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Little Paxton Primary School Governing Body

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Monday 12th December 2016 at 6.30pm

Ellen Barrett	Co-opted Governor	Mike Kendall	Co-opted Governor
Maria Button	Co-opted Member	Oliver Poulain	Parent Governor
Penny Conway	Authority Governor	Gemma Manning	Parent Governor
Neil Donoghue	Co-opted Governor	Paul Warmington	Parent Governor
Richard Fairbairn	Parent Governor		
Diane Hawkes	Head Teacher	In attendance	
Graham Hiom	Co-opted Governor	Alison Gatward	Clerk to the Governors
David Jones	Parent Governor		

The Chair welcomed Paul Warmington to his first meeting following his election as a parent governor.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** All members in attendance
- 2. Declaration of interests:** No changes declared.
- 3. Minutes of the last meetings and Matters Arising (not on this agenda)**
 - Full Governing Body meeting (3.10.16) – Minutes approved by governors.
 - Site & Buildings (17.10.16) – Minutes approved by governors.
It was confirmed that the fire drill was carried out well within the time required.
 - Finance (17.10.16) – Minutes approved by governors.
It was confirmed that the register of interests has been completed.
The questions relating to the Schools Financial Regulations DH was asked to supply written responses ahead of the next finance committee meeting. **ACTION:** DH to respond
 - Personnel Committees (17.10.16) - Minutes approved by governors.
MK gave further clarification on the item regarding succession planning for different committees where it was explored whether it would be helpful to have vice chairs so that someone was in place to step up to the chairs role. Previously had a vice chair in finance but that particular individual did not want to take the chair when it became available. It was acknowledged that succession planning is important and should be considered by governors. Each committee to review and identify a succession plan or training requirements.
ACTION: Discuss succession planning at committee level
Responses to advert will be discussed later.
 - Curriculum Committee (21.11.16) - Minutes of the presentation and committee approved.
Typo to be amended - Social Capital rather than social capita

Post meeting update – Action complete.

It was clarified that the purpose of the middle leadership governor visits is to look at the management process behind the targets rather than individual performance reviewed. Governors requested a copy of the RAISEonline document.

Post meeting update – Action complete.

4. Head-teacher's Report

- Mid-day supervisor vacancy came about as one resigned due to relocation, one reduced to 3 days, another will go on maternity leave in February and a mid-day supervisor who left in the summer had not been replaced. There were four applicants interviewed and all four have been appointed as they all had something to offer. The hours have been split between them and two will be responsible for sharing the 1:1 SEN supervision.
- There were 10 applicants for the Teaching Assistant positions and three interviews were held on Friday. A lady who is qualified as a HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) has been appointed at TA level but would be happy to step up to HLTA should the need arise. She will support the child with hearing difficulties as she has personal experience which has enabled her to be empathetic and great for supporting this child. A current TA has been approached to increase their hours to cover Lucy Boulton's maternity leave. A second candidate was appointed on part time hours to cover the existing TA's part-time hours.
- DH advised she had been involved with CCS (The catering service) interviewing for a cook. The cook appointed in September was signed off sick after two week and there has been no head cook since. The second in command had stepped up as a temporary measure but is not interested in the position on a permanent basis. Two candidates were interviewed one was unsuitable and the chosen candidate did not accept the position. DH has been meeting with other catering providers and has seen four different companies in the last six months. DH and Mary Parnham will visit Alconbury school who use Blake and Edwards to find out more information about the background processes looking at the impact on office staff and the ease of paying for parents etc. Pabulum Catering was suggested by DJ and it was suggested that Roundhouse have also entered into a new catering agreement and they may have valuable insight to share.
- Although a cleaner has been signed off since the beginning of term there has been a consistent team covering who have done a good job. There is no news on the return date for the cleaner who is signed off.
- Cambridge Teaching Schools Network - Executive Head Leslie Birch, lead schools Histon and Impington. They have contacted school as they are looking to expand their teaching school network and would like us to join them as a teaching school partner. This would encompass the SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) work, the maths hub programme and the OFSTED work that the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) are already involved in. It should not impact the work load of the SLT as they are already at capacity and would not look to take on anything additional. However, it may give members of the Middle Leadership Team

opportunities for training, development and additional responsibilities. It would also give staff more opportunities to see how other schools work. Any projects or programmes would be offered to the school to opt to participate and there would be no obligation to take on offered projects. The application date for this was today so the application has been submitted to the Department of Education on the understanding that Little Paxton could be withdrawn from the application if governors did not agree. **QU:** The Network will get extra funding, how will that affect us? It wouldn't directly but they would pay for supply cover or support costs of training. Any services we provide would be paid for by them. **QU:** Whilst there are positives, there is the concern that it will bring pressure to do more, that staff will be overloaded and that staff be out of school more rather than teaching our children. The wellbeing of the staff and the continuity for the children need to be considered? If middle leaders or phase leaders are involved this would be new to them rather than increasing the demands on the SLT. Look to bring in the next tier of people. **QU:** What is the process when they have projects? Will they approach us with projects to do? Are you confident you will be able to say no? Yes and if not then will pull out. Would need to take it all on a case by case basis and review capacity before accepting the work. For other middle leaders to have development opportunities this is a good thing. Governors confirmed that they support this direction but would want to keep it under review and request DH to give ongoing feedback.

- **QU:** Pupil numbers, please can you clarify what is the trigger number before we get additional funding? Somewhere in the 300s DH would need to confirm. The financial advisor did indicate that school may not qualify as one payment has already been made. **ACTION:** DH to advise.
 - Writing moderation showed our expectations were pretty much in line with other schools and where we should be which is very encouraging. In some year groups our expectations were slightly higher, which is the better place to be than lower. Some schools have lower expectations across the board. A further moderation will be held here later in the year. Very much in line with where we should be.
 - **QU:** Nikki Colledge is here on secondment to support reading but if she is needed now will we need her next year? She is amazing at what she does we could easily fill her time full time. She is good at sharing her expertise and is training others including TAs. There is a PPP (Paxton and Priory Schools) project focused on spelling and she is key to this project. She will return to Priory next year if they have the required funding.
 - Pupil progress meetings will take place in January. Phase leaders for year groups will be given the responsibility to look at the data with their teams and report back to the SLT.
 - Four middle leaders have been enrolled into the National Training School for middle leaders. This starts in January and is a national qualification.
 - PPP projects across all subjects excluding core and a separate spelling project.
- 5. KiT visit** – this was scheduled for but was postponed by the SIA (School Improvement Advisor) due to illness. It has been re-arranged for 16th December

6. Meeting with Finance Adviser (8.11.16)

GH issued a summary of this meeting which can be found on the governors shared drive and in an appendix to these minutes. **QU:** This again raises the question as to whether what we are spending on the learning is appropriate for the number of children that we have? The benchmark sets us on a par with Bushmead and County. Each time governors ask the Head if she has everything she needs and she always says she does. There is nothing that is not being done due to financial constraints. Teachers were asked if there was anything they needed and since then a new set of atlases have been purchased. If anything they would like more TA hours rather than physical resources. The variance is also accounted for by the additional income from DH and others who are doing work outside the school which generates income which was not included in the budget. The concern relating to the predicted proportion of reserves being consumed has been alleviated as this level has decreased. It was observed that there is not as much wastage as other schools. Training and development costs are above the norm which was declared to be a good investment of money. Development of staff right across the board may be a reason behind our results. It was expected that Supply Teacher costs would be low which they were but the TA hours were not excessively more than the benchmark school.

7. Performance Management – The Heads objectives have been set and one performance management remains to be completed. The Head confirmed the individual concerned was comfortable with the delay.

8. National Database of Governors (Edubase) – All information has been loaded onto the website.

9. Academisation and joining or forming a multi academy trust –

The Government has removed the requirement for all schools to become academies from the Education Bill at this time. However, it would be wise to proactively continue to consider our requirements at this time whilst there is no pressure to move forward. PC circulated a new guidance document to governors ahead of the meeting. Governors need to ensure they are clear about the vision and ethos of the school. Currently we would be in a position in between step 1 (Horizon-scan: making time to discuss the changing landscape and the implications for your school at a full governing board meeting) and step 2 (Set up a working group of interested governors and staff to explore possibilities.) We are already working with other schools in a successful way and should continue to do so. Teaching School Network and PPP give us the contacts with other schools to see how they are working and decisions that they may make. **QU:** Have you had any further conversations with Priory Heads? They too are happy to pause at the moment. **QU:** What have other schools done regarding the approach from Longsands? No feedback has been received. Chesterton are pushing ahead with their plan to work with primary schools and continue to seek partners. Longsands have said that DLPT have a different ethos and culture to theirs and don't plan to explore that group of schools. PC had approached

the chair of governors at Great Paxton to offer support but has had no response. It was agreed that GH and OP to continue working on the grid so that it can be reviewed by all governors.

ACTION: GH and OP to propose grid for governors to review

10. Policy Review

- Equality Policy – This policy is a statutory requirement to ensure we are compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty and this should be published on the school website. The following review schedule is required; the policy every 3 years, objectives every 4 years and data each year. The RAISEonline gives relevant information for KS2 in the summary which shows all the ethnic groups, how many in the cohort etc, however there is no similar summary for KS1 but the information is available for each of the core subjects. It was agreed to use the information that is available from RAISEonline even if it is different format. **QU:** The Policy states “the Headteacher is to report annually on the effectiveness of the policy.” Is this done? This is a policy which fulfils the statutory requirements, but makes little difference to practice as Little Paxton School has always strived to be inclusive and to ensure equal access and opportunities to all. It is difficult to set SMART objectives that can measure effectiveness. **QU:** Does it help our children? We do need to ensure that these children are not over looked. **QU:** Are the objectives right? Should the equality review be rolled into the RAISE discussion. **QU:** Why have a policy which doesn't do anything? We have always tried to give equality to all children. **QU:** The policy says we will engage with parents and partner organisations? Do we do this? Would this be a question for parents evening? It was agreed that this policy and objectives require a more detailed review. It is approved in its current format in the meantime. It would also be useful to review how other schools handle the requirement. **ACTION:** GM to take away and work through the policy and objectives.
- Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policy - It was agreed that the policy should be wider than just children bullying children but it was not possible to incorporate this throughout the policy. It is better to be addressed with a couple of paragraphs inserted after the introduction. Bullying relating to staff is included in the staff discipline procedure or harassment policy and should be cross referenced from this policy. **QU:** Can all the policies within the same theme be tagged together on the website? This can be done but the staff policies are not on the school website. The staff handbook contains the staff policies. **QU:** Are the policies available on the staff shared server? This would be a good place to have a section which all staff can access. However, it was agreed that as the policies on the google drive for governors to access it would make sense to give the staff access to this folder also. This would give them freedom to access the policies from off site. **QU:** Is there a dignity policy? This is staff code of conduct.

ACTION: AG to update the policy and circulate for final approval.
DJ to discuss access to google drive with MP.

11. Parents Evenings

- **Spring Term 2017** – There have been more focused questions asked in previous parents evenings and it was proposed it may be useful on this occasion ask a completely open question such as “Please tell us what you see as the school’s strengths and also those aspects which you feel should change or improve” This would give parents an opportunity to share their thoughts with us. Governors were keen that parents responses should be grouped together and actions by the school communicated back to the parents. It is not enough to be seen to be listening but it is essential that action is actually taken. **QU:** What if you come back with nothing? There will be subjects; homework always comes up, the amount, the format. School meals are another common topic. **QU:** Can you put a closed question behind these areas? That would then focus the responses which is not the aim on this occasion. It would be good to see if there is something we were not aware of. It is also interesting to see what parents perceive to be good about the school. There should be enough feedback to get a trend. **QU:** Is parents evening the right time to ask such a big question? This is something that parents may want to think about? It could be introduced in the newsletter ahead of the parents evening to given them some thinking time. **QU:** The Parents questionnaire when was the last time this was done? Probably 3 or 4 years ago. It may be useful to do this type of questionnaire following the parents evening using Ofsted type questions, the sample from DJ and adding our own questions. For this parents evening it was proposed to have the questions on line and it was agreed to use iPads at parents evening for parents to complete. In addition plan to give the link to the questionnaire in the newsletter before and after the parents evening. **QU:** Are the parents named in their responses so that individuals can be approached to contact? They will be asked “If you would like an individual response please leave your contact details.” Suggest to also get feedback on whether the parents prefer to fill in questionnaire on paper or on line.

ACTION: OP to develop an online questionnaire

12. Governor Training

- CGS Governor Briefing on 24th Jan 2017, 7.00 – 9.00pm at Wood Green Animal Shelter, Godmanchester
- Annual Cambs Governor Conference “Inspiring Governance: National Perspectives and Developments around Good Governance” on Saturday 4th March 2017, 9.15am – 1.00pm at the Huntingdon Performing Arts Centre, Hinchingsbrooke.

13. Governor Visits to School

Reason for Visit	When	Who	Report to
Impact of the building project on school life	Each Term	ND	S&B
Hand writing and spelling	AutumnTerm Summer Term	OP & PC	C&S

Middle Leadership and the performance management process (2 part)	Dec 2016, Spring Term	MK & GH & EB	Per.
Social Capital Group	Termly	MB & EB	C&S
School PE and sport provision	Early 2017	OP & PW	C&S
Maths Mastery	Spring Term	EB & GM	C&S
Re-visit marking	Summer Term	DJ & MK	C&S
Outdoor Learning	Autumn 2017	MK & GH	

- There can be delay in arranging the visits both from governors requesting and staff responding. It is best to give as much notice as possible.
- Impact of the building project on school life update: The project is currently 2 days ahead of schedule. Site to be weather proof by February half term. ND asked for comments from the staff working nearest to the development and received no negative feedback. KS2 teachers and TAs there are some disruption but the builders are limiting noisy work to outside of school hours. On days when there is unavoidable noisy work they have advised upfront. It was recognised that the builders are doing the best they can to limit the impact to the children.

14. Governor vacancies

- Staff governor vacancy – This was advertised to staff and by the closing date only JW had come forward saying she was happy to continue if no other staff came forward. Natasha Stott volunteered after the closing date. PC spoke with JW who advised she was happy to let NS take on the role. Governors agreed that NS should be appointed to the role of staff governor and thanked JW for her contribution to the governing body.
- RJ was appointed associate governor at the same time as JW and therefore her term has also come to an end. RJ would like to continue as an associate member. **QU:** Does being an associate governor impact her other responsibilities? She attends FGB and Curriculum. RJ and JW have been delegated Curriculum meetings by DH and will continue to attend these meetings. There was previously a concern that there were too many SLT but this has now evened out. Governors agreed to appoint RJ as an associate member of the governing body.
- **QU:** How do we as a governing body engage with all the staff? How do we effectively listen to staff? This also raising similar questions for the children and how the governing body relate to them? Staff opinion surveys can be useful. The school council is about to be re-formed and this has proved to be an effective way to canvas the opinion of the children.

ACTION: MK to consider how to engage with staff and children.

Feedback will be given to the Personnel committee.

MB to be involved in engagement with children.

- Co-opted governor 2 vacancies – The total number of the governing body was set by governors to enable the flexibility to bring in an additional governor should a specific need be identified. **QU:** How has this been done on previous occasions when appointing co-opted governors? They have been invited to come in, visit the school and meet with the chair. There is also the potential to co-opt volunteers as associate members. It was previously discussed that OFSTED would frown upon two open vacancies that had been vacant for sometime and that it could be useful to have a governor who had no links with the school at all. Three people have approached the school to enquire about these vacancies. Thomas Norman has enquired but not as yet submitted further details regarding what he would be able to offer to the school. Tracey Locke has lived in the village for 10 years and would like to contribute to the community. She is a senior HR professional responsible for a sizeable team staff and a large budget. She is a member of a number of boards and committees. DH was approached by a teacher at Priory Junior School who lives in the village and has a child in pre-school here. Her husband is interested in being involved in the school. It was agreed that the volunteers, having submitted their details regarding what skills they have to offer, should be invited to meet with PC and OP to discuss the role further.

ACTION: AG to follow up volunteers who have not submitted their details and advise TL that PC will be in touch to arrange a meeting.

15. **Correspondence received** – none

16. **Any other urgent business** – none

17. **Dates of next meetings**

- Date of next Committees evening: Monday 16th January 2017 at 6.30pm
- Date of next Curriculum evening: Monday 27th February at 2017 6.30pm
- Date of next full Governors’ Meeting: Monday 13th March 2017 at 6.30pm

Meeting closed at 9pm

Mtg	Item	Agreed Action	Who is responsible	Completion date
FGB 7/16	4.	Forward Financial planning – add to Fin. agenda	Chair Fin- GH	Next Finance Mtg
	4.	PP – add to C&S agenda	Chair C&S – OP	Complete
	10.	Equality Policy – add to Dec FGB agenda	Chair – PC	Complete
	17.	All governors to be DBS checked	All Governors	Complete
	18.	Recruitment of governors – add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Ongoing Per. Mtg

	19.	Review planned governor visits	JW	Complete
	19.	Discuss need for skills audit – add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Complete
FGB 6/16	6.	Confirm governor terms	AG	Complete
	6.	Succession Planning –add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Ongoing see*
	11.	EB to confirm attendance at Financial Advisor Mtg	EB	Complete
	12.	Develop criteria grid further	GH & OP	Ongoing see**
	15.	Update policies and load to shared drive	AG	Complete
	19.	SEN Governor - add to next Personnel Mtg	Chair – MK	Combined with recruitment of gov.
	FGB 12/12	3.	For the questions relating to the Schools Financial Regulations DH to supply written reponses ahead of the next finance committee meeting.	DH
	3.*	Discuss succession planning at committee level	Chairs of coms	Committee mtgs
	4.	Confirmation of pupil numbers/funding	DH	ASAP
	9.**	Develop criteria grid further	GH & OP	Next FGB
	10.	Equality Policy	GM	April FGB
	10.	Anti-bullying Policy – update	AG	ASAP
	10.	Access to google drive for staff	DJ	ASAP
	11.	Parents Evening online questionnaire	OP	Jan
	14.	Governor engagement with staff and children	MK/MB	Next Personnel Com.
	14.	Governor vacancies	AG, PC, OP	ASAP

Areas Covered

School issues

Ensured the budget included with all latest staff changes.
Updated funding with additional funding due to Child statements
Fair Funding has been formally confirmed as deferred.

Benchmarking

The yearly Benchmarking exercise completed to Bushmead and to the County.

- Summary position very similar
- Teaching costs slightly lower than the County average.
- Supply is low.
- General TA costs lower on the average.
- Admin staff are lower than County.
- Dev training costs above the norm.
- Building maintenance are low. Energy lower than norm.
- Rates higher than the norm.
- Learning resources (not ICT) lower than the County likely linked to Admin above

Budget review

Reviewed all Funding lines.

From a budgeting perspective (on original numbers) closing balance was £97. From an actual / forecast perspective . Closing balance seems £146 so showing a £50k differential. Breakdown of variance between actual and budget:

- Catering costs £2000
- Learning resources £16000. New budget breakdown and probably over- budgeted. Covered costs in other areas
- Income based on outside Schools support matters.. £20,000

Forecast needs to be adjusted in gas £3500 so that will bring down closing balance

Now back in credit for 2017 / 18.