



**Thaxted Primary School**  
**Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting**  
**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 5.45pm**  
**Held at the school**

Name	Ref	Type	Present	Role	Term
Peter Boorman	PB	Parent	Present		05.11.24
Justine Brooks	JB	Acting Headteacher	Present		
Vacancy		Local Authority			
Emma Dymond	ED	Staff	Present		26.09.25
Hazel Gotfraind	HG	Co-opted	Apologies		19.11.23
Jamie Henderson	JH	Parent	Present		26.09.25
Anne Hopkins	AH	Partnership	Present	Chair of Governors	14.09.22
Colin Howell	CH	Co-opted	Present	Vice Chair	30.06.24
Debra Legge	DL	Partnership	Present		29.04.25
John Levett	JL	Parent	Absent		23.03.22
Jenny Reilly	JR	Parent	Present		13.11.22
Charlotte Tillbrook	CT	Co-opted	Present	Vice Chair	27.06.25
Saroj Velamakanni	SV	Parent	Apologies		25.06.25
<b>Attendees</b>					
Jackie Sweeting	JS		Present	Clerk and SBM	

Item	Detail	Action
1.	<b><u>ATTENDANCE &amp; APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> Received and accepted from JR, CH and HG. There were no further apologies.	
2.	<b><u>DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST</u></b> There were no new interests or conflicts relating to any items on the agenda.	
3.	<b><u>AOB</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studio Refurbishment</li> <li>• Safeguarding update – to be circulated by JR</li> <li>• New ppa arrangements</li> </ul>	
4.	<b><u>MEMBERSHIP</u></b> AH informed the board that EG had stepped down due to pressures at work. Taking this into account there were now two vacancies on the board, for an LA and Co-opted Governor. AH proposed that the board consider an earlier application from Maggi Griffiths, a former teacher at the school. <b>It was agreed that AH would contact her to investigate whether she was still interested and if so pursue getting her onto the board.</b>  SV said that the advertisement was still visible on the Thaxted-online website. AH suggested that the governors reconsidered the wording to see whether it could be refreshed.  See confidential minutes for further discussions regarding membership.	<b>AH</b>

APPROVED

FGB Meeting 19.01.22

5.	<p><b><u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting on the 08/12/21 were a true record and were signed by the chair.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 6: PB to complete Business Interests form <i>To be completed</i></li> <li>• Item 6: PB, JB and ED to provide profiles for the website ED and JB had completed profiles. <i>The profile from PB was still outstanding.</i></li> <li>• Item 7: JB to update the Governor Monitoring Report Template to incorporate the PP Strategy Statement <i>Action complete</i></li> <li>• Item 7: Sentence structure to be adjusted in part of the PP Strategy Statement <i>Action complete</i></li> <li>• Item 10: JB/JS to look into inviting a suitable professional in to assist staff in coping with stress <i>Action to be carried forward</i></li> <li>• JB/ED to feed the findings of the focus group back to staff and arrange a follow-up meeting <i>On staff meeting and briefing agendas for this week.</i></li> <li>• JB/JS to ensure that all staff read the updated Child Protection Policy <i>Currently in circulation; action will be completed before the next meeting</i></li> <li>• Item 14: JB to circulate a list of assembly topics for the spring term <i>Action complete</i></li> <li>• JB to contact heads at feeder secondaries. <i>AH had written a letter that would be sent within the next few days</i></li> <li>• SQ and JS to investigate the cost of installing an all-weather surface in the field <i>Quotes were being sought</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PB</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PB</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JB/JS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JB/ED</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JS</b></p>
7.	<p><b><u>TEACHING AND LEARNING</u></b></p> <p>JB had prepared and circulated a report on the assessment data that was generated at the end of the autumn term. The peer review report had also been added to the meeting papers. A number of governors had asked questions about both documents prior to the meeting, and these had been answered in a separate document that had been circulated to all governors.</p> <p>ED reported that she was planning to visit Dunmow Primary School to observe writing and compare their experiences since the start of the Covid period. She was confident that things were improving; recognising that the children made the most progress during the spring term, she had just completed a further assessment with the year 6 children and could see</p>	

that they were slowly returning to the standards that were expected pre-Covid. The school had put a lot of extra resources into bringing on this cohort; there were extra interventions and booster groups, funded through the recovery premium and school-led tutoring grant. ED was also looking into the National Tutoring Programme and had meetings scheduled with four providers.

The governors recognised that there was a lot happening and were encouraged that there were signs of success. They questioned whether the school should focus more on improving attainment and progress in the lower year groups so that there was less need for so many interventions when the children reached Year 6. JB agreed that it was important that the gaps did not get bigger but pointed out that it had been difficult to address this since the start of Covid. More was being done now in the shape of booster groups, delivered by Lisa Cox and Sarah Billings. The school had recently been sent benchmarking data provided by Juniper Education, which compared assessment data that they held for all of their customers across the country. The results were encouraging, showing that Thaxted was not falling behind national standards. Both ED and JB were confident that, given time, the children would get back on track.

A governor agreed with this view; he was in contact with several other headteachers in the area who were in a similar position to Thaxted. He was confident that attainment and progress would improve over time.

The governors asked whether the Year 5 reading project mentioned in JB's document was a completely separate initiative. JB confirmed that it was. Tom Brown was receiving support and training from local KS3 teachers. The aim was to try to prepare the children more for learning at secondary school.

It was noted that the written report from the peer review had been very positive. However, it referred to variations in books between classes which was something that had been pointed out during the last Ofsted inspection. The governors were concerned that this had not been addressed and asked what the school was doing about it. JB felt that the school had made progress since the last inspection, but pointed out that it was always going to be difficult to compare books due to the way the year groups were split. She agreed that the standard across a year group should be the same, but it was not always possible to follow the same planning and hence it was inevitable that there would be differences. She said that the curriculum was in place and that the teachers were confident in terms of their planning. The peer reviewers had come from schools where each class had a straight year group, hence they noticed the variability much more.

ED said that Thaxted needed to sell this as a strength rather than a weakness; depending on which class a child was allocated, he/she could undertake a unique learning journey. Standards would be equally as high in each class but the learning would not be identical. If the outcomes were good the differences could be embraced rather than avoided. She said that the report had been a positive moral boost for the staff.

The governors asked whether the peer review would be repeated. JB confirmed that it would; the reviews followed a continual cycle within DEEP, ensuring that all schools received the same number of visits.

PB joined the meeting at 6.10pm.

8.	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>A number of finance reports had been circulated, as stated on the agenda. JH had sent some questions in advance of the meeting, which had been answered by JS and circulated.</p> <p><b>In the absence of JL it was agreed that AH would undertake the annual inventory check and report back at the next meeting.</b></p> <p>The governors had been impressed with the benchmarking data provided for the meeting and were encouraged to see that there were few areas of concern (see governor questions).</p> <p>It was agreed that the contract review would be carried forward to the next meeting.</p>	AH
9.	<p><b>PREMISES MATTERS</b></p> <p><b>In the absence of JL it was agreed that CT would review the premises plan before the next meeting.</b></p>	CT
10.	<p><b>PARENT SURVEY</b></p> <p>A parent survey that followed the questions on the Ofsted Parent View Toolkit had been circulated before the end of term. A summary of the results from the survey was included with the meeting papers.</p> <p><b>The governors agreed that the results had been very positive overall. They asked what percentage of families had responded.</b> JS stated that there had been 153 responses in total, which represented a large portion of the parents, bearing in mind that there were 253 children at the school.</p> <p><b>A governor pointed out that a small segment of the parents had disagreed with the question relating to whether the school had high expectations for their child and wondered whether this was something that needed to be addressed. JB said that she would get some feedback on this at the next parent coffee morning.</b></p> <p><b>It was also noted that there were a number of parents who had opted for the “don’t know” option for some of the questions. DL said that the responses were similar to those at her former school. It was impossible to engage with every parent but the results were very positive overall. In particular, the fact that all but two parents out of the 153 who responded were happy to recommend the school was telling.</b></p>	JB
11.	<p><b>POLICIES</b></p> <p>Governors had been nominated to review the policies that were due to be updated during the spring term as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour and Exclusions – SV Approved. JB mentioned that the Essex Heads Association was about to issue a new template, which would include Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP), an approach that the school had adopted after training all of the classroom-based staff. The school’s policy would be revised when this was available.</li> <li>• Children Missing Education due to Healthcare needs – CT <b>c/f to next meeting</b></li> </ul>	CT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints Procedure – AH This had been approved, but PB asked the school to review the stages in the last paragraph to see whether they were in the right place.</li> <li>• Equality Plan – HG HG had two questions regarding the plan, the first related to the mission statement, which stated that achievement was analysed by race, gender and disability. She asked whether this was done as there was no evidence in the data. Secondly under equal opportunities for staff, she asked how the school measured that its staffing reflected the diversity of the local community. The governors discussed both questions; gender and disability were definitely analysed, but there was more doubt about race. This would be addressed in future analysis. Regarding the diversity of staff, this could be checked against census data and born in mind when recruiting.</li> <li>• First Aid Policy – JR c/f to next meeting</li> <li>• Governor Monitoring Visits – AH Lay-out had been amended and then approved</li> <li>• Health and Safety – JR JR had noted that there were no references to Covid in the policy and requested that the risk assessment was added to the list of linked policies on the first page. She had also noticed that the personnel listed on the last page needed to be updated. This had since been done.</li> <li>• LAC Policy – DL This had been approved, but DL asked how the school went about monitoring the policy and whether a paragraph should be added to all policies regarding this. AH asked whether DL could provide suitable, suggested wording from the policies at her former school.</li> <li>• Staff Code of Conduct – JH Approved</li> <li>• Virtual Governance Policy – AH Terminology changed and then initially approved. However, HG also reviewed the policy and raised a number of queries regarding the platform used for meetings and the need for more flexibility regarding individual governors joining face-to-face meetings remotely when required. AH had agreed to review the policy and amend it in light of her queries. It would be reviewed again at the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p>With the exception of the virtual governance, first aid and healthcare policies, the governors were happy to approve the policies taking the amendments stated above into account.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JB</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JR</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AH</b></p>
12.	<p><b><u>GOVERNOR BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p>12.1 Chair’s Action AH had dealt with a parental complaint that she had received in writing towards the end of the autumn term. It had related to attendance and the school’s insistence on</p>	

	<p>a child’s attendance improving. She had responded to the complaint in writing after giving the matter due consideration. There had been no response from the parent but the child has since been taken off roll and was being home-schooled.</p> <p>AH had also written to the local secondary school headteachers and the Clerk to the Parish Council notifying them of the vacancies on the board and inviting staff/members of the council to join.</p> <p>Finally, AH had received correspondence notifying the board of a change in the school’s Effectiveness Partner from Jacky Castle to PJ Prince. Both were visiting school the next day to meet with JB. Both were available to support the headteacher shortlisting process.</p> <p>12.2 SIP Monitoring Progress was noted as follows:</p> <p>Priority 1: <b>JH and PB had carried out a monitoring visit and were due to submit a report.</b> They described the visit briefly, stating that JJ had achieved the autumn term objectives on the SIP and was moving on to those for the spring term. All classroom-based staff had received training in Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) and baseline assessments had been carried out. Parents were to be introduced to TPP and how it could help their children. JJ had also reported that the assessment method for SEND had changed nationally and schools were now expected to adopt a new method. The school had chosen a method that was relevant to all children up to Year 2. This was likely to be adequate for most children on the SEND register, but it might need to stretch to Year 3. JJ lamented the fact that there was a delay in getting EHCPs agreed by ECC due to a loss of staff, particularly educational psychologists. In addition, she talked about a new ECC system for SEND called “ordinarily available”, which centred on standards of SEND provision in all ECC schools. Thaxted had signed up as an early-adopter.</p> <p>Priority 2: It was noted that HG was now the only member of this monitoring group and it was discussed whether CH might move from Priority 3 to join her. <b>This would be proposed and clarified over the next few days.</b></p> <p>Priority 3: SV confirmed that a meeting had taken place before Christmas and a report had been sent to JB and AH. <b>He was asked to resend the report.</b></p> <p>Priority 4: DL confirmed that a meeting was planned for January</p> <p>12.3 Training/CPD The spreadsheet was reviewed.</p> <p>12.4 Monthly meetings The governors discussed whether they felt that monthly board meetings, in the absence of committee meetings was working. AH reiterated that this was something that governing boards were moving towards so that all governors were more informed. It led to a more cohesive approach with more teamwork. After some discussion the governors agreed that the new structure was helping them gain a better all-round knowledge of the school, but that the monthly meetings were</p>	<p><b>JH/PB</b></p> <p><b>AH</b></p> <p><b>SV</b></p> <p><b>DL</b></p>
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	<p>creating a greater workload. It was agreed that the timetable of meetings would be reviewed to see whether they could take place every six weeks rather than four. It was recognised that meetings would extend back to 2 hours in light of this. <b>AH and JS agreed to issue a new timetable for approval.</b></p> <p>12.5 Ofsted Inspection framework Questions This discussion was postponed due to lack of time.</p>	<b>AH/JS</b>
13.	<p><b><u>MEETING REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>13.1 Confidential sections to be agreed Section on membership</p> <p>13.2 Meeting Review See discussions in point 12.4 above</p> <p>13.3 Responsibilities for review for the next meeting</p> <p>Curriculum/Teaching and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher’s Report – AH, SV (but all governors asked to review closely and ask questions if they wish)</li> </ul> <p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Month 9 – carry forward forecast - DL</li> <li>• Budget vs actual - JH</li> <li>• Cashflow - JH</li> <li>• SFVS – CH and JH</li> </ul> <p>Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To receive the result of the ECC online H&amp;S report – JR</li> <li>• To receive the result of the governor H&amp;S inspection JR</li> </ul>	
14.	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>14.1 Studio Refurbishment JS had forwarded an email from the ECC Project Manager to the governors, outlining the most up-to-date plans for the studio. A final decision had been made to refurbish rather than replace the building. A single contractor would be given the task of proposing how best to scope the project within the confines of the S106 funding. There was a risk that the work could not be completed during the holidays and might spill into the term on either side. This would present problems with the after-school and breakfast clubs but could be managed on a short-term basis. She was asking for governor approval to proceed on this basis. The governors were encouraged to hear that a final decision had been made and were happy to support the refurbishment project.</p> <p>14.2 Safeguarding Update JR had sent AH and JS a summary of the most recently proposed changes to the DfE document “Keeping Children Safe in Education”, which were now part of a nationwide consultation. The changes most relevant to governance related to the need for all governors to receive safeguarding training as part of induction, and to also receive regular</p>	

	<p>refresher training. Regular refresher training already in place at Thaxted. <b>AH had asked JR to circulate the document to all governors.</b></p> <p>14.3 ppa Cover  It was noted that JS had circulated a request for the approval of a new ppa sports coach to replace Neil Smye by email. <b>A governor asked why this had needed to be done by email rather than wait for the next meeting.</b> JS explained that NS had left at short notice, which meant that the school had needed to find an alternative quickly, and didn't have time to wait until the meeting. <b>The governor asked why it was necessary for the board to approve the decision when it was more operational than strategic.</b> JS explained that the overall cost of the ppa cover was more than that budgeted for NS, hence it needed approval. The headteacher's expenditure limit set out in the school's Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation, was £5,000 and the expenditure was beyond this limit. The governors suggested that a possible increase in this limit be considered when the document was next due for review in the summer term. All governors had approved the change.</p>	<b>JR</b>
15.	<p><b><u>DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING</u></b>  TBA (see item 12.4)</p>	
	<p>The minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Chair</p>	