**BUCKTON VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF THE COVID OVERSIGHT PANEL (COP), GOVERNING BOARD TRAINING**

**AND EXTRAORDINARY GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD IN SCHOOL**

**ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**PRESENT: Mr Nick Whitbread Parent – in the Chair**

**Mrs Sarah Blake Staff**

**Ms Jackie Brook Co-opted**

**Mrs Zoe Fallows Parent**

**Mr Matt Hartley Parent**

**Mr Arron Leech Co-opted**

**Mr Wayne Williams Co-opted**

**Mrs Deborah Brown Headteacher**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Rachel Lees Clerk to the Governing Board**

**1 PROCEDURAL**

**1.1 Welcome**

The Headteacher welcomed governors to the Governing Board training and Covid Oversight Panel (COP) meeting.

**1.2 Attendance/Apologies**

An apology was received from Ms Sharif, Authority governor. Ms Ross, Parent governor, was expected to join the meeting virtually but did not attend.

**1.3 Appointment of two Parent governors**

A parent governor election had taken place in school. The Headteacher introduced the new parent governor attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: (a) To re-appoint Mr Matthew Hartley as Parent governor with the term of office

as 21 July 2021 to 20 July 2024

(b) To appoint Mrs Zoe Fallows and Ms Jamie Briggs as Parent governors with the terms of office as 21 July 2021 to 20 July 2024

**2 COVID OVERSIGHT PANEL (COP)**

2.1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the COP meeting held on 6 July 2021

2.2 Headteacher’s update on current situation

Governors confirmed receipt of the risk assessment emailed on 3 September. The Headteacher confirmed that COP meetings would continue to be held remotely, on a fortnightly basis, every two weeks although guidance now included some flexibility.

The Headteacher explained that she had decided to retain a staggered start and end of the school day, which she anticipated would continue on a long-term basis. Rather than losing 15 minutes as had been the case in the last academic year, there was now a 5 minute window to ease children into school. There were some initial concerns so there had been some adjustments such as contraflows in KS2, which had worked well. The government had advised that class bubbles could stop but the Headteacher had decided to keep these in the first week because children and staff were used to it. Children thought it was amazing that they were now able to play with children in other classes, the importance of which staff had probably under estimated, particularly with a PAN of 45. The hall was not used for full assemblies in the first two weeks and had alternated KS1 and KS2, which could be repeated as children were used to a calmer and quieter school, especially SEND children and the Headteacher had discussed this with the SLT. The children were very keen to talk and share ideas.

The Headteacher was very mindful that Covid cases were high in Tameside and she did not want Buckton Vale to be a Covid hotspot when school would have to return to bubbles. With this in mind, she had sent a “warn and inform” letter to parents when there were three cases in one class.

Mrs Brook commented that there were one and a half weeks when attendance was poor, primarily due to families being cautious if a child was isolating. Attendance was still very good, at 97.9%. She confirmed she would share attendance figures at the Governing Board meeting on 7 December.

RESOLVED: To approve the Risk Assessments

2.3 To agree the date of the next COP meeting

RESOLVED: Tuesday 12 October 2021 at 4:00 pm

*4:30 pm*

**3 SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

Mrs Kelly Quinn gave a Powerpoint presentation with supporting documents on Safeguarding, focused on key updates on statutory guidance, what staff should look out for, Signs of Safety, thresholds, CPOMS and MARS. She asked any governor who had completed Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and PREVENT to email the School Business Manager to add their details to the safeguarding training matrix. She stressed the importance of CPOMS as a reporting tool. Mrs Quinn acknowledged that Early Help was not as good as it could be and that some teams were more effective than others.

The Headteacher informed governors that Buckton Vale had an increasing number of vulnerable families with issues and cases going to Children in Need or Child Protection which was a tremendous strain on the staffing team as school did not have enough budget, resources or people to deal with all the work. Mrs Quinn commented that it was very difficult for children who had formed a relationship with a social worker to lose that social worker and have to start again, particularly for children with additional factors such as SEND.

The Chair thanked Mrs Quinn for providing safeguarding training to governors.

RESOLVED: To include approval of the Behaviour Policy on the agenda for the Governing Board

meeting on 7 December 2021

5:10 pm

**4 PRESENTATIONS FROM ACADEMY TRUSTS**

The Headteacher had invited academy representatives to talk to the Governing Board as an initial fact finding session. She would invite Drew Duncan, CEO of Tame Valley Academy Trust, to speak to governors on another date.

4.1 Victorious Academy Trust

The Headteacher welcomed Karen Burns, CEO; David Thompstone, CFO and Nicky Wise, COO of the Victorious Academy Trust and introduced governors who were appointed to the Governing Board for their range of expertise and experience.

Governors were provided with a handout and Mrs Burns explained that she had set up the Trust as the LA were rapidly dwindling, funding and expertise were reducing and networking was lacking. Nine schools were working with the Trust and the level of collaboration was amazing, with staff given the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise across the Trust. A working relationship with the LA was maintained, but the Trust provided school improvement, finance, HR and other support.

Buckton Vale was a strong school with experienced personnel. The Trust would not seek to change anything in the main.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| HT | Who does the school improvement work? |
| KB | That is part of our offer with myself and Bev Alford as the formal school improvement support but we have other structures including three experienced head teachers and three less experienced head teachers who are paired together. |

Mrs Burns said that the Trust were extremely successful with capital bids for building projects with CIF (condition improvement fund) bids totalling £3 million.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| HT | Is that money paid back? |
| DT | Schools make a match contribution of 16% but 84% is grant which is quite substantial. The pay back period can vary between 8 to 10 years with the current interest rate at 0.2% but it would not exceed 1-2% normally. |
| HT | There are a couple of major issues at Buckton Vale: heading for a deficit budget and changing the PAN from 45 to 30 next year. One of the reasons is because we have 33 in Reception and have been paying for two teachers for a long time and only receiving funding for one. We met with the LA but did not get the outcome we wanted. Collaborative working is very important to us. We have been in partnership with the Mossley cluster and feel we need to branch out further but we have some big projects, which need to happen. How does that work in terms of bids? Do you work with the head teacher and Governing Board? |
| NW | We work with you and external project members, which are very successful, and we work very closely with head teachers and Governing Boards. |
| KB | If the school is running well and standards are good, we just enhance the school. We do not want to redesign Buckton Vale. |

Mr Leech arrived at 5:45 pm

Mrs Burns explained that the Governing Board would remain as they were, although some titles would change but most decision making would stay the same and there would be no need to change the constitution. However, it would feel different as the legal entity of the Trust were the Board of Trustees. The Chair of the Trustees met with the Chairs of local governing board (LGB) each term and operational meetings with the chair of the LGB took place once per term. Governors would receive newsletters and there were lots of bite size governor training sessions which would be virtual and open to all governors to attend. Trust schools had reduced governors’ commitments because they did not always have committees.

Mr Thompstone explained that he would prepare a financial report centrally at the Trust, which was done in conjunction with the Headteacher and SBM. The Headteacher felt that the education system was stuck and that it was important for Buckton Vale’s teaching staff who did not want to leave the school to have the opportunity to move to the next rung on the SLT or access local opportunities. She felt that secondments would be useful and Mrs Burns confirmed that the Trust had a model and staff would be remunerated for that role. The Headteacher commented that there were free NPQ qualifications in Tameside but, since the DfE had taken them on, Buckton Vale’s staff could not access them due to the school’s location and deprivation index. There were six members of staff ready to start NPQ qualifications and the Headteacher was frustrated with the current system. Mrs Burns reiterated that there were lots of opportunities within the nine primary schools in the Trust.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MH | What centralised software does the Trust provide? |
| DT | We have PS Financials for financial accounting and HCSS for budget planning. The main difference is that the financial year changes from April to March to September to August. We have one to one training for finance staff. We use a third party provider for paryoll (One Education) and Arbor for MIS and assessment. |
| KB | In terms of the financial situation, we have a service fee but if you are heading for a deficit budget we can look at a gradual programme to build up to those service costs. Our fee is slightly more than the LA equivalent but we have one person for nine schools. We offer value for money. |
| DT | I can meet with the SBM and talk about what is achievable. |
| SB | If staff are leaving the LA, they will have concerns. Would you offer some sessions for staff? |
| NW | We can have discussions with staff about the TUPE process. We would have a presentation for staff, FAQ and trade union reps. The three key answers are that staff can stay on the same pension scheme, payscales are the same and terms and conditions are the same. |
| NW | Is there any time period for TUPE? |
| DT | There is never any time period. |
| KB | If staff change role and take on a new contract, then they would have a new contract. |

*Mrs Williams left at 6:00 pm*

The Headteacher and Chair thanked Mrs Burns, Mr Thompstone and Ms Wise for their attendance.

6:05 pm

4.2 Great Academies Education Trust

Mr Brendan Loughrane, CEO of the Great Academies Education Trust and Deborah Mason, Head Teacher of Silver Springs Community Primary School, were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

Mr Loughrane stressed that GEAT was a values-led Trust with four schools: one primary and three secondary including Copley Academy, which he was confident would come out of a category. Great Academy, Ashton was on the way up. All four schools had strong head teachers and a strong improvement structure. GEAT’s emphasis was to ensure that children were well looked after and this had been exceptional over the past 18 months.

The Board of Trustees was strongly and the Trust was relatively wealthy (£7 million). The Trust focused on achievement and outcomes but was values led with the aim to achieve excellence together. Mr Loughrane was keen for Buckton Vale to join the Trust as the Trust’s strategic intent was to grow at the right pace with the right people.

The Headteacher commented that, when Mr Loughrane visited school, she had talked about money and looking for funding because school was heading for a deficit budget and working hard to prevent a deficit budget for 2022. She asked if there were options for school to access monies elsewhere and Mr Loughrane said that he would not make promises but if the Trust moved to five schools then they could access SCA (school condition) funding. CIF bids had been very successful to date. The Trust wanted to get Copley rebuilt and had engaged in a lot of future risk management, such as early retirement. The Trustees challenged him to make the best use of the money for the children.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| HT | Would you recce the site to understand what you are investing in? |
| BL | We have a central team, you would have to make a decision about whether to convert and join our Trust. The Trust would conduct due diligence on finances and an educational review. We are developing a 10-year asset management plan for the Trust. We have a Board of Trustees and four local governing committees. We have a governance support and compliance officer and a commercial marketing manager. We have a finance team who have dovetailed the finance function of the SBM because academy finances are very different to LA finances. |

Mrs Mason provided some background: she was head teacher of Silver Springs for 11 years and became an academy as the school was in special measures, which they got out of before they joined the Trust. School wanted to find a local sponsor, which was focused on the children first. GEAT supported school within its own context but had some vision and values within a small Trust. Staff knew each other personally. Silver Springs would struggle to be outstanding without competitive collaboration and the GEAT provided challenge and support in equal measure. From a head teacher’s point of view, the support and training that Mr Loughrane had developed, even during the pandemic, was exceptional and bespoke. Silver Springs’ governing board were better able to support the children and the wider Stalybridge community. The amount and quality of brokered support was outstanding.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| HT | Do you have any plans to branch out with more than primary schools? |
| BL | We believe in considered growth. We can double the size of the Trust but our priority is to grow the primary phase. |

The Chair thanked Mr Loughrane and Mrs Mason for their information.

6:35 pm

The Headteacher would ask Drew Duncan, CEO of Tame River Educational Academy Trust, to speak to governors on 12 October 2021 at 5:00 pm, following which governors would have a workshop to discuss options and next steps.

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Covid Oversight Panel/Governing Board will take place

in school on Tuesday 12 October 2021 at 4:00 pm followed by a presentation by

Tame River Educational Trust at 4:30 pm and a workshop from 5:00 to 6:00 pm

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Meeting details* |  |
| *Time started* | *1600* |
| *Time finished* | *1850* |

**ACTIONS ARISING FOLLOWING THE GOVERNING BOARD TRAINING/COP/GB MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2021**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Min** | **Resp** | **Action** | **Date/Audience** |
| 3 | HT | Behaviour Policy | GB 7.12.2021 |
| 2.3 & 4 | GB | COP/GB meeting | 12.10.2021 at 4 pm |