



Confirmed

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



**THURSDAY 21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2024 AT 6.30 PM AT ST PETER'S SCHOOL**

**Action**

**Local Advisory Board members present:** Vicky Ames, Salman Arif (remote access), Christopher Bennet (Executive Head Teacher, St Peter's School), Neil Hateley, David Jones (Head Teacher, Thongsley Fields), Simon Newman (Chair), Paul Sadler and Sara Steed

**In attendance:**

Lauren West (Deputy Head Teacher at TF)

Ian Marshall, Parent Governor – subject to appointment at the meeting

Lorraine Barr (Clerk)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Patrick Kadewere and Oluwatosin Iyiola 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.

**3. Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding Governor reported back on her recent visits to both schools. Her main observation was that the information Governors are routinely made aware of, comprising predominantly numbers, was a bit abstract and did not fully reflect the very different and difficult things being dealt with by staff. It was acknowledged that external supervision for staff at SPS is provided, along with the Trust's subscription to an employee assistance scheme, but colleagues are very good at supporting each other in both schools. The Headteachers explained that the pastoral pressures in schools are often not obvious and with the increasing levels of high need and staff absences, these are exacerbated. **In response to concern expressed by Governors** it was felt that there was little more that could be done at LAB level – the external system of agency support was lacking and broken but the schools continued to tenaciously seek the help needed.

The Safeguarding Governor reported that she intended to set up a meeting with the Staff Well-being lead.

VA

**4. Head Teacher's report**

**Thongsley Fields**

The Head Teacher had provided a written report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and the following areas were highlighted **in response to questions from Governors**:

- On the surface the school continued to be a calm and purposeful environment but times were challenging on many levels. Staffing was difficult due to long term sickness and vacancies and out of necessity colleagues were volunteering to cover

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multiple jobs. Governors requested an update on the ongoing recruitment of a Caretaker for the site. There had been no response to the initial advert and a second advert, with a higher rate, had been placed. This had attracted 2 candidates however it had been decided to advertise again to broaden the field – this last advert closed the following week. It was noted that the rate of pay was not attractive and other institutions were also advertising similar roles not involving the same degree of unsociable hours. The vulnerability of the premises, now without the onsite live in caretaker, was noted. In the meantime opening and locking up around the school day and lettings (which included weekends) were being shared amongst the senior staff at the school. It was noted that some infrastructure changes were taking place for example to the alarm system and entry points, which would hopefully reduce the logistical overheads, reducing the burden placed on staff and enabling lettings to continue.

- In response to a query from Governors about the attendance rate in Year 2 which appeared high, the Head Teacher explained that this was due to the SEND context of the cohort, it having 10 children currently on a reduced timetable. In addition, there had been two pupils who had been CME, but since located, who now would be removed from the school roll.

The Head Teacher was thanked for his report.

### 5. Executive Head Teacher's report

The Executive Head Teacher had provided a written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and had been discussed at the recent Curriculum and Standards Committee.

The following areas of focus were highlighted in response to questions from Governors:

- Behaviour – the extremely positive comparison to the same point in time last academic year of the number of suspensions/restorative conversations and specific behaviours was highlighted and praised. The Values curriculum and the associated behaviour expectations had been communicated and the staff focus now would turn towards tightening up behaviour during session changeovers.
- The number of concerns raised with the Head Teacher had also reduced from last year.
- Challenges – staffing – the school had successfully recruited a French teacher. Governors noted that so far this year the school was delivering the curriculum it was able to deliver rather than what it wanted to deliver. From January with the new staff in place the curriculum that school wanted would be delivered.
- Current attendance was noted – Year 11 having a high mobility factor.
- Alternative provision – Governors noted that this provision was expanding with students being in school more often. 25% turnover.
- Safeguarding – staff were working through the issues regarding flaws in working practices that had been shown up by the introduction of MyConcern.
- Financially the school was in a strong position and a decision was awaited from the Trust re the authorisation of additional expenditure.
- Cover and staff absence – The Executive Head Teacher brought Governors attention to the cost implications of providing a substitute teacher. Cover need had been generated in several ways. There had been several staff on maternity leave, and this term unfortunately many staff had suffered the bereavement of a close family member, leading to absence. The significant impact of the mentor training requirements for the school's ECTs and trainees was also noted, alongside the desire to provide CPD and extra curricular activities. As a result it had been decided that only 3 planned absences per day would be authorised – this had been communicated

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to the Trade Unions and staff. Hopefully, the effects of this would soon be visible. It was agreed that this should be monitored and data relating to the number of cover sessions should be added to the Executive Head Teacher's report.

- The arrangements for the prompt arrival in school for students entering via the gates and by bus were clarified – any students who arrive late are registered in A7 and then go to class as normal. This applied to very few students and late marks were not issued for student travelling on the school buses.
- In response to a query from Governors about the possibility of extending the lunch break to facilitate additional extracurricular activities for students, the Executive Head Teacher stated that this was not feasible. Reasons for this were shared which included supervision, behavioural concerns, contractual implications and a lengthening of the school day.

CB

The Executive Head Teacher was thanked for his report.

## **6. Strategic planning**

### **Budgets**

Governors noted that no financial monitoring updates had been received for their information from the Trust Director of Finance and Operations. For both schools the financial position was healthy, in part for TF as a result of the vacancies carried.

### **Student numbers**

For St Peter's School student numbers remained positive with numbers on track for a nine form entry in September 2025. Thongsley Fields' numbers were gradually reducing, although they had settled at around 30, with the greatest mobility in the younger year groups.

## **7. St Peter's School SEND information report**

The SEND information report for SPS had been provided before the meeting. This document essentially outlined the school's offer and approach to SEND and governors noted this was updated annually. The report was unanimously approved and Mrs Knibbs, the Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for Inclusion was to be invited to attend the next meeting of the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

LB

## **8. Trust matters**

The Chair advised that it was hoped that Claire Vasco, the new Trust Lead for Governance, would attend the next meeting of the LAB.

Members discussed the lack of communication regarding the operation of the LAB and its committees in the short term until firmer arrangements dictated by the Trust were in place, noting in particular that financial information had not been forthcoming for the last Resources committee. The Chair agreed to liaise with the Lead for Governance regarding this.

SN

It was noted that in the long term absence of the Trust Primary Executive Head Teacher there would be no Trust presence at the next meeting of the TF C & S committee.

9.	<b>Membership</b>	There were several membership items on the agenda and the following decisions were reached:	LB
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Marshall was appointed as Parent Governor for St Peter's School and agreed to take on the role of link governor for CEIAG once he was provided with more about the position.</li> <li>• Paul Sadler agreed to become the link governor for LGBTQ+ if the committees cease.</li> <li>• The Clerk agreed to follow up the application from the potential Governor for TF.</li> </ul>	LB
10.	<b>Open school event</b>	<p>The Clerk advised that this would take place at St Peter's School at 9.00 – 10.30a.m. on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025. It would comprise: a presentation about the current position of the school by the Executive Head Teacher and another senior member of staff; future plans including support needed and a tour of the site. Local councillors, Heads and Chairs of Governors from feeder schools; representatives from the Trust; Parent Panel members and LA representatives would be invited by the Clerk.</p> <p>There was nothing further to report under this item.</p>	LB
11.	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>	The minutes of the last meeting of the Advisory Board which had taken place on Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
12.	<b>Matters arising from the minutes</b>	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.	
13.	<b>Reports/minutes from committees</b>	<p>The following minutes were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPS Curriculum and Standards Committee (7<sup>th</sup> November)</li> </ul> <p>Members noted that the minutes from the TF Curriculum and Standards Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> July were currently unavailable.</p>	DJ
14.	<b>Policies for approval</b>	There were no policies for approval.	
15.	<b>Governor training</b>	<p>The training log produced by the Clerk was noted and it was agreed that all outstanding Smartlog training should be completed by the end of the calendar year.</p> <p>The TF Head Teacher agreed to forward relevant dates for training completed by colleagues at TF to the Clerk so that the log could be updated.</p>	All  DJ

**16. Governor visits and reports**

Governor induction:

Vicky Ames reported on the usefulness and value of the recently attended staff induction event held at St Peter's School – she had found especially the safeguarding and behaviour sections to be especially informative.

Safeguarding visits:

Thongsley Fields

Vicky had met at TF with the SENDCO, the Head Teacher and the Trust Safeguarding Lead. The introduction of new paperwork required by the Trust, which was felt to be onerous and in some cases duplicate existing documentation, was discussed. It was agreed that this would be discussed again at the next meeting, once any possible recommendations for St Peter's School, and the outcome of any further conversations with the Trust, were known.

The Trust had also required that the existing Single Central Record, which was robust and compliant, be replaced with one retained as an excel spreadsheet – the school felt this was a backwards move resulting in a less secure record, during a time when there was limited capacity in the school.

St Peter's School

Vicky had met with the Deputy Head Teacher and been impressed by the robust systems in place, especially those for caring for staff which included access to an external counsellor. It was noted that there was more work to be done in terms of staff training on how to mark up records as urgent and non urgent to make the most of the functionality of the platform.

The safeguarding link governor stated her desire to visit the school again to meet with the Well-being lead and to do a student voice activity.

**17. Chair's Business**

There was nothing further to report under this item.

**18. Any Other Business**

Pay dates

One of the Staff Governors asked that the Trust consider altering staff pay dates to be a specific date each month rather than the last day of the month. The Head Teacher at Thongsley Fields agreed to forward this to the Trust Director of Finance and Operations.

Recruitment

Governors discussed whether there was more that could be done to make recruitment to our schools more attractive e.g. the payment of TAs on a full-time basis rather than part time was suggested. It was agreed that such ideas could be explored when a Trust representative attended the LAB in January.

Ofsted

In preparation for future Ofsted visits, Governors were encouraged to be familiar with the school development plans and priorities for both schools.

Agenda

DJ

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Cross phase working

Governors were pleased to learn of the arrangements in place between the schools for years 5 and 6 and the Science department and Year 6 coming into St Peter's to see the performance of Cinderella later in the month.

There was nothing further to report under this item.

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

The published date for the next meeting was Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30p.m.  
(Governor pre meeting at 6.00p.m.).

The meeting closed at 8.25p.m.

**These minutes were confirmed as a correct record.**

**Signed: S. Newman**

**(Chair)**

**Date: 16/01/25**

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Actions from 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2024		
TF C & S committee minutes from 12 <sup>th</sup> July	DJ	
Governors to complete any overdue Smartlog or other training as per the schedule	All	
Dates of completion of Smartlog training by TF staff to be sent to Clerk	DJ	
Actions from 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024		
Set up a meeting with the Staff Well-being lead.	VA	
Continue to monitor impact of cover and add number of lessons to EHT report	CB	
Mrs Knibbs, the Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for Inclusion was to be invited to attend the next meeting of the Curriculum and Standards Committee.	LB	
Liaise with Lead of Governance re operation of LAB committees	SN	
Provision of CEIAG link governor role to Ian Marshall	LB	
Follow up the application from the potential Governor for TF.	LB	
Invitations to the Open day to be sent out	LB	
Implications of imposition of additional paperwork from Trust	Agenda	
Contact Mark Norman re altering pay dates	DJ	