



**An Daras Trust**  
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

St Stephens Community Academy  
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Head Teacher – Maura Furber  
Chair of Governors – Joan Heaton

7/12/23

## **MINUTES**

### **Autumn Term Meeting 2023**

#### **Local Governing Board; St Stephens Community Academy**

#### **Friday 1st December 2023 / 10am at St Stephens School**

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

**Present:** Joan Heaton (Chair), Maura Furber (HT), Kathy Walsh, Bonnie Soanes, Gary Jeffery, Cate Harvey, Paul Dickens

**In Attendance:** Ann Cullum (Local Governance Officer).

#### **Governor Resignation**

Laurie Gutteridge resigned with effect from 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The Chair and Head commended her on her involvement and were sorry to lose her.

Gary Jeffery has agreed to become the new Parent Governor and will continue to be the P.E. Lead and the PPG lead.

#### **Re-appoint Governor and Appoint New Governor**

JH's term expires on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024. JH has confirmed that she is happy to continue for a further 4 years. The governors were happy to re-appoint her for a further 4-year term ending 12<sup>th</sup> March 2028.

The Chair welcomed Cate Harvey and the governors agreed to appoint her as a Co-opted Governor for a 4-year term ending 1<sup>st</sup> December 2027. CH will take on the role of SEND Governor and will meet with MF and Debbie Bartlett (the school SENDCo) in January.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest Relevant to this Agenda**

None declared relevant to this agenda.

Governors' annual Pecuniary Interests declaration forms received from all governors.

#### **3. Chair Election**

The governors unanimously agreed for JH to continue as Chair for a further year.

The governors also agreed for PD to continue as Vice Chair for a further year.

#### **4. Governor Administration**

All governors confirmed that they have read the following documents and agreed to abide by them: Code of Conduct, KCSiE, Prevent Update, Health & Safety, ADMAT and School Safeguarding policies and ADMAT termly Safeguarding Update.

#### **5. Confirm Minutes of LGB Summer Meeting (28<sup>th</sup> June 2023) and Matters Arising (Chair)**

The decision was made to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record of the last meeting and the Chair signed a copy.

GJ looked into the possibility of a pop-up pool but this needs to be rented and appears to be a complicated issue. MF has also made enquiries about renting a covered pool for 3 weeks. This will come with changing facilities and maintenance. **Will there be safeguarding issues.** No, as everything is secure and secure fencing should be in place by the summer term. MF will check everything thoroughly when the company attend for an on-site visit. **Why is the pop-up pool needed?** It's not practical to transport the children to the community swimming pool. A pool on school grounds would give all the children more flexibility of use and be more financially viable. MF will keep governors updated regarding developments.

## 6. Confidential Matters

The Head raised staffing issues and suspensions. These are recorded in Confidential Minutes.

## 7. Head's Report

The Head's Report has been made available to all governors. **Your report states that new staff will be starting in January, what induction training do new members of staff receive?** They receive full training as detailed in the DfE document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, May 2019'. **Some members of staff are County Leads; does this affect the school?** MF has no concerns, as having staff as County Leads has a positive outcome and provides additional skills to the school. County Leads share expertise and bring other professionals into St Stephens, which spreads our influence wider. **What contingency plans are in place to ensure pupils are not affected by Subject Leaders' absences?** MF ensures that strong, experienced teachers cover classes and establish set days so children know who will be teaching them. There will also be effective communication and shared planning to ensure consistency, continuity and mutual understanding of vision and expectations. **What is happening about the TAs' pay?** This is regularly discussed but there is no additional budget to pay TAs any more than the national wage. TAs are valuable to the school and their work can be difficult as well as stressful; but budgets must be adhered to.

**Are the children safe within the school grounds at break times, and what supervision is provided?** Yes. The grounds are well-staffed in key areas and all MTAs have walkie talkies during lunch breaks. Additional staff are provided if there are ARB children in the playground. Three adults supervise in the dining hall plus three more with each key stage. There is another MTA in the room with the packed lunch children. The Head is always on duty to provide additional assistance if required. **Have improvements to the school estate been completed?** Final work in fire work improvements (painting, and repairing the frames around grills) is still to be completed. **Is there an update on the progress of the proposed perimeter fence?** The perimeter fencing has now been agreed and is currently out to tender. MF is hopeful that the fencing will be in place by the summer. **How much is the contract for the fencing?** This information isn't readily available but MF will investigate and forward this information. Information can be found via our Central Property team

**Pupil spend (per pupil) was in the lowest 20% of similar schools in 2021/22. Does the school have adequate funding to enable all pupils to have education support staff relative to teaching staff to meet their individual needs?** Due to the high percentage of EHCP pupils we have additional budget for LSA support. However, the funding available does not cover the hours recommended with on-costs and the school budget is used for this. We also have a high level of PPG and this funding enables LSAs to be funded. We use the full staffing budget capacity - staff are our most valuable resource. Tutor funding also used to pre-teach and keep up with year groups / identified individuals. **How might this affect 2024 outcomes?** We will need to keep a close eye on our expenditure but providing adequate resources for all our children is paramount. Current forecasts look to be in line with National once again.

Key priorities are:

- Maths - outcomes for all year groups to maintain end of year attainment against expected national average benchmarking and to build upon best endeavours that all groups (boys/girls,

disadvantaged/non-disadvantaged) make good or better progress from their starting points.

**Some uplift in Maths teaching is noted as a requirement to ensure KS2 attainment remains in line with national standards in 2024. Can you clarify where and how the uplift will be targeted?**

Various measures have been put in place and MF shared the Maths Action Plan with the governors. Covid left children with a gap in their Maths knowledge which has been identified and is being targeted. Written and Oral reasoning using specific mathematical vocabulary and stem sentences is refined and evident for all pupils, and key facts are recalled/retrieved with fluency. Vulnerable/Disadvantaged pupils are making progress in all year groups (with a focus on Years 2-5). Further information is in the school AIP which has been made available to all governors. **Can KS1 and KS2 Maths groups be linked into P.E.?** Maths is linked in with as many curriculum subjects as possible and linking this to P.E. for KS1 could be particularly useful and enjoyable.

- To achieve 'best value' for all our pupils; focus on key vulnerable groups (for instance SEND pupils) and fine-tune their provision and practice.
- To build upon prior skills linked to Visible Learning through 'Thinking Matters' research and practice.
- To continue Curriculum Evolution, improving knowledge and coherence and embedding high-quality formative assessment in all foundation subjects.
- School governors to gather evidence effectively each term to ensure they are accurately assessing impact and hold leaders to account for teaching and learning priorities.

The school Top 3 Risks were identified as:

- i) Evolution in the curriculum
- ii) Achievement and Progress
- iii) Standards in core subjects.

The term Dates for 2024-25 were agreed by the governors.

Attendance is improving and is now 93.7% which is more in-line with the national average. **In 2021/22 overall absence was 8.2% and persistent absence was 27.2%. These figures were in the highest 20% of schools with a similar level of deprivation in 2021/22. What is being done to address these issues?** Appropriate and relevant support is provided as required, to the children and their parents. We are encouraging parental engagement with attendance at parents' meetings and have distributed an 'Attendance Guide' leaflet which sets out the impact of absences. We also include this in our newsletters. We contact the families directly, offering positive support and asking how we can help. The impact of covid is still apparent. The Breakfast Club has gone from strength to strength (sometimes 40 children) and is really having a positive impact on improved attendance and focus in the classroom. **Are staff paid for attending Breakfast Club?**

They are paid from 8am. **Is the taxi service being used by children who don't need it?** No, a lot of children live in outlying areas and it is only used by children who need it. 30 children arrive by taxi, which the school arrange. This has improved attendance. **Are the taxi drivers DBS checked?** Yes, the taxi firm arranges this. There is a reduced gap in attendances of key priority groups (for instance Pupil Premium), and the school appropriately addresses any persistent absences. The school's mental health project is working very well. The Pastoral Team provide social care, emotional support and food to children requiring this. **What is happening with the EWO?** A meeting is taking place today. **Does the school make home visits?** No, we invite the parents into the school. If home is where support is needed this is forwarded to Family Support. **What is the response time from Support Groups?** Sometimes this can take a while. **Does the School Nurse attend regularly?** Yes, she attends very frequently. **What is the job role of the Nurse?** This is purely medical but she will refer to appropriate services when needed.

Discipline and behaviour throughout the school are generally very good with few exceptions. There has been one permanent exclusion.

The governors were satisfied with this and raised no further challenges.

8. **Safeguarding / Health & Safety**

**PD is meeting with Claire Paul next week - carry forward.**

PD is hopeful that the school fencing will be completed very soon.

CP carried out a Safeguarding audit with the children and this has been posted on the school website. **Have any drug or alcohol-related items been found on school grounds?** No drug-related items, but bottles and cans are regularly found on the perimeter of school grounds. .

**What happens if there is a trespasser who gets injured (for instance a skateboarder)?** It is private property and any trespasser is in the wrong so that's not an issue. Parents have asked if they can use the school grounds at weekends but this is not allowed. **If a trespasser has opened the gate and left it open is this still trespassing?** Yes, it is still trespassing. MF will ensure both gates are padlocked. Apparently trespassing isn't a criminal offence unless there is damage. **Will the pool encourage trespassing?** Yes, but the gates will be higher and more secure, so trespassing shouldn't happen. The governors were content with this and raised no further concerns.

9. **Review SEND provision and policy, and agree SEND Local Offer**

SEND Provision, Policy and Local Offer are now on the website. The Governors agreed these.

10. **St Stephens Pre-School**

This is going very well, with good numbers. There is now an Apprentice working there who is very helpful. The pre-school has a high level of SEND children.

11. **Pupil Voice**

Covered in item 8. CP's report has been made available to the governors who were happy with this and raised no questions.

12. **Compliance**

Staff are currently taking the relevant training and will be released to take the training.

13. **Governor Monitoring & Training**

Monitoring Visits/Working Group

- **PE impact and provision for this year (JH/GJ) – GJ will meet with MF in January– carry forward**
- Curriculum (JH/MF) - completed
- EYFS (JH) - completed
- Risk analysis to ascertain current top 3 risks (JH/MF) – *discussed in item 7c*
- Safeguarding (PD) – *discussed in item 8*
- JH visit to Princetown School. This was very positive and JH has invited the Princetown Chair of Governors to St Stephens' Spring LGB meeting.

Monitoring and Working Group for next term

- Improvement Plan Review (JH/CH/GJ)
- Website Compliance – Neil Swait has checked this and it is compliant
- Online Safety (PD/BS)
- Curriculum (JH/CH/GJ)
- Safeguarding (PD/Claire Paul)
- SEND (KW/CH/Debbie Saunders)
- PPG (MF/GJ)

These will be covered at Working Groups. **MF will Email suggested dates to the governors.**

Governor Training

Cyber Security – PD 24/9/23, JH 13/11/23, BS 6/12/23, KW 6/12/23

KCSiE – PD 7/9/23

Online Safety – PD 24/9/23  
GDPR – PD 8/10/23, BS 29/11/23, JH 30/11/23  
Safer Recruitment – PD 11/10/23  
Prevent Refresher – PD 24/10/23  
Safeguarding – CH 28/11/23.

All governors confirmed that they have received and read the ADMAT Termly Safeguarding Update as part of their ongoing Safeguarding training.

Governor Training Overdue – to be completed as soon as possible

All governors are required to take Cyber Security training annually. **MF, GJ to take this term.**

All governors are now also required to take GDPR training, which is **currently outstanding for MF, KW, GJ.**

Governors to Email copies of training certificates to AC so that records can be updated.

GovernorHub – The Key

All governors have registered with GovernorHub.

Chair's Meeting with CEO

The Chair's notes of her meeting with the CEO have been made available to all governors. This was a very positive meeting. The CEO talked about 10 years of steady growth; St Stephens are on track and the CEO was very happy with the school. Margaret Savage (Trust Director) has given the school a lot of support. The recommended DfE documents on Quality are important to read. The Asset Management Plan requires all governor training to be in place. St Stephens will support other schools with Rights Respecting Schools.

#### 14. **Statutory Policies for Review/Renewal**

SEND Policy – see item 9.

PHSE/RSE Policy was agreed by the governors as were the Safeguarding Policy and Admissions 25/26 Policy.

**Policy due for review next term – First Aid.**

#### 15. **Any Other Business**

None.

#### 16. **DONM**

The date of the next meeting is Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at **10am.**

The meeting closed at midday.

**Ann Cullum**

**Local Governance Officer**

#### **Distribution List:**

Joan Heaton – Co-opted Governor (Chair)  
Maura Furber – Head Teacher  
Kathy Walsh – Staff Governor  
Paul Dickens – Co-opted Governor  
Bonnie Soanes – Co-opted Governor  
Gary Jeffery – Parent Governor  
Cate Harvey – Co-opted Governor

Will Hermon – Executive Head/CEO  
Steve Tavener – Chair of Trust Board