



**ARNSIDE NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL
CHURCH HILL
ARNSIDE
CARNFORTH
LANCS
LA5 0DW**

admin@arnside.cumbria.sch.uk
www.arnside.cumbria.sch.uk
Tel/Fax: 01524 761159

ARNSIDE NATIONAL SCHOOL IS AN ACADEMY
Company number 07840925

Minutes of Arnside National C of E School Governing Board Meeting (GBM)
held Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 5.00pm

Key: highlighted areas in yellow = action point highlighted areas in blue = impact measure highlighted areas in green = question

Present: Mr Graeme Armstrong, Mrs Judith Bratt, Mr Paul Cherry, Mrs Steph Griffiths, Mr Chris Hargreaves, Mrs Carla Hartropp, Mr Chris Myers, The Revd Andrew Norman, Mr Ian Service Chair of Governors, Mr Nick Sharp Head, Revd Hannah Wallace, Mrs Steph Woodburn.

In attendance:

Mrs Sue Glendinning Governance Professional to the Governing Board

GBM 55/23 Welcome

Mr Service welcomed governors to the meeting.

GBM 56/23 To receive apologies for absence

The meeting was declared quorate with all governors present.

GBM 57/23 Declaration of conflict of interest in agenda items

Mr Sharp declared an interest.

GBM 58/23 To receive the audited accounts from Ian Thompson of Saint & Co Auditors

Mr Service welcomed Ian Thompson to present the audited accounts and management report.

Mr Thompson informed governors that there was no comment from the auditor on the first 20 pages of the report, as this was governance information, submitted by the bursar.

He referred to page 22 the Restricted General Funds.

£737,000 funds in.

£701,000 funds out.

£36,000 in reserve.

Restricted assets are satisfactory.

Actuarial loss or gain on pensions at the moment indicates that school has money in the bank and are not affected by any pension deficit. Teachers pension is not reported upon; however, local governor pension scheme (LGPS) is. £500 has been paid to Mercer Actuaries. Figures fluctuate year on year, but there is no deficit to report on the previous scheme.

Revd Norman arrived at 5.15pm.

The management letter was referred to next with governors attention drawn to the three areas for action.

- 1) Companies House information to be kept updated within the statutory time frame: Medium Risk
- 2) Pecuniary interests: all governors to be added to the list : Low Risk
- 3) Declaration of interest forms to be updated: Low Risk

GBM 59/23 Governor questions to the auditor

In answer to the areas raised, Mrs Glendinning stated that she had been unable to update Companies House as the site was down for a considerable period of time, the matter has now been addressed, albeit outside the time frame.

Authorised by Chair: C Myers

Date 27 February 2024

Q: Why do all governors need to be listed on the pecuniary interest form when they have nothing to declare?

A: This is now a requirement

Action point:

Governors were asked if they had any objection to being added to the pecuniary interest form that is placed on the school website. None did so this will be addressed. Governors were asked to inform Mrs Glendinning if their circumstances change, so that the changes can be recorded.

Mr Sharp stated that the declaration of interest forms had been submitted but the trustee forms had been omitted, this error has now been rectified.

Mr Sharp and Mr Service will sign off the audited account documents.

Mr Thompson was thanked for his input into the meeting and left at 5.20pm.

GBM 60/23 To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held 28 September 2023

Following one amendment to read “the governor vacancy to be filled as soon as possible” not by the end of the autumn term: the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting, proposed by Mrs Griffith, seconded by Mrs Woodburn, and signed by the chair.

GBM 61/23 Action points progress

GBM 47/23 Foundation governor vacancy: names to be forwarded to Revd Norman and Mr Service

GBM 48/23 CIF bid for new school roof to be pushed: advice has been taken from Lee Haugh to focus on the roof bid, as funding for a new roof is urgently needed. Photos of a leaking roof with buckets catching water leaks and supporting documentation from the local MP have been submitted as evidence to support the bid.

GBM 62/23 Headteachers report

Prior to Mr Sharp giving his report, Mr Graham Carrick, headteacher at Pennybridge C of E school had been invited to join the meeting via teams to discuss the Good Shepherd MAT (GSMAT).

Mr Carrick joined the meeting at 5.45pm and was introduced to governors and welcomed to the meeting.

Mr Carrick informed governors that Cumbria lags behind the rest of the country in MAT's of any nature.

He gave the governing board an overview of how his school joined the GSMAT.

2014 stand alone academy with 115 pupils on roll.

Served with a financial notice to improve by the ESFA, so applied to join the GSMAT to assist with the situation, finally converting to being part of a MAT in May 2022.

Q: How much independence do you manage to retain?

A: 95%, scheme of delegation exists within the trust. If a school is good or outstanding, more financial freedom exists. Day to day management remains the same. Some processes remain generic: i.e. health and safety, safeguarding, child protection. The school development plan (SDP) remains school led.

Q: Does this independence include staffing and recruitment?

A: Yes, in the main, as long as staffing works within the financial boundaries allocated to the school.

Q: What level of scrutiny is there, linked to finance?

A: Purchase orders need to go through the MAT, creative financing needs to be inline with MAT protocols.

Q: ANS roof is the main priority for a CIF bid. Would we have to bid for capital funding if part of a MAT, and is there a management asset plan in place within the MAT?

Authorised by Chair: *C Myers*

Date: 27 February 2024



**ARNSIDE NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL
CHURCH HILL
ARNSIDE
CARNFORTH
LANCS
LA5 0DW**

admin@arnside.cumbria.sch.uk
www.arnside.cumbria.sch.uk
Tel/Fax: 01524 761159

**ARNSIDE NATIONAL SCHOOL IS AN ACADEMY
Company number 07840925**

A: Condition surveys are in place managed by the MAT, with a 3-year plan in place. This is for planned expected expenditure, rather than reactionary expenditure. The MAT does have a bank of reserves that could be called upon in exceptional circumstances.

Q: Does school retain the same autonomy in relation to curriculum taught?

A: Yes, a school identifies its priorities and supports other schools within the MAT who require assistance in curriculum areas. The funding a school receives is their funding to manage; however, this is top sliced with a portion of GAG funding going directly to the MAT.

Q: Are there a lot of MAT's and are they geographical?

A: Church of England schools in Cumbria, currently only have one option of MAT to join, and this is the GSMAT, with no other options available. There is talk about setting up another church MAT: however, GSMAT uses a cluster system with schools spread across Cumbria.

Q: Is there going to be a restructuring of the cluster schools at any time?

A: This matter is up for discussion and remains unresolved at the moment. Church schools join the GSMAT irrespective of geography within the county.

Mr Cherry gave his apologies and left the meeting at 6.00pm. The meeting remained quorate.

Q: How many schools are there in the GSMAT?

A: Currently there are only 12 school within the GSMAT. There needs to be around 1,000 pupils to be a successful MAT. The GS has approx. 700-800 pupils, as it is populated with small rural schools.

Q: Is there an option for ANS to look to schools across the border into Lancashire?

A: This is an unknown factor.

Q: Is this an option for ANS to consider going forward?

A: This is a question asked by the trustees at the AGM. ANS would be seeking a range of alternative options to consider, before taking any decisions on becoming part of a MAT.

Mr Cherry rejoined the meeting at 6.05pm.

Mr Carrick informed governors that Mrs Clare Render is the CEO of the GSMAT and manages the educational element of the organisation.

When stand-alone academies join a MAT, governors go from being directors of an academy to being governed by a Local Governing Board (LGB), created as part of a tier system within the MAT. A chair of governors for each school is still required, but meetings do not need to be quorate.

Q: From a teaching point of view there appears to be free reign with the curriculum. Are there any drawbacks to this?

A: There is curriculum group support, EYFS support, which staff benefit from having in place. Subject leadership in individual schools is still in place. Parents and pupils see no difference at all.

Authorised by Chair: *C Myers*

Date 27 February 2024

Q: When you are a part of a MAT, do you club together to purchase equipment i.e. ICT equipment?

A: The MAT runs all IT through the trust, and they sort all this side of things out for schools.

As there were no further questions for Mr Carrick, he was thanked for his contribution by the Chair, which had given governors an insight into the working of a MAT, which they had been previously unaware of, and left the meeting at 6.10pm.

Mr Armstrong also gave his apologies and left the meeting at 6.10pm. The meeting remained quorate.

Revd Norman went on to explain to governors the process of academisation into a church MAT from a stand-alone academy perspective and explained that the church status is retained when a church school joins the GSMAT.

Mr Service reassured governors that at the moment no decision is to be taken about ANS joining a MAT. School are just addressing the matter and gathering information about the pros and cons of the GSMAT and wait to see if further options materialise for consideration.

The Diocesan Director of Education Charlotte Tudway is working on a potential second MAT option, but no time frame is available on when this might be ready for consideration.

Mr Sharp informed governors that school is in a sound financial position, therefore, there is no necessity to join a MAT because of the financial state.

Q: Would joining a MAT free up any of Mr Sharp's management workload to allow him to more effective access to his teaching commitment?

A: There may be benefits, but this is an unknown measure.

Q: Do we know if Cartmel School are thinking of joining the GSMAT?

A: Unsure of their status at the moment, they have been told by the diocese to start thinking about it.

Revd Norman stated that there are a good number of Church of England Schools in the south of the county, which could lead to a viable GSMAT in the south of the county, which would give a geographical divide between north and south of Cumbria.

Mr Sharp informed governors of an update since his report had been distributed.

Mrs J Topping has tendered her resignation and will leave school after Christmas.

One member of staffs maternity cover ends at Christmas and another member of staff returns following maternity leave in January. School staff will be able to cover Mrs Toppings workload until Easter.

An advert for a replacement will be placed at Easter, which will afford a wider spectrum of applicants and open an opportunity for newly qualified teachers to apply.

Attendance = 95.98% Authorised absence = 3.34% Unauthorised absence = 0.3% Late = 0.38%

Schools attendance rate is above the national attendance figures. An attendance audit will be carried out in the new year. There are 3 pupils on roll whom school are monitoring.

2 are Ukrainian children, whose places are being kept until it is known if it is safe for them to return and remain in Ukraine.

1 pupil is on long term sickness related absence.

Q: Why do we not issue fines for persistent absenteeism?

A: It is not part of our ethos. We will send out a prompt when a pupils attendance drops below 90%, and discretion is used by the headteacher in this regard if a reasonable account is given for the absenteeism. There will be three letters going out on 11 December 2023.

Authorised by Chair: *C Myers*

Date: 27 February 2024



**ARNSIDE NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL
CHURCH HILL
ARNSIDE
CARNFORTH
LANCS
LA5 0DW**

admin@arnside.cumbria.sch.uk
www.arnside.cumbria.sch.uk
Tel/Fax: 01524 761159

ARNSIDE NATIONAL SCHOOL IS AN ACADEMY
Company number 07840925

Q: Have parents got used to the earlier start to the school day yet?

A: Yes, minimal fuss and a routine has now been established.

Mr Sharp informed governors that school are recruiting an additional teaching assistant (TA), as school have had 2 Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) approved, which will require additional staffing to cover the pupils needs. Unfortunately, recruitment of TA's is proving difficult across the county, with very few applicants due to the low salary scale.

Mr Sharp was thanked for his report.

GBM 63/23 Governance

a) To receive committee minutes

Finance and Staffing committee minutes have been circulated, with curriculum minutes to follow when received from the committee clerk.

b) To receive Governor monitoring reports

Reports received from Mrs Griffith, Mr Service, Mr Hargreaves, and Revd Norman, have been circulated amongst governors as well as being filed. Mrs Bratts SEND report is to follow.

Q: How frequently should monitoring visits should be made?

A: Termly is advised in order to see progress and assess impact measures.

c) Governor vacancy update

The governor vacancy situation continues. Governors were advised to give thoughtful consideration to the matter. The point was made that the group of people to be considered as suitable and potential candidates is small with the majority being retirees. The suggestion was made that the circle is widened, and candidates sought from a wider field than just the church community, with local businesses approached as a varied skill set is needed and these can be found in the locality.

d) Governor e-training

NGA training module continues to be the training material for governors, who are advised to access as much training as possible whilst the service is free to schools.

Mr Cherry stated that he now has the link to the training programmes.

The filtering audit will be carried out by Mr Cherry and will be a task that is ongoing.

Action point:

Cyber training is a module that all governors must complete. This needs to be completed by the end of term, with certificates forwarded to Mrs Glendinning for the file.

GBM 64/23 Safeguarding matters

There are no safeguarding matters to report to governors.

The safeguarding audit will be carried out in January 2024 by Mr Sharp and Revd Norman.

GBM 65/23 Policy review

a) School admissions policy: updated, approved, and adopted.

Action point:

Policy to be sent to the LA admissions department.

Authorised by Chair: *C Myers*

Date 27 February 2024

GBM 66/23 Chair's report

GBM 67/23 Items deemed confidential

No items were deemed confidential at this meeting.

GBM 68/23 Date of next meeting to Tuesday 27 February 2024 at 5.00pm

Governors were thanked for their attendance and continued support. The meeting was declared closed at 6.50pm.