

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

31 January 2018, Crosby Ravensworth School

MINUTES

PRESENT:	Liz Lindwall	Foundation Governor	(Chair)	LL
	Rev Stewart Fyfe	Foundation Governor, ex officio	(Vice Chair)	SF
	Duncan Priestley	Staff Governor, ex officio	(Headteacher)	DP
	Becky Day	Foundation Governor		BD
	Susan Pattinson	Staff Governor		SP
	John Paul Turnbull	Parent Governor		JPT
	Marie-Louisa Raeburn	Parent Governor		MLR
	Sarah Rogers	Foundation Governor		SR
	Alan Woodward	Foundation Governor		AW

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Chloe Randall	Clerk to the Governors	CR
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APOLOGIES:

Debbie McCall	Foundation Governor	DMcC
Linda White	Foundation Governor	LW

Also: John Paul Turnbull, Susan Pattinson and Marie-Louisa Raeburn had to leave the meeting before its conclusion (care was taken to confirm that the meeting was still quorate at every point where decisions were made)

1 PRAYERS

SF opened the meeting with a prayer to the Heavenly Father, thanking him for bringing the group together this evening, and for the life of this school, its dedicated staff and governors, and above all, its children. He prayed that all present might have wisdom, alert minds and wise thoughts in order that the meeting might accomplish what is best for the children of this school. Amen

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

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

- Linda White, who is still some weeks away from full recovery from her accident – SR said that LW hoped to resume participation by March
- Debbie McCall had sent her apologies via the Resource Committee
- JPT, SP and MLR indicated that they would have to leave the meeting before its conclusion for a variety of very valid reasons

2.2 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 SEPTEMBER 2017:** the minutes had been circulated by e-mail; several comments had been incorporated, and the minutes were ratified by the board as a true record.

2.3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** all governors were asked if they had any further declarations of interest to make, and all confirmed they had not.

2.4 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE: none.

2.5 COMMITTEE REPORTS

2.5.1 RESOURCES COMMITTEE 25 JANUARY 2018:

2.5.1.1 JPT gave a very brief summary (as much of the information was included in the Head's Report):

- the budget is under control so far
- wrap-around care has been a success
- falling roll continues to be a very major challenge

2.5.1.2 DP mentioned that subsequent to the meeting, it was noted that the school needs to spend £2,000 before the end of the financial year (Devolved Formula Capital) on capital or ICT ventures.

2.5.2 PUPIL PROGRESS COMMITTEE 24 JANUARY 2018:

2.5.2.1 BD said that the comprehensive minutes had been circulated, and that they had had a very good meeting with a lot of good discussion about holding people to account. It had been a very positive discussion, and they had found that several members of staff had already started to address problems arising from DP's report.

2.5.2.2 DP said that the Headteacher at Patterdale was sending the committee a very useful resource for Safeguarding, which should form a regular part of the committee's agenda.

3 MAIN BUSINESS

3.1 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT:

3.1.1 DP said that it had taken days to write this report, and he had to keep changing many areas as things happened – such as the Nursery news and the falling roll data.

3.1.2 **Next Ofsted inspection:** DP specifically asked governors to note the first of the five bullet points in his introduction. An Ofsted inspection would be due in October, and these points would undoubtedly be raised at the start of the inspection. The first bullet related to governors' roles and responsibilities, and had occurred because of the high turnover of governors at the time of the last inspection – something which has unfortunately continued. Every governor needs to understand that it is vital that they both challenge and support the leaders, and that the highlighting of challenges in board minutes helped to encourage and identify this practice. It was also again mentioned that DP was very good at challenging himself, but that the board should be vigilant to ensure that he has challenged himself sufficiently! DP also took the chance to impress upon the newer governors that "there is no such thing as a stupid question" and that they should not hesitate to seek clarification of terms and acronyms with which they are not familiar. It was suggested that prior to the inspection governors should find time to visit the school and familiarise themselves with the location of files and other governor resources, and perhaps someone

should put together a “hit list” of things which governors should know. The opportunity to have a Local Authority “health check” once the school had entered the inspection window was also noted, and would be grasped as soon as possible.

3.1.3 Nursery situation: all governors noted with great sadness that the Nursery staff were on twelve weeks’ notice of closure.

3.1.3.1 The papers circulated prior to the meeting about the possibility of taking children into the school from the age of three were discussed in some depth. DP was **challenged** to clarify the break-even point based on the cost-benefit figures, and to clarify whether the “total number of children” referred to full-time children, or simply those on roll. The sad reality, however, is that from knowledge of the community, the school is only likely to be asked to take one child in this age range so the break-even point is irrelevant.

3.1.3.2 Much discussion took place over the practicalities of being able to offer this facility, and it was regrettably concluded that with the current complement of one Teaching Assistant, there is simply not enough slack in the system to accommodate the responsibilities which would accrue. Other schools with a slightly larger numbers of TAs are able to be more flexible, but until that happens, it is not practical to offer to take younger pupils.

3.1.3.3 DP was **challenged** to explain whether there would be greater flexibility in an Academy structure, as on the face of it, it seems to present a solution. The well-rehearsed arguments for and against academies were reviewed again in the light of this changing situation, and it was again concluded that the future of the school would be in jeopardy if this route was pursued. It was also debated whether the school was providing an education fit for the 21st century, and it was again concluded that the resources (such as IT and sports equipment) the school is currently able to offer the children are far greater per child than in larger schools. Also the benchmark figures from the Pupil Progress Committee confirmed that the children’s academic progress was well above average for the county. It was thought that the perception that small schools could only offer limited opportunities might be valid nearer to population centres, but in rural counties it is simply not the case.

3.1.3.4 The debate then turned to the question of the falling roll, and the various lobbying actions which DP had made since the last board meeting. There seemed to be little enthusiasm from the Parish Council for actively trying to get affordable housing built in the village, and their answer to the school’s falling roll continued to be “market yourself better.” All governors were irritated by this comment, as the school has become extremely active in terms of marketing itself – although further and sustained effort is of course needed. It was suggested that the Lyvennet Community Land Trust was more likely to recognise this issue and take positive action, and it was agreed that the liaison, via Kitty Fisher, should be maintained and prioritised. It was also noted that further publicity of the fact that families in Kings Meaburn benefit from a free school bus could be useful, in conjunction with other awareness

activities in that village. It was also recognised that other schools in the area were “getting too large” and historical behaviour patterns suggested that parents may seek a more intimate setting for their children. The board was enormously heartened by the news that one family had specifically moved into the area in order to be in the CRPS catchment area.

3.1.3.5 DP was then **challenged** as to what other uses the Nursery accommodation might be put to? A discussion followed, and it was concluded that there were significant difficulties (eg, relating to safeguarding and security) if an alternative tenant was sought, although it was worth discovering if any other nursery/childcare operations in the area might be interested. There was, however, strong support for using the space to improve the facilities of the school – for example, a dedicated science room, or quiet space for one-to-one support.

ACTIONS:	DP to insert a feature in the Lyvennet Link on a “local Kings Meaburn student”	DP
	DP to suggest a fund raising activity in Kings Meaburn Village Hall	DP
	all Governors to lobby for affordable housing wherever possible, and with Lyvennet Community Land Trust in particular	All

3.1.3.6 **Diocesan visit:** the report of the recent Diocesan visit was noted, with a **challenge** to DP over the apparent length of time spent on site. DP confirmed that in fact the consultant had been at the school for at least one hour, and had been in time to join the singing practice.

3.1.3.7 **The school’s second diabetic child:** the school now has a second diabetic child, with differing treatment regimes to the first, which puts additional strain on the teaching staff in these early stages. This is particularly so as the school has a new member of staff (who is settling in very well and doing good work). DP was **challenged** as to whether this was having an impact on curriculum standards in that class. He acknowledged that it was difficult and put more pressure on both himself and the other staff, although as everyone became more accustomed and skilled, the position should improve. He felt he was extremely lucky to have staff who were prepared to cope, and who have maintained standards, but governors should recognise that this is a challenging time. Additional funding should be available for the child and has already been applied for, but it is unlikely that this will be forthcoming before the summer, at best. Governors were concerned to be kept advised of this situation and asked for “Welfare, standards and morale” to become a regular item on the agenda, and wished the staff to know that they recognised and appreciated their efforts to manage this complex situation.

ACTION:	“Welfare, standards, morale” to be added as a regular item for Governors meetings	CR
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3.1.3.8 DP pointed out that recent training relating to the new diabetic child had identified the need for additional training in “control and restraint due to diabetic issues.” The potential requirement for control in these circumstances had been added to the

Whole School Behaviour Policy, and DP was **challenged** as to whether this was the correct place? He confirmed that he had checked with the school's Health and Safety consultant, and had been advised that this was correct. DP was also **challenged** as to the nature of the training to be obtained, and he confirmed that the special nature of this training was being fully taken into account. A further **challenge** was then made as to whether restraint had been referenced on the child's diabetes check list, and DP pointed to the check list on the wall, which had been compiled with the parents' consent. The list will be amplified to describe how restraint is achieved after appropriate training had been identified and received.

- 3.1.3.9 Further discussion ensued over ensuring that the school was taking full advantage of additional funding for pupils with special needs, and that all those eligible for Pupil Premium were claiming it.

ACTION:	BD to discuss with Pauline the ways in which eligibility and desirability of Pupil Premium might be brought to parents' attention	BD
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- 3.2 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:** In response to a **challenge** about the continuing relevance of the School Development Plan, DP confirmed that his ability to use it as a living, evolving document had continued and developed, and that it was completely up to date. He felt that the relationship between the Self Evaluation Form (the non-statutory "diagnostic tool") and the SDP (the "cure") was working well, and that the development of the school was well on track.

- 3.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION VISITS:** LL reminded Governors of the need to achieve their monitoring and evaluation visits within the term, with responsibilities currently as listed on the "Status of the Board" paper. SR undertook to recirculate the guidance notes and pro forma, and to see if they can be made available on the website for easy access. It was recognised that this subject needed to form part of the Governors' Rapid Action Plan.

ACTIONS:	SR to re-circulate guidance notes and pro forma to Governors	SR
	Chair to include monitoring visits in the Governors' Rapid Action Plan	LL

- 3.4 POLICY REVIEWS:** all the below policies were accepted by the board:
- 3.4.1 **Whole School Behaviour Policy:** (the board noting the extra bullet point relating to the use of restraint for medical purposes as discussed at paragraph 3.1.3.8).
- 3.4.2 **Child Protection Policy:** updated.
- 3.4.3 **Complaints Policy:** SR confirmed that the time limits in the policy were now in line with other schools.
- 3.4.4 **Crisis Management Policy:** contact details have now been updated.

A FURTHER ITEM WAS DISCUSSED AT THIS POINT, AND IS INCLUDED IN THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES.

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4 STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

4.1 **STATUS OF GOVERNING BODY**

4.1.1 It was noted that the board now had only one vacancy – for the Local Authority Governor – following Marie-Louisa Raeburn's unopposed election as a Parent Governor last October. DP commented that it was important to have this remaining post filled, as it provided a strong link between the board and the trustees of the school.

4.1.2 DMCC's offer to act as Health and Safety Link Governor was also noted with great satisfaction.

4.1.3 LL's notice of resignation after the May board meeting was noted with regret but with full understanding, and thanks were offered for her valuable work in the role at a time when it had been much needed. It was suggested that some thought might be given to improving succession planning by proposing a single year term of office for the chair, with vice chair to take the chair role the following year (SF commenting that he would be happy to stand down to enable this to happen). DP said it was also possible to have "co-chairs" as a way of sharing the responsibilities. It was recognised that an election would be needed at the next board meeting.

ACTION:	CR to ask for nominations and self-nominations when the agenda is circulated for the next meeting, so that an election could be conducted at the end of the meeting	CR
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4.1.4 **DBS checks:** DP said that the Health and Safety consultant had advised that the governors could formally agree to accept a Disclosure and Barring Service check undertaken by another organisation for one of their members. If a governor has no unsupervised access to pupils on a regular basis, the "barred list check" is not required and the Enhanced Disclosure is fine. The school need see the DBS check, take the appropriate details for the Single Central Record, and note in the comments column the date of the governors' meeting (or the chair's decision) when it was agreed this could be accepted.

ACTION:	DP to advise the school office	DP
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4.2 **GOVERNORS' RAPID ACTION PLAN:** LL said that she had looked at the last RAP (May 2016) and felt that events had moved so far forward, that there was little of relevance in that document. She asked for governors to join her to brainstorm a list of six or so key items – one of which needed to be "Monitoring and Evaluation Visits" – to form the basis of a new, evolving document (learning from the newly-dynamic status of the SDP). It was recognised that all governors needed to be involved, but that gathering all together for an additional meeting was not practical. It was agreed that LL should circulate dates when she was available, with her first ideas, and that others would send in their own ideas when confirming which dates suited the best. There may need to be two or three small gatherings to gain every governor's input.

ACTION:	LL to circulate dates and ideas to build the RAP	LL
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4.3 **LINK GOVERNOR UPDATES:**

.1 **Church:** SF said that he was delighted to be back in school this term, with the topic being the Lord's Prayer so that children grew to understand its meaning and to learn

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it. They would also be studying the Stations of the Cross in Church, with RE lessons looking at art work relating to the crucifixion appropriate to the pupils' ages. SR asked if Confirmation Classes were to start, and SF said that he would be very keen to do this this year

- .2 **Governor training and induction:** SR reported that the Local Authority has not yet made any nomination for the one remaining vacancy, but that the new governors had completed their initial training. SR said that she was trying to focus on free courses and those of particular benefit to make best use of the budget
- .3 **Special Educational Needs and Disability:** LL said she had met with Heather Lowthian (SENCO) and discussed roles, responsibilities and processes. A further meeting was planned to look at IEPs, success criteria and monitoring; also to discuss the second diabetes pupil
- .4 **Nursery:** the Nursery Manager had sent the board a report containing the sad news that the nursery was no longer viable (discussed above – **not yet public knowledge**)
- .5 **Health and Safety:** (DMcC had left the meeting earlier) the accident report for Autumn 2017 had been included with the papers. It was noted that the Health and Safety Audit was due this summer
- .6 **Safeguarding:** SR said that there was a nil report, and that a safeguarding report needed to be presented to each Pupil Progress meeting. DP referred to the e-mail he had circulated on 29 January 2018 including this link https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf to the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2016) which sets out everyone's statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding, and asked governors to confirm they had all received it.* DP also said that he had completed Level 2 training, and was taking Level 3 shortly with Jane Corrie so there would be two members of staff trained at the highest level. (In response to a **challenge** as to why this was only being achieved at this stage, DP admitted that "we had dropped the ball" due to other pressures. SF commented that it was not ideal for a teaching head to carry this requirement, but that as DP was the only member of staff present five days a week, it was unavoidable.
- .7 **Online Safety and Personal Social Health Education:** (MLR had left the meeting earlier) SP commented that a governor's name was needed for On-Line Safety and undertook to liaise with MLR

ACTION:	SP to discuss with MLR	SP
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SR raised the point that at one time there had been an item on the agenda for "staff concerns" but this had lapsed as there had been no concerns raised for some time. It was thought that SP (who had left the meeting earlier) should be encouraged to e-mail SR if she wanted to raise any concerns from the staff, and it was to be made clear that these could be discussed in the absence of DP if necessary or appropriate.

ACTION:	SR to ensure that SP is aware of this facility	SR
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- 4.4 **GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER:** BD volunteered to produce the Spring 2018 newsletter before the start of the half term break.

ACTION:	Governor's Spring newsletter to be prepared and circulated, and added to the website	BD
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5 **REVIEW OF MEETING**

5.1 **MEETING REVIEW:** LL said she thought the meeting had covered a lot of ground, made appropriate challenges, identified things to do, and had generally been extremely positive and helpful, and she thanked all present.

5.2 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS / ITEMS FOR AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:**

BD said that the Pupil Progress Committee needed to review the Sex and Relationships Policy and that they intended to contact the LGBT foundation for advice on transgender issues. DP said that this subject had also been raised at a Heads meeting, and SF undertook to find out whether the Church had any material to help.

SF subsequently sent links to the two papers that came before General Synod last summer:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2071a-welcoming-transgender-people.pdf>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2071b-welcoming-transgender-people-a-note-from-the-secretary-general.pdf>

SF commented that the discussion of liturgies in the first paper may be less relevant, but the introduction would be helpful, as would the second paper.

5.3 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

Pupil Progress Committee	1830, Wednesday, 9 May 2018
Resources Committee	1730, Wednesday, 16 May 2018
FULL BOARD	1830, Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Ratified by:

LL technical amendment to 4.3.3, and 3.4.5 (confidential) – 7 February 2018

* BD confirmed by email, 31 January 2018
LL confirmed by email, 1 February 2018
SP confirmed by email, 7 February 2018