



Confirmed  
**THONGSLEY FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ST PETER'S SCHOOL  
MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**



**TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020 AT 7.00 PM**

**Action**

**Governing Body Members Present:** Christopher Bennet (Head Teacher St Peter's School), Phil Cox, Mark Goodridge (Chair), Bill Hennessy, Sarah Jane Hilton, Rachel Hurst, David Jones (Head Teacher, Thongsley Fields), Anne Sutton and Stephen Terrell.

**In attendance:** Paul Lawrence (Director of Education for the Cam Academy Trust), Carolyn Duckett (School Business Manager) and Lorraine Barr (Clerk).

**Observers:**

Lauren West (Deputy Head Teacher Thongsley Fields)  
Emily Davis (potential governor)

The meeting was quorate throughout.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from James Singleterry and Stephen Munday (CEO of the CAM Academy Trust). These were accepted by the Governing body.

**2. Declaration of business interests**

There were no declarations of interest pertaining to the business to be discussed other than those already noted.

**3. Head Teacher's report St Peter's School**

In advance of the meeting, the Head Teacher's report had been circulated and questions on its content were invited.

**Engagement**

**In response to a query from Governors**, the Head Teacher advised that, in years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 during the week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> June, only 37% of students had accessed online learning and only 19% of disadvantaged students had accessed online resources. He stated that the school had done all that was reasonable in order to engage the students such as:

- Weekly calls to the most vulnerable
- Email/letter contact
- Home visits as appropriate and

that the degree of need in the community had significantly influenced engagement. Live lessons had, in general, been well received, however student attendance at some had been disappointing. The delivery of such lessons had been conditional upon staff having the necessary resources and being sufficiently trained prior to the period of lockdown. Substantial praise had been received from the parents of students who had actively participated in live lessons. A significant investment in laptops had been made to further engage students, however broadband connections remained a hindrance for some families. Governors were reassured to learn that the rate of engagement of students at St Peter's School was above the 20% quoted nationally. Members were advised that, within the Trust, the St Peter's rate of engagement was the lowest amongst the secondary schools. It was noted, however, that other schools with higher engagement

## Confirmed

were further ahead in the implementation of the Trust's IT policy which supports the purchase by parents of I pads.

Following a question raised by Governors, the Head Teacher stated that parental engagement in the Year 6 transition webinar the previous week had been very positive,

with many questions raised and answered. The majority of information packs completed by parents had already been received by the school. This was a significant improvement on this time last year. Governors were advised that the school website contains substantial information for new parents, who are also communicated with two or three times a week by email, and expectations have been made clear. Members noted that some of the PD day on 4<sup>th</sup> September will be dedicated to transitions.

### Staffing

Those present were advised that there is a full complement of teaching staff for September. Due to the increase in student numbers, a family worker and first aider are to be recruited to commence in September. Interviews for the vacancy for a Head of Year are due to take place in September so these can take place in person. The selection process for four teachers and associate members of staff had taken place remotely and this was felt to have been very successful.

### September return

The Head Teacher commented that staff members had worked exceptionally hard to interpret Government advice and prepare and disseminate as much information as possible. The aim was to give colleagues sufficient time to anticipate the teaching and learning requirements for the safe return of students in September.

The intention to continually develop skills for online and blended learning was noted.

## 4. Head Teacher's report Thongsley Fields

In advance of the meeting, the Head Teacher's report had been circulated and questions on its content were invited.

The Head Teacher advised that currently 72 of the 295 student on roll, and almost the full complement of staff, were in school. The huge undertaking of the Safeguarding team during the lockdown period, in terms of phone calls, home visits, delivery and collection of work was noted. There were currently no children on a waiting list for places in the provision and it was felt that 72 was the optimum number to ensure compliance with the government guidance. There has been an increase in the number of students for whom FSM and PP funding is received and it is anticipated that this will continue to rise.

### Staffing

Following a query from Governors, the Head Teacher advised that three new members of staff had been recruited to begin in September. The interviews had taken place remotely and this experience was felt to be positive. Members noted the challenge posed in supporting a new NQT and an existing NQT next academic year.

### Curriculum development

Governors were informed that more rapid progress was being made in this regard since staff had returned to school.

### Online learning

Following a question from Governors, the Head Teacher confirmed that, in the previous week, 30% of students had engaged in remote learning activities, however this number

## Confirmed

had since dwindled. A significant number of paper resources had been distributed to students, however little had been returned and there was concern as to its validity. Members recognised that for some students the home environment was not conducive to remote learning and they praised the school for the lengths to which they had gone in order to engage students and their families.

### September return

In complying with Government guidance, the intention for Thongsley is to combine small groups of students into year teams of approximately 90 students. Full catering will be in place for lunchtime. The Head Teacher advised that for Reception and Nursery children who will have missed a substantial part of their learning for this year, and some of whom display challenging behaviour, it was intended to keep groupings flexible.

### Changes to the school week

In response to a challenge from Governors, the Head Teacher was asked to expand upon his rationale, circulated in advance of the meeting, for closing the school early every Wednesday afternoon which has been the practice since May. Parents would be given the choice to collect their child or leave them in school to participate in extra-curricular activities. The closure would allow PPA to occur during this time, thus enabling greater flexibility in the deployment of staff and support of students. The school had had little success in running after school clubs and it was hoped that such enrichment opportunities, that would enhance life experiences, would be offered during the proposed early closure period. For example, food technology, first aid, textiles, forest school and sports activities.

The Head Teacher advised that the money and resources saved by introducing the proposal would be redirected back into enhancing the educational provision and resources within the school. Savings could also be used to purchase the services of specialist external providers. In addition, this proposal would enable augmentation of staff CPD, reductions in class sizes for the younger children and enable more flexible groupings to support students with additional needs. This, it was suggested, represented considerable potential to add value to existing provision.

The Head Teacher advised that he had not yet contacted parents to gauge what the level of uptake of this provision might be and it was his intention to run this as a pilot, for an academic year, to be reviewed and adapted as necessary. Accessibility and equality of access would form part of this monitoring. Governors noted that, should the proposal be agreed by the LGB and subsequently the Trust, formal parental consultation, with adequate response time, would need to take place. Members were advised that the Primary Executive and CEO of the Trust had been involved in preliminary discussions regarding the proposal.

Governors noted that the school would only be able to accommodate two thirds of its students in this provision (although fewer would be accommodated in September due to distancing). A number of Governors expressed their disquiet about the safeguarding of those students not remaining in school and also the possible impact on disadvantaged students. They also were concerned that not all students would be benefiting from the enrichment activities on which the Head Teacher placed significant importance.

Members advised that, the activities proposed should have clearly articulated outcomes which transparently demonstrated the characteristics and capabilities being developed through the enrichment provision. This would be necessary in order to ensure that the right pupils were accessing the programme. In addition, an overt link of the items addressed within the proposal to school self-evaluation and development plans should be in place.

## Confirmed

The Head Teacher shared information regarding the financial cost of this proposal (ranging from £7,000 to £37,000). Governors sought more detailed quantified information regarding the costs and benefits of this plan. It was recognised that some of these would only become apparent once the changes were implemented.

It was noted that in September the hour of face-to-face teaching time made available by not having assemblies twice a week would offset most of the contact time lost during the Wednesday closure period.

After a lengthy discussion, Governors agreed that, before the proposal could be considered further, more rationale clarification and evidence/data was required. This should cover: the broad articulation of learning outcomes; address Governors' safeguarding, participation and engagement concerns for those students not experiencing the provision; and the costs of guaranteeing 100% coverage of the provision (whilst recognising the challenging nature of the budget); it would also be useful for Governors to receive any relevant information as to similar schemes operating elsewhere.

Once this information is provided by the Head Teacher, Governors will provide virtual feedback in order to reach a decision on this pilot proposal. The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors agreed to discuss this further outside the meeting.

DJ/MG

### 5. Returning to work plans

#### St Peter's School

The Head Teacher explained in detail the arrangements to ensure the safety of staff and students when returning to school in September. This covered:

- The use of identified areas for different year groups
- The rearrangement of the timetable
- The non-use of specialist rooms for Key Stage 3 students
- The re-allocation of Key Stage 3 students into mixed ability classes
- Arrangements and timings for lunch/break times
- Curriculum experiences for Key Stages 3 and 4
- The resultant impact on the learning capacity for each year group – this would be greatest at Key Stage 3

Governors were pleased to learn that the initial plan has been solidified and that the timetabling for Key Stages 3 and 4 was complete. All relevant information will be provided to staff by the end of the week. The model adopted will be reviewed and adapted in response to changing needs and Government guidance. Members noted that the Trust will be looking at ways by which those areas of the specialist curriculum missed might be addressed in other disciplines.

The Head Teacher advised that a whole school risk assessment had been prepared and it was agreed that this would be forwarded to the Health and Safety Governor and Committee before being forwarded to the Trust.

CB

### 6. Strategic planning

#### Budgets

Copies of the proposed budgets for both schools, as recommended for approval by the Resources Committee, had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that considerable effort had taken place to balance the budget in the short term and to make

## Confirmed

provision for long term implications of increasing student numbers. The budgets were unanimously agreed for submission to the Trust Board for approval later in July.

### Cross phase working and Hub

Following a request for information, the Head Teacher of St Peter's School updated members on plans regarding cross-phase working and the creation of a hub. Collaboration between SPS and TF was continuing with a French teacher spending one day a week at the primary school. Support of challenging students in three schools for alternative provision was ongoing and a family worker is to be employed to work with Hartford Junior and TF. More concrete plans for a hub model comprised of four primary schools plus St Peter's School, are being drawn up involving the Primary Executive of the Trust.

### Sixth form

The Head Teacher of St Peter's School advised Governors that collaboration with Comberton Village College regarding Sixth form provision was progressing. A meeting had taken place and a three-year model was being developed which will include:

- Joint curriculum offer including prospectus in September 2021
- Staffing
- Timetabling
- Quality assurance
- Student recruitment
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Progression
- Extra-curricular activities
- Added value

The Head Teacher explained how joint curriculum provision might benefit St Peter's students e.g. virtual lessons and onsite lessons at Comberton to allow Geography to be offered in future years. However, in order to facilitate this, Governors were keen to learn what investment the Trust will make in this development. They reiterated that the notion of Trust wide sixth form provision, whilst being a challenge, was a very encouraging development. The benefits for staff and students of all institutions involved in this effective partnership were promising.

## 7. Trust Matters

There was nothing to report under this agenda item.

## 8. Membership

- Governors noted the resignation, from the end of July, of Stephen Terrell as a Trust Governor. The Chair of Governors expressed his thanks for Stephen's invaluable input, influence and support since joining the LGB. He had made an exceptional contribution to the Health and Safety and premises aspects of the LGB activities. Governors passed on their good wishes for the future.
- Consideration was given to the appointment of a new Health and Safety Governor. A decision on this was deferred to the next meeting.
- Governors agreed unanimously to recommend to the Trust Board the appointment of Emily Davies as a new Trust Governor
- It was noted that the term of office for Paul Sadler is due to expire in August. The Clerk advised that an election for this position will be arranged early in the Autumn term.
- Members unanimously agreed to recommend to the Trust Board that Phil Cox should be appointed as Chair of Governors from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. Mark Goodridge will continue as Chair until this point.

Agenda

LB

Confirmed

- Consideration was given to the appointment of a new Vice chair of the Governing body. A decision on this was deferred to the next meeting.
- Consideration was given to the appointment of a Chair and Vice chair of the Resources committee. A decision on this was deferred to a later date.
- Individual Governor responsibilities were reviewed and it was agreed to leave them unchanged.
- 

Agenda

Agenda

**9. Terms of reference for Committees**

The terms of reference for all committees for 2020/2021 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and these were unanimously agreed unchanged.

**10. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body which had taken place on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

**11. Matters arising**

The Chair agreed to clarify the process by which Governors could access Trust minutes and whether any benchmarking information across schools in the Trust is also available.

MG

**12. Reports from Committees**

Resources Committee

The minutes of the St Peter's School and Thongsley Fields Resources Committee meetings that had taken place on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Their content was noted.

**13. Approval of 2020/2021 budgets**

See minute 6 above.

**14. Annual child protection monitoring report**

The form for St Peter's School for this year has been completed on-line and a copy of the form had been circulated for Governors information. The form had not yet been filled in by Thongsley Fields.

Governors asked Head Teachers to pass on their appreciation to all safeguarding staff for their efforts, which went above and beyond expectations, during the times of school closure.

CB/DJ

**15. Meeting dates**

The proposed meeting dates for the next academic year had been provided in advance of the meeting and these were agreed.

**16. Subscription to Cambridgeshire Governor Services**

In advance of the meeting, the Chair of Governors had been supplied with copies of the proposed SLA to subscribe to Cambridgeshire Governor Services. Governors discussed the benefits of continuing subscription for a further year and this was agreed.

CD

**17. Policies for approval**

The following policies had been circulated prior to the meeting and these were approved unanimously:

St Peter's School policies:

Category 2:

- Admissions 2021
- Assessment
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Behaviour
- Child Protection and Safeguarding

Category 3:

- Antibullying
- Drugs, Education and Misuse
- Uniform
- Wellbeing (new policy)

**18. Governor training**

There was nothing to report under this item.

**19. Governor visits and reports**

There was nothing to report under this item.

**20. Chair's Business**

There was nothing to report under this item.

**21. Any Other Business**

Rachel Hurst was thanked for undertaking a review of the Governing body. Her findings will be reported in due course.

RH

There was nothing further to report under this item.

**22. Date and time of next meeting:**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

**The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.**