

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Sutton-on-the-Forest CE VC Primary School on Wednesday 14 November 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present: Prof H Hall (Chair), Mr C Henderson, Mrs J Fineran, Mrs V Gale, Mrs H Pye (Headteacher), Mrs H Morris, Mr G Redfern

In attendance: Mrs A Instone, Clerk

Core functions of a Governing Body:

- a) ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction***
- b) holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff***
- c) overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent***

The meeting was not quorate.

Minute no

Gov 1 Prayer

The meeting opened with the School Prayer.

Gov 2 Appointment of Co-opted Governor – Mr G Redfern

This item was deferred until the meeting became quorate.

Gov 3 Apologies for absence, consents and declarations of interest and reminders regarding confidentiality and gifts and hospitality

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Williams and Mrs Craig. Apologies for lateness had been received from Mrs Gale and Mrs Fineran.

There were no declarations of interest and no gifts or hospitality had been received.

Those present were reminded of the need to maintain confidentiality at all times.

Gov 4 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated 3 October 2018

This item was deferred until the meeting become quorate.

Gov 5 Matters arising from the minutes and from the Action Plan

Minutes

Mrs Gale joined the meeting at 6.12 pm.

With regard to Minute Gov 4, it was agreed that the Headteacher would develop a timetable for the rotation of meetings around the different classrooms and the presentations by the relevant staff members.

Mrs Morris joined the meeting at 6.20 pm, the meeting became quorate and the agenda reverted to the published order.

Gov 6 Appointment of Co-opted Governor – Mr G Redfern

The Chair stated that Mr Redfern had a background in civil engineering, premises management and health and safety issues and attention was drawn to the resume which had been provided by him and distributed with the agenda and supporting papers. The Chair recommended that he be appointed as a Co-opted Governor with responsibility for health and safety and premises. Comments were invited and a number of views were expressed. Some discussion followed and it was agreed that Mr Redfern should become a Co-opted Governor with immediate effect.

Gov 7 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated 3 October 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Mrs Fineran joined the meeting at 6.35 pm.

Gov 5 continued Matters arising from the minutes and from the Action Plan

Action Plan

Item 1 – it was agreed that presentations by the School Council would take place during the business meetings and that the Headteacher would produce a suitable timetable. She pointed out that there also existed a Worship Council whose members would be willing to give a presentation on request

Item 2 – to be removed

Item 3 – completed

Item 4 – the Chair undertook to remind Mrs Williams that the matter remained outstanding

Item 6 – the Chair reported that he had sourced contact details for a potential new Governor, who had been suggested by the Clerk, and that he intended to make contact with him

Items 9 and 10 – to be removed

Item 11 – those present were invited to attend a walkaround of the school on 15 November 2018

Mr Redfern joined the meeting at 6.50 pm

Item 12 – it was reported that the information provided by the Bursar had been insufficient and that she would be requested to supply electronic copies of the contracts in order that they could be reviewed prior to the next meeting of the Governing Body when the focus would be resources

and finance. Mrs Morris volunteered to assist the Chair in reviewing the contracts

Item 13 – completed. The Headteacher stated that a successful meeting had been held with the pre-school staff and that it was hoped to build really positive links with them. She added that, each week, the Rising 5s would attend a structured session in the school Hall in order to prepare them for school and that the pupils had been invited to have Christmas lunch in school with some of the parents and to stay and watch the Christmas Play. Mrs Fineran added that a Teddy Bears' Picnic Party was also being planned. The Chair commented that, at the end of the meeting with the pre-school staff, it had been agreed that both the school and the pre-school would consider and share with each other what each wanted from an increased collaborative partnership. He also expressed optimism with regard to future collaborative possibilities.

There were no other matters arising from the minutes or from the Action Plan.

Gov 8 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair stated that:

- a) with regard to the recruitment of new Governors, it was important to have a Link Governor with the skills of Mr Redfern, particularly in view of the fact that there was no longer a Committee structure and a Resources Committee with responsibility for both health and safety and school premises
- b) given the Governing Body's need for close monitoring of the budget, it may be prudent to consider co-opting additional Governors with different skills around resources
- c) together with the Headteacher, he had met with the School Business Manager, Mrs D Pitt, and they had discussed the minimum funding guarantee and possible 'top slicing' of the budget
- d) it would be necessary to review the finance and resource monitoring processes. Mr Henderson was requested to review the school's Budget Management Policy and they agreed to meet in order to consider how to adapt the North Yorkshire County Council model document
- e) a financial control checklist was available to assist with compilation of the SFVS documentation
- f) the school would be allocated a new School Business Manager
- g) he was drawing up a timetable for the reviewing of policies

- h) the current Clerk, Mrs Instone, was unable to commit to the increased number of Governing Body meetings and a new Clerk had been sourced and was likely to commence in January 2019
- i) all members of the Governing Body had been issued with a school based e-mail address and were reminded to use it for school business. It was noted that Mr Redfern would be issued with the same
- j) the interest earned from the gift from Miss Mitchell was £30,000 and he informed that it was to be used to deliver the Church mission for five to eleven year olds in Sutton and Hubby. It was noted that advice would be sought from those who had had earlier involvement in the bequest.

Gov 9 Headteacher updates

The Headteacher stated that one of the Teaching Assistants would be leaving to take up a position elsewhere. She added that, as a result of the opportunity provided by her resignation, she had appointed two new Teaching Assistants and re-organised the spread of cover in classes which had enabled her to secure support for all of the pupils.

She went on to inform that confirmation was awaited with regard to some new pupils joining the school.

Mrs Gale challenged the Headteacher with regard to feedback from the toddler session and she responded that those who had attended had enjoyed it and added that, in future, it would be held on a different day in order not to conflict with a neighbouring school. She advised that some community events would be offered after Christmas.

Questions were invited but there were none.

Gov 10 Order of business

The order of business was agreed as presented.

Gov 11 Presentation on monitoring

The Headteacher tabled a pack of information which related to monitoring in school and explained that it was carried out in order to provide a good self evaluation of how the pupils were achieving and how the staff were performing. She gave a brief overview of the various pro formas which had been included in the documentation.

The Chair questioned whether or not the Headteacher saw evidence of change in the quality of the teaching of the staff or the feedback that they gave as a result of the learning walks and book scrutinies. She responded that she had commenced the monitoring at Easter 2018 and

felt that the staff were more informed and were moving forward. Mrs Fineran commented that the feedback given was very specific and that it had a whole school approach in mind and she quoted, as an example, the way in which the staff were able to make better use of the working walls which were now the same in each classroom.

The Headteacher went on to state that, in respect of data, the staff inputted the statistics, realistically and accurately, at the end of each half term, reports were produced and pupil progress meetings were subsequently held to review the data as it related to each pupil in order that they could reach their full potential. She added that she hoped to introduce pupil interviews with the Year 6 pupils with a view to providing a full picture. She then explained the concept of the Fischer Family Trust.

It was noted that moderation took place within both the school and the cluster and that it was hoped to attend some Local Authority moderation meetings.

Mr Henderson asked what information would be reported back to all members of the Governing Body and the Headteacher agreed to supply a data summary on a half termly basis.

Mrs Gale challenged the Headteacher with regard to the high level of pupils in the 'working towards' category contained within the data which had been distributed with the agenda and the Headteacher responded that there were some pupils in Year 3 who were giving cause for concern. **In response to a further question from Mrs Gale**, she confirmed that those pupils were already receiving the necessary interventions.

The Chair questioned how much more responsive the new approach enabled the staff to be and Mrs Fineran stated that, where pupils required additional support, a practical, proactive discussion took place in order to determine how that support could be provided. **He went on to ask** whether or not it better informed the staff's discussions with parents and Mrs Fineran commented that once a plan had been discussed with another person, it was very clear and the staff were accountable for it.

The Headteacher informed that, at the January 2019 training day, there would be a focus on the Teaching Assistants and their roles in order to ensure that they were not passive but fully participating in the classroom.

She went on to state that school life centred on ensuring that the pupils also experienced the richness of the curriculum during the activities which took place in the afternoon sessions.

Mr Henderson commented that he felt that, in the past, members of the Governing Body had not been as 'forensic' as they should have been. The Headteacher stated that she would provide those present with some good questions relating to data and forward some YouTube videos concerning the Fischer Family Trust. The Chair added that the DfE publication

entitled 'Understanding Your Data' contained suggestions across the board with regard to being forensic as a Governing Body and he undertook to distribute it, together with two types of sample questions and he encouraged all members of the Governing Body to challenge the Headteacher in respect of the standards which the pupils were achieving in school. He went on to state that he felt that members of the Governing Body should produce, in writing, a vision which indicated that all of the pupils should be performing above the national average.

Gov 12 SIAMS Inspection – oral presentation

The Headteacher stated that she anticipated that the school would undergo a SIAMS Inspection in March 2019 and she tabled a document which gave details of the new Inspection framework. She pointed out that:

- a) the expected standards had been raised
- b) the Inspection would be very, very thorough and based on the Inspection question shown on the front page of the document
- c) she was currently drawing up a self evaluation document based on the seven strands
- d) the SIAMS Inspectors would wish to meet with members of the Governing Body during the Inspection
- e) the York Diocese offered free training.

The Chair stated that, because of the involvement of members of the Governing Body in the SIAMS Inspection, the matter would be re-visited nearer to the estimated date of Inspection.

Gov 13 Approval of policies:

- a) Health and Safety

The Chair commented on the changes which he had made to the Policy which gave increased responsibility to himself and Mr Redfern in terms of ensuring that certain actions were carried out.

The Policy was approved, subject to the amendment of the names of Service providers, as necessary

- b) School Information Policy

The Policy was approved, subject to amendment of the date of the annual review

c) Governor Allowances Policy

Some discussion took place and it was agreed that:

- i) the cost of care arrangements would be investigated
- ii) the section relating to public transport costs would include a phrase which indicated that 'advanced fare rates should be utilised where possible'
- iii) mileage would be paid at a rate of 45p per mile
- iv) the Policy would be brought back to a future meeting for final approval

d) Capability Policy

The Policy was approved without comment

e) Charging Remissions Policy

The Policy was approved without comment

f) Anti Bullying Policy

Mrs Fineran suggested that 'transphobic' should be included amongst the list of different forms of bullying and the Headteacher undertook to clarify the matter. Subject to that potential amendment, the Policy was approved

g) Attendance Policy

The Policy was approved without comment

h) Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

The Policy was approved without comment

i) Admissions Policy

The Policy was approved without comment.

Gov 14 Feedback from Governor visits

The Chair stated that he had attended:

- a) the Harvest Festival where the performance had been brilliant and the pupils had been upbeat and he commended both the pupils and staff

- b) the Remembrance Assembly which had been led by the Year 5 and 6 pupils. He added that the pupils had been engaged with the assembly and understood the purpose of it at an age appropriate level for each class.

It was noted that he would be making a further visit into school the following day.

The Headteacher undertook to distribute an e-mail inviting members of the Governing Body into school for monitoring visits.

Gov 15 Feedback from Governor training

Mrs Morris stated that she would produce and distribute a report of the monitoring training course which she had attended. Those present were encouraged to lodge any notes from training sessions in the file provided for that purpose.

The Chair stated that he had attended a useful training session entitled 'Chairing the Governing Board' and drew attention to one aspect of the course which had related to succession planning. He added that whilst he was willing to be nominated as Chair beyond the end of his current term of office, succession planning would need to be given consideration in due course.

He went on to state that it would also be necessary to undertake a skills audit during one of the business meetings in order to ensure that there was an adequate spread of skills across the Governing Body.

Gov 16 Dates of future meetings

It was agreed that the additional Governing Body meetings would take place on:

- a) 5 December 2018, with a finance focus
- b) 21 February 2019 and not 20 February 2019 as suggested
- c) 5 June 2019.

Gov 17 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

Gov 18 Any other business previously notified to the Clerk

Attention was drawn to recent instances where vehicles had driven across the playground at inappropriate times. The Headteacher undertook to raise the matter with those concerned.

Mrs Gale questioned the publication of Governor attendances at meetings on the school website and the Chair undertook to follow up the matter.

Gov 19 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5 December 2018 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.