

Embsay CofE (VC) Primary School
Meeting of the Governing Body held on
Monday 5th December 2022 at 5.30pm in the school

Minutes (Draft)

Present: Fiona Prest (Headteacher); Chris Atherton (CA) (Acting Chair); Andy Gash (AG) (arrived at 18:20); Rev. Tim Calow (TC); Rev. Marion Russell (MR); Helen Ralph (HR)(left the meeting at 19:00)

Apologies: Emma Smith (ES), Rachael Higgins (RH); Jennifer Stearn (JS); Matt Smales-Cresswell (MSC), Steven Hudson (SH)

In attendance: Sallie Wareham (Clerk); Val Berry (School Bursar); Shirley Chapman (office manager)

Core Functions of a Governing Body:

- **Setting strategic direction.**
- **Holding the Headteacher to account for educational performance.**
- **Ensuring financial health, probity, and value for money.**

No.	Item	Action
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Part A – PROCEDURAL

1.	<p>Prayers – CA opened the meeting of Embsay C.E (V.E) School Governing Body at 5.30pm on 5th December 2022. TC led an opening prayer.</p> <p>Welcome The acting chair welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies Consented apologies were received from Emma Smith, Jennifer Stearn, Matt Smales-Cresswell and Steven Hudson.</p>	
2.	<p>Confidentiality The acting chair reminded all present of the confidential nature of all discussions.</p> <p>It was agreed that part of item 8, Headteachers Report and item 12, Health & Safety, would be recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of interest No declarations were made.</p>	
4.	<p>Urgent business items previously notified to the Chair None</p>	
5.	<p>Membership of Governing Body Update on LA Vacancy – In the absence of MSC the progress report on this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. MR signed the following declarations: NGA Code of Conduct and declaration of business interests. She confirmed a nil return for the gifts and hospitalities disclosure. Clerk to follow up with JS and MSC at the next meeting.</p> <p>Governors accepted the resignation of Rachael Higgins from the governing body. Rachel has been a co-opted governor for almost 4 years, and has held the role of chair during the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MSC</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLERK</p>

	<p>last Ofsted and during the Covid lockdowns. The governors all thanked her for her service.</p> <p>Governors to consider what skills are required within the governing body before recruiting for a co-opted governor in the new year.</p> <p>It was noted that AG and MSC will have completed their 4 year term of office in January 2023. They were invited by the governing body to consider if they wish to be considered for co-option for a further term and to inform the Clerk and HT of their decision.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>MSC & AG</p>
6.	<p>Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2022 were approved.</p> <p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda: The Headteacher thanked HR, CA and ES for their confirmation that they had read and understood the updated KCSIE document. She reminded all other members that their responses are required as soon as possible.</p> <p>The draft documentation produced by Lee Talbot following the HT performance management has been issued to the members of the panel. Once approved and returned to Lee, feedback can be given to the governing body.</p>	<p>Clerk, HT and Chair</p> <p>TC, AG, MSC, MR, JS, SH</p> <p>HR & CA</p>

Part B – School Improvement

7.	<p>Finance Finance: There was a discussion about pupil numbers given the new housing. Currently there has been minimal expected impact as there doesn't seem to be a lot number of younger families occupying the estate. This will be monitored.</p> <p><u>School Financial Value Standards (SFVS)</u> SFVS is an annual review of the measures in place to ensure financial competence and adherence to procedures. This review and its findings must be sent to Ian Morton at the Local Authority by 31st March. Headteacher and TC have completed this review and this was approved by the governing body. There is a nil return for 3rd party related transactions.</p> <p><u>Benchmarking</u> Data to compare the school's financial position with other settings nationally was received and discussed.</p> <p>Governor question: Embsay appears in the top 10% nationally for energy costs. Can NYCC fund improvements to make the school more energy efficient?</p> <p>A. It is unlikely that the LA will step in to support the school make improvements. The central budgets are all under pressure and although the benchmarking data for energy costs is a cause for concern, the school is doing what it can with the resources available. The mixture of old and new heating systems does not help as the thermostat is in year 5, together with old style radiators. It is quite a task to achieve a good general temperature throughout school.</p> <p>Governor question: Staff costs have reduced comparatively, is there a reason for that?</p> <p>A. Teacher PPA cover is currently provided by HLTA and outside staff, which is cheaper than using a qualified teacher.</p>	
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Revised Budget and three-year forecast

Governors received the monitoring statements and a final draft of the revised budget and three year forecast for approval.

Governors considered the three year budget forecast, which is showing a considerable shortfall in year three.

Governor question: With so many unknown facts, is there a chance it could be worse?

A. There are several mitigating circumstances which may impact positively on the overall financial position of the school in the current and coming 2 years.

- The Chancellor has promised more funding for schools during the Autumn statement, but it is not yet known how this will be calculated or what Emsay will receive
- Employer pension contributions will be reducing, which will impact positively on the budget.

However the honest answer to the question is that Governors should plan for a worsening national picture including:

- Increase to National Minimum Wage in April 2023
- Changes to banding for support staff roles expected because of NYCC merging several functions from smaller parish and town councils in the coming 12 months.
- Removal by government of energy price cap in April 2023.
- Unions are balloting members with a view to strike action over the 5% teacher pay offer. If successful, the amount could be higher.

The capital budget has been spent and there will be nil carried forward in April 2023.

Governor question: How is school managing the costs of supply cover to cover staff absences?

- A. The School has absence insurance which pays out after a qualifying period of absence. The amount received by school does not cover the cost of supply, so there is a shortfall but a manageable one.

Governors questioned some of the key changes between the budget forecast last year against this year's figures and sought understanding on the changes reported.

Governor question: There were several costs codes which are showing a high year on year increase. Why is this?

- A. The five significant ones are as follows:

Support staff – all staff are now on higher pay than estimated following NY discussions with unions.

Clerical staff – staff moving through pay scale and now on higher pay than estimated.

Staff absence insurance premium – Based on number of FTE in April 2022, when there was a maternity leave overlap.

Maintenance – All contracts increased in price due to wage inflation and material costs. A new contract with wider scope is being looked at.

Premises Insurance – This is similar in cost but has been coded to a different part of the budget, in accordance with LA guidance.

Governor question: Will the budget situation and falling amounts held in reserve impact on a possible Academy partner?

A. It is anticipated that academies will need to adjust their entry criteria as all maintained school are in a similar position. The LA will need to step in and support the negotiations, given their strategic aims for Education need to be met.

Bursar

	<p>Governors acknowledged that the budget includes a significant number of estimates and omissions, which have not yet been confirmed at County level. This uncertainty at revised budget approval time is a significant hindrance to effective governance. The governing body resolved to feedback to NYCC.</p> <p>Governors thanked Val and Shirley for a tremendous effort to produce detailed analysis of the school's financial position.</p> <p>With discussions concluded, governors unanimously approved the three-year budget which will be sent to NYCC by the deadline of 31.12.2022</p>	
8.	<p>Headteacher's Report A copy of the Headteacher's report had been circulated ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>The Pupil Premium statement for 2022 – 2025 has been completed by the HT and MR and was approved by the full governing body during the meeting. HT can now publish on the school website.</p> <p>Governor question: <i>Have any families indicated that they are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis?</i></p> <p>A. None have come forward, seeking support.</p> <p>The remaining questions, discussions and decisions from this agenda item are recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>	HT
9.	<p>SIAMS/SIP</p> <p>Environmental Awareness will be carried forward to the next meeting for discussion</p> <p>The SIAMS framework for making judgements about schools has changed. The changes will need to be incorporated into the SEF. The inspection outcome can now be either <i>"meeting"</i> or <i>"not meeting"</i> the needs of pupils.</p> <p>The teaching of Phonics has been a key priority within the SIP. The HT reported that after extensive evidence-based scrutiny, she remains confident with current arrangements for teaching phonics. Governors were in agreement that a move to the Little Wandle Phonics scheme was unnecessary.</p> <p>HT has completed 2 of 3 phonics leader sessions, which are very useful when looking at phonics from a strategic point of view.</p> <p>The HT has attended training on staff wellbeing. Governors agreed to consider a stress policy in the new term, to ensure staff are well supported and workplace stress is acknowledged.</p> <p>The idea of mental health training for staff and managers was welcomed and will be discussed in greater detail next term, along with the new policy.</p> <p>Link governors were encouraged to re-read the SIP and establish if it is detailed enough to support effective curriculum monitoring. It was agreed that a TEAMS meeting would be useful to clarify what to do during monitoring visits and how to relate the visit to the SIP. HT to agree date with governors via email and issue the meeting invitation.</p> <p>Governors thanked the headteacher for her hard work in preparing and presenting the SIP and school vision to parents. Unfortunately it wasn't as well attended as wished however for those that did there were questions asked by parents.</p>	<p>CLERK</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT and LINK GOVs</p>

	During discussions with governors during Heather Russell’s safeguarding visit, discussions took place as to whether the communication with parents should be reviewed. Governors decided that a parent communication survey may help to understand parental preferences.	
10.	<p>Academisation</p> <p>The working group provided a verbal update following their attendance at recent events hosted by The Causeway Trust, Collaborative Learning Trust and Leeds Diocesan Learning Trust.</p> <p>Each of the MAT’s claim that they work collaboratively and seek to support the individual school’s identity, vision, ethos and decision making. This is important to governors at Emsay.</p> <p>It was agreed that the 3 trusts would be invited to the school to meet governors and discuss academisation in greater detail.</p>	HT & Working Group members to arrange dates
11.	<p>Governor Report to Parents</p> <p>In the absence of MSC the progress report on this item will be carried forward to the next meeting.</p>	MSC
12.	<p>Health and Safety Update</p> <p>This item is included in the confidential minutes.</p>	
13.	<p>Reports of Governor visits and training:</p> <p>TC has completed a finance monitoring visit, completing the SFVS.</p> <p>CA has completed a Maths monitoring visit</p> <p>AG has completed a Safeguarding monitoring visit</p> <p>CA has attended part one of “Chairing the board” training. Handouts from the course have been uploaded to SharePoint.</p> <p>Other governors with subject responsibility to arrange visits for early next term.</p>	MSC – English SH – Science TC - RE
14.	<p>Any Policies to be adopted:</p> <p>After discussion governors unanimously agreed to adopt the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti Bullying Appraisal 2022 Behaviour 2022 Budget management Educational visits Homework Medical Pay 2022/23 RPI 2022-2024 Transition 2022 – 2025 Missing Children Procedure <p>Governor question: Should an Adult:child ratio be included in the EV policy?</p> <p>A. Ratios are different for each trip depending on the nature of the educational visit and the risk assessment. The HT is responsible for the decision, and NY advice is that specific ratios should not be included in the policy.</p> <p>Work is still ongoing to convert all policy documents to a universal format. CA will continue with this project</p>	CA

15.	To note any governors' correspondence received or sent None.	
17.	Any other urgent matters previously notified to the Chair under item 4 above. None.	
18.	Provisional Meeting Dates 2022/23: <i>Thursday 9 February 2023</i> <i>Thursday 23 March 2023</i> <i>Thursday 25 May 2023</i> <i>Thursday 13 July 2023</i> <i>All at 5:30 p.m</i> Diary dates: 13 th December – Governance review with Lee Talbot from the Diocese.	
16.	How have we helped to achieve our objectives today and how has this meeting impacted on the welfare and progress of our pupils? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors are reassured that teaching of Phonics is effective at this school. • Governors feel confident that decisions made about the budget will ensure a quality learning environment. • Governors are clear and focused on the strategy of the school • 	
17.	Close of meeting The acting Chair declared the meeting closed at 19:40.	

Signed:

Dated: