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**MINUTES OF THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL**

**FULL GOVERNING BODY MONDAY 24th MAY 2021**

**This meeting was held virtually via Teams due to the coronavirus pandemic.**

**PRESENT**

Miss Tina Gobell (Head Teacher)

Mrs Annabel Cornall (Chair and Parent Governor)

Mrs Catriona Stringer (Vice Chair and Co-opted Governor)

Louise Connelly (Parent Governor)

Mr Dave Waller (LA Governor)

Mrs June Budd (Co-opted Governor)

Dr Tina Ivanov (Parent Governor)

Kelly Dey (Staff Governor)

Mr Roland Parrott (Co-opted Governor)

**In Attendance**  Angela Alexander, School Business Manager,

Jenny Baker, Deputy Head Teacher

**Clerk** - Mrs J Roe

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| **ITEM NO** | **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION** | **ACTION POINT** |
| **PROCEDURAL** | | |
| **1** | **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**   * 1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. It was noted that Dr Tina Ivanov would be joining the meeting shortly.   2. The meeting was quorate |  |
| 2. | **REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS**  The Register of Business Interests was up to date. No business interests were declared. |  |
| 3 | **FINANCE AND BUDGET.**  **Proposed 3 year budget plan**  The finance committee had met on 21.05.2021 to scrutinise the new 3 year budget plan. A copy of all budget documents had been circulated to the FGB and copies are stored with these minutes.  The Chair of the finance committee gave a summary of the discussion from the meeting. He started by thanking the SBM for her prework in providing extensive documentation prior to the meeting. The overspend for the last year was £297 (two hundred and ninety seven pounds). When reviewing the new budget, the committee had noted the large amount of expenditure on assessment material. The committee felt that although this expenditure tied into the current SIP, it was important that the Quality of Teaching & Learning monitoring governors were able to validate that this was proving to be good value for money at future monitoring visits.  After having a lengthy conversation about continuing to use the online teaching in an affordable targeted manner, it was agreed that it was essential that governor monitoring could reflect this.  A governor from the Quality of Teaching & Learning monitoring pair commented that they had met with the DHT. As there had been no validated national tests, the assessment material had provided an opportunity to validate the schools data, and with a likely Ofsted inspection would evidence a good story for progress and achievement.  The finance committee had a long discussion around the lessons learned from the Covid pandemic and what had gone well. Discussions had centred around staff training and how it was important moving forward to get the right balance between face to face and online training. The committee felt that moving forward this was a broader discussion for the FGB.  The carry forward spending was 3.9% over the overall budget (£115,000). The carry forward would be less than before, but the chair of finance explained that in previous years the carry forward had been close to exceeding the 12% BCM which was felt to be too high. By not exceeding 4% it had enabled the school to be in receipt of Covid grants to cover additional staffing costs.  The committee had debated at length the new funding formula. Whilst on paper it looked as though the school should be in a better financial position, KCC had given the government additional funding but then reduced SEN funding so the school were not benefitting as much as they should have been. The HT commented that this would cost the school £55,000 (fifty five thousand). It was noted that this had affected other local schools and as a result it was expected that the Kent Head Teacher’s Association would be writing to KCC on behalf of schools.  Governors learned that the predicted income for Year 1 was 3.2 million, 3.3 million for year 2 and 3.4 million for year 3. This year outgoing costs were rising faster than incoming costs so this would affect the reserves but only by a small amount.  The carry forward was £85,000 (eight five thousand) this year (2.7%) but governors were mindful that this was always a conservative figure.  Governors heard that the main reason for the higher spending had been the impact of Covid on learning and the conscious plan to invest heavily in tuition through the schools’ own staff as feedback from the government tutoring had been variable. This had been discussed in great detail at the finance meeting on 21.05.21 and the overspend had been consciously planned to manage the covid catch up fund. However, the committee were keen for the Quality of Teaching & Learning monitoring governors to be able to validate that the impact. The DHT had used pupil progress meetings to review which pupils would benefit from 1:1 tutoring. Looking at the 3 year plan the extra money that the school would be spending on paying staff would be close to the 85% limit for the remainder of this academic year and next year but staffing costs would then drop back down once the tutoring ceased.  A governor asked the HT how the school would mitigate the negative impact that the additional teaching could have on day to day teaching, eg staff tiredness. The HT agreed that whilst staff wellbeing remained a focus, the interventions would be in 6 week blocks with a review at the end of each block. If there were to be any impact on day to day teaching the SLT would review matters. The tutoring would be half an hour three times a week with additional payments for planning and marking. It would be on a voluntary basis. The HT felt that it could minimise stress levels for staff as it would give them more control and space during their working day rather than continually worrying to ensure that they were closing the gaps.  The finance committee had looked carefully at ensuring there was flexibility within the budget to ensure that reductions could be made on things that the school would like to do but may have to be put on hold if the finances were required elsewhere, eg the multi surface sports area. The overspend for this year (year 1) was £40,000 (forty thousand), with an underspend of £10,000 (ten thousand) in year 2 and an underspend of around £90,000 (ninety thousand) in year 3.  The committee had reviewed the 3 options for a new catering contract with Caterlink. After discussion the school would commit to a 2 year contract with school lunches increasing in line with inflation.  ***The FGB approved the new 3 year budget for submission to KCC.***  **SFVS**  The finance committee had met on 07.05.2021 to review the SFVS. The final amended version along with the finance committee minutes of 07.05.2021 had been circulated prior to this meeting and copies stored with these minutes.  The chair commented that there had been challenges with misrepresentation of the schools data, partly due to how differently schools count their staff and the data used was from this year and last year. There had been a robust conversation where the committee had challenged the HT and SBM who were able to evidence any discrepancies. The school had a high level of staffing, but this was due to the emphasis on SEND staff.  The SBM had prepared an excellent SFVS document which had enabled the finance committee to add in additional examples of evidence.  The committee had noted that currently staff were not required to declare any conflict of interests other than financial declarations and asked the HT to look further into this. The HT commented that having discussed this with the SLT, the school would be adding a line into the Staff Code of Conduct regarding declaring pecuniary interests. It is a requirement for all staff to sign the Staff Code of Conduct annually. Staff would be informed by SLT at the INSET day in September what the addendum to the Code of Conduct means.  The Finance Policy had been reviewed and the committee were keen for there to be reference to staff being able to claim for consumables that they purchased for teaching in the classroom. The SBM had amended the policy and it had been approved.  There were no further questions on the SFVS.  The committee would be holding a further meeting in Term 6 to follow up on any outstanding actions.  The CoG thanked the Finance team for their scrutiny of both the SFVS and the budget and the SBM for her work in preparing both. It was noted that LC would now be part of the Finance Committee.  *The SBM left the meeting* |  |
| 4 | 4.1 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** The minutes from the FGB meeting of 24.05.2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed to be a true record of the meeting. These will be signed by the CoG when meetings resume in school.  4.2. **GOVERNOR ACTIONS.**  Item 3 – SFVS for review by Finance committee 12.05.21 – achieved.  4.2. School Business Continuity Plan – Finance committee to review hard copy at their next meeting. However, it was noted that the Covid pandemic had enabled the plan to be tested in real time and the committee were confident that the Plan was fit for purpose.  4.2. Clerk to send statutory list of policies to H&S governor – achieved.  6. Monitoring visits – The clerk commented that there were still some monitoring reports outstanding and asked for these to be forwarded to ensure that documentation remains up-to-date.  8. Covid catch up report to be amended to reflect assessment data and to be shared with the FGB. The DHT had included her report within the HT report as appendix 1. She commented that it would not be prudent to share data until July when there would be a set of out turn data on how the school had managed to close the gaps. It was noted that the DHT would be meeting with the Quality of Learning & Education governors.  9. Virtual Governance Standing Order The clerk had amended this to reflect the need for for governors to have a lateral flow test when visiting the school.  9. Relationships & Sex Education working party Both CS and AC had attended and found it extremely useful. They commented on the amount of planning and hard work that had gone into the session. .  13. Safeguarding monitoring visit to be arranged after Easter CS had carried out a review of the CSR which was up-to-date. She commented that despite Covid the support given by the school to vulnerable pupils during the closedown had continued.  14. Community Art Project. There was no further information on this. The HT had informed the other HT’s within the collaborative group of the proposal. | **Business Continuity Plan for Finance committee agenda**  **Monitoring reports to be sent to clerk.** |
| 5 | **GOVERNING BODY MATTERS.**  The CoG informed the FGB that due to a new job in the Far East Michelle Dewhurst had resigned from the FGB. Governors also learned that Dr Tina Ivanov would be resigning at the end of this academic year due to a work promotion. The CoG thanked Dr Ivanov for her contribution to the FGB on behalf of all the governors. As the CoG had completed and passed her Chair’s course and on reflection of her skillset, she suggested that she moved from a parent governor role to a Co-opted governor position. This was agreed by the FGB. The new vacancies would be advertised in September to include new parents with pupils joining the school. There would be two parent governor vacancies and one Co-opted governor vacancy. A governor felt that moving forward the FGB needed to look at ways to ensure that the board reflected more diversity. This was agreed unanimously. 1 | **Governor vacancies to be advertised Sept 2021** |
| 6 | **GOVERNING BODY MONITORING VISITS**  The CoG had met with the HT to review the monitoring visits schedule for term 6and this would be circulated by the Chair after the meeting.   * Wellbeing – Following on from the pupil voice questionnaire, visit to focus on lunch times to triangulate information from pupils. * Safeguarding – Update on previous extensive meeting * Quality of Learning & Education – Pupil Progress and how gaps are being closed. * Pupil Premium – Meeting with HT to look at progress of pupils receipt of pupil premium are making compared to those not receiving pupil premium. * SEND – SEND governor had met for thorough review in Term 5 * Learning & Management – School Improvement Advisor visit 25th May, L&M governors to attend. * Early Years – Focus on final meeting for new framework transition * H&S – The HT asked the H&S governor to complete a compliance check on her next visit. | **Chair to circulate monitoring visits schedule** |
| 7 | **GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**  The CoG reminded governors that the skills audit needed to be reviewed annually and would enable the FGB to focus on the skill set that they would like to see from new governors. The clerk will forward these to individual governors. Governors were asked to review their skills audit prior to the July meeting. | **FGB to complete skills audit review. Clerk to circulate.** |
| **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT** | | |
| 8 | **HEAD TEACHER’S REPORT**  This had been circulated prior to the meeting and a copy is stored with these minutes.  Year 6 residential trip The governors were asked to approve the year 6 residential trip. Risk assessments had been carried out by both the Centre and the school. The governors agreed the trip.  Pupil Premium The HT commented that following on from pupil progress meetings with staff the DHT was now focussing on children in receipt of pupil premium and referred governors to Appendix 1 of the HT report.  A governor asked how this information would be communicated to parents. The DHT said that parent consultations were to be held on 28.05.21 and staff had received training on how to deliver this to parents in a sensitive manner. The DHT reminded governors that every child’s experience of lockdown had been different, and everyone needed to be mindful that it would take months rather than weeks for some children to recover from the lockdown.  Last year the Government had provided schools’ with guidance on Annual Reports to parents, and assessment and reports last year were amended to take into account Covid. However, as yet there had not been any advice provided for reports this year and it would be too late to wait until next term for staff to start to write their reports. The school would be sending out a covering letter with the reports to set a context for parents. Governors learned that parents would be informed of where their child was and where they should be in regard to their learning but within the narrative there would be a context to show that it was clear why the child had not met their level to avoid any concerns later in their educational journeys.  A governor asked the HT to inform the FGB as to how many parents attended the upcoming virtual parent consultations on an INSET day. The DHT said that this would be reported and that the school would be actively seeking to speak to all parents to ensure that they had made contact with their child’s teacher.  A governor asked for clarification on the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils widening by approximately 3 more months and whether this was in addition to the 3 month gap already in place. The HT said it was an existing feature on the SIP to narrow the gap and the gains made in the last 2 years had been lost so the gap was back to 6 months. Nationally the gaps have been undone due to Covid.  The HT reminded governors that all children who had not been engaging during the lockdown learning had been contacted and invited into school and that there were 43 pupils out of 620 who did not engage during the home learning period.  A governor questioned whether in maths the school was the same nationally with a 4% drop. The HT said that there were 3-4 month gaps, but these were across the whole area of maths. The school were working hard to plug these gaps as pupils varied in the areas that they had fallen behind in.  With regard to the covid catch up funding the DHT said that she had looked at 4 areas; reading, writing, spelling and grammar and maths. Maths needed the most support through targeted groups.  It was also noted that writing stamina had decreased but the school were confident that this would be able to be rebuilt.  The governors thanked the DHT for her comprehensive report.  Online learning parental questionnaire  Governors had received a copy of the feedback from the online learning parental questionnaire which had provided constructive feedback from parents. The flexibility that the online learning had provided had been well received by families especially for those with both parents working or more than one child requiring access to IT equipment at the same time. Some parents were still keen to have more live lessons. Although live lessons would prove challenging, the school were mindful that they would consider using these for some of the learning in the future. There had been 4 very negative responses out of 620 pupils and these related to the school not being able to provide online learning during the first lockdown. However, this had been due to the fact that the school was unable to leave a service level agreement at that time. Comparison to other local schools in the collaborative group was inaccurate as apart from two all offered the same provision. Governors felt that the school needed to communicate to parents that there is a collaborative group of schools who work closely together.  Two governors had visited the school to carry out a pupil voice questionnaire on the lockdown learning and the results were shared at the meeting. Governors found it interesting how the views of parents differed from the pupils.  The pupils commented that they had enjoyed being able to work at their own pace. They had liked having ‘star of the week’ etc but said that they missed the school community and celebrating with the rest of the school. Pupils said that they would have liked a live registration every morning to give them the opportunity to have contact with their teacher and friends to discuss what they would be doing each day in terms of work etc. The Year 5 boys had particularly enjoyed listening to the pre-recorded story being read by a teacher at the end of the day and wanted this to continue. The creative aspect of the online learning had been a great success with pupils and was something that they would like to continue with.  Pupils talked about the difficulties of the online learning which had included noisy households and being able to concentrate. They hadn’t liked the lessons that were delivered by Oaks Academy.  Following on from the discussion governors talked about how it was important to ensure that the school takes forward some of the positive aspects from the home learning.  A governor questioned whether the school would continue to seek the views of parents and pupils with questionnaires in the future and how the school would feed back to parents and pupils that their views had been taken into account and as a consequence what changes could or would be made. The DHT said that the results would be communicated to parents in the appropriate way.  Governors thanked the school for inviting them in to speak to the pupils.  Attendance. Governors were pleased to learn that attendance remains high.  Staffing issues There had been one reported case of racial harassment since the last report. The HT said that a staff member had not meant any offence, but it highlighted the need to raise awareness. It was dealt with through mediation and no further action was required. As a result, staff awareness training has been implemented for the INSET day on 28.05.2021.  A governor asked if staff had regular access to this training. The HT said that there hadn’t been but the incident had highlighted the need that it should be done and will be part of staff annual training. |  |
| 9 | **Covid update.** Governors learned that the latest guidance related more to secondary schools than primary schools. There would be more opening up of after school clubs. The school had taken the decision to re-open year group bubbles rather than class bubbles.  A governor asked if there had been any group isolations required and the HT replied there had been nothing since January of this year. |  |
| 10 | **POLICIES** Copies of all policies were circulated prior to the meeting, and copies are stored with the minutes.   * Attendance Policy – This had been updated in September 2020 to reflect the addendum around Covid and arrivals at school. There had been no further amendments. The policy had been approved. * Behaviour Statement of Principles – This was reviewed and approved by the FGB. * Educational Visits Policy – The HT had reviewed the policy which was adopted from KCC model policy. It was recommended by the HT for agreement by the FGB. The FGB agreed the policy. * Disciplinary and Conduct Policy and Procedure – The policy had been updated following KCC’s model policy which had also been reviewed by the Unions. The FGB reviewed and agreed the policy. * Uniform Policy – The Policy had been reviewed by the HT. The HT had updated the policy so that pupils were able to wear trainers instead of school shoes as they were doing physical activity each day. A governor questioned whether there could be guidance for when boys could be exempt from wearing a tie in the hot weather. The HT said that she would include this within the policy. The governor then said that having reviewed the school website there were several variations of uniform, particularly for the girls. The FGB talked about this at great length, and it was agreed that this was something that needed a longer term discussion to take into account the views of all stakeholders. It was agreed to review the discussion and the policy at the July FGB meeting.   A governor asked questioned whether the HT would be letting parents know in September that standard uniform would be expected, eg coming to school in PE kits. The HT said that discussions at the SLT meetings had highlighted that the pupils wearing their PE kit into school had proved extremely successful as prior to this there was often a lot of lost learning time with pupils changing into and out of PE kit.  A governor asked whether the school would also look at other aspects of lockdown that had changed in the school day such as drop off times to see if these would continue. The HT commented that information from the DfE had hinted that schools needed to be prepared for a 3rd wave in the Autumn/Winter months and she was mindful that there could be further restrictions during that time. | **Uniform Policy for review July FGB meeting** |
| 11 | **SAFEGUARDING.** No further discussion |  |
| 12 | **GDPR** No breaches to report |  |
| 13 | **SEND** The SEND governor provided the FGB with a comprehensive report on her visit with the SENCO and Inclusion Manager. She commented on how much work the SENCO and Inclusion Manager had carried out to ensure that all SEND pupils received comprehensive learning during lockdown. Annual Reviews, Provision Plans etc had all continued during the lockdown.  All SEN pupil data had been reviewed and showed that some SEN pupils had been making accelerated progress towards their targets whilst other had made progress at a slower than anticipated rate. Some pupils support had moved more towards lunchtimes rather than within the classroom as they have needed help socially, emotionally and mentally.  Parents had commented that the live lessons were not always a positive experience for them as they highlighted their child’s difficulties and they found them quite exposing. Some parents who had been opposed to extra help were now supportive of what interventions their child may need. Staff had found that the Specialist Teaching Service were more readily available to access and parental relationships had improved due to staff creating a bond with the exchanges of support that were needed.  Some of the challenges were that the SENCO had received an influx of parents seeking SEN support for their child. This was taking up a huge amount of time and resources and was often unfounded. Staff were having to determine whether the need was developmental or SEN.  A number of pupils were affected by social, emotional and mental health issues with new pupils being identified on the SEN register and dominating time in terms of provision.  Further discussion is recorded under Part 2 confidential items. |  |
| 14 | **STAFF WELLBEING/GOVERNOR WELLBEING** The wellbeing governor asked the HT for clarification on what her next visit should focus on with regard to wellbeing. The HT will discuss with the SLT and inform the wellbeing governors. | **Focus of wellbeing visit to be confirmed by HT** |
| 15 | **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**  The LA governor informed the FGB that slowly activities within the community were re-opening which had included the sports park and the newly extended Community Centre. The sports park would be benefitting from the installation of a multi-use games area by the end of the summer. |  |
| 17 | **IMPACT OF MEETING**   * Following robust scrutiny by the Finance Committee the FGB approved the new 3 year budget. * The SFVS had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and approved by the FGB. * Monitoring Visits schedule for Term 6 had been arranged and suggested visits will be circulated to the FGB by the CoG * Policies – The Uniform policy had been discussed and challenge around the inconsistency of the uniform in girls raised. Further discussion at the next FGB. * Full and robust challenge by governors around home learning and what could be taken forward * Approval of Year 6 residential trip * Safeguarding visit to review CSR * SEND visit had highlighted dedication of SENCO and Inclusion Manager for provision of learning during lockdown. |  |
| 18 | **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**  None |  |
| 19 | **CHAIR’S ACTIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**  The Chair informed governors that she had signed an updated Covid Risk assessment as an urgent Chair’s action. |  |
| 20 | **CONFIDENTIAL** SEND – see Part 2 of confidential items |  |
| 21 | **UPCOMING DATES**  A governor asked when FODS would be running events. It is likely that these will re-commence in September.  PGL trip for Year 6 pupils. |  |
| 22 | **UPCOMING IMPACT MONITORING VISITS**  No further discussion. Suggested monitoring timetable to be circulated by CoG | **CoG to circulate monitoring Calender** |
| 23 | **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.**  Monday 19th July 6.30 pm |  |

Signed ……………………………………………….. Chair/Vice Chair

Dated ………………………………………………….