



**Didsbury CofE Primary School  
Local Governing Body Meeting  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.30pm – remote meeting  
Minutes**

**Present:**

Abbie East	Foundation Governor
Paul Good	Chair (MDBE)
John Janulewski	Foundation Governor
Matthew Lee	Foundation Governor
Joyce Thom	Foundation Governor
Catriona Arundale	Foundation Governor
Kate Catling	Parent Governor
Samantha Morgan	Staff Governor
Helena Miller	Executive Headteacher
John Barrett	CEO
Emma Chamberlain	Deputy Headteacher (Acting Clerk)

**Apologies**

Augustine Ihm	Foundation Governor
Philip Robinson	Parent Governor

**1. Welcome, Introductions & Opening Prayer**

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by The Chair, who led the opening prayer.

**2. Review and approval of previous minutes from 15<sup>th</sup> November**

A foundation governor raised that the wording of point 12 in the previous minutes was unclear. The Chair gave an update on the current position of the safeguarding incident referenced in point 12 and explained there are 2 complainants, whose complaints are made up of multiple strands. These are part of a formal complaints process being dealt with by the legal team, due to their safeguarding nature. These will be heard by a Trust panel once the legal position is clarified.

The CEO explained outside agencies, including Ofsted, reviewed the procedures the school carried out and were satisfied with the actions taken. It was explained the concerns were not an ongoing safeguarding issue in the school, but rather the ongoing complaints related to the prior safeguarding incident in September.

A parent governor asked about where the complaints had gone. The Exec Head explained the complaints had been reported to: the school, Ofsted and our legal advisers.

A foundation governor asked:

- a) if the governors will learn the outcome of the complaints, once they have been heard;
- b) what was the current feeling was from the wider parent body, given that previously, other parents had raised concerns/questions.

The CEO explained further advice would be sought. The outcome of the hearing would be shared with governors. The process might advise or highlight any learning points that can be taken forward to inform future policy and practice.

The Exec Head explained things seemed more settled with the wider parent community. Year 6 parents had recently received a letter detailing enhanced PSHE lessons for their children.

A foundation governor asked if the school had a record of complaints for governors to track and monitor these, particularly persistent complaints or complainants.

The Exec Head explained this information is gathered for the governors' meetings and kept on CPOMs. The CEO explained a revised vexatious complaints policy is in place.

A foundation governor asked about the expectations regarding the understanding governors should have about the nature/reporting of the safeguarding issues. A Safeguarding Lead explained safeguarding often involves a high level of confidentiality, the nature of which cannot be shared with governors. Information featured in the report shared with governors includes safeguarding incidents which required further action rather than the formative safeguarding logs. These formative logs help inform a bigger picture or give an indication of an emerging safeguarding concern.

The CEO explained an external safeguarding audit, led by Kerry Dawson (Accredited Safeguarding Adviser), is being undertaken across Trust schools. Didsbury will be the first to be audited and the findings will be shared with governors.

### **3. Executive Head of School Report**

The Exec Head explained some of the key updates and challenges of the half term.

#### Budget

The main budget issues centre on the cost of pay rises, which are not fully funded through the annual funding round.

#### School Improvement Priorities

The main areas are already being addressed with more monitoring in place moving forward. EYFS will be a priority focus – An audit has already taken place led by Sarah Quinn (EYFS Specialist Adviser). Sarah has been briefed to audit all Trust EYFS provision.

### Appraisals for teaching staff

There is now a more rigorous approach to appraisal, whereby teachers audit their own practice against the teaching standards and identify the areas they would like to develop. School leadership will include these into targets that are linked to the School Improvement Plan.

A parent governor asked for further information detailed under 'challenges' relating to administrative staff and site/cleaning staff. It was explained that hours and job descriptions are being examined at to ensure that roles are fulfilled within the allocated hours.

A foundation governor requested further information on attendance figures decreasing. It was explained there had been a tightening up on what is classed as 'on time,' therefore more children have been recorded as 'late'. The recording of absence has also been tightened up by the DfE, therefore there is less misinterpretation of what constitutes absence.

Another foundation governor asked two questions about Early Years in relation to the Ofsted report:

- a) Was the Requires Improvement outcome a huge surprise, as the letter to parents explained these issues were raised in September; however, she did not expect it to receive this judgement.
- b) Are there plans for a meeting with Early Years parents to address some of the concerns raised in the report?

The Exec Head explained the safeguarding incident early in the Autumn term detracted from time available to focus on monitoring EYFS provision early in the term.

The CEO explained it takes time to understand the quality of provision, at an appropriate level, before implementing change. He outlined that this understanding involves listening about the approaches currently being undertaken and understand them, before identifying areas and actioning change. He also explained that as outcomes across the school were historically been strong, it may have been felt change was either not necessary or urgent.

The CEO explained reports which governors will receive from external advisors, consultants and from himself will be beneficial, accurate and give a clear picture of what is happening in the school.

The Exec Head outlined some of the positive feedback parents had shared since the release of the report, particularly about how happy their child is in Early Years, but that inevitably some parents had concerns about the judgement. She explained forums with Early Years parents would be held. These would help the SLT communicate what actions are being undertaken to address the findings of the report and report on the progress being made.

**The Chair thanked the Executive Head for her comprehensive report**

#### **4. Finance Update**

The school budget plan was shared. The Chair explained this newly formatted document will be adopted across all Trust schools providing common framework for planning and reporting on individual school budgets. Governors will in future, have closer involvement in approving the school budget, ensuring it addresses school priorities.

It was explained a number of central services and service level agreements (SLA's) may in future be managed at Trust level. The Trust should be in a position to negotiate better value. The new budget format will allow these to be more readily identified. The format will be evaluated and revised through use.

A parent governor asked for further clarity on some of the acronyms within the document. The CEO explained some of the acronyms used in the budget and offered to prepare a sheet explaining them. The main principle and purpose of the budget is to show the effective use of school financial resources. The CEO stated he is expecting to compare expenditures across the Trust, ensuring value for money. It will be a dynamic budget plan reflecting the needs of the school, it will change as the school responds to circumstances. Governors will be required to approve changes to the plan.

#### **5. Governing Body Matters including:**

Positive comments were shared from multiple people regarding the governors' meetings including more open, honest conversations about the school. These were welcomed by governors as they expressed that it helps them to have a realistic view of the school and means they can hold leaders to account and support more effectively.

The Chair thanked governors for offering their agreement to the Job Description and Person Specification for the Headteacher recruitment and their offers to serve on the interview panel. The advertisement, is 'live' and highlights the Trust are looking for someone to take Didsbury CE to the next level. The recent Ofsted inspection will hopefully, attract interest. There are clear priorities, but a strong confident foundation to build on.

##### Training undertaken

Governors were reminded to update their training onto Governor Hub.

##### Safeguarding training for governors

Governors/Trustee Safeguarding Training with Kerry Dawson (Safeguarding Adviser) will be held remotely on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 6:00pm – 8:00pm.

#### **6. Dates for 2022/23 meetings**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.30pm – in school

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm - in school

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 3.30 (meet the children)

#### **7. Closing Prayer**

**The Chair thanked Emma Chamberlain for taking the minutes and led the closing prayer.**