



Charing School is an inclusive family, proud of our faith in God and our friendship with our community.

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Confidence – Determination – Faith – Friendship – Respect.

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Governing Body Monday 30th November 2020 at 5pm.

Governors Present: Mr. David Milham (DM): Chair,
Mr. Tom Bird (HoS): Head of School,
Ms. Angela Matthews (AM): Consultant Head Teacher,
Mr. Dan Freedman (DF),
Mr. Charles Low (CL),
Mrs. Sarah Siddiqui (SS),
Mr. Simon Molony (SM),
Ms. Susan Ashford-Smith (SAS) *joined at 17:45.*
Ms. Ana Olea Fernandez (AOF),
Mr. Daniel Sutch (DS).

Additional Attendees: Mr. Nick Morgan (NM): Head of Governance & Estates Aquila

Clerk: Mrs Lorraine Bondzie-Mensah

PROCEDURAL MATTERS			ACTIONS
1	Welcome and Prayer	The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and AM led the Governing Body in prayer. New governors were welcomed and introductions were made by all attendees.	
2	Apologies	There were no apologies required.	
3	Declarations of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs L. Bird is volunteering in Year 6. Hannah Horsford <p>ACTION: Clerk to circulate statutory declarations and training documents to all new governors.</p>	CLERK
4	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	The minutes from the previous Governing Body Meeting held on 5 th October 2020 were approved as a true and accurate reflection of proceedings. ACTION: AM to be added to the list of attendees at the last meeting.	CLERK
5	Matters Arising	ACTION: Reminder to Governors to complete the skills audit circulated by the Clerk.	DM, TB, SS + New Gobs
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT			ACTIONS
6	Head of School Report	<p>The HoS Report was circulated in advance of the meeting and reflects the very challenging 12 weeks prior; mainly due to COVID. Governors noted the increase in infection rates and there has been an increase in self-isolation absences, with 1 positive test in a child in Year 6. An increase in absences is a challenge when the school is trying to maintain and accelerate progress in all children.</p> <p>Term 1 data in Year 6 has been positive. Catch up funding has been received and is supporting the accelerated progress of children who need to catch up after the last lockdown. The HoS is confident all pupils will make progress as long as there are no further lockdowns / self-isolation from school. Additional interventions have had a positive impact but have only been running for 5/6 weeks. The timetable has been updated to Introduce 20 minutes of reading every morning. Every child is heard reading every week and vulnerable children are being heard</p>	



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		<p>3 or 4 times a week. It is also particularly helpful in ensuring the start of the school day begins in a settled manner.</p> <p>SLT expressed concern for staff wellbeing. They find themselves under significant pressures to manage in such difficult circumstances. The school are keen to find the right balance between moving the children forward but not using COVID as an excuse for not moving children forward either. Governors pleased the school's expectations are high for the end of the year but are mindful that COVID will inevitably have a significant impact on business as usual.</p> <p>Q1: When are the catch up sessions taking place? R1: Afternoons. There is an hour twice a week for catch up in core skills and filling knowledge gaps.</p> <p>Q2: Is the focus on parts of the curriculum missed last term or on filling the individual gaps in each child's knowledge? R2: Both. Some of the missed work is incorporated into the main lessons this year and so plugging the curriculum gaps has become part of the overall lesson plan. The catch-up hour is personalised but will include both missed curriculum and any additional work that might have been missed due to being in self-isolation or some children may be struggling to keep up with the pace in class.</p> <p>Q3: The high level of children moving in and out of the school was noted. Are there any patterns in that movement that the LGB should be aware of? R3: 7 children have left and 10 have joined. Most moved from the area but one family moved schools as an issue with community relationships. A number of girls have joined in Year 5. The HoS is also expecting more children to join after Christmas.</p> <p>Q4: Have these children joined because their families are new to the local area? R4: Yes, for the majority. There are some long held opinions regarding the reputation of the school still having an impact in the community. Another 2 children are expected to move from the area after Christmas.</p> <p>Q5: Governors noted the high level of support being given to a 3rd of Year 2. Is this sustainable as they move up the school? R5: 9 children require intense support which is currently being funded by catch up funding. There will be no funds available to deliver this level of support in future years.</p> <p>Q6: Attendance appears to be much higher than the national average? R6: Caution should be used when viewing this data as the school is currently using a special code for those children self-isolating. The national average is 87% and the school is currently at 96%. A number of pupils have accessed the new online learning portal which has evidenced 98 new learner accounts since it was launched. All the children engaged in the DT project as part of homework too.</p>	
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6.1	Updated COVID Risk Assessment	<p>The children really want to be in school. Many of them viewed the last lockdown as a type of punishment and are keen to be here.</p> <p>Q7: How many are unable to access home learning? R7: Most children can access home learning. The school has received 2 laptops from the DfE allocation. NM appealed that decision and a further 3 laptops were received. Some parents have occasionally requested paper copies and this is manageable but most are accessing the learning electronically.</p> <p>Q8: Governors noted the comments relating to the financial health of the school. What is the reason behind a decrease in purchase ledger payments? R8: The school must improve its financial position. The small amount of reserves is not enough to safeguard the school and the school has had to reduce expenditure to essential spend only. This has been helped by a significant financial investment in the buildings from the Trust and Condition Improvement Funds. A reduction in purchase ledger payments has also been brought about by tighter financial controls and a more robust spending plan. The staff have played a vital role in reducing expenditure on items such as photocopying and the school is now seeing the benefits of the renegotiated contracts entered into at the end of the last academic year. This reduction in spend is planned and is being closely monitored by SLT and the finance governor.</p> <p>The LGB congratulated the HoS on achieving the NPQSL.</p> <p>The most recently updated COVID risk assessment was circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting and has been added to the school website. Following government guidelines means that staffing at the school is incredibly stretched. The HoS noted a number of families were mixing during half term and this led to a spike in self-isolation at the beginning of the new term. He expressed significant concerns that the easing of socialising during the Christmas period will lead to some children coming back to school without symptoms yet showing and another increase of children not in school as they self-isolate.</p> <p>Q9: [To AM] Is the Charing approach the same as Temple Ewell? R9: The same issues are being discussed at SLT. The school are reinforcing the expectations and requirement of parents to follow government guidelines on managing symptoms and hygiene. AM is satisfied that both schools have controlled the spread of cases very well.</p> <p>The HoS praised his team for their amazing efforts and fantastic team work over the last term. The LGB extended their heartfelt thanks to the team for their inspiring commitment and hard work over the last term.</p> <p><i>Susan Ashford-Smith joined the meeting at 17:45.</i></p>
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7	Data	<p>Term 1 data was reviewed and discussed in detail as part of the HoS Report review in the previous agenda item.</p> <p>Q10: Is the school tracking GRT progress? R10: Yes. Pupil progress meetings monitor all vulnerable groups and GRT is included in these discussions.</p>	
8	School Improvement Plan (SIP)	<p>The SIP has been updated to include RAG ratings. Wendy Simmonds will be completing a School Review at the end of January which will focus on leadership and book scrutiny.</p> <p>Q11: Governors noted a need to focus a future School Improvement Visit on science? R12: This is because they have not yet had the opportunity to scrutinise this. ACTION: Governor monitoring visit required in term 3 to include science.</p>	CHAIR
8.1	Pupil Premium Strategy	<p>The pupil premium strategy was circulated to the LGB in advance of the meeting and outlines the ways in which PP funds will be used to reduce the gap between these pupils and mainstream pupils.</p> <p>Q12: How long has this strategy been in place? R12: The use of 5 classes instead of 4 has been in place all year but the implementation of the rest of the plan begun earlier this term. A formal review is planned for March where SLT will review the impact of spend on pupils. ACTION: Governor should be involved in the PP strategy review in March.</p>	CHAIR
9	Governance Matters	The Governing Body discussed the following governance matters:	
9.1	Notes of Visit	Governors noted the incredibly positive NoV. It is good to see how well the school is moving forward.	
9.2	SEND and Inclusion Reports	Actions in the report are being worked on abut not yet completed. The HoS from Brenzett Primary School came in to support the SENCO and it was a very useful day. It was good to see the school is on the right track.	
9.3	Governor Monitoring Responsibilities	SEN = SAS Safeguarding = AOF Christian Distinctiveness = DS Behaviour and attendance = DS	
9.4	Governor Monitoring Reports	<u>Quality of Education</u> SM + CL met with HoS + AM. The remit of 'quality of education' has been expanded to cover teaching, learning and curriculum. The teaching profile of the school and SLT's judgement on the quality of teaching in the school was discussed. SLT and Governors are pleased to report it is the best it has been in a	



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		<p>number of years. The quality of learning is easily evidenced in the data circulated earlier in this meeting. The catch –up curriculum was discussed and issues surrounding that have been covered earlier in this meeting.</p> <p>For new governors, SM provided context to the intention of the visit. Namely that standards of maths and English are the best it has ever been across the nation. Educationalist recognised there is a need for a greater focus on foundation subjects and school efforts are focused on delivering a curriculum that is broad and balanced. This was discussed in detail and further information can be found in the report. The cultural dimension of education has been greatly missed and the school’s curriculum now embraces topics which are particularly interesting for children. Governors noted Ofsted intention to return to inspections in early 2021. The most recent NoV focused on maths and English due to prioritising the review of the impact of catch up interventions but are aware the other topics need to be reviewed.</p> <p>ACTION: Next meeting - end of term 3.</p>	<p>SM + 1</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Finance</p>	<p>The October Monitoring Report and Cash flow report was reviewed by the LGB. The forecast estimates a year end surplus of around £20k. There will be some changes in staffing costs next month when the year-end staffing cost forecast will be based on actuals now that appraisals have been completed. A 3% uplift was built into the original budget but some staff will have exceed “good” in their appraisal and the support staff have moved over to Aquila Pay Ranges.</p> <p>The seemingly endless building costs are a concern and a significant number of those have been mitigated against by the Trust. A point noted by the Governors, which would not have happened when the school was under local authority control. Governors noted the increase in water costs however this is a worst case scenario as the school await credit notes and readjusted bills from both water in and water out suppliers, now that the leak issues have been resolved. Governors can expect to see a shift in these costs by the end of the term. The school is in a stronger position than last year. Governors noted the quality of reporting has taken a step up.</p> <p>Q13: Has the HoS ensured every vulnerable child who is entitled to additional funding has applied for it?</p> <p>R13: All parents who have had a change in their circumstances due to COVID have been contacted with a reminder of the support available to them in terms of FSM.</p> <p>ACTION: HoS to send out another letter to all parents.</p> <p>The school has received ¾ million pounds from either the Trust or CIF since it converted. The Trust have recently spent £10k on a boiler repair. The costs of electrical work which has been identified in health and safety audits will also be covered by the Trust. However, NM warns that there are still some historic issues remaining and the impact of long term lack of investment in site management is beginning to have a real impact on the costs of maintenance. For example, the</p>	<p>HoS</p>



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		<p>issue relating to grease traps in the kitchen is not new and drain blockages are still costing the school money. Grease traps have now been ordered. The Trust has also committed funds to erect secure fencing around the school. This has been delayed due to the preferred contractor not quote for everything. The final cost of the fence is in the region of £33k. The school has applied for ACF funds from the Trust to refurbish toilets but there may also be so underlying plumbing works which will need to be investigated further.</p> <p>Q14: Is there any part of the school which is permanently unutilised or can be made vacant? R14: The older part of the school was under used but now holds the new ICT suite and provides additional space for nurture and intervention activities.</p> <p>Q15: Who owns the school land? R15: A church trust owns the school. There is no scope for land sales. The school would not benefit from the funds of a sale even if there was because the money would go straight to the land trust or the family who endowed it to the school in the first place.</p> <p>Q16: Are most of the issue in older part of the building? R16: no. There were issues historically, such as the need to provide better classrooms rather than mobiles and this led to the other buildings on site. But some of those original fittings in those buildings are now beyond their life span. The school are trying to be more strategic but still firefighting as a result of low income from having a small roll. As mentioned previously, the best action for this school is to increase the number of pupils.</p> <p>Governors are really thankful that the school is part of Aquila. Toilet refurbishment continues to be a key capital investment for 2020/21.</p> <p>Q17: What are the caretaker’s views on these issues? R17: He is new in post and is only on site for 3 hours a day. NM is supporting him and he is keen to develop his knowledge.</p>	
11	Risk Register	<p>The LGB reviewed the school’s risk register. The impact of COVID is increasing and the LGB has discussed the recent RA and potential issues in January earlier in this meeting. Governors noted the future funding risk associated with the needs of pupils in Year 2. They acknowledged the issues relating to needing reserves but being unable to secure them due to firefighting issues around the site. However, attendance has moved to closer to where it should be.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor monitoring visit on attendance and behaviour required at the end of Term 3. 	



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors encouraged to attend the GRC-1 training on 17th December and the new governor induction session on 21st January 2021. 	
12	Safeguarding	There were no safeguarding matters to report to the LGB.	
13	Buildings + Health & Safety	<p>General risk assessment form the annual audit has very recently been received by the Trust but not yet circulated to the LGB. It looks worse than last year but it really focusses on systems and processes. All compliance issues from previous years has been dealt with.</p> <p>ACTION: NM to circulate the EW Audit to DM and HoS.</p>	CLERK
14	Policies	<p>The following policies were approved by the Governing Body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Policy - APPROVED Behaviour Policy - APPROVED CPD Policy - APPROVED EYFS Policy – ACTION: page 3 to has the wrong primary school name. LAC Policy – ACTION: AOF to provide feedback directly to HoS after the meeting and the updated policy will be re-circulated for approval at the next meeting. 	HoS HoS
ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS			ACTIONS
15	Any Other Business	<p>Governor Training ACTION: Clerk to circulate the NGA training link to be used with Governor’s school email addresses.</p> <p>Kent Test results – 6 out of 8 who took the test passed and will be going to grammar school. That equates to a 3rd of the year group. Some were subject to a Head Teacher appeal. These children are a credit to our school.</p>	
16	Confidentiality	No items were deemed confidential.	
17	Date of Next Meeting	25 th January 2021	
18	Closing Reflections	There was a good level of discussion across a range of subjects. The Chair hopes the new governors found it useful and interesting. The LGB noted how hard the HoS, AM and all the staff team are working under very difficult circumstances. Despite the pressures, the constant drive for improvement continues. In the past, none of the children from Charing would have gone to grammar school so this is a significant change in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Governors also noted a change in strategic discussions – having spent the last year and half to two years focusing on teaching and learning and improving standards; it is a reassuring step forward that SLT and the LGB has the scope to now focus on wider issues outside the classroom such as buildings and capital investment.	



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There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:06.

Signed:
Chairman of the Governing Body

Dated: