



**Minutes of Cromwell Primary Academy Local Governing Committee
held on Wednesday 17th July 2023 2pm**

Present Governors: Hannah Connor-James HT
Rebecca Berton CoG
David Sykes DS

Attendees: Antonia Drysdale

Clerk: Whitney Whitham

Apologies: Jacqui Harris JH

1.	Welcome and apologies for absence
	<p>The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate and apologies were received in advance from JH.</p> <p>CoG addressed the committee to confirm that unfortunately a resignation was received from Governor Angela Moore due to work-life balance. CoG thanked AM for her contribution on behalf of the LGC.</p>
2.	Declaration of interest
	The CoG asked the LGC to raise any new declarations – there were none.
3.	Approval of minutes May 23
	The minutes were deemed to be an accurate account of proceedings and signed off by the CoG and the committee.
4.	Matters arising (not elsewhere on the agenda)
	<p>CoG drew attention to the school's KS2 SATS results, sharing it was a great outcome and a testament to the hard work put in across the school. DS added the school was very pleased. HT shared that predicted results were based on aspirational predictions, so we were quite presently surprised with the outcome. We are very honest and err on the side of caution with our assessments in terms of moderation. DS continued to explain it's unfair and would be a disservice to the student to predict them something that is not accurate for them in senior school. CoG agreed we must be fair to the child in what can realistically be achieved. You should be pleased with your results.</p> <p>DS stated he is pleased with the Year 4 MTC results and explained we have made a huge improvement from last year as a result of new support mechanisms such as time management which have made all the difference. The greater depth scoring was also very high. HT raised there is concern regarding the writing score which will be discussed in more detail in the HT report. CoG agreed the scoring is lower than ideal however, this is a national issue.</p> <p>The Headteacher requested the acronym HT is used for future minutes in replacement of HoS.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to contact SE regarding a Trust Governor induction to support with initial onboarding (such as a checklist and information to support them learning the role). • JH & CoG to coordinate their attendance to meetings and open days for Governor Recruitment. Priority for next year is to recruit 2x parent Governors. • Previous action for CoG was to set next year's meeting dates with HCJ and share with Clerk.
5.	To ensure accountability for the Educational Performance of the School
	<p>Receive updated Headteacher's Report to Governors July 2023</p> <p>Headlines from HT:</p>



- It has been a pleasure to continue with increasing numbers. Cromwell Academy have a waiting list in many classes now. The context is continuing in a similar trend for example a gradual increase in pupil premium and SEND needs.
- We were lucky to have had no impact from the Teacher strikes.
- Staff Pulse results have been very positive.

CoG queried what 'skill' score relates to.

Action: Clerk to confirm what questions are asked in relation to this category.

CoG raised that the development score has increased which would suggest people do feel their skillset is considered and supported. HT advised it has been a difficult year to carve out the time to have staff meetings with the additional workload resulting from LB's leave. We should be in a very strong position next year to ensure strong communication with staff. I find it difficult in meetings when other Headteachers query how we get such high scores and it's difficult to describe that it is down to culture. DS added that Cromwell staff feel very involved in the process and therefore know how their contributions impact the school. CoG added they see that the HT has very good communication and this is the strength which has encouraged the high uptake and results. It would have been interesting to reflect on surveys had they been in place before Hannah started and the journey she has brought the school along since this point.

1. Attendance

HT shared that attendance has evened out over year and this can be owed to the student awards given throughout the year. We witnessed a significant change in relationships with new parents due to how hard we have been on those in reception as instructed by the Trust. We feel the gentle encouragement for high attendance has had a much greater impact.

CoG asked how the school is doing regarding persistent absence. HCJ explained it has decreased over the year, but we are still above national. Over half of our classes are above 96%.

2. Safeguarding

HT shared that relatively low numbers of referrals and child protection concerns has been consistent this academic year. A lot of training has been given to support staff including VECs which is a regular feature in staff meetings.

3. Pupil Progress Audit

CoG explained it is a strong area of this school and a review was conducted which gave Carla Parker clear areas to work on in terms of enrichment and cultural capital and full experiences of children. It's been a capacity issue this year and CP is aware of improvements to be actioned. A new family worker is being recruited for next academic year which should offer some support.

4. Staffing

HT confirmed the school is in a good place staffing wise. The Site Officer has returned, and it is looking positive.

5. Admissions

CoG raised that admission numbers are looking great, with 30 places in reception. HT shared we are very proud with the progress. CoG queried how the mobility has been. HT responded it varies - current year 5 cohort is very high, and we see more of an impact across KS2. It's very cohort dependant as some boost class data and some cause a decline, and this is unpredictable.

6. Behaviour



HT explained a comprehensive review was carried out recently which noted that figures of incidents and types of incidents are relatively low. We were able to show that where numbers were higher, they could be attributed to a specific number of students. We did a pupil survey which highlighted some interesting things including their understanding of bullying and safety in school. Where children said they did not feel safe in school we identified their concerns were things such as a gap under the gate where someone could slip out. Regarding bullying the children needed a better understanding of the definition of bullying vs unkind behaviour or friendship difficulties.

7. SDP

HT shared that SDP priorities have not moved as quickly as hoped although it's reassuring to see the progress that has been made. We did anticipate this which is why it was made a 2-year plan. We've provided a lot of training around Safeguarding and SEND which has been useful. EYFS are ready and chomping at the bit to manage an onsite preschool which makes such a difference in education moving into reception and year 1. I believe our current strengths in year 1 are a direct result of what has been achieved in EYFS and this could be even further improved.

HT explained we are concerned with the early years outcomes as the results are below national averages. It's a sign of the changing picture of the school. We should be accepting that we are a school from a more deprived catchment and a lower starting point of academic progress. With the EAL and low starting points in reception I hope we will see some really good value added with the cohort going through. Despite this we are outperforming most schools in greater depths standards which shows the gap we are dealing with. We are still meeting the needs of the children in the higher end.

CoG queried how the school achieved both scores at 90%. HT explained 90% of year 2 cohort had passed the phonics screening by end of KS1 and in terms of this, it is the best we've ever had. Victoria Wootton and the KS1 lead will say the phonics scheme has made all the difference as a much more prescribed scheme. DS added the structure of the scheme ensures consistency. HT added interventions taken outside of the lessons were made a priority following Ofsted and they are closing the gaps. CoG agreed the school has clearly made the right decision.

CoG asked if there is a plan for those who didn't pass in phonics. HT confirmed two students are high needs and therefore we are looking at another approach.

CoG asked whether KS1 results were moderated. HT confirmed they were and were mostly in line with national average. KS2 is the problematic area but is an improving picture due to the covid impact on writing. The bounce-back program was successful however 6 weeks was not enough and is something we are requesting support with from the Trust. The greatest impact we have seen is in reading and maths.

CoG added it is much harder to provide intervention in writing and perhaps the school can look at how to impact it in other lessons such as maths where you have such high results. It would be useful to encourage opportunities for more cross-curricular writing without watering down subjects. HT responded that we need to rethink writing as we still strongly feel the approach we are using is the best one however, we have given a lot of time to this and have looked at setting the same standards of writing across the curriculum. The expectation is there but I think we are still missing the opportunities in other subjects to support the pupil's stamina. We have not had time to complete training in staff meetings and instead it has had to be more focussed on reminders. DS added there has been an issue of high occurrence of staff meetings and Trust meetings which has taken away from directly working on SDP points. HT agreed this has been a challenge. CoG advised the first step is to organise a working party on writing so that teachers can collaborate and share their perspectives.

CoG asked how the immersive classroom has progressed. HT explained we are still deciding where this will go and the company are scheduling a site visit to offer advice. I've approached the ACES Director of Finance, David McMillan, on proposing to trustees if they would consider lending the money subject to repayment over the next 3 years. The CEO is in agreement it would be positive if the Trust can release some money from its reserves for this.

CoG stated the Headteacher's report was very helpful, and it was delightful to read the positives. It's been a challenging year but the outcomes are pleasing and you are starting next year in a much stronger place.



6.	Governor Hub
	<p>CoG confirmed we would like everyone to use Governor Hub going forward. Clerk to request that when minutes are shared, Governors are to comment on noticeboard whether they will be in attendance.</p> <p>Action: HCJ to circulate AD SEND report on governor hub.</p>
7.	Finance report update
	HT confirmed we have not received a finance update and will revisit this in September 2023.
8.	AOB
	<p>HT shared an update that Headteachers have collectively raised a concern on growth of the Trust. CoG added that Chairs across the Trust have also written a letter but have not received a response to date.</p> <p>CoG confirmed no other business.</p>
9.	SEND update
	<p>Antonia Drysdale, ACES Director of SEND, shared the headlines of her SEND report which was shared with the Governors in advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been involved with many activities with Cromwell such as quality assurance and SEND reviews however, much has been very reactive with an explosion of high needs pupils. This has been managed very well by the school. • The SEND review documents are quite onerous, but we have established a process which should bring relief next year and we will need to discuss whether to continue this. • I'm keen to discuss frequency of meetings and reviews for next year and amend the required depth in each instance. If I'm coming in regularly, I will have a good knowledge of day to day and will not need to work so closely. • Building on the distributive leadership of SEND has been positive and not gone unnoticed. • The flexibility of well-trained TAs has impacted the quality of support and shows true inclusion. Children are being accommodated through various support plans and this has worked extremely well to keep them in mainstream education. • Flexibility and professionalism are apparent at Cromwell. • One of the things we have agreed very recently is an educational support officer funded by the trust. • We have worked on bespoke informal and formal coaching of staff on managing behaviour and the provision of our sensory circuits project where needed but there was not a high need this year. • HCJ kindly attended the ACES SEND leaders to share best practise. • Recently we have been trying to get SEND management onto Arbor. • I have seen better SEND provision here than in some specialist schools I have worked in. • Evidence of strong leadership in SEND and strong knowledge in leadership. • Support from LA is scarce in inclusion which is why we are exploring alternatives. • Curriculum structure is very good in empowering students with a good support of learning through the environment. • Cromwell provides inspiring and creative support for high need pupils. • I am happy to continue with CPD, particularly with new staff. It's been a privilege to work with Cromwell this year and they do an excellent job in supporting their leaders in this provision. <p>CoG commented it was a good move to write a two-year plan as this has impacted availability and opportunity to meet targets this year. AD agreed it's clear there is a huge difference in capacity since Lauren Blythe's return. She is a key part of the school and has been very busy since being back.</p> <p>CoG added that inclusion is the culture of this school and it is pleasing to hear you have seen the same. HT shared AD's input has been much appreciated, especially in the crisis moments which can feel quite lonely for a Headteacher.</p>



	AD requested to attend one or two Governor meetings per year for SEND updates.
10.	Date of next meetings
	<p>Dates of future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 26th September 2023 4pm• 28th November 2023 4pm• 26th February 2024 4pm• 14th May 2024 4pm• 15th July 2024 4pm <p>Action: Clerk to issue invites.</p>