



MINUTES

PENKETH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY – SPRING TERM 2025

Tuesday 4 February 2025 at 5.00pm

PRESENT:

Mrs Claire Lawton (Headteacher)
Mrs Claire Roper
Mr Simon Carroll
Ms Carla Bonner
Mr Jake Smith

Mrs Carolyn Williams (Chairperson)
Mrs Kathryn Bullivant
Mr Steven Hennessey
Ms Pamela Lucido

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Maria Warburton (LA Minute Clerk) Miss Lorraine Browne (Observer)

Part One – non confidential business

1 Welcome

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting. The chair congratulated everyone at the school for keeping the children safe and allowing the school to be open and staff being in school during the period of snow and ice in early January.

2 Absence and apologies

It was reported that the headteacher will be arriving late due to attending NPQH Training in Sale. Apologies have been received from Miss Browne who is currently absent due to personal reasons.

3 Declaration of personal interests for any item on this agenda

Governors were asked to declare any interest they may have, pecuniary or otherwise, relating to this meeting. No interests were declared for any item on the agenda.

4 Chair's emergency decisions

Mrs Roper informed governors that a decision had to be made in relation to some admission queries (consultations) for children with EHCPs. They knew two of the three children.

The headteacher entered the meeting at 5.05pm.

Mrs Roper explained that they read all of the information and went off what was written. The requests came from the LA as being the closest school. After reviewing all of the information it was decided that they could not meet the needs of the three children (there were high levels of complex needs). It was a difficult decision to make; however, it was in the best interests of the children. This decision was supported by the Governors.

The chair welcomed the headteacher to the meeting.

5 Governing body membership

There are two co-opted governor vacancies.

The chair confirmed that she has checked the GIAS (Getting Information About Schools) and the information is all up to date and correct.

6 Previous full governing body minutes, matters arising and action log

- a) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2024 and discuss any matters arising

Page 15, agenda item 25 (Any other confidential business/MAT update): 'It was confirmed that *Sutton Primary* joined in August 2024 and *Dallam Primary* joined in September 2024' should read 'It was confirmed that *Sutton Academy* joined in August 2024 and *Dallam Primary* joined in September 2024'.

AGREED: The minutes from the previous meeting held on 3 December 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chair subject to the above amendment.

- b) Action log
Mrs Roper reported that the £1,055 cost relating to the EYFS training day was split across all TCAT primary schools and was therefore a low cost for all the Early Years staff. Penketh South Primary paid the initial bill, and Ms Atherton invoiced the cost out to other primary schools (this was prior to Christmas).

Bad Debt Policy: It was confirmed that Mr Hennessey sent this to the headteacher. The headteacher informed governors that she will forward the policy to TCAT for their information and feedback.

The headteacher informed governors that they will take any comments on board from TCAT and the policy will be uploaded to the school website (amendments have already been made to the policy)

AGREED: Governors approved the proposed Bad Debt Policy subject to any minor amendments from TCAT.

ACTION: The Bad Debt Policy to be uploaded to the school website.

7 Headteacher's report

- Scorecard and PAP (education aspect)
The headteacher informed governors that the document has been updated with Mrs Briggs – partly due to the November review. The headteacher explained that there were some aspects that she noticed on the initial monitoring and some things were working well which they have kept in place. Dates have been included for when things should happen. Actions will be coloured green when they have been fully completed.

For the curriculum they are looking at mapping basic skills – what is expected for each year group for reading, writing and maths. Subject leaders are mapping those this term.

They are looking at the timetabling. Curriculum subjects are being taught; however, there is some inconsistency in some year groups, ie: they are ensuring an hour for each class for music, etc. They have now put that in place for the spring term with the right amount of work they need to do.

There are some schemes already in place. White Rose Maths was introduced in September. There are spelling schemes, and they want to make sure that these are embedded; they are being monitored from the start of this term.

Inclusivity: They have carried out work on adaptive teaching for SEND pupils. Mrs Roper has also carried out work with staff on a SEND graduated approach. Some staff want to refer children for assessments and the graduated approach ensures that staff put strategies in place before completing a referral as they need to have the evidence behind that.

Transition: They have been working with the trust on promoting the school, ie: newsletters, a new prospectus, redesigning the school website and a radio advert at a local hub. They also have a Nursery open evening planned on 27th February.

They are about to order new signage for parking for both schools as visitors are parking in the wrong places.

A governor asked if the school will be full in September. The headteacher confirmed that the promotion of the Nursery has helped to ensure that the school is full.

The headteacher reported that the trust has introduced the TCAT Challenge Award that is similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The trust has links with Chester University, Warrington Wolves and The Princes Trust. The Year 4 class has been chosen to gain points based on things they do, ie: a child visits the local care home regularly and they are looking to introduce a bake sale on a rota for each of the classes. The children that achieve fifteen to twenty points will be invited to a ceremony with the other schools in summer to celebrate their achievement. Year 4 will be visiting Tyn y Felin. All the children will have the opportunity to access points through events and activities that the school will organise.

The headteacher reported that she has been involved in an Induction programme, and she has met with a number of people in the trust to work through what she needs to know; she is aware of who to go to for information and support. It has been a supportive induction programme.

For reviewing the roles in SLT the school has a structured process in place.

With regards to professional development the trust is looking at instructional coaching to work with staff. Miss Browne will lead on this. It will give staff the opportunity to be coached and develop their teaching. The headteacher explained that she has an online coach, and they meet regularly to reflect on what she is learning which is positive. Staff are able to visit other schools, ie: to look at maths and what they can introduce at Penketh South Primary.

Governance: The chair informed governors that they have the required number of governors for their governing body under the TCAT guidance. The chair added that she is grateful for all the support and work that governors do.

Staff were asked if they want to be part of a wellbeing team, and they started to put an action plan together. Some staff volunteered; however, the action plan has not yet materialised yet. The headteacher added that she suggested that they look at updating the staff room – it is about looking after the staff as well as the children.

The headteacher reported that the safe and sound team is working really well. The single central record (SCR) is not as good as it could be due to short staffing levels in the office; hence, it has been rated as amber at Christmas. A review was held on 21 January 2025; there are some areas that need addressing (again due to being short staffed in the office) and these have been worked on.

The headteacher informed governors that pupil progress meetings have been taking place.

ACTION: **The headteacher to upload the Scorecard/PAP to Governor Hub.**

- **School on a Page Update**

The headteacher informed governors that the document has been updated. There has been a slight increase in SEND need; EHCPs have risen slightly. Mrs Roper explained that they have a total of ten EHCPs; one child moved to a specialist provision over the Christmas period.

In January they gained one child with an EHCP through a mediation process which took the total number back to ten. They have thirty seven children on the SEND register taking it to forty seven in total.

Year 6 has reduced to twenty nine pupils from thirty. The headteacher reported that they had a child join the school in the October half term and there was a significant safeguarding issue – the foster family broke down and the child returned to their previous school.

- **Curriculum Updates**

This has already been discussed. The headteacher explained that during the last half term she has become more familiar with the school. They have now started to look at the curriculum. There was a long term plan in place for each subject and a medium and long term plan – these did not always link up. They have been trying to teach too much.

Staff have been given the opportunity to map out what they want the children to know in each subject and clear areas of progression. Vocabulary is a key focus. Some subjects had a lot of words and a few of these were quite difficult, for example, in Year 3 for history there were thirty words. They will be scaling this down. The headteacher explained that they are ensuring that staff finish the maps, and she will timetable meetings with every curriculum leader for half a day leading up to Easter. They will look at the mapping, the books and the teaching and learning that is happening along with what is working well and what is not working well. Teachers are able to reflect on their subjects.

The school has also been linked with a science lead at another school for a platinum award. They met with their science lead to look at how they can further develop this, and this is being well-received by staff. that.

A governor asked if the curriculum documents on the school website have been updated. The headteacher explained that these have been removed at the moment whilst staff finish the documents – they want a consistent approach. They will be uploaded to the subject pages which will include a policy for that subject and a long term plan; it will be basic information that parents need to know for those subjects. On the class pages will just be information relating to what parents need to know for that particular class.

- **Learning Environment updates**

They are working on an Early Years approach using the environment as a third person in the room, ie: display boards for children to refer to. The vocabulary for each subject will feature along with photos of any activities and work. For English and Maths, the relevance to learning is on the board for children to access.

This will support children and ensure that their learning environment reflects all of their learning. They have looked at the benefits of working walls and staff have visited Grappenhall Heys Primary to see their displays. They will be discussing a display policy tomorrow and the consistency they are expecting in classrooms.

The display boards in some classrooms are not situated in the best place, ie: Year 3 and Year 5 - they will try to be creative with the space available.

The headteacher reported that prior to Christmas the school received a £2,000 donation from a local Penketh community group. This is being used to upgrade the chill out area and to create some nice areas around school where children can read and learn as well as condense the size of the Year 3 and Year 5 cloakrooms.

- Update on Monitoring carried out in Spring 1
This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

A governor asked if staff have responded well to the curriculum changes. The headteacher confirmed that they have – they have tried to ensure that the workload has reduced slightly and that subject leaders can have a good overview of their subject.

Mrs Roper added that it is about unpicking what they have and putting the documents into clearer formats so they can see what is being taught across the school. The headteacher added that staff need to know what the children have already been taught and what they are learning next. Mrs Roper informed governors that the curriculum has been overloaded and this has been recognised by the government; they hope they will slim it down further to focus on certain areas. The chair acknowledged that it **will be** is good to monitor it and know it is helping.

The headteacher informed governors that the history curriculum for KS2 is vast – she is leading on this and is making some elements relevant to Warrington, ie: the Manchester ship canal, which then becomes relevant to the children and their learning. It is the same for geography.

8 SEND update (standard agenda item)

Mrs Roper informed governors that she met with Liz Richards (TCAT SEND lead practitioner). Every half term they hold a SEND day at TCAT, and they discuss many aspects of SEND. Mrs Roper explained that Ms Richards is working with her on the LA SEND review which is due to take place in May 2025 (previously she has assisted on a review; however, this was led by Miss Browne).

The headteacher mentioned that the report referred to the early signs of SEND and they will do more work on learning plans which they provide to parents.

Mrs Roper explained that teachers will meet with parents of SEND children to go through learning plans before parents' evening and they will put a plan in place for that across the year to allow teachers to do this.

There are ten children with EHCPs and thirty seven children on SEN support. There are seventeen children on their list for monitoring, ie: where they could be referred, where a referral has been submitted, or where they are tracking and they are not making the progress they would expect, or a parent has raised concerns. It is about building a profile using the graduated response. This is good document from the LA to identify an area of need. It has many suggestions along with their own core strategies and SEN offer. Their highest need continues to be speech and language concentrated in Early Years and Year 1. Miss Kilbride (TA) delivers the speech and language plans which are having an impact. They have good links with the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) team.

They have ten children diagnosed with ADHD and seven children diagnosed on the autistic spectrum. These are all EHC children – three children are ADHD alongside other learning needs. The ten children with ADHD are quite a high number. They are doing some work in the SEND hub to upskill staff.

Attendance is at 90.9% for SEND (national is 92%). One child has not been in school since October, and they are trying to encourage that child back into school. The headteacher reported that after half-term they have arranged for a tutor to work with the child at home with a view to bringing the child closer to the school and building. They had to wait for an EHCP to be put in place before the parents agreed to the tutor.

A governor asked if there is an agreed plan to bring the child back into school. Mrs Roper explained that it depends on the needs of the child and why they have not been in school. It also depends on the parents.

9 Staff wellbeing

- TCAT Staff Survey

The headteacher reported that the results of the survey have been uploaded to Governor Hub. This is a trust survey which has been sent to staff electronically to complete. The first question asks about the school they are part of and then asks a series of questions. A week before the survey closed they were informed that just two members of staff had completed the survey, and a reminder was sent out. They received just seven responses out of a possible twenty five. The survey was aimed at all teachers and TAs. Staff may have thought that the questions were about the trust and not about the school.

A governor asked if the survey was anonymous. The headteacher confirmed that it was. **A governor asked** if this was made clear to staff; it is usually apathy or suspicion. **A governor asked** if there has been the same response from other schools. The headteacher explained that she does not know what the response was for other schools.

The chair acknowledged that they are a small school. Staff may not be aware about TCAT and what it does for the school. If the surveys are different each time they do not have a comparison. Is the survey asking the right questions for that school – is it for individual staff wellbeing or about what TCAT is providing to staff.

A governor asked about the opportunity to include some text within the survey. If someone strongly disagrees there is nowhere to include that feedback.

The headteacher informed governors that she will get some feedback from staff and speak to Melissa Alexander who has led the survey for the trust. If they have the data from that they could potentially look at doing an internal staff wellbeing audit in summer.

ACTION: **The headteacher to contact Ms Alexander regarding the data from the survey.**

The headteacher to arrange a staff wellbeing audit in the summer term.

The chair suggested that they inform staff about why they are being asked to complete the survey, what happens with the information from the survey, and the changes that have been implemented.

10 Policies

- **Asthma Policy**

The headteacher explained that the policy they had was more of a process. As part of the review for staff training they all had online training for asthma and asthma awareness; they have also completed defibrillator training. The information was taken from a model policy.

A governor asked if they will be sharing the policy with TCAT if they do not already have one. The headteacher confirmed that they would.

A governor asked if the school has a report which shows which children have asthma. The headteacher confirmed that the information is on Arbor. They have a first aid box in the classrooms where the inhalers are kept. There are also charts around the school which have a photo showing where the emergency boxes are within the environment.

A governor mentioned that a school in Warrington sent out a letter suggesting that every parent consents to the use of an EpiPen in emergencies if they believe it is necessary. The child would then be sent to the hospital having had that administered. **A governor asked** if they will be doing that in other schools. The headteacher informed governors that staff who need to be EpiPen trained have recently had that training and it was not mentioned. Mrs Roper added that they have a supply of emergency inhalers, but not EpiPens.

Mrs Roper reported that there have been changes to the EYFS statutory framework for choking, ie: in sight of an adult. The school secured a free anti-choke mask through a charity foundation which can also be used on adults. The headteacher added that all of their MDAs have been trained in slips, trips and choking.

AGREED: Governors agreed to adopt the proposed Asthma Policy.

11 Admission arrangements

The headteacher reported that she has attended two meetings with headteachers. They have been advised that the birth rate has dropped massively, and the LA is looking at areas of Warrington where they have predicted numbers to be lower than others. A number of schools have reduced their PAN, and some schools are going out to consultation. Each school is to be contacted to consider their PAN; Penketh South Primary has not yet had any contact. They received an update in January which stated that the situation was worse than predicted in certain areas of Warrington which will have an impact this September and the following September. Penketh South Primary is not affected at the moment.

The headteacher reported that the admissions department have confirmed that they have thirty one first choice for the September intake, twelve second choice and eleven third choice. This does not include the three EHCPs and any out of borough applications. The headteacher added that there will be further house builds happening in the future.

Local schools are not full and have low numbers – only eight to ten schools in Warrington are oversubscribed. Some schools have just ten to fifteen first choices. In general, the Year 5 cohort is huge, and secondary schools are concerned that they do not have enough places. After Year 5 the numbers reduce. The Nursery plays a huge part to ensure that Penketh South Primary is full. As part of their admissions criteria the Nursery features high on the list – some schools have their nurseries much lower in their criteria. If their Nursery is full the Reception class is full.

The chair recognised the work that has taken place in changing that and raising the profile of the school through development days for staff – Penketh South Primary is highly regarded for its learning environment. The headteacher informed governors that the new local nursery has not impacted on numbers. Mrs Roper added that they also have a waiting list already for September.

The headteacher reported that they will continue to promote to parents that their children would be coming to a school nursery where they have teachers and staff. Copying older children brings the younger children on.

Mrs Roper informed governors that she is at capacity most mornings with some spaces in the afternoons.

They are receiving phone calls all the time as parents want to increase hours – if they are not able to accommodate they will go elsewhere. The older children will move into Reception. They are helping to build the roots from early on. The Nursery 1 class for the following September is currently busy.

The headteacher confirmed that the admissions information is published on the school website.

12 Governor visits

- **Safeguarding (C Williams) - 3.12.24**
The chair reminded governors that she mentioned her visit at the previous meeting and the summary report from that meeting has been uploaded to Governor Hub. The chair informed governors that she will look at the SCR on her next visit. It is not their responsibility as governors to audit the SCR, but they need to know that it is being kept up to date and there are processes in place.

The chair explained that the LA audit has changed with a new set of questions – the information is in the LA briefing paper. They are using NSPCC questions as a model for the S175 audit. Mrs Roper confirmed that the school is also using the NSPCC audit tool.

For CPOMS they are looking for consistency across the trust.

Mrs Roper confirmed that all of the SEND information is uploaded. If a report comes in this is scanned into CPOMS. Calls with parents are also logged.

The chair mentioned that during the safeguarding review they tend to have a question for the link governor and suggested a meeting with Mrs Roper prior to the review.

Mrs Roper confirmed that the next safeguarding review is scheduled for the morning of 26 February 2025. A timetable has not yet been sent through.

The chair confirmed that she will review the SCR prior to the review taking place as this has been flagged as amber as an action.

ACTION: The chair to look at the SCR prior to the safeguarding review.

The safeguarding link governor to attend the safeguarding review on 26 February 2025 (if available).

13 Governor training

There was no information reported.

14 Local Authority Governor Briefing

- a) Governor Briefing paper
The chair informed governors that the document has been provided for information.

The chair mentioned that Ruth Agnew – who carried out a review of the school a number of years ago – has been awarded the MBE.

15 Any other business

There were no other items.

16 Future meeting dates (Tuesdays at 5.00pm)

Spring (2): 25 March 2025 (finance focus)

Summer (1): 20 May 2025

Summer (2): 15 July 2025

PART ONE OF THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.25pm

SIGNED
Chairperson

DATE

