**TORKINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES**

**SUMMER TERM 2021**

Date: 14th July 2021

Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr A Hirst (Chair), Mr A Buckler (Headteacher), Mrs N Halford, Mrs D Martin, Mrs A Thompson, Mrs H Merrick, and Mr C McFarlane.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Nicholson Headteacher, Mellor Primary School (present 7pm – 8.06pm)

Ms J Castledine Governor Support Officer

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| 1. | WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE |
|  | Governors were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Titley, Mrs Fortune and accepted by the governing board. Miss Dodgson was not present at the meeting. |
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| 2. | DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS |
|  | Governors were asked to declare any business, financial or personal interests in any agenda items; no declarations were made. |
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| 3. | DECLARATION OF A.O.B. |
|  | The Chair declared the following to be considered at item 12:   * Academy working party   The board agreed to take this item directly after the Headteacher’s Report. |
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| 4. | CHAIR’S ACTION  The Chair advised that no actions had been taken since the previous meeting. |
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| 5. | HEADTEACHER’S TERMLY REPORT |
|  | The Headteacher’s Report was emailed to the governors prior to the meeting. The Headteacher highlighted the following points and questions were invited:   * Bubble closure and requirements to self-isolate within the staff team have had an impact upon assessments, curriculum, SEND, pupil voice and a maths deep dive. The SEND and Literacy co-ordinators will be invited to the FGB autumn term meeting to talk through their reports **ACTION.** * Some self-isolating pupils have been seen out in the local community; teachers have been asked to issue a reminder of the correct protocol via ClassDojo and the Headteacher will follow this up tomorrow with a whole school communication. * Attainment & Progress – Years 1 and 2 are still to complete their summer term assessments. Year 6 headline data is very positive on the whole. A slight concern in relation to Year 3 and 4 maths results at greater depth was noted – additional support is planned from the start of the autumn term for these cohorts. * ***The Reading, Writing and Maths combined scores are significantly higher for Year 6 than the younger cohorts – is that usual?*** The Headteacher explained it was to be expected; it is a very able cohort and has been a focus for interventions. In terms of attainment and progress, the key areas have now been identified. Support requirements around social emotional issues will be established in September. * Pupils and staff are fully engaged with the Transformative Communication Project; a in depth impact statement will be shared in the autumn term **ACTION** * There has been a recent increase in staff absence. Staff are currently working hard to provide internal cover for a colleague’s absence. * Finance – the school has been advised that it will be in receipt of additional funding to support a pupil’s medical needs and for Catch-up tutoring. TA support has been refigured across the school which has resulted in a budgetary saving; this will act as a buffer in the event of additional resources being required over the new academic year. * Some pupils have presented with fairly significant social emotional issues which require immediate support. The waiting lists at HYMS and Primary Jigsaw are extensive and so a colleague from Beacon Counselling has been engaged to work at the school this half term and for one day a week from September. * The school now has two new withdrawal rooms and a library at a cost of £300, thanks to the generosity of a school parent. A new garden space has been created and is being enjoyed by the pupils. * The Health & Safety audit report has been shared with the Chair and Miss Dodgson; no issues were flagged as causing concern. * A burst pipe in the upper junior toilets has now been repaired. A portion of roof over the Year 4 classroom collapsed overnight due to a leak which has affected the flooring; quotations for its repair are being sought. ***If there is more rain, could this result in more leaks? Should the roof be inspected?*** A drone survey was carried out 2-3 months ago; the school is waiting for the results of this. A building survey is scheduled for the beginning of the school holidays. * Curriculum – key focus areas for the new academic year will be maths, science, design & technology and reading. * The new School Development Plan will be circulated at the start of the autumn term **ACTION.** * Governors noted Mrs Pietrzak’s time out of the classroom to support her SENCO role.   The Headteacher was thanked for his report and there not being any further questions, it was RESOLVED that the Headteacher’s report be received.  **The meeting continued with item 12a.** |
| 6. | GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT |
| a) | End of Term of Office |
|  | It was noted that Debbie Martin’s term of office as a parent governor will end on 1st October 2021. The Chair advised that Mrs Titley has tendered her resignation from the governing board with effect from 23rd July 2021. A parent governor election will be held in the autumn term. **ACTION**  Mrs Merrick indicated at this point that she was experiencing technical difficulties which were compromising her participation in the meeting 8.08pm. |
| b) | Vacancies |
|  | Governors noted a vacancy on the board for a 1 x LA Governor and 1 x Staff Governor. |
| c) | Governing Board Development Plan, Induction, Training and Succession Planning |
|  | The Chair will meet with Mr McFarlane and Mrs Merrick in this respect **ACTION** |
| d) | Terms of Office for Chair and Vice Chair |
|  | It was noted that a two-year term of office had been agreed previously so there was no requirement for an election to be held until autumn term 2022. |
| e) | Expressions of Interest for Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of Committees |
|  | Governors were invited to give some thought to the roles and contact the Clerk prior to the autumn term full governing board meeting in order to express an interest. **ACTION**  The Clerk was asked to clarify whether committee chairs are appointed annually or every two years **ACTION.** |
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| 7. | BUSINESS |
| a) | Full Governing Board Minutes |
|  | It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the full governing board meeting held on 3rd March 2021, copies circulated previously, be approved and signed by the Chair and authorised for publication. |
| b) | Review of Action Points from the Previous Meeting |
|  | The actions from the spring term meeting were reviewed as follows:-   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **MINUTE POINT** | **ACTION REQUIRED** | **ACTION FOR** | **UPDATE AS OF 14.07.21** | | 5 | Governing board to produce a letter to reinforce the message to parents. | All governors | Situation resolved without letter being required | | 6 | Email the link for the Wellbeing resources to the Chair. | Clerk | Completed | | 7a | Ask Mrs R Titley to continue until the end of the academic year. | Chair | Completed | | 8b | Circulate the SFVS return to AH and CMcF for completion / agreement and circulate the associated documentation to all governors. | Mrs A Thompson | Completed | | 8b | Consider the vacancy for a Pupil Premium link governor which could also incorporate the catch-up premium. | All governors | Carry forward **ACTION** | | 8b | Consider the vacancy for a link governor for literacy | All governors | Carry forward **ACTION** | | 8b | Teaching & Learning Committee date to be arranged. | Miss S Dodgson | Agreed date not required this term; report through FGB | | 8b | Resources Committee date to be arranged to approve the 2021/22 budget. | Resources Committee | Agreed date not required this term; report through FGB | | 8e | Approval of INSET days 2021/22. | All governors | Completed | |
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| c) | Policy Approval |
|  | The following policy was circulated prior to the meeting and duly APPROVED by the governing board subject to its personalisation to the school:   * Exclusion Policy   Governors agreed that the Protection of Biometric Information of Children in Schools and Colleges policy was not required at present as the school does not use biometric data. This will be regularly reviewed moving forwards. |
| d) | Approval of Inset Dates |
|  | The dates were not submitted for approval at the meeting. |
| e) | Confirmation of GovernorHub details |
|  | Governors were requested to update their personal details on GovernorHub before the end of term. **ACTION** |
| f) | Pay Policy Preparations |
|  | The Clerk informed governors that the revised model pay policy would be issued in the autumn term.  Governors noted a vacancy on the Pay committee due to Mrs Titley’s resignation. An appointment will be made at the autumn FGB meeting **ACTION**. The board AGREED that the pay policy will be considered and approved at the autumn term Resources meeting. |
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| 8. | RESOURCES |
| a) | Resources Committee Minutes |
|  | No meeting was held in the summer term. |
| b) | Ratification of Policies |
|  | There were no policies for ratification. |
| c) | Budget Update |
|  | A report was circulated prior to the meeting; there were no questions from the governors. |
| d) | Approval of the Budget 2021/22  The budget was APPROVED by the governing board at the spring term meeting. |
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| 9. | TEACHING AND LEARNING |
| a) | Teaching & Learning Committee Minutes |
|  | No meeting was held in the summer term. |
| b) | Ratification of Policies  There were no policies for ratification. |
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| 10. | BRIEFING PAPERS FROM STOCKPORT LOCAL AUTHORITY |
|  | * Governance Update * Governor Development * Ofsted Updates * Early Years Update * Early Career Teachers (formerly NQTs) * RE Syllabus 2021-2027 * Holiday Activities and Food Programme * Stockport and Tameside Partnership Opportunities   Governors noted the guidance within the reports. |
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| 11. | DATES |
| a) | Full Governing Board |
|  | Autumn Term – Wednesday 24th November 2021 at 6:30pm  Spring Term – Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 6:30pm  Summer Term – Wednesday 13th July 2022 at 6:30pm |
| b) | Committee Meetings  No dates were set. |
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| 12. | ANY OTHER BUSINESS |
| a) | Academy Discussion  Mr Jim Nicholson (JN), Headteacher at Mellor Primary School, was welcomed to the meeting at 7pm.  The Headteacher gave some background to the discussion, stating that the board had been talking about academisation and multi-academy trusts (MATs) for a considerable while now. A staff survey was carried out as part of an initial consultation process – of 24 responses received, the majority indicated that they were in favour of academisation. The Headteacher recommended that the governing board give serious consideration to this issue and handed over to JN to speak to the meeting.  JN gave a brief background to his school’s conversion to a Single Academy Trust (SAT) in 2011, advising of the school’s intention to create a primary MAT at some point over the next year. Conversations with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) have been very positive. Questions and comments from the board were invited:  ***What are your timescales to create a MAT? How quickly do we need to make a decision for Torkington?*** JN stated that this would really depend upon the due diligence process, acknowledging that the decision to move from being a maintained school to an academy was a significant one. He recommended making the decision as quickly as possible, indicating that the school’s application to the DfE should be underway by the start of the autumn term.  ***What due diligence has already been done?*** The Chair advised that work had been done in the background up until now. He suggested that rather than forming a working party, the work should now be done by the full governing board moving forwards.  ***Can you expand upon the financial benefits of becoming an academy?*** JN briefly explained how some of a maintained school’s budget is retained by the local authority to support specific services. As an academy, a much smaller amount of money would be paid into the MAT and the schools would be able to directly influence its spending. The Headteacher agreed that under this system, he would feel that he was more in control. He expressed frustration that some LA services into his school were being eroded, despite funds being paid into them. JN explained to the governors that as an academy, the school can make bids for additional funding. He gave two examples of successful bids that Mellor has made. JN made governors aware of the rigorous financial and accountability processes which are required of MATs.  ***What are the benefits to staff?*** There are opportunities for all schools within a MAT to work collaboratively to develop best practice, support CPD, maximise opportunities for professional growth. This naturally benefits the pupils and ensures better pupil outcomes across the trust.  ***I would want to feel assured that the support that Torkington currently offers to its SEN families and other vulnerable groups would continue or even improve.*** JN stated that Mellor Primary has run the ‘No-Outsiders’ programme since 2017; all children are welcome at his school. The Headteacher reassured governors that becoming an academy school would not change the unique spirit of Torkington Primary.  ***Do we have to join a MAT?*** The Headteacher confirmed that schools could no longer become SATs, they could only create their own MAT or join an existing one. He noted that Hazel Grove High School is part of a different MAT.  ***What are the negatives?*** JN stated that MATs were subject to a very high level of accountability and public scrutiny, which could be a challenge. Academy schools are not allowed to go into a deficit budget – this would flag up the ineffective leadership and management of the MAT.  ***Why is Torkington looking at joining with Mellor rather than a nearer school?*** The Headteacher explained that he and JN have discussed the opportunities for two like-minded schools to come together. He reminded the meeting that he is currently part of a local authority which encompasses the whole of Stockport; his vision and ethos is not shared by all Stockport headteachers but they collaborate under the umbrella of maintained schools in Stockport. JN and the Headteacher are committed to creating a MAT for schools with very similar philosophical ideas and direction of travel.  ***What is the difference between continuing as a maintained school and converting to an academy, besides the financial benefits?*** The Headteacher stated that the school would get stronger, pupils would have a much more bespoke education targeted towards their needs, they would be able to enjoy trust-wide opportunities (eg. music concerts, sports competitions) but Torkington’s values would remain unchanged. JN added that within a MAT, Headteachers would be able to work collaboratively and support each other to access opportunities and work out solutions to problems. Each school will be able to learn from the others and ensure better outcomes for all the MAT’s pupils – mutual growth with shared core values and purposes.  The Chair suggested that governors read through some key documents on Mellor Primary School’s website. **ACTION**  JN was thanked for his attendance and informative contribution to the discussion and left the meeting at 8.06pm.  Mrs Halford indicated at this point that she was experiencing technical difficulties which were compromising her participation in the meeting – 8.06pm.  Governors AGREED that they should meet over Zoom to discuss academisation further and identify any points for further clarification. The Headteacher will not be in attendance at this meeting. **ACTION**  **The meeting continued with item 6.** |
| b) | Transition Arrangements  In response to a governor question, the Headteacher briefly outlined his plans for pupil transition sessions before the end of term. |
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|  | With no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.30 pm. |

**TORKINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**MEETING ACTION POINTS**

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| **MINUTE POINT** | **ACTION REQUIRED** | **ACTION FOR** | **DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED** |
| 5 | Invite SEND and Literacy co-ordinators to the FGB autumn term meeting to talk through their reports | Headteacher | Autumn FGB meeting |
| 5 | Share an impact statement on the Transformative Communication Project at the autumn term FGB meeting | Headteacher | Autumn FGB meeting |
| 5 | Circulate new SDP at the start of the autumn term | Headteacher | Start of autumn term |
| 6a | Parent governor election to be held at the start of the autumn term | Clerk send pack to school | Start of autumn term |
| 6e | Consider the roles of Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of committees and express an interest to the Clerk | All interested governors | Autumn FGB meeting |
| 6e | Check whether committee chairs are appointed annually or every two years | Clerk | Post meeting |
| 7b | Consider the vacancy for a Pupil Premium link governor which could also incorporate the catch-up premium. | All governors | Autumn FGB meeting |
| 7b | Consider the vacancy for a link governor for literacy | All governors | Autumn FGB meeting |
| 7e | Update personal details on GovernorHub | All governors | End of summer term |
| 7f | Appoint a governor onto the Pay committee | Governing board | Autumn FGB meeting |
| 12a | Read through Academy key documents on Mellor Primary School’s website | All governors | Post meeting |
| 12a | Meet over Zoom to discuss academisation and identify any points for further clarification | Chair to convene meeting | Before end of summer term |