

'Living life to the full'
John 10:10



Tas Valley Church Schools Federation

Preston CE VC Primary and Saxlingham Nethergate CE VC Primary

Full Governing Board Meeting

Monday 16 October 2023 at 5pm, Preston CE VC Primary School

Minutes

Present:

Diane Perry-Yates DPY (Chair of Governors)
Matthew Walker MW (Executive Headteacher)
Katie-Rose Lightfoot KRL
Rebecca Orford RO
Fiona Webb FW
Claire Smith CS
Will Defoe WD
Anne Fry AF

Apologies:

Claire Crawshay CC
Lesley Allgood LA
Daisy Sutcliffe DS

In Attendance:

Christopher Perry-Yates CPY (Governance Professional)

Item No.	Item and discussion	Owner	Target Date
1.	<p>Register of attendance and apologies:</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Daisy Sutcliffe, Lesley Allgood and Claire Crawshay. All other governors were in attendance and agreed to accept the apologies offered.</p> <p>The Governance Professional advised that the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors advised that contact would be made with Daisy Sutcliffe to ascertain if she would be able to remain as a governor.</p> <p>Governors passed on their best wishes to Lesley Allgood. It was agreed to send a bouquet of flowers on behalf of governors.</p>		
2.	<p>Declarations of pecuniary interests:</p> <p>There were no new pecuniary interests declared.</p>		
3.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting on 18 September 2023:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 18 September 2023 were reviewed and approved as an accurate reflection. The minutes were digitally signed by the Chair.</p>		

4.	<p>Matters arising:</p> <p>The action list from the previous meeting was reviewed.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that staff had been consulted about the idea of having an Ofsted banner stating that Saxlingham had been graded as 'Good'. It was noted that there were mixed feelings amongst staff. It was agreed that this would be discussed by the Marketing Working Party.</p> <p>ACTION: Chair of Governors and Executive Headteacher to raise the idea of having a banner at Saxlingham CEVC Primary at the Marketing Working Party meeting.</p> <p>All other actions were noted as completed.</p>	DPY, MW	01/11/23
5.	<p>Items for discussion under Any Other Business:</p> <p>There were no items declared for discussion under AOB.</p>		
6.	<p>Executive Headteacher's report:</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the headteacher's report. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher highlighted the changes since the report had been submitted. It was explained that there had been some movement the pupil rolls with one child moving from the school and 3 children joining the schools. There were also some children who may be moving from Preston to Saxlingham. Other children were due to join the Federation in January 2024. Current Number on Roll (NOR) at each school was 129 children at Preston and 69 at Saxlingham.</p> <p>Q (RO): What was the reason for the move from Preston to Saxlingham?</p> <p>A: This was a decision based on what would be better for the child and their needs.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Saxlingham shows 9 children in Reception. Does that mean that we have lost one recently? If so, what is the reason and what impact will this have on the budget in Years 2 and 3 and class organisation, considering we had low numbers in Reception last year?</p> <p>A: One child has transferred to Hempnall as they live in Hempnall. This child has now been removed from the budget. At this stage, there would be no impact on class organisation. This departure has been offset by 3 new pupils at Preston.</p> <p>Q(DPY): SEND at Saxlingham shows 21.5% which is above national average and equates to 14 children. Are there any particular classes under pressure?</p>		

A: SEND pupils are distributed fairly evenly across the 3 classes. None are particularly under pressure. Where challenging behaviour has been identified, referrals have been made to external agencies for support, and this is proving useful.

Governors noted excellent attendance figures at Preston, this included Pupil Premium and SEND children.

Q(DPY): At Saxlingham Owls appear to be suffering mainly with reference to boys; is there a particular reason? Are families being supported to improve attendance?

A: Saxlingham Owls – 1 boy under Medical Needs Team attends AP (Alternative Provision) 2 days a week; a second Y6 boy has an ongoing medical issue affecting attendance. Both children and families are receiving appropriate support.

The Executive Headteacher highlighted that there were 15 children in Owls and each child accounted for a large percentage. It was agreed that removing those two children from the data would provide a more accurate reflection of overall attendance. There was no fundamental issue in Owls class; these children had always had poor attendance since joining the school due to their illness / medical needs. It was noted that both schools' attendance was above the National Average of 94.8%.

Q (RO): There are 3 children with less than 85% attendance in Year 6 at Preston; what is the reason?

A: Two of these had been removed for holidays. They had not had poor absence before. Another child's absence was due to family issues. They are low concern as they had not been persistent absentees before.

Q(DPY): I noted that staff are developing opportunities for spirituality across the entire curriculum, which is very much in line with SIAMS. What will this look like and how will the children flourish as a result?

A: Initially this is to do with articulating what spirituality looks like within the curriculum area and an awareness of what those opportunities for spirituality might entail. Moving forward, we will look to plan for progression within the curriculum in terms of spirituality.

Q(DPY): Behaviour and values - can you update governors on MW / JF meeting with Revd Austin regarding SIAMS?

A: This was a general conversation to make Rev Austin aware that we are in the SIAMS window and to give him a flavour of the focus of the inspection and how he can support us. He is aware that he might be asked to speak with the inspector and is very keen and willing to talk about the partnership between school and church.

The governing board commended the newly sign written minibus and agreed that it would underpin the marketing strategy.

Q (AF): At Preston - do we have reasons why the intake compared to PAN is low this year?

A: This is an issue beyond our villages; it affects the whole county. Other schools are in a similar position. On the positive, we have had a very good response at both schools to our Open Days, which were very busy and well attended. We are planning to repeat this offer after half term.

Q (AF): SEND at Saxlingham: do we have the resources/staffing and training needed to support 14 children on SEND register?

A: SEND pupils are distributed fairly evenly across the 3 classes. None are particularly under pressure. Where challenging behaviour has been identified, referrals have been made to external agencies for support, and this is proving useful.

We may need to increase staffing in the short term for a child in Reception. However, we are awaiting confirmation of funding, and, in the mid-term, we have pupils with EHCP leaving the schools in Summer 2024 and Summer 2025.

The SENDCo is doing a fantastic job within her new role, managing the caseload very effectively. Ofsted were very complimentary about the impact she has already had.

Q (AF): Could you comment on low attendance for SEND children and PP children at Saxlingham (Owls)?

A: See the answer above.

Q (AF): Behaviour and Values: is Saxlingham involved with the local church e.g. for Harvest festival (as Preston is)? Are there more ways Saxlingham could be involved with the local church?

A: Saxlingham hosted its Harvest in church on 13 October. As at Preston, Open the Book visit weekly and Rev Dawn at least half termly. The church provides Bibles for new Reception children and leavers in Year 6.

A: We visit the church to support the wider curriculum (e.g., history, art and RE) as well as for festivals – Easter and Christmas. We also engage in community events (Flower Festival and Christmas Tree Festival at Saxlingham and Christmas Card and Food Bank collection at Preston, etc.). Further information is within the SIAMS SEF.

Q (AF): The Reading for Pleasure guidance looks inspiring. How do we/ or can we measure or assess reading for pleasure - do the children read for pleasure?

A: Probably the best way to measure this is through Pupil Voice; it could be a focus for governor monitoring, but this is something that the English and Early Reading Leads have undertaken and was definitely a focus for Ofsted when they visited Saxlingham and spoke with children.

Things in place would include:

- Parents Meetings to introduce phonics and to support them to read with their child.
- Weekly Reading Cafes.
- Engaging with Authors (often virtually).
- Power of Reading English.
- World Book Day.
- Library access is currently being improved in both schools.
- Promotion of Library activities (Summer Reading Challenge).
- Reading by class teachers (class readers).
- FOSS and FOPPS supporting development of engaging reading corners within the classrooms.

Q(DPY): What DSL cover do you have in place during the long-term sickness absence?

A: There are a number of TA doing additional hours to ensure that the class has enough TA time to support the teacher effectively. As DSLs we continue to meet weekly and there are no concerns.

It was noted that there had been one prejudice related incident which had been dealt with and parents were working with the school.

The Executive Headteacher advised that a phonics audit had taken place at Preston and the school had been commended for its organisation and awarded matched funding of £3,000. It was hoped that Saxlingham would receive a similar report.

Q (AF): How would the matched funding be spent?

A: This would be used for phonics resources.

Governors recorded thanks to the SLT and phonics teams for their work on phonics.

Q (RO): Do you have a plan to address the recommendations from the phonics report?

A: Yes. Some of the things that were not in place it was conceded were practically difficult for us to do.

	<p>Q (RO): Do the Wensum Hub offer any follow-up support?</p> <p>A: They provide two levels of support and they advised that we do not need the higher-level support, but there will be some staff CPD provision.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised governors that the Federation had submitted INDES (Identification of Needs Descriptors in Educational Settings). In the first few weeks the Federation had submitted INDES for every child on the SEND register and there were some that it was expected the school would receive funding for. A provision map had been created for all SEND children. Governors commended the staff for the additional work that had been created to complete the INDES forms. It was highlighted that there were three children in Reception across both schools with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan). It was noted that there may be the need for staffing support for at least one child.</p> <p>Q (CS): How will we afford additional adult support?</p> <p>A: We will get some funding which may be on a short-term contract until summer once other children receiving adult support left the school and support staff could be redeployed.</p>		
<p>7.</p>	<p>Safeguarding report:</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the safeguarding report section of the Executive Headteacher report. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Is safeguarding effective at both schools and how do you know?</p> <p>A: Yes. There are 2 DSL at both sites as well as the Executive Headteacher. The Head of School at Preston has undertaken Single Central Record training. The DSL meetings are useful to share caseloads and also helps with wellbeing to discuss situations with others.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Do you have separate DSL meetings or meet together as a Federation?</p> <p>A: As a Federation which we feel gives more strength.</p> <p>It was agreed that a member of the governing board should cover the safeguarding link role during the absence of LA.</p> <p>ACTION: Chair of Governors to set a meeting to monitor safeguarding.</p>	<p>DPY</p>	<p>30/11/23</p>

8.	<p>Resources reports:</p> <p>Budget update</p> <p>The governing board reviewed a draft of Budget Revision 2 (BR2). A copy of this was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that the biggest change to the budget was the revenue from SEND funding. The governing board was advised that any changes were being highlighted as they were identified.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Income - Revenue has increased by £26,970 due mainly to additional SEND funding. With the requirements of SEND children, can you confirm that this money is ring-fenced and will be shown as part of additional expenditure?</p> <p>A: Much of this funding will cover staffing costs to deliver interventions and provide 1:1 or small group support. We have had to put staffing in place before funding has been confirmed. For 1 child at Saxlingham, this also covered Alternative Provision.</p> <p>The money is not ring-fenced as such but is used towards SEND costs. We have had to submit a costed provision map to the LA for both schools which supports the allocation of funding.</p> <p>Q(DPY): In Line I01 is the additional £5,576 revenue down to timing?</p> <p>A: This credit was due to overpayment of rates (£4,948 Saxlingham and £628 Preston).</p> <p>Q(DPY): Expenditure - There is an additional spend of £7,645 relating to cleaning (E14), although premises staff shows a saving of £7,182 (E04). Will this continue to balance out? How much more expensive will it be to have the contract staff by the end of the financial year? Is this an ongoing situation?</p> <p>A: The additional spend in E14 is for contract cleaning. With the Preston cleaner on maternity, we have a saving in E04. This will continue to balance out until the end of maternity leave. The total cost of the contract is £12,572 for 10 months.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Year 2 and 3 overall show a surplus now, although we are still spending more than we are getting as revenue. How solid is this? I note for example that E02 'Supply' is undervalued in Year 2 and 3; is this realistic? Staff Training (E09) is halved, E19 'Learning Resources' are reduced in Years 2 and 3 and E27 'Bought in Services (Curriculum)' is also reduced in Years 2 and 3. If you add up the reductions shown in Year 3 for example and factor them back in then the surplus disappears.</p> <p>A: E02 - We are currently at 19% spend which is low. At Revision 2, we intend to move £2000 into Year 2024-25 as we are halfway through</p>		
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	<p>the financial year and are underspending.</p> <p>E09 – Staff training lines have been broken down to specific expenditure for individual training events.</p> <p>E19 – is currently a lower figure in future years as we have only put in the residential trips but no other visits. The unallocated balances for FOPPS are also not in for future years (to be discussed with Finance Officer at BR2 as this will be done by them).</p> <p>E27 is reduced in future years because we will no longer require Alternative Provision after our Y6 pupil leaves in July 2024.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Is the training coming from different pots or still the same pot?</p> <p>A: In the next years training we budgeted for the SENDCo award which is a one-off cost.</p> <p>It was noted that the budget was based on a full Published Admission Number (PAN) and there was a need to be cautious.</p> <p>Capital Expenditure – iPad, Laptop and smart screen quotes</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the quotes received for iPads, laptops and smart screens. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the capital budget expenditure did not impact on the main school budget. The Executive Headteacher advised that the current technology, both iPads and laptops were inadequate for the needs of both schools especially.</p> <p>The quotes received were for 25 iPads for each school 15 laptops for Preston and 10 at Saxlingham and 1 smart screen for each school.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Will the current scope of the specification future proof the Federation for long enough? Should there be an additional quote for iPad protectors?</p> <p>A: We believe that the scope of the specification will future proof the Federation. We have taken advice from the companies with regard to the 9th and 10th generation iPads and have been advised that there is a considerable additional outlay (see quotes) for the 10th generation, but that this will not lead to significant benefits in terms of capability, speed, or longevity, and the advice given, is that the 9th generation is suitable for our needs.</p> <p>IPad protectors have been included within the most recent JC Comtech quote; we are still hopeful that we might be able to negotiate this as part of the deal, but otherwise, these will need to be purchased, but not necessarily through the capital project.</p>		
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<p>Q(DPY): Currently the scope is for 9th generation iPads when the latest version is 10th generation. Should the Federation be seeking quote for the 10th generation to ensure future proofing because the 9th generation is 20/21 and therefore, we are already 2 years behind.</p> <p>A: We have obtained quotes for 9th and 10th so a comparison can be made.</p> <p>Q(DPY): As a Federation we have a substantial amount of business with ComTech which leaves us very vulnerable to them having a monopoly over our IT infrastructure?</p> <p>A: I understand the concern here; potentially this situation could occur with any IT support provider. All I can say is that, to this date, I have personally been very happy with JC Comtech. Wherever there have been urgent issues, they have responded promptly.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors advised that NS Education had since provided a further £100 discount and a £100 Amazon Gift Card. The Executive Headteacher advised that the feeling was the NS Education would also have the equipment installed and ready sooner than other suppliers.</p> <p>Q (RO): How have we chosen quotes from these specific providers?</p> <p>A: JC Comtech are the current IT suppliers and we have used from recommendations.</p> <p>Q(WD): Have much do we have in the capital budget?</p> <p>A: Over £70k.</p> <p>Q(WD): Are you purchasing enough iPads and Laptops; are you likely to need more in the near future?</p> <p>A: There may be the need for a few additional iPads.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that discussions had been held about long-term equipment renewal plans.</p> <p>Q (FW): Will we be covered for the laptops if the need repairing?</p> <p>A: Yes. This would be through our support contract.</p> <p>Q (RO): In what scenario do you need the laptops?</p> <p>A: The iPads are used for more mobile use and laptops are used for research and art.</p> <p>After debating all options fully it was agreed to purchase the iPads and Laptops from capital expenditure. It was agreed to proceed with the 9th generation iPads and accept the quote from NS Education at a total of up to £40k.</p>		
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	<p>IT WAS RESOLVED that the capital Expenditure for iPads, Laptops, Smart screens, trolleys and accompanying accessories should be awarded to NS Education up to a total cost of £40k. Proposed: DPY Seconded: CS All voted in favour with no abstentions.</p> <p>Summer Term RAG report The governing board reviewed the RAG Report for the summer term. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>It was agreed that the school should arrange a finance health check.</p> <p>ACTION: Executive Headteacher to make arrangements for a finance health check.</p> <p>MI Sheet 173/23 – Thematic Audit (Payroll) The governing board reviewed MI Sheet 173/23. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>Governors noted the responses included by the Executive Headteacher in response to the document. It was agreed that there were no major issues relevant to the schools.</p> <p>Premises Inspection reports The governing board reviewed the Premises Inspection Reports for both schools. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>Governors were advised that there was a low-level concern at the damp at Saxlingham. It was agreed that this should change to become a high priority and a builder should be sourced to review the issue.</p> <p>Premises Development Plan The governing board reviewed the Premises Development Plan. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Do we have an idea of budget / costs? We need to know that this matches up with our premises pot.</p> <p>A: This needs to be finalised and can be put together before the next meeting. Many of the actions are already budgeted for.</p>	MW	30/11/23
9.	<p>School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) outcomes and new priorities:</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the outcomes and updated SIDP. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p>		

	The Executive Headteacher advised that the SIDP would be updated at each FGB meeting.		
10.	<p>SIAMS:</p> <p><i>New SIAMS framework from September 2023</i></p> <p>The Chair of Governors advised that the SIAMS Introduction training had been useful to highlight the new style of inspection.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Has a meeting been held with the incumbent at Saxlingham to discuss SIAMS and the support the school needed?</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q(DPY): Is there a governor input into the SIAMS SEF? The need to include governors voice within the SEF was mentioned in the SIAMS training?</p> <p>A: As governors you should look at what governors should do and feedback anything that could be updated.</p> <p>ACTION: Governors to review the SIAMS SEF to ensure it reflected what the governors do and feed back to the Executive Headteacher.</p> <p>It was noted that the training had reinforced that the governing board had made the right decision to revisit the vision and values to ensure that they reflected the Federation.</p> <p>The Executive Headteacher advised that Chris Allen and the DSSO had been pleased with the SIAMS SEF.</p>	All	30/11/23
11.	<p>Pupil survey results:</p> <p>It was agreed that this had been covered at the previous meeting.</p>		
12.	<p>Governor CPD:</p> <p>DPY and AF advised that they had attended SIAMS Framework training.</p> <p>DPY advised that she had attended the Racial Justice Working Group.</p>		
13.	<p>Governor monitoring:</p> <p>The governing board reviewed the draft monitoring plan. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes.</p> <p>The monitoring plan was agreed.</p>		
14.	<p>Governing board correspondence:</p> <p>There had been no correspondence received since the previous meeting.</p>		

15.	<p>Policy review:</p> <p>The following policies were reviewed and approved:</p> <p>a) Pay Policy The policy was reviewed. It was noted that B5.6 needed updating to ensure that it reflected the additional payments to be based on the actual salary.</p> <p style="color: red;">Q(WD): Have the leadership pay ranges changed?</p> <p style="color: red;">A: No. All options selected are based on last year.</p> <p>b) RE Policy The policy was reviewed. There were no questions.</p> <p>c) English Policy The policy was reviewed. There were no questions.</p> <p>d) First Aid Policy The policy was reviewed. It was agreed to remove the reference to the first aid room being large enough for a medical couch. It was agreed to find a space in a location known to staff for the display of the policy.</p> <p style="color: red;">Q (CS): Paragraph 12.2 refers to guidelines issued to staff?</p> <p style="color: red;">A: The reference to guidelines will be removed.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED that the above policies should be adopted subject to the changes agreed. Proposed: DPY Seconded: CS All voted in favour with no abstentions.</p>		
16.	<p>Any other business:</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>		
17.	<p>Items deemed confidential:</p> <p>There were no items deemed confidential.</p>		
18.	<p>Reflection: how have discussions today helped the children and school to live life in all its fullness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that IT equipment would be purchased to support their learning and helping the children to flourish. • Scrutinising the budget to ensure that the school is sound. • Ensuring that a monitoring schedule was in place showing strong collaboration between staff and governors. 		

19.	Date of next meeting:		
	11 December 2023 at 6.30pm via Microsoft Teams		

Meeting closed at 7pm

Actions:

Item No.	Action Description	Owner	Target Date
4	Raise the idea of having a banner at Saxlingham CEVC Primary at the Marketing Working Party meeting.	DPY, MW	01/11/23
7	Chair of Governors to set a meeting to monitor safeguarding.	DPY	30/11/23
8b	Make arrangements for a finance health check.	MW	30/11/23
10	Governors to review the SIAMS SEF to ensure it reflected what the governors do and feed back to the Executive Headteacher.	All	30/11/23