

ASTON CLINTON SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

Date	Wednesday 26 th June 2024
Time	6pm
Place	via Zoom
Clerk	Emma Lad. Emma.lad@clerks.hertsforlearning.co.uk

Name	Governor Type	Attended
Sue Bradshaw	Co-opted governor	Attended
Hannah Brunning	Parent governor	Attended
Katy Coats	Co-opted governor	Attended
Katherine Cole	Staff governor	Apologies
Sean Hayward	Co-opted governor	Attended
Emma Lad (Clerk)	Clerk	Attended
Carol Macdonald (HT)	Headteacher	Attended
Christine Moxham (Chair)	Co-opted governor	Attended
Sophie Roberts	Co-opted governor	Attended
Jenny Stark	Local Authority Governor	Attended
Rebecca Taylor	Parent governor	Apologies

Governor challenge/questions will be marked in yellow.

Governor Actions are marked in *italic*.

Meeting started at 6.10pm

Long term strategic aims for the school

- To be the school of choice for the local community
- School is judged at least GOOD by Ofsted, **with elements that are judged OUTSTANDING.**
- The school is developing its own e.g., TAs to teachers to leaders.
- The school is outward looking:
 - Is a reference point for others and shares best practice.
 - looks to move forward and improve all the time.
 - Keeps up to date with current thinking.
 - Has a stable and committed staff team.

1. Welcome, apologies and reminder of confidentiality.

The meeting was quorate. Apologies from Katherine and Rebecca.

2. Conflicts of interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3. Notification of any other business

There was no notification of any other business.

4. Board membership matters:

- Note any new appointments, vacancies, and expiring terms of service. Agree actions that need to be taken – two co-opted governor vacancies.
- *To be discussed at the next meeting*

<i>Parent Governors</i> <i>2 posts, 2 posts are filled, 4-year term</i>		
	Rebecca Taylor	01/11/2024
<i>Staff Governors</i> <i>1 post, 1 post is filled, 4-year term</i>		
		to
	Katherine Cole	01/11/2024

Clerk (Agenda)

- Report on any training undertaken and training needs still to be addressed.
 - All governors to complete [Refresher Prevent training](#) following updated guidance Jan 24

5. [Minutes of the last meeting](#) and matters arising to be approved

The minutes were approved and will be signed by the Chair of governors via Governor Hub. All matters arising are completed or agenda items – see appendix A below except:

Item 12: *Hannah cannot be linked to English at present. There will be more detailed reporting at governors' meetings to ensure appropriate monitoring. Book looks and learning walks will take place during governor meetings.*

HT/ Clerk (Agenda) – Carry forward

6. Chair's action

- Report on any action taken by the chair or vice-chair on behalf of the board since the last meeting – None.
- [The chairs report](#) is available on Governor Hub and the Chair explained the key points.

8.10pm Hannah joined the meeting

- *The Chair thanked Sophie for her Opal update for the Friday flyer. It was suggested safeguarding be the topic for the next one in the Autumn term which Katy will update.*

Clerk (Agenda)

7. [Academisation update](#)

The chair explained that the due diligence has begun looking at academies in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. Natasha has completed the exercise as she has no conflict of interest with the process.

The key indicators were discussed including financial information, transparency of reporting, whether all schools must have the same curriculum/ uniform etc., if they did not move a school to good when taken on as requires improvement.

There were six schools which were still to be considered after these items. However, three of them were either too far away or were mainly secondary.

The HT has spoken to one of the MAT's already and has requested that the chair speak to their counterpart in the schools. The plan is to visit all three of the MATs to complete the due diligence exercise.

G: Did face-to-face contact benefit you? What did you learn from the process?

HT: I visited with the DHT and there are always issues. It was interesting hearing the lived in experience and I met with two of their schools. I asked numerous questions around strategic decisions, support from the MAT and how difficulties are dealt with. The schools are both planning on meeting with the school to work together in the future. They all agreed on the support from the Trust regarding suspensions, procurement of resources and how they obtain further external support for SEND support.

G: Would you do anything differently in future visits?

HT: It is interesting to see how they align.

G: It is surprising to see there are no Trusts in Bucks.

HT: It is concerning that they don't meet the requirements.

G: How do the MATs manage governance?

HT: There is a Trust board, and then each school has their own local committee monitoring teaching and learning.

G: Did you discuss how you would maintain the Aston Clinton individuality?

HT: What would that mean for you?

G: The extra curricular activities.

HT: That MAT that I met with does everything we do, and they are happy for schools to keep their identity. Their pastoral development is stronger than ours, but they were interested in the school's mental health work. I won't tell you which MAT it is now until we have met all three.

The HT will arrange the meetings and let governors know once in place.

HT

The governors asked that their thanks be passed onto Natasha.

8. Mental Health policy presentation

The SLT have reviewed the tiered approach and looked at the Thrive program and there is a high cost associated with starting the program. The school has a lot of the program already in place through its own research. The HT explained the tiers and support at each level.

G: How will the tiers work alongside the continuum of need from the LA?

HT: They are separate, but they will work simultaneously. It has been factored in. The school needs to be considering the mental health of the parents alongside the child.

G: Is there a system for recording and staff input?

HT: It will be reviewed by the DSLs at the reviews of the Assess, Plan, Review and Do process.

G: Is there a timescale for review?

HT: It will depend. Interventions are usually six weeks but for example if the attendance is dropping, they should be considered earlier.

G: Are you going to be a Thrive school?

HT: I can't justify the £6000 payment for the school. The Academy we met with have worked with Boxhall to improve the systems and mimic some of the Thrive program. We will be working with the school on this moving forward.

G: Boxhall is very positive in my experience.

G: It is a very large document. Is there any value in having reference to staff wellbeing sitting separately?

HT: It is at staff consultation now so we can discuss with staff and see what they think as we don't want them to think it is lip service to them. The staff do feel that parents are on the attack sometimes and we need to ensure the parents are clear of the staff's need for support and

wellbeing. For example, when the year 6 residential got back there were three parents who immediately attacked the staff verbally as they got off the coach.

G: Have we warned parents that the trips are not compulsory, and that staff have chosen to take the children?

HT: Yes. This has been sent in the Friday flyer.

9. Policy review

BC Updated Model Policies

- First aid in schools
- Leave of absence

To be reviewed at the Finance, Premises, health and safety committee:

- Flexible working
- Redundancy
- Maternity / Paternity

FPH&S Committee

10. Headteachers report to governors

Additional: There is an upward trend in safeguarding with increased incidents and amount of external support required.

G: In your report it separately mentions that a family left the school because of a safeguarding issue and in the staff survey the staff response wasn't 100% that children were safe in the school. Was that something we should consider?

HT: The safeguarding governors have already reviewed. The staff were concerned because children were having to be physically restrained due to issues with behaviour and self-regulation, so their behaviour is making them not safe.

G: Can you confirm you are meeting all the requirements of the children who are in receipt of off-site direction?

HT: Kings-Inter High is commissioned by the parents. The school has in writing that it will not over-see the Quality of Education, but we have put in place the same due diligence procedures surrounding safeguarding whilst the parents seek EOTAS from the LA.

End of year data:

- The HT gave a verbal update on the data for the children. Governors were very pleased with the results. There will be further review in more detail to look at groups progress.
- The school has been selected for the Reception Baseline in September. The school now has validated data for this year and Jenny Stark will review further and report back.

11. Committee reports

Finance, Premises, H&S Committee – 9th May – the committee was not quorate, but the discussion took place via Governor Hub.

Personnel, Admissions and Pay review Committee – 8th May – staffing is challenging and the SLT will be covering some classes.

Meetings will be booked before the end of term for both committees

Chair of Committees

12. Safeguarding

- The linked safeguarding governors fed back that the school will continue to complete the termly updates. The Single Central Record check has been completed.
- An Internal audit schedule will be created for next year.
- KCSIE has been updated.

The HT explained there can be a section 47 called if there are medical concerns regarding a child. The HT has now met with the local doctor's partnership, and they are amending their procedures to allow for medical information to be released to the school if requested. The procedure has been explained to parents. If parents won't give consent, then the school will still email the doctors to alert them that the school has concerns and then they will raise as a concern with the necessary authorities.

G: Is it just the doctors who are involved?

HT: It is dealt with confidentially and will be rolled out to all the schools in the Liaison group.

G: What happens if the children are not attending those doctors?

HT: We will consult with them as required. The doctors are also taking the partnership experience back to the Quadrant so that the MASH team can make changes to the safeguarding policies to allow for better information sharing across county.

Governors thanked the HT for her work on this area which should further safeguard children in the school.

G: A neighbour has raised a concern regarding the 'mile a minute' weeds can they put weed killer down?

HT: We would need to speak to the site manager as this is already a concern for the school and restricts use of the area.

13. Staff wellbeing survey update – Sophie Roberts

The linked governor asked that it be carried over to the Autumn term so that there can be time to review and put in place actions for improvements. This will work alongside the review of the mental health policy.

Sophie Roberts/ HT

14. Reports from governor monitoring visits

- Receive and evaluate reports from governors who have carried out monitoring visits.

Jenny Stark updated on her visit to Forest school and reviewed data.

It was clear Forest school is a fantastic experience for the children and for their mental health and resilience. There is one element of directed play leading from what they have been taught in class initially. Once the activity was completed, they had their exploring time. The children all said they loved the exploring time, and their behaviour and interaction were lovely to watch.

- Book future visits
Sophie Roberts – 27/6/24
Sue Bradshaw – visit being booked.

15. Clerks update

Governance Guides (replaced Governance Handbook).

The DfE has published 2 new governance guides.

[Maintained Schools Governance Guide](#) [Academy Trust Governance Guide](#)

This online guidance replaces the Governance Handbook. There are no new requirements for governors/trustees and the academies version reflects information contained in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#) and [Commissioning High Quality Guidance](#). Boards should make sure everyone on your board is aware of, and can access, the right guide for your school type. They must also remove any copies of, or reference to, the previous Governance Handbook in your board's files and documents.

The DfE has withdrawn the following documents. Much of the information contained in these documents is now covered in the new governance guides.

- Governance Handbook
- Competency Framework for Governance
- Clerking Competency Framework

- Governance Structures and Roles
- Statutory Policies for Schools and Academy Trusts

NB: There is currently no option to download this guidance into individual documents on the DfE website. If you access other providers' PDF versions, please be mindful that they will need to be replaced when the DfE makes any updates.

Mobiles Phones in Schools

The DfE have published guidance for schools on how they can develop a policy to prohibit the use of mobile phones during the school day. The guidance is available [here](#).

The guidance should be considered alongside KCSIE and Behaviour in Schools guidance. Its objective is to support schools in removing distraction for pupils during the school day and to protect against Cyber-Bullying.

The guidance gives a number of options that schools could consider in the development of a mobile free policy and advice on communications, sanctions and reasonable adjustments.

Governing Boards should note this guidance and discuss the school's approach to control of mobile phone use during the school day. It should be agreed how this will be progressed.

DfE: Music Plan template

The National Plan for Music Education (NPME), published in 2022, outlined the government's aim to enable all children and young people to learn to sing, play instruments, create music, and have opportunities to progress their musical interests and talents. The plan advocates for music to be an integral part of every child's education, aiming to make music accessible to all, regardless of background or circumstances.

As part of the plan, DfE has said it is "asking schools to publish a summary of their music development plan on their website before the start of the 2024 to 2025 academic year. Schools should then update the summary before the start of each new academic year."

The [guidance](#) on what academies must/should publish online has been updated to reflect that a music develop plan should be published: "Alongside the content of their music curriculum, all academies are expected to publish information about their music development plan. A [template](#) is available to support with this."

The publication of the plan is in the 'should' part of the guidance and therefore is not statutory.

Key things for you to know about changes to [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](#)

As the changes are mainly technical, there aren't many actions you need to take. As governors or trustees, the most important changes are that you should:

- Assure yourselves that your child protection policy is up to date with the latest technical changes, such as the updated definition of safeguarding
- Be aware that the sections on 'children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning' and 'preventing radicalisation' are still **under review** and may change, but we don't know when this will be
- Make sure that where your school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding needs for that pupil. Check with senior leaders that they're satisfied the placement meets the pupil's needs
- Refer to the data protection guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) to help you comply with data protection law

Part 1: safeguarding information for all staff

An updated definition of safeguarding

- This is now in line with the working together to safeguard children 2023 guidance. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is now defined as:
 - Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge (this bullet point is new)
 - Protecting children from maltreatment, **whether that is within or outside the home, including online** (this last part has been added)
 - Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
 - Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This is in paragraph 3.

An updated list of early help indicators

- Your school and staff should now also be alert to any child who:
 - Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
 - Has a parent or carer in custody (previously it was 'family member in prison'), or is affected by parental offending
 - Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care (the word 'education' has been added)

This is in paragraph 18.

There's more detailed information on early help in the [working together to safeguard children guidance](#), which includes a more comprehensive list of indicators that a child may need early help.

New wording and changes in terminology

- When referring to 'abuse and neglect', the guidance now also includes 'exploitation' throughout (for example, see the heading at the top of page 11)
- The definition of abuse now also has 'including where they see, hear or experience its effects' in relation to domestic abuse (paragraph 24)
- 'Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education' has replaced the phrase 'deliberately missing education' when referring to safeguarding issues (paragraph 29)
- 'It is important that **when** staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse they should speak to their DSL' – this has replaced '... **if** they have concerns ...' (paragraph 31)
- The definition of child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation now says CCE and CSE **'may involve** an exchange for something the victim wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator'. Previously the definition didn't include the word 'may' (paragraph 34)

Part 2: the management of safeguarding

The section on children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning has been updated

For now it **remains under review** until the response to the [gender questioning children consultation](#) and final guidance have been published.

The phrase 'gender questioning' has replaced the word 'trans'.

This section reflects that the Cass review:

- Identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and that children may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children

Your school should take a cautious approach to support a gender questioning child and:

- Consider the broad range of the individual's needs
- Do this in partnership with their parents (except in rare circumstances where involving parents would bring a significant risk of harm to the child)
- Include any clinical advice that is available
- Consider how to address wider vulnerabilities, such as the risk of bullying

It's also important for staff to 'create a culture' where pupils can speak out or share any concerns with staff (previously it was to 'provide a safe space' for pupils to do this).

Once it's published, your school should refer to the guidance on gender questioning children when deciding how to proceed.

A new paragraph on using the DfE's data protection guidance

Governors, trustees and staff should use the DfE's data protection guidance for schools to help you and your school:

- Comply with data protection law
- Develop data policies and processes
- Know what staff and pupil data to keep
- Follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches

This is laid out in paragraph 93.

A new paragraph on alternative provision

- This clarifies that where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil. Your school should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs (paragraph 171)

Extra wording in the section on elective home education (EHE)

It now says that:

- Elective home education can mean that some children are not in receipt of suitable education
- Many home educated children have a 'positive learning experience' (previously it said 'overwhelmingly positive learning experience')

This is in paragraph 179.

Removed information on plans for further guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence

- KCSIE 2023 stated that further guidance on teaching relationships education specifically to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence would be published. This has been removed (paragraph 132 of KCSIE 2023)

Part 3: safer recruitment

There are no changes to this section.

Part 4: safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff

There are no changes to this section.

Part 5: child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Updated definition of early help

- Early help is now defined as 'support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse' (paragraph 497)
- This reflects the working together to safeguard children guidance

Statistic clarification

- The guidance says that **children with disabilities** are 3 times more likely to be abused than their peers. This previous wording was 'children with special educational needs and disabilities' (paragraph 456)

Annex A: safeguarding information for school and college staff

The changes in terminology around the safeguarding definition and 'unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education' in part 1 have not been reflected in Annex A. We've contacted the DfE to check whether these should also be updated for Annex A.

Annex B: further information

Preventing radicalisation

The section on preventing radicalisation is still under review after the government published a [new definition of extremism](#) on 14 March 2024.

For now, changes include:

- An updated definition of radicalisation, which is defined as 'the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence'
- 'Susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism' has replaced the wording 'susceptible to an extremist ideology'
- When referring to the Prevent duty, 'the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism' has replaced 'the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'
- Some information around possible indicators has been removed. Instead, your school should refer to the DfE's guidance on [managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting](#)

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

There's a small update to the indicators of county lines. Be aware of children who:

- Go missing **from school or home** and are subsequently found in areas away from their own
- Have been the perpetrator or **alleged** perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime), as well as the victim

Children and the court system

- Separate age-appropriate guides for schools to support children have been published: [5 to 11 year-olds](#) and [12 to 17 year-olds](#)

Annex C: further information

Availability

- Clarification that availability of the DSL in exceptional circumstances could include Skype

Holding and sharing information

- The final bullet point in the section on holding and sharing information has been updated to include that the DSL should keep written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions
 - This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program

16. Any other urgent business

None requested at the beginning of the meeting.

17. Future dates

Date	Start	Meeting	Location
Wed 25 Sep 2024	18:00	Aston Clinton FGB meeting	School
Thu 7 Nov 2024	09:15	Finance Premises, Health and Safety Committee	School
Mon 18 Nov 2024	18:00	Aston Clinton FGB meeting	Online
Wed 15 Jan 2025	18:00	Aston Clinton FGB meeting	School
Thu 9 Jan 2025	09:15	Finance Premises Health and Safety Committee	

Mon 31 Mar 2025	18:00	Aston Clinton FGB meeting	Online
Wed 23 Apr 2025	18:00	Aston Clinton FGB meeting	School
Wed 30 Apr 2025	17:00	Strategy Meeting	
Thu 8 May 2025	09:15	Finance, Premises, Health and Safety Committee	
Mon 23 Jun 2025	18:00	Aston Clinton FGB meeting	online

The governors were invited to attend the drinks for staff on Monday 22nd July at 2pm at the Oak pub.

All governors

The chair thanked Carol and the staff for all their work this year.

Meeting ended: 7.30pm

Appendix A: Full governing body Matters arising:

Item 4: All governors to complete [Refresher Prevent training](#) following updated guidance Jan 24 – Hannah B, Sean H,

Hannah B/ Sean – agenda item 4

Item 4: Rebecca Taylor has completed Cybersecurity training and will add to her Governor Hub record.

Rebecca Taylor - completed

Item 5: Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed by the chair via Governor Hub. All matters arising are completed or agenda items – see appendix A below.

Chair - completed

Item 6: Governors discussed, and the parent questionnaire will be updated and redistributed by the HT.

HT - completed

Item 6: The Chair will submit something in Summer 1 and there will be an OPAL update in Summer 2 from Katy Coats.

Chair/ Katy Coats - completed

Item 6: The SIP two-year projection should be reviewed by governors ahead of the Strategy meeting. It is aspirational and some of the targets are over two years. The objectives are ranked in order of priority.

All governors - completed

Item 6: Governors agreed to complete an internal safeguarding audit and then review whether there are any areas for improvement. At which point an external audit can be completed.

Katy Coats/ Sean Hayward – agenda item 12

Item 7: To be reviewed at the next meeting:

- First aid in schools
- Flexible working
- Leave of absence
- Redundancy

HT/ Clerk (Agenda) – agenda item 9

Item 8: Governors were asked to observe the opening of the SATs paper and the exam process on the 13th to 16th May. Sophie 15th or 17th, Katy 14th May, Sue, and Christine – any day.

SATs observation reports to be sent to the clerk to collate into one report.

All governors/ Clerk - completed

Item 10: The HT will review and report back to the Chair. It will be brought to a Summer 2 meeting.

HT/ Chair - completed

Item 11: Governors agreed to use the questions from The Key and the clerk will add one question to each agenda for the school to respond to.

Clerk (agenda) – agenda item 7

Item 13: Staff wellbeing survey from DFE – governors to issue to allow cross reference with the completed school survey. Sophie will manage.

