



5.	<p><b><u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting on the 17/03/21 were a true record and would be signed by the chair at the next available opportunity.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 5 Update on the studio refurbishment project See FPP minutes from 07/06/21 The governors recognised that this was not something that would be addressed with any urgency by ECC.</li> <li>• Item 5: Prevent Training HG had scheduled this course. A link would be sent to DL and CT by AH</li> <li>• Item 5: PB to provide a profile for the website DL and CT had provided photos and a written profile. PB apologised for the delay, explaining that he had been extremely busy with other charity work.</li> <li>• Item 6: MH to inform parents of the way that attainment information would be reported to them for the 20/21 academic year <i>Action complete</i></li> <li>• Item 9: HG and EG to review the Equality Plan. HG reported that she and EG considered the plan fit for purpose. EG had sent some additional information to MH that had been used by his HR department at work. He felt it was worth incorporating some of it into the plan if MH had time to look at it over the summer.</li> <li>• Item 11: JS to review Thaxted governor group with IT Technician There seemed no obvious reason why some governors were not getting their email. JS had sent instructions for changing the format of their emails in their inbox, so that they received all messages individually rather than as a string of replies as this may have been the reason why emails were being missed. In addition, a new group had been set up with governor private email addresses, so that JS could notify governors via their private email if there were important messages on their Thaxted account. It was early days, so it remained to be seen whether this had been successful.</li> <li>• Item 11: Skills audit/being Ofsted ready AH had created a document outlining feedback on governance from recent Ofsted inspection reports which had been circulated shortly after the last FGB meeting in March. She reported that governance featured as part of Leadership and Management, but only ever got mentioned if a school was found wanting. Preparing the board to be Ofsted ready was to be mentioned again later in the meeting.  JR to see whether her husband, an ex-Ofsted inspector, could lend some support to the GB <i>Action complete – he had no capacity to help with this at the current time</i></li> <li>• Item 11 – Membership</li> </ul>	<p><b>AH, HG, DL, CT</b></p> <p><b>PB</b></p> <p><b>MH</b></p>

	<p>Parent election to be run over the Summer term <i>Action complete – SV confirmed for a further 4-year term</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SV to put new advert for a community governor on Thaxted on line <i>Action complete – governors successfully recruited (see membership)</i></li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b><u>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</u></b></p> <p>The report, together with an updated Transition Plan and the results from the most recent Learner Survey, had been posted with the meeting papers 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. Questions relating to these documents had been received prior to the meeting and, in the absence of MH, JB had addressed these in a document that was circulated by email on the 12.07.21. JB was thanked for supplying detailed answers.</p> <p>SV noted that the school had been fortunate over the course of the pandemic in terms of the low level of staff absence, with no staff members refusing to work. He asked whether there were any specific reasons for this. JB thought it related to the way that Thaxted staff worked as a team, together with the high focus given to staff wellbeing by the SLT. In addition, whilst primarily working with the children, Miss Black was always willing to try to support staff if they had particular worries. EG supported this view; he and HG had visited the school to meet with members of the wellbeing team on the 13.07.21 and had also sensed a high level of support amongst the team. The school had appeared very calm, with a positive and cheerful atmosphere.</p> <p>ST returned to a previous question in which she had asked MH to define “excessive workload”. JB had not been in a position to answer this question. The governors agreed that it would be difficult to define it as it could be perceived differently by each individual. Workload would almost certainly be covered by the wellbeing group as it worked through the five main areas that were to become its focus. This would lead to a better understanding of workload within the school.</p> <p>AH commented on the results of the Learner Survey; feedback had been very positive overall, with behaviour being the only area where there were one or two slightly concerning comments. JB admitted that there were small pockets of poor behaviour that were currently receiving a lot of attention from the SLT. The answers given to the question relating to teachers setting challenging work had also resulted in ambiguous answers, with only 28% of the children thinking that they were being challenged in each lesson. JB said that challenge had been a focus of the SIP in 20/21. She felt that teachers were possibly not overt enough with children, resulting in them not realising that they were being challenged. <b>This would be incorporated into the 21/22 SIP.</b></p> <p>ST referred to 2 questions relating to the safeguarding data that had been supplied with the HT report. <b>JB had not been in a position to answer them, but would ask MH to address them on her return.</b></p> <p>The governors asked whether the staff had managed to review the Transition Plan. JB confirmed that it had been discussed during a recent staff meeting. Some governor monitoring of reading and writing had been postponed due to MH’s absence. This would need to be picked up next term, and would feature in the new SIP.</p>	<p>JB/MH</p> <p>MH</p>

	<p>PB commented that, as an outsider, it was difficult to see how the transition plan and SIP were linked. JB was confident that there were strands that had been carried across to the transition plan, and thought that the problem may have arisen because the governors had not seen the final updated version of the 20/21 SIP, which was used to create the Transition Plan. She agreed to check whether this was the case.</p>	<p>JB/MH</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>DATA REVIEW</b></p> <p>Assessments took place towards the end of June and data was loaded onto the school's tracker system in early July. A summarised report with a commentary was provided by JB on the 10.7.21. Questions received prior to the meeting had been answered by JB and provided to governors on the 13.07.21.</p> <p>JR said that, whilst there were some concerns as anticipated, there was little point in analysing why this had happened; it was more important to work out how to best move forward and ensure that the challenges were reflected in the 21/22 SIP.</p> <p>AH said that alarm bells were ringing for the children in year 3. She reflected on an earlier occasion when a cohort had slipped under the radar as they moved through the school and had then struggled in Year 6. JB said that she had already met with Jen Shackleton, who had taught the cohort in Year 3 and was teaching a majority of them in Morpurgo in 21/22. They had discussed ideas and put a preliminary action plan together to ensure that the children got the support they needed.</p> <p>ST reported that she had been the link governor for Rowling class in the Transition Plan. She had met with Jen S to talk about the data and plans for next year. She was clearly well aware of the weaknesses in the data and was positive about the challenge of taking the children for a second year. All staff were aware of the challenges that the cohort were facing and were optimistic that they could bring them up to a satisfactory level.</p> <p>The governors noted that there were some significant highlights in the data. In particular, they were impressed with the progress made by the children with SEND and asked that the staff responsible were congratulated. In addition, they noted the progress made in maths in years 1, 2 and 6. JB felt that the mastery technique, introduced 2 – 3 years ago, was beginning to show real benefits. The school was starting to introduce the same techniques for English, which, in light of the maths results, was definitely a step in the right direction.</p> <p>SV asked how the data compared to that of other schools. JB said that comparisons had not been made thus far, but she was sure that the results would be shared in DEEP.</p> <p>TB reported on a visit that she had made to Donaldson class earlier that day. The children had been keen to show her their work and had been very positive about their learning, which had been lovely to see. She had been impressed with the standard of the handwriting and the sentences that the children had been putting together.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN</b></p> <p>JB and CH had attended several updates and training sessions related to disadvantaged children over the past few months. ECC had recently enlisted Marc Rowland to carry out training, which JB described as inspirational. He offered practical solutions, and encouraged schools to be realistic about what they could achieve, focusing on things that</p>	

	<p>they could change and accepting that other things were outside of their control. JB had also attended several useful clinics within the DEEP group, which would continue into 21/22.</p> <p>CH commented that the training had encouraged staff and governors to change their mindset on disadvantaged children so that they avoided labelling pupils and families.</p> <p>JB explained that a Disadvantaged Strategy needed to cover so much more than children who were receiving Pupil Premium. The pandemic had highlighted a number of families that had been under the radar, but were now in urgent need of support. CT asked whether the number of disadvantaged children had increased at the school. JB said it had remained stable, with some children leaving and others being added to the list.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>GOVERNOR MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING</u></b></p> <p>JR reported that the governor auditing group had taken a new approach for the 20/21 academic year; it had adopted a template, recommended by a safeguarding expert, Andrew Hall, which consisted of 22 areas. Having reviewed all of the sections over the course of the year, she could confirm that the school was 98% compliant. There were one or two minor actions outstanding, but all of the key areas were well covered. She planned to publish the framework alongside an action list, so that all governors could see the results. She pointed out that every governor was responsible for safeguarding and it was important that they understood what this entailed at the school.</p> <p>AH thanked JR for her work in this area.</p>	JR
11.	<p><b><u>COMMITTEE REPORTS</u></b></p> <p><i>I. Curriculum – 26/04/21</i> The minutes were confirmed as received and read.</p> <p><i>II. Finance, Premises and Personnel – 07/06/21</i> The minutes were confirmed as received and read. It was noted that the updated Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation had not been submitted prior to the meeting, as shown on the agenda. The governors were reluctant to approve the document on the recommendation of the FPP committee because this level of authority had not been delegated to it in its Terms of Reference (ToR). The document would be included on the agenda at the planning meeting and a decision would be made on whether to change the ToR.</p> <p><i>III. Pay – 24/03/21</i> AH reported that the Pay Committee met on the 24/03/21 to review support staff pay decisions. No issues were highlighted and all support staff who were due to receive an increment had been awarded one.</p>	JS/FGB
12.	<p><b><u>DATA PROTECTION AUDIT</u></b></p> <p>The results of the most recent DPO audit had been provided with the meeting papers. JS was congratulated on the positive outcome.</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>POLICY REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>The following policies were due to be reviewed:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After-school Club</li> <li>• Disciplinary and Dismissal (standard Juniper Education template)</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity in Employment (standard template as above)</li> <li>• Grievance Procedure (standard template as above)</li> <li>• Special Educational Needs</li> </ul> <p>Updated documents had been provided with the meeting papers. Referring to the After-School Club, AH asked whether the club was ever forced to levy late collection charges. JB and JS confirmed that it did.</p> <p>AH also noted that Appendix C, referenced in the Grievance Procedure, was missing. JS agreed to investigate this prior to the board approving the policy.</p> <p>AH suggested that the school introduced a standardised way of cross-referencing in all of its policies as each one did it in a different way. JS agreed to look into this for any reviewed policies going forward.</p> <p>All of the policies, with the exception of the Grievance Policy, were approved.</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>JS</p>
14.	<p><b><u>ACADEMISATION</u></b></p> <p>A short paper, written by JS, outlining the implications of academy conversion and the school's options should the board decide to pursue it, had been provided with the meeting papers.</p> <p>See Part II Confidential Minutes</p>	
15.	<p><b><u>SEND REPORT</u></b></p> <p>JJ had provided a report with the meeting papers. She joined the governors at 7.55pm for this section of the meeting. She shared some data for the children with SEND, broken down by those who had been on the register for the full year and those that joined part-way through. She explained that the attainment data was not that useful because the children were always likely to be below age-expected standards, but that the progress data was more indicative of the effectiveness of the children's learning. The school was aiming for 4 steps progress or more, which had been achieved by a number of children. Overall the data that included children who had joined the school mid-year was less impressive because the school had had less time to make an impact.</p> <p>JJ shared progress data for the children who had been receiving interventions with Susana Neto. Virtually all of the children had made significant progress, with some of the 1<sup>st</sup> Class at number children improving their age-related ability by well over a year since the intervention started three months previously. The governors were impressed with the results and wished to pass on their thanks to SN.</p> <p>JR referred back to the most recent FPP committee meeting when staffing levels were discussed, and in particular the number of LSAs based in each classroom. She said that the higher ratios were clearly paying off in terms of the progress made by children with SEND.</p> <p>AH asked whether JJ felt that the school was getting enough support since the restructuring of the SEND provision within Essex County Council. JJ thought that support had</p>	

	<p>deteriorated, with far less focus on specific needs. She received one termly meeting for half an hour, which was woefully inadequate, but there was a lot of expertise in the DEEP cluster, which meant that she could manage. AH was encouraged to hear that the DEEP SENCOs were in regular contact. She wondered whether there was more that the governors could do to try to generate more support from ECC. JJ felt that this was not necessary; she was adjusting to the reduced level of support.</p> <p>CH commented on the need for continuous CPD for all of the staff; it was something that was emphasised during the course that he had attended on disadvantaged children. He was reassured that Thaxted staff had been attending regular training sessions and wondered whether this would continue into the future. JB commented that training providers had recognised that engagement was more achievable with online courses and thought that this would remain the same going forward.</p> <p>TB asked whether interventions would change in the new academic year if children no longer had to stay within the same bubble. JJ said that the system within bubbles had worked well, but it limited the number of children that could be taught in one group. She wasn't sure which method the teachers would prefer from September, but suspected it might be a mix of both.</p> <p>SV asked whether JJ thought that there would be a need for more interventions and potentially more resources in the new academic year, to reflect the amount of learning lost over the course of the pandemic. JJ did not think that the children with SEND would be any further behind than their peers; she thought that a majority of the children that were behind would catch up through high quality teaching. There was a small segment, however, that were on the cusp of being identified as needing extra support, before the pandemic; she felt that this group had struggled, and could end up on the SEND register over the coming year.</p> <p>JJ was thanked for joining the meeting and providing a detailed report. The data that was presented at the meeting would be added to the meeting papers.</p>	JS
16.	<p><b><u>GOVERNORS' BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p>I. <b>Training</b> The Governor CPD training spreadsheet had been included in the meeting papers. AH thanked those governors who had attended courses. She encouraged all governors to sign up for the Balance sessions that had been recently announced.</p> <p>II. <b>Governor Monitoring of the Transition Plan</b> This had been covered earlier in the meeting. The uncompleted monitoring on reading and writing would be carried over to the 21/22 SIP. Governors would be assigned monitoring tasks at the Planning Meeting in September. Where it had happened, the links to classes had worked well. This would also be reviewed in September.</p> <p>III. <b>Committee Structure</b> A paper outlining the possibility of moving away from committees and having more regular FGB meetings was included in the meeting papers. AH said that, with the relaxation of the pandemic restrictions, and the introduction of new governors onto</p>	

	<p>board, the time was right to consider whether to go back to the old organisational structure or introduce new. The disadvantage of a committee-free structure was that there would be more meetings to attend, but these would be shorter and more focused. The agendas would be shorter and there would be more time for reflection and discussion. She felt that there was currently too big a gap between FGB meetings, which slowed the effectiveness of the board down.</p> <p>DL expressed a concern that the new structure would generate more work for MH. AH said she didn't think this was the case because she wouldn't need to produce a report for every meeting. On the contrary, she hoped that, moving forward, MH would be in a position to delegate sections of her report to other members of the SLT. It would be good practice for other senior staff to join the meetings.</p> <p>PB agreed that it would be possible to limit the number of HT reports to the three that the board currently received. His biggest concern was the governors would not be able to specialise in specific areas, to match their skill-sets. AH commented that there was no reason why governors would not be able to develop an area of expertise in the same way as a Subject Leader. The board would continue to appoint roles to governors at the beginning of each year, and that person would be responsible for focusing on particular parts of FGB agendas.</p> <p>EG thought that the more frequent meetings would result in better teamwork. It would enable governors to get to know each other and bond on a human level.</p> <p>ST said that she would not personally have the capacity to attend more meetings. There was always a lot of paperwork, resulting in a lot of preparation.</p> <p>HG said that there was a need for change; the agendas were currently too long and required governors to look at too much paperwork before each meeting. If the new system reduced the amount of preparation needed it would be a good thing. It would, however, inevitably result in more work for the clerk.</p> <p>SV asked what the motivation for this was and whether it was really needed. He asked whether the governors had concerns about the board's effectiveness with its current structure. He also had concerns about the amount of preparation needed for each meeting.</p> <p>DL felt that it would be impossible for the governors to decide on the matter without MH having her say. AH agreed that a decision could not be made at this point and suggested it was discussed again at the Strategic Planning Evening on the 19/07/21.</p> <p>IV. <b>Meeting Dates for 21/22</b> A set of proposed meeting dates had been included with the meeting papers. These were accepted, but it was recognised that the dates would need to change if the board decided to do away with committees.</p> <p>IV. <b>Preparing for Ofsted</b> AH said that the board needed to concentrate on this over the coming months. Time would have to be found at meetings to concentrate on each aspect of</p>	
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	Leadership and Management, so that the governors felt more prepared for an inspection.	
17.	<p><b><u>CHAIR'S ACTION/CORRESPONDENCE</u></b></p> <p>I. AH informed the board that she had sent out individual emails to all members of the school's support staff to thank them on behalf of the governing body for their work over the most difficult of years.</p> <p>II. She had also met with the new PTA Chair, Lorna Burkle, and planned to invite her to a meeting to meet all the governors.</p> <p>III. She thanked the governors for meeting with her for their 1 to 1 reviews. A summary of the key points had been circulated after the meetings. She had found each session extremely useful, and planned to work on improving any areas of concern over the coming months.</p> <p>IV. Finally, AH thanked the governors for their individual contributions to drinks for the staff meal on the last day of term.</p>	
18.	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b> None</p>	
19.	<p><b><u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS:</u></b></p> <p><b>Governor Strategic Planning Evening</b> Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 7pm</p> <p><b>Governing Planning Meeting</b> Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 6.30pm</p>	
	<p>The minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting</p> <p>_____ Date _____</p> <p>Chair</p>	