

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

Crosby Ravensworth, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 3JJ

School telephone: 01931 715265

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## FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING 27 September 2017, Crosby Ravensworth School

### MINUTES

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Liz Lindwall	Foundation Governor	(Chair)	LL
	Duncan Priestley	Staff Governor, ex officio	(Headteacher)	DP
	Sarah Rogers	Foundation Governor		SR
	Susan Pattinson	Staff Governor		SP
	Debbie McCall	Foundation Governor		DMcC
	Alan Woodward	Foundation Governor		AW

#### OTHERS ATTENDING:

Marie-Louisa Raeburn	Observer – prospective Governor	MLR
Chloe Randall	Clerk to the Governors	CR

#### APOLOGIES:

Rev Stewart Fyfe	Foundation Governor, ex officio (Vice Chair)	SF
Becky Day	Foundation Governor	BD
John Paul Turnbull	Parent Governor	JPT
Linda White	Foundation Governor	LW

## 1 PRAYERS

The Chair asked DP to lead the board in prayer. DP asked his fellow governors and others present to spend a quiet moment pausing for reflection to seek God's help in the conduct of our business; to ask that He sends His wisdom to us, and helps us to put the children at the heart of all the decisions we make tonight. Amen.

## 2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

### 2.1 **APOLOGIES:** LL explained that apologies had been received as follows:

- SF – whose unavoidable absence had been noted (with regret) when the date for the meeting had been fixed
- LW – who is currently incapacitated following a serious domestic accident. SR reported that LW had undergone an operation to her arm, and would be recovering over the next four to six weeks. Flowers had been sent to her on behalf of the board, together with good wishes for a speedy recovery
- BD – who had e-mailed earlier to say that she was delayed in a clinic in Salford (with the board hoping this was not due to another case of personal injury)
- JPT – whose heavy work commitments had intervened at the last moment, and the board was grateful to hear that he had found time to send notes of the points he wished to draw to the board's attention (see item 2.5.1)

### 2.2 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10 MAY 2017:** the minutes had been circulated by e-mail; several comments had been incorporated, and the minutes were ratified by the meeting as a true record.

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2.3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** all governors present reviewed their written Declarations of Interest, and signed to confirm that they remained correct.

2.4 **MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE:** none.

### 2.5 COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### 2.5.1 **RESOURCES COMMITTEE 20 SEPTEMBER 2017:**

2.5.1.1 When sending his apologies, JPT had signalled that his core message to the Full Governing Body is that:

- finances are in line with expectations for this point in the year
- some costs needed to be investigated following bench marking exercises. These relate to:
  - internet services
  - heating fuel
- the Resources Committee continues to have work to do to seek funding from other sources (eg, fund-raising, Friends, the Diocese, the Foundation) to ensure adequate provision of staffing and other resources
- outsourcing of cleaning is to be reviewed, as it appears to be either cost neutral, or positively beneficial, with additional management benefits

2.5.1.2 DP reported that following the last meeting, he and LL went to the Parish Council to explain the impact of the school's falling role on its financial position. The delegation asked the Council to consider:

- a) underwriting the costs of the school if the crisis point were ever reached, and
- b) fully investigating the building of affordable housing in the village, ring-fenced for young families.

These points were received with proper concern, and it was very apparent that the Parish Council wished to be helpful and supportive if they could. Following the presentation at the meeting, the Parish Council's published minutes indicated that detailed discussions had continued, and that the school's concerns had been taken very seriously.

With regard to point (a), the Parish Council feels that the right action for the school in the first instance is to investigate whether any financial shortfall could be met with funding from the Trustees of the School (the Council noted<sup>1</sup> *"that the Crosby Ravensworth United Schools Foundation (CRUSF) held funds of £136,000 on deposit, was in addition well-endowed with property and that its primary objective was to support the school. It was noted to have regular income from rentals of £9,000. In view of this it was not considered appropriate for the council to make a financial contribution to the school as its financial position should be secure."* DP had spoken to the Chair of the Parish Council subsequent to this meeting, and it had been suggested that the Chair of the Parish Council; DP; a Governor; a member of the Parochial Church Council; and one of the Trustees from CRUSF should try to meet informally to discuss ways in which the position might be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> extract from Crosby Ravensworth Parish Council minutes of 3 July 2017

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(For those who were unclear as to the role of the Trustees, DP explained that the school had been built on land owned by the Foundation, and that Foundation funds had been boosted by various bequeathed properties, which are currently let out and generating rental income. It was recognised and gratefully acknowledged that the Trustees were very supportive of the school with regard to specific projects such as the recent extension. Hitherto, however, the school had not encountered the financial problems which the falling roll and cuts to funding had created, and consequently had not previously approached the Trustees for support for operating costs. It was noted that the charitable objects of the Foundation provided that the Trustees could apply the income of the charity in *“assisting the Governors for the time being of the school to defray the cost of meeting their obligations under the Education Acts 1944 to 1986.”* Whilst it was recognised that the Foundation needed to retain sufficient funds to manage their assets, governors felt it entirely appropriate to open dialogue and seek assistance with operational costs until the school roll rose again.)

As far as point (b) was concerned, the Parish Council noted that the immediate risks the school face were from the falling roll. Whilst supporting the need for more housing, the Council felt that the school could do more to market itself and its catchment area. It was felt it was particularly important to contact property agents for the new development at Kings Meaburn to ensure that the benefits the school can offer (free transport, wrap-around care, etc) are made known to prospective residents. Discussion ensued amongst the School Governors as to the critical roll number, and the reasons why school rolls fluctuated. Various points were noted, including the facts that where one school grew to the point where it was perceived to be “too big” by parents, children were channelled towards smaller schools, and that provision of free transport was apparently becoming less of a significant factor in parents’ decisions. DP was **challenged** to answer what size roll the school required to break even. He responded that, based on research across the county and his experience at CRPS, 28/29 pupils was the number, although he added the school would run far more comfortably in the mid-thirties and beyond.

<b>ACTIONS:</b>	DP to pull together an informal meeting with representatives of the Parish Council; Parochial Church Council; Trustees and Governors of the School to consider constructive ways forward	<b>DP</b>
	A governor will continue to support the school with marketing and PR to raise the profile across the catchment, with particular emphasis on Kings Meaburn	<b>MLR</b>

2.5.1.3 As far as outsourcing of school cleaning is concerned, DP explained that there appeared to be a marginal cost-saving, but that more importantly, a number of management benefits would be achieved if Orian Solutions undertook the contract (Orian currently provides the school catering service). These included:

- production of a site file for the school, detailing the cleaning requirements and schedule
- various training courses for the cleaning staff including manual handling, health and safety, and hoovering training (one of the Governors expressed a desire to attend this latter course to quality-assess the training on offer)
- PAT testing
- management of cleaning-related COSHH responsibilities
- recruitment and management of cleaning staff

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- most importantly from a day-to-day management point of view, responsibility for ensuring that cleaning continued if the designated cleaner was absent for any reason

The Governors **challenged** DP on two key issues:

- confirmation that the cleaning staff conditions were as good as they were under direct employment – which DP confirmed they were (with the hourly pay actually being £0.02p higher), and the local candidate who had come forward being eligible for interview by Orian
- on the length of the contract; trial periods and break clauses – DP to confirm the details with Orian

<b>ACTION:</b>	DP to confirm contract details with Orian, and proceed if acceptable to Resource Committee	<b>DP</b>
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DP said that he and the school were very sorry that the long-standing cleaner, Nicola Atkinson, was leaving due to a family bereavement creating child-care issues, and the board added their thanks for Nicola's service and sympathies for her bereavement.

It was also noted that Freda, the school cook (employed by Orian), was on sick leave with a broken foot, which was proving very slow to heal. With every sympathy for Freda, the board noted that the Orian contract did free DP from the need to find a substitute cook himself.

2.5.1.4 The **Financial Procedures Manual** was noted by the board; and the **School Financial Value Standard** was signed by the Chair.

### 2.5.2 PUPIL PROGRESS COMMITTEE 13 SEPTEMBER 2017:

2.5.2.1 In the absence of BD, SP reported that the Pupil Progress Committee had been extremely pleased with the school's very good results. The KS2 SATS results in particular had been excellent – above regional and national expectations in every area apart from reading (explained by illness to a pupil). Reception children had achieved early learning targets, and all phonics tests were passed. The school is above both local and national averages, except for reading. DP explained that one pupil had had to take the papers at home, and had just missed out on passing the reading paper by two marks. After **challenges** from the committee, rigorous examination of the results had been unable to identify any specific areas of weakness upon which to focus this year's efforts. It had been recognised that every area was really good, and that significant progress had been made. DP said that they were continuing to look for weaknesses, as the school had no intention of allowing itself to become complacent.

2.5.2.2 SP advised the board that the Committee had agreed the school should no longer maintain a 'Gifted and Talented' list. It was felt that the very small numbers in each year made it relatively pointless, as each child's ability was individually known to every teacher. DP said that the list was arguably superfluous in larger schools too,

and that a lot of schools were dropping the concept. Governors were encouraged to continue to look out for able pupils who might appear to be coasting when scrutinising pupil performance.

2.5.2.3 SP mentioned that one child with SEN did not make as good progress as they would have liked, but the position was being examined. A Governor **challenged** why the child was not making progress and SP explained that it was really difficult to engage the pupil's attention, and as the pupil also struggles to retain information the child was on the SEN register. DP said that regular dialogue took place with the parents, and the Educational Psychologist had found that the pupil was not that far below the expected standard. Although the pupil was summer-born, it was not felt that moving back a year was appropriate, and the school continues to provide appropriate support.

DP commented that the two committee meetings had been really constructive and purposeful, probably the best since he had come to the school.

### **3      MAIN BUSINESS**

**3.1      HEADTEACHER'S REPORT:** DP talked the board through the highlights of his report. He stressed that whilst the school was not going to get complacent, he felt they could not be better placed – apart from the fact that the roll was about five children short. The school is currently a very happy place to be, with lively children and happy, well-motivated staff.

A **challenge** over the attendance figures spotlighted the fact that the absence of one child in America had skewed the data significantly. DP commented that since returning, the pupil had made phenomenal academic progress. A further **challenge** was made over whether any fines had been imposed, and DP said not, reporting that he had not heard of any being applied in Cumbria. The preferred approach was to monitor and address any impact on the child's learning, and the impression conveyed by the local authority was that they do not wish to impose fines.

SP reported that the school was achieving points towards the Bronze Award in the Food For Life project, and that a number of visits were taking place to local producers. MLR invited the children to visit Askham Hall, which was gratefully accepted. SP also said that the Gardening Club was going to gain further impetus with the help of support from a parent dedicated to gardening.

DP drew attention to the forthcoming audits of Safeguarding (October) and Health and Safety (Summer 2018) with Kym Allen, the school's contracted health and safety advisor.

It noted that DP's performance appraisal would be due in October and that there were benefits in this being undertaken alongside another Headteacher, in line with

the peer-to-peer concept. SR and JPT had undertaken the last performance review, and if possible would undertake the next.

(Other matters in the Headteacher's report had been covered elsewhere.)

- 3.2 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:** DP asked Governors to note the plan and invited questions. He said that he finally felt that he had reached a position where the SDP was a dynamic, working document which truly documented the school's forward progress. Peer support had assisted him to realise that the SDP should be highly visible, and in a constant state of update and development. The paper presented to the board is now a genuine snapshot of the status of the school's development at this point in time. As a working plan, the document is in a constant state of evolution and is updated throughout each week.
- 3.3 SELF-EVALUATION FORM:** the SEF was also presented. In response to a **challenge**, DP explained that the SEF is a non-statutory document which is used to diagnose the current position of the school. This then helps to identify what needs to be carried forward into the SDP (the analogy that the SEF produces a 'diagnosis' and the SDP sets out the 'cure' was used).
- 3.4 GOVERNORS' OBJECTIVES AND VISITS:** LL said that she felt that the governor visit programme should be more focused on the curriculum subjects. It was noted that the visits programme had been subject to slippage due to the high turnover in governors over the last twelve months or so, and it was felt that this would be a good point to establish a new focus and impetus. It was agreed that subjects should be allocated to governors as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Governor</b>
Maths	DMcC
English (including Reading)	SR
Religious Education	LL
Science	AW
Art and Design	} JPT
Design and Technology	
Music	AW
Physical education	LW
Computing	BD
Geography	} SF
History	
Languages	MLR

SR recalled that guidance notes for conducting visits and a pro-forma for reporting the outcome had been developed in 2015 and undertook to circulate these to Governors, with an example report. It was emphasised that the purpose of the visits was not to assess the teaching, but to find out how the subject is taught.

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<b>ACTIONS:</b>	SR to circulate guidance notes and pro forma to Governors	<b>SR</b>
	Clerk to include the schedule with the "status of the board" summary	<b>CR</b>
	Chair to include monitoring visits in the Governors' Rapid Action Plan	<b>LL</b>

### 3.5 POLICY REVIEWS:

- 3.5.1 **Complaints Procedure:** SR reported that she had looked at the Council's model Complaints Procedure and contrasted it with the one on the school's website. The only difference was that the school's policy did not specify time limits for responding to complaints. Following comparisons with Morland and Orton Schools' policies, SR proposed that the school should set a time limit of five school days for responding to minor complaints, and twenty school days for more detailed responses. This was agreed.

<b>ACTION:</b>	CR to supply the Complaints Policy document in Word format for SR to amend	<b>CR, SR</b>
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- 3.5.2 **School Marking Policy:** DP pointed out that this paper explained why a marking policy was no longer needed, but that an Assessment Policy would be forthcoming during the term.

- 3.5.3 **Special Educational Needs Policy:** this policy was presented to advise governors that it had been ascertained that the review period for the policy should be three years, not one year, and the policy and schedule had been amended accordingly.

- 3.5.4 **Online Safety Policy:** SP explained that she had taken the policy to Kym Allan for review, and the only changes needed were to amend the title and references in the policy from "E-Safety" to "Online Safety." SP also advised that there was a need for a Link Governor for Online Safety, and MLR volunteered to take on this role (which fitted well with her role in connection with social media for the school).

Some discussion took place over the complexity of the policy, and SP said she had had to ask the school IT consultant to review and explain various areas. One of the Governors **challenged** the value of a policy which was not readily accessible to all. A discussion ensued, and although the dangers of deviating from the model policy were recognised, it was also noted that policies needed to be interpreted for general use.

<b>ACTION:</b>	LL to include in the Governors' RAP the need to identify ways for complex policies to be communicated to those who need to be aware	<b>LL</b>
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- 3.5.5 **Religious Education Policy:** SP said she had undertaken training for a new scheme for RE based on "understanding Christianity in depth." Schools which had taken this training on board were getting excellent SIAMS feedback demonstrating the value of this approach, and it had been agreed at a staff meeting that the content of the RE Policy should be changed to include this.

## 4 STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

- 4.1 **STATUS OF GOVERNING BODY:** it had been agreed earlier that this paper should be expanded to include the "Monitoring Visits" roles.

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The fact that the board now had ten Governors (out of a complement of twelve) was noted and applauded. MLR had earlier indicated her willingness to take on Governorship, and there was some discussion as to whether she should stand as a Parent Governor or the Local Authority Governor. It was agreed that the best approach would be to report her self-nomination as a parent governor via the next school bulletin, and seek any further nominations (none had been forthcoming last time). In the event of others coming forward, MLR indicated her willingness to propose herself as an LA Governor.

It was also noted that the vacancy for a Health and Safety Link Governor could not be allowed to continue indefinitely, and LL undertook to include this in the Governors' Rapid Action Plan with a view to canvassing the Governors absent from tonight's meeting.

<b>ACTION:</b>	CR to prepare letter for parents inviting further nominations for the Parent Governor role	<b>CR</b>
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- 4.2 **GOVERNORS' RAPID ACTION PLAN:** LL undertook to update and renew this valuable document, and in the absence of anyone present having the time to meet to contribute to the review, LL said she would circulate an e-copy when drafted.

<b>ACTION:</b>	LL to update and circulate the Governors' RAP to all Governors for input	<b>LL</b>
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4.3 **LINK GOVERNOR UPDATES:**

- .1 **Church:** no report as SF was absent.
- .2 **Governor training and induction:** it was noted that SR had done extremely well to bring yet another prospective Governor to tonight's meeting!
- .3 **Special Educational Needs and Disability:** LL explained that she had a meeting scheduled with the SENCO shortly.
- .4 **Nursery:** the absence of a link Governor was found to be less important given the excellent report sent to the meeting by the Nursery Manager. The Board was delighted to see that the Nursery was showing encouraging signs of re-growth, and LL undertook to write to the Manager confirming the Board's appreciation.
- .5 **Health and Safety:** this role needs to be filled following MR's resignation on 1 May 2017 – to be included in the Governors' Rapid Action Plan.
- .6 **Safeguarding:** SR said that there was nothing to report other than the forthcoming audit.
- .7 **Online Safety and Personal Social Health Education:** as reported earlier, MLR was happy to adopt this role when she became a Governor.

<b>ACTIONS:</b>	H&S Link Governor recruitment to be addressed in Governors' RAP	<b>LL</b>
	Chair to write to Nursery Manager to thank them for the report and to congratulate them on the progress made	<b>LL</b>

- 4.4 **GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER:** the late Spring/Summer newsletter had been prepared and circulated by JPT. It was noted that BD was scheduled to produce the Autumn edition.

<b>ACTION:</b>	Governor's Autumn newsletter to be prepared and circulated	<b>BD</b>
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## **5 REVIEW OF MEETING**

5.1 **MEETING REVIEW:** LL said that she was very grateful for the challenges made by various Governors. DP noted that LL had conducted the meeting extremely well. CR commented that the board was in the healthiest state it had been since she had become Clerk.

5.2 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS / ITEMS FOR AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:** DP mentioned that teachers and leaders from Shap, Temple Sowerby, Tebay and Orton had recently visited the school to try to learn from good teaching practice.

### **5.3 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

Pupil Progress Committee	1830, Wednesday, 17 January 2018
Resources Committee	1730, Wednesday, 24 January 2018
<b>FULL BOARD</b>	<b>1830, Wednesday, 31 January 2018</b>

Pupil Progress Committee	1830, Wednesday, 9 May 2018
Resources Committee	1730, Wednesday, 16 May 2018
<b>FULL BOARD</b>	<b>1830, Wednesday, 23 May 2018</b>

### **Ratified by:**

DP: "Thanks for your brilliant first draft!" and various amendments, all incorporated in Version 2; 29 September 2017

LL: "Looks good to me, well done!" and various adjustments included in Versions 3 and 4; 29 September 2017

AW: "Received with thanks;" 30 September 2017

SP: "I've got them Chloe thanks! No comment to make" 2 October 2017

### **Those note attending:**

JPT: "They look good;" 30 September 2017

LW: "I acknowledge receipt of the minutes, many thanks" 1 October 2017