

**Steeton Primary School Governing Body
Meeting of 29 November 2021
Minutes**

This meeting was reconvened from 04 November 2021.

Meeting commenced at 6.13pm

Present: John Cooper (EHT), 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)

Agenda papers: available on Skills 4 Bradford

Additional papers:

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
20/21(b)	School to investigate causes of PA, especially among multi-vulnerable pupils, and report to next meeting – to include national data for comparison.	J Cooper	31-01-2022
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	Absent Governors to confirm to HoS, by e-mail or by signing document in school, that they have read and understood KCSiE.	S Mills E Wainwright	URGENT
26/21	HoS to notify governors of the faculties, their content and the type of governor involvement that would be useful. Governors to consider which faculties they wish to "adopt".	K Wheeler All	31-12-2021 16-02-2022
27/21	HoS to arrange for donors to be thanked through the Newsletter and letters from pupils	K Wheeler	17-12-2021

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Emma Wainwright. The absence of Stefan Mills without apology was noted.

[It subsequently emerged that Mr Mills had made every effort to attend but had been unable to do so.]

Action

Governor assurance and school performance

18/21 Discussion of outcomes of Link Governor Autumn term meetings

Paper: Ways of Working flowchart

The Executive Headteacher (EHT) talked through the agenda paper, which had been discussed with the Link Governors for Leadership and Management (LGs/LM). Subject to governors' approval, he proposed to include this diagram in the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF). The Chair added that the LGs/LM had seen the diagram as a useful document to

support governors and staff in explaining to Ofsted and others the role of governors in supporting the school and holding leadership to account. She thanked the EHT for his work in devising the diagram.

Asked if the diagram could be e-mailed to a governor, the Clerk said that it was among the papers for this meeting, which were available on Skills 4 Bradford, to which she had circulated a link on 20 November 2021. The EHT invited the governor to contact him if he wished to talk through the paper in more detail.

a) Approval of Ways of Working flowchart

Governors welcomed the diagram but noted that many of the individual elements (eg the Pupil Offer) covered a wide range of important activities that were not shown. The EHT acknowledged this: he would explore the scope for the website version to show the content of each element when the user hovered over it.

EHT

➤ **The Governing Body approved** the Ways of Working diagram.

Claire Redman joined the meeting at 6.19pm

19/21 **Approval of key planning documents for 2021-22**

- a) Updated Self Evaluation Form – The EHT said that the SEF continued to evolve as it was reviewed at Link Governor meetings. It would be condensed towards the end of the school year to make it more manageable.
- b) School Development Plan for 2021-22 – The EHT said that the SDP, like the SEF, was being monitored closely through the Link Governor meetings.

20/21 **Covid**

Paper: Attendance breakdown 21-22 plus Covid data

- a) Catch-up learning – The EHT reported that assessments would be conducted in the next fortnight and the outcomes discussed at the next round of Link Governor meetings. This data would enable the school to make a more formal assessment of the scale of the impact of Covid on progress and attainment.

All pupils now had access to their own iPad which they were using for Learning By Questions (LBQ). Although originally intended to support Maths, LBQ was being used by the school to support Reading, Spelling etc.

The response of both pupils and staff to the Arts input had been very positive, endorsing the school's approach to continuing to provide a whole-curriculum offer for pupils, rather than focusing on specific interventions. The Head of School (HoS) remarked that the quality of work produced by pupils had improved markedly between the autumn 1 and autumn 2 half terms.

Staff CPD had focused this term on Phonics and Reading For Pleasure to support pupils in making up for learning lost due to Covid. Staff were enjoying the development of their skills and were benefiting from being able to implement the training immediately. The Staff Governor endorsed this, and reminded governors that they were welcome to visit the school to see Magic Mondays in operation. Governors who had already done so commented on the work they had seen, which had been interesting, challenging and, through the use of LBQ, marked in real time so that pupils could improve their work immediately.

The Chair said that she had attended a National Governance Association (NGA) conference at which the Arts Council had been represented. The Arts Council offered

accreditation for school arts programmes: she would discuss with the EHT and HoS the scope for Steeton to seek accreditation for its arts and crafts offer.

While recognising that the autumn term progress and attainment data was not yet available, **governors asked** whether the senior leadership team (SLT) had a feel for the scale of the impact of Covid. The HoS said that, while there had been some impact on pupil attendance, the scale was not as great as had been feared. Pupils wanted to be in school; the atmosphere was positive; and the work ethic of both pupils and staff was impressive – he hoped that this would be reflected in the autumn term data. The Staff Governor added that the use of LBQ enabled staff to gain an early view of progress and attainment before the assessment data emerged: from this, it appeared that pupils were holding their own. The work on Reading for Pleasure should have a positive impact on the Reading assessments. A Governor who had visited the school recently as a volunteer reader said that a pupil had told her that the book he was reading had been highly recommended by another pupil: this suggested that reading for pleasure was starting to take root. The HoS reported that parent attendance at the recent Book Look had been high, and that pupils had been proud to be able to show off their work.

b) **Review the impact of Covid and Persistent Absence on multiply vulnerable pupils**

The EHT said that, at 94.08%, whole-school attendance in the autumn term to 18 November 2021 had been below the usual national average and below the standard that the school wished to see. In the 2020-21 school year, attendance had been 96.54% among non-Pupil Premium pupils and 95.63% among Pupil Premium pupils: thus, attendance had been stronger during 2020-21, which had been affected by Covid closures, than in the autumn 2021 term to date. Attendance among SEND pupils in 2020-21 had ranged from 93.65% for SEN Support children to 96.35% for those with No SEN Status. Attendance among pupils of different ethnicities ranged from 89.84% for the school's fifty Mipuri Pakistani to 100% for several groups. The largest of the school's many ethnic groupings was white English (115 pupils), among whom attendance in 2020-21 had been 96.01%.

The EHT considered that, in the context of the challenges presented by Covid in 2020-21, the overall attendance figures did not give cause for significant concern, though there was certainly room for improvement. The main concern was the increasing number of pupils who were Persistently Absent¹ (PA), which stood at 18.9% for the autumn term to 18 November 2021. This was significantly higher than in the past. Of the fifty-five PA pupils, ten were on the SEND register and thirteen were eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Eight children were vulnerable on multiple fronts: of these, two were PA, with attendance of 75% and 77%. There were good reasons for the absences of these two children, and their safety and wellbeing was monitored closely.

The school was confident that these PA children were safe but was undertaking work to explore more deeply the reasons for PA among pupils with multiple vulnerabilities: a report would be brought to the next meeting.

Replying to questions, the EHT said that Persistent Absence had been 10% nationally in 2020-21. PA at Steeton had been 10% to 11% in that year, but was now increasing and was approaching double this national figure. **Asked** whether the local authority still provided the old truant officers, the HoS said that it had not done so for many years: it had provided Educational Social Workers until, in recent years, that role had been cut: this had significantly reduced the tools available to schools to address attendance effectively. Fines were a blunt tool that did not address the complex situations of many of the families of PA pupils. Among the reasons for absence was a very real fear of Covid among extended families with elderly or otherwise vulnerable family members: the school was working with families to address this.

¹ Persistent Absence: attendance by a pupil of less than 90% (ie 19 days or more missed in one year)

The Chair said that she had attended a virtual seminar recently at which an Ofsted inspector had spoken about attendance of SEND pupils. The Inspector had indicated that Ofsted expected schools to be able to demonstrate that all staff were absolutely determined to do everything possible to get children into school. Governors were aware of the ceaseless work of the Inclusion and Welfare Officer, supported by all staff, to support and encourage families to send their children to school. In her capacity as Named Governor for SEND, the Chair had been reassured to see that the attendance of the four pupils with EHCPs was relatively strong given their circumstances: this was to the credit of their families and staff.

The GB thanked the EHT for the report and looked forward to receiving further information, including national attendance data and the reasons for Persistent Absence, particularly among multi-vulnerable pupils, at the next meeting.

21/21 Agree progress, attainment and attendance targets for 2021-22

Paper: Attendance data

Claire Redman, Deputy Headteacher and Staff Governor, showed the targets for 2021-22 on screen. The targets reflected the learning lost due to Covid, the impact of which was particularly marked in Writing, which was less easily taught remotely than Reading and Maths. Writing would be a key area of focus, but the time lost due to Covid was significant.

The EHT noted that the Year 5 cohort was strong, which augured well for their Year 6 outcomes in 2023. The targets for Year 6 did not yet include a target for combined Reading, Writing and Maths: this would be reported to the next meeting, with information about the targeted interventions to support pupils.

Governors were interested in the differences between the various cohorts. They noted that the current Year 6 cohort was one that the GB and SLT had been monitoring throughout its time in school. **At the request of governors**, the EHT undertook to provide a summary of the support that had been provided for this cohort to the next meeting of the Link Governors for Quality of Education (09 December 2021).

Asked whether any guidance had been received about Government plans for the 2022 SATs, the EHT said the DfE intended to go ahead with the SATs and use them to determine how much attainment had been affected by Covid. Governors understood the reasoning, but were concerned that this might be to the detriment of the 2022 Year 6 cohort nationally.

The GB noted that the outcome of the assessments to be conducted over the next fortnight would be brought to the next meeting, with a plan of interventions and a breakdown of combined Reading, Writing and Maths.

The Governing Body approved the targets shown on screen.

EHT

22/21 Feedback from Governing Body staff wellbeing survey

The EHT said that he had provided a list of staff school e-mail addresses to the Vice Chair so that she could send the survey to them. Further discussion was deferred to the next meeting in light of the Vice Chair's absence.

23/21 Review policies and other key documents

Paper: Staffing policy handbook

a) Child Protection policy

- ***The Governing Body unanimously approved*** the Child Protection policy

b) Safeguarding policy –

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Safeguarding policy

The EHT said that the Child Protection and Safeguarding suite of policies would be collected into a Safeguarding Policy Handbook and posted on the school website.

c) Staff Policy Handbook (including review of the policies themselves)

The EHT reminded governors that most staffing policies were provided by PACT HR the school's HR advisory service.

- **The Governing Body unanimously approved** the Staffing policy handbook and the policies therein.

Governing Body business**24/21 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021**

All Governors present confirmed that they had read and understood *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* (KCSiE).

The Governing Body asked that, as a matter of urgency, absent governors e-mail the Head of School, or come into school to sign, to confirm that they had read and understood KCSiE.

E Wainwright
S Mills

25/21 Agree arrangements for 360° review of Chair's performance

Item deferred in the absence of the Vice Chair, who was leading.

26/21 Consider appointment of Link Governors for each of the four Faculties

The HoS said that the faculties would be launched at a staff meeting in the new year. **Asked** whether the coverage of the faculties had been determined, he said that it had been discussed, but not finalised. He would advise governors by the end of the autumn term of the coverage and content of the faculties, and give an indication of the governor involvement that they school would find helpful, so that governors could consider which faculties they would like to "adopt" at the next meeting.

HoS
All

Closing items**27/21 Other business referred from Item 05/21 above**

Papers:

- e-mail exchange with Robbie Moore MP
- Letter of 15 November 2021: Baroness Barran, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education, to Robbie Moore MP re School Rebuilding Programme

The HoS was pleased to inform governors that fundraising for the trip to Chester Zoo had raised £5,073 – an incredible sum and a reflection of the supportive nature of the Steeton community. Generous donations had been received from Bridge House, the Parish Council, the local pub and others. The Governing Body was astonished by the scale of the sum raised – this was Your Inspirational Community in action. It asked that the school thank parents and other donors by means of the school Newsletter and individual letters to organisation. The HoS said that the school would ask pupils to write the letters, and arrange for appropriate media coverage.

HoS

Signed: _____ Date: _____

28/21 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held virtually at **6.15pm** on **Thursday 17 February 2022**.

29/21 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 7.05pm.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm