

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY (FGB) OF STEEPLE  
MORDEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL  
HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2024 AT 7PM**

**Governors Present:** Ann Lynn (Chair), Jo Daniels (Acting Headteacher), Gabrielle Edwards, George Lynn, Gill McGuire, Helen Ogilvie.

**Also in Attendance:** Jacquie Watts (Clerk), Alex Housden (Headteacher designate).

*The meeting was quorate.*

*(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold)*

Action By:

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Clerk opened the meeting.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> apologies for absence had been received from Vicky Hutter, Debbie Littlefair and Lucy Nightingale (Associate) because of work and family commitments. Gabrielle Edwards and Gill McGuire had apologised in advance for their late arrival. Mark Arnold had resigned as both Chair and as a co-opted governor with immediate effect that morning. <b>A summary of his reasons for resigning was provided by the Vice Chair.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to accept all apologies for absence tendered.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> Ann Lynn, as Vice Chair, would take the Chair for the meeting and assume the role of Interim Chair until the next FGB meeting in July 2024, when the agenda would include elections for both Chair and Vice Chair roles from that meeting onwards and for the 24/25 academic year up until the first meeting of the FGB in 25/26.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there were no declarations in relation to items on the agenda.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Vacancies and Appointments</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the three governor vacancies listed on the agenda and the addition of a fourth vacancy following the resignation of Mark Arnold. The Foundation (Ex-Officio) Governor position remained unfilled as the Diocese had yet to appoint a rector for the Shingay Group of parishes and was unlikely to do so for some time. The parent governor vacancy created by the resignation of Leanne Holt had not yet been filled. The staff governor vacancy created by Catherine Seward reaching the end of her term of office in April had not yet been filled, although, following advertisements in the school, one member of staff was considering standing, but had not yet submitted a self-nomination. A co-opted governor vacancy had been created by the resignation of Mark Arnold.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Chair and Acting Head would discuss parent governor elections later that week.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Chair proposed appointing Lucy Nightingale (Associate) to the Co-opted governor vacancy, if she was willing to accept the appointment.</p>	<b>AL/ JD</b>



	<p>visits was in hand. Helen Ogilvie would be taking over from Ann Lynn as monitoring lead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appointment of Interim Head</b> – negotiations had been concluded.</li> <li>• <b>Governing Body Committee and Link Roles</b> – the former Chair had not updated the Committee and link role document. A new one would be produced for 24/25.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 as a true and correct record. The Chair signed the minutes at the meeting. They were passed to the school for safekeeping and publication on the school website.</p>	AL
5.	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting of Resources Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the minutes uploaded to GovernorHub. The focus of the meeting had been the budget. Issues would be discussed under the agenda item on the 2024/25 budget.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to accept and ratify the minutes and the actions of the Resources Committee.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting of Curriculum Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the minutes of the meeting as uploaded to GovernorHub just before the FGB meeting. <b>The Committee Chair provided an oral commentary. Issues discussed had included the PSHE Policy and pupil data predictions. Phonics predictions indicated an improvement in phonics. The results of the multiplication tests were promising and above the previous year’s national average. EYFS predictions were also encouraging, though there was more work to be done. The headline from the meeting was that improvements were headed in the right direction, but governors were not complacent and there was more work to be done.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Acting Head described the logistical arrangements for undertaking the 2024 SATs and highlighted work on the post-OFSTED action plan. Alana Brown had officially ceased to be the Interim Head, but was still supporting the Acting Head unofficially.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to accept and ratify the minutes and the actions of the Curriculum Committee.</p>	
7.	<p><b>GB Skills Audit</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the NGA Skills Audit summary uploaded to GovernorHub as a late report. <b>The Chair commented that it would need to be redone when new governors were appointed. Also, some governors had completed it over six months ago, and with subsequent training it was likely to be out of date.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> when recruiting new governors, finance and/or HR experience would be useful. <b>The meeting discussed ways of recruiting more governors.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Chair would see if she could obtain the data and comments that had created the skills audit summary, as they would be useful in drawing up a training plan for governors.</p>	AL

8.	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> other than the former Chair's resignation letter, no correspondence had been received.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Policies (item 14 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> parent comments on the PSHE policy had been constructive. Most parents wanted conception to be taught to an earlier age group than was currently being recommended by the government.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the PSHE Policy, on the understanding that further updates might be necessary to ensure compliance with changes in government policy. <b>Governors praised the school for the amount of work that had gone into reviewing the policy and consulting with parents.</b></p>	
10.	<p><b>Health and Safety (Item 15 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the school had no major issues to report. <b>Governors raised the issues of safety of the old swimming pool compound. The area was padlocked but the pool was still filled with water. The meeting discussed anecdotal evidence of access to the area behind Smarties.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the school would review the situation of the swimming pool compound and discuss any resultant matters with the Resources Committee.</p>	<p>JD/ Rsrces Cttee</p>
11.	<p><b>Governor Training and Briefings (Item 16 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Chair had attended the termly briefing session for governors. She reported that the recent OFSTED inspection of the LA had resulted in a Requires Improvement judgement. There were a number of personnel changes at the LA. A new Governance Guide had been launched in the Spring. There would be changes to Early Years and Wrap Around Care in September. The governor training programme for 24/25 would be made available over the summer holiday period. She encouraged all governors to look out for it and book courses early before they filled up.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the clerk highlighted the need for at least one governor to undertake the same level of Cyber Security training as school staff.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Clerk would post details of Cyber Security training on the GovernorHub noticeboard for governors to consider before deciding who would undertake it.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Clerk</p>
12.	<p><b>Governor Monitoring and Visits (Item 17 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> as a result of limited governor and staff time, monitoring activities had fallen behind schedule. Helen Ogilvie would be taking over as monitoring lead governor from the next meeting. She would review the current monitoring and visits form and would share proposals with the Head.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the meeting discussed how phonics was being monitored and who was leading on it. Debbie Littlefair as the English link governor had looked into phonics. The school was likely to be changing curriculum leads in</p>	<p>HO</p>

	<p>the autumn term. <b>The meeting discussed future arrangements including timetabling governor visits and revisiting the creation of a governor visit day once Alex Housden was in post.</b></p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p><b>Budget 2024/25 (item 9 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the budget documents uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting. <b>George Lynn commented that the 23/24 budget outturn had resulted in an in-year deficit, which was worse than budget, and a net £4.6k accumulated deficit. 24/25 would result in a further operating deficit, with salary costs being the significant contributory factor. He highlighted regulatory limits to the size of a deficit in a single year (5% of income), which had resulted in the LA rejecting initial budget proposals.</b></p> <p><i>Gabrielle Edwards joined the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the governors and school were now proposing an in-year deficit of £6.5k for 24/25, with a worsening cumulated deficit in 25/26, but with the financial position improving thereafter. <b>Draft budgets based on both a six class and a seven class structure had been drawn up.</b> The Clerk highlighted that a six class structure had been agreed by the FGB at its previous meeting. <b>Some governors, however, had not felt happy with the decision, and had wanted to consider other options.</b> The Acting Head pointed out that the school could not afford a seven class structure given its size and predicted admissions. The school had continued to work on the proposed budget for the six class structure and had emailed a revised budget to George Lynn that morning. <b>Governors asked how a six class structure would work operationally?</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> governors felt there was a disconnect between the LA’s drive for quality improvement and its focus on budget economies and that the LA should be made aware in writing of the consequences of addressing the school’s finances over curriculum development. The costs associated with the new PKC curriculum were noted. The PTA was willing to contribute to costs.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the deadline for approving the budget was 22 May.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the first priority was to approve a budget. A letter to the LA could be drafted in less haste afterwards.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Acting Head explained the revised budget was constructed on a worst case scenario and had been modelled against possible staffing outcomes. She detailed the steps taken by the school in revising the budget. The meeting discussed possible operational approaches and savings, including the possibility of a joint swimming approach with Guilden Morden. The staffing situation was also explored in detail. The Clerk pointed out that governors had not seen the proposed revised budget. <b>George Lynn summarised the differences between the two proposals. The revised budget would result in an in-year deficit of £34k as opposed to £6.5k. As this was a worst case scenario, it was anticipated that the size of the deficit for 2024/25 would reduce once potential staff resignations were known at the end of the month. The increased deficit was within the margin of 5% of income. Deficits in future years could be closer to the 5% limit.</b> The Acting Head explained that the increased deficit supported 1.5 extra TAs that were logistically and operationally necessary to support children safely.</p>	

	<p><b>AGREED:</b> reluctantly, the 24/25 budget proposed by the school leading to an in-year deficit of £34k. George Lynn would draft a letter from the FGB to the LA setting out the rationale for the reluctant approval of the 24/25 deficit budget, the FGB's concerns regarding risks implied by class restructuring and also the lack of support for the school and its governors as provided by the LA. The letter would be circulated to all governors before the next FGB meeting.</p>	<b>GL</b>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>School Strategy (item 10 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the strategy documents uploaded to GovernorHub, including a strategic plan template for committees and the FGB to discuss and complete. The Head felt that much of the required detail of the Strategic Plan was already included in the revised SIP. <b>Governors welcomed the documents but queried their value, given the governing body had yet to conclude its investigations into Academy status and it was not yet clear whether remaining with the LA or joining DEMAT would best serve the school's needs. The meeting discussed the situation in detail, including steps that would be necessary to trigger a due diligence review by DEMAT and for how long after triggering it the school would remain free to decide to remain with the LA or join DEMAT. Governors felt they still did not have enough operational information from DEMAT to make an informed decision. The meeting discussed the strategic options open to the school and governors.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> George Lynn would undertake further work on the Strategic Plan document having regard to the detail in the revised SIP. He would share it with others as deemed appropriate and bring it back to the July FGB meeting.</p>	<b>GL/ Clerk</b>
<b>15.</b>	<p><b>School Development Plan (School Improvement Priorities) (Item 13 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the document tabled by the Acting Head, as the first draft of the document had only been completed the day before the meeting. The Acting Head provided a detailed oral commentary on the document and the actions being undertaken by the school. <b>Governors queried why some actions had no recorded impact?</b> Detail for these impacts would not be available until the second half of the Summer Term. <b>Governors asked why the document only covered the Summer Term.</b> This was the post-OFSTED rapid improvement phase. The SIP for 24/25 would cover the full academic year. The meeting discussed the work being undertaken by the school in relation to pupil clubs. <b>Governors commented favourably on the document, which they felt was clearer and more informative than previous versions.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Acting Head would liaise with the Chair in order to upload the current SIP onto GovernorHub.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> self-evaluation by the FGB was included in the document for the Summer Term.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Chair would consider how governance self-evaluation might best be undertaken.</p>	<b>JD/ AL</b>          <b>AL</b>

16.	<p><b>Acting Headteacher's Report (item 11 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report tabled by the Acting Head using a new template structure. The Acting Head provided a detailed oral commentary covering staffing, staff well-being, pupil statistics, achievement and standards, safeguarding, parent liaison, wraparound care, the Curriculum, premises, finance, SEND, cluster activities, the SIP and Christian distinctiveness.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> 165 pupils were on roll, of which 28 were Pupil Premium. 24 places had been offered for 24/25 and late enrolments were expected. Pupil data predictions indicated the following areas would be above the previous year's national average: EFFT GLD, KS1 reading, KS2 Maths, KS2 RWM and the Multiplication test. KS1 Writing and Maths would be lower than the previous year's national averages. There were a number of ongoing safeguarding issues.</p> <p><b>NOTED: following questions from governors, the meeting discussed the difference between evacuation and invacuation and the steps the school would need to take in certain circumstances. Difficulties caused by inappropriate parent parking were noted and discussed. Governors asked if the planned parent survey had been circulated? It would be circulated the first week after the half-term break. The possibility of governors writing a regular piece for local village newsletters was discussed. The Chair said she would consider possibilities.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the EDRA would be visiting the school in June to consider Christian distinctiveness.</p> <p><b>NOTED: governors commented favourably on the new layout of the report and the level of detail it contained, which they felt had been missing in recent months.</b></p>	AL
17.	<p><b>Safeguarding (item 12 on the agenda)</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> safeguarding had been discussed as part of the previous item. The new Head had spoken to the LA about Safeguarding training and had arranged to undertake the recommended courses. When she ran safeguarding training for staff in the new academic year, governors were welcome to attend.</p>	
18.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>NOTED: Mr Bevan had approached a governor with a view to making a presentation to governors about personal development opportunities. Governors were happy to receive the presentation, but were not sure there would be time during the July meeting and felt it might be better presented to the Curriculum Committee.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Curriculum Committee should receive the presentation.</p>	Curric Cttee
19.	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting and Meeting Venue</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7pm at the school.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>The meeting finished at approximately 21:55</b></p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts

**Clerk To The Governors  
23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024**

**Approved by the Full Governing Body on:**

**Date: .....10 July 2024.....**

**Signature (Chair):.....**