



Governing Body of Sutton CofE VC Primary School

Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting	Date: Monday 29 th April 2024 Time: 6.00pm
Governors Present: Chris Shea (Co-chair, C Sh), Jessica Webb (Co-chair, JW), Mike Harrison (Headteacher), Jonathon Cooper (JC), Ryan Storey (RS), Hilary Sanderson (HS), Sarah Stant (SS), Chris Sanderson (CS) Associate Members Present: Ruth Garbutt (RG) Apologies: Peter Townsend, Rebecca Ayres, Kim Fleming Absent: Pheobe Greenwood Clerk: David Barker	

Action log.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29 TH APRIL 2024.			
AGENDA ITEM.	Action.	Owner.	Deadline.
3	Actions ongoing from previous action log dated 13 th February.		
	7.3 For the Headteacher to explore the options available to the school for alerting staff members of the need to carry out the planned invacuation procedure and to feed back to the Governing Board about these options.	HT.	FGB 9 th July 2024.
	7.7 a JW, RG and the clerk to meet to discuss the policy review cycle and to return to the FGB with suggestions.	JW, RG, the clerk	FGB 9 th July 2024.

	7.7 b For the school to upload appropriate policies, with changes to previous policy versions being highlighted, as indicated by the policy update schedule, on GovernorHub for Governors to review.	Headteacher.	ASAP.
	7.7 c For Governors to review policies uploaded on GovernorHub prior to meetings, giving their approval of policies as appropriate and identifying those that they would like to discuss further for inclusion in meeting agendas.	Governors.	ASAP.
6.2	For the clerk to ensure that the agenda item: 'budgetary risk identification and monitoring' be included on future F&R meeting agendas.	Clerk	F&R Committee meetings Sept 24 onwards.
10	For the clerk to send out proposed meeting dates for next academic year to the Headteacher, Co-Chairs and FGB for consideration.	Clerk	ASAP.

Meeting minutes.

AGENDA ITEM.	MINUTES.
0.	Opening prayers were led by HS.
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence/note of absenteeism.
	The Chairs welcomed governors to the meeting. Apologies were noted and accepted for Peter Townsend, Rebecca Ayres and Kim Fleming. Pheobe Greenwood was absent.
2.	Declarations of interest.
	No declarations of interest were made.
3.	Minutes of the last FGB (13.02.24) meeting, matters arising and actions.
	Review of actions. 3.1: EPM provide the Pay Policy and they have no new such policy at present, so the existing Pay Policy is still in operation.

7.2: There are 4 volunteers in total, 3 of whom support in the classroom, and one supports in the library and with reading.

A Governor wanted to know if the school would like more volunteers.

Governors were advised that the school is always hoping for more volunteers and there is another who has expressed an interest in volunteering at the school.

A Governor asked whether the volunteers had been DBS checked.

Governors were advised that this was the case and at appointment each volunteer is risk assessed. Volunteers also take part in the yearly safeguarding training that the school carries out.

7.3: Critical Incidents Policy. Governors were advised that this is in progress and that the school is waiting further information about the in-school system for alerting staff members to an incident. Currently the radio system in use is not a feasible option, for invacuation purposes, as these are often turned off/down by staff while they are teaching. The school perhaps needs an alarm system; however, this would come at a cost and there is little room for manoeuvre within the capital budget. The options are that the school upgrades the current radio system, or that the school installs an alarm system for the purposes of this policy.

Action: For the Headteacher to explore the options available to the school for alerting staff members of the need to carry out the planned invacuation procedure and to feed back to the Governing Board.

7.7: JW, RG and the clerk will be meeting to discuss the policy review cycle and to return to the FGB with suggestions bringing into their consideration the following: policy duplication, the DfE Guidance relating to statutory policies required and the frequency of reviews indicated within the school's policy update schedule. CS also volunteered to review the policy review schedule. Governors decided to use GovernorHub as a platform for the reviewing of policies:

- With changes to previous policies being highlighted for ease of reference.
- For Governors to review policies uploaded on GovernorHub prior to meetings, identifying those that they would like to discuss further for inclusion in meeting agendas.

Action: JW, RG and the clerk will be meeting to discuss the policy review cycle and to return to the FGB with suggestions.

Decision: Governors agreed to review policies uploaded onto GovernorHub.

8.1 a: Action completed and closed.

8.1 b: Action completed and closed.

8.3: Action completed and closed.

8.4: Action completed and closed.

8.6: Action completed and closed. SS will take on the role of link Governor for PSHE.

8.7: Action completed.

	8.8: Action completed and closed. Decision: The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 13th February 2024 were approved.
4.	The Headteacher's report. The Headteacher's report was uploaded onto GovernorHub for Governors to review prior to the meeting. Governors were advised of the following: <u>Admissions.</u> - Numbers continue to rise. - There are 19 children with high level needs, these also have a family worker. <i>A Governor wanted to know if the vulnerable children were joiners or were children already at the school.</i> Governors were advised that there were 2 joiners within this group. - There has been a steady flow of new admissions, 2 at the start of term, 1 this week and 2 next week. - The joiners are predominantly vulnerable children but are settling in well due to the good induction process and the school proactively seeking information from the children's prior school. - The steady rise in numbers is significant for the budget. If there are an additional 15 children attending the school, as measured between each census point (October), then the school could apply for growth funding. There is confidence that the school will reach this number (248 on pupil roll at the last census, currently there are 262 pupils on roll). <u>Staffing.</u> - There are 3 new members of staff, including a new member of the kitchen staff and a new TA. - Staff absence has been impacted upon by the prolonged periods of absence for some staff members, through no fault of theirs. - Attendance meetings have been carried out for those for whom it is appropriate, and briefings have taken place at meetings to highlight the importance of attendance. <u>Paintbox.</u> - Some Paintbox staff members will be leaving the provision. This will impact upon the number of appropriately qualified staff in the provision.

- The LA's EY's advisor has commented that the staffing ratios in Paintbox are not compliant with regulations. Currently there are 3 unqualified staff working in the provision.
- There are significant numbers of children joining the pre-school. This is due to the enhanced reputation of the school and the quality of staff working there.
- There is a need for more qualified staff in Paintbox. Existing staff can be trained if they choose otherwise their employment would be no longer tenable.
- Overall, the provision is moving in the right direction.

A Governor wanted to know if there were risks of staff refusing to work if they did not engage with the training.

Governors were advised that this is unlikely, and the school would employ those who would do the training and would seek to avoid closure.

Governors commented that the improvements to the environment have been noticed and were welcomed and thanked the school for the significant improvements in a short period of time.

Pupil Attendance.

- Pupil attendance is above LA and National averages.
- There is still a small group of children who are persistently absent. These are all vulnerable children who have siblings with attendance difficulties at secondary school.
- There has been a recent outbreak of Scarlet Fever which is impacting on many schools.

A Governor wanted to know if achievement in phonics was in line with expectations since introducing Little Wandle.

Governors were advised:

- That achievement is currently ahead of expectations, and they are hoping for 90%+ achieving the standard by the end of Y1.
- Improvements have been significant, supported by the Priority Area Funding.
- Staff are more engaged.
- Systems are in place to ensure consistency and coverage.
- The assessment system highlights pupils with areas of need and rapid interventions take place in these instances.

A Governor wanted to know whether children could maintain the progress in class after these intensive inputs.

	Governors were advised that this was the case, with class teachers regularly assessing the pupils to identify and address gaps. Absence can have a significant impact on achievement in phonics. Governors commented on the usefulness of the Headteacher's Newsletter in promoting attendance. <i>A Governor wanted to know if Rainbow learning had been revised.</i> Governors were advised that this was the case, it is planned and shared with TAs who use it to update Tapestry. <i>A Governor questioned what was meant by AI learning in writing.</i> Governors were advised that this refers to the use of AI tools, e.g. ChatGPT to change or create texts. This is of great use to children who benefit from the inclusion of visual elements to a text. <i>A Governor questioned whether the school had been informed of, and will be putting into practice, the new DfE guidance for attendance that starts in August of this year.</i> Governors were advised that staff are being trained and software will be updated to reflect the coding guidance and there will be tighter arrangements in place for reporting attendance to the LA. <u>Behaviour.</u> • There had been an increase in racist incidents taking place on online platforms e.g. WhatsApp, and other chat platforms. • These incidents are due to the naivety of the children who are repeating vocabulary they have heard outside of the school. <i>A Governor wanted to know if anything specific had triggered these incidents.</i> Governors were advised that there did not seem to be anything specific beyond children being in the park and accessing chat platforms.
5.	Safeguarding. A Safeguarding report had been included in the Headteacher's report which was uploaded onto GovernorHub for Governors to review prior to the meeting. Governors were advised that a number of Early Help Assessments have been submitted. In previous years these cases would have merited a Section 17 assessment and been allocated a social worker. <i>A Governor wanted to know if the family support HLTA is back at the school.</i>

	Governors were advised that this was so, however the HLTA's role is currently being discussed. The school safeguarding team are holding weekly safeguarding meetings. Pupil voice activities show that they are very happy at the school, and all could say who a trusted adult was that they could speak to if they had a concern. The link governor for safeguarding gave a verbal update of the findings of a monitoring visit recently carried out, noting for governors: That the SCR is impressive. Adults and children all commented that they felt safe at the school and in class. There is a second visit being planned. There were some concerns expressed, by children, of the poor behaviour from some children. In terms of site security, there was some concern about parental access to areas of the school e.g. classrooms at the beginning of the school day. The Headteacher commented that he is speaking to parents about this issue.
6.	Finance The budgets for 2023-24 and 2024-25 were uploaded onto GovernorHub for Governors to review prior to the meeting. <u>6.1 Budget for 2023-24 update.</u> Governors were advised of the following: • That revenue generated from the Headteacher's work with the Diocese has contributed to a greater carry-forward than would otherwise have been the case for the financial year ending 23/24. • The Diocese has requested that the Headteacher continue his consultancy work with them. This would have important implications for the budget for 24/25 bearing in mind the numbers of children joining the school with needs. • That 40% of the Headteacher's salary is paid for through his work with the Diocese. • There is currently leadership capacity within the school to sustain the levels of his work with the Diocese. • The Diocese work continues to support the school budget and also enhances the reputation of the school. <i>A Governor wanted to know when his work with the Diocese would cease.</i>

Governors were advised that his work would stop when school funding changes. The ERB is a potential way forward in that the funding this generates could support staff retention and bring additional capacity to the school.

A Governor wanted to know the extent to which it mattered that a deficit is set.

Governors were advised that an in-year deficit can be sustained but an end of year deficit would not be accepted.

6.2 Draft Budget for 2024-25 for approval.

- There is a carry-forward of some £34,000 from the end of the financial year 23/24 into this financial year, but an in-year deficit of some £4,000, so there should be some £30,000 left at the end of the year.
- These figures do not yet include the new census figures which could impact on the budget for the following year.
- The budget for 24/25 is manageable but dependent upon the Headteacher's consultancy work.
- Paintbox is a concern in that previous practices were questionable for example, the charging of a small fee for parents to have their child registered, sessions not being for the full entitlement meaning parents had to seek additional hours.

A Governor wanted to know if the timings of sessions would be changed.

Governors were informed that this would be the case.

A Governor asked if there could be a charge for consumables made to parents using Paintbox.

Governors were advised that this is the case, and a full charging system will be in place by September, although costing this is a challenge as there is no prior data available upon which costings can be based.

A Governor wanted to know if the deficits for 2025/26 and 2026/27 should be discussed.

Governors were advised that forecasting is based on existing pupil numbers and anticipated pay rises. This means that income stays the same, but costs increase. Consequently, it is difficult to accurately budget for the medium term. Revenue is dependent upon Government Policy and budget allocations might increase in the future.

A Governor wanted to know if the apprenticeship levy could be used to support cost effective recruitment, especially with regards to recruitment for Paintbox.

Governors were advised that this could help but that there may be capacity issues. It could work for the Paintbox and this would be something the Headteacher will look into.

A Governor wanted to know how the gap between this budget and future budgets could be bridged.

Governors discussed the need for strategies being in place to manage the risks within the budget and forecasts. Risks such as, a reliance on the Diocese income. The Headteacher advised that the increasing pupil numbers will bring additional funds into the school in the future.

Governors wanted to discuss what would happen if the worst happened and income did not increase, as anticipated, in future years. For example, if pupil numbers do rise, but other funding streams are reduced.

Governors discussed a variety of options:

- Decreasing class numbers. This was felt to not be an option.
- Members of the leadership team return to class.

Governors discussed reasons as to why the school look to the future positively:

- The expanding size of the village.
- The enhanced reputation of the school.
- The likelihood of the school having an ERB.

Decision: The Draft Budget for 2024/25 was approved by the Board.

Decision: The Board decided to have a standing agenda item for the F&R Committee to be the identification, and monitoring of, budgetary risks.

Action: For the clerk to ensure that the agenda item: 'budgetary risk identification and monitoring' be included on future F&R meeting agendas, for reporting back to the FGB.

6.3 Staffing and class structure 2024/25.

The overview of the class and staffing structure was uploaded onto GovernorHub for governors to preview ahead of the meeting.

	<i>A Governor wanted to know why it was that pupil numbers appear to have reduced over time.</i> Governors were advised that the document is now over a month old and there are currently 260 pupils in the school. The Headteacher proposed a Y4/Y5 class mix as all other classes are close to capacity. <i>A Governor wanted to know if this mix would impact on the curriculum.</i> Governors were advised that there would be an impact but currently there seems to be little other choice. <i>A Governor wanted to know what the cost of an additional class with a teacher and TA would be, with on costs.</i> Governors were advised that this would likely be in the region of £100,000, although by employing an ECT these costs could be reduced to around £70,000. In either case, the budget will be unable to support this level of staffing. A Governor commented that the mix of Y4 and Y5 seems balanced in terms of numbers. Governors were further advised that if the trajectory in growth of pupil numbers continues at the present rate, then the school will be requesting growth funding.
7.	Receive draft minutes and feedback from committees. Minutes of the committee meetings were uploaded onto GovernorHub for governors to review. No questions were asked, or comments made.
8.	School Development. Governors had been given an SDP update at the T&L Committee meeting in January and the FGB in February. There will be further updates provided at the next FGB.
9.	Policies. Policies were uploaded onto GovernorHub prior to the meeting for Governors to preview. • Policy Review Cycle: Governors agreed to review the policy review cycle as noted above. The following policies were unanimously approved by the Board for adoption and use by the school. • Governor allowances. • Education of children who have or have had a social worker. This policy requires the link governor for Vulnerable groups to be named within the policy. • Disciplinary procedures relating to misconduct. • Managing serial unreasonable complaints. • Class mixing

	- Collective worship: A Governor wanted to know whether children do shape and deliver Collective Worship. Governors were advised that this is informally done, and the aim is to have worship leads. - Governor Induction Policy. It was agreed that a new skills audit would be sent out in September to all governors. The following policy was not approved and will be deferred to the next FGB meeting. - Grievance. This needs consideration at the next meeting as the policy requires reviewing to ensure it aligns with EPM's policy/procedures.
10.	Governor Actions. Key points arising from this part of the meeting were: - Some governors attended an ERB briefing meeting. - There has been no appointment to replace the staff governor whose term of office has expired. The Headteacher will speak to staff and report back at the next FGB. - Link Governor Monitoring visits were discussed, with the school hoping to increase the subject link visits so they occur termly. Action: For the clerk to send out proposed meeting dates for next academic year to the Headteacher, Co-Chairs and FGB for consideration. - HS has been promoting the Governor role at the local PCC meetings. - CS advised the Board that this will be his final year as governors at the school and that his term will end on 30th September 2024.
11.	Impact of the meeting To what extent have we: - Developed/reinforced the vision and strategy for the school? <i>The inclusive nature of the school has been emphasised throughout and governors have been involved in discussions regarding Paintbox and a potential ERB.</i> - Had oversight of, and input to, the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent? <i>There has been an extensive discussion about the school's budget and a standing agenda item has been created for the F&R Committee enabling it, and the Board, to have greater oversight of budgetary risks.</i>

	Held the school leaders to account to ensure that every pupil has the best possible education? <i>Governors have asked school leaders about the progress of phonics teaching in the school, reviewing data and evaluating the school's phonics development work in the light of intended outcomes.</i>
12.	Schedule of future meetings.
	F&R Committee meeting: 9 th May 6.00pm, virtual. T&L Committee meeting: 17 th June 6.00pm, virtual. FGB: 9 th July 6.00pm, in-person.
13.	AOB
	The Headteacher has been invited to the Bishops Garden Party and requested that a governor be present. The Headteacher will email governors with dates and times.