



Minutes of Governing Board (GB) Meeting 42

Held on Thursday 4th March 2021 Virtually (via Teams)

Present:

Governor Category	Name	Additional Information	End of Term
Ex-officio	Matthew White (MW)	Headteacher	Ex-officio
St Mary's Hampton PCC nominee (7)	Kel (Michele) Razza (KR) Revd. Ben Lovell (BL) Hilary Hart (HH) Andrew Parish (AP) Timothy Stephens (TS)	Vicar, St Mary's Hampton Church; Chair of Governors Chair, Resources Committee	11 March 2022 Ex-officio 1 April 2024 31 March 2022 25 Nov 2024
Parents (2)	Robert Hodges (RH) Benjamin Opoku (BO)	Vice Chair of Governors; Vice Chair, Resources	26 Nov 2021 8 Nov 2024
LDBS	Nick Woods (NW)	Vice Chair, Teaching & Learning Committee	24 Feb 2024
Co-opted (Up to 3)	Paul Adams (PA) Sophie Tait (ST) Jennifer Walker (JW)	Chair, Personnel & Pastoral Committee Chair, Teaching & Learning Committee	10 July 2023 10 July 2023 6 Sept 2021
Staff (1)	Alana Rowlandson (AR)	Year 6 Teacher	22 Nov 2024

Also attended: Clare Struthers (CS, Clerk)

Graham Willett (GW facilitated strategic vision planning event)

Minute	Discussion & Decisions
455	BL welcomed everyone to the meeting at 7.35 pm and followed with prayer.
456	BL said that no apologies for absence had been RECEIVED; Julie Booth (School Business Manager) had been EXCUSED from attending the meeting and KR had advised that he would join the meeting late, due to an alternative commitment.
457	Declarations of Interest: Governors CONFIRMED there were none relevant to the matters for discussion.
458a	Previous meeting held on 26th November 2020 Minutes of the previous meeting Decision: All governors present at the November 2020 meeting AGREED, by a show of hands vote, that the minutes were a TRUE and ACCURATE record of that meeting.
458b	(MA 446k) 2019-20 Annual Report: BL said that this had been published on the school website within the required timeline.
459	AOB: None raised.
	Governance
460a	(MA 446b.3) Committee Membership: BL said that AP had volunteered to join Personnel & Pastoral committee for the remainder of the academic year. Decision: Governors UNANIMOUSLY AGREED the committee membership for the remainder of the 2020-21 academic year, by a show of hands vote.

460b	<p>2020-21 School Development Plan</p> <p>MW said that the timescales for the spring and summer termly milestones had been updated to reflect the impact of the latest partial school closure (January to 7 March 2021). MW welcomed governors to email questions.</p> <p>A governor asked about the school's plans for the parent forum, as this had not been included in the SDP.</p> <p>MW said that the Personnel & Pastoral committee would consider this.</p>
461	BL welcomed GW to the meeting at 7.40pm.
462	<p>Preparations to Re-open School to All Children on Monday 8 March 2021</p> <p>MW said that minimal changes to the COVID Risk Assessment had been necessary for the re-opening (all of which were explained in the letter to parents, also circulated to governors).</p> <p>BL THANKED MW for keeping the COVID risk assessment under regular review.</p> <p>Governors AGREED that the contents were SUFFICIENTLY THOROUGH and ROBUST.</p> <p>A governor suggested that with the roadmap out of lockdown having been published, it would be helpful for 'to-be-actioned-by dates' to be added to the risk assessment.</p> <p>MW AGREED.</p> <p>ACTION MW: COVID RA – 'to-be-actioned-by' dates – 25 March FGB</p> <p>A governor asked about the feedback from parents on the re-opening plans.</p> <p>MW said that it had been possible to answer all of the queries by reiterating the plans outlined in the letter (mentioned above).</p>
	School's Finances
463	<p>September 2020 – 31 January 2021 Expenditure Report</p> <p>The February 2021 Resources committee minutes had been circulated to the board (with specific reference to minutes 560a-d) to advise governors of the committee's monitoring of the school's finances.</p> <p>BL said that in summary the school's budget would be in deficit at the end of the academic year, due to three points: COVID-related costs, the school's staffing structure, which was unsustainable in the future, and a significant let (the farmer's weekly market) that had not been successfully trialled during summer 2020.</p> <p>As Chair of Resources committee, AP said that the school was drafting its response to the structural challenge, the outcome of which would be presented to the board at the appropriate time.</p> <p>All members of the board AGREED having CONSIDERED the referenced minutes of the February Resources Committee minutes and the accompanying finance reports.</p>
	Audit Committee
464	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>AP said that in line with the recommendation of William Giles' external audit, review dates for the risks monitored by the Resources Committee had been added, and asked ST (Personnel & Pastoral committee chair) and JW (Teaching & Learning committee chair) to ensure review dates were added at the next committee meetings.</p>


	BL THANKED governors for their work on the Risk Register, which was now a much more dynamic document.
465	<p>Governors' spring term meeting dates:</p> <p>T&L: Thursday 11 March at 4pm</p> <p>Resources: Thursday 18 March at 9am</p> <p>Thursday 25 March – AGM at 7.15 pm & FGB at 7.30 pm</p>
	Strategic Development led by Graham Willett
466	<p>GW opened by explaining that his entire working career had been in education with his current role as the founding director of Scholis, an independent educational consultancy. GW said that he was also a governor at South Thames Colleges Group and the Chair of the Kingston Educational Trust (KET); GW said that he had been involved in KET project since the inception of the idea to start a new school. GW said that this presentation was based on both DfE guidance and his governance experience.</p> <p>GW said that both the DfE's Governance Handbook and NGA's 'Being Strategic, A Guide for Governing Boards and School Leaders' were useful references. GW said of the board's three core functions, the focus for the presentation was 'ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction'. GW noted the board's reference to communicating with stakeholders (pupils, staff, parents and the wider community) on the school's website, which was in line with the NGA's campaign for this to be a fourth core function of all governing boards.</p> <p>GW said that of the six key features of effective governance outlined in the Governance Handbook, 'strategic leadership sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy' was relevant to the discussion. GW said that effective strategic development required a clear understanding of the relationship between the mission, values, vision and strategy.</p> <p>GW said that without a single, coherent set of articulated and shared values for the trust, the board and the school's leaders would implicitly assume that everyone held the same values, although these were likely to differ, even if only subtly. GW challenged governors to think about the extent to which governors were certain that they had a common understanding of the mission and values.</p> <p>Governors AGREED that without a stated mission statement and set of written core values, there were differences in their understanding and therefore it was important for their assumptions to be discussed and differences ironed out.</p> <p>GW said that without a written mission statement and set of core values, it was 'normal' for there to be a subtle difference between governors' understanding of these two constructs.</p>
467	GW said an important distinction was that between the trust and the school, two distinct entities; the trust was the legal entity, governors were trustees of the trust that discharged the responsibility for operating the school to the executive leader. GW said that as trustees governors had a responsibility to the trust that was slightly different to their responsibility to the school.
468	<p>Mission should be a brief, powerful, written declaration of an organisation's core, legal purpose that usually remains unchanged over time. Mission answers 'why', i.e. the school's reason for existing.</p> <p>GW said that the mission statement should answer: '<i>why does St Mary's Hampton school exist?</i>'</p>

	<p>MW said that this was to provide the very best, well-rounded educational experience for every child, which was summarised in the statement, '<i>learning, belonging and growing together, in mind, body and spirit, with Jesus by our side</i>'.</p> <p>A governor suggested that it was the GB's role to support and guide the senior leadership team in operationalising the GB's mission, which was marginally different to that expressed by the school.</p> <p>A governor suggested that the GB's mission was to monitor from a governance perspective the achievement of the mission and ensure the school achieves its legal obligations.</p> <p>GW said that importantly governors acted as one voice, which provided collective strength in fulfilling their 'critical friend' (support and scrutiny) duties.</p>
469a	<p>Values are the anchor point for everything that the board aims to achieve and should guide and inform everything the board does and decides. The values should therefore be at the core of all actions, a reference point for all decisions; in this way, the school's values should underpin the culture, strategy, policies and procedures throughout the trust. Values both encompass the Nolan principles and should be unique to the trust. Values must be communicated and understood by everyone in the school's community; the values must be meaningful, discussed and lived. The trust's values should guide the 'how'.</p> <p>GW reiterated the importance of having a single, coherent set of articulated and shared values for the trust, understood by all stakeholders and with which all of the board's decisions should be consistent. GW said that this set of values crystallised the board's collective beliefs and naturally changed/evolved slowly over time. GW said that having a set of articulated and shared values would mitigate against variability between members of the board.</p> <p>A governor said that a useful reflection was to think about how it would feel to be an employee of the school. This governor said that the board's aim should be for articulated values to encourage the senior leadership team to flourish which in turn would allow the children to flourish.</p>
	<i>KR joined the meeting at 8.12pm</i>
469b	<p>GW explained his experience from having been involved with the Kingston Education Trust (KET, a single academy trust, free school) since the proposal stage through to the current day (i.e. now a full school). GW said that having established the school, the trust board developed a set of five Values and Principles, each of which was supported by three statements explaining the way in which the values could be realised. GW said that the KET trust board tested itself against these Values and Principles periodically to determine whether they were being successfully implemented.</p>
470	<p>Vision – your vision should be based on your shared values; ambitious but achievable; open to new opportunities; descriptive of what your young people will have achieved in the broadest way – in terms of attainment, progress, experience and being prepared for the next stage of their education; reflective of the views of pupils, parents and staff; communicated to the school community. The vision outlines what the trust/school will look like in five years from now; it answers the 'what'.</p> <p>GW said that the mission statement should articulate milestones and dates.</p>

	<p>A governor said that the school's statement, <i>'learning, belonging and growing together, in mind, body and spirit, with Jesus by our side'</i>, was both a mission statement and incorporated some of the trust's values.</p> <p>A governor said that in the early years of the trust, the vision had been to successfully establish the school through to being full (i.e. Year 6 in place). The success had been defined by admissions (there had been limited vacancies across year groups throughout the school's growth) and the outcome of the OFSTED (good, May 2019) and SIAMS (outstanding, April 2017) inspections.</p> <p>A governor suggested that the school was progressing through development stages and had gone from being an 'infant' school (not all year groups in place) to now being an 'adolescent' school and that the vision should evolve in line with this development.</p> <p>GW stressed the importance of having a clearly articulated vision, as this outlined the desired direction of travel, and should frame the board's response to external events. GW said that the vision should clearly stem from the trust's mission.</p> <p>GW stressed the importance of the relationship between the trust's mission, values, vision and strategy being evident from their content, with there being a clear connection between each. GW reiterated the different timescales for each of the four elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mission was permanent. • The values were timeless • The vision should evolve, as it should reflect the environment in which the trust operates • The strategy was a dynamic statement that should incorporate learning from the past and therefore should involve reflection in its formation.
471	<p>GW introduced the concept of the 'Trust Dividend'.</p> <p>GW advised governors of the Confederation of School Trusts, which was <i>'the national organisation and sector body for school trusts in England advocating for, connecting and supporting executive and governance leaders'</i>. GW encouraged the board to consider membership for the trust – a voice for academy trusts.</p> <p>GW said that he had recently attended a masterclass presented by Sir David Carter (former National Schools Commissioner) on the Trust Dividend, which refers to the additional benefits brought about by deep and purposeful collaboration within a trust. Sir David says that, <i>"Parents need to feel that something special is occurring because the school is in an academy trust. Leaders need to make sure they are constantly communicating the benefits: improved standards, respected teachers who stay longer, improvements in resources, inter-school competitions."</i></p> <p>GW said that governors should be able to articulate 'what it means for people to be engaged in the trust', i.e. the provision for employees of the trust and the service provided to children and parents. For example, the trust teacher might entitled to be safe at work, while the children are entitled to be safe in school.</p> <p>GW said that public money was assigned to a trust to provide a service and the trust board existed to manage that delivery from a governance perspective. GW said that articulating the trust dividend meant outlining the expected level of service for the different groups of people engaging with the trust.</p>

	<p>GW said that a worthwhile exercise in crystallising the school vision was for the board to collectively agree their response to the slogan: <i>'by the time our pupils leave us they will ...'</i>.</p> <p>A governor said that a set of corporate statements would be hard to measure and would not be directly relevant to those to whom the trust was providing a service and therefore asked how to make the vision statement more directly relevant.</p> <p>GW said that by focussing on the trust's wishes for the children in receipt of the service, this would ensure the vision was practical and relevant.</p> <p>GW stressed the importance of governors remaining strategic and not straying into operational matters when setting the vision.</p>
472	<p>Strategy: the trust's approach to planning in pursuit of their vision, which answers the 'how'. The trust's planning cycles should use the vision as the starting point. All developments should be the product of the values-driven vision for fulfilling the mission and informing planning for action.</p> <p>GW said that key points for consideration regarding strategy were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is it set? • What determines your strategy? • How is it monitored and reviewed? • How do you judge success? <p>GW said that these were partly answered by Sir David Carter's statement: 'It starts with strategy – owned by the board and delivered by the Executive', therefore the strategy was set by the trust board and discharged by the school.</p> <p>A governor pointed out the importance of the board asking the right questions to know the school was delivering on the strategy, in order to demonstrate its accountability function.</p>
473	<p>GW said that the mission and values were timeless and, both owned and supported by all stakeholders. GW said that the values must be EXPLICIT and should underpin the culture, strategy, policies and procedures.</p> <p>GW said that the vision was a medium-term goal setting out the trust's aims, which intermittently required updating.</p> <p>GW said that the strategy outlined how the trust planned to achieve the vision.</p>
474	<p>Creating a Strategic Plan</p> <p>GW said that the three to five year vision was the starting point and the strategy should outline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A measurable improvement priority for each part of the vision (limit of six) 2. The appropriate timeframe for each priority (termly/annual/biannual) 3. The success measures for each improvement priority 4. The way in which the GB would monitor the school's progress with delivering on the strategy.

	<p>GW said that to achieve stakeholder buy-in, there should be stakeholder involvement, staff and children.</p> <p>GW said that the strategy should be as succinct as possible.</p> <p>GW said that the strategy should detail the resource implications and requirements.</p> <p>GW said that with the trust established, delivering on the strategy should be the focus of the headteacher's and the senior leadership team's work. GW said that the headteacher should give regular updates to the board on progress towards its delivery for the purposes of scrutiny and oversight.</p>
475	<p>Keep the Strategy under Review</p> <p>GW said that the board should ask itself important questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is our vision still the right one? Does it look forward three to five years? Does our vision include statements about the children's achievements when they leave the school? - Has the board agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving the vision? Does this strategy include measures against which the board can regularly monitor and review progress? - Does our governance structure, activities and agenda setting effectively support the monitoring of the strategy? - Has our trust behaved in ways consistent with our values? <p>GW said that the board was dependent upon the quality of the information provided by the headteacher and stressed the importance of governors asking the right questions in order to be able to gain a true understanding of the performance of the trust.</p>
476	<p>Self-Review</p> <p>GW said that it was good practice for governing boards to regularly evaluate its impact by for example using the 'Twenty-one Questions Every Board should Ask Itself' (published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Education, Governance and Leadership).</p>
477	<p>Setting the Vision, Values and Strategy</p> <p>GW noted the importance of governors recognising that the trust was operating in a constantly changing environment and therefore the board must be content that there would always be elements that were not quite right for the current circumstances.</p> <p>RH said that the board must challenge itself to spend time developing the vision, values and strategy, as they should form the basis and reference for all of their decisions and focus.</p> <p>GW said that while it might feel extravagant to devote precious time to this, it would definitely be time well spent. GW said that with these articulated, any future challenges would be easier to deal with, as the articulated values provided a framework for the decision-making.</p> <p>GW referred governors to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education (refer to NGA website for detail), which could also provide a steer for decision-making.</p> <p>In reply to a governor, GW said that from his experience, the development of the vision, values and strategy was an organic process and was achieved by having a day of reflection setting in the summer term each year.</p>

	Governors THANKED GW for having challenged their thinking and prompted the debate.
	GW left the meeting at 9.26 pm
478	<p>BL said that himself RH and MW would consider the next steps for the forthcoming FGB meetings and welcomed any other governors that would like to be part of the 'strategy development' group.</p> <p>BL said that the focus of the FGB meetings for the remainder of the academic year would be the development of the vision, values and strategy and therefore committees must fully consider governance business.</p>
479	BL closed the meeting at 9.29 pm
	<p>The board formally AGREED these minutes to be a TRUE and ACCURATE record at their next meeting on 25th March 2021.</p> <p>Signed by the Chair </p>