

Minutes

GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTH MOLTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 6.30 pm South Molton Community Primary School

| MEETING | | | | | |
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| Date/Time: Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 6.30pm | | | Location: SMCPS | | |
| Attendees | Initials | Category | Attendees | Initials | Category |
| Tom Parkin | TP | Ex-officio | Karen Humber | KH | Co-opted |
| Beverly Adams | BA | Local Authority | Alison Pope (elected at meeting) | AP | Co-opted |
| Rosie Warrington | RW | Staff (Deputy head) | | | |
| Laura Tandy | LT | Parent | | | |

| In attendance | Initials | |
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| Liz Shaw | LS | Clerk |

| Apologies | Initials | |
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| Chris Brown | CB | Co-opted |
| Glenys Laws | GL | Co-opted |
| Toby Shaddick | TS | Parent |

| | Item | | Sub-item | Leader | Minutes |
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| Procedural Items | | | | | |
| 1 | Welcome and Apologies | | | Chair | Please send apologies and reason if not able to attend |
| | | 1.1 | Election of new governor - AP Re-election of IS | Chair & board | Alison Pope was elected to the FGB. BA proposed Alison and this was seconded by KH. All present voted for Alison to join the board. Ivor Smith's term of office ends 17/3/24. Ivor has emailed to say he will continue in post until the end of the academic year. BA proposed Ivor and KH seconded the proposal. All present voted to re-elect Ivor. Alison welcomed to the board |
| 2 | Update Business Interests | | | Clerk | None |

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| | Minutes | | Receive reports from committees. | | Minutes from spring term committee meetings in folder - all agreed by committee chairs |
| 3 | Actions from last meeting | | Arrange site visit - TS/TP FGB to decide on group or individual photos for website + profile - FGB Create a MAT info folder - done | | Site visit to be arranged - TP explained that the school complete site visits themselves with the site manager and pick up on any issues. FGB on the website: those present agreed for individual photos and small profile about each governor to be sent to clerk by Easter ACTION: FGB individuals to send photo and profiles to clerk. |
| 4 | Receive correspondence | | | Chair | None |
| 5 | Items brought forward | | | Chair | None |
| Safeguarding | | | | | |
| 6 | Any concerns | | | TP/LT | LT will be meeting with TP for termly safeguarding catch up. Report at next FGB. TP: no concerns |
| Health and Safety | | | | | |
| 7 | Site visit - any issues? | | Visit to be completed by TS | TS | Visit to be arranged TP - a child fell on the trim trail, the parent collected and took them to medical staff, the child was unhurt. Recorded as an accident. The trim trail is always staffed during school hours (play & lunch times). The parent was concerned that the trim trail was not appropriate for year 1 children. TP contacted the equipment company and they confirmed the trim trail is appropriate for years 1-6. We remind children to play safely on the equipment, talk about it in assembly. BA - children need the exploration of play equipment, it is how they learn to use it, problem solve etc. TP - there is a safety matting around the trim trail which clearly did its job BA - is the accident recorded? TP - yes all are recorded LT - is there a disclaimer? TP - no. We do inform parents via the newsletter that the trim trail is not staffed before and after school. LT - maybe a sign with the hours it is staffed placed near the trim trail BA - continue to add the information to the newsletter too. |

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| | | | | | <p>Are the lights on the drive working? TP - we have had problems with the timer, so not always on. Will speak with the site manager. ACTION: TP to check with SP about lights on the drive</p> |
| Monitoring and accountability | | | | | |
| 8 | Headteachers report | | Receive headteachers written report. | TP | <p>EYFS/Preschool: TP - EYFS - introduction of a preschool on site. Still no reply from DCC. Tarka Trust would be happy for us to have a pre-school. As part of a MAT still required to apply via DCC. Tarka Trust have emailed the local authority on our behalf to try to move this along. BA - do you have space? TP - we have spare classrooms. As birth rate is falling and intake numbers in reception is low, we would have enough room for now. BA - can governors do anything to help? TP - we need to talk to parents to investigate if they would be interested BA - does the other school have a preschool? TP - no KH - a preschool is a popular facility, parents find it appealing. Helpful for the school too as the children are more prepared for school entry, know the ethos of the school. AP - is it worth talking to councillors? KH - family life is all about logistics, not helpful when parents are travelling to Barnstaple to drop off their toddler before bringing school aged children to school having sat in a car for nearly an hour. Not a positive start to the day for anyone. AP - there is no sense in DCC reluctance for a preschool. KH - the government are changing the funding for EYFS & nursery - there will be more of a need.</p> <p>MAT update: TP - the academy order has been received. Now the process of Tarka getting to know us. Process likely to take us up to the end of academic year, July 2024. LT - thought the process was about 18 months? TP - the time frames vary, within the next 6 months we are likely to join the MAT. Tarka have not had any of our financial details until now, they are obviously happy with our Ofsted report. As part of the process Tarka need to meet governors to help prepare for conversion. Tarka are meeting staff here</p> |

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| | | | | <p>to discuss TUPE conditions on 17th April at 3.15pm. Tarka would like to meet governors on 27th March at 2.45pm - are any governors available to join us? BA & KH to attend. LT will check diary and try to attend.</p> <p>Questions from KH: <i>Class structure for reception/yr 1 - are parents aware it is a mixed year group structure. Will there be an opportunity for parents to understand how it works?</i> TP - we meet parents in May, once school placements have been confirmed. Parents are advised at the meeting. Doesn't usually cause an issue. RW - reception and year 1 classes are quite fluid, interchangeable rooms <i>Premises - EYFS playground - is there design and list of equipment to view? How does the EYFS play area work with mixed reception/year 1 class?</i> TP - we will have 8 classes next year. Planning to have the preschool in current reception class, reception will move into year 1 room, with third room the mixed reception/year 1. EYFS and reception will all have access to the new EYFS play area. KH - wanted to ensure that all EYFS could access the new area. We really need to highlight having a stand alone EYFS area. TP - Dartmoor building is the best place for small children. There had been thoughts of using another building, but Dartmoor was specifically built for small children i.e. toilets, room sizes etc. Dartmoor has capacity to take the whole of EYFS. Really good for progression. TP - brief for play area - wanted resurfacing to ensure all weather and soft play, colourful with a roadway and some play equipment. Pentagon delivered a good design incorporating all we wanted. KH - will the EYFS lead have any input with the design? TP - yes, she has viewed the design and helped with ideas. BA - is Pentagon going to remove the old equipment, not mentioned in their quote? TP - no the site manager is going to remove the old equipment BA - do you have a time frame? TP - yes, Pentagon can start during May half term, should be complete by end of July. The quotes were discussed at F&R committee meeting and all present were happy to use Pentagon. BA - the PTA are adding some money to this? TP - yes. PTA are adding £10000, we will also add money from Sports Fund and the remainder from Capital Fund - money from this can not be used for staffing.</p> |
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| | | | | | <p>All present at FGB agreed with Pentagon quote and happy for work to commence as soon as possible.</p> <p>KH - how would it work with some year 1 pupils in the mixed reception class, can they access the play area?</p> <p>TP - the year 1 pupils remaining in the mixed class will benefit from the continuous provision and support.</p> <p><i>Exclusion - are numbers higher than usual? How long is each exclusion? What plans/support is in place for the excluded child?</i></p> <p>TP - exclusions are higher than usual. Typically we never exclude and in the 11 years I have been here, I have never issued a permanent exclusion. We don't want behaviours to escalate and impact the safety of others. Putting in provision.</p> <p>Each exclusion has been for 2 days. A pupil can be excluded up to 45 days in an academic year. . There is always a return to school meeting with the parents.</p> <p>KH - is work sent home with the child whilst excluded?</p> <p>TP - yes, not always completed.</p> <p>BA - as a school the exclusion rate is small</p> <p>AP - the impact of behaviours on others and school community can't be underestimated</p> <p>BA - assessments covered in T&L committee meeting. Did discuss governor visits and focus. BA & KH visiting with RW. BA to focus on writing and catch up with data from pupils seen last year during visit. KH would like to focus on parental engagement - both SIP priorities.</p> |
| 9 | SFVS | | Review and agree SFVS for submission | TS/CB/all | In folder - SFVS agreed at the Finance & Resources meeting Feb 2024. No further questions from the FGB. All agreed that SFVS can be sent to DCC. |
| 10 | Review signatories authorisation list | | Update signatories list. | TP/CB | Updated to include Sean Pepper and removed Paul Young. Signatory list in governor folder (paper copy) |
| 11 | Budget monitor | | Review budget monitor | TP/KH | Budget monitor discussed at F&R committee meeting. TP - budget looking healthy currently, the carry forward will decrease over the next few years, a reflection of falling numbers |
| | | 11.1 | Quotes for any purchases that are likely to carry forward into new financial | TP | TP - EYFS play area will be part of the 2024-25 financial year. Not planning anything else currently and no further purchases expected for this financial year. |

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| | | | year (brought forward from F&R meeting) | | |
| | | 11.2 | Staffing numbers and projection for budget setting (brought forward from F&R meeting) | TP | <p>TP - we will drop from 9 to 8 classes for the 2024-25 academic year. This helps the budget. We are not losing any teaching staff, due to natural causes there will be no impact on teachers.</p> <p>We have been over staffed with teaching assistants.</p> <p>BA - we talked about this last year, lucky to have the amount of TAs in class</p> <p>TP - we have 10 TAs on temporary contracts and will reduce this by half. We have been through a process of class observation, interviews, review of absences etc and will not be renewing 4 TA contracts. A fifth TA will be leaving to go elsewhere. We are aware it is an unpleasant situation for all involved. Staff have been informed of the decisions.</p> <p>We are losing funding from four pupils in year 6 with EHCP, two having significant top up. We have to cut where we don't have the funding. Our support staff had grown large.</p> <p>BA - can become dependant on teaching assistants in class</p> <p>KH - the SEND report highlights specialist TAs, are they part of the restructure?</p> <p>TP - our specialist TAs are on permanent contracts and were not part of the recent process. These staff have received additional training to support them in their roles i.e. SEMH and speech & language (SaLT).</p> <p>RW - we will be working smarter with our SEND children, particularly in the nurture room. Some of our KS1 pupils will be moving onto KS2, we will be using the nurture room for them. Likely to be approx. 5 children with 2 TAs. Help to access more from the curriculum.</p> <p>KH - Track it - is this working well?</p> <p>TP - works well for approx 95% of children. We are now able to share information with parents i.e. red points.</p> <p>RW - would be good to get feedback during parents' evening next week.</p> <p>LT - like it, useful.</p> <p>TP - with red points we always phone home and inform the parent, but Track it now also advises them. Helpful, can see patterns in behaviour.</p> <p>RW - it is also good preparation for secondary school, as most have a similar system.</p> <p>Summary budget - looks healthy. Carry forward for this year is good. Carry forward for year 2 is approx. £68,000. Healthy position to be in today.</p> <p>KH - business manager from Tarka must be pleased. Good to know money is being managed so well.</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>TP - we have slimmed down some elements. We are not stopping any of the services we use/need.</p> <p>Staffing - some staff have decided to reduce days i.e. site manager dropping down to 4 days.</p> <p>No further questions about the budget. Talked through at F&R meeting.</p> |
| 12 | Approve final budget | | Receive final budget to review | TP/KH/ TS | All present approved final budget |
| 13 | Governing | | Receive reports of any visits | FGB | <p>No visits completed this term. Dates have been arranged with RW with BA & KH - summer term.</p> <p>LT is meeting with TP for safeguarding.</p> <p>TS to arrange site visit</p> <p>ACTION: remaining governors to arrange visits with RW - consider lead role and SIP outcomes.</p> |
| | | 13.1 | Draw-up programme of visits for the term | | Have all governors arranged visits with RW? - see above and action |
| 14 | Governor training | | Report on any training undertaken or identify need/desire for training. | FGB/ clerk | <p>Training record in folder.</p> <p>KH had suggested sharing her training slides with FGB. Clerk to create a folder for training slides that governors can view and chose to sign up for further training.</p> <p>ACTION: clerk to create training folder</p> <p>BA - training is variable. Attendance training was poor, did not find it helpful. Told us what we already knew, was hoping for new ideas</p> <p>LT - will training change for governors when we convert?</p> <p>TP - unsure a question we can ask at the meeting on 27th. The Trust may deliver their own training.</p> <p>KH - some of the recent training I have attended via DES, had MAT staff too.</p> |
| 15 | SIP | | Termly report on progress of SIP and identify next steps. | TP | <p>TP - SIP update in headteacher report.</p> <p>Writing an ongoing area of concern - red. We are aware, a SIP priority. We are thinking about how we can manage and deliver writing from September - do we want to be more prescriptive, use a more formal programme.</p> <p>RW - prescriptive programmes have been shown to work</p> <p>BA - would be good to know what Tarka use</p> <p>TP - we have used a more prescriptive writing programme in the past, moved away from this to give more creative freedom. Want to get the best of both, adopt the best bits without reducing creativity.</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>AP - how is parent engagement with reading? Reading on a regular basis helps to feed into their writing ability. Is there anything in the home/school agreement?</p> <p>TP - Yes, the agreement asks for a minimum of reading 3 times a week. We have a reading cup to award in assembly and our EYFS teacher has held 3 parent sessions to talk about phonics and reading - not many parents attended.</p> <p>LT - autumn term teacher assessments - where there are red areas, are there measures in place to support writing?</p> <p>TP - teachers assess termly</p> <p>RW - we have provided extra staff training for writing. try to ensure staff are confident is assessing writing, can be subjective, as there is very little guidance.</p> <p>LT - have you got any figures?</p> <p>RW - DCC documents with figures</p> <p>Staff assess and then cross examine one another. Looking at this in stages. There are no standardised forms, making it harder to assess.</p> <p>KH - is there a lack of resilience in writing?</p> <p>RW - poor stamina</p> <p>TP - fine motor control is poor</p> <p>AP - the electronic world is changing how we write</p> <p>TP - there are big challenges for education, long term changes in the curriculum</p> |
| | | 15.1 | Review school aims and vision | TP | To be reviewed at summer FGB |
| | | 15.2 | Report on school performance - ASP | TP/RW | Covered above - see headteacher report (item 8) and SIP (item 15) |
| 16 | Feedback from visit(s) from external adviser(s) and action | | Reports from David Chaplin, DCC | TP | <p>TP - David did work with subject leaders and couple of HTLAs with leads in music and PE. Really works when you have someone with a passion for their subject.</p> <p>Developing MFL - new lead, worked with lead at SMCC. Speaking French in class, now working on written language (not a usual requirement).</p> |
| 17 | Update on MAT | | | CB/TS/TP | See headteacher report item 8 |
| 18 | SEND update | | SEND report included in folder | GL | <p>In folder.</p> <p>GL had a couple of queries: removed Senco from report and added SEND team (Tom, Rosie & Liz) as the team covered meetings etc for the year.</p> |

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| | | | | Added explanation of EAL. RW to update the clerk with training she has undertaken this year. |
| 19 | Ofsted | | Review of outcomes/recommendations of report Increase uplift in enquiries? Are we 'selling' the Ofsted report? | <p>CB - acknowledge huge amount of work completed by TP, RW & SLT - Congratulations on a great outcome.</p> <p>BA - not much feedback from parents or community?</p> <p>LT - silence is golden, if the report had been negative parents would have reacted.</p> <p>TP - people do not appear to be viewing school Ofsted reports, we have had families visit the school and the team have highlighted the report, but the families have not looked at it.</p> <p>We are working on assessment and SEND - areas to consider in the report. I have noticed that in other 'good' outcomes, these areas appear a lot.</p> <p>LT - the school sign in Gunswell Lane needs updating with new Ofsted date</p> <p>TP - need signage on the main road to indicate the school location. People do not know we are here.</p> <p>We have been reviewing how to celebrate the school's success: banner on main road, flyers into new homes/with estate agents, information for the local nurseries.</p> <p>BA - we have a beautiful entrance and school, need to use this</p> <p>LT - we did mention at another meeting about using a drone to take photos</p> <p>TP - CB has a drone - need to follow up</p> <p>TP - Senco returning after Easter break. Tarka's new deputy is taking a lead on inclusion and SEND. All will support SEND improvements in the school.</p> <p>BA - any further news about Tarka and Ventrus combining?</p> <p>TP - no further information, the two MATs met. Think there is much to be discussed before this conversion occurs.</p> <p>LT - do you get to see the parent views?</p> <p>TP - no. We are informed of the percentage of people who have responded but we do not see the actual reviews. The Ofsted inspector did read out some views and it was disappointing that some issues that had been dealt with some time before reappearing in the reviews. The inspector did say there have been plenty of nice reviews too. The inspectors take a balance of the reviews.</p> |
| 20 | Headteacher - mid year catch up | | Arrange catch up date with appraisal panel - CB & IS | ACTION - CB & IS to arrange catch up date with TP |
| 21 | Self Evaluation | | SEF - Not a requirement, seen as good practice | TP - our SEF is part of our SIP, we have included challenges and action within one document. We shared the SIP with Ofsted and they were happy with the fact that |

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| | | | | | the document combined elements of SEF and SIP. BA - SEF has not been a necessary document since 2004 TP - we review our strengths and weaknesses. BA -we can take the SEF off the agenda ACTION - remove SEF from agenda |
| Policies & Documents | | | | | |
| 21 | Emergency management plan | | | TS | TS confirmed by email that policy was review and agreed. |
| 22 | Whistleblowing | | | IS | To be reviewed at next meeting |
| 23 | Managing unreasonable behaviour | | | IS | To be reviewed at next meeting |
| 24 | Whole school food policy | | | CB | CB confirmed by email that policy was reviewed. Agreed. |
| 25 | SEND policy | | | GL | GL confirmed by email that policy was comprehensive. Agreed. |
| 25 | Impact | | What have we discussed today that impacts on the children's education? | | TP - writing - biggest impact on the school. Improve work going forward BA - talked about smarter way of using staff KH - as a new governor getting to know the school, it's been very positive good vibes in the school. BA - nice place to be AP - do you think parents take that for granted? LT - 100% BA - if school is going well, it's one less thing to worry about for parents. Need blow our trumpet, to be more obvious, so few followers on Facebook KH - working life for people has changed so much, but the school day remains the same and for many school is childcare |

Closed 8.20pm

Next meetings: