

## MELLOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meeting of Trustees held on Wednesday 3 May 2023 at 6.30pm

Director		End of office	Category
Kit Aldred	KA	30 September 2023	Co-opted
Paul Armstrong	PA	16 May 2025	Parent
Leanne Ashton	LA	20 September 2024	Parent
Helen Greateorex	HG	24 June 2024	Member Appointed
Lynda Gwyther	LG	30 September 2023	Co-opted
David Hoult	DH	25 May 2024	Chair
Bob Humphrey-Taylor	BHT	30 September 2023	Co-opted
David Johnson	DJ	24 June 2024	Member Appointed
Jim Nicholson	JN	Ex Officio	Headteacher
Kate Scott	KS	24 June 2024	Member Appointed

### In Attendance

Carole Owen	CO	Governance Professional
Eleanor Wyborn	EW	SBM (Mellor)
Gemma Parkin	GP	DHT

## MINUTES

### 1. Welcome DJ

DJ chaired the meeting as DH attended remotely and welcomed everyone to the meeting.  
HG also attended the start of the meeting remotely.

### 2. Apologies CO

Apologies were received and accepted from KA, LG and BHT.

### 3. Quorum met CO

The meeting met its quorum.

### 4. Declaration of interests CO

There were no new declarations of business interest.

### 6. Declaration of AoB DH

Holiday dates 2024/25

### 7. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023 DH

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record. These will be signed on Governor Hub by DH.

# Matters Arising and Actions from the last meeting

DH

Meeting	Agenda item	Action	Who	Status
Feb 23	7	Skills audit to BHT, DJ, LG for completion	CO	✓
	10.2	Sample governor visits proforma	CO	✓
	10.2	Governor visits folder on Governor Hub	CO	✓
	13.4	<p>Uniform Policy consultation</p> <p>HG reported that some parents were not happy with the proposed changes to PE kit i.e. no zipped hoodies. GP: zips etc are a potential H&amp;S hazard. PA added that some parents were not happy that branded trainers were no longer allowed.</p> <p>GP: there were 4 responses to the consultation 1 fully supported the proposal 1 requested leggings instead of track suit bottoms and</p> <p>2 people queried the environmental issue of increased washing and the time taken for children to change. Children will leave their kit in school and it takes 6 minutes to change. PA why not come to school in PE kit anymore GP: it is an early learning goal to get dressed. Uniform does improve behaviour LA: it is good training for secondary school when pupils have to change for PE. PA: Is this a whole school approach. GP: JN: Concerns regarding getting changed in front of others could become a greater anxiety in later life. GP: PE is already looking more consistent and of a higher standard.</p>	JN	✓
	AoB	<p>Meet to plan Trustee contact with potential MAT schools</p> <p>PA suggested a female Trustee be involved. Dates to be shared and all Trustees to make themselves available at their convenience.</p>	PA/DH/DJ	O
	AoB	Trustee profiles to be updated for Honeycomb website	DH	✓

### 1. To receive the termly report

The meeting received the written report. JN thanked GP for her contribution to the report. He went on to highlight areas within the report:

- **School Improvement:** Significant progress has been made with school priorities. Since release of the DfE Academy Regulatory Review, there is greater empowerment for MAT growth. JN reported that there had been contact with 3 schools regarding potential Honeycomb membership

**HG: Do we have a time line for our strategic growth and if the Honeycomb plan does not come to fruition in a year, should we rethink our plans?**

JN: A two-year timeline should allow for us to progress the growth plan. Schools need to have a change of mind-set in relation to academy status.

**DH concurred with HG that milestones for action would be welcome in order to determine the future plan. He suggested that a strategic planning day take place in the Autumn Term which would include MAT growth.**

**PA: This would be a useful event and provide reassurance to Trustees regarding the financial viability of Mellor. This is an intense period of change and therefore specific timelines are difficult to plan.**

**KS: If we remain as a single academy Trust in two years, what are the risks associated with this?**

**DJ: We need to be patient; there is movement even if it is slower than we would like.**

**LA: We need to ensure that we are a strong MAT and this extends to a good financial position as this could make us vulnerable.**

**DH: The DfE, RSC and LA have confidence in Mellor which should provide the opportunities for us to take the MAT forward.**

JN added that it would be disappointing if this situation is not progressed in two years.

- **Behaviour/Attendance and Safeguarding:** Attendance is positive overall with 94%.

GP: Children who did not take up their place on strike days have not had their absence authorised.

**PA: Absence is a national issue. Is this replicated here?**

JN: It is difficult to be specific. 6 parents have received letters as their child has lower than 85% attendance. Meetings are to be held with them. Figures are strong in the current national context.

**LA: FSM children in Nursery attendance is low at 89%. Why is this?**

GP: This is due to the absence of two children.

JN: EHCP attendance is strong. One child has had some barriers which has impeded their attendance.

**Trustees enquired if there were any cases of EBSA (Emotionally Based School avoidance).**

GP: This is being monitored carefully however, there are no defined cases at the moment.

The school has 22 open cases of children requiring speech and Language support. Nationally, there has been 36% increase in the number of requests for EHCP assessment.

Admissions for September: The school is full for September are strong with 7 children on the waiting list. The curriculum offer and whole school experience is attracting families from a wider geographical location.

- **SEND:** There are a number of children who have significant needs. This includes children who have joined the school mid-year with one child joining at the start of this term.

JN asked Trustees which data they would like to be included in this report in future.

**LA: The detail should be examined at E&S and the summary in this report is ideal. This view was endorsed by KS and PA.**

- **Staffing:** JN reminded the meeting that GP would be covering the maternity leave of the Yr 6 teacher on a 0.4 basis. He added that two TAs would reach the end of their contract at the end of term.
- 1 child in Yr 6 has had significant funding above the norm due to the complexity of need. The child will leave in July and this will reduce SEND income next year.
- TA pay continues to reduce the number of applicants to such positions as pay is below other sectors
- Wendy Sinclair, Office Manager has given 13 years to school and will be retiring at the end of the summer half term. JN reported how she had modernised practice in school. Trustees acknowledged her commitment to Mellor and thanked her for all her work.

**Resolved**

**To receive the Headteacher's Report.**

**9. Governance**

DH/CO

1. Governing Body development: To review the summary of the skills audit and agree the Governor Action Plan for 2022/23

The skills audit is now fully complete and shows that there is strength and depth in all areas across the membership.

2. **To receive feedback from Governor visits**

PA reported from a visit to discuss area based partnerships in Stockport since half term.

3. **To note any training undertaken since the last meeting**

LA has completed GDPR training.

Following a review of SLAs for safeguarding and Governor training, the school has subscribed to the National College online offer. This will provide for savings going forward

### **Action**

#### **Log ins to be sent to Governors EW**

4. Trust communications/updates

See matters arising.

#### **5. Appointment of Governance Professional 2023/24**

DH reported that 4 organisations were approached for quotes. 3 proposals were received with 1 more expensive than the rest and only provided an online service.

Interviews were held with Cheshire East and One Education which was formally the service provided by Manchester City Council. Other functions were offered such as finance and HR support. One Education has a pool of 17 clerks; DH recommended their appointment. This was unanimously agreed with effect from 1 September 2023.

### **Resolved**

**To appoint One Education to provide Governance Professional Services for 2023/24.**

## **10. Committee Reports**

Chairs

### **1. To receive the report and minutes from the Education & Standards Committee held on 29 March 2023**

LA provided a summary from the meeting including

- Book look
- Data review and in depth questioning of pupil outcomes
- A safeguarding issue
- LA is to follow up Yr 2 Writing with the subject lead.
- Amendments to Behaviour Policy
- KA has completed the website audit. Thanks to her for her work on this.

CO: There is a new requirement for the profile of Governors according to protected characteristics to be published on the website. More information about expectations is to follow.

HG: The National Black Governors Network is open to approaches for interested parties.

### **11. 2. To receive the report and minutes from the Finance & Resources Committee held on 8 March 2023**

DH provided a commentary on the meeting to supplement the minutes.

Management accounts were reviewed and the latest will be included in item 12.

Monitoring actions from the internal audit report and minutes from H&S committee were reviewed.

There followed a discussion regarding the review of HR policies discussion. These had been put on hold pending the formation of Honeycomb. Some policies will go to F&R later this term following consultation with staff before the meeting.

## **Resolved**

**To receive Committee reports and minutes.**

## **12. Financial Matters**

EW

- 1. Management Accounts to 31 March 2023**
- 2. Draft budget 2023/24 and 3 Yr budget to 2025/26**

EW reported the finances were broadly with expectations against budget at 3.9%. Above this is positive given current rate of inflation. 3.9% this equates to approximately -£7k.

Staffing is higher than budget due to overtime and supply cover and back pay from April to August.

No 3 on comparative yellow box income summary; this query has now been resolved. PSF splits the revenue and capital expenditure on reports although monies may be vired as required. This accounts for the difference between the management accounts and the budget summary report.

Budget monitoring report shows a prediction of £11k surplus. This is based on system assumptions. Together the 2 figures suggest an £18k variance from budget.

**DJ: How are the current increases in pay and energy etc. being managed to keep this figure so low?**

EW: We have cut as many things as possible including the review of SLAs, bulk purchasing and renegotiation of subscriptions.

JN: The cost of paper up by 30%. Energy has increased from £13k to £ 32.5k. The 5% included for the teachers' uplift has afforded some protection.

**KS: How are these cuts impacting on provision?**

JN: Staffing levels are at the minimum, any further shrinkage will impact adversely. We aim to preserve our bespoke curriculum including Forest School. Online teaching resources have been reviewed for value and some subscriptions not reviewed.

The draft budget plan is based on a carry forward of £1140 surplus. -£86k budget is currently predicted next year. Expenditure has been estimated on a worst case scenario basis e.g. energy is assumed to increase by 200%. The suggestion from the LA is that this will be closer to 45% next year with 100% assumption in years 2 and 3.

**PA observed that figures looked grim. Will we be informed of any improvements before the next meeting?**

EW: Energy costs could be between £49,940 to £105k. Lower energy costs from April to August could reduce this to £32k. I have modelled 45% takes this to -£42k. All non-staff expenditure set at 7-10% increase.

The annual pay increase for teacher and support staff is expected to be funded by schools

Therefore there has been no assumption there will be any government for support for this in spite of suggestions that monies may be provided.

JN Reserves continue to provide a cushion until 2024/25. There will need to be change across the system as most schools will not be financially sustainable.

**KS: What would happen if Reserves are exhausted?**

JN: A Financial Notice to Improve may be issued and we could be moved into another Trust. CST (Confederation of School Trusts) have advised that budgets should not mask the financials constraints being experienced by schools.

**There was a consensus that finances presented a major risk.**

DH: We have a reserves policy which allow for 5-10% of our turnover. We are currently close to 10%. With the use of Reserves, we should break even this year. He thanked JN and EW for keeping expenditure under control and advised that Reserves should be maintained as much as possible. There is time to review the predicted £86k deficit before deadline of 31 July when the budget has to be submitted to ESFA.

Trustees congratulated EW on successfully completing her SBM qualification.

**Resolved**

**To receive the Management Accounts to March 2023 and draft budget 2023/24 and 3-year plan.**

**13. Policy Review/Approval**

**Statutory Policies**

**1. Complaints**

No notable changes to the policy were proposed. This was unanimously agreed.

**Resolved**

**To agree the Complaints Policy.**

**School Policies**

**2. Trustee Appointment process**

DH proposed acceptance of the draft process which would provide for a panel to be convened as need arises to interview interested parties. The panel would comprise DH, JN, HG and Jon Longworth, Member. Following the interview, the Panel will recommend to the Members candidates for appointment or to Trustees for the appointment of co-opted Trustees.

**Resolved**  
**To agree the Trustee Appointment Process.**

**14. AoB: Business of an urgent nature as deemed by the Chair**

DJ

School dates 2024/34

Following consultation with staff, the following dates were proposed and agreed.

<b>Open</b>	<b>Close</b>
<b>Autumn Term</b>	
3 September 2024	17 October 2024
28 October 2024	20 December 2024
<b>Spring Term</b>	
6 January 2025	14 February 2025
24 February 2025	11 April 2025
<b>Summer Term</b>	
28 April 2025	22 May 2025
9 June 2025	25 July 2025
<b>School Closed to pupils for Staff INSET Days</b>	
2 September 2024	
8 October 2024	
8 November 2024	
3 January 2025	
23 May 2025	
School Closed to pupils for May Bank Holiday on 5 May 2025	

**Resolved**  
**To agree school dates 2024/15**

**15. Date and time of meetings 2022/23**

DJ

**Summer Term 2023**

14 June	<i>Education and Standards Committee E&amp;S</i>
28 June	<i>Finance and Resources Committee</i>
19 July	FGB

**The meeting closed at 8.30pm**