

Wellsprings Primary School

A Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 16th February 2022 at
5.30pm at the school and remotely via Zoom.

Present: Mark Lunn (ML) – Headteacher, Katrina Marshall (KM) Assistant Head,
John Sharp (JS) – Chair, Luke Middleton (LM), Chris Hall (CH), Tricia Budd (TB)
Attending remotely; Nicola Sweeting (NS), Michelle Hall (MH)(left at 6pm), Nicky Hatton (NH) Joined
at 17.40)

Clerk: Kim Lester

Attending: Kate Mahoney (Prospective Parent Governor)

As it had been so long since governors had met in person and there is a new chair and new governors, the chair asked for brief introductions from the board.

1.	Apologies	Action
	NH had advised she would be late joining the meeting.	

2.	Business Interests Register	Action
	As this was the first to face meeting of the year it was decided to complete a new register, all parties present signing.	

3.	Minutes of the last meeting 1.12.21	Action
	This meeting had proved problematic with connections being lost and people not fully hearing the conversations. The clerk had distributed the minutes for governors to read and those present agreed that the minutes were a true record of events.	

4.	Matters Arising	Action by
	E-Safety still outstanding Photos for Governor notice board Safeguarding Training for Governance	JS/ML 30.3.22 All KL to email link

5.	Headteachers Report	Action
	<p>Data Overview – Next steps</p> <p>ML had shared Data sheets with the board and highlighted particular points of interest or concern.</p> <p>Following termly assessments 60-70% of pupils in most year groups are meeting age related expectation (ARE) The data presented showed progress measures in each year group, starting points in some areas are lower than normally expected but no adjustments to the data had been made because of Covid.</p> <p>Key observations show that there is an upward trend and that all year groups are improving. An average of children meeting ARE across the three subjects are:</p> <p>Reading 69% (59% PP, difference of -10%) Writing 59% (53% PP difference -6%) Maths 66% (61% PP, difference of -5%)</p>	

<p>In general, the gap within Pupil Premium children is smaller and this cohort of children were more likely to have attended school throughout the pandemic period.</p> <p>Overall, this shows a 7-9% improvement since the last set of data. The proportion of children making accelerated progress last term is high in all three subjects, just under 50%.</p> <p>Governors asked – what level of PP children are in the school?</p> <p>We currently have 33% of the school population with PP, this puts the school in the middle to high band nationally. National average is 20%</p> <p>KH added that her own children were in receipt of PP and felt that they had been well supported within the school.</p> <p>Next steps: Each year group has a breakdown of points to work with: Including Class interventions in all year groups, targeted booster work in years 2 and 6, Phonics and maths group setting had recommenced. Re-teaching and consolidation tasks daily, focussed support in YR 5/6 to provide a broader range of genre writing experiences.</p> <p>Further emphasis within Reading and Maths in both KS1 and 2 and GPS (Grammar/punctuation and spelling) and Science needs targeting within KS2.</p> <p>Two Government funded programmes available are being sought: National tutoring programme - originally we were below the threshold to receive the funding but with increased PP numbers we can now look at recruiting tutors to provide 15 hours per week at a 75% reduction in cost to the school.</p> <p>Academic Monitors – again these are Government funded at 75% reduction in cost, working 4 days per week for one year. Onus is with the school to recruit for these programmes.</p> <p>Governors suggested asking current part time staff whether they would be interested in the additional work.</p> <p>ML agreed that he had looked into and asked several staff, but he would ask those he hadn't yet approached.</p> <p>Continuation of the NELI language programme to support the Early years, having a positive impact on pupils in the setting suggesting a high % of reception children will meet or exceed levels in their reading skills.</p> <p>Attendance and Exclusions;</p> <p>Our current attendance level is slightly lower than normal at 94.6%, but higher than national (91.1%) and the Local Authority average (93.9%) Boys are attending better than girls at present.</p> <p>Our PP attendance is well above the national of 86% (93.4%) SEND pupils are also attending better than national at 94.61% against 87%.</p> <p>Governors asked for clarification on the SEND criteria.</p> <p>These are pupils that have been assessed by the SENCO for a range of needs, such as speech and language, global delay etc usually having external practitioner involvement such as Education Psychologists and other practitioners. We currently have 19.1% of pupils on our SEND register and 5.5% with an EHCP (Educational Health Care Plan) This is higher than most other schools in the Taunton area.</p> <p>Persistent absenteeism is monitored very closely, with anything below 90% attendance triggering attention. We currently have 11.4% PA's, the last NA comparison being in 2019 at 8.4%. No data available from 20/21.</p>	
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	<p>Exclusions (now suspensions) affecting 3 pupils: YR6 Girl has received 16.5 days. YR 6 Boy 5 days, YR 5 Boy 4.5 days.</p> <p>This is more than normal.</p> <p>Governors asked whether this is recent and whether high levels trigger an Ofsted/DfE enquiry?</p> <p>ML confirmed that these are all recent suspensions, but because they relate to only a few specific children Ofsted will not view this as unrealistically high.</p> <p>ML went on to advise that the YR6 child, currently residing out of County will be transferring to Devon as an impasse has been reached and the school cannot manage the needs of the child. They will probably be dual registered as we will still provide some of their external provision such as Forest school, Music etc.</p> <p>Updated SEF;</p> <p>ML had updated the SEF with the school context information and key areas for development.</p>	
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6.	Finance and Personnel	Action
	<p>Month 9 Report – The report had been distributed before the meeting and For the benefit of the new prospective governor, ML gave an overview of the schools position during the past 2-3 years, whereby we are still a maintained school, significant cuts had needed to be made in order to produce a realistic budget, resulting in many fixed term contracts being terminated and the loss of a teacher.</p> <p>LM raised key points from the report.</p> <p>The report showed that we can expect an estimated outturn of in the region of £212k this figure has gradually risen with each report throughout the year. Current figures show a figure of 42k Committed revenue balance and £169k uncommitted.</p> <p>LM noted that the areas of most saving had been staffing, supplies and contingency. Pupil numbers are expected to decrease in the next few years and we need to be mindful of this. In context, a family with 5 children, now residing outside of Taunton could effectively lose the school £60k if/when they manage to secure school places closer to home.</p> <p>Governors asked whether there was a figure in mind that the school should be considering carry forward as a large outturn would imply that not enough money is being used to support the school. What were other schools carry forwards?</p> <p>ML responded that as we are a maintained school the LA are working very closely with us in monitoring our balances to ensure we do not fall into a deficit situation again. ML very much does not want to have to go down the redundancy route again. With this in mind it is critical that we do not employ more staff than necessary, redeployment at the end of this academic year of staff on permanent contracts who support 1:1 will be used to support children coming up through the school and possibly releasing ELSA trained TA's to enable them to engage with pupils needing Emotional and social support.</p> <p>Having benchmarked with some other local schools it has become apparent that some of them are also carrying forward large amounts at year end. This may be for other reasons such as funding a capital project</p>	

<p>or in anticipation of falling numbers on roll. Governors discussed what they thought would be a reasonable balance to C/F and felt that the excess could be used to upgrade areas of the school that were starting to fall into disrepair. ML suggested that he would like to make improvements with the Playground equipment, this is significantly starting to deteriorate, and an upgrade would enhance the children’s playtime experiences.</p> <p>Governors agreed that ML should obtain quotes and also look at internal painting and that a figure of approximately 100k would be a reasonable C/F going forward.</p> <p>Would it be prudent to invest to save? For example, heating costs are increasing is there anything that could be funded to reduce costs?</p> <p>ML had reservations on this as the building is owned by SCC it is still in their interests to maintain the structure. Experience has shown that sitting tight has resulted in SCC finding funding and carrying out large remedial projects (boiler replacement, windows, new energy efficient lights in classrooms etc)</p> <p>Would the PE specialist be replaced this year as his enrichment for the children was surely missed?</p> <p>Discussions with the PE lead had taken place with possibilities being explored, probably not to employ someone as before but to outsource to a company that could supply Clubs etc</p> <p>LM touched on the Benchmarking information and wondered why other schools far exceeded our levels of income.</p> <p>The benchmarking site compares only funding from the ‘School Budgets’ not anything raised from PTA’s etc We were unable to answer as to why these levels of income were so different. Possible reasons might include grants that the schools have applied for. We applied for funding from EDF to support STEM and were granted £1000 last year and another £500 this year. Schools can apply for any funding they wish to.</p> <p>Also of note within the Month 9 report was to make governors aware that the support staff pay award still has not yet been agreed and that the report has been based on the difference between the original £250 and the last proposed pay award of 1.75%</p> <p>Staff Pay award policy;</p> <p>At a local level we currently pay staff absent from work due to dependency with Full pay. ML prompted discussion as to whether this should be revoked. Possible options to include 1 days paid, then unpaid or up to 5 paid days per year.</p> <p>What are the schools absence rates like?</p> <p>Generally very good, odd members of staff may be seen to take advantage.</p> <p>Governors agreed that full pay should remain with no limit and an annual review/analysis be taken.</p> <p>Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</p> <p>LM had agreed to be the lead governor for the SFVS, with consultation and discussion with the Finance Officer, he brought the SFVS to the board. Focussing on 2 particular questions;</p> <p>A5. How are we covered in the event of long term absence for financial expertise? Potential remote working if able to cover absence. Buy in services from SCC financial services.</p> <p>B7. Best ways/value to achieve the schools strategy? Staffing is a high</p>	<p>ML</p>
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	proportion of the schools budget, experienced teachers, extra class funded in order to keep class sizes smaller to achieve better teaching experience for pupils.	
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7.	Policies for Review	Action
	Charges and Remissions Home/School Agreement SEND	NS KM TB/EPB

8.	Academy Trust and 'LA patchwork' Options	
	<p>Due to a pending White Paper agreement sometime in the future, ML felt it was important to bring to the attention of the board potential options for conversion to Academy/Trust status.</p> <p>Four scenarios were provided;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing and ignore until we have to 2. Informal partnership discussions with similar schools, to keep abreast and informed. This partnership work must have an impact on the school improvement agenda to have any meaningful purpose. 3. LA Patchwork Academy. Local authority to rebrand as an academy for remaining maintained schools, but would require a potential top slice of 15%. 4. Approach an existing academy trust. Of the 5 local Academies/Trusts the only one with any possibility would be the Huish Academy as it has links to the local area, with Taunton Academy and Lyngford being in partnership. <p>During the recent visit by Steve John, Heads performance reviewer, it was suggested we look at a Trust in Weston-Super -Mare linked to the Bourneville estates as this has a very similar demographic/context/profile to Wellsprings.</p> <p>Governors asked who is pushing for schools to become Academies? It is a Government agenda to decentralise out of the Local Authorities, funding would come straight from the government. Trusts are made from an initial Outstanding school, who then can approach other schools to join. The LA is suggesting that schools start looking into alternatives.</p> <p>Current school personal preference is to not act at present, but to keeping exploring options and find a model that works. We can see no benefit from the schools that have already switched, that now have their budgets top sliced and decisions being made by a higher level CEO. ML felt that it would be beneficial to see whether Governor Services could offer an information session for the board to increase knowledge.</p> <p>The LA are running Patchwork consultations, which are open to both Heads and Governors. ML to advise of these consultations.</p> <p>ML thought that following the initial run of Academisation around 10 years ago, there were still roughly 60% of schools still running as maintained, mainly primaries. He didn't expect that the White paper would come into effect any earlier than September 2023.</p>	<p>ML</p> <p>ML/KL</p>

	Governors agreed that option 2 would be prudent, researching working with like minded schools and to approach Governor Services for more clarity.	
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9.	Safeguarding	
	<p>As a new Governor and Lead on SEN and Safeguarding TB, with ML's help fed back the Education and Welfare report to Governors; There are currently 56 pupils on the monitoring register. Zero children on a Child Protection Plan (this is good) 11 Children recognised as a child in need – slightly higher due to stepping down from CP Plan. One child looked after. 17 CSC involvement, either involved of initial assessments. In most cases there had been no further action from CSC. 11 children currently have a social worker. 11 Police logs this term.</p> <p>Governors asked for explanation.</p> <p>Following an incident, logs are sent out to relevant parties, this may directly reflect on a pupil or may just concern and extended family member. Either way it allows school to touch base with families and pupils. Nicky Hattons role as Parent and Family support Adviser supports these families and she may seek to talk to the child for clarification and support.</p> <p>The annual online safeguarding audit had been completed with the following actions identified; GB safeguarding Lead to complete GB CP Training. Training Booked. Update of Model policy – Action met. ML's safer recruitment training expired on 24.11.21 – Training updated, no recruitments since expiry so compliant.</p>	

10.	Health and Safety	
	<p>CH fed back the H&S report to the board. 2 occupational Health referrals in 21-22 around returning to work/suitability to role. There are no current workforce adjustments. There have been 6 staff Covid absences and 19 child cases. High absences for us but still not requiring enforced closures as some schools have experienced.</p> <p>Accident reporting; Equipment related bumps – 13 logged (6 in FS, 4 in KS1, 3 in KS2) Higher than last year, although acknowledge that equipment use was restricted during the pandemic period. Outdoor bumps not linked to equipment; 78 logged (34 in FS, 28 in KS1, 16 in KS2) mostly occurring during transition and almost entirely accidental. Two children reported injured through the actions or another child.</p> <p>Indoor bumps; 12 logged (7 in FS, 2 in KS1, 3 in KS2) EV1 reporting (where the school reports the incident to the Health and Safety executive where medical attention was sought beyond the school first aid)</p>	

	4 instances all related to KS2 children and resulted in treatment for fractures or either legs or arms. All injuries accidental, not involving other staff or children and not equipment malfunction. One member of Cleaning team injured whilst depositing bins, due to poor light visibility later in the evening.	
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11.	Training	
	There had been no training undertaken to be fed back on.	

AOB		
	During the December meeting when roles had been allocated, it had been suggested that NS take on the English and Maths governor link role. NS has confirmed that she is happy to take on this role and requests contact emails for the subject leaders.	NS/KL

Kate Mahoney agreed that she would like to take on the role of Parent Governor and we welcome her onto the board.

The meeting closed at 19.28

Action Points		By whom and by when
4.	Matters arising E-Safety still outstanding Photos for Governor notice board Safeguarding Training for Governance	JS/ML 30.3.22 All KL to email link✓
6.	Obtain quotes for Playground refurb and Internal painting.	ML
7.	Policies for review Charges and Remissions Home/School Agreement SEND	NS KM TB/EPB
8.	Academy Trust and 'LA patchwork' Options Patchwork Consultations dates. Contact Governor Services for Further information	ML ML/KL
AOB	Provide email contact for Link Roles Action New Parent Governor	KL/NS✓ KL✓