

# CROSBY RAVENSWORTH C of E (Aided) SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Crosby Ravensworth, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 3JJ

School telephone: 01931 715265

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## GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Wednesday, 14 October 2020, 1530 via Zoom

### Board members:

Linda White	(Chair)	(LW)	Foundation Governor
Debbie McCall	(Vice Chair)	(DMcC)	Foundation Governor
Tom Cripps	-	(TC)	Foundation Governor
Stewart Fyfe	-	(SF)	Church Governor, ex officio
Liz Lindwall	-	(LL)	Foundation Governor
Susan Pattinson	-	(SP)	Staff Governor
Duncan Priestley	-	(DP)	Staff Governor, ex officio
John Walton	-	(JW)	Foundation Governor

### Apologies:

Neil Hughes		(NH)	Local Authority Governor
Alan Woodward	-	(AW)	Foundation Governor
Tom Hollis	-	(TH)	Parent Governor

### Others attending:

Chloe Randall	(Clerk)	(CR)	
Pauline Cleasby		(PC)	Small Schools Business Manager

## MINUTES

### 1 PRAYERS

SF thanked the Heavenly Father for the school and the dedicated staff, and prayed for His blessing on all the children and their families. He also prayed for guidance during the pandemic and the uncertain situation we are facing; asked for God's grace in our duties as Governors, and for His wisdom and insight to be shared among us in our dealings with each other. Amen

### 2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 **Apologies:** LW explained that apologies had been received from:

- Alan Woodward (a medical appointment)
- Neil Hughes (struggling with Zoom meetings, but had been invited to send in questions)
- Tom Hollis (very busy and had hoped to join the meeting at some stage – but did not appear)

2.2 **Minutes of the meeting of 4 September 2020:** the meeting agreed that Version 4 should be adopted as the formal record of the meeting.

2.3 **Declarations of interests:** none of those present made any new declarations of interest, and none had been received from those absent.

2.4 **Matters arising** (not included elsewhere on the agenda): none were raised.

#### 2.5 Committee reports:

2.5.1 **Resources, 28 September 2020:**

2.5.1.1 LW welcomed TC to his first board meeting as chair of the Resources Committee. She

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also thanked PC for attending in her new role as Small Schools Business Manager, and congratulated her on her brilliant performance in the post so far. TC explained that PC had created the new format for the budget report and said that everyone who had commented on it so far had found it to be very clear and good. The budget situation at the end of September showed a good positive balance, and TC was looking forward to seeing the projection for the end of the year. Currently expenditure was £17,000 less than had been budgeted, although it was recognised that income was taking a hit because of Covid (PC explained that this was due to reductions in income from after school clubs and meals while the school was closed, plus loss of voluntary contributions and donations from parents in connection with school trips). At present it appeared that there would be a substantial carry over at the year end, largely due to substantial savings in Maintenance and Services expenditure which may well be recurrent.

- 2.5.1.2 DP said that the big question was whether there would be a similar surplus in year three, and PC explained this was forecasted to be the case as illustrated in the specific figures shared with the finance committee. DP added that this situation is allowing him to plan a substantial building and curriculum project identified in the School Development Plan following which the surplus will be removed.
- 2.5.1.3 LW asked if there was any indication that the carry-over rules might be amended because of the Covid situation, and DP said that nothing had been said as yet. He added that if any school carried over significant surplus (>8%) at the year end, it would most likely be clawed back by the Local Authority and redistributed to other areas of educational need in the county. TC commented that if the Governors could be convinced that the positive situation was realistic, then staffing plans could be considered as required. He asked if the predicted grant for next year included the increase in children on roll, and PC confirmed that it did not. DP mentioned that a further two children were also likely to come to the school in the near future.
- 2.5.1.4 DP said that there were a number of projects already defined that the school had long been wanting to undertake, including expenditure on the building (detailed in his Headteacher's report) and the curriculum. He felt that the school could start to put together its plans for some of these projects to be completed in the current financial year using the surplus, rather asking the Friends of the School. JW **challenged** DP as to whether he should still ask Friends for funds, but DP said that the money for capital projects needed to be spent in the current year.
- 2.5.1.5 LL asked when the money had to be spent by, and both PC and DP confirmed that invoices needed to be paid by the year end.
- 2.5.1.6 SF **challenged** DP whether – as the surplus had been partially generated while the children were out of school – the monies should be used to help them catch up. DP explained that the excess was more the result of the new funding arrangements than the closure of the school. In any event, additional catch-up funding would be coming to all schools in due course. JW asked whether the promised additional (non-Covid) funding to all schools from Government was actually happening, and DP responded that the school was already benefiting from this via the new funding formula.
- 2.5.1.7 LW asked if the Governors were happy for DP to proceed with getting quotes for the

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identified capital projects, subject to PC confirming the budget position, and the meeting unanimously agreed. PC was thanked for her attendance at the meeting, and then was allowed to leave.

2.5.1.8 TC then brought forward three specific items for approval:

- .1 adjusted pay for the Teaching Assistants
- .2 the temporary increase of the Headteacher's management time (temporary for this year, pending confirmation that the funds are there for future years)
- .3 the Financial Delegation Policy

All three items were agreed unanimously.

2.5.2 **Pupil Progress, 30 September 2020:**

2.5.2.1 SP (in the absence of AW) explained that the staff had needed to immediately assess the children on their return to school, and that the results had contained no surprises: in general, all pupils are behind as a result of their absence from school. SP explained that assessment normally took place at Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year, but this year there would be half-termly assessments so that the staff could try to grasp exactly where the children are and where their gaps in learning are. They were not, however, waiting for the results of the assessments and interventions are already in place. The children have targets to work towards, and are receiving additional focused time with the Teaching Assistant. The staff are quite happy about the current position. DP confirmed that the majority of the 'gap plugging' work is being undertaken by the teachers in lesson time, with the Teaching Assistant helping to reinforce learning on a one to one basis. This system is effective, as almost all the children have the same or similar gaps.

2.5.2.2 LW asked if the children were now happy and settled? SP said they were REALLY happy and had settled back in well. She said that some children will catch up very quickly; some may take longer. DMCC asked after the child who had been quite upset (reported at the last meeting), and was assured that this had been no more than the usual start of year situation.

2.5.2.3 SP then asked if the meeting could ratify the On-Line Safety Policy, notwithstanding the fact that a further amendment had been received from Kym Allan. DP said the latest amendment was an addendum which could be looked at separately, and SF commented that it was still better to have a nearly-up-to-date policy, than an old one. The board agreed that the policy could be ratified, and that DP and SP should review the addendum.

### 3 MAIN BUSINESS

#### 3.1 Head Teacher's Report:

3.1.1 DP said that the Ofsted inspection now seemed to be a very long time ago with all that had happened since. He explained that he had not updated the Self-Evaluation Report and the School Development Plan yet as he felt that the landscape had changed so much that there was a need to discover new priorities. LW challenged whether a lengthy document was needed at this point, or whether a short, sharp focus on priorities would be appropriate? DP said he appreciated the sentiment but felt that it would be a little maverick for him to produce something with less meat on it. He found the School Development Plan to be a hugely useful working document which acted as his 'to do'

list. TC commented that at the webinar he and LW had recently attended it had been emphasised that the budget should align with the School Development Plan, so the Governors did need to see it in full. LW commented that the Plan did exist, but just needed updating.

3.1.2 SF commented that it was a most unusual Headteacher's Report reporting 50% attendance and neither of the two key documents, but he was very reassured that all the answers to any questions he would have raised were clearly presented.

3.1.3 Highlights of the report which DP wanted to draw attention to were:

- .1 the need for a new Pupil Premium plan for the one child concerned;
- .2 the off-site Art lessons at Ullswater Community College, for which full risk assessments had been prepared and full precautions taken after discussion with Kym Allen. SF commented that it was really important for such off-site events to take place both for the children's development and the wider strategic need to support providers of these events so that the framework was not lost. DP said that some parents were naturally concerned about the children being away from the school, but the school did not undertake these visits lightly, or indeed the presence of visitors to the school;
- .3 TC **challenged** the change of the broadband provider 'on the recommendation of the school's IT technician.' He asked if estimates and tenders had been obtained and whether the process was clear and transparent. DP explained that they had been trying to escape the previous contract for some time, as the service provided did not meet the school's needs. The school had looked at the rival bid from a local company which already supplied a number of other schools in the area, and which was substantially cheaper, and this was the basis upon which the decision had been made.
- .4 the new Mission Statement was already in use with the school (on e-mails, stationery, and with the children) and DP demonstrated the gestures which accompanied the words Courage, Compassion and Community. LW commented that when she had visited the school Class 2 was outside having a French lesson and had not only been able to demonstrate the words and gestures, but had also been able to repeat them in French! DP said that these values were not just random words, but reflected how the school and the staff operate. The words are not aspirations, but represent what the school IS. SF commented that one of our duties under Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools is to

make sure that the values do permeate every aspect of school, and DP confirmed that there are plenty of examples of this;

- .5 DP mentioned that the school was fortunate that it could continue to operate its After School Club as the school functioned as a single bubble. This was of great benefit to parents who relied on the clubs to help with their work arrangements;
- .6 DP mentioned that the school's Food For Life award had been well publicised locally and that the children, the older ones in particular, were over the moon about it;
- .7 the fund raising event for the Harvest Festival had raised a massive £560 for the Salvation Army Food Bank in Penrith and had been a hugely popular event with children and staff;

- 3.1.4 Having recently read the Whole School Behaviour Policy with its emphasis on sanctions and celebrating success, LW **challenged** DP to demonstrate how the school did celebrate successes? DP explained that rewarding good behaviour was a huge part of running a successful primary school and that every Friday was a celebration of success with certificates handed out to pupils for various good work and behaviour. SP explained that the house points system also contributed to the celebration, and all those who had earned points had their names entered into the tombola. A "pupil of the week" was drawn for each class, with the selected child receiving a prize.

- 3.2 **Self Evaluation Report** (see item 3.1)

- 3.3 **School Development Plan** (see item 3.1)

- 3.4 **Monitoring and Evaluation Visits:** LW said that she had contacted other local Chairs of Governors, and without exception, all had agreed that it would be inappropriate to conduct Governor visits in the current circumstances, even by Zoom. Staff had enough to worry about at the moment, and DP said that he was always happy to receive e-mails or telephone calls if anyone wished to discuss anything about the curriculum and how it was being delivered.

- 3.5 **Policies:**

- 3.5.1 LW said that a working party meeting had taken place on the previous Monday with Kym Allen joining by Zoom and that some progress had been made. The following policies were ready for ratification by the Governing Body:

- .1 New Mission Statement and Values
- .2 Model Intimate Care and Toileting Procedures
- .3 Whole School Behaviour Policy and Procedures and addendum
- .4 Statement of Behaviour
- .5 Staff Code of Conduct
- .6 Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- .7 On Line Safety Policy (discussed earlier under Pupil Progress Committee)
- .8 Financial Delegation Policy (discussed earlier under Resources Committee)
- .9 Asbestos Management Plan
- .10 Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy
- .11 Model First Aid and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy and addendum

3.5.2 TC queried the wording on the Staff Code of Conduct Policy where it stated that no member of staff should be using their personal living accommodation for teaching purposes. Whilst he fully understood what was intended, the actual wording meant that no teacher should be teaching remotely from their own home and could perhaps be rephrased at the next review. DMcC commented that there was also a policy about working remotely from home which clarified this point.

3.5.3 The meeting unanimously agreed that the above list of policies were ratified.

3.5.4 LW said that two further policies were due to be circulated shortly and could be ratified by e-mail:

- .1 the Health and Safety Policy and addendum
- .2 the General Data Protection Regulations Policy

**3.6 Policy Review Schedule Update:**

3.6.1 The meeting on Monday had also looked at the question of the Policy Review Schedule. DP said that the original schedule had worked well until the Department of Education had said that things had to be done differently. The new schedule lacked some of the columns in the old one, and needed to be expanded with more detail. LW suggested that a Zoom meeting would be the way forward to ensure that everything needed was included, and that she, DP and CR would take this on. DP offered to work on the schedule beforehand so that the meeting could concentrate on checking that everything was covered.

3.6.2 CR raised the question of the standard Human Resources policies which were professionally prepared by the Local Authority. She queried the need for these policies to be on the school's website or circulated to Governors for ratification. CR felt that it was sufficient for the Governing Body to formally minute the fact that all Human Resources policies supplied by the Local Authority were ratified by the Governing Body, and this was agreed, subject to any mandatory requirements for publication.

3.6.3 CR also raised the question of the formatting of policies and pointed out that at least one of those circulated for this meeting had not had its Version number and review date updated, and another still had the Kym Allen logo on the front as below:



These Procedures are designed to be used as a Model and should primarily be used as a comparison with the school's own procedures to ensure that they comply with current best practice and government-led legal and statutory guidance.

**XXXX SCHOOL/SETTING**

3.6.4 CR said that the school had been criticised at an Ofsted inspection for having a policy on its website which had a watermark stating it was a 'draft.' There was also confusion between the Kym Allen version numbering and the school's version numbers, and that reformatting the policies was a long and tedious task. LW said that Kym Allen had said that she was happy to help with formatting difficulties and that policies where there was a problem should be sent to her.

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- 3.6.5 It was also noted that the school's policy 'front pages' should be updated with the new mission statement and values as policies came up for review.
- 3.6.6 DP said that Kym Allen had also pointed out that there was a difference between policies and procedures (eg, Intimate Care and Toileting was a procedure, not a policy). She advised that Governors set the policies for the school and then procedures detail how staff deliver those policies. Therefore Governors need only be concerned with policies. This would mean that a lot less material would need to be circulated to Governors.

<b>ACTION:</b>	LW to arrange a Zoom meeting with DP and CR to find a way to rationalise the policy review schedule and system	LW	
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- 3.7 **Staff Welfare, Standards and Morale (standing item):** LW asked the staff present how they were coping at the 'coal face'? She herself had noticed that the feeling in the school had appeared to be very good today. DP said that walking back into the school in September was a treat and made him realise how very privileged he was to be able to teach for a living.

## 4 STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

### 4.1 Status of Governing Body:

- 4.1.1 LW reviewed the board 'aide memoire' and invited Governors to comment on their present and future roles. All confirmed they were happy with the current position. DMCC warned that she may have some medical issues to resolve in the coming months, and was unable to look towards taking on the role of Chair; indeed, she may have to consider resigning as a Governor at the end of the school year. LW offered sympathy to DMCC and expressed the hope that she would be able to continue. The rest of the board were asked to consider the succession of the Chair role at the end of the year and the potential need for a Vice Chair.
- 4.1.2 LW asked JW if he was content with his nomination (in his absence) as Sex and Relationships Link, and he confirmed that – whilst he did not yet know what it entailed – he was happy to take it on. JW said that the area was quite complex, and enquired whether it needed a new approach to the curriculum? DP confirmed that there was a new policy on that because the curriculum had expanded.
- 4.2 **Governors' Action Plan:** LW said that – as with the School Development Plan – some of the actions had been achieved and some were no longer relevant. There was a need for some strategic thinking to take place and she would appreciate some input and thoughts from other Governors.
- 4.3 **Governor Skills Audit:** LW pointed out that only nine responses had been received (and one of the defaulters immediately declared his omission). LW said that the results did not identify any glaring gaps, but whilst it was not possible for Governors to be in school, perhaps those who had identified their own weaknesses could consider undertaking some on-line training in pursuit of continuous improvement.
- 4.4 **Link Governor updates:**
- .1 **Church:** SF said that he was delighted to be back in school taking assemblies, and the Harvest Festival Service at the church had been very special, in spite of

the fact that parents could not be present. The school choir (which is allowed to sing together, unlike the wider congregation) had sung the traditional harvest hymns. It was hoped that similar arrangements would be possible for Remembrance Day and Christmas.

- .2 **Health and Safety:** DMcC said that on 21 October there was to be a Health and Safety Inspection and once actions had been identified some thought needed to be given to the way forward. She would love to receive some suggestions and constructive ideas on how to move forward. LW queried whether it would be difficult with Governors not being able to go into school, but DMcC said that a lot could be done remotely – such as challenging DP to demonstrate that he did conduct fire drills every term, or asking if there had been an asbestos sign off after the boiler room work. DP said that he could undertake a lot of the premises actions himself if they were spread out over the year. DMcC said the point of the Health and Safety Policy was to ensure that the school was operating in a safe manner, and a lot of the premises actions were undertaken by staff in school on an on-going basis. Overall, she was hopeful that the inspection would produce an even better result this year as such a lot of work had been done since the last one.

LW asked if it would be useful to have another Governor help with the Health and Safety role, and DMcC said that would be a really good idea, particularly with her medical issues ahead. It was suggested that TH could be approached with a view to working with DMcC on this role.

- .3 **Special Educational Needs:** LL said that there was nothing to add that had not been covered by the Pupil Progress Committee.
- .4 **Governor Training and induction:** JW said that he was working on updating the Governor Induction Policy (dated 2015) and the Induction Pack (dated 2019). He was also concerned that the Master Training Record was not up to date. CR pointed out that this was because it had only been discovered in February that some Governors and many training providers had been sending training certificates to the school office where PC had been maintaining a separate record. The two records needed to be amalgamated under the control of the Training Link Governor, with the record passed to CR to add to the website.
- .5 **Safeguarding:** JW said there was nothing to report on this heading.
- .6 **Online Safety/Personal Social Health Education:** SP said that after Marie Louisa Raeburn's departure at the end of the school year, AW had taken on this role. There was nothing to report, other than the updating of the policy (discussed above).

- 4.5 **Governors' newsletter:** LW had wondered if TH might like to use the Autumn newsletter as a way to introduce himself as the new Parent Governor and to encourage others to join him in the vacant Parent Governor role. Any other suggestions for the newsletter would be gratefully received.



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**5 REVIEW OF MEETING**

**5.1 Any Other Business**

DMcC asked DP if the school had received the Covid testing kits promised by the Local Authority, and DP confirmed that they had.

**52 Dates of Next Meetings:** the dates of the next meetings remain as published, but LW said at present it seemed unlikely that they could be held in the hybrid format that had been hoped for.

**Spring Term 2020-2021**

<b>Resources Committee</b>	Monday, 25 January 2021, at 1530 hours
<b>Pupil Progress Committee</b>	Wednesday, 27 January 2021 at 1530 hours
<b>Full Governing Board</b>	Wednesday, 10 February 2021 at 1530 hours

**Summer Term 2020-2021**

<b>Resources Committee</b>	Monday, 10 May 2021, at 1530 hours
<b>Pupil Progress Committee</b>	Wednesday, 12 May 2021 at 1530 hours
<b>Full Governing Board</b>	Wednesday, 26 May 2021 at 1530 hours

**Feedback from Governors:**

**Version 1 circulated to LW and DP at 1310 hours, 15 October:**

**LW:** "Great job on the minutes and a very quick turnaround, thank you. Small alterations and suggestions in red type and highlighted in blue." 2113 hours, 15 October

**Version 2 circulated to LW and DP at 0620 hours, 16 October:**

**DP:** "Well done, excellent, accurate record as usual. Three areas I'd amend: 2.5.1.2; 2.5.1.3 and 2.5.1.4." 1655 hours, 16 October

**Version 3 with suggested amended wording circulated to all Governors, 1800 hours, 16 October:**

**TC:** "I think these minutes are an impressively accurate record of the meeting." 1820 hours, 16 October.

PS: Myself (and John W) are still listed as Associate rather than Foundation governors. That sort of thing doesn't bother me but in the interests of accuracy....

**DMcC:** "Thank you Chloe for putting everything so succinctly. Very minor point is that Ofsted issue was that a policy had a draft watermark on it, rather than a template. I believe that you already dealt with the offending document!!!! I'm happy to accept the minutes. Have a good weekend." 1836 hours, 16 October

**NH:** "Thanks, Chloe." 0846 hours, 17 October

**Version 4 incorporates DMcC and TC changes, not circulated yet.**

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