



**Minutes of the full governing board
Spaxton School CofE VC Primary School
Thursday 28th February 2019 at 6.00pm**

Present: Andrew Watson (Co-Chair and Chair of Meeting), Luke Kelly (Head Teacher), Suzanne Traynor (Co-Chair), Heidi Moule, Revd. Eleanor King, Kerry Henderson and Becky Skews

In attendance: Karen Canham (Head Teacher of Haygrove School and Trustee of Haygrove Academy Trust), Tina Stoel-Walker (Chair of Trustees, Haygrove Academy Trust) and Helen Roper (Clerk)

1. Opening Prayer

Revd. Eleanor King led the meeting in an opening prayer

0. The background to the academisation decision

Karen Canham thanked the board for inviting her to the meeting to outline why previous members of the Spaxton board had elected to join with Haygrove school in a multi-academy trust. She asked if governors had had an opportunity to read the information forwarded by Cath McAdam, chair of governors at the time of the original decision as Haygrove had followed a similar process in making the decision to become an academy. Their drivers had also been a decrease in the capacity of the local authority to support the school, falling budgets and the national policy direction towards academisation.

The first discussions about primary schools joining the academy trust had taken place in the autumn of 2016 and presentations had been made to staff and to parents in November the same year. The diocese formally agreed to the proposals through a Letter of Conditional Consent in July 2017 and an application initially featuring Spaxton, Stogursey and Otterhampton schools was submitted to Rebecca Clark, the then Regional Schools Commissioner. However, following a challenging Ofsted monitoring inspection, Otterhampton withdrew from the process and joined an established local MAT. The bid was turned down on the grounds that the proposed MAT was too small.

The trust was then approached by Crowcombe and Stogumber schools and a second application including Spaxton, Stogursey and the 2 federated schools was approved in November 2018.

Karen explained that her vision for the Quantock Education Trust was for a MAT of around 10 to 12 schools. There would be some standardisation in order to improve outcomes and gain efficiencies but each school would retain its individuality.

She outlined the governance structure within the MAT and explained the focus of the primary head of school/head teacher would change with a single emphasis on the

standards of teaching and learning. The local governing bodies would therefore focus on the standards and performance of the school and holding the head to account. The Chairs group would continue to meet after the MAT was established.

In order to ensure there was sufficient primary expertise, the trust was planning to appoint a primary executive head. The post would be part-time. **A governor asked if the appointment was likely to be made from one of the primary schools.** Karen replied yes, the MAT would be looking to grow its own expertise.

Karen predicted that there would be little day to day change for school staff; the greatest difference would be in the availability of inter-school support and the support of the teaching school. She drew governors' attention to the school improvement model that formed part of the successful application and stressed the CPD was key to its delivery.

(Kerry Henderson joined the meeting at 6.25)

Karen stated that the trust was looking to develop a 2 to 16 curriculum journey and as part of this may look closely at Y5 to Y8 curriculum.

Tina Stoel-Walker outlined the current governance arrangements; she explained that while the Haygrove Academy Trust board were responsible for the decisions leading to the establishment of the Quantock Education Trust, it was working closely with a shadow board that would assume responsibility as soon as the trust was in operation. She was a member of both boards but noted that there had been a rigorous recruitment process and a number of applicants had been disappointed.

A governor asked if Crowcombe and Stogumber schools were feeder schools for Haygrove. They are currently in the Kingsmead catchment area but Karen hopes to review admissions arrangements in the future. **Are there any local schools currently considering joining the trust?** This is unclear but Karen makes a point to talk to local schools following a change of head or a change in governance. **Governors welcomed plans to minimise transitions within the trust and the possibility of a "middle school phase curriculum, had the process of growing the trust changed Karen's view on transition?** Karen said it was clear that the KS3 curriculum did not build on the KS2 curriculum. She added that the MAT would explore what happens in the post- SATS period.

Andrew thanked Karen and Tina on behalf of the board and they left the meeting at 6.55. The board then discussed the presentation. Governors welcomed the preservation of the identity of the individual schools and felt it was clear that it was a case of "Haygrove wanting them". It was agreed that work had been done to understand the primary context but concern was expressed that there was still an element of the schools being "done to". It was felt it was important that Karen and other secondary staff experienced

a day in the life of a primary head in order to better understand the context. **ACTION: co-Chairs to raise this this at their next meeting with Karen**

2. Chairs' Report

- 2.1. Andrew and Suzanna reminded all governors that it was imperative that they checked their email accounts regularly and either responded to emails or acknowledged their receipt. There were a lot of decisions which could not wait until an FGB as they needed to be made rapidly and it was important that all governors were involved in the discussion process.

3. Apologies and Declaration of Interests

- 3.1. Apologies were received and accepted from Dean Waghorn; apologies for lateness had also been received and accepted from Kerry Henderson.
- 3.2. There were no declarations of interests re: agenda items

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2019 and matters arising not covered by the agenda

- 4.1. The minutes of the 9th January were agreed to be an accurate record and were signed by the meeting chair
- 4.2. (6.1) Board contact details had been updated and posted to Dropbox
- 4.3. (6.2) All governors were now on the newsletter mailing list
- 4.4. (7.6) The PTFA had provided funds for the purchase of reading test materials

5. Head Teacher's Report

- 5.1. A copy of the head's report had been circulated before the meeting and governors had forwarded a number of questions in advance.
- 5.2. The head explained that the school was in the middle of its second data drop of the year so there was no new performance data to report. **A governor asked if the progress figures within the report were lower than expected.** The head and staff governor explained that they appeared low because they represented the progress pupils had made in this year's curriculum. For example, a pupil who had made better than expected overall progress in Y2 would not be listed as making progress in Y3 until they achieved "better" better than expected progress. This was a problem with School Pupil Tracker On-line and the reason why the MAT was exploring alternative systems
- 5.3. Attendance was below national average but this was largely due to recurring sickness affecting pupils but were measured against their overall progress for last year.
- 5.4. The head reported that on the day the school received a letter from the Secretary of State for Education congratulating it on being in the top 3% of all schools in the country it received a letter from the Local Authority (LA) saying it was an amber

school as there is an acting head in post. The LA letter was rather disappointing and was being challenged

- 5.5. The head informed the meeting that the planned fire escape work did not take place over the half-term but was in hand. The money for the installation of the school gates was ring-fenced and would be carried out whatever the academisation date.
- 5.6. The head responded to the questions about his report and the SDP submitted in advance of the meeting. **Successive monitoring record pupils having positive engagement in lessons. What other means of monitoring are used to ensure pupils understand the curriculum?** The head explained that the curriculum was designed specifically with mixed year groups in mind and that there was no repetition of material. The school was looking at new ways of evidencing the curriculum, for example for the current work on bats, there would be a video record. The head added this was part of the focus on the wider curriculum and would be key to engaging in the new Ofsted framework. **A governor asked if there was time to offer a broader curriculum, are staff pressurised?** The head said that the school had always provided a broad curriculum and there would be time
- 5.7. **Are targeted interventions of Pupil Premium showing any impact on progress/attainment?** Yes. Pupil Premium (PP) pupils are making better progress than their non-pupils premium peers. The parental uptake for the purchase of a reading library for PP pupils had not been as successful as hoped, but the school had arranged for book sales to take place on the premises. The introduction of the Reading Dog was proving to be very successful.
- 5.8. **How will you demonstrate to Governing Board that reading improvement is taking place?** Through data and monitoring information; the NFER scores show improvement is taking place
- 5.9. **What impact have good practice visits had on teachers and their methods?** The staff governor said that she had found her visit reassuring as it showed her that someone with the same mix of Year groups was using the same approach. She added that she had also introduced new techniques after her visit
- 5.10. **When is Governor survey due?** It is due now, the head explained he had been waiting until governance arrangements were stable
- 5.11. **The website does not appear to be up to date – how and when will this be corrected?** The head apologised and said that he had delegated the upkeep of the website but had now taken back the responsibility. The meeting discussed ways of addressing the problem and it was suggested that a parent volunteer may wish to assist. The head reported that the “advertisement” for assembly visitors/speakers to encourage outside parties to come into school was now in place and that the announcement for the parent governor vacancy could be found under recruitment

6. School Development Plan

- 6.1. The RAG rated plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The head explained that there were a lot of amber rated actions as they covered end of year targets and could not become green until then.

- 6.2. Priority one – the head reported on the “red actions”: pupil interviews had not taken place due to pressure of work. Everything was in place but a date needed to be fixed.
- 6.3. The head reported on the amber actions – visits to good practice and to cluster meetings were ongoing. He explained that in observations he was looking for quality first teaching and a rigorous subject knowledge. He was pleased to report that Y1 were on phase 4 phonic sounds at the moment and on course to meet the target of phase 5
- 6.4. Priority 2 – red actions: The spelling bee had not yet been arranged because the appointment of new heads in neighbouring schools meant that new requests for participation had to be made. Training for Dyslexia Friendly Award had not been completed as the course had been cancelled; the school had decided to apply for the award without this input. The linked aspiration workshops had not taken place. Although green because planning had taken place, the head reported that training with Jo Thyer would not be taking place as it had proved too expensive for the school. Staff would continue to attend cluster meetings.
- 6.5. As reported in the previous item, the family trip to the book shop to purchase reading materials for home had not gone as well as expected. The visits to the in-school book shop would be staggered so that there would be no stigmatising of pupils receiving free books. **A governor asked what measures were in place if parents couldn't read or had a fear of reading.** The head explained that the school had encouraged parents to use audio-books alongside the print. This has been effective for the parents of children with English as an additional language (EAL).
- 6.6. The planned author visit was particularly targeted at struggling girls and pupils whose writing needed a little “oomph” or to be in more depth.
- 6.7. Objective 3 **ACTION: Head to upload the results of the pupil surveys to Dropbox**
- 6.8. The head asked if more governors could make themselves available for the Learning Review Week

7. Financial Items

- 7.1. The Finance Governor reported that she had met with the Extended Services Manager (ESM) for an extensive discussion, including a review of the School Financial Values Standard (SFVS) submission. She recommended that as a matter of some urgency the school explored the support that would be available to the ESM. She said that the ESM was not confident about finance and had expressed concerns that the academisation process could result in her redundancy. The finance governor had assured her that her role was far ranging and too important to lose.
- 7.2. The finance governor recommended that the SFVS document which had been circulated before the meeting should be accepted by the governors and signed by the co-Chairs. It had been correctly completed and was a true representation of the school. The school came out well in benchmarking with the exception of the purchase of support services. This was skewed by the financial management support package purchased from county.

- 7.3. She added it would have been helpful to have had the indicative budget for 2019/20 available during its completion. The head reported it had arrived that day and income was projected to be £20,000 lower than last year. This matched the school's carry forward figure.

8. Academisation Working Party Feedback

- 8.1. Governors who had attended the last meeting reported that the first part of the scheme of delegation had been dissected. The other primary schools had raised similar challenges to Spaxton and it seemed that the trust was listening and taking note of this feedback
- 8.2. Other schools had raised policies as an issue and it had been decided that there would be workshops to review these. The dates would be set at the next working part meeting (11th) but the plan was that they would all be held in the same week and governors were free to attend the workshop most convenient to them, not just the one at their home school

9. Policies and procedures

- 9.1. The DfE model complaints procedure had been circulated in advance. It was agreed to adopt the model **ACTION: Head to add Spaxton specific information to the model procedure**
- 9.2. The head reported that he had been advised that anti-bullying policies should be replaced by a "peer on peer" policy and he was awaiting the publication of a model policy by the LA. This would be additional to the school behaviour policy.
- 9.3. The advised governors that the school needed an exclusions policy and he had asked for an example of a combined behaviour and exclusion policy and had been recommended to look at the Oaklands School model which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He proposed to adopt and adapt the exclusion section and add it to the existing behaviour policy. The governors agreed to this. The meeting chair informed the meeting that he was meeting with Claire Hudson, the diocese school organisation and governance adviser to review the behaviour principles and policy.

Rebecca Skews left the meeting at 8.35

10. Governor Monitoring Reports

- 10.1. Governors had no additional questions about the reports as they had been discussed during the head's report agenda item

11. Governor responsibilities

- 11.1. The meeting chair reminded governors that Chris Fairbrass had held a number of governance responsibilities in addition to his vice-chair position. It was agreed that the pupil exclusion, staff discipline and complaints roles would not be re-assigned as any governor could be asked to sit on these panels if they had not been involved at an earlier stage in the process.

11.2. It was agreed that the premises role sat alongside health and safety and subject to his agreement this role would be taken by Dean Waghorn.

11.3. Dean would also be asked to act as the board's GDPR champion **ACTION: Co Chairs to talk to Dean**

Heidi Moule left the meeting at 8.45

12. SMSC Report

12.1. The head outlined how the current project on bats was providing pupils with a range of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural experiences. He explained how the school's rich curriculum offer, especially the holistic afternoons ensured the pupils had a full spectrum of SMSC opportunities.

12.2. **Governors asked about the monitoring of curriculum offer**

13. Safeguarding Report

13.1. The head as DSL reported that two families were currently receiving Level 2 support and that he was in the process of preparing an application for one family to receive Level 3 support.

14. Meeting review

14.1. The board reviewed the decisions and discussions within the meeting. It was agreed that governors were more comfortable about moving forward in the academisation process and more confident about assuring they help steer it rather than be steered.

14.2. The head thanked governors for their searching, challenging questions

14.3. Governors were disappointed that the meeting had overrun its 2 hours but it was noted that this was due in a large part to the guests' input taking longer than expected and that without this the meeting would have run to the agreed time.

15. Date of next meetings

15.1. Head of School recruitment planning; 6.30pm, Tuesday 5th March

15.2. Academisation Working party, Monday 11th March at Spaxton

15.3. Next FGB meeting, in order to avoid a clash with a proposed academisation working part meeting it was agreed to move this to Wednesday 24th April, starting at 6.30 **ACTION: Clerk to forward electronic invitations to governors**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.55 pm

These minutes were agreed as a true record

Signed

Date

Summary of Decisions

[illegible]

Summary of actions

[illegible]