to the next meeting plus a list of actions to be considered.</p> <p><b>Action: Central record to be set up and all training done forwarded to the Clerk to update e.g. Prevent Awareness training, Multi Academy Trusts training</b></p>	Clerk/All
9.	<b>Meet the Head</b>	
	<p>It was noted that Sarah has supplied minutes of the previous Meet the Head meetings. Issues that have been discussed include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Development Plan</li> <li>• New Assessment system and concerns about understanding reports. It was noted that an explanation will be included in the report to indicate age related expectations and comparative position (above or below etc.) within year group but that planning for this is still in the early stages. Guidance has changed making the format hard to finalise.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Further information on this will be fed back to the TLOC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of a mentoring programme with local businesses</li> <li>• Anti bullying questionnaire</li> </ul> <p>Next Meet the Head is scheduled for 20 May 2016</p>	Tony
10.	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p><b>Parent Governor Vacancies</b></p> <p>Nominations for the two Parent Governor Vacancies have now closed with 7 people standing representing an extremely diverse group. Voting will be taking place the week after next. It was noted that the Skills of those not elected should be reviewed after the Elections with a view to whether they would be suitable to be co-opted governors.</p> <p>A number of questions were raised about how the voting for Parent Governors</p>	

	<p>would be conducted. Concern was expressed that the Chair of Governors had asked to meet with all the candidates prior to them being nominated. Zoe explained that this meeting was an opportunity to ensure that nominees understood what they were taking on and had the skills or were willing to undertake the training needed to do the job. It was noted that a pre-meeting is not essential and parents could self nominate even if they were unable to meet with the Chair but it was good practice to ensure that people understood what was required of governors. Neil thanked Zoe for taking the time to meet with all the prospective governors in this way. It was noted that a Parent Governor who had just reached the end of their term of office was standing again. Whilst they will only have a child in the school for another couple of months this is within the rules surrounding Parent Governors and the only requirement is to have a child in the school at the time of the election. It was agreed that ensuring there is fresh blood on the Board is important and should be taken into consideration for reappointment of Co-opted governors for additional terms of office and that the Board should look at succession planning.</p> <p>Zoe advised that she has drawn up an Induction checklist for new governors.</p> <p>Tony advised that there have been 3 staff applications for the 2 Staff Governor posts (2 co-opted Governor posts which it has been agreed should be filled by members of staff).</p>	
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Dates of future meetings and Agenda items agreed to date</b>  Teaching Learning and Outcomes Committee – Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June  Full Governing Body – Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July  Items flagged for discussion at next meeting:  Letter to Government from FGB  Academisation Update</p>	
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>School improvement actions and outcomes from meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chair of Governors (Zoe) to contact National Governors Association (NGA) and the local forum to discuss writing a letter and agree wording at the July FGB</b></li> <li>• <b>Central record to be set up and all training done forwarded to the Clerk to update e.g. Prevent Awareness training, Multi Academy Trusts training</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The Full Governing Body unanimously approved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Budget for 2016/17</b></li> <li>• <b>the change in name from Curriculum to Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee</b></li> <li>• <b>Exploration of the next steps to academisation (and potentially setting up a MAT) in the following ways:</b>  Tony to ask Adrian to look at initial costs/potential areas of savings and funding available  Tony to initiate discussions with staff (at a general level)  Tony to initiate discussions with Heads of other local primary schools.  Tony to raise issue at next Heads meeting  Zoe to raise issue at next Chairs meeting</li> </ul>	

Signed..... Date.....