

# St Osmund's CE Middle School Part of the Wessex MAT

Meeting  
Local Governing Board  
Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 @ 4.30pm

Venue: St Osmund's School  
Chair Emily White

Item No		
21/068	<p><b>Present</b> Emily White EW Lesley Bainbridge LB Nikki Fowler NF Lesley Richardson LR Emma Gould EG Moirar Farley MF Pieter Mostert PM</p> <p><b>Attending</b> Michelle Every ME Vicky Smyth VS Simon Beet SB</p>	<p><b>Apologies</b>  Louise Balaam LBal  Ali Mitchell AM  Julia Benson JB</p> <p><b>Guests:</b>  Chloe Carter-Miles CCM  Paul Absolom PA</p>
	<b>Item Details</b>	<b>Action</b>
21/069	<p><b>Chairperson's opening remarks – item 1</b> The Chair began by advising that the meeting was being recorded for 2 reasons 1- to help the new clerk recall the minutes and 2 – for possible use as a training tool when new Governors start. Governors confirmed that they were in agreement with the meeting being recorded. It is National School Governance Day on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. There is a link in the post section on teams which will allow access to some free webinars; this will be promoted on the school website and on Facebook. There is also a need to recruit a new parent governor so it is hoped that this will help raise awareness. The new Ofsted inspection handbook is in the post section on teams. Governors need to start using this section on teams to share information and help to keep everything in one place. The Chair proposed to move the majority of meetings to after school next year to enable all governors to attend – <b>Governors voted in favor of this.</b> The Chair asked if governors are happy with the current number of meetings, or should it be reduced down to 8 a year – <b>Governors voted to reduce the number of LGB (Local Governing Body) to 8 and remove the February meeting but use this as a specific training session instead.</b> <b>Governors were asked to go onto the NGA (National Governance Association) Learning Link and download any training certificates that they have previously done and send them to the clerk.</b></p>	GOVS

**Commented [WC1]:** I've changed this to action and all the initials in the column will be who is responsible for the action. This will make it easier to find them when you do the actions list at the bottom

**Commented [WC2]:** I've bolded any decisions or questions/challenge to make them easier for Ofsted to pick out when they review the minutes

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	<p>ME and VS would like to deliver some training on the portal to enable Governors to move forward and use this for the meeting packs. VS explained briefly how the portal works.</p> <p>A governor stated that the portal sounds like a very good idea.</p> <p><b>It was agreed that training on the portal would take place before the March meeting and governors were asked to arrive 15 minutes early.</b></p> <p><b>ME/EW to look at getting guest access for next meeting so that governors can have access from their own laptops/devices – speak to IT Tech to arrange.</b></p>	<p>GOVS</p> <p>ME/EW</p>
21/070	<p><b>Declaration of interests -item 2</b></p> <p>No new Governor interests declared.</p>	
21/071	<p><b>SEND – item 3</b></p> <p>The Chair asked what are the biggest strengths and weaknesses in SEND (special educational needs and disability) and what is the focus?</p> <p>CCM stated that there are numerous strengths including the fabulous TA's and dedicated staff.</p> <p>Good interventions are also a strength, however more work is being done on entry and exit data points so that it can be measurable. It is obvious that staff have the capacity, knowledge and are keen. The focus is to look at how intervention is running and have a specialist teacher coming in to look at this.</p> <p>Currently there are in-house assessments in the SEND department which have historically been completed once a year in September. In the past this has advised the school what provision is made for students, but it is changing so the school will have data points in July so that children are able to hit the ground running with intervention in September. This will then be followed up with a midterm data point in February to be able to assess progress. Interventions are generally a short-term thing over 6 – 12 weeks.</p> <p>The specialist teacher will produce a piece of work as to how the school uses in-house data regarding reading and spelling and the school is to start using the Sandwell maths assessment.</p> <p><b>A governor asked what is the Sandwell maths test?</b></p> <p>CCM advised that is a diagnostic maths assessment.</p> <p><b>A governor asked how is it different from the GL assessments?</b></p> <p>CCM stated that Sandwell, YARC (York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension) and HAST (Helen Arkell Spelling Test) are what SEND in Dorset recommend as they are a diagnostic approach. There are staff in the department who are qualified to write learning programs, although this has not been done for a while. It is the next focus to address this and utilize that skill set. Although we have access to the free specialist teaching service it is in high demand, and we have the ability to do this in-house.</p> <p><b>A governor enquired when the specialist teacher would be coming in?</b></p> <p>CCM confirmed that there has been no specific date set but <b>they are</b> due to start after easter.</p> <p><b>A governor asked about intervention in year 5?</b></p> <p>At the moment years 6,7 and 8 start intervention in September but year 5 need at least half a term to settle in before any type of intervention starts, assessment for year 5 start in the first half of the autumn term with a view to starting interventions after Christmas.</p>	

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A lot of work has been done around quality first teaching and there is an expectation that there will be a lot more input from staff because of this.

**A governor asked if intervention continues from year 4?**

CCM confirmed that it all depends on the programme but if its speech and language then it will. There is a year 5 communication group, but students need the chance to bed into their new school and classroom, not a lot will be done with year 5 before half term. CCM visited Puddletown School and spoke to their SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co Ordinator) who advised that they adopt the same model. This year assessments will take place at Easter but next year it will be February. Intervention is the biggest concern.

Catch up phonics is in place and is already having a good positive impact.

Another major concern is student wellbeing and mental health. This is a covid led concern and it is worrying that students are using the language of anxiety. Capacity is a struggle due to the sheer number of students that need support.

**A governor asked if CCM is aware of much about the student when they are coming up from first school and how much are we identifying new needs?**

CCM opined that a vast number of new needs are being identified, she talked about the case studies that were included in the meeting packs, specifically child B whose needs were missed at first school. Concerns were raised but the child was known as 'the bad child.' The level of need of this child is akin to a child already as St Osmund's who is currently on dual registration.

**A governor asked if this is fed back to the first schools?**

CCM advised that due to being new to the role she has not done yet, but the transition process at St Osmund's is fantastic which is all down to a member of staff. The school is unable to influence what information is handed over from the first schools, but it can influence what it does with that information. The transition document is now available on the website. Governors discussed succession planning with regards to transition and their concern that the weight is on one person. CCM confirmed that this is in hand.

CCM informed Governors that a lot of time has been spent with girls and it has been apparent that there are high levels of anxiety which has been masked before year 6/7. There are half a dozen showing ASD (autism spectrum disorder) traits, but it is very difficult to identify as could be a combination of other issues. Four EHCP's (Education Health and Care Plans) need to be done before May and there are 8 students who are on the list to do a core diagnostic under the behavioral pathway. Some of these are at the school's request whereas some are requests from parents.

**A governor asked how children present themselves, are they coming in and saying they are not coping?**

CCM advised that some are, for example attendance for 2 specific girls has dropped off and after speaking to the parents to try and find out why and build up a relationship with them, the students then came and spoke to CCM directly which then enables the team to recognize certain behaviors and concerns.

**A governor asked where has it come from?**

CCM opined that a lot comes down to anxiety and attendance. The team are working their way through the graduated approach to wellbeing in terms of pastoral care. The school is starting a voluntary mentoring programme, where students will be matched to a member of staff and a package of support will be available in whatever way they feel comfortable with.

**A governor asked if the voluntary mentoring programme has started yet?**

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CCM advised that it has and added that a lot are historical. Staff were asked if they have done anything like this before and there were a lot of replies saying yes. Moving forward the task now is to make a record and formalise it along with training for staff.

CCM advised that lots more students are making use of study provision. There is a need to create a 5-point scale for those students to offer strategies which can be accessed before leaving lessons to help with stress management/anxiety.

**A governor asked if student anxiety may just be the tip of the iceberg and could there also be family anxiety which is contributing to this?**

CCM agreed and added that there are, parent support groups that help to give the parents some ownership of what is happening in school. Parents can be a great help with areas such as sourcing sensory school uniform, helping with tricky bedtime routines as they have firsthand knowledge. Following on from feedback from parents it has become apparent that many struggle with childcare in the evenings so therefore looking to run a parallel group possible at the children's centre which would be a less stressful environment for some parents who would feel anxious coming into school.

CCM suggested that parents at times can feel very isolated thinking that they are the only ones dealing with the issues surrounding their child and as a school we do not want them to feel like this. Something that has already been organized is for a child and parent to attend school counselling together, this has had a positive effect and has really made a difference.

PA noted that we will not see the full effects of what has happened for a long time. The Chair enquired as to the transition plan for a child with specific needs from case study Child A. CCM detailed the plans.

**A governor opined that TA's that go above and beyond should be recognized for their amazing achievement.**

**A governor asked if the therapy dog is still happening?**

CCM advised that it is and that he supports the early bird breakfast clubs in the morning

**The Chair asked if that is the PP (Pupil Premium) breakfast club?**

CCM replied that it is really for those that need extra support in the mornings, but it is predominantly ASD children, we offer 3 breakfast clubs 1 of these is for PP children

Oscar the therapy dog is part of the school's wellbeing offering and there are certain students that walk him.

**A governor asked if he has a calming effect?**

CCM agreed that he does.

**A governor spoke about the Dorset SEND family course that she attended online.**

CCM confirmed that the school already uses the Dorset steps service. There was some uncertainty as to whether the new provision would be opening in the summer term or September. Governors were informed that the Harbour Vale School is for children that have ECHPs but are working at Age Related Expectations (ARE). They are offered 3 GCSEs – English, Maths and Photography. CCM opined that there is no suitable provision for the children at St Osmund's with concern around the distance pupils will need to travel to access new places with the provision in Wimborne, Shaftesbury and Portland. There is also a massive backlog in Speech, Language and Communications.

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**A Governor commented that Speech and Language Therapy is the hardest thing in schools at present.** CCM explained that St Osmund's is lucky as it has someone qualified to deliver the learning programmes.  
**Governors were invited to attend the inset day on 8/4/22 and were asked to let Ms Carter-Miles know if they intend to attend.**

Governors were informed that there is high demand on TAs. Ideally, other staff would be upskilled to deliver interventions, but the TAs are stretched and do not have the time because the need is greater than what they are able to provide. CCM added that she would like to ringfence the TAs in 3 groups – Key Stage 2 English and Maths and Key Stage 2 and 3 children with EHCPs. She informed Governors that she has created a hierarchy of need and will create a proper TA policy.

**A Governor asked if the ELSA TA has capacity to train others to support?** CCM opined that there is no capacity among the TAs to deliver at present.

**Another Governor enquired as to whether there is supply for TAs.** CCM confirmed that there are couple on the school's books, however, it is difficult to get good cover.

**Governors thanked Ms Carter-Miles for her work.**

GOVS

21/072

**Safeguarding – item 4**

PA advised Governors that school inspection may be imminent. Two weeks ago, there was a presentation to tutor groups entitled 'Who can I speak to.' The school is polishing current practice rather than creating and implementing new practice. Work has been done to remind students who they can contact if they have concerns. He added it is about creating a culture in school that fits with the values of being ready, respectful and safe. He outlined the things in place in school such as tutors, year leaders, wellbeing team, SEND team, Diversity Leads, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) as well as the Year 8 Buddy and anti-bullying ambassadors. Sessions have been delivered to the children including scenarios and some children have come forward after these sessions to speak to staff. The safeguarding tab on the website has also been updated.

**A governor asked if the word DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) is used with the students**

PA advised that it is, and he added that the school tries to avoid having too much on the walls as it can overload the children. How the school teaches safeguarding is also on the website and Governors were shown this information on the website. PSCHE covers a lot of safeguarding elements. How the school teaches diversity is also on the website and this was shown to Governors. PA advised Governors that he had presented at a national conference on the work the school has done with regards to Diversity on behalf of the Headteacher

**A governor enquired as to the feedback.**

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	<p>PA confirmed it was incredibly positive.</p> <p>PA highlighted the new Ofsted Handbook to Governors, particularly how leaders had adapted safeguarding during the pandemic. PA gave Governors examples and opined that safeguarding arrangements remained effective. He discussed contextual safeguarding issues and informed Governors that Youth @ Risk are working with the school as are the police, youth services and early help. County lines and Anti-Social Behaviour are particular contextual safeguarding issues in this area at present.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked if that as this is a predominately white area, there would not be high numbers of radical groups but has there been training how to spot them?</b></p> <p>PA advised that Saira Sawtell has recently attended prevent update training. The big issue from this is the growth of the incel subculture. PA explained what this is and added that there is concern around impressionable vulnerable children, particularly those with ASC traits that can become absorbed in particular topics. PA gave an example in St Osmund's. White supremacy is also a concern locally. PA informed Governors that he had recently attended a MAT Safeguarding session which included training on better use of My Concern, the school's online reporting tool for safeguarding concerns. He explained that in the effort to triage concerns he had forgotten to choose categories but has since gone back through the records and rectified this. The biggest issues are home, neglect, emotional health and anxiety.</p> <p><b>A governor enquired about concerns regarding sexual harassment</b></p> <p>PA confirmed that there has only been 1 case which took place in the playground.</p> <p><b>A governor asked if all staff have access to my concern?</b></p> <p>PA confirmed that they do.</p> <p><b>A Governor noted that there are a higher number of concerns than they expected on gender identity.</b> PA opined that this is more overt now and there are a number of children questioning their gender identity. He suggested that it is positive that children feel able to speak to staff about this.</p> <p><b>Another Governor noted that all the things' parents may worry about are low.</b></p> <p><b>A Governor questioned the category of self-neglect.</b> PA explained that this is related to children that put themselves into positions of vulnerability and not caring for themselves</p> <p><b>A Governor asked if there is anything else that St Osmund's can do.</b> SB opined that the school is working very hard and makes referrals to external agencies where needed. There are 720 children in school and 234 concerns recorded in the autumn term. What the figures do not make clear is how many children are affected, for example, one family has had 132 concerns recorded.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked if a concern can fit into more than one category.</b> PA confirmed that it can.</p> <p><b>The Chair requested that the governors get to see this data at least annually.</b></p> <p><b>A Governor asked how staff know that the sexual aspects were not higher and just unreported.</b> PA opined that they do not know. A relationship with parents here is important as is teaching children how to stay safe online. Many of the school's children are too young to be on social media but most are. The school does have a culture of children raising concerns about their peers with staff because they care and are worried about them. The key message is that staff, children, governors, parents and volunteers need to be always vigilant.</p>	PA
21/073	Approval of minutes of the last full Governors meeting held on Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> January – item 5	EW

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	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record</b></p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>The Clerk was asked to remove a former Governor from the attendance list and correct spelling mistakes of some staff names.</p> <p>Outstanding Actions</p> <p><b>Ms Bainbridge will also meet with the lexia lead to understand any issues with lexia – after half term</b></p> <p><b>Ms Gollege to check risk assessments to ensure they cover working with children virtually and create or update if necessary – follow up outside of meeting</b></p> <p><b>Contact Ms Richardson to let her know if there is anything you wish her to look at through her Governor of the Month activity - ongoing</b></p>	
21/074	<p><b>Headteachers report – item 6</b></p> <p><b>Written questions submitted in advance</b></p> <p><b>A Governor enquired, given the high number of COVID cases in the area, what provision is available for absent pupils.</b></p> <p>SB noted that the case numbers in the Southwest are high and refusing to go down. There is also an expected change in legislation coming on Monday. Governors were informed that 2 weeks ago, 10% of students were affected, this has now reduced to 2%. Core subject leaders upload work on Mondays for students to complete at home. Some students will not access it as they are too ill, some will not do it because they do not have parental support and others are actively involved and do all the work in-line with their peers.</p> <p><b>A governor asked if progress reviews will be available to governors?</b></p> <p>SB shared the data with governors, He explained that they have lowered the benchmark and are using this to work out progress. The children are doing another SATs (Standards and Testing Agency) mock now for which the benchmark will be raised in order to bring it closer to previous levels. The deadline for marking these mocks is the 4/3 which allows teachers to choose whether they want to do it over half term or after half term. This data will be available at the next LGB for governors</p> <p>SB advised Governors that the government have announced a broad-brush approach to GCSE levels with sympathetic grade boundaries but there has been no message on key stage 2, so the school is basing it on the last time SATs were undertaken. In a worst-case scenario, they may lower the grade boundaries</p> <p><b>A Governor asked for an update of curriculum development in DT and History.</b></p> <p>SB advised Governors that history had been a big concern and that a broad-brush is now in place as are the units, so staff know where the bits of curriculum fit in. There is a new Head of History who is adding disciplines the children will need to know to the curriculum, for example, cause and consequence. This work is developmental. Some long-term planning is changing, and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are confident that the subject will be in a stronger place by the end of the year. DT has also had a new Head of Department and staff are being encouraged to write new schemes of work e.g., utilizing the Resistant Materials staff to write those schemes of work.</p>	

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	<p><b>A Governor asked how many pupils have been taken off the lexia scheme because they have reached their chronological age, or the scheme is not working for?</b> SB advised Governors that the school is using lexia as a tool and would like to make it a short-term intervention which is against the way the organization designed it to be taught. There was a need for a reading scheme which is now in place and the school is also teaching phonics. Lexia data to be made available at next LGB</p> <p><b>A Governor asked for more information respecting the reading scheme?</b></p> <p>SB informed Governors that the school has adapted the read, write, inc scheme for phonics and there are banded books.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked where read theory sits within this?</b> SB confirmed it is in the banded book scheme. He explained that read theory is an intervention.</p> <p><b>A Governor referred to Ms Sawtell's suggestion that longstanding staff have new DBS (Disclosure &amp; Barring Service) checks and asked if there was a specific reason as to why this has been raised?</b> SB opined that there has not been a concern and so this is not concern led and he would have to follow this up with Ms Sawtell. The MAT Clerk noted that the MAT were exploring section 128 checks and ensuring that these are in place for all Governors, SLT and roles with management responsibility such as Heads of Department. The MAT is also looking into ensuring all Governors have new DBS check regardless of if they work elsewhere in Dorset Council and have had a check within 2 years there. DBS checks for longstanding staff have not been raised at MAT level as far as the MAT Clerk is aware.</p> <p><b>Mr Beet to follow up with Ms Sawtell</b></p> <p><b>Governors thanked Mr Beet for this attendance</b></p>	SB
21/075	<p><b>Governor of the month – item 7</b></p> <p>The Governor of the Month advised the LGB that the school is meeting the Baker clause in Careers and the Gatsby benchmarks that apply. They will also be attending a trio meeting and will follow up afterwards. They plan to ask the staff 'what are you are doing well, what do you need to improve and what impact are you seeing. The Governor also plans to attend a bitesize pedagogy session.</p> <p><b>Governors were also made aware of the Year 6 Retreat Day in March on 29/3 and the next Core Action Group (CAG) meeting which is also on 29/3 at 12.30pm</b></p>	GOVS
21/076	<p><b>Policies – item 8</b></p> <p><b>Send policy – approved</b></p> <p><b>Complaint policy – received</b></p> <p><b>Privacy policy – approved</b></p> <p><b>Clerk to ensure all are signed and published on the website - Done</b></p>	ME

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	<p>Meeting closed at 6:30 pm</p> <p>Next Meeting: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 at 16.30</p>	
	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>21/069 - ME &amp; VS to deliver portal training at next meeting, governors to arrive 15 minutes early.</p> <p>21/069 - Ensure all governors have guest access on their own devices – speak to IT Tech</p> <p>21/069 - Governors to go onto the NGA (National Governance Association) Learning Link and download any training certificates that they have previously done and send them to the clerk.</p> <p>21/073 - Remove former governors name from the last minutes and correct any spelling errors on staff names - Done</p> <p>21/073 - LB to meet with Lexia lead to understand any issues</p> <p>21/074 - SB to follow up with Saira Sawtell regarding longstanding staff needing a new DBS check</p> <p>21/076 - ME to ensure that SEND, Complaints and Privacy policy are published on the school website</p>	<p>ME/VS</p> <p>ME/EW</p> <p>GOVS</p> <p>ME</p> <p>LB</p> <p>SB</p> <p>ME</p>

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