



LOOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE 2023/24 MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15th May 2024

Governors present at the meeting held on 8th July 2024 approved these minutes as a true and accurate record, and signed on Governor Hub electronically

PRESENT

John Edgar, Trustee and Chair (JE)	Stuart Thomson (ST), Co-opted Governor
Samantha McMahon (SM), Associate Governor	Michelle Garrett (MG), Staff Governor
Tetyana Bennett (TB), Parent Governor	Paul Harrington (PH), Parent Governor
Richard Benjamin (RB), Associate Governor	Trevor North (TN), Headteacher
Sean Johnson (SJ), Associate Governor and Deputy Headteacher	

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Lacey, Governance Professional	
-------------------------------------	--

Yellow highlighted text demonstrates challenge / questions

PART A – PUBLIC MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 **Welcome:** JE welcomed all parties to the meeting.
- 1.2 **Apologies:** Apologies were received and accepted from Berenice Pretlove.
- 1.3 **Quorum:** The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 JE gave all parties the opportunity to declare any additional declarations of interest against the agenda to which none were declared.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

- 3.1 **Approval of Minutes:** Governors approved the minutes presented as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting that took place on the 13th March 2024.

ACTION: AL to mark minutes as signed on Governor Hub and arrange for publication

- 3.2 **Actions Outstanding from 31st January 2024** – refer to actions table. Key discussions are noted below:

- 3.2.1 Governor attendance at PP Review meeting: TN to inform MG of the date for the next review meeting which she will attend.

ACTION: TN to liaise with MG

- 3.2.3 Commercial Pool: TN informed governors that following investigation, there was no value in establishing a charitable company to commercially operate the school pool. In addition, there had been discussions with an interested party for the commercial lease of the pool but due to safeguarding and staffing issues, the matter was on hold.

RB commented that there were different tax and VAT implications for Academies compared to Council operated leisure facilities that operate as charitable companies.

TN asked governors for their views on the safeguarding concerns, which included how visitors to the pool would access the site. JE suggested that TN discuss the matter with the Trust Estates Manager (NM) to carry out a risk assessment.

ACTION: TN to liaise with NM

4. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS – there was no other urgent business not covered on the agenda.

5. SCHOOL STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.1 Headteacher's Report – TN provided an overview of his report highlighting key matters and invited governors to raise questions.

5.1.1 Number on Roll: JE asked if the September 2024 numbers had been confirmed? TN confirmed that they had been confirmed and were also healthy across all year groups.

5.1.2 Budget monitoring and finance: These are recorded under Item 6 Finance.

5.1.3 Contextual indicators: JE asked if all SEND pupils had now been identified? TN could not confirm that they had and more were being added for whom additional HNF was being secured. TN added that not only was the challenge to identify all of the SEND pupils but then to ensure the quality of Teaching & Learning and adaptations to the curriculum were appropriate for each child, which was developing well now that systems are in place but work is still needed to be excellent for all.

JE asked if schools still needed to fund the first £6k per pupil and if there had been a reduction in those with an EHCP? TN confirmed schools were expected to fund the first £6k and the HNF allocation was specific to each child based on need. It was still unclear what the LA with SEND funding going forward. SM added that there is an increase in those pupils with SEND but capacity in special schools was not keeping up resulting in an increase in SEND pupils in mainstream schools.

5.1.4 Attendance: TN informed governors that overall figures were above the national average but Yr6 attendance has not been as good as he would have liked. SM asked what Yr6 attendance had been like during SATS? TN said it had been very good.

5.1.5 Site Matters:

- Site Manager - TN informed governors that there continued to be challenges in recruiting to the vacant Site Manager position. TB asked what was the Trust view of the situation? JE said that the Trust had recently appointed an Estate Manager who has been tasked to review how the sites are managed and if it could be done differently. However, the Academy Insurers were about to carry out an audit of the Trust, which was his immediate focus of attention. RB asked what was the Estate Manager's role? JE said that in addition to the review, the Estate Manager would be carrying out the H&S walks, and looking at all three schools which have different issues and challenges.

TN added that he felt the Site Manager role did not pay enough and there is a real risk of not having a person in role or continuing to pay costly agency fees for the current arrangement. It was noted that there had been very few applicants to the Site Manager role at StKaths who had promoted internally. SM asked what was the grade for the role? TN said that he had managed to advertise at one level above the benchmark but there was a need for equity and also to save money.

RB said that he had looked at the job description and skills requirement thinking that it seemed a lot for the salary being offered.

TN asked that HT's should be involved in any discussions regarding proposals for future site management arrangements.

- H&S – TN informed governors of an accident where a pupil had broken their arm when using the playground climbing apparatus. When making enquiries into the incident, TN found that there was no risk assessment for the use of the equipment. JE suggested that TN liaise with the Estates Manager who would help write one.

ACTION: TN to liaise with NM to write a risk assessment for the use of the climbing frame.

- CIF Bids – TN informed governors that neither of the CIF bids had been successful. It would cost £10-15k to deal with the windows most in need of replacement but the Trust were advising they wait for another year and see if the December 2024 application would be successful.
- SEND project -TN advised governors that the works had been put out to tender but would need to be scaled back to keep within budget. There was a meeting next week to agree the work which will need Trustee approval. TN added that the contractor has agreed to carry out some work free of charge as part of their 'social contribution'. The work is planned to be carried out over the summer holiday.

5.1.6 Priority 1 Teaching & Learning: See CONFIDENTIAL minutes

JE asked if governor(s) were attending PP meeting? MG confirmed that she was planning to attend Yr 1 PP meeting.

See CONFIDENTIAL minutes

5.1.7 Priority 2 Curriculum Development: JE asked what was being done to ensure teachers deliver the curriculum in a fun and engaging way? What changes are they making to enact the curriculum? SJ the challenge is to get teaching staff to be flexible in the way they deliver the curriculum and also, how do you make some elements of the curriculum fun e.g. Yr 6 are studying population.

JE asked if all subjects are being taught well? SJ replied saying that across the board there are lessons and topics sessions being delivered well, that there are pockets of good teaching across the school but that it is not subject specific.

TN added that the challenge in developing the curriculum is assessing those topics that are not so important and / or picking those up in other areas e.g. citizenship, and in his view the trust had adopted a secondary model of education and lost sight of what is required for primary school pupils i.e. making learning fun and interactive.

JE asked if it was knowledge rich and sequenced curriculum? Should some topics be excluded or taught in a different way? TN replied 'yes, it should especially where covered elsewhere', and that as an academy we are able to do things differently but it is a case of what and how. SJ added that a challenge was to better align the different parts of the curriculum e.g. Art / DT produce something that is related to learning in another subject such as make a clay model of a volcano so skills are still taught but the output is in context with other learning.

TN commented that teachers did not feel they were able to adapt the curriculum as it had been prescribed by the Trust, which it had out of necessity but that teachers were able enact the delivery in any way they want. Teachers needed support from leadership to feel able to change the way they deliver the curriculum. MG asked if the other schools in the Trust faced the same challenge? TN said that they did not as were happy with the curriculum as written whereas he felt the approach needed to be different.

5.1.8 Priority 3 Access to the Curriculum: JE referred to the Ofsted feedback asking how the link with parents of SEND pupils was working, and are meetings well attended? TN said arrangements are working well where parents want to engage and the meetings were proving to be worthwhile.

TN informed governors of the plan not to run interventions in T6 due to limited TA resources – there are 20 FTE TA's in total so not even 1 per class to support teachers, never mind SEND / 1-2-1 etc. The focus will be to provide EHCP support. In T2 there will be a review of the interventions and determine what are actually needed and those will be delivered going forward. RB as how will the impact be measured? SJ said that if the work is done in class and organised well it should deliver improvement that can be measured.

See CONFIDENTIAL minutes

5.1.9 Teaching & Learning: See CONFIDENTIAL minutes

5.1.10 Data & Attainment: TN provided governors with an update on the Spring pupil attainment data. They key points were:

- See CONFIDENTIAL minutes
- See CONFIDENTIAL minutes

- It was agreed that as the Summer data would not be available until 9th July that it would be reported in T1 24/25 and linked to the School Development Plan.

ACTION: Summer attainment data to be reported in T1.

5.2 Strategic Document: – TN provided an overview of his report highlighting key matters and invited governors to raise questions.

5.2.1 TN informed governors that IT / digital strategy was ‘red’ as apart from increasing the number of i-pads not much had been done.

5.2.2 See *CONFIDENTIAL minutes*

5.3 School Policies and documents:

There were no school policies due for review.

6. FINANCE

6.1 March 2024 monitoring: TN provided governors with a summary of the March 2024 monitoring report. Overall, there are no real issues regarding the current 2023/24 budget, with the current forecast out-turn of £586k compared to £591k in February 2024.

The key point to note was that there were significant agency costs in March covering both teacher absence and the site manager vacancy.

6.3 Future funding allocation and budgets:

TN informed governors that the draft 2024/25 budget had forecast in-year deficits but which remained over the 4% reserves target. Key points to note were:

- Government (GAG) funding did not cover the school operating costs, and therefore the self-generated income from lettings including the pool hire was essential.
- Staff costs currently represent 75% of income received, compared to the 80% target, which increased in subsequent years to 84%. This clearly shows costs are increasing greater than ESFA funding.

RB asked if the amount the school received for each pupil was falling? TN said that it was not but salary costs are increasing more than the funding received.

TN suggested that one approach might be to invest the ‘above target’ reserves to improve the teaching and learning environment for the children, and see what the future holds for the situation is likely to change especially if there is a change in government. **JE questioned whether it would be appropriate to spend reserves and given the forecast, there is a justified need to hold the higher level as there needs to be a balancing act.** SM added that deficit budgets and reducing levels of reserves is the real picture across many trusts and schools. TN concluded that he does not have any concerns with the school budget.

JE added that the change in leadership structure to have two DHT’s had been funding by savings so had minimal impact on the budget.

Governors discussed the HO recharge / top slice in the budget. JE said that the Trust established a level of reserves to provide an equity fund that schools could bid for to pay for one-off projects. TN suggested that there were barriers to schools accessing the fund and that he would prefer the money to be left with the schools and to reduce the amount top-sliced from their budget. JE suggested that HT’s should discuss with MC (CEO).

ACTION: TN to raise the matter of HO top-slicing and the equity fund with MC (CEO)

7. SAFEGUARDING AND ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

7.1 LADO referrals: TN informed governors that he had reason to seek advice from LADO in reference to an incident that occurred outside of the school, and that he had done so as a pre-emptive measure. LADO confirmed that no action was needed. Governors noted the action and that the matter was concluded.

8. ANY OTHER SCHOOL MATTERS

8.1 TB mentioned that during a recent PTA meeting they discussed whether the trust had and if not, would benefit from having a dedicated fundraising role similar to FAW. JE said that the Trust had discussed the possibility of such a role at the last F&A meeting and raised a concern whether it would be cost effective.

TB said that the PTA felt there were a number of missed opportunities for external funding and grants. AL commented that whilst there are such opportunities they favoured schools such as FAW and those with high percentages of FSM pupils.

ACTION: JE agreed to raise the matter of a trust fund raiser with trustees.

9. GOVERNANCE MATTERS INCLUDING MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 Governor monitoring arrangements for visits and reporting: JE reminded governors that the focus for T6 governor monitoring would be SEND emphasising the need to plan their visits well in advance of the LGB meeting ensuring reports are provided to AL by not later than the preceding Friday (28th June 2024). It was noted that most governors had already got dates in the diary.

ACTION: Governors to provide T6 monitoring reports to AL by not later than Friday 28th June 2024

9.2 Governance – LGB Membership: See *CONFIDENTIAL minutes*

10. TRUST MATTERS

10.1 LGB had nothing to feedback to Trustees in relation to the Board minutes from 13th March 2024 .

10.2 Following on from discussions during the LGB meeting, it was agreed that JE would raise the following matters with Trustees:

- Site Manager / Estate Management
- Fund Raiser role
- Trust Reserves

ACTION: JE to raise at T5 Trust Board meeting.

10.3 See *CONFIDENTIAL minutes*

11. TRUST POLICIES

11.1 Governors noted the Trust policies that had been approved in T4. AL informed governors that staff policies such as Staff Discipline and Conduct were no longer published on the trust / school websites and that they would need to ask for such should they wish to review. Staff had access to such via internal document sharing.

11.2 Governors noted the new Risk Register, which JE explained although was still ‘work in progress’ and that the Trust Risk Register would be more focused on strategic and major school risks, with schools having their own ‘operational’ risk registers that LGB would own and review. **RB suggested that the format should include a ‘direction of travel’ indicator.** JE said the new risk register would include such an indicator and, that it was intended to roll out in T1.

12. MEETING CLOSE

12.1 Confidentiality: JE reminded Governors that discussions at meetings are confidential and should remain so until minutes are published.

12.2 Governors confirmed that Items 5.1.6 (part), 5.1.8 (part), 5.1.9, 5.1.10 (part), 5.2.2, 9.2 and 10.3 would be recorded as confidential.

12.3. Next meeting dates: All to be held at Loose Primary School (staffroom) commencing at 1700 on:

- Wednesday 3rd July 2024

Governance calendar on Governor Hub

12.3. Meeting close: Meeting concluded at 1910 and JE thanked all attendees for their contribution to the meeting.