



Little Paxton Primary School Governing Body

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Monday 25th April 2016 at 6.30pm

Ellen Barrett	Co-opted Governor	Barbara Hughes	Parent Governor
Maria Button	Associate Member	Rebekah Jenkins	Associate Member / Staff
Penny Conway	Authority Governor	David Jones	Parent Governor
Neil Donoghue	Co-opted Governor	Mike Kendall	Co-opted Governor
Richard Fairbairn	Parent Governor	Oliver Poulain	Parent Governor
Debbie Gray	Co-opted Governor		
Diane Hawkes	Head Teacher	In attendance	
Graham Hiom	Co-opted Governor	Alison Gatward	Clerk to the Governors

1. Apologies for absence

Received and accepted from: Gemma Manning Parent Governor, Jordana Watts Staff Governor

2. Declaration of Interests – no changes declared.

3. **Associate Member** – Maria Button introduced herself, she has been a TA for 6 years and has had a child in school since 2003. She works in the lower end of the school and is interested to see how the school operates behind the scenes. She was the chair of the LSPA until last year. MB left the meeting. It is proposed that MB join as an associate member, the only difference being she does not have voting rights. Associate membership would be more flexible for MB to enable her to have balance with her home life and would alleviate concern that the governing body has too higher proportion of staff members. **QU:** Is there a specific area that she would bring? She would give a staff view that is not senior leadership. She also works as HLTA taking full classes in year 1 and year 3, enabling her to also give a teachers' perspective. **QU:** Is there a set percentage of staff allowed? There is a maximum number of staff, no more than a third of the total. JW represents teachers and KS2, RJ is also an associate member and represents KS1. DG represents support staff. Governors agreed to accept MB as a co-opted associate governor. MB was welcomed as associate governor

Action: AG to send new governor information to MB

4. Minutes of the last meeting (29.2.16) & matters arising

DH updated governors that an informal reviewed of possible pupil premium children didn't identify any further children who may qualify. A KS1 family has recently applied for pupil premium. DH confirmed there is a model pay policy for support staff which can be used. MK will step down from performance management team. Governors have agreed the HTPM Panel will consist of EB, PC and DJ.

The minutes were approved.

5. Minutes of the Committees Evening (14.3.16) & matters arising

S&B Kitchen - 3 quotes have been received will reviewed at the next S&B committee meeting

Finger guards - assessment will be included in the health & safety review next week.

QU: Re-siting of the mobiles concern that there should be a contingency plan. It was clarified that the plan is to move them in the summer and the contingency is October half term.

FinanceDH to visit other schools to look at useful investments still to be carried out.

Benchmarking of the carry forward - GH discussed with Rob Cottle who shared the amounts of carry forward from other similar sized schools. The figures were not dissimilar to ours. Across his schools there will be over £2 million total carry forward. He has not raised the level of carry forward as being a concern.

JW was to review a contingency plan if MP were to be off. This has been discussed by the SLT and it was identified that a short term absence the main concern would be dinner money. This has now been incorporated into the CPD of other office staff to ensure that this work could be covered.

GH & PC completed and submitted the SFVS to County.

Personnel

GH to review amended flow charts

JW to review physical restraint training - the list needs to be removed from the policy and instead state that the inclusion worker keeps an up to date list of those who are trained.

Action: AG to update the policy

The minutes were approved for all committees.

6. Head's report including:

- School Development Plan (includes SEF and TOP)
- Staff Update, including training
- Pupil numbers update
- Premises Update (including the proposed extension)
- Finance update
- PPP Partnership

QU: The Pupil premium section refers to a meeting last week is there an update? This relates to a project run by the Cambridge school improvement board which exists to promote and enable school to school support and so bring about school improvement. A group of 6 staff including chair of governors went to the meeting with 10 to 12 other schools. There were interesting and helpful presentations on pupil premium which included practical suggestions and a presentation from a Senior HMI Ofsted inspector. The schools were then put into working groups with schools outside of their immediate area; we were then put together with a school in March and another in Cambridge. Each group was to generate a plan of what they wanted to do to work on together. It was decided to run a project from September 2016 for the academic year. Each school is given £1,000 to help fund their participation. The plan is to visit to each school in the autumn term to kick start the project and then again at the end of the year. It was agreed that partnering on an ongoing basis would not be practical (simply because of the distance between the schools) but a few specific visits will be undertaken as required for the project. There is scope in the project to focus on social

capital elements and how pupil premium children see themselves amongst their more advantaged peers. Then to look for ways to give the children social skills they require. **QU:** It seems like a lot of staff are involved, will this be necessary for each visit? Think that it is likely that the visits would involve specific staff but the full plan is still to be determined.

QU: Achievement and standards – what has been the impact of the spelling test that has been leaked? Our pupils have already completed the test as we were chosen to do it early. The DfE have confirmed that they will use the results from the schools who completed the test early to benchmark the levels for the following year. The scores have been used internally for teacher assessments. Children were excited to do the papers. A governor commented that the school is careful with the language around the SATs they are not called by name but just tests. The results have shown that grammar teaching has been really strong as the children did well in that paper. This means that what has been put in place since the new curriculum has worked and it has also highlighted that spelling is not as strong as it could be. There is a need to carefully manage the transition between year 1 and year 2 where correct spelling becomes a stronger focus. **QU:** What about spelling further up the school? This is already on the radar and will be discussed in more detail. **QU:** Were the spelling results a surprise? Not in general it is due to the change in focus of the curriculum and it was observed that many of the attempts at spelling that were made were phonetically good and would have been acceptable in year 1 but are incorrect.

Currently the intake for September 2016 is set at 45 reception children. A triple mobile classroom was requested but this was not possible due to planning. **QU:** Are all children in catchment? With the exception of one, but all those from catchment who applied on time have places. There may be children who have moved into catchment since the deadline to apply for a place who as yet do not have a place. **QU:** Will we be asked to take on further children? Parents can and will appeal and this is the only way the classes can exceed 30. It would be possible to have another couple of children in each class.

There have been some initial conversations with the office staff about the changing requirements for when the school grows. To be picked up in the next personnel meetings.

Action: Impact of growth on staff to be added to next personnel agenda.

DH attended the National Academies show and also met with some education suppliers. She attended demonstrations of touch screen boards which will be required in the new classrooms. PC & DH plan to attend a DfE workshop for schools who may consider be coming sponsors of other schools. The head from Priory Juniors is attending a similar conference and information will be shared.

Work on the art room to convert it into a space more suitable for a general classroom will start in July to ensure that it is ready for use in September.

The TOP (Termly Operating Plan) has been emailed to governors just before the meeting.
The number of children who are currently on track to meet there ARE targets by end of the summer term (ARE- Age related expectation)

Class	Reading	Writing	Maths
Peacock (Y1 only)	All	2↑	8↓
Dove	All	All	All
Robin	1↑	All	2↓
Wren	All	2↓	1↓
Heron	All	All	2↓
Woodpecker	4↓	2↓	3↓
Kestrel	3↓	1↑	2↑
Osprey	4↓	3↓	2↓
Goldfinch	All to meet targets	All to meet targets	All to meet targets
	3↓ ARE 89% to achieve ARE or better	2↓ ARE 93% to achieve ARE or better	3↓ ARE 89% to achieve ARE or better

This information allowed teachers to focus on the interventions required to assist the children who are predicted to fall below ARE to make more progress. **QU:** There are more below in maths than other areas? This may be as there is still a term left and some aspects of the curriculum may not have yet been taught. This will be reviewed in more depth. **QU:** 8 below in Peacock for maths must be a concern? These are year 1s who have special needs and have needed to plug their gaps from reception. Suggestions have been made as to how to bring these levels up and meet the need of two different curriculums within the Peacock class. **QU:** Was it expected that there would be 8 below? It was expected to see possibly 6 children below. Only two additional children have been added to the class since the targets were set. There have been some behavioural issues in the class which has disrupted some teaching. **QU:** Concern regarding the year 6 levels with only 2 weeks until SATS. There is a child who will not be taking SATS as they are too far from the level and another who has very poor attendance, accounting for the targets being below 100.

There has been a focus on training in English and work on adapting the assessment system to ensure that the right elements are being monitored. A parents evening for BRP (Boosting Reading in Primary) was held for parents of those who have completed or are about to undertake the programme. Positive feedback was received about the programme and the evening. There has been an inset day focusing on English. In the summer term the focus will be on spelling, year 2 are trialing the new programme. The programme consists of 15 minutes a day for all year groups starting once year 1s have finished the phonics programme.

The middle leadership have made good progress with staff taking ownership of their subject area and doing their own tracking. Focus Education have produced useful resources on tracking for each subject as a starting point for subject area leaders. **QU:** Have you seen anyone come to the fore that you haven't expected? Dawn Moffat is responsible for art and DT. She has really stepped up and brought this subject back to the fore, she has led a staff meeting to present ideas. **QU:** Has

subject leadership impacted on the work of TAs? It has impacted the teaching staff more so far. There is a plan after SATs to review what else needs to be done. Every member of staff is in one of the teams but this is just starting to reach down to TAs. Subject leaders are liaising with their own teams and some have done more than others. **QU:** Will all staff have had some involvement by the next FGB? Possibly not for every team but more will have done. It has been good to be able to give the subject leaders release time giving them dedicated time to focus on their subjects. **QU:** Why is the action on the plan for subject leaders to lead staff meetings shaded orange? Although dates have been set they are still to be completed. **QU:** Will JW be full time in September and will she still be able to support the release time for subject leaders? She plans to continue 4 days a week- 2 days in the year 5 class and 2 days for PPA cover and SLT time. It is hoped that there will be a few hours a week that she would be able to cover subject leaders so that the release time can be continued.

It was very encouraging to have the full year 2 team attended the parents meeting on the SATs. Members of staff were thanked for supporting this meeting.

The recent parents' forum was attended by more parents than expected. This is becoming an effective way for parents to communicate ideas and concerns with the school.

7. Report of meeting with School's Financial Advisor (23.3.16)

Initial thoughts and questions about budget proposal were discussed and agreed in principle at the Finance meeting held on 14/3/16. Following a meeting of the Chair of Finance, the Chair of Governors and the Head with the School's Financial Advisor, firm proposals for the budget were shared ahead of the meeting for ratification by the Full Governing Body.

It was highlighted that the closing reserve at the end of the financial year was £156,000. This was as a result of both an underspend and additional funding of £30,000 more than when the budget was set.

Closing reserves at the end of the next financial year are predicted to be £99,700. It was made clear that this is £57,000 more than the funding due to be received next year the overspend will come from the reserve funds.

Teachers pay was £515,000 in the past year and for this year's budget it will be £606,000 which is a £91,000 increase. This is impacted by a 1% pay increase, factoring pay scale movement, NI and pension changes have made the biggest impact. The increment in additional teachers is just 0.4 teachers.

It was noted that funding can change during the year. If the budget is overspent then the strategy must be questioned or if the spend is less than the budget this will affect the impact on the reserves. The schools finance advisor supports the strategy and budget that has been proposed. The school is in a strong financial position; spending on teaching and support staff is the right place to invest the money.

The governing body need to watch monitor, measure and make sure the finances remain strong as the year goes forward.

QU: Will the huge increase in NI contributions have the same impact for future years? There were specific changes just brought into place which have created the biggest impact. Each year there are increments in NI payments but it should not be as extreme going forward.

It should also be noted that the minimum wage has also increased and this has affected the whole pay scale band for support staff in order to maintain the differentials within the band, this has also impacted pension payments etc.

In September 45 children are joining reception, and 27 will have left from year 6 so the overall growth is only 18 children but the decision was to appoint an additional teacher to ensure that there is flexibility to take in new children throughout the school. It is possible that there may be

further growth funding before the end of the academic year. The school is spending 83% of the total budget on staff but 90% of revenue funding. This is high because of the plans to have the extra teacher ahead of the increase in number of children.

Capital investment is limited to emergency purchases until the extension work is complete. It may be that a new white board is required sooner rather than later and it was proposed to buy in a new version so that it can be tested for its suitability for the new classrooms.

All governors accepted the budget and agree to its submission to County in early May.

8. Partnership/Federation/Trust Meeting

A reminder that there is a meeting at 7.30pm on 28th April at Priory Infant School to discuss possible future options with the Priory Schools. PC, DH, MK, DJ, OP and JW have agreed to attend on behalf of Little Paxton. Other Governors were encouraged to be involved by feeding in any thoughts or questions ahead of the meeting for inclusion in the discussion.

QU: What is the process for feedback? The three head teachers have already had a pre-meeting to create an agenda for this meeting, it is planned to be an informal sharing of thoughts. However, the meeting will be minuted and these minutes will be shared with the FGB. The thoughts are that the proposal would be to move towards a more formal federation rather than the current soft federation. It is felt that each school would not get agreement to become a standalone academy as this is not in line with the current government direction. However, a formal federation would be a good first step. The meeting will be an opportunity to table some ideas as to where to go as a partnership and test the water. **QU:** Will the next steps then go on the next FGB agenda? It may be that there is another meeting with the Priory schools before the next FGB meeting in July. It is important to work out what is good for us and be in control of our own destiny. Governors were assured that no decisions would be made at this joint meeting, any decisions would be made by the individual governing bodies. **QU:** How different is it really being an academy or part of a trust? Is it just the fear of change? On the ground, day to day the difference would probably not be perceived. It could mean sharing of staff expertise which is already being done anyway. Finance is an area that changes the most from experience of other schools. It would be imperative to ensure that the appropriate support is in place ahead of any major change. The required skill set for a finance team may need to change. A small MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) is 5-6 schools so it may be that other schools would need to be included. 10-15 schools are required in a MAT before economies of scale are achieved and they almost become a mini "Local Authority".

The skill set of the governing body will need to change for an academy: the school becomes a company limited by guarantee as well as a registered charity and a board of trustees would be required. It is possible to join a small group of schools on an equal footing without a lead school but it does require one person to be a point of contact. It may be that this can be rotated among the heads on a termly or annual basis. This would be good professional development and from this basis may result in a natural selection of a lead school. The board of trustees are responsible for the MAT but can decide to delegate powers to the local governors. Setting up the delegation would involve a lot of input and work.

QU: If you go in with other schools, you need to have confidence in those other schools. Do you have confidence in their head teachers and their SLTs? Would you be happy for them to have an input into what goes on here? There is a good mix of skills across the schools leaderships. Both schools are classed as "Good" by OFSTED. **QU:** Do the heads have confidence in the deputies and SLT? There is confidence in the Head Teachers. Governors at one of the schools have invested in the SLT to ensure improved managerial skills to address previous concerns. There is a trust in their

ability, integrity and commitment. **QU:** What about in the school? Is there discussion about academies? This is not being discussed, the purpose of the upcoming meeting has been notified to teaching staff. At the moment there is no uncertainty. A head in one of the other schools has asked her staff about their thoughts on academies and DH plans to follow this approach after the meeting to find out the thoughts of the staff here. Parents haven't fed in as they are possibly not aware. There will be full consultation with all stakeholders before any decisions are taken about the future.

9. Governor visits to school

Reason for Visit	When	Who
Teachers new to year groups and new to school	Complete – Report due to be presented at next Personnel meeting.	GM EB
Hand writing focus in school - based on new focus in new curriculum	October & Summer term Report due to be presented at C&S in summer term	BH
Assessment Grids	Complete – Report due to be presented at next C&S meeting.	GH OP
Progress in reading	Report due to be presented to the C & S Committee later this term	MK EB
Outdoor Learning follow-up visit this term to check progress this year	Summer Term	MK GH
Re-visit marking - follow-up visit this term to check progress this year	Summer Term	DJ OP

Governors were reminded to complete the scheduled visits and have reports ready for the appropriate committee meeting.

10. Governor Attendance at Parents Evenings

Open Evening later this term Thursday 14th July 3.30 – 4.30pm and 5.30 – 6.30pm

Action: Volunteers to attend to contact PC

11. Annual meeting for Governors and Parents

It has been normal practice to invite parents to meet us before our final FGB meeting each year. Governors questioned whether this was still necessary as it has often been awkward for parents joining the meeting possibly feeling put on the spot to ask questions or governors using it as an opportunity to recruited new governors. Governors now have visibility and are available for discussion with parents at each of the parents evenings during the year and open discussions with parents are happening at the parents' forum. **QU:** Is there an obligation to invite parents? Not any more. Governors agreed to not invite the parents to the meeting but still to issue the Governors Annual report. There being no other volunteers PC agreed to write the report.

Action: PC to write the governors annual report for distribution to parents.

12. Governor Training

- Information from the CGS Annual Governor Conference (5/3/16) can be found on the Learning Together website.
- Joint training with Priory Infant and Junior Schools on “Promoting British Values” has been arranged for 16th May at 7.00pm at Little Paxton School.
- The CGS termly briefing for governors will be held at WGAS at 7pm on 17.5.16

13. Working Party to review the list of policies at Little Paxton School

PC, ND, DH and GM met on 18th April to consider how best to rationalize our extensive list of policies. Notes of that meeting had been circulated to all governors. **QU:** Was there a reduction in number of policies? We had all the policies we are required to have and the review has identified the potential to slightly reduce the number of policies. There are many that we have that we don't need to have but do so because the school want them. GM has taken many of the policies to streamline. Governors agreed to the changes proposed by the Working Party.

Action: GM to streamline some of the policies as identified
PC & AG to compile final list of policies and review schedules.

14. Document storage

At the recent Personnel Committee meeting there was a discussion regarding the possibility of having a virtual space (Dropbox or similar) to share documents. It is felt that this could be an easier means to access documents for meetings in particular. As the WIFI in the meeting room is now working the folder could be accessed during the meetings. This raises a few questions – should the access to the shared space be via school emails or personal emails. It was observed that at some schools governors do not use the governor email system. The shared space should have security whichever email is used to access it. Many governors have Dropbox accounts and were concerned that they could become too busy if governor documents were also stored in that way. Google drive was suggested as an alternative as they offer free use to schools with unlimited storage. Dropbox has a 2 Gig free storage limit. **QU:** Is there a facility within the governor email system to share files? There could be but it is felt that this system is somewhat dated and may cause compatibility issues with newer technology and the county system is likely to be phased out over the coming years. Governors agreed that the idea in principal is good but it may need to be tested by a few governors to see how in practice it would work. Proposal to review googledrive. The school domain will need to be registered and there could have potential to roll this out to the school at a later date.

Action: DJ, MK and AG to investigate, test this further and report back.

15. Scheduled review of Policies

School Self-Evaluation Policy – this is really a monitoring schedule which is an annual timetable rather than a policy. It is no longer required to be included in the policies but the information in the timetable is useful for governors to be aware of what is going on when. Governors agreed to amend this to a Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule and to have it as a standard agenda item to be shared annually.

Action: AG to create a new document

Behaviour Policy – deferred from Personnel Meeting held 14/3/16 to be reviewed over the summer by EB and governors agreed to let the current policy to stand for the interim. Looking to streamline the policy and include some definitions to clarify it fully. Add to committee evening next term.

Action: Add to personnel agenda in Autumn 2016

Governors have previously agreed to use the oversubscription criteria agreed for all community schools in Cambridgeshire and the LA deals with all applications for admission. Admission arrangements to be shared on the website. Approved.

Action: PC to forward details of Admission Arrangements to school office for inclusion on website

16. Governing Body vacancies:

2 co-opted governor vacancies - nothing from SGOSS (the website for governor recruitment).

17. Correspondence received – none

18. Any Other Business – none

19. Dates of next meetings

- Committees Evening has been arranged for 6.30pm 9th May 2016
- Training evening 7.00pm 16th May 2016
- Curriculum Evening has been arranged for 6.30pm 13th June 2016
- Full Governing Body has been arranged for 6.30pm 11th July 2016

The meeting closed at 8:45pm