



St Martin’s School and Vale View School Local Governing Body Meeting

Thursday 26th November 2020

Executive Head Teacher: Mrs A Siggins

Headteacher St Martin’s: Miss R Appleby Headteacher Vale View: Miss K Brown

Minutes of the Local Governing Body Meeting held virtually on Thursday 26th November 2020, 9.15am.

Governors Present: Stacey Wells (Chair of Governors), Mike Ashley (Vice Chair of Governors), Sue Atkinson, Sarah Slingsby, Amanda Abbott, Rachel Appleby (Headteacher), Anne Siggins (ExecH, Governor)

Clerk: Kirsty Ash

Others Present: Helen Thompson (AHT, STM), Sarah Harris (AHT, VV), Ruth Bishop (EYFS Leading Practitioner), Casey Hall (W DAT KS2 Leader of Learning), Katie Banes (Clerk to PF LGB),

Not in Attendance: Kelly Brown (Headteacher)

1 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for absence

The Chair of Governors welcomed governors to the meeting and governors introduced themselves. Apologies received from Kelly Brown and Sue Atkinson. Sue Atkinson joined the meeting at 11:00am.

Resignations

Kate Webster has tendered her resignation from the VV & STM LGB due to an impending move away from the area. This resignation takes place with immediate effect. All Governors accepted the terms of this resignation.

Alison Mackintosh has tendered her resignation from the VV & STM LGB to return to the PFS LGB with immediate effect. Alison will remain a Trustee and an invited guest to this LGB. All Governors accepted the terms of this resignation.

Acknowledging notification of these resignations, the Chair of Governors raised a query around recruitment of new governors for this Local Governing Body.

The Whinless Down Academy Trust have made several attempts to recruit new governors to the LGB over the course of the last few years, including advertising in the local papers, approaching the Dover Volunteer Centre and reaching out to large organisations including Dover District Council and

	<p>P&O Ferries. To date there has been no response to the advertisements. Recruitment continues to be a challenge and a primary aim for the Trust. All governors are encouraged to consider different recruitment tactics and methods of engagement. Reaching out to personal contacts and making recommendations, was felt to lead to a less diverse group of people. One caveat to approaching national programmes is that you may be assigned people that are not local to the area, which doesn't meet our representation of local schools for local children run by local people.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u> Governors were given the opportunity to declare any interests against this agenda. No declarations were recorded against this agenda.</p> <p>It was confirmed that all governors had completed and returned new Business Declaration forms for the forth coming year (2020-2021).</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><u>Minutes from previous LGB Meeting – Term 1</u> Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st October 2020 were distributed to governors prior to the LGB meeting. The Chair of Governors invited governors to comment or raise any queries relating to the minutes.</p> <p>No queries were made and governors accepted the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Actions from previous LGB Meeting – Term 1</u></p> <p>Approval of previous minutes – due to Covid restrictions, both Chairs of Governors emailed the Clerk to provide their approval of the previous minutes and permission to sign on their behalf. Copy of email is retained with the minutes.</p> <p>Business Interest Forms – it was confirmed that all governors had completed and returned new Business Declaration forms for the forthcoming year (2020-2021). Forms are to be held centrally at PFS.</p> <p>Terms of Reference (As agreed by Trust Board) – The agreed Terms of Reference were distributed to all Governors ahead of the meeting and the roles and responsibilities had been updated with the responsible personnel as agreed at the previous LGB meeting. As Kate Webster has resigned and was previously assigned to both SEND and Pupil Premium, Amanda Abbott has agreed to support Sarah Slingsby in the area of Pupil Premium. All governors agreed to this appointment.</p> <p>Safeguarding (KCSIE) – Clerk confirmed that all Governors had emailed with their confirmation that they had read and understood part 2 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education document.</p> <p>Governor Monitoring – Governors have started to adopt the new monitoring strategy and have already focussed on SEND and safeguarding areas in term 1. Further areas of monitoring to be agreed in this meeting.</p> <p>Action: Chair of Governors to email Clerk with permission to sign minutes from meeting on 1st October 2020 on their behalf.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to amend Terms of Reference with new appointment of Amanda Abbott to Pupil Premium area along with Sarah Slingsby.</p>

Action: Clerk to prepare letter on behalf of Chair of Governors to acknowledge resignation of Kate Webster.

4	<p><u>Covid Action Plan Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Catch Up Plan- EEF 3 Tiered Plan- On-Line Learning update- Risk Assessment update (Since Lockdown) <p>The EEF Guide (3 tiered plan), remote learning plan and Covid Risk Assessment were distributed to governors prior to the meeting. Governors were invited to ask questions relating to these documents.</p> <p><u>EEF 3-Tiered Action Plan</u></p> <p>The EEF guide to supporting School planning (2021) is split into three sections; (1) Quality first teaching, (2) Targeted Academic Support and (3) Wider Strategies. Each of these sections are then expanded to outline actions within Key Stage 1, Lower KS2 and Upper Key Stage 2.</p> <p>The first consideration is how gaps can be addressed under Quality First Teaching and then through targeted academic support for those pupils identified as requiring something additional.</p> <p>A governor asked about the catch up sessions that would be available to those children requiring additional support. Both STM and VV are offering targeted additional after school catch up sessions for selected pupils in English and Maths.</p> <p>As part of a wider strategy of support, parents were invited to individual telephone meetings with Senior Leaders to discuss any concerns they may have for their children following the lockdown. Only one parent engaged with this. Both the headteacher for STM and AHT for VV confirmed that parents with any concerns had already approached the schools for support.</p> <p>Across the Trust, pastoral staff are fully committed to engaging with parents at all times and parents generally communicate well with both schools.</p> <p><u>Remote Learning Plan</u></p> <p>The remote learning plan outlines actions to be implemented in the event of a partial or full closure and the event of individual isolation. One of the challenges that remains includes ensuring that children have adequate access to facilities at home to access the remote learning.</p> <p>A governor queried whether the electronic devices, provided by the Government COVID plan had been ordered and if they were yet available for use.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher confirmed that a number of devices had been ordered across the Trust (St Martin's – 3 devices, Vale View – 5 devices, Priory Fields - 11 devices) and that these should be delivered within the next week.</p> <p><u>Covid Risk Assessment Update</u></p> <p>The risk assessment is a dynamic document that is evolving constantly in response to government guidance. Staff are consulted during the review phase and then asked to sign to say that they have read, understood and agree to adhere to the risk assessment protocols. The Executive Headteacher explained that there is anxiety amongst staff, particularly as it had been announced on this day that</p>
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	<p>Kent had entered into Tier 3 covid restrictions. Governors asked what in particular is causing the feeling of anxiety amongst staff and whether instant testing will be supported within the School day. Staff anxiety is varied across the Trust largely depending on the number of cases that are presenting themselves. With regards to testing, finding the capacity in school to cover staff absence whilst they go for a test could be challenging. The Headteacher explained that the negative press surrounding education settings and teachers being at risk is one cause for concern amongst staff.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher commented that it is important to acknowledge the medical data that has been presented, which suggests younger children tend to not be transmitting the virus and adults are more at risk. A governor further commented that children were starting to see other classes close down and go into periods of isolation. The headteacher confirmed that whilst this can be unsettling initially the well-being amongst children is high and they are incredibly focused on their learning.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><u>Staff Absence due to Covid Report</u></p> <p>Staff absence reports for St Martin’s and Vale View were distributed in advance of the meeting. The reports indicate the impact of Covid 19 on staffing in terms 1 and 2 (up to and including 18th November), by highlighting the number of teaching and support staff affected and the number of days absence incurred. Long term absences are not recorded within this data set, but general short-term non-covid related sick leave is included.</p> <p>A governor asked if, in terms of sickness, the reports were in line with the normal level of staff absence for this time of year. The Executive Headteacher confirmed that non covid related sick leave is much lower than usual. A governor further asked how the staff absence is having an impact on teaching, particularly if the teacher is unwell with Covid-19. The Executive Headteacher and Headteacher for St Martin’s explained that staff absence is covered in-house, with the minimal crossing over of bubbles as possible. Supply staff from agencies will not be called in as they pose a greater risk for transmission of the virus. If staff or pupils test positive, the bubble is sent home to complete a period of isolation. If self-isolating, then both staff and children are expected to work at home, utilising differentiated learning packs. If staff or children are unwell, then they are not expected to work from home.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><u>School Evaluation Form and School Response</u></p> <p>Exploring high priority statements and next steps, linking to SIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Quality of Education b) Leadership c) EYFS <p>The School Evaluation Form (SEF) was presented to governors at the previous meeting. In this meeting the Headteacher for St Martin’s, along with other staff, delivered a presentation that focused on Quality of Education, Leadership and Management and the EYFS. Several statements from each section were reviewed and evidenced within the presentation. In addition, staff reported on the next steps and what, as a Trust, is being done to build on these developments. Across the Trust the terminology of the SEF is comparable and between St Martin’s and Vale View there are marked similarities, due to the nature of the cross-Academy projects currently being undertaken.</p>

Quality of Education – CPD Programme

A comprehensive CPD programme focused on pedagogy has been implemented. Feedback from teachers has highlighted the positive impact on learning from pupils and their own personal positivity around the different strategies that they are using. Teachers are demonstrating more flexibility in lessons, utilising more “in the moment” approaches from the Teaching and Learning strategy, championing the aim to teach the right thing to the right child at the right time. There has been a marked increase in pupil independence, confidence, stamina, and resilience is developing.

A governor asked at what point one confirms that pupils have remembered what they have learnt and how as a Trust we are doing this and recording it. The headteacher for St Martin’s explained that the retention of learning had been identified in the monitoring (regular teacher check-ins with the pupils) and pupil voice sessions. In addition to this, ongoing assessment activities with the children and tracking via Cornerstones, will help to build up a picture of progress made over the course of a year.

A governor further asked if pupils look back at their work and learning over time.

It was confirmed that pupils are encouraged to keep revisiting their previous learning and how implementing the Teaching and Learning strategy has had an impact on how children retain information. Changes to lesson and curriculum design has given children opportunities to develop fluency, rehearse and revisit, allowing teachers to ensure learning is instilled. This also provides a firm platform for highlighting what children should have learnt and retained so that gaps can be addressed.

The KS2 Leader of Learning expanded on the training methods and principles that had provided the basis for the developments that have been identified. A key element was looking at the different types of learning, delving into neuroscientific principles and how they directly link to teaching and learning.

A governor commented that they felt governance might be focusing on “catch up” too much, given that the nation is still facing a global pandemic. Children and teachers shouldn’t feel under pressure to achieve too much too soon as it is more vital that both are in the right frame of mind for learning. A governor further commented that computerised tracking systems might be seen as a method to pressure teachers to get through the learning as efficiently as possible. The Headteacher confirmed that the tracking systems are not objective based and do not operate in this manner, instead focusing on the child’s progress overtime. Feedback from the Assistant Headteacher who had recently attended SEN training, supported the idea that “happy children learn” and it being paramount that children are mentally in a good place to learn, which is why mental health is highlighted as a school improvement focus.

The KS2 Leader of Learning outlined the next steps, including continuing to deliver the next part of vocabulary training which highlights the gaps in vocabulary learning and aims to close this gap, particularly between those of differing social standing. Vocabulary is now a key part of the Teaching and Learning Strategy and defines and refines how the Trust will teach vocabulary and how this will impact the children’s learning. Further research projects are being conducted by teachers into developing children’s vocabulary, for example by exploring the history and roots of words.

A governor asked if the Trust could expect an immediate impact on the development of vocabulary. The KS2 Leader of Learning commented that children should be taught around 300-400 words per year and these words should be revisited regularly. Vocabulary learning is a long term system, which requires teaching language explicitly and making vocabulary more visible in the classroom. From a teaching perspective, a staff governor commented that the culture in class has changed already and vocabulary expansion has been visible immediately.

Quality of Education – A vibrant and engaging Curriculum

Pupil voice indicates children have been engaging with a vibrant curriculum, which focuses on utilising visits and real life experiences to support the development of children's knowledge and understanding. It has worked to provide equality for children so that all pupils have access to similar experiences, irrespective of their social standing. Children talk enthusiastically about their experiences to date including a fascinating space project in year 5 and learning about the heart and circulatory system in year 6.

A governor asked how we fill the gaps for missed experiences given the current pandemic. It was confirmed that trips were taking place last term and these included adventurous outdoor activities and attending swimming sessions. The pandemic has been limiting but as a Trust we are ensuring that as many activities as possible take place on site. Teachers have been very creative in providing opportunities for life experiences in different ways and the children have responded to these well, talking often about their exciting learning opportunities.

A governor further asked what arrangements are in place to address the gaps in reading and phonics, as well as ensuring that we have adequate and good quality books. The KS2 Leader of Learning explained that quality first teaching has been the primary focus, introducing age appropriate vocabulary, and an extensive retrieval and inference programme. Reading very much links with vocabulary and work is being done to recognise how children understand and retrieve information from text. At both schools, phonics lessons are now being delivered twice per day, extra reading time has been introduced and the accelerated reader programme at St Martin's is now well underway. As well as encouraging children to read more frequently, Accelerated Reader offers reading comprehension quizzes and vocabulary tests after a read. At Vale View, Busters Book Club is utilised to encourage additional reading, by offering rewards for a class that reads. Following an audit of the books available, a book order for Vale View School will be placed imminently to expand the selection.

A governor asked if these initiatives were having an impact on the children that are particularly reluctant to read.

At St Martin's, children's attitudes towards reading have changed. They access a wider variety of texts and genres and their interests have expanded. Performance appraisals reflected the gains children had made in reading, for instance children who had not finished a book before are now so engaged and enthralled by the books that they want to finish them. The Reading Champions project, taking place across both schools, is an initiative that focusses on a TA working with a selected group to engage children in reading individually and collectively with opportunities to discuss texts read.

A governor asked how teachers that are working well are sharing their practice. The use of IRIS, a tool which enables teaching to be recorded and shared, is being implemented across the Trust. Confidence is growing slowly amongst staff in using this facility with the aim that it will become second nature to self-monitor and share practice.

A governor further commented that the pandemic has encouraged more digital techniques to be used more naturally and teachers need to become familiar with seeing themselves on screen, particularly for conducting remote teaching and learning to pupils.

The KS2 Leader of Learning commented that IRIS is used effectively in NQT mentoring to record clips of teaching that can later be reflected on and targets set for improvement. IRIS is a very beneficial tool that enables teachers to reflect straight away on their teaching style and the impact on learning.

With regards to next steps, bespoke CPD continues to be delivered in accordance with a research focused programme. Much of the training is concentrating on understanding the basic neuroscience of education and how this impacts a child's memory when learning.

A governor asked with reference to cultural capital, how the Trust are diversifying the curriculum as this is of vital importance in enhancing cultural understanding.

The KS2 Leader of Learning confirmed that senior leaders regularly review the curriculum content, asking challenging questions about why for example, a particular person in history has been selected within a history topic. These challenges will ensure that diversity is addressed in the school environment. This is a huge area to tackle and it is a long journey in terms of representing all areas of cultural diversity but actions are in place.

Sue Atkinson joined the meeting at 11:00am.

Quality of Education – Curriculum Development

The curriculum has been developed across the Trust, with objectives coherently planned to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum, including looking at skills more closely within each subject to ensure that children are prepared for future life. Maths and English long term plans are well-established to ensure skills are progressive from Year R to Year 6. In addition, subject leaders have developed a 'skills' document to ensure that children continue to develop as they learn new skills, guaranteeing that they are building on their knowledge as they go through the school.

The KS2 Leader of Learning explained that over the next term the trust will begin to review assessment across the curriculum, working alongside key stage leaders and subject leaders, to identify how knowledge, skills and understanding are planned for, taught and assessed. Teachers will assess children's knowledge and recall of information regularly and the impact will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

A governor asked how the Teaching Assistants are being supported.

The Assistant Headteacher for St Martin's confirmed that training for TAs is taking place across the Trust to ensure that TAs feel supported and guided through the curriculum development. For example, training on vocabulary has been cascaded to support staff.

Leadership and Management – Subject Leaders

Subject Leaders continue to develop in their roles. They have developed progression of skills documents which ensure knowledge and skills are progressively built upon. The Assistant Headteachers across the schools are leading a group of Subject Leaders across the Trust, who are gathering evidence about their subject, ensuring they have a clear vision for their subject, that the curriculum is designed to achieve this and that they can clearly articulate this to external bodies. The long term aim and lasting legacy is to have a handbook on subject leadership to provide a reference guide on how to be an effective leader, including how to showcase their subject in school, the community and on the website. Additionally, those Subject Leaders that have been part of the working group will be able to support other Subject Leaders across the Trust.

A governor commented that the challenge is to ensure that the subject leadership success is embedded whole heartedly into the curriculum as well as ensuring that the subject is kept current and fresh. Senior leaders agreed and confirmed that the curriculum is regularly reviewed with this in mind.

Leadership and Management – Vision and Values

Visions and values are well established and embedded across Vale View and St Martin's. The values 'characters' were introduced last year as a means to support the children's understanding of values and what they look like in everyday life. The values are now an integral part of the school and are visible in the environment, the curriculum, assemblies and shared with our families. Monitoring has demonstrated the impact of these values and the level of understanding by children as they move towards the mindset of striving for success and embedding this attitude in all of their learning.

It was acknowledged that the Headteacher at Vale View drove this initiative forward originally and exciting work has also been taking place at Vale View, including school advocates writing a postcard from the perspective of the character and sharing this in school assemblies.

A governor asked if the rewards and recognition programme had been adapted during the Covid pandemic.

It was confirmed that during the pandemic, no whole-school assemblies were taking place. However, celebration assemblies were being held weekly in the classroom with the same rewards. The weekly newsletter is focused on achievements and embedding the values.

A governor further asked if the characters are inspiring children to change their behaviours. St Martin's gave examples that, in restorative justice circles for instance, children will recognise that they were not being a "respectful rhino". Similarly, a child wishing to be considered as an anti-bullying ambassador used the phrase they wanted to be a "responsible rabbit". Children have had an opportunity to write stories about the characters to share with their class, demonstrating that they are starting to relate their experiences to these behaviours. This year, the character traits are

being developed further so that children can relate their learning behaviours to how this will help them in the future. For example: Responsible Rabbit knows that it's her choice if she makes the most of her learning. She understands that if she wants to do well in her future, it's worth the effort now.

EYFS Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Leading practitioner gave an overview of the curriculum, which is coherently planned with related activities and skills that are progressive throughout the year. Adult directed learning opportunities are linked to child initiated learning, where children have the opportunity to practice what they have learned and reapply the skills they have acquired. Adult support is specific and tailored to each child. Real life experiences play a large role in the curriculum, for example in the living eggs project children gain a lot of language as well as a link to wider knowledge and understanding of other life cycles. EYFS are also working on school values and identify that these are characteristics of effective learning. The children have responded well to these values and talk about stories of courageous cats, as well as making links to other characteristics such as having pride in their work.

In terms of the next steps, the new curriculum will be introduced in September 2021 and staff will need to attend training.

Early reading continues to be developed using "Letters and Sounds" to teach phonics systematically. Books purchased last year ensure that children have access to books that match their phonic knowledge and ability. Progress is closely monitored and learning journeys demonstrate lots of opportunities for child initiated practice. To support parental engagement in early reading last year, story sacks were sent home every 2-3 weeks which were well-received by families. Our challenge now is to identify a covid compliant way of enabling parents to support and encourage a love of reading.

A governor asked how EYFS will monitor the impact of staff training.

The EYFS practitioner confirmed that staff will be observed within specific sessions and monitored so that confidence in delivery can be built up over time.

A governor further commented that there could be a huge variance in knowledge amongst Early Years children and queried if children with a higher understanding are encouraged.

It was confirmed that children have an individual learning journey and are assessed against criteria. Staff also have a good understanding of what the children already know so that they can be further challenged. This is fundamental as children that come from nursery show a marked difference in knowledge when entering Year R than those that haven't attended nursery and the same applies to summer born children who may have a lower attainment than those children that are older in the cohort.

7

Feedback from Governor Monitoring

	<p>Since the last meeting, governors have carried out monitoring within the areas of Safeguarding (SCR) and SEND.</p> <p>Governor monitoring reports will be sent in advance of the next meeting so that governors have time to review and prepare questions.</p> <p>Monitoring targets for next term were set in the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Voice • SEF – an aspect will be selected and tested • Health and Safety <p>Action: Monitoring reports from Governors to be provided to Clerk and then distributed prior to the next meeting.</p>
8	<p><u>AOB</u> No AOB</p>
9	<p><u>Confidentiality</u> There were no items of a confidential nature raised in this meeting.</p>
10	<p><u>Date of the next meeting</u> Term 3 – Thursday 28th January 2021</p>
<p><u>Action Points</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chair of Governors to email Clerk with permission to sign minutes from meeting on 1st October 2020 on their behalf. ➤ Clerk to amend Terms of Reference with new appointment of Amanda Abbott to Pupil Premium area along with Sarah Slingsby. ➤ Clerk to prepare letter on behalf of Chair of Governors to acknowledge resignation of Kate Webster. ➤ Monitoring reports from Governors to be provided to Clerk and then distributed prior to the next meeting. 	

Minutes written by the Clerk, Kirsty Ash

Signed Date

Stacey Wells, Chair of Governors