



THONGSLEY FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ST PETER'S SCHOOL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD



TUESDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 PM AT THONGSLEY FIELDS SCHOOL

Action

Local Advisory Board members present: Salman Arif, Christopher Bennet (Head Teacher St Peter's School), Neil Hateley, Oluwatosin Iyiola, David Jones (Head Teacher Thongsley Fields), Shaun Keates, Simon Newman (Chair), Sara Steed and Kris Stutchbury

In attendance:

Stephen Munday, CEO of the Cam Academy Trust
Lauren West (Deputy Head Teacher at TF)
Lorraine Barr (Clerk)

Mel Jest – potential Trust Governor (Observer)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Sadler, Oluwatosin Iyiola and Dee Wormald and these were accepted by the Advisory Board.

2. Declaration of business interests

There were no declarations of interest pertaining to the business to be discussed other than those already noted. The Clerk circulated forms for those members who had not yet signed them for this academic year.

3. Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Governor, Kris Stutchbury, had visited St Peter's School before the half term break and the report on her visit had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She stated that:

- The safeguarding scenarios shared as part of the weekly Staff Briefings continued to be appreciated by staff
- She had met with the new Head of School who was extremely well briefed during her weekly meetings with key safeguarding colleagues
- The school had decided to switch to using the electronic recording system MyConcern. The existing paper-based process remained secure, however with the increasing student numbers came increased pressures on the processes. In addition the closer links with MVC had enabled the school to witness more closely the potential benefits of this new system. Installation would take place in January, with the programme being rolled out in May and June and ready to use from September 2024.
- The links between the safeguarding team and the curriculum teams via PSHE and assemblies continued to be proactive, with the safeguarding trends being reflected in content.
- Staff wellbeing remains a priority
- She had met with the Sixth Form Mental Health ambassadors who had completed a Level 2 qualification enabling them to support other students on a rota basis at break and lunch times in an area of the SFC which was easily accessible to other students. These sixth form students were well supported by staff and met regularly for debrief sessions. The main issues which seemed to arise amongst the student body were

Unconfirmed

associated with friendships. These students had also helped out on the transition days.

- She had yet to arrange her visit to Thongsley Fields and asked if this could take place before Christmas. The Head Teacher for TF suggested that a better time might be to coincide with the visit of the Trust Safeguarding link on 13th March, however Kris was unable to attend on that date. It was agreed that Kris and David would liaise outside the meeting to find a convenient time for the Governor Safeguarding visit to TF.

KS/DJ

4. Head Teacher's report

Thongsley Fields

The Head Teacher had provided a written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

High SEND need pupils

The Head Teacher informed Governors of the continued pressure the school was under from the LA to accept placements of pupils with high SEND needs. In the last six months four such placements had been imposed upon the school – these students, who were within catchment, were in need of specialist provision which was not available and their placements were felt to be detrimental to the effective education of other pupils on site. The Head Teacher was to contact the Trust's solicitors for further advice.

DJ

Governors were pleased to learn of the Hunts/Cambs area peer led pilot funding programme in which the school was taking part from January for pupils on the cusp of being granted an EHCP, or needing space to settle, for whom short term funding was to be distributed.

It was recognised that the school's success in dealing with children with SEND and behaviour challenges was validated by the requests for places.

SN

Governors asked whether there was any action they could take to address this issue, including writing to councillors. It was agreed that the Chair would write, supported by Patrick Kadewere and Tom Sanderson, to the Chair of the Council to express the concerns of the Advisory Board in addressing the needs of these students from both the primary and secondary perspective.

Staffing

Following a question, the Head Teacher advised of the challenges experienced in recruiting Teaching Assistants which was felt more acutely due to the high level of pupil need. The vacancies had been re-advertised, but Governors noted the aspects of the post which made it less attractive e.g. the salary and lack of flexibility when compared to positions elsewhere. In addition, the workforce was also shrinking as increasingly TAs leave their positions to train as teachers.

The CEO of the Trust explained that discussions as to how to address this issue at a Trust level were ongoing, including exploring the offer of gap year placements to add flexibility to the recruitment situation.

The Head Teacher was thanked for his report.

5. Executive Head Teacher's report

St Peter's School

The Executive Head Teacher had provided a written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In response to a request from Governors, the Executive Head Teacher agreed to consider further areas of the report where more comparative data might be included to facilitate governors in identifying trends or patterns. However, Governors would need to bear in mind the impact of Covid and also the increase in student numbers over time.

CB

Following an observation regarding behaviour in general but specifically Year 8, the Executive Head Teacher explained how behaviour was tracked in lessons and outside the classroom. The positive impact of STEPS was reinforced which was engendering in students intrinsically the desire to want to do the right thing. Behaviours were changing with a notable reduction in the number of negative behaviour incidents and an increase in the number of positives.

Attendance

Members noted with the increase in student numbers, and associated parental contacts required, the necessity to employ an additional member of staff to focus on attendance. Pressures were also being felt by staff involved in following up Persistent Absence, safeguarding concerns - necessitating home visits, and also medical needs requirements. The increase in the number of anxious students post pandemic was noted.

Issues:

Year 11 concerns

Following a challenge from Governors, the Executive Head Teacher explained the challenges presented by the current Year 11 cohort – four of whom were not attending due to medical needs, four not attending outright, eight were in Alternative Provision and a further eight students refused to sit their mock examinations.

The results of the recent mock examinations for this cohort would be available for Governors in January.

Director of Education reports

Members noted the usefulness of the reports provided by Mr Lawrence in analysing standards and identifying strategies for improvement.

The Executive Head Teacher emphasised that the detailed points for consideration were given to relevant members of staff to enact where appropriate, with the impact of any improvements being measured. A schedule of visits for the whole year has been derived to ensure that all key aspects of the school are covered. Experience as part of these visits is triangulated through meetings with staff and students, parents if appropriate, learning walks and consideration of data.

Product Design

There was a brief confidential discussion regarding PD, its performance and possible changes.

The Head Teacher was thanked for his report.

6. Strategic planning

- **Budget**

It was stated that confirmation was awaited regarding details re funding of contributions to the teachers pensions, the funding per pupil and EOTAS monies – once updates are received these will be shared with Governors.

The situation regarding the reserves held by the Trust, contributed to by its schools, and the healthy carry forward of both St Peter's and Thongsley Fields was noted and would be discussed further by the Trust Finance and Resources Committee. The historical contexts behind these carry forward amounts were shared.

- **Student numbers**

Members were reminded that admissions to TF remained stable at a one class intake, however in year admissions continued to be high and erratic making planning challenging. A contingency is maintained, facilitating admissions during the academic year.

Governors discussed the possible impact on both schools of the new housing development near Stukeley Meadows and the delay in a secondary school opening at Alconbury Weald until, at the earliest, September 2026. The effect was anticipated to be negligible for TF due to the distance away and vacancies in other local schools, but significant for St Peter's, where the PAN for Year 8 had already been exceeded. Governors were pleased to learn that a meeting was planned for the following week onsite with officers from the LA about provision that would be needed to accommodate the suggested increase in student numbers (e.g. an increase in the number of serving areas/equipment in the canteen). The Executive Head Teacher advised that growth funding previously received for increased student numbers only covered half of the cost of taking on the additional students and so this time confirmation would be sought from the LA that the additional expenditure incurred would be recompensed.

Members deliberated upon what might happen to student numbers at St Peter's once the secondary school at Alconbury opened in a phased intake.

Governors were pleased to note the expansion of the school reflected its success. However, they were keen to ensure that conditions to this must be attached regarding its infrastructure, canteen, toilet facilities, staff facilities and assurances regarding the longer term plans of the LA.

- **Cross phase working**

There was nothing to report under this standing item.

7. Trust matters

The CEO of the Trust reported that:

Unconfirmed

- A small primary school within the catchment area for Melbourn Village College was intending to join the Trust in January 2024.
- The Ofsted report from the inspection of MVC in July had been published, rating the school inadequate for student behaviour. The Trust had noted that improvements were necessary and the CEO recoded his thanks to the Executive Head Teacher for his significant role in bringing these about.
- The appointment process for the CEO of the Trust was continuing and was hoped to be concluded by the end of January.
- Ongoing discussions were taking place regarding the Aces Trust joining the Cam Academy Trust and the advantages for the provision of local education were noted. There was no negative impact of the outcome of the MVC Ofsted inspection upon other schools wishing to join the Trust.

8. Local Advisory Board structure and membership

The Chair reminded members of the intention for the LAB to split into two separate LABs, one for TF and one for SPS, membership willing. There had been no response to the call for potential governors at TF. Members asked if there was anything the Trust could do to facilitate this process, however it was noted that the constituency was the local area and schools were best placed to exploit/advertise any opportunities. It was agreed that the Executive Head Teacher and the Chair would devise a letter to be sent to SPS parents regarding potential governorship.

SN/CB

Members felt that regardless of the LAB dividing, it was a good time to review governance in general with a view to reducing duplication and streamlining activities. It was noted that some primary schools use a different model re financial governance meaning that a Resources Committee was not necessary. It was agreed that this would be explored further.

SN/DJ/CB

The outcome of a nomination for Trust Governor was expected before the Christmas break.

9. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body which had taken place on Tuesday 26th September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. Matters arising from the minutes

The action log produced by the Clerk to accompany the minutes was discussed to identify any outstanding items – the revised action log, including items from this meeting is appended to these minutes.

11. Reports/minutes from committees

The following minutes were noted:

- Curriculum and Standards (TF) – 14th July 2023
- Curriculum and Standards (SPS) – 9th November 2023 (notes as not quorate)
- Salary Review committee (SPS and TF) – 16th November 2023 – anonymised (attached)
- Resources Committee (SPS and TF) – 16th November 2023

DJ to send minutes from the TF Curriculum and Standards Committee to the Clerk.

DJ

Governors were surprised to note the number of staff who were eligible for threshold progression but had chosen not to submit applications. They were reassured by the Executive Head Teacher that staff were aware of the process and its associated deadlines and that appropriately supportive measures were in place.

12. Policies for approval:

St Peter's School policies: (circulated)

Category 2: (to be approved by LAB following Trust consultation)

- Curriculum policy
- Admissions 2024 2025 – Governors noted the implication of the increased number of Cabin students and the impact on the number of TAs needing to be employed.

Category 3: (LAB approval only)

- Anti-bullying
- Medical Needs – Governors suggested that the terminology for parents/carers/families should be consistent throughout – it was agreed that this would be checked. Governors also noted the pressure on the First Aid room and the appointment of a Lead First Aider and additional administrative support.
- BTEC policy

LB

All of the above policies were approved unanimously unamended.

16. Governor training

The training log produced by the Clerk was noted and members were encouraged to ensure that all Smartlog training is up to date prior to the next LAB meeting. The Chair agreed to write to absent members to remind them of this responsibility.

SN

The Clerk was asked to find out how Governors can access the Online safety training circulated since logins did not appear to work.

LB

Kris Stutchbury reported that she had completed some Safeguarding training at Cambourne Village College and asked that this be added to the tracker. She had also undertaken online training regarding involvement in a Pupil Disciplinary Committee which she had found very useful.

LB

17. Governor visits and reports

This item was covered elsewhere on the agenda.

There was nothing further to report under this item.

18. Chair's Business

The Chair updated members on the housing development at the top of Stukeley Road, which was to include a primary school and GP surgery. The arrangements for the installation of a pelican crossing across the A141 to aid access was shared. Governors expressed their

concern regarding the impact on the traffic flow in the vicinity. It was noted that a meeting involving Councillor Tom Sanderson and officers from the LA to discuss traffic calming measures locally around the school was being arranged. **Clerk's note: This is taking place at 2.00p.m. on 15th December.**

Duke of Edinburgh update

Following a request for an update, the Executive Head Teacher stated that he was the assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme in school – once students upload their work he is notified and can then assesses the submission. It was confirmed that all students who had submitted work had been assessed. He was pleased to report that an interview had taken place at MVC for someone to run the scheme there and at St Peter's, where they are visiting to view the setting and the nature of the work. Once this appointment is secured parents will be informed.

There was nothing further to report under this item.

19. Any Other Business

There was nothing to report under this item.

20. Date and time of next meeting:

The published date for the next meeting was Thursday 11th January 2024 at 6.30p.m. (Governor pre meeting at 6.00p.m.). Meetings for the Autumn term had been held on a Tuesday but this had been a trial. The Head Teacher from Thongsley Fields agreed to discuss the feasibility of holding meetings on a Thursday for the next term with the Chair, outside of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Unconfirmed

Actions from 17th May 2022	Who	
Existing Parent Panel members to produce short videos explaining its role and achievements for use on social media	SN	To be raised at parent Panel meeting
Attendance at Student Council meeting	PK	No dates yet agreed for 2023/24
Actions from 10th January 2023	Who	
Agree date for visit to TF (On line safety governor)	SN	Date TBC
Actions from 4th July 2023	Who	
Smartlog training – to complete by 21 st July	All	To be completed by 28/11/23
Safer recruitment training report	NH	
Follow up visit and report from Behaviour for Learning governor	SN/PK	
Actions from 26th September 2023		
Report from SEND governor following visit to TF	SS	
Actions from 28th November 2023		
Arrange date for TF safeguarding visit	KS/DJ	
To write to the Chair of the Council re placement of high needs pupils at TF	SN	
To let Clerk know who to invite to Open session at SPS and write to Councillors	SN	
Letter to SPS parents to advertise governor roles	SN/CB	
TF Head Teacher to send minutes of TF C & S committee in October to Clerk	DJ	
Wording of Medical Needs policy to ensure consistency	LB	
Write to members to remind them to complete training	SN	
Clerk to look into Governor access for Online safety training	LB	
Clerk to update tracker re KS safeguarding training	LB	