



RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD
1 December 2020 3.45PM**

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| Present: | Kim Wilmer | Headteacher (HT) |
| | Dave Brockman (Chair) | Co-opted Governor |
| | Peter Aldous | Co-opted Governor |
| | Tracey Wilson | Co-opted Governor |
| | Simon Carter | Parent Governor |
| | Matt Pyrke | Parent Governor |
| | Helen Robson | Staff Governor |
| | Michael Sullivan-Stanley | Staff Governor |
| In attendance: | Nichol Gordon | School Business Manager |
| | Laura Bunting | Clerk |

| Item | Main discussions and agreed actions | Action by |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Welcome and apologies: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Due notice had been given and the meeting was quorate. Apologies had been received from D Clarkson (work commitments) and were accepted by Governors. S Decker (CEO) also could not attend due to a dental appointment.</p> <p>Governors agreed to the meeting being recorded for the purpose of typing the minutes, to be deleted once approved.</p> | |
| 2 | Declaration of business interests | |
| | 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest. | |
| 3 | Notification of AOB | |
| | 4.1 There were some updates from the HT. | |
| 4 | Minutes of the previous meeting | |
| | 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting on 29 September 2020 were agreed. The Chair would sign these electronically on GovernorHub. | |
| 5. | Matters arising not covered by this agenda (update on actions) | |
| | 5.1 An actions log was circulated with the agenda and it was noted that most actions were complete. The following updates were given. | |
| | 5.2 19.2 - The Governance Development Plan was on GovernorHub and would be reviewed in advance of the Governor Day. | Postpone until Governor Day |
| | 5.3 19.3 - The Chair confirmed he had spoken with D Clarkson | Complete |
| 6 | Governor membership updates | |
| | 6.1 The Chair highlighted there was still a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor and it was hoped someone could be found with HR/Finance skills. | |
| | 6.2 It was noted since J Bell had left there was a vacancy for E-Safety and Training Governor. It was agreed S Carter would take on the role of E-Safety Governor and D Brockman the role of Training Governor. Action: Clerk to update GovernorHub and Website to reflect the new roles. | Clerk |



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| | | | |
|----------|---|--|--|
| 7 | Trust Update | | |
| | 7.1 | As the CEO wasn't present the Clerk outlined the CEO update given at the Twydall IAB meeting for Governors: | |
| | 7.2 | A letter would be sent out to all parents and staff across the Trust to update them on the current situation (Governors had now received a draft of this). The CEO had noted all that Headteachers and staff were doing in difficult circumstances. | |
| | 7.3 | The HT at RMGS would be retiring at the end of this academic year and a replacement was currently being recruited. The CEO had wished him well in his retirement. C Collyer (Clerk) was also leaving for personal circumstances. She had provided a very professional service and would be missed. Recruitment would begin for this post shortly. | |
| | 7.4 | There had been some changes to guidance on the use of face coverings in schools which effected secondary schools. There would be free school meal hampers provided over Christmas and February half term. A centre would also be set up locally for regular critical worker testing which would hopefully pick up anyone who might be asymptomatic. | |
| | 7.5 | The DfE had been clear any planned school closure would be in breach of the school funding agreement. Although there was a national discussion currently amongst schools regarding closing (and providing online learning) in the last week of term. Provision of remote learning was a legal requirement. | |
| 8 | Clerks Update | | |
| | 8.1 | The Clerk added that the Circle Model Review Group would now meet in term 3 to give more time for monitoring visits to be carried out. | |
| 9 | Income and Expenditure Report (filed on GovernorHub) | | |
| | 9.1 | The SBM informed Governors this hadn't been reviewed for November yet as month end was still being finalised. She added the budget was constantly under review and a £20K deficit for the year was still expected. | |
| | 9.2 | Governors noted the shortfall in breakfast and after school club income and asked if this could not be resolved until after Covid. The SBM confirmed this. The lack of lettings also impacted the budget but compared to many schools Riverside was in a good position. The HT added a lot of schools were going into severe deficit. Riverside had a rollover which covered their planned deficit this year. | |
| | 9.3 | Governors asked what the long-term strategy was. The SBM outlined the school hoped to move forwards with the expansion of the breakfast and after school clubs which would increase income. The school also wanted to protect staffing. Cover was being provided | |



RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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1 December 2020 3.45PM**

| | | | |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| | | internally currently with HLTA's covering classes. She highlighted additional curriculum-based learning where visitors would come into the school couldn't happen currently. The school were unsure whether it would qualify for any additional government funding so were protecting their finances as much as possible. | |
| | 9.4 | Governors asked whether any funds would be provided from the Trust. The SBM explained each school within the Trust managed its own budget. A percentage was contributed to the Trust. The HT added that a financial contribution was received from the Trust based on the percentage contributed. This year there had been funding for maths and reading which, added to catch-up funding, had paid for a teacher to support in KS2. The HT highlighted the budget had been managed well over the past 7 years. Sometimes money was taken from the rollover to pay for additional staffing but this was always carefully managed, working on worst-case scenario. Although she did not like going into an in-year deficit of £20K, the school had a healthy surplus to cover this and it was a conscious decision. | |
| | 9.5 | Governors noted how well the budget was managed and things should improve once things eased in terms of Covid. It was noted, although separate from the budget, other funds which provided resources for the school from FoRPS were helpful and Governors thanked FoRPS for the work they had done raising funds, even during the pandemic. | |
| | 9.5 | Governors discussed it would be useful if they could attend some finance training to help them challenge effectively in this area. This was an idea for Governor Day. It was noted that it would be good to ensure there was no duplicate in terms of what the Trust did when auditing. | |
| 10 | Agree Pay Committee Recommendations for HT Salary | | |
| | 10.1 | <i>See Confidential Minutes</i> <i>Staff Governors and the HT left the meeting and returned at 4.37pm.</i> The Chair informed the HT that the GB had agreed with the salary recommendation made and thanked her for her efforts, especially over the past few months. | |
| 11 | Accounting Officer Checks | | |
| | 11.1 | The SBM confirmed Accounting Officer checks had been completed. | |
| 12 | Premises Update | | |
| | 12.1 | The HT informed Governors the risk assessment in relation to Covid continued to be reviewed, especially with the increase of cases since half term. A second staff room had been set up. She highlighted no | |



RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
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1 December 2020 3.45PM**

| | | | |
|-----------|--|---|-------------------------|
| | | school could be Covid secure but they aimed to keep the school as safe as possible within the guidelines. | |
| | 12.2 | The HT advised they were trying to progress with a CIF bid for work on the flat roofs. This was going to tender at the moment. Expansion of breakfast and after school clubs were on hold. | |
| | 12.3 | Governors asked about progress with work on the car park. The SBM advised Enviro had carried out an assessment of what needed doing which had been given to the LA but things took longer at the current time. Obtaining quotes to improve the path was a priority and the 'bear cave' in the Den had been flattened and made safe. | |
| 13 | Monitoring Visit Reports | | |
| | 13.1 | The Finance monitoring visit report was on GovernorHub and a lot of what had been discussed had been covered under agenda item 9. It was noted spending of sports premium funds had changed this year to more individual activities and swimming was on hold currently. <i>The SBM left the meeting at 5.50pm</i> | |
| 14 | Review Exclusions | | |
| | 14.1 | The HT advised there had been no exclusions this academic year to date. There had been 2 last year affecting 1 child and this had been managed successfully this year. | |
| 15 | Admissions Update | | |
| | 15.1 | The HT advised admissions was continually changing as people moved in and out of the area. There had been an increase in admissions with SEN. This had been discussed in SEN monitoring. | |
| 16 | SEND Report | | |
| | 16.1 | Governors noted there was some overlap with SEND monitoring and this should be looked at when reviewing the circle model to ensure there was no duplication of effort. Action: Chair and Vice-Chair to feedback at Circle Review Group. Challenge of SEND had taken place at the monitoring visit and is covered under item 17. | Chair/Vice-Chair |
| 17 | Monitoring Visit Reports (School Improvement) | | |
| | 17.1 | <u>SEND (report on GovernorHub):</u> The monitoring pair ran through the key findings of their monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of children on the SEN register and with EHCPs was discussed and the implications in terms of the support required. • The benefits of close working relationships with other agencies was noted. • The impact of in-year admissions and the financial impact this could have for the school. | |



RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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1 December 2020 3.45PM**

| | | | |
|--|------|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current priorities and targets for SEND across the school and how these linked to the SIP were discussed. • Support from the speech and language therapist was noted. • Work to identify current learning priorities and children with multiple vulnerabilities was discussed. • It was noted progress and attainment data would be investigated more at the next monitoring. • Creative ways used to maintain parental engagement had been noted. • Attendance rates were higher than national and local figures. • The training and support given by the Inclusion Manager had been noted and the impact this had on students. TA's had also completed online training. • It was noted the Inclusion Manager had a clear view of the needs of the children and staff. • It was noted some children had benefitted from time at home with parents over lockdown. | |
| | 17.2 | <p><u>Quality of Education and Pupil Outcomes (QE & PO) - Report on GovernorHub:</u></p> <p>The monitoring pair highlighted they had been mindful of the context of the school currently due to Covid. The following had been noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been good engagement over lockdown but not as many opportunities to write which had impacted on writing. This had been a focus in Term 1 and a teacher had been appointed to support KS2. There would also be the opportunity to appoint 2 graduates in the Spring to work one-to-one with children. • There was a clear plan for use of catch-up funding • The newsletter and class dojo were used for regular communication. • It was noted monitoring of teaching and learning in the usual way was difficult but it was clear the SLT had a good overview of teaching and learning and were mindful of SIP priorities. • Staff absence had an impact on interventions but the school was being proactive in moving children's learning forwards while considering staff wellbeing. • This meeting had focused on the recovery plan. The next would focus more on progress data. <p>Governors noted the focus at the moment was on key skills but asked what was being done to also maintain a broad and balanced curriculum. The DHT explained teaching was topic led. Alternative</p> | |



RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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1 December 2020 3.45PM**

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | | <p>resources were used instead of visits, English lessons would also incorporate a particular topic. Staff were being creative in their teaching. The HT added she walked around and saw work outside classrooms, eg. models of teeth and magnets. It was noted planning need to be adjusted constantly to meet the needs of classes that may need to isolate. Governors agreed this was testament to the dedication of the staff and from a personal viewpoint some Governors expressed how impressed they had been with online learning and engagement.</p> <p>Governors asked about progress on the SIP. The HT explained she was still working on this and a draft was with the SLT currently. She explained the SLT were normally very strategic but current circumstances meant they had to continually react to situations that arose.</p> | |
| | 17.3 | <p>The Chair noted Quality of Leadership of Management monitoring (including safeguarding) was due next term. He suggested the risk register could be looked at in that monitoring and a review of the website conducted.</p> <p>As PP and QE & PO monitoring had taken place recently and the demands on the school were great currently, it was suggested an update from Kim next term would be more appropriate. The Chair said he had raised this with C Collyer to suggest to the Trust.</p> | |
| | 17.4 | <p>Governors discussed Governor Day which they had planned to hold in January. It was agreed to postpone this. T Wilson offered to hold a session to feedback work she was doing on her Governance programme in relation to reviewing the Governance Improvement Plan.</p> | |
| 18 | Stakeholder engagement | | |
| | 18.1 | <p>It was noted response on Dojo to newsletters was positive and the majority of stakeholder engagement was good.</p> <p>The HT highlighted there had been an increase in private messages on Dojo about minor queries sent over weekends. Due to the current climate, where people may be informing the school of illnesses, these messages were checked and responded to but this was impacting on staff wellbeing. The HT informed Governors she would be telling staff that they are not expected to respond. She will keep a check at the current time but hoped as the Covid situation improves towards the spring and summer she could reduce this too.</p> <p>Governors asked if something could be added to the newsletter to explain to parents they should not expect an immediate</p> | |



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| | | | |
|-----------|---|--|---------------------------|
| | | <p>response. The HT agreed that she planned to address this in January when she would send a reminder to parents of how Dojo should be used.</p> | |
| | 18.2 | <p>The HT highlighted the school had worked hard over the past 7 years to increase parental engagement, which was generally very good. However there had been some parents who blamed the school for Covid cases. She understood this was an anxious time and had written to all parents explaining the school's position. This had led to the CEO writing a letter to all parents and staff across the Trust. The HT noted however that the CEO had referred to schools being Covid secure and this was not possible. Schools tried to minimize risk and be as risk free as possible.</p> <p>Action: The Chair agreed to feed this comment back to the CEO.</p> <p>Governors noted how difficult it was for the school at present and the majority of parents were very supportive of the school. The Chair suggested a Governor newsletter should also be sent to parents thanking them for sending in their children and engaging with home learning when needed. All agreed.</p> <p>Action: Chair to draft Governor Newsletter</p> | <p>Chair</p> <p>Chair</p> |
| 19 | Policies | | |
| | 19.1 | There were no policies to review and no changes to report. | |
| 20 | Risk Registers | | |
| | 20.1 | <p><u>Academic Risk Register (on GovernorHub):</u> Governors queried the amount graded as 4. The HT confirmed this was as a result of Covid. Although there was remote learning provided there were still gaps. There were also issues with younger children settling back into routines upon return to school after a period of isolation.</p> | |
| 21 | Governor Training update and CPD | | |
| | 21.1 | The Chair highlighted some training available through Governance Connected in the new year - Maintaining a Broad and Balanced Curriculum, and Setting the Budget and Sustainable Staffing. He asked the new governors how their induction training was progressing. Both had started accessing training and had booked sessions | |
| 22 | AOB | | |
| | 22.1 | The HT informed Governors Teams was working well and positive feedback had been received. The school had had between 15 and 18 staff off at any one time since half term. This has a massive impact out of a total of 40 staff. The number testing positive had been relatively small but the need to isolate close contacts meant there were a number isolating. The HT hoped lateral testing for critical workers may help. | |



RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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| | | | |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| | 22.2 | The HT informed Governors some school tours had had to be cancelled due to the last lockdown as well as Medway being in Tier 3. She was hoping to arrange a zoom session before the end of term. | |
| | 22.3 | The HT highlighted the increase in PP and FSM children. There were currently approx. 86 children on the disadvantaged list. This showed a lot more families were in crisis. | |
| 23 | Confidentiality | | |
| | 23.1 | There was one confidential item - 10.1. | |
| 24 | Impact of Governance/Governors KPIs | | |
| | 24.1 | The Chair expressed his thanks to all. He noted that Governors needed to be aware not to duplicate work - eg. SEN and finance audits. The need to be reactive at the present time was noted but he hoped the GB and school could become more strategic again next year. | |
| | Date of next meeting: 2 February 2021 | | |
| | The meeting closed at 6pm. | | |

Actions

| Item | Action | By/who |
|-------------|--|------------------|
| 6.2 | Clerk to update GovernorHub and Website to reflect the new roles of E-Safety and Training Governors. | Clerk |
| 16.1 | Chair and Vice-Chair to feedback at Circle Review Group points raised about duplication. | Chair/Vice Chair |
| 18.2 | Chair to feed comment back to the CEO regarding schools not being Covid secure for his letter. | Chair |
| 18.2 | Chair to draft Governor Newsletter | Chair |