



COXHEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE 2024/2025 MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2024

Governors present at the meeting held on 3rd December 2024 approved these minutes as a true and accurate record, and signed on Governor Hub electronically

PRESENT

Caroline Jacques (CJ) (Parent Governor) CHAIR	Darren Flisher (DF) (Staff Governor)
Claire Webb (CW) (Co-Opted Governor)	Simon Malone (SM) (Co-Opted Governor)
Jade Sheppard (JS) (Parent Governor)	Giacomo Mazza (GM) (Governor / Headteacher)
Bev Evenden (BE) (Associate Governor / Deputy Headteacher)	

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Lacey (AL) (Governance Professional)	
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Yellow highlighted text demonstrates challenge by the governors

PART A – PUBLIC MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Welcome:** CJ welcomed all parties to the meeting. CJ explained that the focus of the meeting was to clarify the strategic priorities for the next 12 months to ensure that these align to those of the Trust, and to ensure that the LGB understand their role in monitoring these priorities against the targets.
- 1.2 Apologies:** Apologies were received from Katherine Tunnicliffe (KT). JS had advised she would be late and arrived at 1715. CW left the meeting at 1905.
- 1.3 Quorum:** The meeting was confirmed as quorate throughout.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REMINDER OF CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.1** All were reminded that discussions tonight should remain confidential.
- 2.2** CJ gave all parties the opportunity to declare any additional declarations of interest against the agenda to which none were declared.
- 2.3** SM advised that due to a change in role at Barclays Bank, he was required to disclose to his employer any business arrangement the Trust has with the bank.

ACTION: AL to make enquiries of the Trust Office and confirm to SM

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 9th July 2024.
ACTION: AL to mark minutes as signed on Governor Hub and arrange for publication
- 3.2 Matter arising from the minutes and review of actions:**
 - 3.2.1** The actions table was updated to reflect the latest position. Key matters discussed that were note included on the agenda:

- **Writing:** CJ asked for an update on the roll out of the new Writing curriculum. GM said that the roll out was going well saying the newly appointed ECT had commented how good the support was for writing. HM (Writing Lead) had delivered the first PDM, which was warmly received and the new writing curriculum was building strong foundations for teaching and learning.
GM suggested that HM attend the T2 LGB to provide an update on the roll out. LGB agreed to the suggestion adding that writing will be the subject of governor monitoring this academic year.

ACTION: HM to attend T2 LGB and provide writing update

- **PE & Sports Grant:** DF confirmed that the PE & Sports Grant report had been published. The bicycles had arrived and the next stage was to develop the programme to enable children and parents to use. GM said that the challenge was developing the contract for using the bicycles in regards to what was considered unfair wear and tear, and how that would be administered. SM asked if safety equipment was included? DF confirmed it included helmets, lights and locks and that Cycle UK would do the first checks to ensure the bikes are ok followed by a check after 6 weeks and then annual.
SM said that it was a good idea. DF agreed but it was now a matter of sorting out the management and administrative arrangements.
- **Health & Safety including site walks:** GM advised governors that systems had been introduced for logging and monitoring works around the site and a comprehensive safety culture had been put in place. It would be a good idea for JS to complete a H&S walk and to see the new processes.

ACTION: GM to inform JS of dates for termly H&S walks

4. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

4.1 There were no items raised.

5. SCHOOL STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.1 Headteacher's Verbal Update

- **Attendance:** GM informed governors that attendance was good with year to date 95.5% compared to national 95.4%. The DfE have introduced new guidelines for attendance which required the Trust to update its policy. As a result, each school should have a school specific document, which is being reviewed and will be reported to the T2 LGB meeting.

GM advised that the biggest change related to a new approach to dealing with pupil absence, which has moved away from simply issuing penalty notice and fines (now £180 per child per parent). The new process now is to engage with parents to improve attendance recognising that some will take their children out of school for family holidays. The aim is to have a conversation and reach agreement that the child will, without good reason be in school for the rest of the academic year.

ACTION: School Attendance Improvement document to T2 LGB

- **SEND:** The percentage of SEND has increased from 9% to 13.5%, which is below national (17.1%). SM asked for clarity on the figure? GM advised that it was based on the number of pupils on the school's SEND register compared to the number on roll.

Staffing: See Confidential Minutes.

- Interviews were being held for the vacant caretaker position following retirement.
- **Finances:** GM informed governors that the 2023/24 out-turn was an in-year deficit of £33k mainly the result of additional staffing costs, which were covered by reserves. There was a balance of £9k on the PP funding carried over into 2024/25. Overall, reserves at £308k or 12% of the budget are above target.
Funding is predominantly based on school roll which is presently 460. There are a few spaces across the year groups with 3 in YrR as there are 87 on roll.
- **Behaviour:** GM advised governors that there had been behavioural challenges in the Yr6 cohort which need to keep an eye on to ensure those pupils do not disrupt classes and impact on others.

5.2 **ECG Feedback:** JS provided feedback from the ECG meeting saying that there had been a considerable amount of challenge by Trustee in response to the SATS outcomes that were below both predication and

national. The main challenge was 'why were outcomes below predicted when comparatively, attendance figures are higher and SEND is lower compared to national?'

GM said that the Trust overview was not necessarily representative of the position at each school, and the challenges facing each school were very different. The focus had been on developing the curriculum and empowering teachers to modify and adapt their approach to teaching and learning to meet the needs of the children. At CPS, DF's roll was to provide oversight and monitoring of the modifications and adaptations put in place to improve access to learning for pupils.

GM added that the school no longer receives tutoring funding and therefore, the target will be Yr 6 and Yr 1 phonics. The focus seems to be one on data outcomes whereas it is considered progress is the more important measure.

CJ asked if the challenge presented at ECG was fair? JS said she thought most of it was and that the focus kept coming back to the same issues. GM said that the predications were based on expectations and what might be achieved, and to have set higher targets would not have been achievable. Also, data outcomes are one element of assessment, and there had been no celebration of achievements.

GM said that the situation at CPS was different to the other schools saying that maths was consistently good and the focus was to improve reading. It was also disappointing that there are no progress scores as this would demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. GM expressed concern that simply pushing the teachers to achieve national might have impact on their well-being.

CJ added that not all cohorts are the same and outcomes will vary and, the objective is to provide a rounded education and wider development of the children. CW said that those with children who have left Coxheath and gone onto secondary school are seen as having a rounded education.

JS said that SEND was another focus area in relation to the provision in each school, the accuracy of the SEND registers and adaptations to provide access to the curriculum. GM said that Coxheath were addressing this through engagement with the PINS project.

A third area was that LGB's should ensure that they are aware of the data predictions and monitor progress to ensure that they are achieved or at least there is awareness of the reasons why they might not be achieved. BE agreed to share data predictions and updates in terms 3 and 5.

ACTION: BE to provide data updates to Terms 3 and 5

CJ asked if the data outcomes had any impact on the school priorities? GM advised that the reading curriculum is sufficient when meeting the needs of a cohort of children who are strong readers and likely to be working above national. When the cohort is not securely working at national, the current reading curriculum may need to be revised as they are likely to struggle and require catch-up interventions. This is being reviewed as well as the time allocated to the teaching of reading. CW said that children should also be reading for purpose in learning other subjects. GM agreed but a lot also depends on children having books at home and parents making time for reading with them.

SM asked if an idea would be to arrange class seating so that strong readers were spread around and provide peer to peer support? BE said it could be tried but the issue might be that children lack the skills and life experiences to understand the text as they struggle with some words and therefore cannot picture what has been written. DF added that there is a need to increase conversation within the class to widen children's vocabulary.

SM asked if staff were aware of the situation in their class, understood what need to be modified to deliver T&L and do what is expected? GM said with regards to reading there needed to be a better understanding of the data, identify and analyse the knowledge gaps, and then consider what and how best to fill the gaps. There are alternative guiding reading schemes and associated interventions. There is a Trust wide view that the Sounds Write scheme will be used and has been in place for a few years. The question therefore is what is stopping the phonics targets being achieved? T&L is good so is it the speed of teaching or the sequencing?

GM informed governors that he hoped these questions would be answered through the Challenge Partner initiative, and they could learn from others in the scheme one of whom had increased attainment from 53% to 90% using Sounds Write. The idea is for the Challenge Partners to review teaching of reading at CPS including the use of Sounds Write and identify reasons for progress not being made.

CJ asked if the issue was in part due to recent admissions and the challenge of COVID? GM said it is probably a number of things and it is trying to unpick the issues as there is a need to hit the national target for phonics.

See Confidential Minutes

GM said that a question to consider is whether Sounds Write is the right scheme for the school as phonics is key as if attainment is low then reading standards will generally be low. There are alternatives such as Read Write Ink and Little Wordle that could be considered. Before any decision is taken, there needs to be a full analysis of the current scheme which is happening over the coming terms.

SM asked what is the plan to achieving phonics targets? GM said it would be to engage the Sounds Write experts and get them to assess if the school is doing the right things and suggest anything different. GM added that we are talking fine margins as a number of children are close to the pass rate, the difference is 3/4 additional children achieving target which could be influenced on the day by 1 or 2 being absent.

ECG representation – Trustees expected there to be two LGB representatives to ensure there was attendance and would encourage both to attend. JS said that she found the meeting very interesting and provided a greater insight and understanding of the educational challenges.

5.3 School Priorities (SDP / SEF)

GM advised governors that the priorities were:

- Reading and phonics and to identify what is needed, is it happening and is it having the desired and expected impact? Governors need to support this via monitoring and challenge so both SLT and they can say what the school is doing to provide quality teaching and achieve the agreed targets.
- SEND not just in relation to those with needs accessing the curriculum but also the management and leadership of such. DF will be looking at the barriers to inclusion, and the assessment of SEND pupils progress and attainment. The school are working with PACT (Parents and Carers Together) to better understand SEND and to increase awareness.

5.4 Trust Wide Assessment

BE provided an overview of Trust-wide assessment principles of which there are 5 as outlined in the paper provided with the agenda. BE had supported the Trust in the development of the Assessment Principles which in summary:

- Underline the 'what' is to be taught but not the how and to facilitate high quality teaching.
- A switch to greater reliance on informative assessment and less on the summative testing, as the former is based on on-going teacher assessment rather than one or two tests.

The principles are being worked on as a whole staff team and it was decided to take one principle per term, which is being facilitated via drops ins. The key aim is for teachers to check for understanding to ascertain whether pupils understood the lesson as it seen that good assessment leads to effective decisions regarding teaching and learning.

BE summarised the assessment date for CPS agreeing to provide the brief report to AL for uploading to Governor hub which was actioned during the meeting.

BE informed governors that the challenge is to ensure that HLTA's and Cover Supervisors are all aware and know how to deliver the pre-planned lesson. This will be achieved through PDM's and developing questioning and walk through techniques.

CW asked if the intentions were closed for outcomes saying do teachers clearly state the expected achievements and engage pupils via initial questioning to start the thought process? BE replied yes adding that questioning might work for the older children. BE added that when they reach this phase of the roll-out that she will ask CW to get involved.

5.5 School Specific Policies and Reports

- **Emergency Procedures** – CJ had comments on the documents and it was agreed she would forward to GM for amendment prior to adoption.

ACTION: CJ to forward comments to GM

6. SAFEGUARDING AND ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

6.1 GM informed governors that there were no safeguarding concerns to report.

7. ANY OTHER SCHOOL MATTERS

7.1 **School Expansion Project:** GM provided governors with an update following the latest project. In summary:

- The double mobile unit that should have been provided during the summer holiday is due for delivery during the October break.
- The full consultation meeting took place on 22nd October and the next stage is the formal planning application process. GM said that following the consultation meeting there is likely to be one objection to the proposal.
- The final design has been agreed and signed off.
- The main build is due to commence in April 2025 with expected completion June 2026, which is later than originally planned (Nov 25). The knock-on effect of the delay is the possible impact on the September 2025 intake numbers as the current Year R area might detract from the offer.

8. TRUST MATTERS

8.1 **Trust Board minutes:** Governors noted the minutes from the T6 meeting.

8.2 **Risk Policy and Risk Management:** Governors noted the Trust Risk Policy and Strategic Risk Register attached to the papers. AL informed governors that the implementation and roll out of a Trust-wide approach including establishing School specific risk registers would be discussed as part of the Trust Governance Event.

8.3 **Trust Governance Events:** Governors were reminded of the event organised for 6th November and asked to confirm their attendance to CH (Chair of Trustees)

ACTION: All governors to inform CH as to whether or not they can attend the event.

9. TRUST POLICIES

9.1 **Trust Policies** – Governors noted the Trust policies that had been approved in T6.

10. GOVERNOR MONITORING

10.1 CJ asked GM what could the LGB do to support the school saying she felt the priorities were SEND, reading, writing and phonics. GM said to observe and monitor delivery of the agreed actions to deliver SIP, the impact of such and ensuring staff have a clear understanding on what is expected of them.

10.2 It was confirmed that monitoring would take place sufficiently early in Terms 2, 4 and 6 to enable reporting to the LGB in the same cycle. Terms 1, 3 and 5 would focus on data.

10.3 It was agreed that the following areas would be subject to governor monitoring:

- T2 – reading (CJ / **), Phonics (SM / **), SEND (JS / CW) - ** to be confirmed following outcome of governor appointment.
- T4 – EYFS and writing
- T6 – Data outcomes vs predictions, and follow up on actions and observations arising from T2 and 4.

Allocation of governors to the remaining areas for monitoring to be agreed at T2.

10.4 **Dates for T2 monitoring visits:** It was agreed that GM would provide governors with a list of the subject leads and they would liaise direct to organise dates / times for the monitoring visits. GM would inform staff of the arrangements. Governor reports would be provided to AL by not later than Friday 29th November 2024 for uploading to Governor Hub.

11. ANY OTHER GOVERNOR MATTERS

11.1 Appointment of Roles and Responsibilities: Governors reviewed the schedule of roles and responsibilities in response to the vacancies created by recent resignations. Whilst it was agreed that both the statutory roles and those aligned to school priorities would be allocated there would be some that remain unallocated.

SEND – JS / Safeguarding – CJ / CiC – SM / Digital Monitoring – CJ / Trips & Visits – CW / Finance – SM / EYFS – KT / H&S – JS / Personal Development – CW / PP – CJ.

The ECG representatives would be JS / SM and it was noted both were more than welcome to attend the meetings.

ACTION: AL to update schedule for sharing with governors and also the Trust Board.

11.2 Governor appointment: GM informed governors that the Trust had recommended someone for appointment as a co-opted governor to replace SS who had resigned. Whilst the LGB considered the person would fill a skills gap it was agreed GM / CJ would meet with them and confirm to Trustees.

ACTION: GM / CJ to meet and recommend to Trustees.

11.3 Compliance and Training: It was noted that with one exception all had reconfirmed their business interests. AL explained that all governors were required to complete the cyber security training annually as a requirement of the RPA insurance cover. Staff would be covered by Trust HR and that any governor would not need to complete if they could provide evidence of completion that was approved by NCSC from their employer.

ACTION: All governors to complete the SchoolPRO cyber security training or provide AL with evidence of prior learning.

12. MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE TRUST BOARD

The matters to be raised at the Board meeting are: *See Confidential Minutes*

13. MEETING CLOSE

13.1 Confidentiality: Governors confirmed that 5.1 (part) and 5.2 (part) would be recorded as confidential.

13.2. Next meeting date: All to be held at Coxheath Primary School commencing at 1700 on:

- Tuesday 3rd December 2024
- Tuesday 4th February 2025
- Tuesday 18th March 2025
- Tuesday 13th May 2025
- Tuesday 8th July 2025

Governance calendar on Governor Hub

13.3 Meeting close: CJ thanked all attendees for their contribution to the meeting. The meeting closed at 1920.