

**Hotwells Primary School**  
**Meeting of the Local Governing Body**  
**Term 4, Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023, 4.35pm**

**Final MINUTES OF MEETING**

*Overall Objective of the Meeting: Review the school's budgetary and staffing position for continuing improvement.*

<b>Governors Present</b>	<b>In Attendance</b> (non-voting) Matt Edwards, Assistant Headteacher Sally Morris, SBM (until 1700 – Item 2) Keira Stobie, Clerk	<b>Apologies</b> Marissa Stephenson Eleanor Weaver  Rhiannon Benson (received after the meeting)
Zoe Bell Chris Bond, Chair Anthea Bruges, Vice-Chair Rob Davies Kee Jones, Headteacher Michael Martin (until 1640 – Item 3)	Before resignation of MM: Quorum = 5 (half in post) After resignation of MM: Quorum = 4 (half in post)	

**Feedback on actions from T3 2022 - 2023 Meeting**

<b>AGENDA NUMBER</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
2	Headteacher's Report	KJ to provide EYFS families with an update regarding the situation in this area	KJ
4	Governor Area Updates	RD to contact SM regarding Governor involvement in H & S.	RD
4	Governor Area Updates	RD to investigate joining SM/EW on H & S walk round.	RD
4	Governor Area Updates	KS to update records to reflect RD becoming Governor responsible for H & S.	KS
4	Governor Area Updates	RB to meet with SH T4	RB
4	Governor Area Updates	MS to arrange a follow up meeting with SM regarding the Single Central Record	MS
4	Governor Area Updates	KJ to arrange a note regarding applying for PP funding in school newsletter	KJ
5	School Leadership	KJ/ME to create a list of priorities for improving staff areas.	KJ/ME
5	School Leadership	ZB to discuss options for improving staff areas with PTA.	ZB
6	Clerk's Business	ZB to complete profile and Pecuniary Interests once access to Governor Hub has been established.	ZB
6	Clerk's Business	RD/EW to return Governor Induction Policy documents when completed.	RD/EW
6	Clerk's Business	KJ to update Governors on Behaviour Policy at the T5 meeting.	KJ

6	Clerk's Business	KS to forward website format for policy page to ME/MP.	KS
6	Clerk's Business	KJ to forward KS details of Safeguarding training video.	KJ
6	Clerk's Business	KS to provide Governors with details of Safeguarding training video when available.	KS
6	Clerk's Business	ME to e mail Governors regarding forthcoming changes to e mail accounts	ME
7	Approval of Precious Minutes and Matters Arising	CB to mark as signed on Governor Hub the final T2 minutes	CB
8	AOB and Close	CB to assist ME with new Governor page on school website.	CB
8	AOB and Close	All governors to provide ME with a short biography and photo	All Governors

Item	<b>Final Minutes of Meeting</b>
1	<p><b>Welcome (CB)</b>  Apologies were received and accepted from MS and EW. The meeting was quorate throughout.</p> <p>MM submitted his resignation, with congratulations to the school for securing a deserved Ofsted grade and the offer of assistance in the future should this be required. Thanks were extended from the Governors for all contributions made as a Parent Governor.</p> <p>MM left the meeting at this point.</p> <p><u>Pecuniary Interests</u>  No changes were reported</p> <p><u>Self-Certification</u>  Governors were thanked for completing this.</p> <p><u>Training undertaken</u>  RD had imported his training record onto Governor Hub, which was appreciated.</p> <p>Governors were reminded of the CST training session at St. Katherine's school on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 1600 – 1800.</p>
3	<p><b>Budget (SM)</b>  The school was working with CST to set the budget and this was proving challenging. Thus, the data reported remained subject to change.</p> <p>This year a deficit of £97, 103 (ninety seven thousand one hundred and three pounds) was predicted, and this was calculated to rise to £202, 923 (two hundred and two thousand nine hundred and twenty three pounds) for the next academic year.</p> <p>GAG funding was based on student numbers as recorded on the October 2022 census and would therefore decrease in the next academic year. The reduced numbers would also have an impact on other income streams, such as free school meals, yet certain variables, such as number of teachers required, remained fixed. This highlights the problems caused by being such a small school.</p>

In light of this, it has been decided to combine two year groups, thus reducing the number of teaching staff by one. This would leave six full time teachers and a SENCO for two days per week. The nursery would also stay open. By potentially combining two existing roles, the number of support staff will remain constant, but with potential savings for the school. Staffing costs have increased due to annual regradings and increased pension contributions.

Forest school could not operate as a self-sustaining entity and so would be coming to an end. Slight savings had been found for premises maintenance and the school was keen to retain some contingency when budgeting for educational supplies.

However, the decrease in income was by far the most significant factor contributing to the increasing deficit.

CST have set the school the target of working to a deficit of £175, 000 (one hundred and seventy five thousand pounds) for the next academic year and work was ongoing to achieve this.

**Governor Question: Were the staffing costs calculated taking into account the reduced number of teachers?**

They were, and staffing costs had increased in spite of this reduction because of the annual regradings and salary increases received. The school could counteract this by seeking to replace more experienced teachers with ECTs, for instance, but this was not considered an attractive option.

**Governor Question: What percentage pay increase were the predictions based on?**

This was automatically pre-populated at 5%.

**Governor Question: Is there a grant the school is no longer receiving that would account for the £9000 (nine thousand pounds) decrease in that area?**

This figure had to remain an estimate until the composition of the new reception class was known, as the number of students that would receive PP funding was uncertain and this represents a grant of £1300 (one thousand three hundred pounds) per student.

**Governor Question: Could costs increase beyond estimates made?**

It was hoped the government would mitigate to some extent should this occur.

**Governor Question: Was the increase in teachers' pay taken into account by the government when setting the grant received?**

This was included in figures supplied by CST.

**Governor Question: What feedback has been received from CST on the drafts produced?**

CST support all their schools equally, but, when the school joined CST, it was understood by both parties that Hotwells would struggle and investment would be required. However, due to decreasing student numbers across the city and increases in energy bills etc., all CST schools are experiencing challenges and therefore CST cannot offer additional consideration forever as this would drain Trust resources. Therefore, there is pressure, but also room for negotiation. CST would, ideally, like the deficit to be considerably less, however, the school has taken dramatic steps forward already, with the number in reception set to rise significantly from the current eight in the next academic year. However, the problems remain ongoing, as that year group of eight students will continue through the school and even fantastic improvements, such as the subsequent reception class rising to twenty students, still will not completely compensate for this.

The issue of employing agency staff demonstrates the nature of the issues faced, with the realistic estimate submitted by the school being reduced by CST,

**Governor Question: Is the teacher who is leaving at the top or bottom of the pay scale?**

They are towards the upper end, but the school cannot replace them with an inexperienced teachers because a balance must be maintained so all staff can feel supported. In addition, a considerable number of Subject Leads are required and only teachers with a certain level of experience can hold those roles.

**Governor Question: When is the staff member leaving?**

At the end of the academic year.

***Governor Question: Have more nuclear options been raised?***

None have been mentioned and it was not felt that it would reflect favourably on CST should one of its schools be merged or closed. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the census was taken only weeks after the Ofsted evaluation was received and so none of the impact that will have had been realised at that point.

***Governor Question: Was there any pressure to become a five form school?***

With the Yr 3 class also being small, this had been looked at as an option. However, implementation would result in the majority of classes becoming merged and it was not felt that families would find this attractive, which could impact retention. All the work undertaken on the new curriculum would also have to be restructured, which would greatly demoralise staff. It was also felt that once done, it would not be easy to reverse, thus locking the school into this format for the foreseeable future. The merger which is being suggested has been triggered by the extremely small class of eight students, which is not a feasible option for successful learning either.

It was also noted that CST continued to fund improvements such as the new ramp, the windows in the Year 6 classroom and the troubleshooting of leaks.

The Governors expressed their confidence in SM and thanked her for all her work, especially producing such a clear and understandable summary for the meeting.

SM left the meeting at this point.

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**Head Teacher's Report (KJ)**

This week was Science Week and a huge programme of activities had been brilliantly planned by EW. This would be followed by a racing car themed career day for female students in receipt of PP funding and a dance workshop as part of the school's involvement as a Shakespeare Trust Birthplace Hub School had already taken place. The Governors acknowledged the incredibly enriching curriculum offered by the school.

Furthermore, ME would be leading a CST art day in the near future.

**Monitoring**

A Phonics Support day is planned for later this term and the second ECT reviews are also approaching. However, there has also been a huge focus on the behaviour curriculum.

**Staffing**

The staff leaving represent huge losses and the school is very sad to see them go. One member of support staff will also be reducing their hours, with the staff member currently providing PPA cover moving to this office role instead. This could make PPA cover complicated, however, it is hoped that a member of the nursery staff could provide this for lower years so the additional costs are minimised.

There had been around 6 applications for the teaching job advertised.

***Governor Question: What was the quality of the applications received?***

No formal shortlisting had taken place yet so this had not been assessed.

***Governor Question: How experienced were the applicants?***

Applications ranged from M3/M2 to ECT, with the former offering the potential to lead subjects as well. Although a more experienced teacher would represent a higher cost, this had to be balanced against covering the additional PPA required by an ECT.

**Governor Question: Could the Governors provide any assistance with the interview process?**

This offer was appreciated and will be considered nearer the time.

The Finance Administrator had accepted a one year secondment to another CST school and, although this represented a promotion, it was hoped they would return to Hotwells after its completion. A handover to the successor had been arranged

**Governor Question: Would a return to Hotwells reverse this promotion?**

It would, and so the school was examining if there was any possibility to compensate for this.

Another member of staff had successfully undergone an operation and was hoped to be able to begin a phased return before the end of the school year.

**Governor Question: Would this have financial implications?**

It would, however, it was envisaged that the long term cover already in place could continue as needed.

These changes have created a feeling of uncertainty, which is not entirely unusual at this point in the year.

#### Music

The choir will be restarting, thanks to a visiting member of CST staff. The school was very grateful for this external assistance as the SLT currently had no capacity to provide such activities.

#### Industrial Action

Not all staff participated in the latest round of strikes.

#### Attendance

This is an area the school would like to see improvement in, with moving above 95% the target. Monitoring is now in place and a meeting has been held with the CST Attendance Lead. Families have been notified by e mail, text and through the newsletter, with individual contact made where this was felt appropriate.

There were currently three staged letters and it was felt that it would be more effective if this was reduced to one letter, followed by a meeting if required.

Attendance data was now being shared at Parents' Evenings rather than at the end of the school year, so families could be more aware of the situation. Sending texts acknowledging improvement had also been suggested.

Another consequence of the low number of students was that each absence had a huge impact on the overall figures. For example, in reception, each absence equated to 12% for the class.

**Governor Question: Although all communications from the school refer to help being available, what initiatives were in place?**

It was acknowledged that this was stressful for families and the school was aiming to only target those where it was felt such intervention was required. The fact that families were united in wanting to support the school was a positive to be capitalised on through emphasising the impact absences had on the whole school community.

**Governor Question: The statistics provided cover attendance but not punctuality, which also contributes to missed learning. Is this monitored differently?**

The school looked at patterns in both and tried to suggest suitable interventions, such as before school clubs if certain days were particularly challenging. This was recognised as important as the whole class would be interrupted by poor punctuality.

**Governor Question: Could work on attendance be linked to one of the new Hotwells Habits?**

This was already envisaged with the “to be ready” habit.

#### Desktop Review and Diagnosis Day

These would be held next term, the first examining data in order to plan for the latter, which would then form the foci and priorities for future improvements.

**Governor Question: Has a theme been announced?**

This would be determined following the Desktop Review.

Governors had been encouraged to question the school regarding this, however, the view that Governors had become recipients of information rather than participants in the process was raised and the possibility of CST involving Governors more in the future was highlighted.

Thanks were extended to ME for work on the impressive new school website.

**5**

#### **Behaviour (KJ/ME)**

The recent INSET day had focused on the Behaviour Curriculum. All the discussions had been rooted in research and, prior to this, KJ had participated in a Peer Review Day with JL and three CST heads, as well as undertaking a visit to a non-CST school as part of a Behaviour Hub Day to learn about training and observation.

Conversations with students at Hotwells had revealed that they were frustrated by low level disruption and felt strongly that the current system was not being implemented consistently, with certain key individuals within classes repeatedly being able to make poor behaviour choices.

Following the implementation of the new Behaviour Curriculum, it is hoped to repeat these interviews to analyse its impact.

These comments were also reinforced by an anonymous staff survey as well.

**Governor Question: What did the student teachers feel about behaviour within the school?**

It was not felt that the school had any significant behaviour problems, but the lack of consistency was a concern. Their input was very welcome as they brought experience of other schools as well.

**Governor Question: How would this impact on a future Ofsted judgement?**

If the Behaviour Curriculum was being applied inconsistently, the school was unlikely to be judged outstanding.

**Governor Question: Were all staff involved in the INSET day?**

Both teachers and support staff were included.

The new Behaviour Curriculum complements the strong relationships between students, staff and community which characterise the school and were highlighted by Ofsted. The school was also working on the philosophy that if the curriculum worked for the most disadvantaged students, who most need routine, consistency and nurture, then it would definitely be successful for all. It could not be assumed that students already knew how to behave and therefore the Hotwells Habits (to be ready, to be respectful, to be ambitious and to be safe) have been developed with straightforward language designed to help students by reducing the cognitive load so they can focus entirely on the learning involved. It was highlighted that high expectations were as much part of consistency as the way in which the curriculum was being applied.

**Governor Question: Was it felt that “respectful” was understood in the same way by everyone?**

An activity on this was included on the INSET day and, subsequently, equivalent activities had been run with the students. This was then reinforced through school assemblies and newsletter articles.

**Governor Question: Were the exceptions required for some students discussed with their peers?**

These were discussed and teachers found that students were very accepting when adjustments were necessary.

Reward strategies had been agreed and it was hoped these would allow teachers some flexibility while still being consistent. These were designed to foster a sense of community through working together.

**Governor Question: Would working towards class gems be as effective as unexpected rewards?**

The inbuilt flexibility would still allow teachers to use these, once earned, unexpectedly. In addition, the idea of the recognition board was that each student would get their name posted by the end of the day.

**Governor Question: Would making this a daily expectation cause stress for students?**

It was felt the emphasis was very much on recognition, rather than expectation.

**Governor Question: Had the school considered moving away from constant judgements to alleviate the negative effects a rewards system could generate, especially if achievements were only recognised by others, rather than the student themselves?**

This curriculum had been introduced following visits to other schools where similar systems had been observed working successfully and it was hoped that it would encourage praise to be less often, but more genuine. It would also be reviewed at each stage and changes could be made should issues arise.

Students had also felt that sanctions were unclear and inconsistent and the new curriculum aims to be unemotive and put the focus on the behaviour, not the student. Restorative conversations would be built in at all stages with the aim being to uncover the explanation for any poor behaviour. The school was again aiming for equity rather than equality and understood that exceptions would have to be made. Any adaptations would be agreed as a staff team.

This aspect of the curriculum had not yet been rolled out, but, as a whole, the initiative had received positive feedback from staff, with the Hotwells Habits identified as extremely effective for encouraging consistency.

**Governor Question: It is important that this huge investment of SLT time results in them being required to intervene less. Has this been the case?**

The new curriculum has been designed to empower everyone, and so more teachers are having conversations with students. However, SLT will always be involved with the most serious incidents and this exposure is considered informative and valuable.

It was recognised that behaviour was key to any school, not least because of its importance to families who were more informed than ever in this area and more conscious of it since COVID. Therefore, it was also a significant factor when selecting a school.

**4**

**Governor Area Updates**

Health and Safety (RD)

A report had been circulated on Governor Hub prior to the meeting.

RD had met with SM who was very clear regarding the areas needing work. Current areas being focused on include the management of risk assessments and working with CST on the Fire Policy. The level of tidiness and lack of litter seen on the visit had been very impressive and all necessary checks had been completed.

EYFS

It was decided that ZB would take responsibility for this area.

	<p><b>ACTION: KS to assign ZB to the role of Governor for EYFS on Governor Hub.</b></p> <p><u>Wellbeing (CB)</u></p> <p>It was noted that the current changes were a big issue for staff.</p> <p>There was nothing reported from any other area.</p>
6	<p><b>Assessment (ME)</b></p> <p>This item began with a brief demonstration involving redacted information. It was emphasised to Governors that this was an area under constant scrutiny, with PiXL used to identify any gaps. PiXL could also highlight whether this represented a whole class issue, in which case reteaching would be recommended, or a more individual issue, where interventions or therapies would be more appropriate. PiXL could provide a bank of such measures, and the more significant problems were selecting the best options and delivering them with minimal support staff.</p> <p>It was also important to remember that the percentage values would be dependent on the number of students in a class and Governors were also made aware that PiXL was not currently being used for writing, hence the lower values reported in this area.</p> <p><b><i>Governor Question: Are teachers required to enter the data used?</i></b></p> <p>PiXL generated a spreadsheet which simplified this process for staff. By doing so, they could then compare their data with that from other PiXL schools, which enhanced the analysis possible.</p> <p>Following each assessment, a discussion was held with every class teacher and changes could be made, thus making it a cyclical process.</p> <p>In addition, the school would soon be completing statutory assessments, the results of which would be reported to the DfE.</p> <p><u>Phonics</u></p> <p>Results were positive in this area with 61% of KS1 students already demonstrating they were capable of passing the assessment. The numbers might be lower at KS2, but were favourable when compared to those achieved at other PiXL schools. The school was confident these scores would increase as students completed the entire curriculum.</p> <p><u>SATs</u></p> <p>Yr 6 students were completing a mock assessment each term, with the access arrangements for the real assessment mirrored as closely as possible. The results for reading were good, and it was hoped those for writing would increase further. Currently, no data for maths was available.</p> <p><b><i>Governor Question: How is assessment viewed under the new Ofsted framework?</i></b></p> <p>There is now much less emphasis on this data.</p> <p><b><i>Governor Question: How is assessment viewed by CST?</i></b></p> <p>There continues to be close scrutiny from CST, comparing the progress made with national averages. A dip in attainment in maths has been noted across all CST schools and it has been suggested that this is due to COVID having a greater impact than expected on this area.</p> <p><b><i>Governor Question: How does Hotwells compare to other schools?</i></b></p> <p>The fact that national data represents sequential learning has a considerable impact, however, PiXL provides reassurance, demonstrating that the results seen at this stage are comparable with those seen in equivalent schools.</p>

	<p><b>Governor Question: Is Ofsted looking at data more now more reliable, post-COVID results are available?</b> This is frustrating, because all comparisons will still be against less reliable data impacted by COVID.</p> <p><b>Governor Question: Is assessment data shared with students?</b> Students will be involved with conversations regarding all aspects of their progress.</p>
7	<p><b>Governor Shared Drive (ME)</b> This held view-only versions of live documents and could be accessed when logged in to a Hotwells e mail account by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clicking on the “9 dots” icon</li> <li>• Selecting “drive”</li> <li>• Selecting “shared drive”</li> <li>• Selecting “Hotwells Governors”</li> </ul> <p>In future, all policies from CST requiring personalisation would be uploaded to the shared drive, but all others could be sent to the IT Helpdesk to be uploaded onto the school website.</p> <p><b>ACTION: KS to highlight to CB policies for review prior to each LGB meeting.</b>  <b>ACTION: RD to add review dates to Policy Review Spreadsheet.</b>  <b>ACTION: KJ to bring the completed Behaviour Policy to the T5 LGB meeting.</b></p> <p>All other matters had been covered under other items.</p>
8	<p><b>Clerk’s Business (KS)</b> In light of the forthcoming staff changes, the school was alerted that Staff Governor elections would be required.</p> <p><b>ACTION: KJ to arrange Staff Governor elections in T1.</b></p> <p>It was confirmed that the school website was now fully compliant with all requirements.</p> <p>All Governors present were able to access their e mail accounts following the changes, and advice regarding Governor Hub logins shared.</p>
9	<p><b>Approval of previous minutes and Matters Arising (CB)</b> No amendments were received and the Actions Arising were reviewed (see RAG rating at the start of this document).</p> <p>The following actions were carried forward to the T5 LGB meeting:</p> <p><b>ACTION: RB to meet with SH T5</b>  <b>ACTION: MS to arrange a follow up meeting with SM regarding the Single Central Record</b>  <b>ACTION: KJ/ME to create a list of priorities for improving staff areas.</b>  <b>ACTION: ZB to discuss options for improving staff areas with PTA.</b>  <b>ACTION: CB to assist ME with new Governor page on school website.</b>  <b>ACTION: All governors to provide ME with a short biography and photo</b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed and approved. Proposed: RD Seconded: AB Agreed unanimously.</p> <p><b>ACTION: CB to mark as signed on Governor Hub the final T3 minutes.</b></p>

10	<p><b>AOB and Close</b></p> <p><u>EYFS Policy</u></p> <p>ME informed Governors this was statutory and therefore it was proposed as an item for the T5 LGB meeting.</p> <p><b>Governor Question: Did the new Behaviour Curriculum apply to EYFS?</b></p> <p>The same routines were being encouraged in an age appropriate way.</p> <p><b>ACTION: KJ/ME to liaise with ZB regarding the EYFS Policy.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: KS to include the EYFS Policy as an item on the agenda for the T5 LGB meeting.</b></p> <p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>This was changed to 1630 Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023.</p> <p><b>ACTION: KS to update Governor Hub calendar with new T5 LGB meeting date.</b></p>
	Meeting closed at 6.35 pm.

Signed as a true record:

Chair of Governors,  
Chris Bond

Date:

## DECISIONS GRID

AGENDA NUMBER	AGENDA ITEM	DECISION
1	Welcome	Apologies accepted
1	Welcome	Resignation of MM accepted
4	Governor Area Updates	ZB to become Governor responsible for EYFS
7	Governor Shared Drive	All policies from CST requiring personalisation would be uploaded to the shared drive
7	Governor Shared Drive	Other policies would be sent to the IT Helpdesk to be uploaded onto the school website
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting
10	AOB and Close	Requirement for an EYFS Policy agreed
10	AOB and Close	T5 LGB meeting to be held on 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2023

## ACTIONS GRID

AGENDA NUMBER	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
4	Governor Area Updates	KS to assign ZB to the role of Governor for EYFS on Governor Hub.	KS
7	Governor Shared Drive	KS to highlight to CB policies for review prior to each LGB meeting.	KS
7	Governor Shared Drive	RD to add review dates to Policy Review Spreadsheet.	RD
7	Governor Shared Drive	KJ to bring the completed Behaviour Policy to the T5 LGB meeting.	KJ
8	Clerk's Business	KJ to arrange Staff Governor elections in T1	KJ
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	RB to meet with SH T5	RB
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	MS to arrange a follow up meeting with SM regarding the Single Central Record	MS
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	KJ/ME to create a list of priorities for improving staff areas	KJ/ME
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	ZB to discuss options for improving staff areas with PTA	ZB
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	CB to assist ME with new Governor page on school website	CB

9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	All governors to provide ME with a short biography and photo	All Governors
9	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	CB to mark as signed on Governor Hub the final T3 minutes	CB
10	AOB and Close	KJ/ME to liaise with ZB regarding the EYFS Policy.	KJ/ME
10	AOB and Close	KS to include the EYFS Policy as an item on the agenda for the T5 LGB meeting	KS
10	AOB and Close	KS to update Governor Hub calendar with new T5 LGB meeting date	KS