



St Mary's Church of England School, Truro

Full Governing Board

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

Minutes (Spring Term 1)

GOVERNORS PRESENT	
NAME	ROLE
Mr Nigel Machin	Chair
Mrs Nicola Bray	Headteacher
Mr Bill Robinson	Governor
Mrs Mary Ann Trethewey	Governor
Mrs Louise Stevenson	Governor
Mr Simon Treganowan	Governor

OTHER ATTENDEES PRESENT	
NAME	ROLE
Mrs Laura Calcraft	Clerk

APOLOGIES	
NAME	ROLE
Mrs Nichola Insa-James	Governor
Mrs Tressa Julyan	Governor

COLOUR CODE	
<b>BLUE</b>	Governor Challenge Question
<b>GREEN</b>	Governor Comment
<b>RED</b>	Action

<b>ACTION WORKSHEET</b>				
<b>NO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTOR</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Spring Term 1	17. Governor Visits for next term	Circulate dates for monitoring visits	Mrs Bray	Pending
Spring Term 1	16. Governor Impact Document	<p><b>Add the following to the Governor Impact Document:</b></p> <p><b>Reading overview</b></p> <p><b>Site Security – vehicular access gate completion</b></p> <p><b>School hours and subsequent letter to parents</b></p> <p><b>Alternative provision and safeguarding arrangements.</b></p>	Mrs Stevenson	Pending
Spring Term 1	15. Academisation	Speak to Penair Partnership Headteachers and will look at some dates for a MAT meeting.	Mrs Bray	Pending
Spring Term 1	15. Academisation	Group to go away and think of questions	All Governors	Pending
Spring Term 1	14. Monitor School Improvement Plan	Circulate English Action Plan	Mrs Stevenson	Pending

Spring Term 1	9. Attendance	Feedback after meeting with new EWO	Mrs Stevenson	Pending
Spring Term 1	5. Governor Training	Contact Governor Services about the possibility of Health and Safety training for governors.	Mrs Calcraft	Pending
Spring Term 1	5. Governor Training	Research into governor training on school exclusions	Mrs Bray	Pending
Autumn Term 2	12. Governor Impact Document	Add discussed impact items	Mrs Stevenson	Complete
Autumn Term 2	11. Staff Wellbeing	Add question noted in this section to staff survey	Mrs Stevenson	Pending
Autumn Term 2	9. Attendance	Circulate monitoring report template	Clerk	Complete
Autumn Term 2	9. Attendance	Calculate data trend of holidays versus non-holidays	Mrs Stevenson	Pending
Autumn Term 2	8. Headteacher's Report	Distribute link to Maths Action Plan	Clerk	Complete
Autumn Term 2	8. Headteacher's Report	Feedback SIP deep dive in maths	Mrs Bray	Complete
Autumn Term 2	7. Health and Safety	Request a site visit	Mrs Bray	Complete
Autumn Term 2	5. Policies	Add vision to the policy	Mrs Stevenson	Complete
Autumn Term 1	15. Governor Training	Continue induction training for new governors	Clerk	Pending

Summer Term 2	11. Safeguarding	Look into getting a minibus	Mrs Bray	Complete
Summer Term 1	7. Ofsted Update	New induction paperwork – circulate via email	Mrs Stevenson	Complete
Spring Term 1	10. Staff Wellbeing	Governors to see questions prior to staff survey being circulated	Mrs Stevenson	Pending

## Part 1

**1) Apologies:** Mrs Tressa Julyan and Mrs Nichola Insa-James

**2) Interests in matters to be considered at the meeting**

No additional interests were declared at the meeting.

**3) Minutes of the last meeting**

**I) Matters Arising:** Mrs Bray raised the issue of the change to school hours following the White Paper being put on hold. Having taken advice, she has made the decision to not make any changes prior to September at which point the alterations will be revisited. This was unanimously agreed by all Governors. Parents will be notified.

Recruitment and retention were discussed. Further to the last meeting, the school advertised for a teaching assistant for the Year 6 class. There was only one application which we weren't able to progress with due to safeguarding concerns. The class currently has an amazing agency teaching assistant who has committed until March. She loves working in the school and will be checking if she can continue after this point. Miss Shelton's maternity leave was brought forward by a week and Victoria McNamara will be in post from next week in EYFS. The school have employed a part-funded Academic Mentor through the Government's National Tutoring Programme as part of the Covid Recovery Plan. She is currently conducting interventions throughout the school. Her standard wage is quite low, so the school offered to increase working hours to help this. The Academic Mentor has requested a review of the wage, as she is a qualified teacher. Mrs Bray agreed to bring the request to the Governing Board. It is a tricky situation as it is a spot salary and there are no spine points. This is the wage as advertised by the agency who recruit the Academic Mentors. The Governors discussed all aspects of this query. It was agreed that as this was a temporary position until July, and that it is very important that the children receive this vital tuition, that the wage would be brought up to the bottom of a Grade 2 which is equivalent to that of a starting HLTA. It was agreed that the additional money would be transferred from the Governor Private Fund to the main school budget.

Mrs Bray updated the group on the School Improvement partner visit in November. The report was circulated to the group. Mrs Bray said that the team was given quite a grilling. The partner was satisfied

with the information the team gave him. He was also impressed during his learning walk. He reported that the attitudes and engagement of the pupils were high. Children were less confident with British values; therefore, the team have since done a lot of work on this.

**II) Approval:** The previous minutes were unanimously agreed and ratified.

#### **4) Committee and Working Groups:**

**I) Finance and Personnel/Premises:** Mr Treganowan fed back to the group. He said that the meeting was very detailed. There are currently lots of staffing issues which will impact on the final budget. The school is a victim of its own success, as lots of staff are at the top of their band. Pay rises were agreed. The school is still in a healthy financial position, but there will be some deficits.

There are two further Education Healthcare Plans going to panel shortly, so we should hear about the additional funding this will bring. One avenue that the school is looking at is funding for pastoral support plans.

**II) Curriculum and Policies:** The Behaviour Principles Written Statement was circulated prior to the meeting. It was unanimously agreed.

**5) Governor Training:** Mr Treganowan has recently completed a 1:1 training session with Diocese Education Lead, Claire Kendle. He reported that it was very comprehensive. He will also be taking part in GOV1 training next week. He said that he feels very supported.

Mrs Trethewey took part in online training sessions regarding dealing with complaints and the academisation process. She found them informative and reassuring.

**Mrs Bray said that her team have done some research into governor training on school exclusions and will let the governors know when that becomes available.**

**Mrs Calcraft to contact Governor Services about the possibility of Health and Safety training for governors.**

The group was reminded that there are a lot of good training sessions available on The Key for Governors.

**6) Health and Safety:** Following ANOC approval, the rear vehicular access gate will be made more secure and the work will start on this next week. It has been an additional cost but is vital for safeguarding.

**7) Safeguarding:** Mrs Bray reported that the school currently has three pupils on a reduced timetable due to Special Educational Needs. They are attending Alternative Provisions. Prior to this provision starting, a quality assurance checklist has been designed which includes conducting site visits, signing off of safeguarding procedures and designing action plans for the providers. There are a lot of risk assessments in place. **A Governor asked how these placements are being funded?** Mrs Bray said that the school has to fund it but there may be some financial help for this. **A Governor asked how the pupils get there?** They are always accompanied by their parent. The selected Alternative Provisions are recognised by behavioural specialists, and it is wonderful to see the pupils' successes.

**8) Visiting Governor Reports:** We had a visit from Katie Fitzsimmons from the Diocese to go through the possible academisation process which will be discussed later in these minutes.

Visits for next time have been merged and Mrs Bray will circulate them.

Mr Machin wanted to say how excellent the Key Stage 1 nativity production was, and it was enjoyed by all.

**9) Attendance:** Mrs Stevenson has not yet managed to complete the calculations discussed at the last meeting but would like to present them as a broader report next meeting.

Attendance is not as good as we want it to be. Mrs Stevenson noted that she found it was difficult for her to be building pastoral relationships with families and then be strict about attendance. The Education Welfare Officer allocated to the school has left, so the school have investigated a private company to work with. They will be running attendance clinics and will give us an air of authority by it being an external person. This intervention is not cheap, but the budget is there to support the school, and this is something we need to focus on. **The first meeting is on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February and Mrs Stevenson will feed back at the next board meeting.**

**10) Staff Wellbeing:** A survey has been looked into and staff have been consulted with. Some staff have expressed an interest in a service offered by TES. Teaching staff are reporting that their wellbeing is good apart from some small items that can be easily fixed. Teaching assistants requested a platform where their voices could be heard and so a weekly meeting has been put into place. It was raised that more support was needed during lunch break, and so the Senior Leadership Team now assist on a rotating basis. SEN teaching assistants had concerns about knowing who was covering what, therefore a live document has been created in order for them to have input in cover arrangements. **A Governor asked if there are any long-term absences?** No.

**11) Consider the impact of cost-of-living crisis:** Mrs Bray reported that the school have seen an increase in food voucher requests.

At Christmas, the school received a generous donation of £500 from a member of the local business community to provide food for struggling families at Christmas. We purchased a hamper for each child in receipt of Free School Meals which included some staple food items as well as a few Christmas treats.

We wrote an article in the school newsletter of all the support that people can access in times of hardship. We also purchased a uniform donation bin that is sited in the entrance foyer. The School Council will then organise a giveaway afternoon when the donation bin is full.

**A Governor asked if the school utility bills have risen?** Yes. we received an email from the PFI contract. The Council were subsidising schools by £177,000 but they can no longer do this. There is a schools team, led by the Headteacher at Richard Lander School, who are investigating this and it has been referred to the legal team.

**12) SATS Plans:** The SATs this year will take place on the week commencing the 8<sup>th</sup> May. There has been a slight alteration as the King's Coronation bank holiday will now fall on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May, meaning that the tests will start a day later than originally planned.

**13) Monitor Education Recovery Plan:** An update on Year 6 progress was circulated to the group. Mrs Bray is optimistic that we are heading in the right direction. They are working on behaviour for learning. Parental engagement with before and after school interventions has been tricky. Mrs Bray will give a further update at the next meeting.

**14) Monitor School Improvement Plan:** The Reading Team were unable to come to this rescheduled meeting. The English Action Plan follows the EEF template. The Team looked at what they needed to address. **Mrs Stevenson to circulate the English Action Plan.** The group discussed the reading overview. When the Governors conduct their visit, they can see everything in practice.

**15) Academisation:** Katie Fitzsimmons emailed after the meeting and recommended reducing the list of possible academy trusts by geographical areas and size to avoid mergers.

**A Governor asked if we have the option of not joining a Multi-Academy Trust?** Absolutely.

**A Governor asked what the difference is between majority and minority trusts?** It is to do with Foundation Governors.

Mrs Bray reported that there is still an appetite for a Truro-based MAT. She has currently had several meetings with MAT leads. We need to look at the benefits to children and staff. Being part of a MAT will give the school access to professionals such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists. This is not necessarily a problem for us as we can buy in these services. The Council offers are shrinking. MATs can also offer additional support for Ofsted inspections.

**But what can they offer the children?** Something Truro based could help with access to more sporting opportunities.

The Diocese have offered to pay for an external review. This is not a process to be rushed. Once we have joined a MAT, we are committed. At the moment, we are in a precarious position without a recent Ofsted inspection. Even though the White Paper is no longer in force, academisation is still something to consider.

**Can we be forced into academisation?** Forced academisation would only follow a double 'Requires Improvement' inspection.

**How do Headteachers feel about academisation?** It varies, but you do get a lot of leadership support.

**What do you see about the benefits for the children?** Quality of education through school improvement.

**What about autonomy?** At the moment, the Headteacher is accountable to the Governors and to Cornwall Council. The CEO would be a level above the Headteacher. Governors would no longer make financial decisions; it would change their accountability. It is likely that all staff would be tuped across for 3 years under existing conditions. It would also affect school reserves, so this would have to be investigated prior to negotiations.

**Mrs Bray asked the group to go away and think of questions, then a separate MAT meeting can be held.** This is such a big decision for our school. **A Governor commented that a Truro hub is an attractive offer.** We have to consider the corporate business model that this presents and where the

children come into this. **Mrs Bray to speak to Penair Partnership Headteachers on Wednesday and she will look at some dates for a MAT meeting.**

**16) Governor Impact Document: Mrs Stevenson to add the following to the Governor Impact Document:**

- **Reading overview**
- **Site Security – vehicular access gate completion**
- **School hours and subsequent letter to parents**
- **Alternative provision and safeguarding arrangements.**

**17) Governor visits for next term: Mrs Bray to circulate dates for next visits as discussed.**

**Part 2 Confidential Matters: Nil**