

**Steeton Primary School Governing Body  
Meeting of 08 July 2021  
Minutes**

**Meeting commenced at 6.13pm**

**Present:** John Cooper (EHT), Adam O'Neill, Claire Redman (DHT), Emma Wainwright (Vice Chair), Sue West (Chair)

**Associate Member:** Kevin Wheeler (HoS)

**In Attendance:** Charlotte Bingham (Early Years Leader – EYL – to Item 118/20) Helen Osman (Clerk - SGS)

**Summary of actions**

Item	Action	Person	Date
90/20	School to send to all governors a CPD form on which to record details of their training	J Cooper	16-07-2021
118/20(i)	E Wainwright to issue staff survey	E Wainwright	16-07-2021
118/20(ii)	(Sub-item Res 94/20) School to circulate a summary of first aid incidents in 2020-21 to governors	K Wheeler	31-07-2021
121/20	School to advise the GB on the impact of Covid and PA on pupils with multiple vulnerabilities	J Cooper	21-10-2021
122/20(i)	Chair to write on behalf of GB to congratulate SENCo on the merit she had been gained for the NAS SENCo Award.	S West	16-07-2021
122/20(ii)	NG/SEND to conduct a SEND Governance review	S West	31-10-2021
125/20(i)	Chair to include details of Governor Development Programme on CPD form	S West	31-07-2021
125/20(ii)	DHT to provide copy of monitoring schedule to Chair to inform governor visits in 2021-22	C Redman, S West	31-07-2021
127/20	HoS to share details of revised faculty structure with Chair/Vice Chair to inform assignment of governors to faculties	K Wheeler S West E Wainwright	31-08-2021 21-10-2021
128/20	Chair to write to staff and attend staff get-together on GB behalf to express the GB's thanks and pride in their hard work thought this difficult year. Vice Chair to provide baked treats for the get-together.	S West E Wainwright	July 2021
129/20	School to communicate agreed timings of the school ay to parents via Pin, the website and letter	J Cooper K Wheeler	09-07-2021
130/20	Curriculum and Staff Policy Handbooks to be brought to next meeting.	J Cooper	21-10-2021
133/20	Resources Committee to review the timing of its meetings with a view to maximising attendance – Clerk to put on agenda	H Osman	06-10-2021
134/20	Vice Chair to co-ordinate 360° review of Chair's performance	E Wainwright	30-09-2021
136/20	Adam O'Neill and Annette Mullen to brief Dave Mullen and Emma Wainwright on Pupil and Sports Premium.	A Mullen A O'Neill D Mullen E Wainwright	17-09-2021

**Action**

**114/20 Apologies for absence and their acceptance**

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Stefan Mills, Annette Mullen and Dave Mullen.

**115/20 Notification of urgent other business and requests for order variations**

No other business was notified.

The Governing Body agreed to take a presentation on Early Years from the Early Years Leader after Item 117/20.

In light of the cancellation of the meeting of the Resources Committee planned for 07 July 2022 due to lack of a quorum, the GB agreed to consider the budgetary element of the agenda for that meeting at Item 120/20 and the remainder of the agenda at Item 118/20.

Action

**116/20 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda for this meeting.

**117/20 Minutes of the meeting of 06 May 2021 and matters arising**

a) ***The minutes were unanimously agreed as a true record.***

Matters arising

Item	Action	Status
71/20	<i>EHT to approach contact with community involvement (Stronger Communities) with a view to meeting LG/PCi</i>  Governors noted that this action had been delayed by Covid, was no longer timely and should be closed.	Closed
90/20	<i>EHT to discuss with Business Manager a system to record governor CPD using CPOMS (to include monthly reminders to all Governors to update their record)</i>  The EHT said that the Business Manager would send to governors by the end of term a form to record details of their training, to be added to CPOMS. <b><u>Replying to questions</u></b> , the Clerk recommended that governors include all training, including from their workplaces, that might be relevant to their roles as governors.	Closed  New action
97/20	<i>Parent Covid questionnaire response summary to be circulated to governors</i>  This action had been completed.	Closed
98/20	<i>School to invite Chair, Stefan Mills and Emma Wainwright to comment on draft consultation on the school week; and copy final version to all governors when it issues to parents.</i>  This action had been completed.	Closed
110/20	<i>Clerk to prepare schedule of proposed meetings for 2021-22 for next meeting</i>  This action had been completed.	Closed

**Additional item: Presentation on Early Years Foundation Stage Vision**

*Agenda papers: Letter to Governors re the EYFS vision; EYFS Vision presentation*

The Chair welcomed Charlotte Bingham, Early Years Foundation Stage Leader (EYFSL) to the meeting and thanked her for taking time out of her evening to make this presentation to the Governing Body.

EYFSL said that she and her team had carefully reviewed the latest research into Early Years pedagogy to inform the development of their vision for how the new Early Years framework should work at Steeton Primary School to meet the particular needs of Steeton's youngest pupils. She quoted a number of research sources and said that the team's review had led to the following conclusions:

- Early Years learning should be child-led. Through open-ended and challenging play it should encourage children to use their curiosity to shape their own learning and prepare them for continual learning in all aspect of their future lives.

Action

- Children should not be taken out of play sessions for more sharply focused tasks, because this gave the message that learning through play was not valued.
- The learning environment was a key element: it was, in effect, a third teacher.
- In particular, the learning environment at Steeton needed to provide the support for language development that the school's pupils did not enjoy elsewhere. This would be a major focus for the team.

EYFSL described her team and how it operated. Based on their research and visits to schools with Outstanding Early Years provision, they had developed a very clear shared vision of what they needed to do to become a truly excellent Early Years unit.

A clear requirement of the vision was to ensure that every area was enhanced with high quality books and texts. The team would be supported in this by a lead HMI inspector for English or Professor Teresa Cremin, who would help them to ensure that Reading for Pleasure was a key priority and would be researched and developed throughout the year.

The learning of expressive art needed to be developed beyond basic activities (eg making pictures from pasta on paper) into exposure to real life art, inspirational artists and exploration of different media and materials: EYFSL gave examples.

EYFSL highlighted the importance of Play-Doh in developing fine motor skills and sensory perception: fine motor skills in particular were limited among Steeton's intake. Resources needed to be highly accessible: staff needed to be able to predict the resources that children would need and reach them quickly.

Research suggested that six copies were required of each reading text. Physical texts were required so that pupils became familiar with handling books and turning pages. As well as core texts, the unit needed to have a wide range of diverse texts available to stimulate pupils' pleasure in reading.

EYFSL said that the reforms in the new Early Years framework were less about specific content and more about teaching children skills for life. Topics needed to be inspiring and broadly based – for example, Little People, Big Dreams could include people as diverse as Vivienne Westwood and David Attenborough. Maths and English could be taught within these topics, so that children learned almost without realising that they were doing so.

A key aspect of Early Years learning was investigation, and an area of the Early Years unit needed to be dedicated to this. The purpose was to give children space and "permission" to make mistakes, and to explore without being spoon-fed by adults. It was also important to provide EY pupils with a construction area.

Research indicated that staff should not spend time changing Early Years areas to represent places that were unfamiliar to pupils: for example, there was little point creating a replica newsagent if children had never visited a newsagent. Pupils needed to start from places that were familiar to them and then branch out.

EYFSL described the steps that the team had taken so far, within existing resources, to implement their vision and make best use of the Early Years area. These steps included:

- Stripping back the Early Years environment to focus on what pupils had achieved.
- Implementation of Tapestry<sup>1</sup>: this had proved very successful. Tapestry enabled staff to see parents' contributions, which helped to develop staff understanding of the needs of their pupils and enabled them to model for parents how they could support the learning of their children. EYFSL gave example of how Tapestry was

<sup>1</sup> Tapestry – an online learning journal for Early Years

used by parents, including by sharing pictures of pupils taking part in activities and events such as Eid, Halloween and home baking.

While the team was pleased with the steps taken to date, and with the improvement in data seen this year despite the turbulence caused by Covid, they felt that further development of Early Years was held back by the limitations of the environment, particularly the indoor and outdoor learning area. They believed that, with the appropriate investment, they could improve learning further, particularly in Communications and Language. As with the quality of teaching, the quality of the learning environment was critical to the development of Early Years pupils. They also saw development of the EY learning environment as a way to help to attract new pupils to the school.

EYFSL said that a Specialist Leader in Early Years Education had been working with her free of charge, and had offered to provide further support at reduced cost, including through team teaching and facilitating visits by the team to an Early Years facility at Newby Primary School and other Outstanding settings.

Staff were excited by the Early Years vision and keen to embrace changes to enhance the learning of their pupils, including by developing their own expertise through CPD and external academic qualifications. They saw learning from others as a way to gain a head start in raising the quality of provision for Steeton's youngest pupils.

EYFSL concluded by saying that her team needed funding to achieve this vision.

The Governing Body (GB) thanked EYFSL for her clear and fascinating presentation. It was clear that she led a truly inspirational team of people who were doing a fine job in a context of limited resources. It was deeply to be regretted that there was such a disparity in the resources available for pupils in different schools. The new Early Years framework, and the school's unusual position of having a small budget surplus, provided a real opportunity to address the needs of Early Years learners.

**Asked** about the cost of making the desired improvements to the learning environment, EYL said that detailed quotes had not yet been sought but that, at a rough estimate, £10k would be required to cover both classrooms. The EHT added that the intention would be to make an initial investment in the learning environment and retain sufficient additional money for future investment in resources such as reading materials: as discussed by governors on other occasions, lack of appropriate high quality reading resources had been a real issue for the school.

**Asked** whether Covid catch-up funding might be used to support EY development, the EHT explained that catch-up and summer school funding were ring-fenced for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding. As far as he was aware, there were no sources of funding for this type of capital project. EYL added that the school had applied successfully for funding specifically for Communications and Language.

The Chair of the Resources Committee (Chair/Res) noted that there were various ways in which the Governing Body could address the needs of EY. The required expenditure needed to be precisely defined and prioritised, and creative approaches to securing equipment explored. As she had discussed with the Chair and EHT, it was not the school's results or equipment that deterred parents from sending their children to Steeton but, rather, the poor environment in the Early Years area. Thus, as suggested by EYFSL in her presentation, investment in the Early Years environment was also an investment in the long term sustainability of the school.

Governors thanked EYFSL for her work and that of her team, and for this presentation and discussion. It was a privilege for governors to be able to support such an inspirational team, whose work was so important to the GB's vision of inspiring the best in happy and confident children so that they could operate on a level playing field with children from other schools up and down the country. The GB would discuss the funding of Early Years further under the finance section of the agenda for this meeting.

Noting other discussions with governors about the scope to lobby for a new building, the EHT said that the firm with which the team had discussed possible designs for the classroom had assured the school that the classroom resources would be fully transferable to a new building.

*Charlotte Bingham left the meeting at 6.45pm*

### Standing reports

#### **118/20 Receive Head of School's data report on day to day business**

*Agenda paper: End of Year report*

The Head of School (HoS) highlighted the following points from his report:

- The number of pupils expected to join the school in September had reduced to thirty-six: some pupils who had been allocated to Steeton as their first choice school had been re-allocated to a school in Keighley.
- Working with its supply agency, the school had secured an experienced member of supply staff to support a Year 5 SEND pupils who was about to move to Year 6. If all went well, the school would consider offering the post to this member of supply staff on a permanent basis.
- The quality of applicants for advertised posts had been poor and the school had been unable to appoint to the Early Years of SEND posts. In the meantime, the role of SENCo was being covered by a strong teacher.
- From September 2021 the school would run a range of after-school clubs for all Year Groups rather than, as at present, Key Stage 2 only.

**Asked** about the reference in his report to a staff wellbeing service, the HoS said that the school had secured CCC (Continued Corridor Conversation) for the autumn term to address the frustration of staff that they rarely had the opportunity to talk to each other informally. The Inclusion and Welfare Officer (IWO) was meeting a psychologist half termly by Zoom and, from September 2021, would lead four groups of teaching staff and two groups of support staff which would meet to discuss any issues and concerns. Staff would be assured that, aside from the headlines of the issues raised, their discussions would not be fed back to senior leadership so that they could speak freely. Senior leadership would respond to the headlines that were reported to them. These groups would give staff the opportunity to address minor concerns and irritations that they would not normally raise with senior leadership but that could, over time, affect wellbeing. Staff would be informed of these new groups at the final staff meeting of the summer term.

Governors discussed whether the planned action arising from the Link Governor (Leadership and Management) meeting, to carry out a short staff wellbeing survey, remained relevant. They considered that it did, and the HoS said that the unions had asked for such a survey. Emma Wainwright would issue the survey, liaising with the school as necessary, and would report the outcome to the next meeting.

*E  
Wainwright*

Noting the cancellation of the Resources Committee meeting planned for 07 July 2021 due to lack of a quorum, the HoS reported against the agenda items as follows:

**Res 86/20 Review Quarter 1 (end-June) Budget Monitor** – to be reported at Item 120/20 below.

**Res 87/20 Pupil Premium funding: eligibility and applications** – Forty-four pupils were eligible for Pupil Premium funding, of whom forty-four were eligible for Free School Meals. Four pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding would leave the school at the end of the summer term.

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**Res 88/20 Implementation of new EYFS framework in September 2021:** outcome of audit of equipment requirements – as reported in the presentation by the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader earlier in this meeting.

**Res 89/20 Update on appointment of support staff** – as reported earlier under this agenda item.

**Res 90/20 End-year review of staff attendance** – The HoS reported that, excluding absences due to Covid, three teachers (20% of teaching staff) had been absent due to sickness during 2020-20 for a total of six days. Seven support staff (33% of all support staff) had been absent due to sickness for a total of 31 days.

No teaching staff had been absent due to accidents. Two support staff had suffered car accidents, one sustaining a broken limb, that had resulted in a total of 51 days' absence.

28 days absence had been caused by Covid (excluding self-isolation).

The HoS considered that these levels of absence were reasonable but proposed to review the staff attendance policy and return to work procedures to ensure that they remained fully appropriate.

**Res 91/20 Termly report on progress of, and support for, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)** – The HoS reported that one of the school's NQRs was due to complete their qualifying period successfully in December 2021. Another had secured a permanent position with the school now, and a third had secured a temporary position with the school from September 2021 while they completed a part time NQT course. The AHT, who had herself been an NQT in school, was providing high quality support for the Newly and Recently Qualified Teachers in school.

**Res 92/20 Update on current building works:**

- External groundworks –The EHT reported that the surveyor was having difficulty in identifying a contractor to undertake the required work. He would keep the Resources Committee informed.
- Girls' toilets – Bradford Council had tentatively indicated that the work would be carried out in October 2021.

The school continued to maintain contact with Bradford Council to ensure that these projects were given appropriate priority.

**Res 93/20 Update on progress against the Estates Working Group action plan** – The EHT said that the Committee had received the report of the Working Group. The immediate priorities identified in the action plan had been completed and the remainder were being addressed as indicated in the plan.

**Res 94/20 End-year review of Health and Safety incidents** – the HoS would circulate a summary of first aid incidents to governors.

One member of staff had splashed cleaning liquid in their eye in September 2020. The First Aid policy had been reviewed as a consequence of the incident: the school now had an eye-cleaning kit whose location was known to staff.

Three Early Years staff and the HoS had been trained in paediatric first aid; the school planned to arrange for more staff to undertake this training.

The HoS reported that Steeton, like many other schools in Bradford, had serious concerns about the lack of response, or inadequate response, of Bradford Council's Children's Social Care team to safeguarding concerns reported by staff. Minutes of Core Group meetings were not sent to the school, even on request – the reason given was that staff were working from home. **Replying to questions**, the EHT considered that there was no need

HoS

for the GB to intervene at this time because the Chair of Governors at Sandy Lane<sup>2</sup> now held the Council portfolio for Children's Social Services and was investigating these concerns. She was due to meet Steeton's IWO and her opposite number at Sandy Lane to gather further information, and would pursue the matter at high level within the Council.

**119/20 Receive Executives Head's 'Your Inspirational Community' update**

The EHT said that he would report on this at Item 127/20.

**120/20 Receive report from Resources Committee meeting of 07 July 2021**

Noting the cancellation of the Resources Committee meeting planned for 07 July 2021 due to lack of a quorum, the EHT reported as follows.

**Res 95/20 Review Quarter 1 (end-June) Budget Monitor** (*shared on-screen*) – The EHT said that the Bursar was content with the budget position at the end of Quarter 1. He had increased the forecast expenditure in some budget lines but, as a matter of prudent financial management, had not included potential but unconfirmed savings: as a consequence, the bottom line had reduced somewhat but might alter as the year progressed. The main changes were:

- Receipt of additional High Needs funding
- Income from the Literacy Hub was higher than the conservative assumption made in the original budget
- Slightly higher expenditure on teaching staff than anticipated, principally due to increased on-costs and Covid absences. The Bursar anticipated that this would steady as the year progressed.
- The forecast outturn for expenditure on educational support staff could be expected to vary throughout the year depending on the success of recruitment and the need to cover posts with supply staff.
- The variation in expenditure on premises staff reflected overtime payments arising from the actions agreed by the Estates Working Group.
- Similarly, the forecast outturn for grounds maintenance included provision for tarmacking, as agreed by the Estates Working Group. The EHT thought it unlikely that the full amount of the revised provision would be required.
- The forecast outturn for Administrative supplies had increased because the cost of furniture purchased at the end of the 2019-20 financial year had fallen into the current financial year. Furthermore, the school had paid an up-front charge of £3.2k for a three-year contract.
- The forecast outturn for Agency Supply Staff had increased to reflect the increased need to bring in supply staff to cover posts to which the school had not been able to recruit.

Taking all these changes into account – and noting that changes had not been made to reflect potential savings – the Bursar had revised the overall forecast to show an in-year deficit of £33k. The forecast cumulative carryforward was around the 6% limit<sup>3</sup>, so the Committee might need to consider recommending

<sup>2</sup> Sandy Lane Primary school – Steeton Primary School's partner school

<sup>3</sup> "6% limit" - the Local Authority is entitled to claw back sums carried forward that exceed 6% of the school's budget, defined as its income under Budget Headings I01 to I05

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

that the GB submit an Interim Use of Balances (IUB)<sup>4</sup> scheme to Bradford Council, for the first time in a number of years.

The EHT reminded Committee members that budget line E19 (non-ICT curriculum resources) contained £53k, based on the assumption that expenditure would quickly recover from the low levels in 2019-20 due to Covid. In practice, continuing Covid concerns meant that expenditure had remained low in Q1, and the Bursar therefore proposed to take up to £10k from this budget line to fund the improvements to Reception discussed earlier at this meeting.

**Replying to questions**, the EHT said that the school had not received information about how much catch-up funding it would receive, but he thought it unlikely to be a significant sum.

Chair/Resources said that the Q1 budget position was much as expected. She welcomed the Bursar's prudent approach to managing the budget. She noted the importance to the budget of the school being full: this underlined the need to invest in the Early Years environment to attract new pupils, as well as to meet the needs of current pupils.

- ***The Governing Body unanimously agreed*** that the school should spend up to £6k on the priorities set out in the presentation by the EYFS Leader at this meeting, with a further £4k to be held in reserve.

#### 121/20 Receive report from Named Governor for Safeguarding

*Agenda paper: e-mailed report from Annette Mullen, 01 July 2021*

The Governing Body noted the report from the Named Governor for Safeguarding with thanks.

**Asked** whether there was a correlation between the pupils who were Persistently Absent<sup>5</sup> (PA) and learning outcomes, the HoS agreed that some of PA pupils were struggling, socially as well as academically. As governors were aware, Persistent Absence could be caused by a number of factors, such as social reasons, SEND issues, poor parenting skills, parents struggling themselves, concerns around the Covid situation especially in multi-occupancy households: often a combination of factors was involved. The school continued to press and support families to send their children to school, and the full raft of attendance measures, many of which had been suspended in 2020-21 in line with Government Covid advice, would be resumed in September 2021.

The absences had undoubtedly had an impact on outcomes. While some of the pupils concerned were unlikely to have reached the expected standards regardless of their attendance, they had not made the expected progress. There was a risk that some parents might have got into the habit of not sending their children to school, and it might be that additional strategies would need to be adopted to address this. The Deputy Headteacher (DHT – also a governor) added that PA had been taken into account in the organisation of classes for 2021-22, so that PA pupils were grouped with other pupils with high needs, and LBQ<sup>6</sup> was being used to support the learning of PA pupils at home.

The EHT added that Steeton was not alone in experiencing an increase in PA in light of Covid. The rate of PA at Sandy Lane was double that at Steeton. Governors noted that a small number of PA pupils had a significant impact on whole-school data for both attendance and attainment. The EHT said that the school planned to undertake further

EHT

<sup>4</sup> Intended Use of Balances: If there are strong reasons to carry forward sum greater than the "6% limit", the Governing Body may approve an IUB scheme for submission to the Council. The IUB must relate to specific projects and must be spent within the following financial year

<sup>5</sup> Persistent Absence: attendance by a pupil of less than 90% (ie 19 days or more missed in one year)

<sup>6</sup> LBQ – Learning by Questions: a classroom app with curriculum-aligned question sets, immediate feedback, automatic marking and instant insight to enable targeting of interventions



analysis of the data to determine the impact of Covid and PA on pupils with multiple vulnerabilities and how that impact could be addressed, and would report the outcome to the GB.

#### 122/20 Receive report from Named Governor for SEND

Sue West, in her capacity as Named Governor for SEND (NG/SEND), said that all actions (eg provision mapping, staff training, Individual Education Plans) had been completed, with positive engagement from parents and all staff (not just the SENCo and SEND support staff). She offered her thanks to all for the work involved.

Governors were pleased to learn that the SENCo had gained a merit in the NAS SENCo award. They asked that Sue West, in her capacity as Chair of the Governing Body, write to congratulate the SENCo on her achievement.

Chair

NG/SEND had met the SENCo recently using Zoom. The SENCo looked forward to working with the new 0.5 fte<sup>7</sup> teacher, who was highly experienced and had taught in a school in a significantly deprived area. This would free up more time for the SENCo to spend on her SEND responsibilities. She planned to work with the Welfare Officer to prepare a report on pupil vulnerability, which would be RAG rated and accompanied by support plans.

NG/SEND and the SENCo planned to conduct a SEND Governance review early in the autumn term and would report to the Autumn 1 GB meeting.

NG/  
SEND

The Governing Body noted the report of NG/SEND with thanks.

#### 123/20 Approve annual SEND Information Report 2020-21 for publication on the website

*Agenda paper: SEND annual report*

NG/SEND said that she considered the report to be a clear and well-written overview of SEND needs in school. Although these needs had reduced (from 24% to 15%), they remained significant. She summarised the key points:

- The report emphasised the importance of SEND pupils making a strong start in Reception, particularly in relation to speech, language and communication. This further underlined the importance of the development of Early Years as discussed at the start of this meeting.
- SEND pupils of all ages were struggling with writing skills: this was consistent with national information on the impact of Covid.
- Year 4 data had been adversely affected by the complex needs, vulnerability and poor attendance of two children. These children would be further challenged by the transition to Year 5: support plans were in place, with a particular focus on addressing their deficits in reading skills.
- In 2021-22, Year 6 would have smaller classes, giving a higher staff to pupil ratio and allowing greater differentiation of teaching.
- As discussed at Item 121/20 above, a small number of pupils did not attend school or access remote learning despite the best efforts of staff, and this was the case for some of the school's SEND pupils.
- Support from the local authority (LA) for the school's SEND pupils had been good in 2020-21 and, importantly, appeared set to continue to be strong. This contrasted with the support that schools were receiving from the LA in relation to safeguarding.

<sup>7</sup> fte – full time equivalent. A full-time staff member counts as 1.0 fte; someone working 3 days per week counts as 0.6 fte etc

NH/SEND concluded that she was satisfied that the school was doing all that it should and could to support these very vulnerable pupils.

#### 124/20 End-year report on Safeguarding incidents

*Agenda paper: End of year Safeguarding report to Governing Body*

Item covered at Item 118/20 above.

#### 125/20 Report on Governors' visits to school, training and development

Visits to school and attendance at training events had continued to be curtailed by Covid restrictions.

Sue West had completed the Governor Development programme. After a weak start (as previously reported to the GB), the programme had proved useful and had stimulated reflection on her role as Chair and the strengths and weaknesses of the GB. It had led to the decisions of the GB to adopt practices such as 360° review of the Chair's performance and an informal review, by the Chair, of Governors' contributions and development needs and wishes. The Chair would record the details of this training programme on the CPD form that the BM was to issue to governors, as discussed under matters arising from the previous minutes.

Chair

Governors felt that it would be useful to have views from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on how Governor visits in the autumn term could be most useful, and minimally disruptive, to the work of the school. The EHT said that the SLT was keen for governors to resume their regular visits. The DHT would provide the school's monitoring schedule for the Autumn term to the Chair to inform the timing and focus of Governor visits.

DHT,  
Chair

#### 126/20 Report on Chair's actions and correspondence

The Chair reported that she had discussed with the EHT a letter from a parent, who had made clear that she was also an Ofsted inspector, about the consultation on Friday afternoon closures. The parent had wanted the school to re-open fully to pursue Covid catch-up – essentially, to return to the way it had operated prior to Covid – and had cited legislation in support of that position. The EHT had called the parent to explain that the Covid restrictions had not yet been lifted by Government, and the parent had seemed satisfied by the call.

The consultation on school opening times would be discussed under Item 129/20 and might help to reassure the parent further.

### Governor assurance and school performance

#### 127/20 2020-21 end-year review

*Agenda papers:*

- *Governor milestone monitoring*
- *Updated self-audits as agreed at Link Governor meetings (six)*
- *Self-Evaluation summaries for Ofsted framework sections (five)*

##### a) Self Evaluation against Ofsted Good and Outstanding criteria at Link Governor meetings March-April 2021

The EHT reported that, at the latest round of Link Governor (LG) meetings, LGs had agreed that the performance in their areas of the Ofsted framework were Good and had identified the steps to move to Outstanding. These discussions had been reflected in the milestones circulated with the agenda. He highlighted the following areas:

- *Inspirational Community – the vision and ethos*: designers were being invited to advise on the design of vinyls and door wraps to exemplify the vision and ethos around school, drawing on material provided by the Vice Chair. Designs would be shared with Governors when they were received. As well as being placed around school, they would be reflected on the school website.
- *Art and Creativity in the curriculum* – an Arts specialist would be brought in to support staff CPD in the skills required to teach art and creativity with confidence.
- *EYFS* would be developed according to the presentation earlier in this meeting.
- *Governor visits* to school would be resumed from September 2021 (Covid permitting) and aligned with the school's monitoring schedule as discussed at Item 125/20. The SLT was keen that governors gain a first-hand picture of the work that pupils were doing, for example during Magic Mondays, particularly in the second half of the autumn term when the work of the art specialist in the first half term should be having a clear impact.

Despite the challenges of Covid, the school had gone a long way to implementing the actions agreed at the start of the year, including the development of important initiatives such as the introduction of LBQ and Reading For Pleasure. The prospects for the year ahead were exciting, and it was the school's hope to be able to provide an environment and resources of a quality that reflected the quality of the school's staff and met the needs of its children.

The Vice Chair said that, as agreed at the Link Governor (Leadership & Management) meeting, she had started to distil the wonderful work that the school was doing to realise its vision and ethos into a summary that could be articulated clearly by staff, governors and, ultimately, pupils and parents. She had also started to write a paper to support the case for a new EY building for use in seeking funding.

She noted that DfE were asking surveyors to review school premises: Steeton was in the third set of the second tranche of this work, and the surveyors were due to visit in February 2022. It was not clear when DfE expected to make decisions following this work on whether and how much to fund individual schools. It would be useful to raise the profile of the shocking state of the EY area locally prior to the DfE survey so that the school could point to support from the community.

The HoS said that the local MP was keen to visit the school: he hoped that one or more governors would be available to attend that meeting. Governors agreed that it would be useful if the Vice Chair's paper on the Early Years area could be ready for presentation at the meeting, during which he could be invited to see Reception for himself.

**Asked** what progress had been made on assigning governors to faculties, the HoS said that the school would review the structure of the faculties over the summer in light of experience. Once the structure had been firmed up, he would share the details with the Chair and Vice Chair, who would work with governors to march them up.

The Chair congratulated the school on the progress that had been made against the milestones despite the substantial disruption caused by Covid, and thanked Governors for their contributions and support. The milestones themselves, with the self-audits against the Ofsted framework, had proved to be useful in focusing the efforts of both school and governors in a very busy year. The Link Governor groups were proving to be highly creative forums that generated positive ideas and directions that benefited pupils and staff – and, hopefully, the premises.

b) *School performance summary data next steps, including Covid catch-up*

The EHT shared on screen a comparison between July 2021 data and similar data from 2019 (2018-19 being the last complete year for which data was available). He emphasised that, while the whole-school data suggested a relatively small drop in

HoS,  
Chair,  
Vice  
Chair

attainment due to Covid, this masked substantial variations in different year groups. Furthermore, the 2019 data had itself been lower than usual for Year 3 and Year 5 in some subjects, making the drop in attainment in 2021 seem smaller than it actually was.

Turning to the data for individual year groups, the EHT said that Year 1 attainment had been badly affected by the loss of the summer term of their Reception year and the Spring term of the current year. Years 3 and 4 had benefited from a well-established and experienced team of staff, and this was reflected in their attainment. Reading attainment in years 2, 4 and 6 was pleasing, despite lockdown: in the absence of lockdown attainment would have been higher. Year 6 reading attainment had been broadly the same as in 2019 – again, this would have been higher in the absence of Covid.

The SLT was concerned about attainment in Writing where, although Year 3 attainment was higher than in 2019, for other year groups it was similar or lower. Years 1 and 2 had suffered the greatest decline – this was unsurprising, because Years 1 and 2 were critical for the development of writing skills, which were difficult to teach remotely. Year 5 writing attainment was of particular concern and would require intensive work to recover. The school was reviewing how to make most effective use of LBQ to support writing in September 2021-22.

Maths outcomes had remained broadly steady except in Year 2.

Although Year 6 outcomes had been below national averages in 2019, the fact that it had maintained that level in 2021 despite Covid was encouraging. The school benefited from a strong teaching team and the EHT was confident that, in a full year of normal teaching, governors would see this reflected in stronger attainment data. Where pupils had not achieved the expected standards, the school would look principally to Quality First teaching<sup>8</sup> to support recovery, supported through Magic Mondays, the use of Forest School to develop resilience, and an exciting and energetic curriculum.

The following points emerged from discussion of the data:

- Governors who were parents agreed that it was difficult for parents, many of whom were juggling home working and care of other children, to support the remote learning of their children, particularly those in Years 1 and 2. They had developed a clearer understanding, and appreciation, of the skilled nature of the work of teachers.
- Governors with an educational background agreed that the school needed to focus recovery on Quality First teaching and support for Phonics, making use of LBQ.
- **Replying to questions**, the HoS said that pupils who had not passed the Phonics screen would re-take the test. Unusually, and in light of Covid, eight pupils who had not passed the test in Year 2 would take it again in Year 3.
- **Asked** how LBQ could be used to support writing, staff present gave examples such as use of correct Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. **Asked** whether there were particular aspects of writing that had suffered more than others, the DHT said that it had been across the board: writing could not be taught effectively at distance. She was confident that, once school was operating normally again and staff were receiving CPD and had re-familiarised themselves with the teaching of writing as a process, they would be able to address the shortfall. She urged governors to come into school to see for themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Quality First teaching - The features of 'Quality first teaching' as exemplified by the Primary National Strategy (PNS), showing how robust assessment of children's learning secures progression in phonic work and how literacy is developed across the curriculum from the Foundation Stage onwards

Turning to the data for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding (PP pupils), the EHT reminded governors that the low number of PP pupils at Steeton meant that the data needed to be interpreted carefully, particularly in some Year Groups (eg there were only two PP pupils in Year 2). PP pupils showed similar patterns of attainment to their peers: attainment in writing, and among Year 1 and 2 pupils was particularly low and would be a priority to address in 2021-22.

Due to Covid, the school had been obliged to suspend the usual programme of Pupil Progress Meetings (PPMs) in 2020-21. Covid permitting, half-termly PPMs would be held for PP pupils from September 2021, ensuring that they received the focused support that they needed and that it was having the intended impact. Staff knew their PP and SEND pupils well and were adept at catering for their needs. They recognised that it was essential for these pupils to catch up by the time they left primary school if they were to be successful when they reached their GCSE year. Governors agreed: it would be essential to follow this up thoroughly in LG meetings and governor visits: these most vulnerable pupils could not afford for governors or the SLT to take their eye off the ball.

Governors welcomed the format of this data, which was clear, concise and accompanied by a helpful narrative. The EHT said that this was the format in which data would be presented to the meetings of the Link Governors for Quality of Education and Leadership & Management. **Asked** how the data had been gathered, the DHT said that, for Year 6, it was based on formal end of year assessments (2019 SATs papers and White Rose Maths Hub tests) and teacher assessments of writing. These assessments were supported by LBQ data, which had enabled staff to make assessments where pupils had not been asked to sit tests because they were suffering mental health issues. Thus, the 2021 data was broadly comparable with the 2019 data.

The EHT added that LBQ provided a wealth of class tracking tools that might, in due course, remove the need for assessments. The DHT agreed: the skill of teachers would be in knowing how to access the daily tracking data and interpret what it meant for their pupils.

The Chair thanked the EHT for this very helpful report, which was clearly based on a great deal of work by the school.

## **School operation**

### **128/20 Update on staff wellbeing**

The GB had discussed earlier in this meeting the wellbeing questionnaire to be issued by Emma Wainwright and the introduction of CCC. The HoS said that staff were very tired: throughout 2020-21 they had all regularly given up lunch and playtimes to enable bubbles to remain intact. A small staff get-together was planned for after 19 July 2021 to thank staff for their hard work throughout a very challenging year.

Governors agreed that the Chair should attend this get-together on behalf of the GB to underline the pride that the GB took in the hard work and commitment of all staff. She would also write to staff, and the Vice Chair would provide some baked treats for the event.

Chair,  
Vice  
Chair

### **129/20 Consider timing of the school day in 2021-22 in light of outcome of consultation**

*Paper: circulated by Head of School 16 June 2021*

Governors noted the outcome of the consultation with parents on the timing of the school day. Taking account of the responses,

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- **The Governing Body unanimously agreed** that, from September 2021, the timings of the school day for all pupils would be as follows:

**Monday to Friday      8.45am to 3.00pm      Lunchtime: 55 minutes**

The GB specifically emphasised that included the reinstatement of a compulsory Friday afternoon session following its suspension in 2020-21 due to Covid.

The HoS would communicate this decision to parents via Ping and the school website as a matter of urgency; the EHT and HoS would also write to parents.

#### 130/20 Review policies and other key documents

##### a) Governor Induction policy

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Governor Induction policy

The EHT said that the Curriculum and Staff Policy Handbooks were nearing completion and would be brought to the next meeting.

EHT

### Governing Body business

#### 131/20 Report from Chair on informal chats with Governors about their contributions to the GB

The Chair said that she had spoken to all but two governors: she would speak to the remaining two as soon as possible. She expressed her appreciation of the time that Governors had made available, and the luxury of having time for a more leisurely conversation than was possible at meetings. She thanked Governors for their commitment to fulfilling the four key responsibilities of Governing Bodies despite the many other pressures on their time. The main themes that had emerged from the conversations were:

- Governors would like to do more, though they recognised the need to strike an appropriate balance between their commitment to the school and their work and personal lives.
- Governors felt that the GB had grown into its role and was now operating at a high level of accountability and responsibility. The volume of work was managed well and the GB had a supportive and effective clerk.
- Governors enjoyed the opportunity presented by the Link Governor meetings to use their skills to support the school and to contribute directly to the development of its strategic priorities and milestones, as well as its self-evaluation. They found the LG meetings to be more creative when it was possible to hold them in person rather than by Zoom.
- Governors saw mutual benefits in the partnership with Sandy Lane.
- Governors enjoyed a trusting relationship with a valued and professional senior leadership team. They felt that there was room for more rigorous scrutiny of performance data as the school, hopefully, returned to “normal” in September 2021.
- As discussed elsewhere in this meeting, both governors and the school were keen to resume regular governor visits, learning walks, monitoring walks and direct engagement with pupils (eg through the School Council). This would facilitate rigorous scrutiny and enable governors could talk intelligently about school performance on the basis of first-hand knowledge.
- Governors had also referred to the need to appoint to the two Co-opted Governor vacancies.

**132/20 Note report of decision taken by e-mail: change to staffing**

*Agenda paper: Report on GB decision by e-mail – change to staffing structure May 2021*

**The Governing Body noted** the formal report on the decision it had taken by e-mail to approve a change to the agreed staffing structure.

**133/20 Review Governor attendance in 2020-21**

*Agenda paper: Register of Attendance 2020-21*

The Clerk said that, based on her experience of a range of Governing Bodies, attendance at Governing Body meetings in 2020-21 had been good. Attendance at meetings of the Resources Committee had been less so, particularly towards the end of the year. She suggested that the Committee consider reviewing the timing of its meetings. The GB agreed: it was probable that emergence from Covid would enable Committee members to attend more regularly, but it would be useful to review the timing of meetings.

Resources

The Chair thanked governors for their generally good attendance, which made a real difference to the effectiveness of the GB.

**134/20 Consider Governing Body self review and/or skills audit**

The Chair reminded Governors that the GB had undertaken a self-review in December 2020. The resulting action plan had been completed except where actions had been prevented by Covid. This review had led to the establishment of the Link Governor monitoring arrangements and its focus in 2021 on developing a more effective and strategic role in relation to the school vision, its engagement with the community and its development of a curriculum that met the needs of Steeton's pupils.

As discussed, the Chair would undertake a 360° review of her performance. The Vice Chair would circulate a short review for to governors and collate the responses.

The Link Governors for Leadership and Management would take forward work to identify potential new co-opted governors: ideally, it would be helpful to identify people with experience in finance and/or curriculum/performance data.

The GB agreed that it would undertake self reviews every two years: the next should be undertaken in December 2022 for discussion and approval of an action plan at the Spring 1 2023 meeting.

**135/20 Approve Committee Terms of Reference for 2021-22**

*Agenda paper: draft Terms of Reference for the Resources Committee 2021-22*

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Terms of Reference for the Resources Committee for 2021-22 as set out in the agenda paper.

**136/20 Review Committee membership and Named Governor roles for 2021-22**

*Agenda paper: Committee membership and Named Governors at 30-06-2021*

- **The Governing Body unanimously agreed** to appoint governors to Committee and Named and Link Governor roles as set out at Annex A.

The GB asked that Adam O'Neill and Annette Mullen (previously Named Governors for the Sports and Pupil Premium respectively) brief Dave Mullen and Emma Wainwright (Link Governors for Quality of Education) on the Pupil and Sports Premiums.

A Mullen,  
A O'Neill

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**137/20 Agree meeting dates for 2021-22**

*Agenda paper: Proposed meeting dates 2021-22*

The Clerk said that, as agreed at the previous meeting, the proposed dates included four, rather than six, full GB meetings in 2021-22 and alternated physical and virtual FGB meetings, with the Autumn 2 GB meeting being virtual.

➤ **The Governing Body unanimously agreed** to meet in 2021-22 as set out at Annex B.

**Closing items****138/20 Any other business referred from 115/20 above**

The DHT said that the Reading For Pleasure event that she had invited governors to attend on 12 July 2021 had been cancelled due to the closure of a bubble. The event would be held instead in the autumn term.

**139/20 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at **6.15pm on Thursday 04 November 2021** and will be held in person subject to C19. Governors asked that the meeting be held in a room with adult sized furniture if possible.

The GB asked that the Clerk convene Link Governor meetings in the last week of September 2021.

**140/20 Confirmation of Clerking time**

The Governing Body confirmed that the meeting had been due to start at 6.15pm and was about to end at 8.38pm

The Chair thanked governors and all staff for their hard work and commitment throughout a very difficult year. Despite the disruption caused by Covid, the school had achieved a remarkably high proportion of its milestones and had maintained a consistently positive outlook. The plans and prospects for the year ahead were exciting and challenging. She also thanked the Clerk for her support for the Governing Body throughout the year. She wished everyone a happy and refreshing summer break and looked forward to seeing them in September, ready to carry on making a real difference to the lives of Steeton's pupils.

**The meeting closed at 8.40pm**