



Thaxted Primary School
Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting
Wednesday 17th November, 6.30pm
Held at the school

Name	Ref	Type	Present	Role	Term
Peter Boorman	PB	Parent	Absent		05.11.24
Justine Brooks	JB	Acting Headteacher	Present		
Vacancy		Local Authority			
Emma Dymond	ED	Staff	Present		26.09.25
Edd Gallier	EG	Co-opted	Apologies		24.09.23
Hazel Gotfraind	HG	Co-opted	Present		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	Present		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	Present		25.06.25
Attendees					
Jackie Sweeting	JS		Present	Clerk and SBM	

Item	Detail	Action
1.	<u>ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Received and accepted from EG. There were no further apologies.	
2.	<u>DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST</u> There we no new interests and conflicts relating to any items on the agenda.	
3.	<u>AOB</u> None	
4.	<u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u> It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting on the 13/10/21 were a true record and were signed by the chair.	
5.	<u>MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 2.2: SV to put advert for a governor vacancy on Thaxted online <i>Action complete. The advert was posted during the week of the 1/11/21. To date there had been no response, but it was hoped that someone might still come forward.</i> • Item 3: PB to complete Business Interests form <i>Action still outstanding</i> 	PB

APPROVED

FGB Meeting 17.11.21

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 7: PB, JH and ED to provide profiles for the website <i>Action completed by JH and ED. JB was also asked to provide a profile. Profile from PB still outstanding</i> Item 7: JH to carry out website check <i>This had been done and would be reviewed at the next meeting.</i> Item 7: AH to finish RAG rating governors against their SIP priorities in 20/21 A completed RAG rating was circulated prior to the meeting. The governors accepted AH's assessments. <p>AH updated the governors on the dates put in place for the next round of headteacher recruitment. She passed on the interview date of the 17/3/22 and asked governors to put this in the diary so that as many as possible could come into school to meet the candidates.</p>	PB/JB
6.	<p>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT Four governors had submitted questions prior to the meeting and answers had been circulated on the 16/11/21.</p> <p>There were no further questions about the report. JB stated that she planned to change the format for the next report as some of the information that had been pulled through from the school' Information Management System had been misleading. The governors discussed the system in place for asking questions and it was agreed that, to avoid duplications, JS would format the initial email, requesting questions, in a way that would allow all governors to be copied into all questions.</p>	JS
7.	<p>REVISED SIP An updated SIP, with details of governor monitoring, had been included with the meeting papers. AH confirmed that the governors assigned to each priority on the 15/09/21 had not changed. The corresponding staff leads for each priority were:</p> <p>SEND – Jen Jinkerson (CT lead, PB, JH) Maths – Justine Brooks (SV Lead, JR and CH) English – Emma Dymond (HG lead, EG,) Priority 4: Early Years – Sarah Quinn (DL lead, JL, AH)</p> <p>Each staff lead had an action plan that would be shared with the governors prior to the first meeting/visit, and it would be up to each group to agree with the lead how best to carry out the monitoring.</p> <p>AH stressed the importance of monitoring reports to evidence that governors were fulfilling their role. She asked that each group tried to carry out a visit before the end of term if possible, so that the monitoring adhered to the original timetable of at least three visits a year, once a term.</p> <p>The governors discussed a recent Balance course on preparing for Ofsted that four members had attended. During the course it had been recommended that governors were mindful of the four areas of the Ofsted inspection framework as this would help with the format of their monitoring.</p>	ALL GOVS

	<p>JB was asked about the success criteria at the start of the SIP. She said this was aspirational for the beginning of the academic year, but should be achieved by the end.</p> <p>AH also referred to the Governor SIP priorities on page 3 of the plan. The governors would RAG rate themselves against these priorities once a term, starting at the next meeting on the 8/12/21.</p>	
8.	<p>FINANCIAL DATA</p> <p>A year-end carry forward forecast and a forward plan had been circulated prior to the meeting, together with a commentary on the documents by JS. It had been agreed at the last meeting that these documents would be closely reviewed by JH, DL and CH. Questions relating to the review had been answered and included with the meeting papers.</p> <p>A governor referred to the teacher who had recently opted out of the pension. She wondered whether the school was doing enough to encourage staff to take up the pension. JS said that both pension schemes at the school, for teachers and the local government scheme for support staff, were good pensions and all staff were encouraged to pay into them. The teacher had opted out temporarily for personal reasons, but would almost certainly opt back in in future years.</p> <p>The governors asked whether there was more than could be done to promote the breakfast and after-school clubs, as a means of improving income generation. JS said that the school had recently sent a reminder out to parents of the clubs' existence and would continue to do this on a regular basis. She had also consulted with the staff to get ideas for new initiatives, which had generated a list of new actions. These would be addressed before the end of term.</p> <p>One governor asked about the concerning developments relating to Essex County Council issuing low-value Educational Healthcare Plans and wondered whether there was more that the school could do to contest these. JB stated that JJ was very competent at applying for the plans, and was more successful than most Inclusion Managers. A number of governors agreed that there was little that could be done; ECC were paying out more than they could afford and were introducing measures to cut costs.</p> <p>A governor asked whether the PTA was in a position to help fund any of the shortfalls highlighted in the finance report. JB said that the PTA were doing a fantastic job of generating revenue and supporting certain projects in the school. They had been very creative in the way that they had collected money since the beginning of the pandemic and were currently fundraising to help the school buy a new set of laptops.</p> <p>Another governor referred to the fact that the school was not currently charging for clubs and wondered whether this had been a sensible decision in light of the fact that they generated income. JB said that the funding of clubs was a temporary measure to encourage as many children as possible to participate in physical exercise. Many of the clubs were run by teachers and did not incur a cost. Clubs that were run by Learning Assistants or by the ppa Sports Coach, Neil Smye, did result in a cost, which had been taken from PE Grant funding for this term. The SLT felt that this was a good use of the funding. In her position as sports governor JR agreed with this statement. She had recently discussed the matter with SQ, the Sports Lead, and it was clear that there was a correlation between cost and participation. The initiative successfully targeted those children that would not attend a</p>	

	<p>club if it involved a charge. JS also mentioned that it was really only the clubs run by NS that generated any form of income. In recent years a lot of this had been cancelled out by other clubs where the costs were higher, but could not be passed on to parents, for example, cookery club.</p>	
9.	<p><u>PREMISES MATTERS</u></p> <p>A premises plan had been included with the meeting papers, together with the most recent Asset Management plan, issued in 2018. JL was due to scrutinise this information in advance of the meeting, and was going to visit the school to discuss the plans and carry out an inventory check. The latter was postponed due to JS mistakenly agreeing an appointment that she could not make, so the check would be carried out and reported on at the next meeting.</p> <p>One governor had studied the Essex Asset Management Plan and noted that there were no items that required immediate attention. She asked whether there was any news on the studio refurbishment. JS said that she alongside JB had been involved in two remote meetings with Essex colleagues; the first was to discuss a possible refurbishment, but they were told shortly afterwards that Essex had found another pot of money that could be used to replace old buildings and the intention now was to knock the studio down and replace it with a new one. The governors were encouraged by this prospect, although disappointed that it was not going to happen in the immediate future. They asked whether there was a chance that the new building could be made into a two-storey structure rather than one. JS thought this was unlikely due to the cost and the fact that the neighbours would object. The governors urged the school to investigate this possibility in light of the shortage of space at the school. JS agreed to investigate this and report back at the next meeting.</p>	JS
10.	<p><u>POLICIES</u></p> <p>The Early Career Teacher policy had been scrutinised and recommended for ratification by AH. She said that the policy was worth reading as it provided more detail on the new scheme that allowed newly trained teachers an additional induction period of a year. JB said that this was something that had been put in place after the first lockdown, when it was recognised that newly qualified teachers had not been given enough time in a school to pass their induction period.</p> <p>The Pay Policy had been scrutinised by the Pay Committee and was also recommended for ratification.</p> <p>Both policies were approved.</p>	
11.	<p><u>GOVERNOR BUSINESS</u></p> <p>11.1 Mentoring checklist AH reminded the recently recruited governors and their corresponding mentors that it was important to complete the induction checklist as it provided evidence that they had undergone a thorough induction. All forms were to be returned to JS.</p> <p>11.2 Class links Class-Link Governors were reminded that they needed to contact their corresponding class teacher to arrange a visit if they had not done this so far.</p>	

Donaldson – JR
Rosen - EG
Dahl - CH
Blyton - JL
Rowling - DL
Morpurgo - HG
Carroll - PB
Lewis - CT
Shakespeare - SV

11.3 Succession Plan

AH had spoken to a number of governors to ascertain whether they had the intention of becoming Chair or Vice Chair over the course of the next 2 to 3 years. The existing draft plan that was seen at the meeting on the 13.10.21 had been recirculated prior to this meeting with a request for approval. It was approved.

11.4 Review of recent training

The CPD spread sheet had been included with the meeting papers. It was confirmed that CT, DL and JH had completed their induction training.

11.3 Ofsted Inspection framework

Following on from the last meeting, AH had provided a new set of questions for discussion as follows:

- How good are the schools' **safeguarding** arrangements? What are they? How are they monitored by governors? How is safer recruitment covered?

All staff working at the school were recorded on the Single Central Record. All safeguarding records were kept on MyConcern. The school had a Designated Person for safeguarding (JB), together with two deputies (NB and ED was about to do the training). These designated people met on a weekly basis to look at all of the reports that had been made on MyConcern over the course of the week and decided on a course of action if one had not already been implemented as a matter of urgency. Safeguarding was always discussed at the fortnightly Head and Chair meetings. All staff and governors attended annual safeguarding refresher training and safeguarding was covered regularly at staff meetings. All members of the SLT and several governors received the Andrew Hall weekly safeguarding newsletter. The school was fortunate enough to have a Pastoral Leader, Miss Black, which was a major strength for the school; any children with worries or anxiety could meet with her to get support. The school had a robust Child Protection Policy based on the ECC model; this was due to be updated and would be reviewed at the next board meeting on the 08/12/21.

JB had now diarised a regular check of the Single Central Record. It was also noted that the school would need to undertake the local authority safeguarding audit in 2022.

	<p>The governors were confident that safeguarding was very strong at the school. AH mentioned that a governor would need to attend safer recruitment training in preparation for her stepping down in September 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is staff well-being measured? How are governors kept informed about possible issues? What is the culture of CPD in the school? <p>Staff wellbeing was discussed at the fortnightly Head and Chair meetings. EG, the lead governor for staff wellbeing, was proactive in monitoring it, and was instrumental in organising a focus workgroup. The termly wellbeing survey had recently been sent to staff with a deadline of the 24/11/21 for completion. The governors asked what the uptake had been this time around. JB and JS felt it was lower than seen in the past. HG, the other wellbeing governor, asked whether the results of the first focus group had been shown to staff as she was aware that MH had originally forgotten to do this. JB, ED and JS were not sure whether the information had been shared and agreed to look into this and ask EG for copies of his slides if they needed to be distributed. This could be one of the reasons why the number of responses had decreased; because staff felt that nothing was done about any of problems that they had highlighted.</p> <p>The results of this term’s survey would be sent to EG for analysis. The governors asked JB whether she had a view of how staff felt at the current time. She felt that things were generally OK. The main problem was that people were stretched because of the need to cover high levels of absence due to Covid. Changes in leadership were always unsettling, but she felt things would improve over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do governors know what stakeholders think of the school? How do you listen to the views of stakeholders and is feedback given? <p>The key stakeholders, outside of the children and staff, were parents, the local authority, feeder schools, and people in the town. Communicating with parents was always difficult; they were often unaware of who the governors were and what their role entailed. Parents’ views were collected via an annual survey; this was due to be sent out over the next week. The school did work with local preschools, but it was difficult to evidence the cooperation that took place. Likewise, there was regular engagement with the community via the churches and Thaxted Festival but this was also not well evidenced. The governors discussed whether this was an issue and concluded that it would not be at the top of an inspector’s list, to gauge the strength of community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What arrangements are in place for governor training? Does it take place regularly? Is it related to the strengths and weaknesses of the governing board? How do you know what they are? <p>The board has a record of any training attended. Governors have committed to attend at least two courses per academic year, preferably one per term. Strengths and weaknesses are highlighted through an annual skills audit, and governors are signposted to appropriate training to fill any gaps in their knowledge. A skills audit took place in the Spring term 2021 and would be repeated next year.</p>	
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12.	<p><u>MEETING REVIEW</u></p> <p>12.1 Confidential sections to be agreed None</p> <p>12.2 Meeting Review – summarised AH asked whether the governors felt that the new structure of monthly meetings was achieving its purpose. They felt it was too early to say. One governor pointed out that the questions asked as part of the scrutiny of various reports were useful; some governors would already know the answer to them, but it led to others becoming more informed.</p> <p>JS asked whether the governors would consider bringing the time of the monthly meetings forward; they had always been later than the committee meetings because certain governors had historically struggled to make it back to Thaxted any earlier, but she felt that this might no longer be the case. The day was very long for staff who got to school at 7.30am. The governors agreed that they would try an earlier start of 5.45pm at the next meeting to see whether this would be possible going forward.</p> <p>12.3 Responsibilities for review for the next meeting</p> <p>Curriculum/Teaching and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch-up Funding – CH • Pupil Premium Expenditure, including the Recovery Premium and School-led tutoring funding – CH • PE Grant expenditure - JR <p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget vs actual for 21/22 – JH, HG • Cashflow for 21/22 – JH, HG • Trading accounts for catering, after-school and breakfast clubs – JH, HG • Virements for 21/22 – JL • Contract review - JL (initial discussion to take place at the same time as the inventory check) <p>Premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory check - JL <p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report on the results of the most recent staff wellbeing survey - EG • To give a verbal report of the Pay Committee meeting - AH <p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Policy – JR 	
13.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>JB wished to invite the governors to the following events:</p> <p>Christmas dinner – 14/12/21 – 12.00 Christmas service – 16/12/21 - 2pm</p>	

	Nativity – dress rehearsal 6/12/21 – 2pm	
14.	<p><u>DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>Wednesday 8th December 2021 Wednesday 19th January 2022 Wednesday 23rd February 2022 Wednesday 23rd March 2022 Wednesday 4th May 2022 Wednesday 15th June 2022 Wednesday 13th July 2022</p> <p>All meetings start at 6.30pm</p>	
	The minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting	
	<p>_____ Date _____</p> <p>Chair</p>	