



Minutes of the St Issey School Local

Governing Body Meeting Tuesday 30th November 2021 at

4.00pm, St Issey School

<u>Agenda</u>	<p>Present:</p> <p>Chris Parham – Head of School Rev. Katie Kirby – Chair Avril Heard Marjorie Finch Brenda Wright Heather Holder-Powell Marjorie Smith</p> <p>Also in attendance:</p> <p>Will Johnson – CEO, Venture MAT Jonathan Brown – Clerk</p>	
Item	Subject	Action
1	<p>Welcome, introductions and opening prayer</p> <p>Rev. Katie Kirby welcomed everyone to the meeting and delivered the opening prayer.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorum</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Shelley Francis. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p>	
3	<p>Declaration of business & pecuniary interests</p> <p>No interests were declared in relation to any agenda item.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting (29/09/2021) Draft minutes of the meeting of 29th September 2021 had been circulated in advance. <i>Governors agreed</i> that they were an accurate record, except that Avril Heard had incorrectly been listed as an attendee in place of Brenda Wright. The Clerk agreed to amend this.</p> <p>Matters arising as follows:</p> <p>[item 4] Avril Heard indicated her willingness to continue as Vice Chair. No other governor wished to stand for the role. <i>Governors elected</i> Avril Heard as Vice Chair until the first meeting of the next school year.</p> <p>[item 8] The new SIAMS evaluation framework had been circulated, along with the ‘Windows, Mirrors, Doors’ document about spirituality in school.</p>	Jon Brown
(5b)		

	<p><i>[item 10]</i> The Head had approached the YHA about potentially accommodating foreign students, but they had not been keen. Other options were being considered, but it was not clear whether the students would be coming this year at all. A <u><i>governor asked</i></u> when the students would arrive. A) They would be here from around March to July. <u><i>Governors discussed</i></u> the possibility of putting them up at the start of this period, <u><i>but agreed</i></u> that finding accommodation locally in summer would be difficult.</p> <p>Other actions had been completed, and/or would be covered by future agenda items.</p>	
5	<p>Governance and board membership matters</p> <p>a) Board membership No updates</p> <p>b) LGB Roles and Responsibilities, including election of Vice Chair The election of Vice Chair had been carried out under item 4. Roles and responsibilities were detailed on the monitoring schedule (see item 8).</p> <p>c) Training A governor had attended recent training, and agreed to log this with the Clerk.</p>	Heather Holder-Powell
6	<p>Safeguarding update Safeguarding training would be delivered at the end of the meeting following discussion of other agenda items.</p>	

7	<p>Head of School report</p> <p>The Head's report had been circulated in advance. A <u><i>governor asked</i></u> for clarification of current Pupil Premium (PP) numbers. A) This had recently increased to 12, hence the discrepancy on the report.</p> <p>A <u><i>governor asked</i></u> what was meant by 'mastery maths'. A) Previously, if a child showed understanding of a concept they would be progressed to the next one. However, the focus was now on expanding and deepening knowledge within the same concept, both to embed learning and to avoid too much differentiation of learning within a group. The idea had originated in Hong Kong. A <u><i>governor challenged</i></u> whether this model encouraged too much rote learning. A) The concepts were not delivered the same way as in Hong Kong due to cultural differences, but used the same basis of ensuring fundamentals were not skipped over too quickly.</p> <p>Attendance had been good in the summer term, but had dropped this term and was now disappointing for St Issey, despite remaining above the national average. This had been caused by a significant amount of genuine illness, besides Covid, as well as some families not following current guidance around attendance due to nervousness about Covid. Term-time holidays had also increased again, and although these were not being authorised unless the circumstances were exceptional, it was not uncommon in the local area, where many families worked throughout the summer. St Issey might have been seen as a bit of a soft touch in this regard in the past, but the Head was now keen to</p>	
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(8)	<p>ensure recent hard work on attendance was not undone, as the government had recently communicated an increased focus on this.</p> <p><u>A governor asked</u> what constituted persistent absence (PA). A) Being absent for at least 10% of school sessions over a one-term period. PA at St Issey was 21%, well above the national average. Letters had been written to all parents with attendance below 91%. These would be followed with a second warning letter if necessary, and a third letter issuing fines. PA rates should drop over time as completed school sessions increased, but it was important to arrest the trend as soon as possible, as some pupils were missing a substantial chunk of education.</p> <p><u>A governor commented</u> that they understood the need to clamp down on holidays, <u>but asked</u> whether Ofsted would really be interested in overall attendance figures at the moment given the exceptional challenges of the pandemic and the picture nationally. A) Yes, recent anecdotal feedback was that Ofsted were not interested in 'excuses' about Covid. <u>A governor asked</u> whether there would be any leeway for the small cohort numbers at St Issey, where a small number of pupils could impact overall absence figures. A) The school can explain individual stories, but need to show that they have seriously addressed the issue. The focus will be on persistent absence, which is generally an issue with parents rather than any pupil reluctance to attend school.</p> <p>Most staff absence had been among TAs, but a teacher had recently tested positive for Covid and would be absent for ten days. <u>A governor challenged</u> whether this meant the Head would have to teach full-time over this period. A) The Head was hoping to secure cover to avoid this.</p> <p>A list of questions from governor visits had been circulated, along with the Head's responses as follows:</p> <p><u>Q) Is there any support the school can offer to support maths to make sure all abilities are being supported?</u></p> <p>A) Firstly teacher planning will address the range of abilities in class with support given to children needing it through use of 'concrete' resources whilst children who needed more challenge will have 'digging deeper' challenges presented by their teacher. The maths lead (me) will support teaching staff in examining the approach taken and ways to develop it. I would note that I have no concerns about the delivery of the subject in this class.</p> <p><u>Q) What efforts are being made to reduce absences for children who are regularly missing education?</u></p> <p>A) The Head has written to all parents whose attendance has dropped below 90%. I recognise that this term has been very challenging to parents and children alike - managing COVID infection, COVID concern and other sickness has resulted in a higher pupil absence rate than we'd normally expect to see. This has in some cases been compounded by unauthorised holidays. The Government has written to schools outline their determination that attendance nationally must improve, we support this position. Children have missed too much schooling already. Parents will receive an initial warning letter and should it not improve a further two letters before the sanction of</p>	
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	fining will be undertaken.	
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8	<p>Governor monitoring and schedule 21/22</p> <p>Visit reports about early years and humanities had been circulated in advance, along with an updated monitoring schedule. Questions arising had been discussed under item 7.</p> <p>The Head explained that he was aware that some governors had not been contacted to arrange a visit yet, and asked governors to email him with suitable dates for early in the New Year.</p>	All governors
9	<p>Diocese pre-SIAMS visit report – to review</p> <p>The visit report had been circulated in advance. The Head explained that the visit had been carried out by the Head of another C of E school, and that the report made pleasant reading for St Issey. The school was now rated ‘green’ on the Diocese’s RAG rating. There was the potential to push for an ‘excellent’ judgement at the next inspection, but there were no fixed criteria for this, so it would depend on the inspectors’ experiences on the day.</p> <p>The CEO explained that MAT trustees had seen this report and wanted to congratulate the school for the progress shown. A <u><i>governor asked</i></u> when the next SIAMS inspection was likely to take place. A) This was not known. A list had been circulated of schools across the country that were expected to be inspected this year, and St Issey was not on that list, but that could not be taken as gospel.</p>	
10	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>The DfE governance update for November 2021 had been circulated in advance.</p> <p>A <u><i>governor challenged</i></u> what measures the school and trust had taken to ensure cybersecurity and combat the threat of an attack. A) All data was held off site using online systems rather than local servers. A <u><i>governor challenged</i></u> whether this was enough. A) The IT provider was confident that what was in place was robust, and better than many systems in the educational sector. A <u><i>governor commented</i></u> that cyber attacks could be very serious, and that the trust needed to be certain that they had guarded against this. The CEO explained that Chromebooks were used across the trust, as they were more secure than laptops.</p>	

11	Summary of actions/ information required from trustees No trust board minutes had been available to circulate in advance. The CEO explained that the Trust's audit had just been completed, and that it showed the journey to financial security at St Issey over recent years, which meant that money was now available to spend on certain areas. Trustees wanted to thank staff at both schools for their hard work over a difficult year.	
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	No further information was requested by governors.	
12	Dates & times of future meetings 21/22 Future meetings were agreed for 19 January, 09 March, 11 May, and 22 June 2022.	
13	Any Other Urgent Business None	
14	Confidential matters None	

The Clerk left the meeting at 4.42pm. The CEO proceeded to deliver safeguarding training to governors

Summary of actions:

[item 4] **Jon Brown** to amend minutes of previous meeting to correctly reflect attendees. [item 5c] **Heather Holder-Powell** to log completed training with the Clerk.
[item 9] **All governors** to contact the Head to schedule a monitoring visit for the new year.

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..... Signed as an accurate record Print name Date

