

**Steeton Primary School Governing Body
Virtual meeting of 17 February 2022
Minutes**

Meeting commenced at 6.18pm

Present: John Cooper (EHT), Adam Longden, Stefan Mills, Annette Mullen, Dave Mullen, Adam O'Neill, Claire Redman, Emma Wainwright (Vice Chair), Sue West (Chair)

Associate Member: Kevin Wheeler (HoS)

In Attendance: Helen Osman (Clerk - SGS)

Summary of actions

Item	Action	Person	Date
18/21	EHT to explore scope for the website version of the Ways of Working diagram to enable the use to see the content of each element by hovering over it with their cursor.	J Cooper	31-12-2021
20/21(a)	Chair to discuss with SLT the scope to seek Arts Council accreditation for the school's Arts and Crafts offer.	S West	31-12-2021
21/21	EHT to provide to the next LG/QE meeting a summary of support provided to Year 6 cohort throughout their time at Steeton	J Cooper	06-12-2021
24/21 (amended)	HoS to check that S Mills and E Wainwright had confirmed that they had read and understood KCSiE and, if not, make the necessary arrangements.	K Wheeler	URGENT
38/21	EHT to register A Longden and L Carter with NGA Clerk to send forms and register A Longden and L Carter with Skills 4 Bradford	J Cooper H Osman	04-02-2022
46/21	S Mills to contact Vice Chair re platform for staff wellbeing survey. Vice Chair to issue staff wellbeing survey after February half term and report outcome to next meeting.	S Mills E Wainwright	28-02-2022 08-04-2022
49/21	EHT to take the view of the RSC on whether a proposal for Steeton and Sandy Lane to academise together would be entertained.	J Cooper	18-03-2022
52/21	EHT to provide, and Clerk to commission, collate and feed back to Chair, a 360° review of the Chair's performance.	J Cooper H Osman	11-03-2022 08-04-2022

The Chair welcomed Adam Longden to the meeting and explained that he had expressed interest in being co-opted as a Governor. She had discussed with him the role and responsibilities of governors, the Code of Conduct and the training available to support governors. Adam Longden said that he had lived in Steeton for a number of years, had two children in school and had a background in further and secondary education. Governors introduced themselves.

Adam Longden withdrew from the meeting.

30/21 Co-option of Governor

➤ **Proposal:** That the Governing Body appoint Adam Longden as a Co-opted Governor.

Proposed: Sue West

Seconded: Dave Mullen

Carried unanimously

Adam Longden rejoined the meeting.

The Chair informed Adam Longden that he had been appointed as a Co-opted Governor and said that she would be responsible for his induction.

31/21 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

All Governors were present.

The Chair said that Lauren Carter, a potential new Governor, had been unable to attend this meeting.

32/21 Notification of urgent other business and requests for order variations

No other business was notified and there were no requests to vary the agenda.

33/21 Declarations of interest

The Executive Headteacher declared a potential interest in Item 57/21: staff would withdraw from the meeting for that item.

34/21 Minutes of the meeting of 04 and 29 November 2021 and matters arising

Minutes of 04 November 2021

➤ **Proposal:** That the minutes are a true record.

Proposed: Sue West

Seconded: John Cooper

Carried unanimously

Minutes of 29 November 2021

➤ **Proposal:** That the minutes are a true record.

Proposed: Kevin Wheeler

Seconded: Sue West

Carried unanimously

Matters arising

Item	Action	Status
90/20	School to send to all governors a CPD form on which to record details of their training	Closed
	Action completed.	
118/20(i)	E Wainwright to issue staff survey	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
118/20(ii)	(Sub-item Res 94/20) School to circulate a summary of first aid incidents in 2020-21 to governors	Closed
	Action completed.	

121/20	<i>School to advise the GB on the impact of Covid and PA on pupils with multiple vulnerabilities</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
122/20(ii)	<i>NG/SEND to conduct a SEND Governance review</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
125/20(i)	<i>Chair to include details of Governor Development Programme on CPD form</i>	Closed
	Action completed.	
125/20(ii)	<i>DHT to provide copy of monitoring schedule to Chair to inform governor visits in 2021-22</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
127/20	<i>HoS to share details of revised faculty structure with Chair/Vice Chair to inform assignment of governors to faculties</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
130/20	<i>Curriculum and Staff Policy Handbooks to be brought to next meeting.</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
134/20	<i>Vice Chair to co-ordinate 360° review of Chair's performance</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
07/21	<i>EHT to arrange for HTPM review meeting to be held before the end of the Autumn term</i>	Closed
	Action completed.	
09/21	<i>Chair/Res to discuss timing and days of week for Resources Committee meetings with Stefan Mills</i>	Closed
	Action completed.	
11/21	<i>NG/SEND to report outcome of SEND review to next meeting</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
14/21	<i>S West to write report on her most recent visit to a Reading For Pleasure session</i>	Closed
	Action completed.	
16/21	<i>School to prepare costed proposal on before and after-school provision for consideration at next meeting of the Resources Committee.</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
18/21	<i>EHT to explore scope for the website version of the Ways of Working diagram to enable the use to see the content of each element by hovering over it with their cursor.</i>	Ongoing
	The EHT said that work was in hand to finalise the presentation of the Ways of Working diagram on the website.	
20/21(a)	<i>Chair to discuss with SLT the scope to seek Arts Council accreditation for the school's Arts and Crafts offer.</i>	Ongoing
	The Chair said that this action was ongoing.	
20/21(b)	<i>School to investigate causes of PA, especially among multi-vulnerable pupils, and report to next meeting – to include national data for comparison.</i>	Closed
	For discussion at this meeting.	
21/21	<i>EHT to provide to the next LG/QE meeting a summary of support provided to Year 6 cohort throughout their time at Steeton</i>	Ongoing

Signed: _____

Date:

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24/21	<p>The EHT said that this action was ongoing.</p> <p><i>Absent Governors to confirm to HoS, by e-mail or by signing document in school, that they have read and understood KCSiE.</i></p>	ended act
26/21	<p>The HoS would check that S Mills and E Wainwright had confirmed that they had read and understood KCSiE and, if not, make the necessary arrangements.</p> <p><i>HoS to notify governors of the faculties, their content and the type of governor involvement that would be useful.</i></p> <p>The HoS had circulated information on work in progress and would continue to keep governors informed.</p> <p><i>Governors to consider which faculties they wish to “adopt”.</i></p>	Closed
27/21	<p>For discussion at this meeting.</p> <p><i>HoS to arrange for donors to be thanked through the Newsletter and letters from pupils</i></p> <p>The HoS said that parents had been thanked through the newsletter. Donors would be invited to attend an assembly in the first week of the Spring 2 half term and a press release would be issued.</p>	Closed

Standing reports

35/21 Receive Executive Headteacher’s update on Your Inspirational Community

Agenda paper

The Executive Headteacher (EHT) highlighted the following points from his written report and that had arisen since the report had been written:

- The school wished to thank the governors who had accompanied the school trip to Chester Zoo on 16 February 2022. The trip had been a great success.
- The number of pupil on roll (288 at the time of writing the report) remained a matter of concern.
- Attendance to date in 2021-22 (93.24%) was weaker than it had been in 2020-21 as a whole (95.65%). Sandy Lane¹ had also experienced a drop in attendance since the start of the year. It seemed that attendance had appeared to be stronger during the periods of remote learning because the bar was lower: once a child had been seen on-screen, they were registered as in attendance for the day.
- Attendance remained a high priority for the school. Persistent Absence² (PA) stood at 20.68%, compared with a national average for the autumn 2021 term of 7%. Though the high level of PA was not unique to Steeton, the school clearly had a long way to go to narrow the gap with the national average. The Inclusion Team continued to implement the full range of attendance measures with which the GB was aware, including home visits to bring children into school or at least determine their whereabouts and safety.
- Aside from Covid shielding and self-isolation, the level of staff absences remained remarkably low, suggesting that staff were well motivated and happy to be in school. The Covid-related absences presented a significant management challenge to the Head of School (HoS) and Deputy Headteacher (DHT).

Action

¹ Sandy Lane Primary school – Steeton Primary School’s partner school

² Persistent Absence: attendance by a pupil of less than 90% (ie 19 days or more missed in one year)

37/21 Report on Persistent absence, particularly Plum, Fir and Holly classes and vulnerable pupils

Agenda paper

and

43/21 Receive report on reasons for persistent absence, particularly among multi-vulnerable pupils

[Items taken together]

The Named Governor for Safeguarding (NG/SG) said that, as recorded in her report (Item 39/21), overall pupil attendance at Steeton was particularly strong in comparison with other Bradford schools: there were many schools in the District whose attendance was significantly lower than at Steeton. It was always a matter of concern if children were not in school, but it was important that staff did not gain the impression that the school was failing in this area.

Referring to the agenda paper, the HoS highlighted that 20.68% (sixty-one) children were persistently absent over the year to date. He reminded governors that Persistent Absence (PA) tended to be high in the first term of each year because each absence reflected a higher proportion of days in a single term than of days in a whole school year.

The attendance of three vulnerable pupils was of particular concern to the school, for the reasons set out in the paper: the paper also summarised the steps that the school continued to take to ensure the safety of these children and get them into school. All three lived at some distance from the school. There had been some improvement in the attendance of two of the three pupils, but the third lacked the parental support required to address attendance successfully.

Aside from these three children, there had been a number of unauthorised holidays: some had arisen from genuinely exceptional circumstances but in the other cases fine had been issued. The remainder of absences related to genuine illness or medical need and did not show any pattern with regard to pupil vulnerability. There were no patterns of high levels of absence on particular days of the week.

The school intended to focus in the coming weeks and months on cumulative absences (as opposed to just absences of several consecutive days) and late arrivals.

The EHT said that attendance at Steeton had been stronger than the national average prior to Covid, at around 97%. However, the current high level of PA required that the school tighten up on attendance management procedures, including a three-week monitoring cycle. It seemed that one effect of Covid had been that some families had lost the habit of ensuring that their children attended school regularly.

NG/SG said that she had received a communication from the judiciary indicating that the higher courts were now looking more closely at penalties for non-attendance at school. She reminded governors that, as set out in her report, the reasons for the poor attendance of some pupils related to high levels of deprivation. Governors accepted that, in the cases of some highly vulnerable pupils, a fine would be of limited effect and possibly unjustifiable in terms of the probable impact on the child's home life. Nevertheless, Governors agreed that it was unacceptable for 21% of pupils to be PA.

The Chair said that she helped out in a class to obtain a view of the day by day work of the school. There was a PA child in that class. She found it hard to see what more the school could do to improve the attendance of the child without the involvement of Children's Social Services (CSS): it was frustrating that the child did not meet the required threshold for CSS support.

36/21 Receive report from Committees

a) Resources Committee meeting of 26 January 2022

The Chair, who had chaired the Resources Committee meeting in the absence of Emma Wainwright, reported that the Committee had reviewed and approved the Quarter 3 budget monitor. The projected carryforward balance stood at £10k, which was better than had been feared.

Future budget pressures would include the forthcoming pay increase for education support staff, the size of which was not yet known; inflation; and energy costs. However, these pressures would be offset to some extent by lower expenditure on ICT (since the school had invested heavily in the current financial year), a reduction in the need for supply if Covid absences reduced, and an increase in funding of £800 per pupil

The Bursar had apologised for the error in the opening budget and the damage it had caused to the relationship of trust between him and the Committee: he had emphasized his commitment to winning back that trust. The Chair had accepted the apology.

The Bursar would make a presentation to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and one or more members of the Committee on the HCSS³ financial software, which was being introduced by the school.

Steeton was undertaking a project with Sandy Lane, with the support of Sandy Lane's Bursar, to review contracts and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with a view to identifying scope for savings.

The Committee had agreed that, in light of consultation that indicated insufficient demand, the proposal to offer before and after-school provision was not viable. The proposal and consultation had, however, had the effect of causing the local Nursery to reduce its prices substantially, which should prove helpful to parents.

The Committee had agreed to review the rolling three-to-five year ICT and Building & Maintenance plans its next meeting.

The Committee had been disappointed in the report of the recent Health and Safety visit conducted by the unions: the visit had not included the Reception class Portacabin or the Room 4/girls' toilet/outside gully area. Governors echoed the disappointment of the Committee: these were the areas of the school about which the GB had Health and Safety concerns, which it continued to press with the local authority, and it would have been helpful to have the view of the unions.

The Committee had received an update on Room 4 and the girls' toilet, whose condition had seriously deteriorated due to the decision of the LA, despite the concerns expressed by the school, to address these areas before fixing the external gully. Condensation was a serious issue and damp was spreading up the walls into other rooms. Contractors had visited the site on a Sunday, without the school being notified, to work on the external gully: their work had been negligent and they had left a mess.

The Chair, Stefan Mills, the EH and HoS had conducted a site walk on 27 January 2022 and had agreed to send photographs of Room 4, the girls' toilet and the external gully with an urgent letter of complaint to the local authority Clerk of Works, with copies to the local MP and ward councillors, focusing on the risks to the health and safety of pupils and staff and the arguably negligent use of public funds. If no

³ HCSS - financial planning software for schools produced by HCSS Education, part of the Access Group. Commonly used by Bradford District maintained schools.

response were received within one week, the matter would be escalated. A Governor suggested copying the correspondence to the CEO of Bradford Council.

The Committee had made a recommendation on the pay of the EHT, which would be considered at the end of this meeting.

b) Joint Committee with Sandy Lane – meeting of 17 February 2022

The Chair reminded governors that the Governing Bodies of Steeton and Sandy Lane had established a Joint Committee, consisting of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each, to manage the partnership between the two schools. After some delay due to Covid, the Committee had now met. It had agreed draft Terms of Reference, which would be put to the next meeting of each GB for approval.

The Committee had reviewed the wide range of benefits that had already accrued to both schools as a result of the partnership and plans for its further development, including joint development of Writing for Pleasure, Design & Technology, Modern Foreign Languages and Science & Technology. It had agreed that there might be scope to share some of the more expensive equipment that would benefit pupil learning in these areas.

The Committee had discussed the strategic direction of the schools, including academisation. Sandy Lane would be interested in establishing an academy with Steeton, but not in joining a large established academy chain. Both GBs were concerned about the capacity of the local authority to provide support as more schools academised, and the Committee had asked the EHT to take the view of the Regional Schools Commissioner on whether an academy consisting of the two schools would be considered. There was no commitment on the part of either school: the purpose of the request was to understand the options available.

The Committee had discussed the arrangements for the EHT's pay, reviewed his job description and confirmed that his strategic performance management objectives had been agreed.

38/21 Receive report from Governors' briefing by the Local Authority on 01 February 2022

The Chair had been unable to attend the Governors' briefing but had seen the briefing noted: there had been little new information, except on the latest schedule of governor training courses. Training was also available through the National Governors Association: the EHT would register the new Governor and Associate Member with NGA⁴ and the Clerk would send them the necessary forms to register them on Skills For Bradford.

EHT
Clerk

39/21 Receive report from Named Governor for Safeguarding

Agenda paper

The agenda paper was taken as read.

Asked whether there had been an increase in safeguarding concerns following Covid, NG/SG said that, aside from the attendance issues discussed earlier in this meeting, there had not. She and the HoS had discussed this regularly, but the increase that had been feared in domestic violence, Social Care referrals and other safeguarding concerns had not materialised. Governors suggested that this might reflect:

⁴ NGA - National Governance Association

Signed: _____ Date: _____

- the high level of monitoring and support provided by the school, led by the Inclusion and Welfare Officer, who had close relationships with families, to ameliorate the impact of Covid; and
- the high proportion of families that had already been out of work prior to Covid.

The HoS said that there had been a significant increase in levels of deprivation. Governors asked that the school keep the GB informed over the coming months especially, as the winter of 2022-23 approached, whether more needed to be done to support families through, for example, breakfast clubs, in addition to the use of the crisis support policy.

40/21 **Receive report on any safeguarding incidents since the previous meeting**

The HoS said that one safeguarding referral was ongoing. He had considered that the referral was not being taken seriously by Social Services and had pressed hard on the matter, despite receiving no response to repeated calls. Once the matter had been resolved, he would raise his concerns about the handling of the case at a higher level: it had been managed poorly and the child's voice had not been taken into consideration.

NG/SG said that her discussions with the HoS had identified an increasing tendency for the LA to look to schools to take action which was properly for Children's Services. The school went above and beyond to support children, but it could not – and staff were not qualified to – act as a social work department.

41/21 **Report on Chair's actions and correspondence**

The Chair reported that she had:

- responded to the NGA survey on the use of their 20 Questions to support GB self-review of its skills and effectiveness;
- met two potential governors to discuss the role, responsibilities and induction support for governors;
- visited the new Silsden Primary School with the EHT, where they had attended a presentation by Northern Star Academies Trust.

[*Sue West's Teams connection froze: the EHT continued for her:*]

The new primary school had approximately 650 pupils and looked like a secondary school. It was modern, spacious and had good facilities for online learning. The Trust presentation had been interesting, he and the Chair would say more about this later in the meeting.

The Clerk reported that the Chair had approved the audited School Fund account, which was required by the LA before the date of this meeting.

[*Sue West re-joined the meeting*]

The Chair continued her report:

- The school had been obliged to close on 04 February 2022 due to mains failure, which meant that the fire alarms, heating and internet had been out of operation. This issue had been fixed promptly, and staff had ensured that learning continued.
- The school had visited Chester Zoo on 16 February 2022, accompanied by several governors.

Governor assurance and school performance

42/21 Outcome of assessments in autumn term and target for Year 6 combined Reading, Writing and Maths

Agenda paper

The EHT said that the Link Governors for Quality of Education (LGs/QE) had reviewed the autumn term data in detail on 19 January 2022. Progress in Reading and Maths was strong across school. Progress in Writing was less strong, as usual: the Deputy Headteacher (DHT) and her opposite number at Sandy Lane were developing an exciting new plan, Writing For Pleasure. The programme aimed to address the adverse impact of the government-led emphasis on SPAG⁵, at the expense of creativity and passion in story-telling though writing. The DHT said that new moderation guidance focused on listening to children so that they developed story-telling and narrative skills: they would listen for none points, six of which were oral and only three of which related to SPAG. As children became proficient in the six oral points, the spelling and grammar followed naturally. The DHT would give a brief presentation or paper on the programme once it had been fully developed.

The EHT said that:

- Reception was on track to meet the end of year target.
- Year 1 Phonics outcomes would not reach the national average this year, but should meet the 75% target.
- Key Stage 1 looked likely to meet or exceed end-year targets.
- In light of the high number of SEND pupils in the current Year 6 cohort, the Key Stage 2 targets were lower than usual this year and would be challenging to achieve. The school aimed to maximise the number of pupils who achieved expectation in all three of reading, writing and maths. The school was very clear about the needs of its SEND pupils and was doing everything possible to ensure that they performed to their full potential.

The autumn 2019 and 2021 comparison graphs in the agenda paper showed that progress in reading and maths was higher in autumn 2021 than pre-Covid. This reflected the way that the whole school was now working, with vibrant and energetic teaching and learning. There was little difference in progress in writing between the two years, though the EHT expected to see stronger progress in writing with the introduction of Writing For Pleasure.

Governors commented on the use of White Rose Maths Hub⁶ resources and Learning By Questions (LBQ⁷): they had seen how excited pupils were by the interactive approach and immediate feedback, and how teachers were able to identify areas with which pupils were struggling and address them immediately: the lessons appeared dynamic and pupils highly engaged. The EHT agreed: the experience of using these tools had been very positive, and the groans of disappointment if a teacher had to pause LBQ were an indication of the level of pupil engagement.

Governors commented on the high standard of teaching and learning and the dynamism in school. The openness of staff to sharing information and ideas was a real strength. A governor who was a parent of children in school had been impressed by the extent to which staff had created a sense of normality for pupils during Covid: this

⁵ SPAG - Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar. The original name for what is now known as GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

⁶ White Rose Maths Hub – Led by Trinity Academy Halifax, supporting schools in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds to promote love of and passion for Maths, focused on a teaching for mastery approach

⁷ Learning by Questions – scaffolded question sets to develop classes with mixed abilities and stretch every pupil

had by no means been the case in all schools. Governors noted that the investment in ICT and LBQ prior to Covid had put the school in a strong position to respond quickly to the need for remote learning, and the curriculum development work that it was doing with Sandy Lane had continued throughout the Covid period so that work was well advanced to provide a strong curriculum to support catch-up.

44/21 **School Development Plan: Link Governor termly reports on monitoring of strategic plans**

Agenda papers

The Chair said that, as part of his induction, she would explain the Link Governor model to the new governor, as well as the Ways of Working flowchart. The feedback she had received in discussions with governors was that they enjoyed their Link Governor (LG) role and found that the LG meetings allowed space for:

- more reflective and dynamic engagement with school leadership than the larger and more firmly structured GB and Committee meetings;
- clearer understanding; and
- real participation in the strategic development of the school, including through self-evaluation and shaping of the School Development Plan (SDP).

The minutes of LG meetings were copied to all governors. Actions were linked to the school's SDP prioritise and the Ofsted framework, and cross-cutting themes from each round of LG meetings were summarised for the next GB meeting.

The Chair hoped that the new governor would be willing to take on a LG role and participate in monitoring visits in due course.

The following points were made in discussion:

- LG/Personal Development (LG/PD) said that the school was working to develop a *Pupil Passport*. The aim of the passport was to record, monitor and celebrate participation in the wide range of personal development opportunities available to children through the Pupil Offer, as well as other personal development activity in school and at home, in support of development of character and the school's FOREST⁸ principles.

As well as linking to different levels of certificates or awards, the Pupil Passport would enable staff to identify pupils whose participation in personal development activities was limited and support them to become more involved.

The Pupil Passport was a long-term plan: the aim was to launch it in September 2022. The HoS thanked LG/PD for sharing examples of resources with him: DfE issued generic templates, but the shared examples would help the school to develop a passport that was specific to Steeton's pupils.

- LGs/Leadership & Management (LGs/LM) were considering steps to promote the school to parents of potential new pupils: the school was consistently operating below capacity, which had an impact on its funding and, therefore, on its provision for pupils.
- LGs/Quality of Education (LGs/QE) were impressed by the clarity with which leadership had presented the complex, comprehensive and detailed thinking that underpinned the new Curriculum Intent and Implementation document. This was a key piece of work and the Vice Chair had written to staff to thank them.

⁸ FOREST – Friendship, Opportunity, Resilience, Empathy, Self awareness, Teamwork

- The redevelopment of the Early Years environment was highly impressive and the Reception class was used as a showcase for Bradford.

45/21 Outcome of SEND Governance review

Agenda paper

The Named Governor for SEND (NG/SEND) said that she and the SENCo carried out the SEND governance review annually, following the structure of an NGA model. The review completed in November 2021 demonstrated clearly the distance that had been covered by the school: SEND was no longer seen as the sole responsibility of the SENCo but was addressed collaboratively by staff with the SENCo so that children were supported in the classroom as far as possible. The SENCo had introduced procedures and documentation to support classroom staff in this. Case studies were prepared as evidence.

- **Proposal:** That the Governing Body approve the SEND governance review.

Proposed: Sue West

Seconded: Emma Wainwright

Carried unanimously

NG/SEND reminded Governors of the meaning of abbreviations used in the report of her meeting with the SENCo on 10 February 2022:

IEP – Individual education plan.

MLJ – My Learning Journey document for the pupil and family

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

Three new applications for EHCPs had been submitted in respect of one new pupil and two existing pupils. The LA had introduced a new IT system that enabled the SENCo to monitor the progress of applications online.

Replying to questions, NG/SEND confirmed that the local authority (LA) had caught up with the backlog of EHCPs for Steeton's pupils.

Governors were shocked to hear that the LA now declined to fund dyslexia assessments for pupils unless their reading age was at least four years behind their actual age: it was hard to see how the LA could justify wasting a child's potential for four years. NG/SEND said that the school identified pupils with dyslexia and addressed their needs through Quality First teaching⁹ and short term interventions, with a more formal approach to the LA if required. **Asked** if there was more that could be done for pupils with dyslexia, the EHT said that they could be put forward for a private dyslexia assessment, but that such assessments were costly. Governors reflected that this was another example of where schools were being pushed towards subsidising LA responsibilities, either financially as in this area or through taking on actions that were properly the responsibility of the LA as discussed at Item 40/21.

NG/SEND said that the national report on SEND provision continued to be delayed. Lack of SEND funding in the last decade was a national issue: the level of need continued to increase. It was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain EHCPs for children with high levels of need.

⁹ 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.

NG/SEND said that she would raise these issues with the SEND virtual network. The network had received a useful talk from an Ofsted inspector on 09 November, the key points of which were recorded in her visit report.

NG/SEND said that IEPs and provision mapping were being put in place. A teacher who had previously been SENCo at another school was supporting monitoring and staff CPD¹⁰. As part of its work to modernise SEND support, the school was organising staff into teams that each specialised in an aspect of SEND, undertook the appropriate training, cascaded the training and acted as an expert resource for other staff. NG/SEND believed that this innovative approach would prove beneficial.

46/21 **Outcome of staff wellbeing survey**

The Vice Chair said that she had now received a full list of staff e-mail addresses so that she could send the survey to them. She reminded governors that the survey was governor-led rather than school-led: the intention was to gain staff feedback independently of senior leadership. The questions had been copied to the EHT for advice on tone, but the questionnaire was a GB initiative.

The EHT and HoS said that they were content with the tone of the questionnaire. Governors noted that the point of the questionnaire was to gain insights, and noted that it helpfully encouraged staff to share their thoughts rather than give one-word answers. Noting that other recent requests for staff views had elicited a small number of anonymous, unconstructive and hurtful responses, the EHT believed that the emphasis in this questionnaire on sharing of thoughts rather than numerical rankings gave less scope for unconstructive responses.

The Governing Body confirmed that it was content for the questionnaire to be issued after the half term break: the Vice Chair would liaise with the EHT and HoS on precise timing. Stefan Mills would contact the Vice Chair with suggestions for the platform to be used. The outcome of the survey would be reported to the next meeting.

Vice Chair
S Mills

47/21 **Report on Governors' visits to school, training and development**

Agenda paper

The GB noted the reports of Governors' visits with thanks.

48/21 **Review policies and other key documents**

Agenda paper

- *Note the Curriculum Policy Handbook*

The Governing Body noted with approval the continuing development of the Curriculum Policy Handbook.

- *Note Staff Policy Handbook*

The Clerk apologised: this item had been included on the agenda in error.

The Chair said that the Joint Committee had agreed that it would be useful for Steeton and Sandy Lane to establish a formal Collaboration Agreement that would enable each GB to call on Governors from the other if needed to participate in hearings, for example if an independent governor were needed. A draft Collaboration Agreement would be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

¹⁰ CPD - Continuing Professional Development

Strategic development of school

49/21 Review structural options for school

The Chair reminded governors that the GB had considered at its last meeting whether to pursue options such as federation or academisation. It had agreed that either option would be an unhelpful distraction from its priorities, including Covid catch-up but, in light of continuing uncertainty as to whether, and how vigorously, DfE intended to press the academisation agenda for primary schools, had agreed to maintain a watching brief.

Through 2VLC¹¹, the Chair and EHT had attended a presentation by Norther Star Academy Trust. Key features had been:

- The Trust had two secondary and six primary schools.
- One of the secondary schools was an independent girls' school; the other was a local-authority type comprehensive which had struggled in the past but was now Good.
- The Trust had two hubs, in Harrogate and Keighley.
- One of the Keighley schools had struggled in the past but was now Good. The Head of that school had spoken positively about the Trust. The school shared characteristics with Steeton, for example in relation to deprivation.
- The ethos and vision of the Trust aligned with those of Steeton.
- The Trust allowed schools to retain their independence and ethos and encouraged them to maintain existing collaborations.

The EHT said that there was no clear or consistent information available about whether primary schools could expect to be required to academise, despite requests to Councillors, the local authority and the local MP, who had asked the Minister. However, changes to the National Funding Formula (NFF) meant that local authority School Funding Teams would cease to exist within two years, with funding being paid directly to schools by DfE. This might suggest that all schools would need to be academies.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The lack of clarity about the government position on academisation was frustrating: making decisions against this background was like knitting fog.
- Longer standing governors noted that the GB had thought long and hard about academisation in the past and had seen no reason, other than DfE policy, to do so.
- Although the new NFF might imply that schools would have to become academies, there appeared to have been no statement to that effect by DfE or the local authority.
- While Harrogate was often thought of as very different from Steeton, it too had some areas of high deprivation.
- If the school were to academise, there were attractions in doing so with Sandy Lane, so that the schools could forget their own path together as a well-established and successful partnership.

¹¹ 2VLC – Two Valleys Learning Collaborative: a collaborative arrangement of local primary schools

- However, if the school came under pressure to join an academy chain, the GB needed to be well-informed about the options so that it could drive the process rather than being driven by it.

The GB agreed that the next step should be for the EHT to sound out the RSC on how an academy formed of Steeton and Sandy Lane would be viewed, as agreed by the Joint Committee (see Item 36/21(b)).

The Chair made clear that neither she nor the EHT were pressing for the school to academise: they were simply sharing information and taking the views of the GB.

50/21 **Before and after-school provision**

As discussed at Item 36/21(a) above, the Resources Committee had concluded that there was insufficient demand for before- and after- school provision to be viable. The GB accepted this conclusion.

Governing Body business

51/21 **Appointment of Associate Member to Resources Committee**

The Chair said that Lauren Carter, who had expressed interest in joining the Governing Body, had decided on reflection that she could not give sufficient time to the role while she was working towards a degree. At the Chair's request, she had agreed to be appointed as an Associate Member of the Finance and Resources Committee, with a view to being appointed as a Governor once she had completed her degree: she considered that this role, and the associated induction and training, would be manageable. The Chair said that, in view of the skills that MS Carter would bring to the Committee to support robust interrogation of the school's finances, she recommended the appointment.

- **Proposal:** That the Governing Body appoint Lauren Carter to the Resources Committee as an Associate Member with voting rights.

Proposed: Sue West

Seconded: Emma Wainwright

Carried unanimously

52/21 **Initiate 360° review of Chair's performance**

The Chair said that she would welcome feedback from a 360° review. The GB asked that the EHT commission governor responses, to be collated and fed back to the Chair by the Clerk: the GB noted that the school would be charged for this work, which fell outside the core contract with Bradford Council's School Governor Service.

The Chair would report back to the GB on the review. The Clerk made clear that a 360° review was a personal development tool: it was for the Chair to decide how much or how little she wished to reveal beyond the simple fact that the review had been completed.

53/21 **Review the role of governors in monitoring**

The Chair said that the recent LG meetings for QE and LM had discussed the need to strike the right balance between ensuring effective monitoring and familiarity with school by governors and the need to avoid making unnecessary demands on the time

of both governors and school leaders. Governors currently attended LG meetings, formal GB and Committee meetings, events on the school's monitoring schedule etc. Against this background, would it be helpful to adopt Named Governor roles for the Faculties?

Replying to questions, the HoS said that the Faculties had now been identified, though not all staff had yet been assigned to them.

The GB agreed that, rather than creating Named Governor roles for the Faculties, feedback from the Faculties should be fed into LG/LM meetings and any elements that needed to be reported to governors more widely should be included in the summary sheet of LG themes that was prepared after each round of LG meetings.

54/21 Document Management

The EHT said that, in light of budget constraints, the school's planned move to Teams for management of Governing Body documentation would be postponed until the new financial year.

Closing items

55/21 Any other business referred from 32/21 above

There was no other business.

56/21 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place at **6.15pm on Thursday 05 May 2022** at the school.

[Staff left the meeting at 8.40pm]

57/21 Executive Headteacher pay arrangements

The Chair said that the EHT Performance Management (PM) Committee had made a recommendation on the pay of the EHT that took account of the fact that, for several years, either Sandy Lane or Steeton had been unable to fund a performance-related pay award, despite the achievements with which governors were familiar. During this period, the Heads of Schools and their deputies had received performance-related pay increases. The PM Committee had recommended a pay increase of three points on the leadership scale. A three-point increase was exceptional, but was justified by the lack of pay increase in over four years. The Resources Committee had considered and endorsed this recommendation to the GB.

Sandy Lane had agreed to take full responsibility for payment of the EHT salary at the increased rate. It would invoice Steeton for provision of an EHT service at the following rates:

- Remainder of the current year: 50% of the uplifted EHT salary costs
- Next year: 30% of the current EHT salary costs

The reduction in payment from 50% to 30% of salary costs reflected an adjustment in the hours that the EHT would work for each school, enabling him to oversee the launch of Nursery provision and a major premises project at Sandy Lane.

- **Proposal:** That the Governing Body approve the award of a three-point performance-related pay increase to the EHT.

Proposed: Sue West

Seconded: Stefan Mills

Carried unanimously

58/21 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 8:44pm.

The meeting closed at 8.44pm