



LOOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE 2023/24 MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 8th JULY 2024

Governors present at the meeting held on 16th October 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
Berenice Pretlove (BP), Co-opted 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

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Lacey, Governance Professional	
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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 from Samantha McMahon (SM), and Sean Johnson (SJ). AL left the meeting at 1835 due to a prior commitment and TB minuted the remainder of the meeting.
- 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 15th May 2024.

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

- 3.2 **Actions Outstanding from 15th May 2024** – refer to actions table. Key discussions are noted below:

- 3.2.1 **Commercial Pool.** TN informed governors that there was no value in establishing a charitable company to commercially operate the school pool. In addition, there had been ongoing discussions with an interested party for the commercial lease of the pool but following further investigation, the other party decided that it was not a viable proposition. The matter is now closed.

- 3.2.2 **Safeguarding associated with pool hire.** TN had discussed his safeguarding concerns, which included how visitors to the pool would access the site with the Trust Estates Manager. Whilst current arrangements were considered OK, this was to be reviewed in T1.

ACTION: TN to liaise with NM and provide update in T1.

3.2.3 H&S and use of outdoor play equipment. TN informed governors that risk assessments and clear guidance for the use of the outdoor play equipment had been introduced, which included minimum height requirements for the monkey bars. Staff have been informed of the new guidelines, which is being periodically checked to ensure compliance.

ACTION: TN to ensure staff working in the HPS especially casual student staff are aware of the guidelines.

4. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

4.1 2024/25 Residential Trip: It was noted that governors needed to approve the proposals for the residential trip. JE would circulate the details for governors to approve by email, which would be ratified at T1 LGB.

ACTION: AL to note for T1 meeting.

5. SCHOOL STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.1 Headteacher's Report – TN provided a verbal update on key matters arising since his T5 written report, which focused on data, attendance including behaviour and general updates:

5.1.1 Data: Key points to note:

- Year R: were above national, 78% GLD, Boys 74% and Girls 81% noting that those with excellent attendance generally did better. TN added that one pupil attained 90%.
- Year 1: Phonics was 74%, which was 6% below. There will be a review of the outcome not least as concerns were raised but nothing was done in the way of providing interventions to address the gaps. For some pupils, an improvement by 1-2% would have resulted in achieving national, and therefore, the outcome would have been different. The challenge now is that the gaps have to be addressed in Year 2.

JE asked if the concerns were discussed at pupil progress (PP) meetings and if so, was not a member of SLT present? BP added, what is being done to ensure this does not happen again? TN confirmed the concerns were discussed at PP and SLT were present, which itself is an issue that has been addressed for 2024/25 with staffing changes. TN added that there is a need for Year R / Year 1 to carry out a joint review of the data and carry out joint moderation to ensure Year R assessments are not exaggerated and therefore resulting in a lower starting point for Year 1. For next year, Year 1 will have strong teachers and there will be better planning and resourcing.

RB asked when would governors receive pupil progress data? TN said that the data comes out too late and therefore, would be reported next term but going forward, he would hope to provide more timely data.

Year 1 attainments were reading 80%, writing 80% and maths 87% with combined of 73%.

- Year 2: Attainments were reading 78%, writing 52% and maths 56% with combined of 70%. TN said that based on teacher assessment, one particular class underperformed and the challenge for Year 3 is to make progress, which needs to be tracked. The good news is that 98% of pupils left KS1 with secure knowledge of phonics.
- Year 3: Attainments were reading 69%, writing 66% and maths 72% with combined of 51%. TN informed governors that there was a need to focus on two of the three classes.
- Year 4: Attainments were reading 72%, writing 55% and maths 68% with combined of 45%. TN said that one class stood out due to having high levels of SEND, adding that to achieve national by Year 6 would require a 10% uplift in both Years 5 and 6.
- Year 5: Attainments were reading 81%, writing 64% and maths 69% with combined of 57%.
- Year 6: At the time of the meeting SATS data was not available.

TN summarised saying the data shows that writing was an issue, maths presents a key challenge and phonics is also a concern.

JE asked about the progress measures? TN said that progress measures for the cohorts are on track but attainment is low due to the starting point, and tracking year on year progress includes a risk of building in under-achievement.

JE asked if the outcomes stem from EYS overstating pupil outcomes at the end of Year R and therefore, Years 1 and 2 have to fill in the gaps? TN said that is one reason for introducing the Year R / 1 cross moderation and also for end of KS1 and the move to Year 3. In addition, a significant factor is that the Trust has changed assessment packages – NFER / White Rose and therefore, this could have produced inconsistent results.

TN added that there are some gaps in SEND and that progress data is now being tracked better. This will be reported to T1 LGB and will show how SEND pupils are meeting their personal targets.

ACTION: LGB to receive progress data for SEND pupils.

BP raised the action arising from the T6 ECC meeting which asked LGB representatives ‘to ascertain what is happening in their respective schools regarding focus groups, and also interventions post the latest assessments?’ TN said that the problem with data is that it becomes ‘the stick’ and is a measure of where we are at a point in time. Schools need to come away from data and focus on progress supporting such through interventions. However, TA’s are stretched and interventions are not being done well. The aim should be on increasing quality first teaching, which is why there are no interventions planned for T6 or T1, and in T2 it will be targeted.

PH asked why are the schools generally weaker in writing? TN advised that this because there was nothing in place, which is why the writing subject leads have developed a detailed and structured curriculum for implementation in T1.

5.1.2 Attendance: TN informed governors that overall attendance figures (95.3%) were above the national average (94%). However, unauthorised and persistent absence continues to present a challenge particularly in Year 6 and also 3/4 pupils in KS1.

JE asked why has persistent absence has increased? TN said that due to increased working from home post Covid, parents found it easier to keep children off school particularly older pupils. MG added that this was the case especially those in Years 5 and 6.

BP asked if there were any repercussions for unauthorised absence? JE commented that fines are cheaper than the savings from taking children out of school for holidays. PH added that it is seen to be socially acceptable to take children out of school for holidays.

BP asked how pupils felt about being persistently late for school? MG said it was a mix as some children are always late due to chaotic lives and it becomes a norm whereas others did not like being late to school.

TN said that more needs to be done to increase engagement with parents but regards needs to had to the recently published DFE attendance document, which was why the Attendance Policy was being reviewed for September 2024. The focus should be on the persistent absences rather than unauthorised holiday absence as these have a greater impact on the teaching and learning. Those with persistent absence generally achieve below national.

TB asked what happens in regards to those pupils whose attended is poor due to a genuine illness? TN said that discretion is applied and adjustments made to support such pupils.

BP asked if there were rewards for those with good attendance? TN said not anymore as it used to disadvantage those with a genuine illness or it was due to parental reasons.

5.1.3 Behaviour: TN advised governors that there were no concerns and behaviour was generally good, and support was provided for those that struggle. *See Confidential Minutes*

TN mentioned that a pupil was joining Year 6 in September as part of the ‘Fair Access’ scheme. It was felt that LPS could provide a suitable setting. JE commented that a change in environment can sometimes make a big difference.

5.1.4 Complaints: TN informed governors that there had been three complaints:

- SEND where following investigation it was acknowledged that the school could have dealt with the initial matter with greater understanding and compassion.
- Bullying, which had been resolved but elements of the complaint were upheld as the school could have done things differently.
- *See Confidential Minutes*

ACTION: TN to review and confirm whether any are likely to be taken further and therefore require a Governor panel meeting.

JE asked PH if due to his experience and awareness, he would review the process in relation to SEND and suggest any improvements that could be made. PH agreed to look at the process and report to LGB.

ACTION: PH to review complaints process in relation to SEND pupils.

5.1.5 General updates:

- **Site Matters:** TN informed governors that he had appointed a new site manager who was both experienced and local, and was already demonstrating an understanding of things and would not need micromanaging.
- **Staffing:** TN informed governors that he had a full complement of TA's for next academic year, which included two pastoral support staff, one for KS1 and another for KS2. There were two vacancies, one being a 1-2-1 support for a pupil with an EHCP and the Extended Services Manager post, which had attracted no interest.

5.2 Strategic Document: TN provided an update on the three priorities:

- Priority 1 - Teaching & Learning
- Priority 2 - Curriculum Development
- Priority 3 - Access to the Curriculum

TN informed governors that the original aims and objectives had been met, but that the big disappointment was the low attainment data.

- Lesson planning has been reviewed, and where alignment found such as for science and ICT, there has been joined up teaching across the curriculum, to save some lesson time.
- Forrest School had been established for September 2025, and the new DHT was level 3 trained.
- Teacher assessment improvements to ensure checking for pupils understanding, and reducing barriers to tracking pupil progress.
- Improving access to the curriculum for those with additional needs and ensuring there is a good foundation to progress

5.3 SIP Model for 2024/25. TN informed governors that the draft SIP for next academic year was almost complete. He had shared a draft with the DHT's for comment, which included a proposal to remove 'ethic of excellence' and replace with a 'care' statement retaining the line 'potential is limitless'. For 2024/25 TN was not proposing to set projects but to focus on delivery of the strategic plan. Once finalised, TN will share with JE for comment and then the rest of LGB before the end of T6.

ACTION: TN to share draft SIP 2024/25 with governors before the end of T6.

JE commented that he understood the reasoning for removing the 'ethic of excellence', and asked if TN was also reviewing the school values? TN said that the school values had been embedded for quite a while so he was not considering to change such but had questioned such and was going to include an explanation as to what each meant.

JE asked if the school was led by its values? TN said that the values were strong, the challenge is how you model them. BP added that values lead an organisation, and help clarify for staff what is expected of them. TN agreed adding that they are currently open to interpretation and the reason for him adding an explanation to clarify such.

5.4 School SEND Project. TN informed governors that following a site meeting with the contractors the project should be completed over the summer holiday, which included: installation of bollards and fencing and refurbishment of KS2 first aid room and disabled toilet.

5.5 School Policies and documents:

There were no school policies due for review.

TN informed governors that the PE & Sports Premium report was being written for which the Trust had set a deadline of 17th July for review prior to publication by the deadline of 31st July 2024.

ACTION: TN to ensure PE & Sports Premium report is published by the required deadline.

AL informed governors that Trustees were considering a revised School Trips and Visits Policy at their T6 meeting on Wednesday 10th July, which would be effective from the start of T1.

TN informed governors that he was updating the school behaviour policy for review in T1. JE advised that if the amendments were to take effect from T1 then TN should circulate to governors for approval by email.

ACTION: TN to circulate amended policy to governors for approval.

6. FINANCE

6.1 May 2024 monitoring and 2024/25 Budget: JE provided an update as part of his governor monitoring report – see Item 9.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

7.1 LADO referrals: TN informed governors that there had been no issues to report since the last LGB meeting.

7.2 See *Confidential Minutes*

8. ANY OTHER SCHOOL MATTERS

8.1 TN expressed his frustration with the current policy for signing off school residentials and trips where a deposit was required before income had been received from parents. JE advised that he had discussed the matter with the Trust who had explained that the process is due to both the financial risk of making a payment before income had been received, and the deposit exceeded HT's financial authority. JE added that HT's financial authority needs to be reviewed as this was not uplifted when the Trust Leader's was increased to reflect price inflation.

9. GOVERNOR MONITORING

9.1 H&S – Governors were informed that a H&S walk had been completed with the Trust Estates Manager in T5 and that this would be re-visited with the newly appointed Site Manager. RB said that there should be a Governor with a H&S remit and that he was happy to attend the next site walk.

ACTION: TN to inform RB of date of the next H&S site walk.

9.2 Finance – JE provided an update to governors on both the May 2024 management accounts and draft 2024/25 budget:

- May Management Accounts. There are no major issues as the current year out-turn is forecast to be slightly better than expected. There is the ongoing review of photocopying costs as these are considered excessive. MG commented that photocopying of tests is costly both photocopying and office time.
- 2024/25 Draft Budget. JE informed governors that the draft budget had been reviewed and discussed at great length and whilst there are in-year deficits for each of the three years, reserve balances remained positive.

RB asked if the amount budget for future agency staff was realistic given the current year spend? TN that there was a difference between short and long term agency costs, and a significant reason for the current year spend was due to long term staff absence. Going forward, one of the SIP objectives is to reduce the reliance of agency supply. This will be supported by having two DHT's who have no teaching commitment and who can cover classes resulting in agency staff only being used as a last resort.

RB asked if there was any ongoing long-term staff absence? TN said not from September 2024.

JE said that a lot of hard work had gone into preparing the budget to ensure there was no massive overspend. It did highlight how much the school relies on self-generated income, which includes PTA support. TB said that the PTA had contributed over £20k during the last two years - £6k in 2022/23 and £5k in 2023/24. JE asked TB to thank the PTA for their ongoing support.

JE informed governors that there was likely to be a need to carry out repairs and improvements to the school swimming pool. TN added that it was hoped there would be opportunities for external investment such as 'crowd funding' due to the community use of the pool. AL mentioned that StKaths had also been looking at external funding to help with the refurbishment of their pool but had missed the deadline.

ACTION: TN to liaise with RL as to what funding opportunities St Kath's looked into.

MG suggested that it might be an idea to reach out to other local community groups to explore possible crowd funding for the swimming pool repairs and suggested the local church. JE asked if MG would explore such in liaison with staff who are members of the local church.

ACTION: MG to explore opportunities for crowd funding.

TB asked if there was any feedback on a previous suggestion for the Trust to consider appointing a fund raiser? JE said that this had been raised with Trustees but presently considered not viable and would be linked to the growth of the trust.

9.3 L&M SEND review – JE fed back to governors following his monitoring visit to look at leadership and management of SEND.

JE said he was amazed to find that 79 of the 647 children on roll were on the SEND register, and that there were another 50 who staff were keeping under review. The 'watch list' represented those pupils who might be in transition of either moving off the formal SEND list or those who might be included on the register.

Transition from nurseries into EYS had changed and was now more structured, and the SENCO (JB) had clear processes and procedures in place to facilitate supported moves and also obtaining EHCP's including associated HNF. The increased HNF, which was child specific allowed for increased support in class such as 1-2-1 TA's and interventions that were more structured and specific to their needs.

See Confidential Minutes

It was noted that whilst SEND children do not generally attain the same as non-SEND, it is important that they make good progress and achieve their personal targets. TN added that one of the areas for improvement is increased and improved communication with parents of SEND pupils to inform how they are doing.

MG suggested that JB (SENCO) be invited to a LGB meeting to provide an overview and explain some of the challenges she faced. *See Confidential Minutes.* JE agreed in that he and TN had not pushed for teachers to attend LGB but going forward, they should be offered the opportunity to explain their subject and progress.

JE asked what was the focus of Ofsted in relation to SEND? TN said that Ofsted would seek evidence that SEND pupils are keeping up with the curriculum and achieving personal targets, and where they were not attaining specific goals what interventions were in place. The aim is for children to complete the tasks in class.

AL left the meeting and TB clerked the remainder of the meeting.

9.4 Quality of Writing – MG provided governors with a summary of her monitoring report, which was circulated at the meeting.

ACTION: MG to provide AL with electronic copy for uploading to Governor Hub

MG commented on the positive impact that the SENCO is having across the school, saying that it would be good to do a follow up visit in the new academic year to follow up on the 'Steps to Success' viewed back in April 2024.

MG informed governors that whilst pupils were provided with verbal feedback on their work, there appeared to be no teacher marking, and asked the question how teacher's know pupils are progressing? JE expressed a view that in his opinion, it was not necessary for all work to be marked but only where there was a need to do so. TN added that the Trust approach was for a 'light touch' approach, and it was not something that had to be done. Teachers provided verbal feedback at the end of lessons, and that marking for the sake of marking adds little value.

MG said that SEND pupils are not making the same levels of progress as non-SEND, and asked what needs to be put in place to ensure teachers are tracking their progress? TN suggested that ensuring the quality of conversation with parents of SEND pupils to explain progress is the way forward.

PH commented that for SEND pupils, in addition to the teachers and SENCO, others are there to provide support and guidance to both pupils and parents such as class TA's and 1-2-1 support.

10. LGB GOVERNANCE MATTERS

10.1 LGB Membership: Governors noted that BP would be leaving the LGB at the end of August, and thanked her for all the support she had provided. Governors recommended to Trustees that RB, an Associated Governor should be appointed to the vacant co-opted position.

It was also JE's last LGB meeting as standing down as CoG – governors thanked JE for his support and understanding. Governors recommended to Trustees that ST should be appointed CoG from T1.

ACTION: JE to refer the LGB recommendations for appointments to the LGB to the Trust Board.

11. TRUST MATTERS

11.1 Trust Board minutes from 22nd May 2024 .

- LGB noted that there should be a formal estate management plan by the end of 2024.

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

- LGB recommendations for appointments to CoG and vacant co-opted position

11.3 Any further feedback from the ECC Reps

- MG would replace BP as the LGB representative at ECG but the recommendation is for two nominees to ensure there is representation at meetings.

ACTION: LGB to nominate a second ECG representative.

12. TRUST POLICIES & GOVERNANCE CALENDAR

12.1 Governors noted the Trust policies that had been approved in T5.

12.2 LGB noted the draft governance calendar, which was subject to confirmation by the Trust Board.

13. MEETING CLOSE

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

13.2 Governors confirmed that Items 5.1.3 (part), 5.1.4 (part), 7.2 and 9.3 (part) would be recorded as confidential. (to be recorded once draft minutes cleared)

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

- Wednesday 16th October 2024
- Wednesday 4th December 2024
- Wednesday 5th February 2025
- Wednesday 19th March 2025
- Wednesday 14th May 2025
- Wednesday 9th July 2025

Governance calendar on Governor Hub

13.3. Meeting close: Meeting concluded and JE thanked all attendees for their contribution to the meeting, and TB for minuting the last part of the meeting.