

Minutes of the Meeting of St Matthew's Primary School Full Governing Body (FGB)
at 6.00pm at St Matthew's Primary School on Wednesday 13th February 2025

Present: Chris Jagger (Co-chair), Aditi Vedi (co-chair), Christina Bates, Riccardo Herbane, Simon Richardson, Katie Hehir, John Parkin, Linda Jones, Neil Perry, Ananay Aguilar, Sonia Ingersent, Simon Richardson, Kate Spencer-Allen, Elizabeth Steel

Online: Andrew Grieve

Apologies: N/A

Attending: Tony Davies (Headteacher, HT), Daisy Lawrence (Clerk)

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 6pm and all participants were welcomed. There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

There were no new specific declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the FGB Meeting on 4th December 2024

It was noted to check that AG was listed as present online in the meeting minutes. The notes were agreed.

AP – Chair to sign and send to the HT.

4. Head Teacher's Report

The Headteacher (HT) shared their report with the FGB prior to the meeting and talked through all the items.

Comments and Challenges:

Governors asked a number of questions regarding if the children were settling down, about the number of, and reason for, exclusions and no-ball-Fridays. Attendance, punctuality, funding and comparisons to other local primary schools were also discussed.

The HT responded there had been a small spate of some difficult moments and that exclusions were always a last resort measure in cases where the children or staff were unsafe. In most cases the school is very adept at being able to calm down a pupil or situation where the child may be feeling emotionally dysregulated. Occasionally, the school will impose an exclusion in order for the child to calm and/or for the school to have the time to adequately plan and manage how best to go forward. Improved punctuality has been observed at the start of the day. The HT said the rationale for no-ball-Fridays is a behavioural management policy. It encourages a wider range of games and better social interactions to occur.

5. Resources for Learning

There was a discussion on Resources for Learning which is more or less exactly in the same situation as at the previous meeting. There is a zero carry-forward and a £4,000 in-year deficit.

Comments and Challenges

Some other schools seem to be in a much worse position. How much can the school keep cutting expenditure to the bone? Where is the balance between the debt and funding restraints and the point where the children are being let down with the provision? A £4k in-year deficit is a great achievement and very impressive profit margin given the risks involved. The PTA has brought in £30k and there has been a £5k grant for supporting phonics, plus some additional funding from the PTA for phonics resources.

The school has always tried to keep to financial restraints and targets. It keeps all spending inline. High needs (SEN) funding is at £202,000 for the financial year, but there is a lag of additional funding of approximately £40k for the past financial year. Some ECHPs are coming through and a number are being back-dated. Cuts to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the re-organisation have helped significantly so the school is exactly where it predicted last year. Figures need to be frequently checked and adjusted which is time-consuming and frustrating but the position is not disastrous. The situation could be better or worse by the year end. Looking at financial benchmarking there are wide disparities and it is difficult to compare, but the information shows that the school's expenditure is at the lower end in comparison to similar schools included in the financial benchmarking exercise, demonstrating that the school is being very careful in its expenditure. Cuts cannot be made to Teaching Assistants (TAs) as that would incur higher costs to bring in supply teachers to bridge the gaps.

AP – Jonty Holden is the new Financial Advisor. HT to ask him to come in to speak to the governors. (CPH has also been invited to talk about SBS.)

6. Raising Standards

School Development Plan and SEF Update

Actions in the SDP are on track. As previously discussed, the Behaviour Management Policy will be coming to governors in the summer term after further work with support staff. Progress on a new MIS system has been delayed due to the local authority informing schools that one of the preferred options, Arbor, was not compatible with SBS. There has already been seen improvements in behaviour and punctuality with changes to the start of the school day routines and movement around the school. There is now a senior leader in charge of behaviour and mental health. The school is awaiting a report from Craig Duncan on Maths in KS2 and phonics in early years and KS1. The visit was very positive with good points for development alongside the positive feedback. They have received some great compliments and reassurance that the school is operating very well with hard-working, industrious and focussed children in every class observed.

The governors were presented with updated policies in the following areas, responding to action points from last term's safeguarding audit. These were **prejudice-related incidents; St Matthew's Equality and Diversity Policy; and St Matthew's Equality Objectives**

Comments and Challenges:

Are there any areas that are still needed to be addressed or still in progress? The new policies were discussed, and it was agreed by the governors presented very good model guidance.

The school is always aware if there is any issue but there is a very strong base. The SEF, SDP and their evaluations are very good. There is a consistency of expectation.

7. Safeguarding (SG) Update

The governing body considered the following updated policies - Intimate Care Policy, Cambridgeshire Joint Protocol for Children not collected at the end of the school day, St Mathew's Lone Working Policy

Comments and challenges:

The governing board agreed that the policies gave staff sensible guidance. The joint protocol for children not collected at the end of the school day was discussed and it was accepted that ideally two contacts should be given for all children and acknowledged this can be difficult in certain cases.

AP – The following policies were ratified by the governing body - Intimate Care Policy, Cambridgeshire Joint Protocol for Children not collected at the end of the school day, St Mathew's Lone Working Policy

The HT raised that it would be good if some governors completed safer recruitment training. He said that the Key for School Leadership provided good online training. Governors agreed that this would be a priority.

AP – The HT to re-circulate the link for The Key for governors and encouraged them to sign up for training.

8. Governance Matters

The new potential governor looks a very good option for the board and has good business skills to add to those already in the board but also science where there is a gap. It was agreed the candidate would be invited for interview.

There should generally be two link governor visits and reports each year.

AP – New potential governor to be invited for interview.

AP – Governors to contact their link within the school to arrange visits please.

9. Any Other Business

An email to the school indicating a security threat was confirmed as not credible. The police were called for clarification. This led to a discussion if practicing for a security threat or potential lock-down would be advisable or scare-mongering and frightening children of this age unnecessarily.

12. Dates of Future Meetings

20th March 2025 – FGB 6-8pm

13. Close of meeting:

19:37 Meeting ends.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____