

BOARD of GOVERNORS

26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

Together we aim for the stars

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors for Victoria School on  
**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Members Present**

Mr Mark Petherick, Chairperson  
Mr Alistair Davey  
Mrs Sam Davies  
Major David Emery  
Mr Peter Hall  
Mrs Laura Halliwell  
Mr Simon Husband  
Mrs Judith Jones

Ms Nicola Moorhouse  
Mrs Helen Moreton, Clerk  
Mr Grant Robson  
Dr Rhiannon Slade  
Mrs Jenine Sulley  
Mrs Amy Warne Jones  
Cllr. Mark Wilson

**Apologies**

Cllr. Rhiannon Birch  
Mrs Rebecca Connor  
Mrs Beth Hales  
Mrs Cerys McDonald

**Apologies were given and accepted by Governors.**

**School Improvement Partner**

**Claire Skidmore** was due to give a presentation to the GB but was unable to attend, her visit has been rearranged for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April.

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday were approved by the Governors; proposed by **PH** seconded by **JJ** and signed by the Chairperson.

**Matters arising**

None

**Head teacher Report**

This had been circulated prior to the meeting, **SD** highlighted the following:

**Attendance**

Attendance rates are stable and are currently 95.2%, higher than pre-covid. Our unauthorised absence is low and our attendance is well above mean average of Vale Primaries. **RS** asked who set the attendance targets, **SD** advised it was the LEA.

**The School Improvement Plan**

The SIP for the academic year has been agreed with all staff.

**Key Area One – Teaching and learning**

To continue to develop an awareness and understanding of diversity:

The school is an ambassador school for anti-racism and has worked with CSC to develop a website of support for other schools. The diversity group have met and developed an action plan to support their work in ensuring that Victoria is an inclusive school. Staff are constantly looking for opportunities to include a wide range of resources/experiences to promote diversity and inclusion.

To ensure that the curriculum offer is relevant, engaging and robust.

The Curriculum Task Group have designed the first whole school theme week of the school year. The Senior Leadership Team have undertaken an audit of provision and will analyse this before the end of term.

To develop positive attitudes to reading across the whole school.

Pupils are encouraged to experience the enjoyment of reading. All classes have a basket of books that they will have exposure to across the year. There is currently a book fayre running at school which has generated £550 which the school can spend on books.

### **Key Area Two – Wellbeing, support and guidance**

To continue to maintain VPS high standards.

### **Key Area Three – Leading and improving**

To ensure that professional learning opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

All staff have a professional development target focusing on action research which has a positive impact on pupils.

Two SLT members have received coaching training in order to disseminate to others.

To continue to promote and develop the Welsh language.

We are currently piloting a partnership project with Ysgol Pen Y Garth.

### **A subsidiary Objective**

To develop effectiveness as a community focussed school.

Parents have been invited to form a 'Parent Voice Group' – an opportunity for parents to come together and share their views. Their insights will help the school understand how it can better support our community whilst also empowering parents to help their children thrive.

### **Checking and Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning**

This term the literacy and maths leads have observed every teacher and found teaching to be at least good across the school, with pockets of excellence. Support staff work skillfully to deliver interventions and support teaching, and pupils' behaviour for learning is good. The focus of improvement will be to remove any minor inconsistencies of practice.

### **Staff development**

Our training and development for this term is linked to our SIP ensuring consistency of practice. Staff regularly attend training provided by CSC, including Network meetings. Recently, our LSAs have received training on specific interventions that we complete in school. Teaching staff attended the Education Show to participate in a variety of workshops based on individual professional needs. The INSET held every Wednesday evening is linked to our SIP.

### **Premises**

The plans for the new canteen are in hand. A sensory garden is being developed with a grant from the 'Big Fresh' company, which will provide a quiet, relaxing space in our very busy playground.

### **Health & Safety**

A fire drill was carried out this term and the children were excellent in their response. A lockdown drill is planned for next term.

### **Budget**

The budget currently has a deficit of 320k, compared to 340k in September. The need for an increase in support staff is an additional costing, due to the complex needs of some of our pupils.

Headteacher continues to work with CSC and Welsh Government to secure more income. The Deputy Headteacher continues with his role as verifier, which also secures additional income.

The school is part of a number of working parties which provide additional income and support professional learning. A grant application at the Arts Council was accepted and we were allocated £1000 to subsidise the Y5/6 theatre trip. We continue to apply for grants to improve provision.

## Events

A number of exciting events have already been held, with many more scheduled before the end of term.

## Final Comments

**SD** highlighted that we live in challenging times, she and the SLT are aware that staff morale is low due to financial cuts, the pace of change, frequent emails from parents and some of the physical behaviours demonstrated by children. Therefore, a number of actions have been implemented to support staff such as organising supervision sessions for staff; reviewing provision to ensure that disruptive behaviours do not impact on teaching and learning and providing opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful professional development.

**SD** advised that it was discouraging to staff who had prepared lessons to be unable to deliver them due to a dysregulated child with complex needs. Therefore, next term we will pilot a Nurture Room. **RS** said that she has had experience of nurture rooms in her professional role and would be happy to meet with the **SD** and the **ALNCO** and provide any support.

In addition to the above, **SD** voiced her concern regarding the impact of emails on staff well-being. Governors were asked to support a policy that staff will only respond to emails during working hours, 8.30-4.30 and are not available to be contacted by parents during their lunch hours. A lengthy discussion ensued, the full GB recognised the importance of protecting staff.

**MP** agreed that **SD** would draft a letter which will be sent jointly from her and the GB, **NM** will peruse prior to it being sent to parents. **MP** said an update could be provided at the next full GB meeting, he also recognised the importance of protecting staff.

**SD** thanked the governors for their support and reminded them that they are always welcome to come in to school.

## Governor AoLE Teams

**SD** circulated the terms of reference for the above. **SD, MP & Cllr. MW** had met and agreed that every other GB meeting would be used as an opportunity for governors to meet in their AoLE teams. The primary purpose of the teams was to ensure that the AoLE framework is robust, inclusive and effectively meets the diverse educational needs of all learners.

The group will monitor, through a range of activities, progress against clearly defined educational objectives and key performance indicators, providing evidence-based feedback to inform the Governing body of teaching and learning practices and standards within the specific AoLE. Additionally, the group will lead regular consultations with teaching staff to identify challenges and achievements, promoting an open dialogue about educational practices.

**MP** asked the governors if they would **contact their AoLE lead and aim to meet them prior to the next meeting in February**.

Chairs of each team were appointed, these will report back to the GB after they have met:

- Language Literacy and Communication – **JJ**
- Maths & Numeracy – **NM**
- Science/Technology – **Cllr. RB**
- Humanities – **JS**
- Health & Wellbeing/RSE – **PH**
- Expressive Arts – **RC**

## Feedback from Finance & Personnel Committee

**MP** reported that the above committee met on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

- We are currently fully staffed
- The budget remains challenging – **SD & SH** undertake additional projects to earn money for the school. The fantastic work of the PTA and the financial contribution they make to the school, was acknowledged.
- The school fund has been independently audited and ratified.

## Safeguarding

**JJ** advised that the safeguarding leads have diarised weekly 'protected time' in order to efficiently monitor My Concern. Additional whole days of protected time will be planned as and when required.

A review of My Concern reports and vocabulary used has been shared with staff. All staff are now aware of the need to be more explicit in their use of vocabulary when recording incidents.

Since the last GB meeting there have been 2 further exclusions due to absconding and physical assaults on staff.

The planned action is:

- Ask GB to ratify the Physical Intervention and Restrictive Practices Policy
- Update Team Teach training for key members of staff
- Prepare children for a lockdown drill by sharing social stories
- Arrange further ACES training
- Ongoing Safeguarding training for all of the safeguarding team throughout the year

**JJ** stated that she had been challenged by members of the Out of School Club when arriving for the GB meeting – it was agreed that governor lanyards would be provided for easy identification. Furthermore, she had been advised by governor support that it would be good practice for all governors to undertake a Level 1 Safeguarding course. **SD** advised that we could share the course that staff use. It was agreed that all governors would be given a HWB account as a secure means of communication – **HM** will arrange this.

## Physical Intervention and Restrictive Practices Policy

The policy was sent to the GB prior to the meeting. **GR** asked if it could be made clear in the policy that parents/carers would be informed of any action as soon as practically possible when any action was taken, with that proviso the governors agreed to accept and adopt.

## Correspondence

See - Matters Confidential

## Any other Business

**Cllr.MW** advised that he had been in contact with the VOGC regarding outstanding building issues. The update provided is:

- Fire alarm renewal – planned for summer 2025
- Replacement of elements of the cast iron rainwater goods – this is scheduled to be carried out within the next 18 months
- Pitched roof coverings renewal - this is scheduled to be carried out within the next three years and will require a phased approach due to the extent of the work required.
- Refurbishment of a number of toilet areas – some work is scheduled for summer 2025, with potentially further work in summer 2026
- Window replacement – a program of phased replacement over several years.

**Cllr.MW** informed GB that the proposed works to the new kitchen and dining room were in hand and once completed repair works to the external boundary wall will take place. **MP** thanked him for seeking the update.

**MP** asked if governors would be prepared to give £5 per academic year to be used as and when required e.g. if flowers needed to be sent on behalf of the GB. Governors agreed and will bring their donations to the next meeting.

**Date of next meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> February – to meet in AoLE teams.**

**Matters Confidential – see attached**

