



Confirmed



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

THURSDAY 6TH JUNE 2024 AT 6.30 PM AT ST PETER'S SCHOOL

Action

Local Advisory Board members present: Christopher Bennet (Executive Head Teacher St Peter's School), Neil Hateley, David Jones (Head Teacher Thongsley Fields), Shaun Keates, Simon Newman (Chair), Paul Sadler, Sara Steed and Kris Stutchbury

In attendance:

Lauren West (Deputy Head Teacher at TF – attended virtually)
Lorraine Barr (Clerk)

Potential new Governor – Vicky Ames was welcomed to the meeting as an observer

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Salman Arif, Oluwatosin Iyiola and Patrick Kadewere and these were accepted by the Advisory Board.

For previous LAB meetings the CEO of the Trust had attended for a standing agenda item. Members noted that the new CEO had taken up their position on 1st June and sought clarification, via the Clerk, as to what arrangements would be made for future meetings for Governors to be kept abreast of Trust matters.

LB

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, Kris Stutchbury, reported that she would be leaving the LAB at the end of this academic year and had already emailed the clerk with a view to setting up a final Safeguarding meeting for SPS. The focus would be on the transition from the previous paper based system to Myconcern, what changes had been brought about and were anticipated and how job roles had altered since her last visit.

KS

Kris acknowledged that a visit for TF was also overdue but she was unable to dovetail a visit with that of Sue Wright on 12th June - she agreed to liaise with the TF Head Teacher, either to join some of this visit remotely or to find a suitable alternative date for her visit in the near future.

DJ/KS

Governors discussed the challenges created by students requiring Alternative Provision and the associated responsibilities and financial implications. The Local Authority's perception of what constituted an AP student differed from that adopted by SPS, whose AP students were on site for 25 hours per week and therefore were not notified to the LA. For TF, pupils only received LA funding if they had an EHCP. The TF Head Teacher aired his concerns regarding the lack of clarity of safeguarding responsibilities for a current pupil who was on site for only two hours per week and then tutored, arranged and paid for by the LA, at a library in Huntingdon.

Throughout the discussion it became apparent that there was some disparity between local schools as to who receives the more challenging students when places in specialist provision are limited.

4. Head Teacher's report

Thongsley Fields

The Head Teacher had provided a written report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Admissions

The Head Teacher reiterated that the school would admit 34 pupils to its Reception unit in September, necessitating two classes. The financial (£50,000) and logistical implications of this were noted, as were the advantages bearing in mind the high level of need of this cohort. The result would be an in-year budget deficit, however Governors were reassured that the school had sufficient reserves to support this, along with any possible in year savings which it was hoped to make.

Attendance

Governors noted that attendance had picked up which was encouraging.

Safeguarding

The number of logs of concern continued to rise year on year. These were a mix of low to high level concerns and followed staff training on how to complete same. The importance of the lower level concerns as evidence of neglect was emphasised.

Recruitment

The ongoing difficulties in recruiting to TA positions was noted and the impact on this of the high needs cohort coming through was shared. The excellence amongst the very capable support staff was praised, however members were aware that this took considerable time to develop. Three adverts for TAs were currently live and the school was hopeful of receiving applications, from suitably skilled individuals.

High SEND need pupils

Governors praised the Head Teacher on the number of EHC Plans in place (15) and acknowledged the significant amount of work this reflected.

The delay in getting professional reports through and the lack of available Educational Psychologist time was again raised by both Head Teachers.

Writing

Members were keen to pass on their congratulations to the school for the improvement in writing (the writing data from last year had been moderated and this had usefully fed into this year) and the school's experience of taking part in the Trust wide review was sought. The TF Head Teacher described the process and experience as positive and advised that the

Confirmed

sharing of good practice had been valuable. The writing target was 59% and the latest assessment undertaken before Easter showed attainment at 54% - thus the school was confident in meeting this target with three weeks to go before submission.

SATS

The Head Teacher reported that the children had been calm and settled throughout the testing period and had been well prepared for the experience by staff. A monitoring visit had taken place on the Thursday with no resultant recommendations for improvement received.

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 which had been discussed in depth at the recent Curriculum and Standards Committee whose minutes were attached. Questions upon the report were invited.

The Executive Head Teacher reiterated his justification for the use of high targets and the rationale behind setting the targets, which were averages in all subjects, above last year's achievement. He stated that this enabled challenge to be retained, but staff were not held to account in their performance management if these were not reached.

In response to a query from Governors the Executive Head Teacher confirmed that he had produced a comparison to previous periods of behaviour and safeguarding logs for the next meeting.

CB

There followed a lengthy discussion amongst all present about the legal requirement to accept students, the implications of parental choice for students with SEN challenges, and the operation of, and woeful financial contribution made by, the LA. As academies, the LA cannot legally direct the schools to take a child, however they can then apply to the Secretary of State who can force schools to admit them based on the funding agreement. TF had sought the advice of the Trust solicitor over a recent case it was considering pursuing. Governors felt that a Trust wide approach to this growing issue was needed and members felt strongly that the schools should be addressing the needs of their own local communities. It was agreed that the Chair of Governors would contact the new CEO of the Trust about the discussions relating to this increasingly untenable position and the impact on schools, encouraging the Trust to take a firmer position with the LA.

SN

The Executive Head Teacher was thanked for his report.

6. Strategic planning

Student numbers and budgets

- For Thongsley Fields, the admission numbers into Reception remained stable, at 34, all first choice applications, out of the 48 received. There was projected to be an in year budget deficit however Governors were reassured that the school had sufficient reserves to support this.
- For SPS there were expected to be 281 students joining Year 7 in September, the largest ever cohort with the largest number of first choices. There would also be a small increase in the numbers in the Sixth Form resulting in a total of nearly 1500 students on site in September 2024. One tranche of LA growth funding had already been secured.

7. Trust matters

Governors were informed that the recruitment process completed for the appointment of the new CEO had been robust and rigorous, involving two days of selection activities and interviews.

The current focus of the Trust Standards and Curriculum Committee was on the primary sector and results.

8. Local Advisory Board membership

Members noted that Vicky Ames had applied to join the LAB. She had already met with the Chair of Governors and it was agreed that the Clerk would arrange for her to visit SPS and TF to meet with the respective Head Teachers and familiarise herself with the settings. Governors' recommendation for her to join the LAB would then be forwarded to the Trust Board for its consideration to appoint her as a Trust Governor.

LB

It was agreed to recommend to the Trust Board that since Simon Newman's Parent governorship was due to expire in October, he should be considered for appointment by the Trust Board as a Trust Governor. A Parent Governor election would then be arranged by the Clerk in the new academic year.

LB

Members also asked that their recommendation be considered for Paul Sadler, Trust Governor, to be reappointed for a further term of office when the current one expires in October.

LB

It was agreed that Laruen West should be reappointed as an Associate member of the LAB for a further year w.e.f 3rd July.

The Chair reminded members of the intention for the LAB to split into two separate LABs, one for TF and one for SPS, although this was dependent upon sufficient membership numbers (18 i.e. 9 for each LAB). It was agreed that efforts should continue to be made to attract interest in these positions, using a variety of routes, including local contacts, school open events, links with universities and local business and organisations.

SN

The Head Teacher of Thongsley Fields agreed to chase up a potential Governor the following week.

DJ

9. Proposed meeting dates for the next academic year

The proposed meeting dates for the next academic year had been circulated in advance by the Clerk. Members discussed the need to agree at its meeting in July, the venue for the LAB meetings on Thursdays and also the dates for the TF Curriculum and Standards committee which needed to be altered from Fridays due to the availability of the Primary Executive Head Teacher.

Agenda

10. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body which had taken place on Thursday 11th January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. Matters arising from the minutes

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.

12. Reports/minutes from committees

The following minutes were noted:

- SPS and TF Resources Committee (07/03/24, 02/05/24)
- TF Curriculum and Standards Committee (15/12/23, 16/02/24, 22/03/24) (not provided)
- SPS Curriculum and Standards Committee (08/02/24, 16/05/24)
- SPS Health and Safety Committee (26/02/24)

Agenda

13. Policies for approval

The policies below were unanimously approved unchanged:

St Peter's School policies:

Category 3: (to be approved by LAB only)

- Staff induction policy
- Governor Induction policy (Clerk to complete header)
- Drugs education and misuse - ratified as considered previously at SPS Curriculum and Standards meeting that was inquorate

LB

Category 2: (LAB approval following Trust framework and consultation):

- Health and Safety
- Remote learning - ratified as considered previously at SPS Curriculum and Standards meeting that was inquorate

14. Governor training

The training log produced by the Clerk was noted and members were asked to ensure that all Smartlog training is up to date by 4th July.

All

Members were reminded of the Exclusions and IRP on line training organised by the Trust for 25th June at 5.30p.m. – one member had already signed up for this and another Governor recommended the Trust Pupil Disciplinary online training.

15. Governor visits and reports

The Chair of Governors verbally reported on a behaviour visit he had made to TF on 5th March 2024 (report attached to these minutes). He stressed how impressed he had been by the outstanding and consistent behaviour of the children which met the school's high expectations and demonstrated the pleasurable daily interactions between pupils and staff. The amount of hard work behind the scenes in establishing and embedding such behaviour was noted. Mr Newman also wished his thanks to be recorded to Mrs West, who had provided him with layers of depth and detail in her answers to his challenging questions during the visit.

Confirmed

In addition, members were pleased to learn from the Deputy Head Teacher of how impressed with the school the Life Bus visitors had been – so much so that following a recommendation, the PSHE service had visited the school looking at books, the curriculum and diversity and community reflection – this had fed into the behaviour report.

There was nothing further to report under this item.

16. Chair's Business

The Chair of Governors reported that he had a very useful and impressive meeting with the SPS Head of School. He advised that he would like to meet with Miss Butler on a monthly basis going forward in order to keep up to date on plans and developments.

There was nothing further to report under this item.

17. Any Other Business

Reception area

Governors suggested that further consideration should be given to enlivening the Reception area at St Peter's School to make it more inspiring and celebrating the success and achievement of the students.

CB

SPS Permanent Exclusion

The Chair of Governors reported that following a permanent exclusion the Governor Disciplinary Committee had met, upholding the Executive Head Teacher's initial decision. The parents had requested an Independent Review Panel hearing which had taken place on 21st May. The Panel upheld the Governor Disciplinary Committee's judgement, agreeing that all pertinent policies had been followed correctly by the school and Advisory Board.

Representation to Governors following a suspension.

The Chair of Governors noted that prior to the LAB a confidential meeting had taken place to consider a parental representation submitted following a half day suspension. The outcome of this meeting would be communicated to the parents by the Chair of Governors following the LAB meeting.

SN

There was nothing further to report under this item.

18. Date and time of next meeting:

The published date for the next meeting was Thursday 4th July 2024 at 6.30p.m. (Governor pre meeting at 6.00p.m.).

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

These minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

Signed: *Simon Newman* Date: 4th July 2024

Confirmed

Actions from 26 th September 2023		
Report from SEND governor following visit to TF	SS	
Actions from 11 th January 2024		
Link Safeguarding governor visit to TF to be arranged/reports from the Trust Safeguarding Officer visit to be shared with the LAB.	DJ/KS	
Actions from 6 th June 2024		
Clerk to follow up Trust representation at future LAB meetings	LB	
Arrange date for SPS and TF safeguarding visit	KS	For SPS
Comparison of behaviour and safeguarding logs	CB	
Letter to be written to ask Trust to take a firmer position with the LA re admission of students with high needs	SN	
Clerk to action appointment recommendations and arrange Parent governor election in autumn term	LB	
To continue to generate interest in Governor vacancies and to follow up any expressions of interest	SN/DJ	
To agree venue for LAB meetings next year and amend dates for TF C & S committee	Agenda	
To receive minutes from Committee meetings: TF Curriculum and Standards Committee (16/02/24, 22/03/24)	Agenda	
Governor Induction policy – header to be completed	LB	
Governors to complete all outstanding Smartlog training by 4 th July 2024	All	
Outcome of parental representation discussion re a suspension to be communicated to the parents	SN	



Confirmed

Thongsley Fields and St Peter's School Governor Visit Report



Date	5 th March 2024	
School Priority	Behaviour	
Action from SIP/SDP to be monitored		
Present	Simon Newman, Sara Steed, Lauren West	
Summary of Visit	<p>The aim of the visit was for Governors to develop a better understanding of the approaches used by Thongsley Fields school in order to maintain consistently high standards of behaviour by its students.</p> <p>The visit comprised an in-depth discussion with the Deputy Head Teacher and a tour of the school to see the policy in action. Governors were able to review key documents, the results of staff surveys and examples of activities that underpinned the overall approach. The tour also coincided with lunchtime, which provided Governors with an excellent opportunity to witness the behaviour of the children during one of the busiest parts of the day.</p>	
Progress and Impact seen or cited by staff and students	<p>It was clear that a significant amount of effort had been made by the school to maintain a consistently high standard of behaviour among students. I was particularly impressed at the depth of the approach with each year group having a defined plan, appropriate to their age and needs with activities that are engaging and thought provoking. For example, Year 5 and 6 students watching Newsround every day and then discussing the issues they had seen struck me as a great way of dealing with issues that can often be frightening for young people.</p> <p>I was also impressed by the focus on preventative activity and the themes the school had set around the PSHE curriculum.</p> <p>The lunchtime tour was a real joy. All of the students were perfectly well behaved, sitting around tables comprising of different year groups. The atmosphere was relaxed, organised and cordial at all times – demonstrating the effectiveness of the approach.</p> <p>I must also make a special mention of Mrs West who was able to answer every question I asked in some detail and had the evidence to back up her answers. It is clear that the school is doing an excellent job in relation to the behaviour of its students and I look forward to following up my visit in the future to learn more</p>	
Feedback to:	David Jones, Head Teacher	Date of Meeting: 06/06/24