

LETHBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
Company number 7685652
Minutes for the Full Governors' meeting held on
Monday, 27th September at 19.00 at Lethbridge Primary School

Our duties as governors are:

- *to encourage all governors to contribute to all items discussed and speak freely and openly*
- *setting vision, ethos and strategic direction*
- *holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils*
- *overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent*
- *to respect confidentiality*
- *to declare any conflict of interest related to any agenda item*
- *to ensure that previously circulated papers have been read prior to the meeting.*

Supporting Papers:

Safeguarding and child Protection policy Lethbridge.
Behaviour Policy 2021
Draft Minutes 06.07.21
KCSIE 2021 September
Lethbridge Primary School SEF Sept 2021
Meeting Dates 2021/22
New Child Protection and Safeguarding – the Key updates
Risk Assessment for 1st September 2021 onwards
Whistleblowing policy review September 22

Attended by:

Phil Ashdown PA (Chair)
Lisa Mayes (LM) (HT)
Chris Webb (CW)
Christopher Hobson (CH)
Claire Harmer (CHa)
Annette Shakespeare (AS)
Carly Chew (CC)
Irene Fernow (IF)
Caron Short (CS)
Nataley Fryer (NF)
Angela Mackenzie-Wilson (AMW)
Emma Mann (EM)
Fiona Wall (FW)
Laura Crosby (LC)
Margaret Smith (MS) (Clerk)

Apologies:

Jon Dearlove (JD)

1) Welcome, apologies, declarations of interest

- PA welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were accepted from JD for tonight's meeting. PA asked if there were any declarations of interests specific to tonight's meeting. AS said she works with a school that is part of the Blue Kite Trust. However, this was not considered to be a conflict of interest in this case. PA mentioned, however, that pecuniary interest forms are available to fill in and should be on Governorhub. **(Action: All)**. PA also reminded everyone that we have the Code of Conduct and KCSIE document and he would check that these are also up on GovenorHub.

2) Elect Chair/ Vice Chair

- A motion was put to the governing board to re-elect PA as Chair and this was carried unanimously.
- Regarding the Vice Chair vacancy, PA said that nobody had come forward to specifically nominate himself or herself for this role, and PA therefore requested that people send him an email for a positive affirmation- rather than it being a case of PA pressing people at the meeting for a decision.

3) Notification of items for AOB

- PA said that there had been no specific Head Teacher's report included in the Agenda but an update would be provided at this present i.e. how things were progressing with the COVID issues at the school.

4) Minutes of Previous Meeting 6/7/2021

- PA said that the minutes had only just gone out that same day and requested that people read the minutes and let both PA and the clerk know if something is not correct. If not, could he therefore take the minutes as being a true reflection of the meeting and sign off accordingly,

5) Matters Arising

- PA referred to the Safeguarding slides a matter which had been raised at the last meeting when it was apparent that this still needed to be done. This is concerned with governors' responsibilities and PA requested that everyone should look at this before the next meeting. **(Action: All)**
- PA Also asked whether there was anything else that people felt ought to be discussed but not covered in the Agenda? Nobody had anything they felt needed to be raised. It was clarified where the training slides for Safeguarding could be found and PA asked whether everyone was clear on this. All agreed that they were.

6) MAT Update

- PA recapped that during the last academic year there had been various discussions around MATS - Blue Kite and Lydiard in particular. The merits of both these organisations had been discussed in some depth and it had ultimately been agreed that it was in the best interests of the school to seek to join Blue Kite. LM and PA had subsequently met up with Blue Kite to discuss what is to happen next. There will be an application to the *Regional Schools Commissioners* (RSC) which would need to provide reasons for joining and an explanation of *why* those reasons would be valid ones. This is applicable to both sides, i.e., whether the MAT itself is a good fit in terms of ability to exert a positive effect on the school and whether this is the right choice for the school itself based on its own situation/performance, i.e. Suitability to join a MAT. This would need to be approved before the next step is undertaken. PA confirmed that there was nothing that gave any cause for concern and the process would be made as straightforward as possible. PA also confirmed that they will subsequently also have more detailed discussions with Blue Kite as the process evolves. PA said there would probably not be anything much else happening for a month or so, however. LM pointed out that LA Schools are being told by the borough that they need to join an academy so she is very pleased that they have made this decision already and, in a sense, pre-empted what is now happening. FW asked whether the transfer could take place mid-academic year as opposed to the start, and PA confirmed that there are some practical considerations but no specific reason why not, but will need to look at specific timings and it will without doubt be the 1st of a month whenever it finally does occur. LM enthused that people know people who work in some of the schools that are part of the Trust and this has been reassuring as there has been nothing negative whatsoever. PA, on a different note, stated that Blue Kite might come in to have discussions around some of the contracts in place and it may be the case that some will pass over to Blue Kite, or others stay in place. It was confirmed that Blue Kite will do a presentation for both staff

and for parents similar to the presentation that was given for the governors, and in fact, one of the main priorities that Blue Kite has is reassuring staff which is clearly very important. Everyone considered this to be a very positive and reassuring part of the process. A further point was raised by LC. She asked whether in terms of Academy Trusts, do we need to have details of that protocol/plans for transition stored anywhere and asked is there a folder specifically in relation to this. PA said that they can create one in due course. **Action: PA/LM/Clerk.** AMW raised a concern that there will now be an influx of schools wishing to join Blue Kite (given the LA's stance on this) and she questioned whether this would impact upon Lethbridge's progress with their own application. LM said that other schools have been told that they may have to wait a year and a half so it won't impact on Lethbridge at all. PA agreed and said that Blue Kite aren't going to over stretch themselves at all as that would not be in their interests to do that. LM said that other schools will undoubtedly contact Blue Kite, but certainly not at Lethbridge's expense as we are fortunate enough to already be part of the process. As far as the RSC is concerned, PA said that there really shouldn't be any reason why they wouldn't sanction the move to a MAT.

- CH asked whether there was currently any indication of the timeframe involved regarding the application. PA said the end of October, possibly.

7)SEF/Ofsted discussion

- LM discussed SEF (The School's Self-evaluation form) distributed. She said that the document will evolve as the year goes on and is thus a work in progress. PA pointed out that 'Quality of Education' is listed as 'outstanding' and provides the school's reasons why, but it is this that Ofsted will want to challenge. LM agreed and said that things will come up to add in, as over the last year or so as a result of Covid some activity hasn't been as thorough as usual. LM referred to the fact that she has said that all areas are outstanding as she thinks that this is the right way to approach it as this is what Lethbridge ultimately strives to achieve. PA requested that we come back to it at a later meeting following any redraft. LM reiterated that it is a work in progress and she has highlighted areas for improvement such as a focus on continued recovery from Covid 19 by further developing the school's provision for mental health and wellbeing support, ensuring all staff are well placed to use trauma informed processes to meet children's needs. LM also referred to the quality of the curriculum provision which is an area for improvement by ensuring all subject leaders and governors have very high levels of understanding of this and how this might be facilitated in terms of training and empowering people/subject leaders.
- A further focus concerns the schools' phonics and reading provision for which the school will need to make choices about future programmes and whether to use a government approved scheme. LM confirmed that the school is not in any rush to move over to any of these new programmes now, but will want to see all of the programmes that have been approved in due course, and make a choice and if it is not an approved programme to be able to justify, why? CH raised if this something we may want to discuss with our potential new partner and what other primaries use. LM said that her understanding is that schools have autonomy to choose their own phonics programmes and she is sure that everyone will also be discussing what programme is best for them AS said that it appears that the Trust is happy for people to stick with their original phonics programme and supplement with other things. IF asked for clarification about the phonics results at Lethbridge based on the current programme and was informed by LM that these are always very strong and in the fairly isolated cases regarding some pupils for whom it isn't successful, then sometimes it's simply the case that a slightly different approach is required tailored to that child. IF said that in view of that, surely Ofsted would endorse it in that case as it seems to be very effective. CS raised the point that Ofsted are keen on the word of fidelity to one particular scheme. FW wondered if the publishers of Storytime were working to become an approved scheme. CS said she was no aware they were. LC raised concerns about the possible costs that might potentially be involved if a programme was changed. LM said you could not just suddenly change to something else as these programmes potentially cost thousands of pounds to set up.
- PA asked for an update regarding the next OFSTED: LM said that it will be probably at the end of the year at the earliest, but Lethbridge is not a priority for an inspection in comparison to some other schools and she queried whether joining a MAT makes a difference to the timing. AS said that this would re-set the clock if we were an LA school but did not think it would as we are an Academy . PA also talked about Bill Jerman, our school improvement partner coming in

to give an Ofsted talk at an appropriate time, probably in the new year, as if it's too early it might not be as useful. PA said it would be good to be looking through the lens of an Ofsted inspector on a school and will be a recurring theme at our meetings. It could certainly help with questions inspectors are likely to ask. In response to a query from PA, LM clarified that the focus of the inspection will be more about looking at the curriculum and reading and the subject leaders. FW asked for clarification, as she said that Ofsted must have it clearly measured what the requirements for meeting 'outstanding' are. LM said yes, there is an Evaluation Schedule for that which she can make available. **(Action: LM)**

8 Safeguarding

- This is a very extensive document which has become more complex as society increasingly identifies issues that need to be covered. In terms of KCSIE there is a big emphasis on the responsibilities of governors and safeguarding embedded into the document where it is emphasised that Governors have a duty to ensure safeguarding is embedded and apparent within policies, training, practice, culture and ethos of the setting which together make up all of the threads within the school and which all have an impact on outcome. A particular topic is peer on peer bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence are a theme that is threaded throughout the guidance and this is even filtering down to what is happening in primary schools and in relation to Disability/SEND where specific illnesses are now mentioned. For instance, prejudiced based bullying and discrimination. Lethbridge has always taken any form of discrimination very seriously and it is not something that has ever been tolerated at the school. Issues such as absence are also important – is there a child repeatedly taking time off at certain times of the day for example – little bits missed here and there - which could be indicative of a more serious underlying problem. Another concern is criminal and sexual exploitation of children which by year six with growing freedoms etc is something that needs to be taken seriously and which is emphasised within the Policy. This is something that we all need to be aware of.
- *Part three* of the document covers tightening up on the recruitment process/safeguarding. LM said that Blue Kite has redrafted application forms which has been really helpful. LC asked if this applied to everyone applying for a job at the school and was told by LM and CS that it does. In addition, the other main changes concern allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors which has undergone substantive changes at part Four of the policy. Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment has been significantly strengthened and added to (*Part five*). CS said that there is a lot of reading and that we need to take on board the headlines. This is reflected in the policy and a lot of help has been provided by Sarah Turner regarding the terminology. The text in red will be taken off if ok for publishing. IF thanked Caron for summarising the report. CS said that she is happy to receive any questions.
- PA reminded everyone that there is a formal policy to ratify also regarding Whistleblowing and the behaviour policy and he thanked CS for her helpful contribution and invited CHa to provide an update regarding Health and Safety at the school.

9)Health & Safety

- CHa said that H&S is far more condensed which means that the school is back to how it used to be pre-bubble. The older children are helping younger children to read again for example which is lovely. Of course, keeping everyone safe has its own set of challenges such as thoroughly cleaning classrooms and it hasn't completely gone back to how it was and indeed it is questionable whether it may ever do so. Interestingly, with the bubbles, some things actually worked very well. For example, at playtime there were significantly less accidents for KS2 with the recent format. Therefore, the school has kept some of the good things while going back to how it used to be pre-Covid as far as possible. A particular challenge previously was closing bubbles if a child had tested positive for COVID and endeavouring to keep everyone calm. There was, however, a degree of control previously, which is now absent with the existing test and trace system as this doesn't seem to be happening with children. The school had an incident recently with year six children going off unwell and it was a case of waiting until the point when children actually became ill. It is very dependant also on the parents getting them tested etc and the tests are not always very reliable either. It is a difficult situation to manage

and very reliant on parents doing the right thing by keeping the child at home (if unwell) and keeping everyone safe. AMW asked whether if a parent is positive would the child still come in to school. CHa said yes, that was correct. LC pointed out that the lateral flow test shouldn't be done in the case of a symptomatic child and it could still be positive anyway as it may be picking up other forms of coronavirus other than COVID-19. CHa said yes, that could be it if the lateral flow test is potentially picking up non-COVID positives. CHa said that it is very stressful for the parents. LC asked for clarification on whether children who are at home because of COVID would have the Seesaw provision made available to them. CS, Cha and LM provided clarification on this and agreed that provided that the child was well enough, then yes, absolutely. CS confirmed that the teachers' workloads have been very heavy in meeting these additional COVID related demands. A further problem, as CHa pointed out is that it is possible of course to be positive and have no symptoms – to be completely asymptomatic and the lateral flow tests can be confusing picking up symptomatic COVID/non-symptomatic or false positives/negatives. CHa stressed that children need to be in school if they do not have COVID. CH pointed out that a big problem now is that people have been living in very 'sterile' conditions recently and now that things have eased off in terms of not wearing masks, etc, they are being hit by lots of different illnesses. EM wished to clarify the point that if children are well enough they should be in school then? CHa said that a letter had been sent to parents to clarify this point those children need to come to school if they are well. LC wondered if there has been an increase in absence as a result of COVID being used as an excuse for being away from school. CHa stressed that this was definitely not the case and that things had settled down now. LM said that the lowest attendance has been around 93%, but generally the school tries to be at around 97%. EM queried how staff have been coping and whether they have had higher levels of anxiety. CHa said they have found that now that staff have been double jabbed they are much more confident, so this is not an issue really. She also pointed out that teachers flag any unwell children pretty quickly and this is dealt with as efficiently as possible to maximise safety. PA thanked Cha for her contribution.

10) Finance and Staffing Update

- PA said that the Committee have not met yet this year and will meet for the next F&S meeting on the 7th October 2021. He said that the rollover turned out to be more than budgeted for – it's going to be around £234,000, as opposed to £150,000 set in the budget for this year. Therefore, there is extra contingency for anything that might be impactful. LM said this was good as the school would be in a position to make a capital bid as we would be able to afford the 10% contribution for that – it would be really useful for a forest school with more plants and flowers, for example. PA said that they would report on the fuller details following the next meeting.

11) Reappointment/Appointment of the following as Community Governors commencing 28/9/21:

- Laura Crosby, Nataley Fryer, Annette Shakespeare, Fiona Wall.

- PA put forward the motion to reappoint four governors who are: LC, NF, AS and FW (the latter would now be a community governor, rather than a parent governor). PA asked for a show of hands. The vote was carried unanimously, and each governor was re-elected accordingly.

12) Governor Updates to include:

o Link Governor roles

- PA said there are some gaps which we discussed at the last meeting. NF needs to partner with someone for example. LC asked for an explanation regarding this and PA explained that they buddy up if they can get enough people to enable this. LC further queried how many positions are available. PA explained that there are two parent governor vacancies and two community governor vacancies. However, the governing body needs to decide whether to fill these vacancies as potentially going into a MAT they may not require as many people. It is open

whether we should be actively looking to appoint for those positions. CH said he feels that we need new people with different skills to bring in, and some younger input perhaps, so he was in favour. PA said that Blue Kite wouldn't look to change the structure of the Governing Body overnight and would wait until numbers reduce naturally, i.e., when people leave. PA said there would be 19 positions altogether and in response, LM commented that the Governing body at Lethbridge is larger than for a lot of primary schools. PA said that we could look for 2 x parent governors and CH said we have had varying degrees of success in the past recruiting new governors. IF said that from an Ofsted perspective should we be trying to fill all these vacancies, as might it be seen as a negative otherwise. EM questioned the logic of this and said that we are in the process of joining a MAT and we might not require as many. PA agreed and said that is how we would answer that particular query/criticism.

PA mentioned that there is a proposal to get parent governors paired up and he asked whether everyone agreed that we should proceed with filling the parent governor vacancies. Everyone was in agreement with this. CH said it would be good to get a parent with a finance background as that would be really useful.

o **ESP**

- We are remaining as part of the ESP and Keith Defter is keen to get back on track with this and he will be invited to a meeting to give a talk on its work and aspirations.
- **Meetings Dates**
- These were posted up before the meeting on GovernorHub and PA asked whether everyone could have a look at these and confirm. They are similar to dates for previous years. We will arrange for these dates to be entered onto the calendar and PA confirmed that we will adopt those dates then unless someone comes back and requests a change. (Action: PA/Clerk)

13) AOB

- Training for this year was touched upon. PA said that people can have a look to see if there is anything they are interested in.

There was no other business to discuss.

14) Meeting closed: 8.35 pm.

5) Matters Arising

Detail	Allocated to	Action
1	All	Complete confirmations on Governorhub.
5	All	Training slides to be reviewed.
6	PA/LM/Clerk	Create I folder re MAT protocols.
7	LM	Provide evaluation scheme re: Ofsted
12	PA/Clerk	Put meeting dates into calendar.

Minutes signed for:  29/11/2021