



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

St Stephens Community Academy

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Head Teacher – Maura Furber
Chair of Governors – Joan Heaton

28/11/22

MINUTES

Autumn Term Meeting 2022

Local Governing Board; St Stephen's Community Academy
Wednesday 23rd November 2022 / 5.30pm at the School

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Joan Heaton, Maura Furber, Kathy Walsh, Martin Cornish, Paul Dickens, Bonnie Soanes

Absent: Sue Tierney, Sophie Hughes

In Attendance: Ann Cullum (Local Governance Officer)

2. Declarations of Interest Relevant to this Agenda

Governors' annual Pecuniary Interests declaration form received from all except SH. AC will contact SH urgently.

3. Chair Election

All governors agreed to JH continuing as Chair for a further year.

4. Governor Administration

All governors confirmed that they have read the following documents and agree to abide by them: Code of Conduct, KCSiE, Health & Safety and school Safeguarding policy.

5. Confirm Minutes of LGB Summer Meeting (6th July 2022) and Matters Arising

Decision was made to accept the previous Minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and the Chair signed a copy.

Monitoring/Visits – *as listed in item 14*

Governor Training – *as listed in item 14*

6. Confidential Matters

Confidential staffing matters were discussed.

7. Headteacher Report

The Head's report has been made available to all governors. MF discussed key points: **How does the curriculum offer work?** MF discussed the capability curriculum offer /championing children and how this links to school values and ethos. All curriculum subjects are offered and all children have the same offer but teaching is adapted to their own needs. Evidence is in books, in Pupil Voice and the like. SEND children have separate provision maps which show how they are being catered for. **How is this monitored?** Every half term (or more if necessary) there is a plan of PPG and SEND children's additional support and their progress, support and intervention so HT knows exactly how every child is progressing, giving a good insight into provision. Termly Pupil Progress Meetings are held to review provision, progress and attainment. **Could governors arrange to come in to see how Phonics (for example) works?** Yes, please do. The use of iPads was discussed to support additional keep-up work linked to Read Write Inc. (RWI). **How do we get early starters up to speed?** MF discussed the strategies used for early identification and the rigorous RWI programme used both daily and for on-going

assessments. The needs of the community were discussed, for instance the fact that many children don't own books and some parents don't read or write very well. When children needing additional support are identified their parents are sent links to videos and on-line teaching programmes so the child can use these for extra study at home. Home-school communication and support is key. **Can this be monitored?** No we cannot monitor who has watched the links but we ask the child/parents. It does show that the school are aware of the problem and trying to help/support the child. This is proving very popular with the children. Phonics is daily. Reading Rocks is a new project with new books which is encouraging the children to read more diverse and inclusive modern texts. The school is trialling a new writing programme called The Literacy Tree which has been received with great enthusiasm by staff and children. The children are writing more although it is too soon to judge impact. Writing, Spelling and Grammar really suffered during covid. **Is there extra monitoring support from the Trust?** Yes, Neil Swaite monitors and the Trust will offer extra help if needed. The SEF shows that the quality of teaching & learning is strong. KS1 and KS2 progress and attainment are in line with national figures. One real strength of the school is the many enrichment opportunities given to the children, for instance Music Teachers are brought in; visits and visitors all give children social enrichment. Computing has come on very well. Staff are frequently trained on areas linked to SEF, like weekly Phonics training and coaching. Pastoral care throughout the school is excellent.

8. **Improvement Plan / SEF**

Focus is on improving the standard of writing as this has dropped dramatically in years 3 & 4, although the national standard is lower than previously. There are many EHCPs in year 1 which lowers the figures. Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 are target groups.

Another priority is to improve the SEND provision with good, adapted provision.

Sustainable Development/Climate Change curriculum is the third priority. The school does a lot with this subject already. Two staff members are already well qualified in this subject and developing this curriculum offer.

4th priority is Safeguarding, re-embedding school values and attendance. Incentives are in place to encourage 100% attendance.

5th priority is school governance and leadership.

This is being monitored in visits and the governors had no challenges at this time.

9. **School Top 3 Risks**

The top 3 risks are agreed as:

1. Need to embed good Curriculum capacity, targeting subjects and leaders
2. Need for a Curriculum offer that will impact all groups of children, e.g. SEN children
3. Need to raise the standard of progress and attainment, especially in Writing

10. **Safeguarding / Health & Safety**

PD urged all governors to take the KCSiE training.

Is there a Health & Safety Policy for vehicles dropping off children outside school? Traffic cones have been placed outside the school as children have been hit on the bend. The parents/carers are regularly reminded about the safety aspects and the children in year 6 have worked with the police to create road safety posters to be placed outside the front of the school. The next H&S audit is due on 30th November. Ray Clarke will be visiting the school. **Has disability access been assessed?** Yes, this is on the website. **What about disabled toilets?** The school has disabled toilets. **Do they have automatic doors?** No, but in a school setting the child would have assistance. **What is happening with the fences?** Hopefully work on new secure fencing, emergency lighting and secure gates will be starting in January.

11. **Attendance/Discipline/Behaviour/Exclusions**

Attendance overall has improved dramatically over the last 3 years. Absences and permanent exclusions have decreased. Children came back from covid very well but some families are still

struggling to get children to school. Attendance is 92.5% (96% is the national figure). There is a robust system in operation – text, Email, phone call and if there is still no response this is done again from a different phone number. Letters are also sent and a member of staff will drive past the house. **Can the Education Welfare Officer intervene?** There is no longer a face-to-face EWO but the school system is robust and they can seek advice via email/telephone if necessary. There are genuine extenuating reasons why the attendance figures appear lower than they should be. **How are the children coping with this?** It is unsettling for everyone. The children suffer emotionally when they are off school for a long time. **Are there many illnesses?** Yes, sickness, cold-like viruses and other illnesses are very common at the moment. Discipline has improved substantially and the new Behaviour Policy has been seen by all, which has been (and still is) very effective. Behaviour has also improved dramatically across the school. There have been no exclusions and only one temporary suspension.

12. Pupil Voice

MF shared the UNICEF Steering Group ‘Going for Gold’ document that the children have been working on. The children decided which charities they should be helping and have elected House Captains to organise this aspect as the Steering Group are looking at the climate curriculum and their role. The PTA is going to fund a “buddy bench” for each playground. The children are very caring and Pupil Voice is very strong. Governors were content that children were engaging and had no challenges at this time.

13. Compliance

Report by exception: Cyber Security, GDPR, Health & Safety, Website
All policies are compliant.

Is there a new GDPR Policy? This is due for review at the Audit committee on 7th December and will then be re-issued. The current version on the website is the in date one.

14. Governor Monitoring & Training

Monitoring/Visits (Based on priorities in the Improvement Plan)

JH mentioned that there is a record template on Sharepoint for Monitoring Visits

- Pupil Voice including safeguarding – PD met all the children on the UNICEF poster and asked them what they felt about safeguarding. All their answers were the same which was encouraging and amazing. The children all said they felt safe in the school and all knew who they could go to for help if ever they felt unsafe or unhappy. **Do the children have instruction on road safety?** Yes, via Bikeability, discreet practice and visits from the PCSO
- SEND monitoring – SH/JH - SH visited the school and met with Debbie Bartlett
- EYFS/Curriculum – ST visited the school
- Safeguarding – PD - covered this in item 10
- Writing - MC - visited the school and was impressed with how supportive and helpful the staff all are. This will be discussed further at the Working Group.

Agree monitoring and working group for next (Spring) term:

Agreed for 7th February at 9:30am (to discuss areas that are being developed)

- **Improvement Plan priorities - JH/ PD**
- **Online safety - MC**
- **Curriculum - MC/JH**
- **Safeguarding - PD.**

Governor Training Completed

JH – KCSiE 25/9/22, Governor Monitoring 7/10/22, Governors for Schools “What does the SEND Review mean for your School?” 27/9/22, GfS KCSiE 27/9/22;

ST – TPAT Local Governance 12/7/22;

PD - Safeguarding 13/6/22, TPAT Local Governance 12/7/22, KCSiE 20/10/22, CS 2/12/22;

BS – Safeguarding 15/11/22, Prevent 15/11/22; KCSiE 23/11/22;

Networking Evening (NS Ofsted presentation) attended by: JH, MF, KW, SH, BS;

Follow-up Discussion Evening attended by: JH, MF, SH, BS.

- **SH to complete Safeguarding and Prevent training as soon as possible**
- **SH, MC & BS are also required to take a local governance course**
- **Cyber Security to be completed before the end of December 2022.**

All Governors reported problems trying to access the CyberSecurity training.

AC will investigate.

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

Bios for the school website have been received from all Governors.

Chair's meeting with CEO

JH's Report was made available to all and JH highlighted key Points. EYFS and Pre-School were highlighted as needing to improve outcomes and show gains on the previous year, although MF commented that covid had affected this.

School Improvement, Curriculum (including Visible Learning) and Trust Growth Plan 22-25 (especially staff recruitment and development) were discussed.

MF mentioned that It is good that the governors can meet in person again and also to be a presence in the school. **Governors are all invited to Parents Evening, Leavers' Day, the Christmas Nativity Play on 6th/7th December, 9.30am, and the Carol Service on 13th December, 1.30pm at the church.**

15. Policies

Policies for review:

- Admissions - Approval for 24-25, out for consultation and on the school website. The governors are content with this.
- Accessibility Policy – reviewed and agreed.
- First Aid Policy – reviewed and agreed.
- SEND Offer and SEND Policy reviewed until September 2023.

The governors were satisfied with the above Policies.

16. Any Other Business

None.

17. DONM

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 5.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm

Ann Cullum

Local Governance Officer

Distribution List:

Joan Heaton – Co-opted Governor (Chair)
Paul Dickens – Co-opted Governor
Sophie Hughes – Co-opted Governor
Martin Cornish – Parent Governor
Bonnie Soanes – Co-opted Governor
Kathy Walsh – Staff Governor
Maura Furber – Head Teacher

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