



Governing Body of Sutton CofE VC Primary School

Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting	Date: Tuesday 13 th February 2024 Time: 6.00pm
Governors Present: Chris Shea (Co-chair, C Sh), Jessica Webb (Co-chair, JW), Mike Harrison (Headteacher), Rebecca Ayres (RA), Jonathon Cooper (JC), Kim Fleming (KF), Ryan Storey (RS), Hilary Sanderson (HS), Sarah Stant (SS), Chris Sanderson (CS), Peter Townsend (PT) Associate Members Present: Ruth Garbutt (RG) Apologies: there were no apologies. Absence: Pheobe Greenwood Clerk: David Barker	

Live Actions.

Actions arising from this meeting held on 13th February 2024.

Agenda Item	Action	Owner	Deadline
3.1	Review of the school's Pay Policy was to be considered as an agenda item at the next FGB.	Headteacher.	Next FGB Monday 29 th April
7.2	For the Headteacher to provide a list of volunteers and their roles for governors to review at the next FGB.	Headteacher.	FGB: Monday 29 th April
7.3	For the Headteacher to review the Critical Incidents Policy, updating it in line with governors' feedback and re-present to the FGB for their review.	Headteacher	FGB: Monday 29 th April
7.7	For the Governing Board and Headteacher to review the policy review cycle, making amendments to it, to recommend to the FGB.	Co-Chairs and Headteacher.	FGB: Monday 29 th April
8.1 a)	For the clerk to organise links for each governor so the NGA training platform can be accessed by all.	Clerk.	ASAP
8.1 b)	For the clerk to circulate the NGA skills audit for review by the governing board and possible adoption.	Clerk.	FGB: Monday 29 th April
8.3	For the clerk to include the Governor Induction Policy within papers for review at the next FGB.	Clerk.	FGB: Monday 29 th April
8.4	For the Co-Chairs and clerk to arrange a meeting to discuss the creation of a governance action plan.	Co-Chairs and clerk.	March 2024
8.6	For the clerk to source a PSHE link governor role description and for this to be presented to governors for their review at the next FGB.	Clerk.	FGB: Monday 29 th April
8.7	For the Co-Chairs to make contact with governors with outstanding DBS checks and confirmations to remind them to complete these at the earliest opportunity.	Co-Chairs.	ASAP
8.8	For the clerk to ensure that discussion of training and CPD and training records on GovernorHub is an agenda item at the next FGB.	Clerk.	FGB: Monday 29 th April

Meeting minutes.

AGENDA ITEM.	MINUTES.
0	Opening prayers were led by Peter Townrow.
1	Welcome, apologies and note of absenteeism.
1.1	No apologies were received by the Board. The absence of Pheobe Greenwood was noted.
2	Declarations of interest.
2.1	C Sh declared that he is in the process of applying to be an exam invigilator at a school in Witchford. SS declared that she is now assistant leader of Squirrels and that this group includes children from the school.
3	Minutes of the last FGB meeting, matters arising and actions since the last meeting- FGB 5 th December 2023.
3.1	<u>Review of actions arising from the meeting held on 5th December 2023.</u> 3.1: ongoing. Clerk will continue to remind those who have not completed the Declarations of Interest form on GovernorHub to do so at the earliest opportunity. 3.12: All KCSiE declarations are complete. There are some other confirmations outstanding, and the clerk will continue to remind relevant governors of the need to complete this. 4.1: Action completed. 4.13: This action is on-going. 7: To be addressed within this meeting. Action completed. 8.1: To be addressed within this meeting. Action completed. 8.2: Action addressed within the F&R committee meeting held on 5th February 2024. 11.3: Action completed. 11.4: Review of the school's Pay Policy was deferred to another meeting later in the year. Action ongoing. New action arising: Review of the school's Pay Policy was to be considered as an agenda item at the next FGB. 11.8: Action completed. 12.1: Action completed. 14.1: Action completed. <u>Review of actions arising from the meeting held on 3rd October 2023.</u> 3.19: Action is in-hand and on-going.

	4.133 a) and 4.133 b): Action is in-hand. The C Sh will meet with the Headteacher to discuss and agree a way forward. JW agreed to write a short piece for the forthcoming school newsletter focusing on the election and Paintbox. 7.13: The Headteacher will investigate this issue. Action on-going. 8.13: Action completed. Decision: The minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Board held on 5th December 2023 were approved.
4	Headteacher's Report.
4.1	The Headteacher's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The following points were noted: <u>Catering.</u> • There has been another member of staff added to the catering team. • Meal uptake has improved considerably over this year, with regularly 190 children having a meal in school. <u>Attendance.</u> • Attendance is very good and is on an upward trajectory, largely down to the improving attendance of disadvantaged pupils. The gap between the attendance of non-disadvantaged children when compared to disadvantaged children has reduced from a gap of around 6% to 2%. • The above improvements are due to the work of attendance staff, improvements to provision (including a breakfast club) and the work of all in building an inclusive and welcoming culture. <u>Behaviour.</u> • Behaviour has been very good, however there have recently been two fixed term exclusions, both for physical aggression towards vulnerable pupils. A range of support systems/strategies have been put in place for those involved/affected. There will be a focus in assemblies upon what excellence in behaviour looks like. • In addition to the above there have been 4 internal exclusions in response to unacceptable behaviour.

School Roll.

- There has been a significant number of within-year transfers, totalling around 16 since November. There is a level of challenge with these admissions and all except two have been added to the SEND register and potentially EHCPs will be required.
- The proportion of pupils with EHCPs is higher than the average for schools nationally and locally.

Staff absence.

- Staff absence has been generally typical and many of the long-term absences have been resolved, and this has alleviated some of the additional burdens that were placed upon staff in covering for these. There are still some staff absences to note, one class teacher has a support plan in place and an HLTA is on long-term sick leave and one completing a phased return to work.

A governor questioned what the school's plan was for staff supporting EHCP pupils who will leave at the end of Y6.

Governors were advised that there is need to support pupils with EHCPs in other areas of the school, notably in the pre-school (with whom the school are continuing to work to identify needs early), and that there will be further pupils with EHCPs coming through the school. This meant that staff supporting pupils who leave at the end of Y6 would be redeployed elsewhere within the school. Furthermore, governors were advised that the school depends upon the funding for pupils with EHCPs and this is one of the reasons as to why the school is applying to host an ERB (for which the school is still awaiting a response).

A governor questioned as to how sustainable it was for the SENDCo to work 5 days a week when she is paid for 4 days/week.

Governors were advised that the school are working to encourage the SENDCo to work less, however the SENDCo while recognising this, also acknowledges that there is much work to be done and to some extent there's an element of catch-up to her work. Governors were further advised that if the school managed to get an ERB in place, then they would be able to employ an additional teacher who would also be a SEND specialist and they could support the SENDCo in carrying out her role.

A governor questioned as to whether it was sustainable to keep accepting pupils with EHCPs.

Governors were advised that the school does not have a choice and that if parents decide that they would like their child to attend the school, then they would be able to attend. It was further acknowledged that the demands of pupils with EHCPs does stretch the resources of the school.

	<i>A governor questioned, as to where the additional pupils are coming from.</i> Governors were advised that the school takes responsibility for all children who are eligible to come to the school, and that SEND pupils at the school do well. Additionally, that the funding model for SEND pupils is flawed in that the school is educating new joiners, with SEND needs, without the additional funding that is allocated to the school for their placement. There is growth funding but that is an unlikely route (although being explored) and it is not currently a feasible option to appoint new staff for these children. This will mean that there is likely to be an in-year deficit of around £80,000 for the next financial year. <i>A governor questioned whether schools that have SEND pupils transition from their school, to Sutton, still receive the funding for those children.</i> Governors were advised that the school is a victim of its own success and that the new arrivals are coming from Witcham, Chatteris and Haddenham. Parents have aspirations to send their children to the school who are from outside its catchment. This is a significant change from the situation previously when the school was struggling to encourage parents to send their children to the school from within the catchment area. <i>A governor questioned how mental health week had gone.</i> Governors were advised that the week was a success. A variety of strategies for promoting well-being had been promoted and children are aware of mental health as an issue. The school had also organised collections for the local foodbank. <i>A governor questioned whether the school has a record of pupils who require further medical advice after an incident requiring first aid.</i> Governors were advised that such incidents were recorded and that none had occurred this year.
5	SEND Information Report and Sports Premium Report.
5.1	<u>SEND Information Report.</u> <i>Governors commented that the report was comprehensive and highlighted how the format of the report was very clear and accessible.</i> <i>A governor questioned as to whether there was a Peaceful Place and a Worry Monster in every class.</i> Governors were advised that these aspects of provision were signposted in each class.

	<i>A governor questioned as to whether the school was continuing with KS1 SATs</i> Governors were advised, that although not mandatory, that they were continuing with KS1 SATs, as the SATs were standardised and a helpful measure.
5.2	Decision: The Governing Board approved the SEND Information Report. <u>Sports Premium Report.</u> Governors were given an overview of the Sports Report, and it was noted for governors that the focus remains very much the same as the report reviewed previously. <i>A governor questioned as to whether the school was still doing 2 weeks holiday club.</i> Governors were advised that this should be amended to 4 days. <i>A governor commented that significant funds were being allocated to the Witchford Sports Partnership, and enquired as to the nature of the benefit to the school of such an investment.</i> Governors were advised that the school used the opportunities provided by the Witchford Sports Partnership to ensure that all children take part in some sporting activity during the year. Consequently, some 62% of children access extra-curricular clubs. Furthermore, the partnership offers a whole host of opportunities for children, including, cricket, tag rugby, pentathlon, tournaments for many kinds of activities, all of which are inclusive and often topical in nature. Additionally, that play leader training, transport to and from some events are also part of the offer from the Witchford Sports Partnership that are beneficial.
6	Draft Minutes from committees
6.1	<u>Teaching and Learning Committee meeting 22.01.24.</u> No comments were raised in relation to the minutes.
6.2	<u>Finance and Resources Committee meeting 5.2.24.</u> These minutes were not available for review as the initial draft was awaiting approval.
7	Policies.
7.1	<u>Receive the Policy Review Cycle.</u> The Policy Review Cycle was discussed in points 7.2, 7.3 ,7.7 and 9 below. A summary of the points noted is: • The current policy review schedule impacts upon the workload for both staff and the governing board.

	• Governors questioned the extent to which having such a large body of policies to review is meaningful in terms of impact upon the school. • Governors noted that it was important to have some policies in place and that those statutorily required policies are detailed on the DfE website.
7.2	<u>Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers procedure.</u> <i>A governor commented that it was the school's responsibility, in the case of an allegation being made against a 3rd party or supply teacher, or in the case of an incident occurring outside of the school premises, to take the lead in the procedure for managing such an allegation.</i> It was acknowledged that this was the case, and it would be made clear within the procedure. <i>A governor asked whether a child's allegation should be given more weighting, than that, say, of an adult.</i> Governors were advised that this could not be the case, as any investigation would need to be carried out in a fair and balanced way and to understand the truth about the incident in question. <i>A governor questioned whether it would make more sense for all policies which were inherently of an investigatory nature to be synthesised into one document that covered all types of scenarios.</i> Governors were advised that as the school is an LA school that they have to follow LA policies. Each policy is about the specific features of the issue that are the focus of the policy and it would be difficult to have one policy to cover all. <i>A governor questioned whether the school is required to adopt LA policies.</i> Governors were advised that they should follow the LA's policies and that specificity is needed to avoid ambiguity and to reflect the nuances of each situation. LA policies are helpful, and the school also receives policy advice from EPM, their HR provider. <i>A governor questioned as to whether policies can be changed.</i> Governors were advised that policies can be changed. It was commented further that there needs to be an awareness that policies have been created with legal frameworks in mind and union input and that it could be a risk to deviate from policies. <i>A governor questioned how it was possible to live and breathe policies if there are over 90 of them.</i>

It was suggested that it might be helpful to contact EPM with these comments.

A governor requested that for the next FGB the Headteacher compiles a list of volunteers and their roles within the school.

This was agreed.

Action: For the Headteacher to provide a list of volunteers and their roles for governors to review at the next FGB.

Decision: The Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers procedure was approved for adoption by the school.

7.3

Critical Incidents Management Plan Feb 2024.

A governor commented that rather than name people within the document, give roles instead to save time updating documents.

Governors were informed that there was a need to practise elements of the policy and some elements of the policy need re-phrasing such as 'safe location' should read 'safe location at the time of withdrawal'. Additionally, some elements of the 'Off-Site Evacuation Procedure' needed reviewing to ensure cohesion. Finally, that the effectiveness of practised elements (e.g. invacuation) would be reviewed.

A governor asked whether cyber incidents were included in the Critical Incidents Management Plan.

It was noted that this element should be in place in the policy.

The Headteacher commented that there seems to be an excessive number of policies that require updating and discussing.

Action: For the Headteacher to review the Critical Incidents Policy, updating it in line with governors' feedback and re-present to the FGB for their review.

7.4

Bullying and Harassment Policy.

A governor asked whether there should be reference made to the concern@ email address within the policy.

This was agreed.

A governor asked whether part of the policy was missing as at point 7.4 there is a reference to a 2.4, but no 2.4 exists within the policy.

It was agreed that any minor points that needed resolving should be communicated to the Headteacher to resolve.

A governor commented that the title of the policy should make it clear that it is a policy for employees.

This was agreed.

Decision: With the above changes as a proviso, the Bullying and Harassment Policy was agreed for adoption by the school.

7.5

Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (called the Assurance of Excellence Policy) has already been approved at a prior meeting (FGB 05.12.23).

7.6

Pay Policy.

The Pay Policy is still work in progress and was not presented for review at this meeting and will be deferred to an FGB later in the year.

Action: For the school's Pay Policy to be considered as an agenda item at the next FGB (see action 3.1).

7.7

Mental Health Policy.

A governor asked about the nature of support offered to staff for mental health issues.

Governors were advised that a number of approaches supported staff with regards to mental health issues:

- In the first instance, a conversation would take place between the member of staff concerned and senior leaders. During this conversation needs would be assessed, and signposting would take place for further support for that member of staff.
- The school has a good understanding of mental health issues and the message from training has been that a key approach to responding to needs is to acknowledge that mental health issues can affect anyone and are important.
- That the school's sickness policy, amongst other policies linked within the document, dovetails with, and supports, their approach to supporting staff.
- That it is important to have a policy which is specifically for mental health that gives opportunities for the school to respond appropriately to needs as they arise.

	<i>A governor commented that it would be helpful to signpost the employee assistance programme within the mental health policy.</i> There was then a discussion about the Policy Review Cycle. It was discussed with the governors that: • There are a large number of policies which need reviewing (over 90) and governors questioned the extent to which it was practicable to follow all the policies. • That the workload associated with preparing and reviewing these policies was not conducive to effective time management for both staff and governors. <i>A governor asked whether it was necessary to review all the policies on the policy review cycle.</i> Decision: The Mental Health Policy was agreed for adoption by the school. <i>A governor commented that there is DfE guidance in place that sets out the statutory policies, along with appropriate review cycles. They commented that it would be helpful to review the school's policy review schedule in the light of the DfE guidance and to make amendments.</i> Action: For the Governing Board and Headteacher to review the policy review cycle, making amendments to it, to recommend to the FGB.
8	Governor Actions.
8.1	<u>Review governor roles and responsibilities, appoint a training link governor.</u> Governors were informed that the role descriptions distributed have been created by reviewing information available on The Knowledge (mainly) and pulled together in one place and are hopefully easy for governors to refer to, without the need for extensive research elsewhere. A key point made was that the role descriptions should be seen as supportive and advisory in nature-with the aim that they provide guidance for each link role as to the types of questions and foci each role could have. They are not meant to replace governors' own knowledge of the school, nor their judgements about what they should be focussing on. For training it was requested that the clerk organise links for each governor, for the NGA website, so the NGA training platform can be accessed by all. It was also discussed that the skills audit available on the NGA website is helpful as outcomes from the audit link to recommended courses for each governor to take. a) Action: For the clerk to organise links for each governor so the NGA training platform can be accessed by all.

	b) Action: For the Clerk to circulate the NGA skills audit for review by the governing board and possible adoption.
8.2	<u>Governor election update.</u> - The Co-Chair (JW) has been re-elected for a further 4 years as parent governor. The governing board congratulated her on her re-appointment. - There will be staff governor elections held next half term to fill the vacancy created when the current staff governor's term of office expires.
8.3	<u>Governor Induction Policy.</u> <i>A governor commented that they had a copy of the Induction Policy for governors and that this would be shared with the clerk.</i> Action: For the clerk to include the Governor Induction Policy for review within the papers submitted at the next FGB.
8.4	<u>Governance Action Plan.</u> Governors were informed that the Co-Chairs and clerk will arrange a meeting to discuss the creation of a governance action plan to move governance forward at the school. Action: For the Co-Chairs and clerk to arrange a meeting to discuss the creation of a governance action plan.
8.5	<u>Governance Training Plan.</u> Governors noted that the development of a governor training plan will be part of the discussion about the governance action plan.
8.6	<u>Governance Business Plan.</u> <i>A governor suggested that it would be useful for governors to visit the school, with their role-brief, to review practice and to then feedback to the governing board on their findings. It was also commented that PSHE should be a role, linked to the RSE role.</i> Action: for the clerk to source a PSHE link governor role description and for this to be presented to governors for their review at the next FGB.
8.7	<u>Review of confirmations and declarations.</u>

	Governors were informed that there were still some DBS checks and confirmations outstanding. It was also agreed that the Foundation Governor would discuss the remaining Foundation Governor vacancy on the board, at the next AGM. Action: For the Co-Chairs to make contact with governors with outstanding DBS checks and confirmations to remind them to complete these at the earliest opportunity.
8.8	<u>Updates arising from training and CPD and training records on GovernorHub.</u> This was not covered during the meeting and will be deferred to the next FGB. Action: For the clerk to ensure that discussion of training and CPD and training records on GovernorHub is an agenda item at the next FGB.
8.9	<u>Agree meeting dates for future FGB meetings.</u> It was agreed that the Headteacher, Co-Chairs and clerk would circulate new dates for the Resources committee meetings and FGB meeting this term to ensure that the deadlines for SFVS submission (31.3.24) and budget submission to the LA (10.05.24) are met and due processes are followed.
9	Impact of the meeting in driving the school forward. The following meeting impacts were discussed: • The governors have reviewed the policy review schedule and that this would be a piece of work to carry forward. • That attendance continues to improve. • Governors were very pleased to hear that 62% of pupils are taking part in extra curricular activities. • Governors were very pleased to hear about how inclusive the school is. • The outgoing staff governor also commended the governors for their impact upon the improvements in the school over the last 4 years. The headteacher thanked the staff governor for her commitment to the school.
10	Schedule of future meetings. • F&R Committee meeting (SFVS focus); Monday 11th March 2024 at 6.00pm to be held virtually. • F&R Committee meeting (2024/25 budget review and recommendation to the FGB); Monday 25th April 2024 at 10.00 am to be held virtually. • FGB meeting (budget approval); Monday 29th April at 6.00pm to be held in person. • FGB meeting: Tuesday 21st May at 6.00pm, held in person. To be confirmed.

	• <i>The F&R Committee meeting planned for 9th May is cancelled.</i> • T&L Committee meeting; Monday 17th June 2024, to be held virtually. FGB meeting; Tuesday 9 th July 2024 at 6.00pm to be held in person.
11	AOB There were no points raised as any other business.
12	Meeting close. The meeting closed at 8.00pm.