

## ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Time 5pm

Location Thorpe Primary School

Governors (8) Tracey Cheung (Chair)

Quorum for this meeting: (three governors entitled to vote, at least two of whom must be Trust appointed (PKAT) Governors)

Kathryn Bothwell  
Anne Clayton (Vice Chair)  
Samia Kenley  
Manoj Subudhi  
Gulfraz Umar

In attendance:

Emma Anderson  
Paula Jeremaes  
Rebeka Kirtland-Blundell

Acting Headteacher (AHT)  
Acting Deputy/Pastoral Lead  
Clerk

Apologies:

Joanne Fillmore  
Colin Hammond

Absent: None

Item		Lead
1	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> All Governors welcomed and the Chair advised that the meeting is quorate	Chair
2	<b>Declaration of Interests</b> There were no declarations of interest in respect of the items on this agenda.	Chair
3	<b>Monitoring of School Improvement Plan and Ofsted Action Planning</b> The Ofsted action plan for Thorpe Primary School includes 2 points.  The first objective is the provision for complex SEND students. At the time of Ofsted's visit, the Rainbow Room was in the early stages of progress for students with high needs, although, at that point it was not quite ready. However, the school knew the development plan of the room and what needed to be done and Ofsted were happy that the school had plan in action. 2 reviews have since taken place which have fed back very positively so much so that the school has been asked if other schools can visit. The AHT acknowledged that there still needed to be more training and resources which requires finance however, they are pleased with current progress.	Head

The second action point was that of embedding knowledge. This objective was based on one group observed by Ofsted that couldn't recall all their previous science knowledge. Within different subjects, subject leaders have been working hard and are using more practical methods, where children are more likely to remember what they have covered. However, the AHT acknowledged that big projects need to be reduced, with all subjects being reviewed to streamline them. This is currently a work in progress.

Different subject leads have plans in place and if Ofsted visit, the school is happy with the progress made and plan of action.

**How do you plan to get children remember?**

Children will learn in a more practical way. They will orally rehearse before they write. Other methods include much more practical, hands-on activities, talking and experiencing learning before completing tasks.

KB is researching methods and will be feeding more into what happens in lessons. Maths planning starters are going back over previous knowledge.

KB advised that the methods researched include having recaps of previous learning in books as well as knowledge webs with key vocabulary which is being currently being trialled in certain subjects.

Given the circumstances with the HT currently out supporting another school in the trust, staff have really stepped up.

The AHT then discussed each priority within the School Development Review given to Governors prior to the meeting.

With regards to the first priority, the school has just completed assessment in phonics and children are achieving significantly better than last year. The support given in this area is intense and well managed and has had a real impact.

Changes have included the organisation of the phonics lead, small groups being taught, regular assessment, flexible groups, effective planning, sound practise in the afternoon, continual testing and practising with the children. Every opportunity is being used and the training has really helped to support the learning.

Staff are using videos of how to teach sounds to hone their training, homework is set for phonics and staff are targeting the lowest achievers to make sure no-one missed.

Priority 2 includes the subject of writing. Learners have found this difficult for a long time. There was a low national last year and to tackle this, the school has introduced a variety of activities including 'talk to writing', imitating language and looking at texts before writing. These methods are working well with younger year groups but the effectiveness with the older groups is currently being questioned. These students haven't used these methods previously and therefore, it is not embedded and so the school may need to look at something more scripted for these year groups.

**Could this not be linked to homework tasks? Such as setting simple tasks that are identified as requiring support.**

Unfortunately, homework is very much down to parental/guardian support. Phonics is such an important area of the curriculum that we want to make sure it is completed and covered rather than only individual students working on these tasks as homework.

**A Governor commented that homework is currently a list of activities that the students pick from and therefore suggested that the school could request even just one line that students needed to write, or a worksheet handed out.**

From a teacher point of view, reading or writing tasks are linked to what is happening in class. All children must be catered for, and we do not want them to disengage with the



activity, there has to be a balance.

As a parent Governor, it seems there isn't that opportunity for students to complete a written homework.

The AHT will talk to the writing leads about this.

**Action: AHT to discuss with writing leads the inclusion of further written tasks in homework activities.**

As writing is a topic all of the schools within the Trust are finding challenging, PKAT provided a writing lead where interesting discussions took place, and the school was able to look at schemes provided to either replace or work alongside the current methods.

Discussion with the Governors then included the books that were bought during covid, Parent Governors found these to be useful because students had to read the text and then write answers to questions relating to that text.

However, the AHT advised that there is now more focus on reading the text with expectations being incredibly high for Year 5 and 6. There is lots of work going in to writing however, this is still an area of improvement.

Priority 3 is that of Pupil Premium (PP). The progress made within this area is positive with lots of work still on-going. Reading and Maths were both identified as being good. Progress is not as good with writing; however, this is similar across the board.

There are interventions planned for PP children, but these haven't happened yet due to staff being pulled into a year group where there are high needs.

Interventions are an area that is a work in progress as these are not currently happening as often as the school would like.

Whilst behaviour management is to be discussed in item 4, nearly all of these incidences are related to PP students and therefore the work completed with these students is essential.

Priority 4 discusses developing leadership. The plan in September was that subject leaders are to gain a better understanding with more ownership of their area. This has included finding out what the standards are and what is needed for children to progress further, some of which is discussed on the school's website.

Subject leadership came out well with positive feedback from Ofsted.

There has been an increasing amount of collaboration between subject leaders such as today's meeting regarding assessment and the upcoming meeting on safeguarding.

Whilst each primary school within PKAT wants to be individual, where something is identified as working well, this should be shared across the Trust. This has notably improved this academic year since the appointment of the new CEO.

Priority 5 discussed Financial Sustainability and the AHT gave an overview of this area. Targets include that of the provision for EHCP children and the Rainbow Room. The school does not have as much TA support as they have had previously. When children need support with certain areas of the curriculum, the school is currently not able to offer the level of support that was given in prior years due to financial constraints.

However, teaching staff have been replaced like for like.

What are you doing to attract parents of children? Did we ever get response regarding the banner advertising the positive Ofsted outcome?

The school is holding an open day in the Autumn term to try and encourage parents in and there is Early Years videos on the website.

	<p>There has not yet been a response to the banner. There were struggles with regards to getting the logo, however, the school does now have the Ofsted Logo.</p> <p><b>Does the school have a target for intake?</b>  90 is the current number on roll, we have just managed to temporarily limit the year 3 group to 60, Year 1 is also currently 60, there were possibilities of the number increasing to 62 which would require an additional member of staff or creating a mixed year group, both of which are not desirable options for the school.  We are currently trying to fix the intake number at 60 for Reception and although we are hoping with the recent Ofsted outcome and being part of PKAT, that we can offer more, the risk is that if numbers are only just over 60, this would create an expensive model for the school.</p> <p><b>What would the impact be on staffing?</b>  If no staff leave, we will not need to recruit.</p> <p><b>And what happened in terms of marketing the recent Ofsted outcome?</b>  Lots of other schools that have improved were in the papers</p> <p><b>One Governor discussed that they felt the previous Ofsted prior to the latest Ofsted review has been damaging to the school intake.</b>  Currently, there are a lot of schools that have not reached full capacity. This is due to a number of reasons including low birth-rates, children coming from Europe, Covid and lots of additional factors, all of which have affected intake numbers.</p> <p><b>Historically, when prospective parents researched schools, the previous Ofsted report always came up.</b>  Whilst other schools are also not currently full, 50% of our children are not in the catchment area.</p> <p><b>Rather than a banner, would it not be more effective to use the funds to improve the website?</b>  The website is part of the new marketing manager's responsibility, this is one of their focusses as well as a website reboot.</p> <p><b>Is Marketing manager tracking traffic on the website?</b>  Yes, I believe so.</p> <p><b>Good because success is hard to measure without numbers.</b>  Yes, we agree, I believe that this will happen, but it must come from higher in PKAT rather than at individual school level.</p> <p><b>Could we send information to local nurseries?</b>  There is information given on open days. However, Ofsted noticed a big difference between children from our nursery and others in terms of socialisation and learning so we do need to communicate this further with parents.</p>	
4	<p><b>Focus on therapeutic approach to behaviour management</b>  PJ gives brief overview; KT, the AHT went on training in March 2020 and then PJ and the school's safeguarding lead went in 2021. This is a whole school approach with the focus on making right by the children. This course was originally delivered by Cambridgeshire Steps and there have been several additional elements of training this academic year.  Looking at the data, these incidences happen to be all PP children with social and emotional needs and so, whilst it is a whole school approach, it very much helps those that have additional needs.</p>	PJ



	<p>TAs and supervisors have also had training on this behaviour management method. A steps flowchart was given out during the meeting and explained that this document has been handed out to teachers and TAs. The document includes the correct use of language to help explain the behaviour's effect.</p> <p>Using these methods can also help to give recommendations for Early Years Prognosis. For some children, it is enough of an insight to help explain the behaviour's effect however, for all children with additional needs, it is not enough to keep them on track. 1% - 2% will need to go further down the flowchart which includes the use of anxiety mapping and working through the flowchart step by step. By using scripts to tackle behaviour, this helps staff to reduce escalation and help those with emotional needs.</p> <p><b>Are parents being communicated to with regards to these steps?</b> Yes, parents are communicated with if there is an Early Years assessment.</p> <p><b>Do you rag rate behaviour?</b> We do on our incident log, but the language is very much looking at whether it is social or antisocial behaviour issues.</p> <p><b>Does this also cover SEND kids?</b> Yes, alongside their own plans.</p> <p><b>Parents are involved at the beginning but are there touch points further through the flowchart?</b> Yes, parents are communicated with regularly. This method is linked to the wellbeing of the students which very much fits in with the whole ethos of a therapeutic approach. The school's policy was already very focussed on relationships and therefore this method fits in well with this.</p> <p><b>What support is given to teachers with dealing with these issues?</b> With the teachers and support staff, we often hold meetings to discuss positives and negatives. Teachers have access to support with the use of walkies talkies that if additional help is required or the member of staff need to tag team, this is available to them. The flowchart also shows the steps to follow, which allows the staff member to remove their own emotions from the situation.</p> <p>Governors were then given a copy of the Cambridgeshire steps leaflet, encouraged to read it and then feedback any questions in future meetings.</p> <p>The shared language is beneficial; the school is now working towards embedding it and working with what is best for the students at the school.</p> <p><b>Are there any mental health advocates?</b> There is one based at Jack Hunt School and another at PKAT. There is also counselling available to staff.</p>	
5	<p><b>PKAT Strategic Plan 2023-2026</b> Several points were raised in discussion and the Governors settled on the below actions: Wellbeing of staff through mental health strategy, for staff also within their roles. PPD of all staff across schools Developing leadership</p> <p><b>Action: TC to discuss this item with CH as a Trustee of PKAT.</b></p>	Chair
6	<p><b>Feedback from Governor Visits</b> GU and AJC recently visited the school to discuss safeguarding. This was an</p>	All Gobs

	<p>introductory meeting, and an additional meeting has now been arranged.</p> <p>A governor questioned how much involvement the AHT now has with regards to safeguarding as the recent visit had highlighted that the team were short staffed now that the HT was supporting in another school in the Trust.</p> <p>AHT shares an office with the safeguarding team and so is updated on safeguarding matters but not involved as much as previously due to taking on the role of acting headteacher. However, the AHT is aware that this is a very stressful and emotive role.</p> <p><b>The school's audit of safeguarding was also questioned.</b></p> <p>The AHT confirmed that the recent audit completed by Ofsted was not a full audit.</p> <p>AJC also completed an Early Years visit. This included reviewing the settling in of a staff member after their return from maternity leave who is now in a shared role. Both members of staff were happy.</p> <p><b>An Early Years get together was arranged with the other schools in PKAT on the training day, but it was only open for teachers and not TAs, why?</b></p> <p>This depends on when the meeting was run, whether I took place in school time or afterschool. It also depends on how much notice had been given in advance in order to adjust the training day accordingly.</p> <p>Governor roles were reconfirmed from the previous minutes to allow Governors to prepare for visits.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to check Governor Hub that roles are listed.</b></p> <p>SK asked who to contact with regards to reviewing marketing and GDPR.</p> <p>SK was referred to the Director of Primary Education's PA and CL in the office however, the AHT is to advise further who to contact.</p> <p><b>Action: AHT to check and further advise who SK will need to contact to review Marketing and GDPR.</b></p> <p>MS asked who to contact to visit for Phonics writing and curriculum.</p> <p>AHT to check with regards to phonics. MS recommended to contact JF to co-ordinate a visit regarding the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Action: AHT to advise who MS needs to contact to arrange a phonics visit.</b></p> <p><b>Action: MS to contact JF to co-ordinate a curriculum visit.</b></p>	
7	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>All Governors were reminded that they needed to complete the safeguarding training as this is mandatory.</p> <p><b>Action: MS to attach certificate of Safeguarding training to Governor Hub.</b></p> <p><b>Action: SK to complete Safeguarding training.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to check safeguarding has been signed off for KB.</b></p> <p>Governors encouraged to complete additional training and upload these to Governor Hub.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to advise how to upload additional training that does not include a certificate.</b></p> <p>The chair then discussed the documents that needed to be completed by Governors.</p>	Chair



	<p>These included: Self Evaluation, the 360 review of chair and Governor Appraisals and the Skills Audit. The chair set a deadline of 19/02.</p> <p><b>Action: Governors to complete the listed documents by 19/02</b></p> <p><b>Action: Chair to check if SK and GU have completed Governor Training.</b></p> <p>GU and SK need to set up PKAT emails.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to request emails to be re-sent to Governors to set up their PKAT email address.</b></p>	
8	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022</b></p> <p>The minutes of this meeting were AGREED</p> <p>AC to be referred to AJC in future to avoid any confusion.</p>	Chair
9	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes of Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>Action point 3: Whilst there is still communication, there is currently no newsletter sent out to parents from the school. A previous member of staff had specific experience of previous software used to create the newsletter which is now being sent out via email instead.</p> <p>Parent Governors did not feel there was a reduction in communication.</p> <p>It was also noted that the Mayor has given £250 for use towards the breakfast club, this was discussed that it could encourage people to come and attend which could create further publicity.</p>	Chair
10	<p><b>Feedback to and from the Trust</b></p> <p>Postponed to the following meeting due to time constraints.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to add this item to next term's agenda</b></p>	Chair
11	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>AJC gave an update on finance.</p> <p>The December month end was completed on 16<sup>th</sup> January. The year-end has not been completed as of yet and this is now becoming an issue.</p> <p>There was a problem with the kitchen, the account was stopped due to a bill not being paid. PKAT have now actioned pay. The chair noted that this issue has been raised with the Director of Primary Education of PKAT. Whilst the school did manage to get funds released, had this not happened, the children wouldn't have been fed. It was discussed that there should be a regular meeting with Finance Manager of PKAT.</p> <p><b>Is it normal to work month by month?</b></p> <p>No.</p> <p><b>A Governor questioned whose role it was to manage the release of payments to the school.</b></p> <p>There are likely to be changes, but it is currently the work of 2 people.</p> <p><b>Shouldn't it be reviewed quarterly?</b></p> <p>Yes. Currently, if it is not on the finance system, there is a delay. The school is very limited on what can be spent on credit card, this is causing big delays with deliveries and teachers must be organised well in advance as orders made at the beginning of December have only been actioned.</p> <p>Energy costs for the school have also increased drastically.</p> <p>Looking at the balance in the budget, there is money lacking in the upcoming years and it is having huge impacts.</p>	Chair

	<p><b>Is the Government not providing more money for the rising costs?</b></p> <p>No, this is one reason why the strikes are happening. It's not about teachers having additional pay, the issue is being given a 5% pay rise but no money in the budget for schools to cover this and therefore the impact on the children, resources, support etc.</p> <p>A meeting is to be held the following Tuesday to discuss budgets.</p> <p>AJC raised KT being at Longthorpe Primary School. There has been an uplift in salaries for members of staff to accommodate the HT currently supporting another school within the Trust.</p> <p>Finance figures will be affected but Longthorpe Primary School has been recently put in place a business plan so therefore money will be coming back.</p> <p>Capital finance was discussed, and all improvements have been agreed.</p> <p><b>Where is this money coming from?</b></p> <p>It's all in one pot at PKAT and as a school, you have to put forward a bid for funding.</p> <p>It was discussed that the school has need for a high-tech changing bench to support one student. AJC to see if there are any charities around that could help or the alternative is to use some of the capital.</p> <p><b>Action: AJC to contact charities to help finance the purchasing of specialist equipment required.</b></p> <p><b>Would the student's physiotherapist not be able to support this?</b></p> <p>No.</p> <p>The provision of the afterschool club was then discussed, the school had written to parents but received no response. The club will be closing, and staff have been notified.</p> <p>A Governor raised the question of school trips. Feedback given was that some parents/guardians do not understand why trips are being ran locally and feel that the students are missing opportunities that would ordinarily be available to them to visit places they wouldn't necessarily go.</p> <p>KB removed herself from the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Teachers are so passionate about giving children these experiences but ultimately it is down to the parents/guardians to fund the activities as the school does not have the budget to do so. Travel is a huge part of the cost.</p> <p>The letter has to state that payments are a contribution because these trips are run alongside the curriculum and then because these payments are not often being made, trips are having to be cancelled.</p> <p>Each trip is costed, and teachers work in their own time to organise these. Parents are also surveyed to gain feedback. The only way trips can happen, is to make them as low cost as possible.</p> <p><b>Do we do any fundraising for these events?</b></p> <p>Yes, we have, we did one for the trip to the O2 last week, we also hold fundraising for extracurricular trips, such as a residential. This is because parents/guardians pay, or the children don't go. But if it is part of the curriculum, we can only ask for a contribution.</p> <p>KB returned to the meeting at this point.</p>	
12	<p><b>Confirm Date and time of Next Meeting:</b></p> <p>21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 – 5pm to take place at the school.</p>	Chair



The meeting closed at 7.20pm

**Actions:**

Item	Action	Due Date
3	AHT to discuss with writing leads the inclusion of further written tasks in homework activities.	21/02/23
5	Chair to discuss PKAT strategic plan 2023-2026 with CH.	March 2023
6	Clerk to check that Governor's roles are listed on Governor Hub.	March 2023
6	AHT to check and further advise who SK will need to contact to review Marketing and GDPR.	ASAP
6	AHT to advise who MS needs to contact to arrange a phonics visit.	ASAP
6	MS to contact JF to co-ordinate a curriculum visit.	ASAP
7	MS to attach certificate of Safeguarding training to Governor Hub.	ASAP
7	SK to complete Safeguarding training.	ASAP
7	Clerk to check safeguarding has been signed off for KB.	March 2023
7	Clerk to advise how to upload additional training that does not include a certificate on to Governor Hub.	March 2023
7	Governors to complete the Self Evaluation, 360' review of the Chair, Governor Appraisals and Skills Audits by 19/02	19/02/23
7	Chair to check if SK and GU have completed Governor Training.	ASAP
7	Clerk to request emails to be re-sent to SK and GU to set up their PKAT email address.	ASAP
10	Clerk to add Feedback to the Trust to next term's agenda	March 2023
11	AJC to contact charities to help finance the purchasing of specialist equipment required.	March 2023