



## Local Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 April 2019 at 6pm

Held at the school, Green Farm Road, Colne Engaine, Colchester Essex, CO6 2HA

### Membership:

HH Christopher Barnett	Co-opted
Mr Godfrey Evans (Chair)	Trust
Mrs Jane Lambert	P.C.C.
Mrs Alison McKeown	Trust
Mr Doug McKenzie (Vice Chair)	Trust
Mrs Natalie Pennel	Staff Governor
Mrs Julie Sarti	Headteacher
VACANCY	Parent
VACANCY	Parent

**Other Attendees:** Mrs Elizabeth Murphy, Clerk and Mike Simmonds, Governance Consultant, The Vine Trust

**Quorum:** Minimum of three but one half of the membership of the LGB (rounded up where necessary)

The meeting was quorate

Ref		Action
	<b>OPENING PRAYER</b>	
1	The meeting opened with a prayer by Doug McKenzie	
2	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b>	
	<p>This was the first meeting of the LGB following the school joining the Vine Schools Trust on 1 April 2019. Mike Simonds was welcomed to the meeting and he provided a brief introduction of how he provided support to all the schools in the Trust.</p> <p>Apologies were <b>received and accepted</b> from Christopher Bennett.</p> <p>Murray Thorpe had handed in his resignation due to personal demands on his time.</p> <p>The Vine Trust allowed LGBs to appoint parent governors rather than elect them if preferred and, after a brief discussion, it was <b>agreed</b> that this approach would ensure the candidates with the most appropriate skills and experience would be recruited. A number of possible candidates were discussed, and governors were invited to provide any additional suggestions.</p> <p>A skills audit and references were required and the Headteacher would make the approaches.</p> <p>Mike Simmonds offered to interview them if required. The</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>HEAD</p>

	<p>appointments would be referred to John Crane the CEO of the Trust for approval.</p> <p>Mike suggested that the roles and responsibilities of each governor was listed beside the names on the agenda rather than how they were appointed as this was more relevant, and this was <b>agreed</b>.</p> <p>Governors <b>noted</b> that all their appointments re-started from the date of the conversion i.e. 1 April 2019.</p>	CLERK
3	<b>REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS</b>	
	<p>The Clerk suggested that new forms might be completed due to the conversion but as they would need to be reviewed again at the start of the next term it was <b>agreed</b> that this was not required.</p> <p>There were no conflicts of interest to report.</p>	
4	<b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	It was <b>agreed</b> that future meeting dates could be discussed.	
5	<b>ELECT A VICE CHAIR</b>	
	<p>Governors <b>noted</b> that Godfrey Evans had been appointed as Chair of Governors by the Trust and this was for a period of 2 years.</p> <p>Governors <b>approved</b> Doug McKenzie as Vice Chair until the first LGB meeting in the new academic year 2019-20, to bring this in line with all the other business reviewed at that time.</p>	
6	<b>VINE ACADEMY TRUST</b>	
(a)	<b>Completion of Basic Documents</b>	
(i)	<p><b>Vine Application Form</b></p> <p>Governors handed in the completed forms or had already done so.</p>	
(ii)	<p><b>Skills Audit</b></p> <p>Governors <b>sought clarification</b> on a few questions and then the completed forms were handed in.</p>	
(iii)	<p><b>Governors' Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>A more up to date version was handed out. All governors were asked to read this carefully and sign to show acceptance at the next meeting.</p>	ALL and CLERK
(b)	<b>Examination, Clarification and Questions</b>	
(i)	<p><b>Local Governance Role</b></p> <p>Governors considered the Local Governance Role description. Governors <b>argued</b> that they were not just responsible for the educational performance of the academy</p>	

and its pupils (1.1.2) and wellbeing was a key aspect that was not included. Mike Simmonds said he would feed this back to the Trust.

Governors **questioned** how “ensuring accelerated progress” (2.1.5) could be guaranteed and felt that this was an unreasonable expectation over the long term. Mike Simmonds advised governors that they needed to review their responsibilities and decide what could be dropped under the new structure and that their role was more about challenging the Headteacher with regard to attainment and progress. The governors were accountable to the Trust and it was expected that they undertook detailed questioning of the Headteacher in this regard which they confirmed was already the norm. The unfavourable terminology used would be reported back to the Trust.

Governors commented that it was hoped that the Trust would provide the necessary resources to support them to do their job well in school (2.3).

Governors **questioned** whether they would have any choice about serving on panels (2.4) and it was **noted** that this would be in the form of a request should this occur.

It was clarified that audits (3.1.2) might relate to external agencies undertaking this work rather than governors specifically.

It was clarified that governors would never be asked to formally observe teachers in the classroom as this was not their role (3.1.5). It was confirmed that this was not and never had been the case in school. The value of classroom visits to the pupils was discussed and governors felt that it enabled them to get an understanding of the breadth and balance of the curriculum being taught and the children welcomed their involvement.

Governors commented that help with the lack of capacity to undertake tasks would be welcomed (3.1.6).

Acting in the best interests of the pupils and academy (3.3.4) was felt to be of a higher priority than shown.

Mike Simmonds had **noted** the comments made and would feed this back to the Trust although said that the document was unlikely to be amended as it was more important for each LGB to decide how this would best fit within the school. Governors felt strongly that wellbeing needed to be included as a key feature as it was so important to the welfare of all in the school. A Trust Vision Day was planned and the Chair of Governors would be welcome to make this point at that time.

Governors **noted** the Local Governance Role.

CHAIR

<p>(ii)</p>	<p><b>LGB Terms of Reference</b> The document was reviewed.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Trust would organise an external inspection of the premises (4.4.2).</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Trust would provide a standard Risk Register and the school would need to adapt this and then have this approved (4.6).</p> <p>A debate was had about how and when policies were reviewed. There were around 40 policies that were mandatory for the school and these came into effect immediately, and there was a need to compare them to the current ones to identify the differences and implement any changes accordingly. Governors were advised that it was important that these were considered by governors and that this was noted in the LGB minutes. A few were adapted to local requirements e.g. Pay Policy, Performance Management etc. It was discussed how the introduction of the new policies could be prioritised to assist the headteacher with this workload. Whilst a period of grace could not be provided Mike Simmonds said the Trust was sympathetic to the school during the transition phase and would not make any unrealistic demands in this regard.</p> <p>Governors <b>noted</b> all the mandatory policies were immediately effective and the Chair of Governors agreed to provide a list for these minutes for information purposes (attached as Appendix 1). The CEO had advised that policies should be moved as appropriate to Vine models according to the school's review cycle.</p> <p>A system of reviewing and noting the documents at meetings would be considered by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and then discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Governors <b>noted</b> the LGB Terms of Reference.</p>	<p>CHAIR</p> <p>CHAIR, HEAD AND CLERK</p>
<p>(iii)</p>	<p><b>Scheme of Delegation</b> A more up to date version of the document was handed out and <b>noted</b>. It was <b>noted</b> that standing orders were provided as an addendum too, although it did not reflect the fact that parent governors were to be appointed as discussed earlier. Clarification was required regarding the currency of the Standing Orders attached to the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>There were a few questions that were answered and all felt that this was a helpful document in understanding roles and responsibilities.</p>	
<p>(c)</p>	<p><b>Decisions on Meeting Structure and Dates</b></p>	

(i)	<p><b>Annual Planner</b> It was explained that this document was to assist the Headteacher in what to include in her reports; only 3 written reports were to be provided annually. Mike Simmonds <b>agreed</b> to provide a pro forma for the Headteacher's Report.</p> <p>It was <b>noted</b> that two LGB meetings would be held each term, one to be focused on resources and the other on the curriculum. The committee meetings would no longer be held although it was <b>agreed</b> that governors would take responsibility for specific areas and have termly meetings with relevant staff in school to check progress. Governors would ensure that these meetings were not onerous in time and did not cause the Headteacher to have to repeat information at various times. Governors briefly discussed the approach that could be used to fulfil their responsibilities.</p> <p>Governors <b>questioned</b> how decisions were made with regard to finances. Mike Simmonds explained that the COO would be in regular liaison with the Headteacher and SBM to ensure any decisions required were made and transparency maintained. The SBM would be line managed by the COO in due course. Mike Simmonds explained that it would take some time for the new financial systems to be up and working efficiently in school as this was the most significant impact felt when a school joined the Trust and so a transition period was to be expected.</p> <p>Governors <b>questioned</b> how decisions were made about PPG and sports premium funding. The LGB, or delegated governors, would examine and question as necessary the plan proposed by the Headteacher.</p> <p>Governors discussed how enrichment activities might be reported as they felt this was a very valuable aspect of the school and underpinned their ethos and values. Mike Simmonds suggested that information in this regard can be provided to the trustee linked to the school when visits were made.</p> <p>Governors were advised that the LGB meetings did not need to be held to coincide with the Trustee meetings.</p> <p>Governors <b>questioned</b> how many trustees there were, and this was confirmed as around 15.</p> <p>The Local Governance Annual Planner was <b>noted</b>.</p>	MIKE SIMMONDS
(ii)	<p><b>Agenda</b> The template was <b>noted</b>.</p>	
(iii)	<p><b>Minutes</b> The template was <b>noted</b>.</p>	

(d)	<b>Finance Background</b>	
(i)	<b>Delegated Finance</b> The sheet showing the delegated authorities was <b>noted</b> .	
(ii)	<b>Accounting Timetable</b> The monthly accounting timetable and responsibilities was <b>noted</b> .	
7	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that the meetings booked for the old Resources and CLWB Committees were no longer required, although the dates may still be used for governors with these responsibilities to arrange to check progress.</p> <p>The following LGB meetings were <b>agreed</b>, all to start at 5pm:</p> <p>10 September 2019 (Business Planning)  12 November 2019  10 December 2019  11 February 2020  17 March 2020  16 June 2020  7 July 2020</p> <p>The Vine Trust's Governors' Conference was to be held on Saturday 14 September 2019 from 9.30am to 1pm at Howbridge Primary in Witham and all were invited.</p> <p>The school governors' induction session run by Mike Simmonds was to be re-arranged and a new date advised.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8pm</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>MIKE SIMMONDS</p>

**NOTE:**

**APPENDIX 1 – THE VINE TRUST MANDATORY POLICIES AS AT APRIL 2019**

Drafted: 240419  
Issued: 250419