

## RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (LGB)

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 6.30pm

**Present:** Mr Ian Butler (Chair), Mrs Carolyn Walker, Mr Ian Yapp (Headteacher), Mr Rick Miles, Mr Peter Carr, Mr Charlie Heard, Mr Peter Carr

**In attendance:** Mr Iain Tessier (Clerk, Governance Advisor)  
Mr Martyn Sibley (CEO, STAR MAT)

#### 1.0 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Governors welcomed Martyn Sibley, STAR MAT CEO.
- 1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Alison Woodward and Andrew Warnes. John O'Callaghan was absent.
- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019

- 2.1 **Resolved:**  
Governors agreed that the minutes of the last meeting, held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019, were a correct record of that meeting and the Chair was duly authorised to sign the minutes.

#### 3.0 Action Points and Matters Arising (from last meeting)

- 3.1 All actions from last meeting were in hand. The nursery marketing working group was due to meet on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

#### 4.0 Governor Matter and Board Development

- 4.1 The Headteacher had reflected upon the school's planned participation in the OFSTED pilot inspection for the new framework. Having completed a risk analysis and given the position of the school, the Headteacher wished to withdraw from the pilot. Gaining an insight into the new handbook did not outweigh the distraction of preparing for the inspection. The Headteacher acknowledged that leadership capacity was not where the school wanted it to be and this was part of the equation. Also, the new section 8 was not a one day inspection but in effect took up 2.5 days. Governors supported the Headteacher's stance and agreed that he could write to the DfE to outline their position. A governor asked if any of the other MAT schools had been asked to participate in the pilot. No other MAT schools were involved. As a result of this decision it was agreed that the informal March meeting was no longer needed. At the 8<sup>th</sup> April meeting governors would look at the implications for the SEF.
- 4.2 The Chair had completed safer recruitment training.
- 4.3 The Clerk made governors aware of the facility to use the recently approved 'virtual attendance' protocol. A brief discussion on when and where this might be applied followed. The Clerk pointed out safeguards in the protocol that would ensure the retention of sound, transparent governance.
- 4.4 The LGB were happy to accept the Trust Board's reappointment of Mr Heard.

**ACTION**

**IY**

## 5.0 Curriculum Link Presentation

5.1 Item carried over.

## 6.0 Safeguarding Audit

6.1 The safeguarding audit had been completed (circulated prior to the meeting). Similarly, governors had received the report from Chair's safeguarding visit. The Chair spoke of a very robust self-evaluation exercise. The action plan from the audit had been included in the papers to governors. The Headteacher outlined where he and AW had completed relevant training and how the school would attend to necessary refresher training for other staff. The Headteacher estimated that they were a third of the way through the actions. There were no major problems to address.

6.1.1 A governor asked if the audit had considered how the school would deal with critical incidents. The Clerk pointed out that a Business Continuity Plan, which would cover protocols in the event of critical incidents, was about to be approved by the MAT Board. In addition to certain set protocols, schools would be permitted/required to outline any school-specific procedures that were used in the event of certain emergencies.

## 7.0 Finance Update

Tabled.

7.1 The Headteacher noted that they had covered a lot of ground on the budget at last meeting. There was a brief discussion on the tabled papers. A governor noted that the budget position was circa £32k worse than that which had been reported at last meeting – the LGB had been given the impression (at last meeting) that, if anything, the budget would be going the other way and showing improving. Despite some contention it was established that yes the budget position had worsened and that the school was now projecting an in-year deficit of around £69k. The Headteacher apologised that he had not fully digested the latest details (having only just received them from the SBM) and he would clarify what was going on. What he did know was that SEND income was still coming in and that further EHCP cases were going to panel. Post Easter work would start on the detail of the 2019/20 start budget.

7.2 The Chair asked the CEO for clarification about the school's ability to utilise its budget balance (carry forward) to fund next year's budget and sustain current structures. The CEO said that schools budgets were there own to manage and indicated that LGBs were able to utilise their reserves. Having said that, the Trust had to have a balanced budget and therefore schools had to be prudent in their financial planning. The Trustees would need to be consulted about spending beyond budget (i.e. in-year deficits). Until MAT reserves were in a stronger position all schools would have to be very careful with spending and Trustees had a duty to monitor that situation. In response to a governor query about Trust turnover, the CEO said that STAR had income of around £14m.

## 8.0 Personnel Update

8.1 Two members of staff remained on long-term sick. One was unlikely to return. Long-term supply measures were in place. The SIC had carried out observations of the teachers and concluded that teaching was good. With regards one of the absences, the Headteacher had been made aware that the individual would not be returning until at least May. In all cases, the Headteacher was following HR advice. The supply teachers were doing very well and both could stay until the end of the year. The school had negotiated a reduced rate on fees. The school was providing both teachers with the opportunity to work towards their NQT competency.

8.2 A maternity cover would be required for September. Another fixed term post was coming to an end in August and leadership would need to consider how to move this forward.

8.3 A general discussion followed. Governors made it clear that they supported SLT in wanting the school to retain its 2FE structure; however, they were aware of the potential challenges to this in the medium-term. Given one of the absences, governors wanted to know how the Headteacher was addressing additional leadership capacity. The Headteacher pointed out that the budget currently allowed for AW to be out of class 0.5FTE. Governors would need to weigh up several things: whether to continue with an Assistant Head post, the level of AWs release time, what SLT capacity was necessary and sustainable. They also needed to bear in mind AWs stated intentions re: continuing in post.

8.4 A governor was concerned that Maths had now not had subject leadership for around a year. This was a key area of focus for the school and there was an apparent lack of direction. The Headteacher acknowledged that AW had not had time to focus on this given all that had been going on. Circumstances had meant that the devised plan had not been implemented. The Headteacher said that he had re-drafted the plan but conceded that he was no closer to identifying an internal candidate that was ready to lead on Maths. He shared the governors concern and accepted the challenge. Efforts had not been good enough. When asked about where AWs focus had been, the Headteacher replied that a large proportion of time had been spent on supporting incoming SEND pupils and readying provision accordingly. The Chair noted that, in his opinion, the school would not need an assistant head going forward if the future staffing model assigned current leaders the necessary management time in certain areas and in turn supported them with an appropriate middle leadership. Given upcoming staffing changes, leadership needed to get the next staffing model right and it needed to be sustainable. The Headteacher was invited to present a staffing proposal to the next meeting.

8.5 The Maths governor asked what they could do to monitor the situation. The Headteacher openly encouraged the governor to challenge AW and the school on what they were doing to address the shortcomings in Maths provision. The Headteacher said that he was happy to go through the re-drafted plan with the governor post half-term. The Headteacher summarised the current priorities and objectives when it came to Maths across the school. Mr Miles was invited to attend staff meeting on the subject. Discussion concluded with a frank exchange about the effectiveness of streaming in Maths.

## 9.0 Premises, Health and Safety

### 9.1 Methane

The school had received a letter from the Dep Chief Constable of North Yorkshire police indicating that investigations on the matter were ongoing. The issue at the moment was that no-one was taking responsibility and there was no conclusion on what was causing the problem.

9.2 New fencing and playground markings for the nursery were being funded as follows: Friends £10k, £4.8k Sports Premium, £1.2k 'little extras' money. Given the amount in question, the spend had to be approved at MAT level.

## 10.0 Policy Review

10.1 Resolved:

The following policies were reviewed and approved:

- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying (to be revisited in the summer term)
- Teaching & Learning (describes current approach, however, both school and MAT looking at curriculum vision and principles – thus further changes likely in due course)

## 11.0 Parental Survey

11.1 The raw data from the parental survey was just in and the Headteacher was beginning the task of crunching the data. There had been 85 responses. The school normally received in the region of 130-150 responses. The idea that they would appeal to more parents by going digital had not panned out as expected. Indeed, some of the respondents had not completed all of the questions. The Headteacher was disappointed with some of the outcomes. 'Strongly agreed' responses had

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fallen quite significantly. The introduction of a 'passive' answer category rather than a 'don't know' had led to far greater levels of responses in that category, which was not helpful in understanding if there were underlying issues to address.

### Headlines

11.2 Compared to responses in the previous year, the following approval rates were largely unchanged:

- Children being happy at school
- Satisfaction over a child's progress
- Children feeling safe at school (in fact negative responses were down slightly).
- Children being taught well.
- Homework being at an appropriate level

11.3 Compared to responses in the previous year, the following approval rates had fallen:

- Behaviour was good in school (15 respondents had indicated that behaviour was not as strong as it used to be). The Headteacher felt that staffing issues were also a factor in this and other areas where responses were less favourable.
- Matters to do with bullying

11.4 The Headteacher posed a question: was behaviour as good as it had been? The Headteacher was candid in answering this question. He acknowledged that there probably were more issues with behaviour – although overall behaviour remained good. The school had more children with additional needs, some of whom struggled to operate within the parameters of current policy and expectations. Notwithstanding this, the Headteacher remained proud about the school's approach to inclusion. Governors were concerned as to what narrative they should convey to parents on the back of this survey. A full discussion followed. The Headteacher would consider the management response, taking into account governors' views. Governors were welcome to contribute by emailing their thoughts to the Headteacher.

11.5 A governor asked whether the school did enough to the good work that was going on. The Headteacher acknowledged that they probably weren't the best at promoting the good work that went on and promoting the qualities of the school. There were some lovely comments from parents and these needed to be conveyed in the management's response.

11.6 Governors welcomed the positive responses indicating that parents were happy with the feedback they got from the school in various areas, however, several governors wondered whether the school could better utilise digital feedback systems. The Headteacher asked the parents in the room what they would want in that respect - BromCom / MyChildatSchool, for example? The Chair was concerned that these systems took up even more staff time in terms of administration etc, not to mention the cost involved in installing a system. The Chair suggested that they had other, more pressing priorities to attend to. No consensus was reached and the Chair moved the meeting on.

11.7 The Headteacher noted that the Trust was looking to introduce a consistent methodology when it came to surveying parents. This would offer the opportunity for schools to benchmark against one another and look at best practice etc.

## **12.0 Governor Link Reports**

12.1 Mrs Walker's nursery visit report had been circulated. There were no comments or questions.

12.2 Mr Heard was asked if he should write up his visit to the Eco-Group. The Chair indicated that he should. On that subject, the Headteacher noted that the school was a long-standing green flag eco-school. They would have to consider whether it was appropriate to go down a different path in terms of their approach and any accreditation.

## **13.0 Washing Line and SDP for the Term**

13.1 An updated washing line would be made available ahead of next meeting.

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## 14.0 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

*The meeting closed at 8.05pm*

	<b>Action Points from the Meeting</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Date for Delivery</b>
1.	Write to DfE requesting withdrawal from OFSTED inspection pilot	4.1	IY	ASAP
2.	Seek clarity over the direction of the budget	7.1	IY	Report next meeting
3.	Staffing proposal	8.4	IY	Next meeting
4.	Challenge SLT on Maths provision: attend staff meeting on Maths	8.5	RM	Due course
5.	Contribute to management response re: parental survey	11.4	ALL	Before next meeting
6.	Visit report re: Eco-Group	12.2	CH	For next meeting
7.	Circulate updated washing-line	13.1	IY	By next meeting

### **Items for next meeting:**

- Curriculum link presentation
- Staffing Structure Proposal
- Management response to Parental Survey