Minutes of the
SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 2nd March 2016
at Greystoke Primary School, Narborough

Present:
Mr Connor Acton Mrs Nikki Taylor (arrived 7.15)
Mrs Brenda Davies Mrs Mary Thornton (Headteacher)
Fr Alan Hawker Mrs Suzanne Uprichard (Chair)
Mr David Henson

In attendance: Anna Mousley (Clerk)

PROCEDURAL
1. Apologies for Absence
   Apologies had been received from Neil Foster and were accepted.

2. Declaration of Interests Register
   Declared: BD - DSAT DSI, DH - LCC Blaby Stokes bursar, SU - GDS governor trainer.
   No conflicts of interests pertaining to the agenda were declared.

3. Governing Board Matters (was item 12)
   The board had received Val Moore’s letter of resignation, which the Chair had accepted. To strengthen the governing board it was agreed that her replacement will be a Community governor, Candi Norman, Deputy Headteacher from Mowmacre Hill Primary School. CN is on DSAT’s Aspiring Headteacher programme and is looking to strengthen her experience of governance. CN was assigned the role of SEND governor and governor responsible for Maths monitoring. AH raised that VM fulfilled the LA Governor role, and asked if CN would fulfil this. SU responded that the LA element of VM’s role was nominal, and that her role had assumed a greater community element, which is the position that CN would take. DH was assigned the role of training and development link governor.

   Action: clerk to advise GDS of CN’s appointment, and the reassigned link governor roles.

   A Greystoke governor is required to join the DSAT Health & Safety and Human Resources Risk Management Committee and it was agreed that Neil Foster should be invited to take on this role.

   Action: Chair to contact NF re. joining H&S and HR risk management committee, and advise clerk of outcome.

   Points raised in VM’s resignation letter were discussed in detail by governors. See confidential minute.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 13th January 2016
   The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising from the minutes/action log
   - Min 7, pg. 6 of 25.11.15: maths text books are still being evaluated therefor IS has not yet been approached re. using reserves to purchase them; remain on log.
   - Min 7, pg. 7 of 25.11.15: date of the next parents’ maths evening to be confirmed; remain on log.
   - Min 17, pg. 12 of 13.1.16: three year strategic plan to be discussed at meeting on 27.4.16; remain on log.
   All other actions had been completed, or were agenda items, and can be removed from the log.
6. Notification of any other business
A governor had attended the presentation to parents on school meals and commented how informative and enjoyable it had been.

Q. Are those eligible for free school meals, who have not applied for them, regularly encouraged to do so?
The office regularly contacts parents, usually taking the one to one approach as this if felt to be more effective.

Q. How does the school keep informed about children adopted from care?
Similarly, the office approaches parents if it is brought to their attention or when they first join the school; it is however the parents’ choice whether to divulge this information to the school.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
7. Questions on the Headteacher’s Report
A copy of the Headteacher’s report had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. Highlights and governors’ questions set out below show the governing board is holding the Headteacher to account:-

Governors noted the good attendance figure (97.5%) and the HT said the office and parent support worker robustly tackle attendance and late arrivals.

Q. Is there an underlying reason for persistent absenteeism?
There is a small group of persistent absentees but no set pattern to it or trend.

NT arrived 7.15.

Governors had scrutinised the data at the last meeting. The HT said new data for this term is not due until the start of the Summer term and will be reported to governors in her next report.

The joint working groups with Kibworth and Parkland on book monitoring had been very useful for teachers, and had provided an opportunity for ideas sharing, especially in Maths and English.

Mr Hayes has taken on responsibility for Pupil Premium and has been reviewing case studies and revised some interventions.

Q. What does 12% Pupil Premium children in the school equate to?
This is approximately 40 children and, as a small number, makes them easier to track. They tend to be looked at as a whole group and not per year groups. Teaching staff are being used to support specific areas of need for these children, and it was commented that the most effective intervention is quality first teaching. Governors understand the impact of pupil premium funding and are holding the Headteacher to account for its use.

The SENCo has returned from maternity leave and will resume the role once she has settled back in after Easter, and there will be a hand-over with the temporary SENCo. The temporary SENCo is planning to train as a MAPA trainer and governors noted this as a good example of staff being developed.

Q. What is MAPA?
MAPA stands for Management of Actual or Potential Aggression and its approach is first and foremost to diffuse an aggressive situation before employing physical restraint only where necessary and with the least physical intervention to ensure the safety of the child, others and school property.

BD and the HT reported on the good attendance at the DSAT recruitment fair that has taken place on 27th February, and it was added that through the event some interest in current vacancies has been generated.

Staff are finding the new assessment system challenging, which is the case of all schools nationally. The HT said there is still no clear direction from the government, and the possibility of the EYFS baseline, only introduced this year, being removed. However the HT said the staff are working with the new system to the best of their ability. BD added DSAT are continuing to look at assessment more broadly.
Unpaid staff absences are now included in the report - the second day of absence is unpaid.

Q. Is there a pattern for short-term absences?
Usually it is because staff’s own children are off school sick. The number of second day absences is not that large or a concern.

Q. Has monitoring whole school consistencies had an effect?
It has been a useful exercise, and identified there is still some work to do with newer staff. There has been ongoing work with BD on Maths which has helped catalyse thoughts on how staffing can be used across classes. This has included splitting lessons with TAs supporting teaching for half the class; this is working well and it is evident it is pushing the children on.

It was reported that work on the roof is nearly at an end; the space feels warmer, and the improvements will in turn make cost savings by reduce heating bills.

DH reported that a quote had been received from Boons to develop the house into a ‘before and after school’ care facility to provide extended services to meet the needs of parents, and with a view to it generating income for the school over time. However to convert the space will be very costly @ £133K, and it will take vary many years before income can be realistically generated – a business case therefore does not support conversion for this use. Governors questioned how the cost could be justified and they explored a range of options, and the pros and cons. These included obtaining further quotes for comparisons, demolishing the house and building a single storey mobile using some of the garden in its footprint, or re-letting the property which would incur renovation fees as well as raise security and safeguarding issues. DH said there will be more information by the time of the next meeting for governors to discuss options further.

Action: House to be an agenda item on 27.4.16. Governors to email DH any suggestions.

DH tabled the schools internal audit report (redacted version) and responded to some of the recommendations that had been made. He confirmed that a narrative for management accounts is now provided. There had been some purchase order issues, now resolved, and he said the HT has good awareness of all purchases; all staff are aware they need to secure permission from her or DH for all purchases. Although the governing board had not held any separate finance committee meetings since conversion, governors acknowledged that they do cover finance in full board meetings, and finance is monitored at trust level in the termly Finance and Audit risk management committee meetings.

The HT ended her report outlining the trip to Westminster for the children who attend the DSAT Pupil Parliament. BD said 49 children are taking part and will attend workshops and tours of both Houses during their trip.

STAFFING

8. To discuss any staffing matters
In addition to staffing matters covered in the HT’s report governors noted that the Year 1 teacher leaving the school after Easter will covered by a temporary appointment for the Summer term, and that staffing will be reassessed once there is a clearer understanding of requests from maternity leave returners.

Q. Can reasons for a request for part-time working be refuted?
A judgement cannot be made on the reasons for a request, but it can be difficult to prove the effect part-time work has on the effectiveness of teaching. Every school is different and precedents have already been set at Greystoke. A governor suggested there be a policy for a cap on the number of staff with part-time contracts and the HT agreed this would be a good idea.

Action: HT to contact Louise White for further information and bring back to the next meeting on 27.4.16.

All schools have been asked to complete staffing matrices for next year, as far as they possibly can, to prepare for budgets. This will enable schools to prepare and take action for pressures from pay, changes to the funding formal and increasing pupil numbers that all schools are facing.
GOVERNING BOARD MATTERS

9. Finance update
   The management account report for end of January, with commentary, had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting. DH said that whilst the bottom line of the budget will not change some costs need re-coding and he is re-assessing these, and said governors should expect to see some red costs on the report turn green in the next report.

Q. Will the forecasted surplus be carried over?
   Part of the reserves have been used to cover the cost of the works and £20K is held for the development group. End of year surpluses may not be used by any Trust school to manage an annual shortfall, without prior discussion with and permission from DSAT, and only in particular circumstances.

Q. How do you hope to reduce the high photocopying charges?
   Procedures are now in place to reduce photocopying charges by setting the default mode to black and white and limiting colour copying. Once the current lease expires, which is in under 12 months’ time, a contract will be set up via DSAT.

Q. Does the school make a profit from school meals?
   No; School Food Support (SFS) use the facilities to provide the meals but do not pay enough to cover the cost of administration or utilities. Installing a meter is being investigated. Danemill have faced the same issue and have raised the matter with SFS.

Governors were reminded that in year budgets must not include carry forward, unless agreed by the board and for one year only. Carry forward is ring fenced and pooled with other trust schools to provide both a safety net and to generate income through interest. A DSAT school’s annual surplus may not be used to make any purchases by the school unless this has been discussed and agreed with appropriate members of DSAT central staff team and signed off by PS.

10. Policies
   a) Financial regulations: governors confirmed they had read and understood the regulations and are aware of the procedures.
   b) Health and Safety Policy: governors confirmed they had read the policy and are aware of the procedures and unanimously adopted it.

11. Governor visits reports
   A timetable for governor monitoring visits had been provided by the HT and governors were asked to arrange their visits. NT said she had attended governor visits training, and DH said he had attended DSAT budget training for governors.

   Action: Governors to arrange their visits; T&D governor add details of training attended to training log.

12. Governing board matters
   Covered above, see minute 3

OTHER ITEMS

13. Date of and time next meeting is Wednesday 27th April 2016, 6.30p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed by Chair ......................................................  Date .........................................