

**SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND**  
**VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**GENERAL BUSINESS**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019 at 6.00 pm**

*Small school, big heart, aiming higher together*

*Our vision is to “value everyone” to enable them to develop curiosity, ignite a love of learning, discover talents and reach their full potential in a caring and secure environment.*

*This vision is rooted in our Christian values of **respect, compassion, friendship and perseverance** that are at the heart of our school.*

*1 Peter 3.8: ‘...be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.’*  
*Proverbs 22:6: ‘Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.’*

**Core Functions of a Governing Body:**

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

**PRESENT:** Prof H Hall (Chair), Mrs H Pye (Headteacher), Mrs D Craig, Mrs T Comfort, Mrs J Fineran, Mrs H Morris, Mr G Redfern, Mrs A Williams

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Christine Knights (Clerk), Elva Geaney

Minute No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Gov 1 Prayer**

The meeting opened with the School Prayer.

**Gov 2 Apologies for absence, consents and declarations of interest.  
Reminders regarding confidentiality, gifts and hospitality.**

No apologies for absence had been received.

Governors were reminded of the need for confidentiality, and for any gifts or hospitality to be declared.

**Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and also the confidential minute were agreed and signed as a correct record. The signed copies were passed to the Headteacher to be filed in school.

#### **Gov 4 Matters arising from the minutes and Action Plan dated 23.1.19.**

##### **Minutes**

##### **Page 5**

- The fire doors have now been fitted with quick release mechanisms.
- The drainage issue is ongoing. Mr Redfern will contact NYCC to establish when/how this will be resolved. Mrs Berthinussen is also pursuing this matter.
- The fence on the right (on leaving the school) needs to be removed on the school side. The Chair will discuss this with the neighbours.

##### **Action Plan**

- Item 1 – Governors are invited to have their photographs taken in school on the afternoon of 22<sup>nd</sup> May
- Item 2 – Clerk sends approved minutes for uploading on website by LB
- Item 5 – on agenda
- Item 7 – on agenda
- Item 9 – Completed. External lights have been adjusted to stay on longer and lamps have been replaced as needed.
- Item 11 – Governors have not yet signed up for the Safeguarding updates. Headteacher to send out link again.
- Item 12 – linked with agenda item on marketing strategy
- Item 13 – on agenda
- Item 14 – RE Link Governor attends school regularly.
- Item 17 – Single Equalities policy deferred until later in the term
- Item 18 – update in Item 1
- Item 19 – pending. Mr Redfern to discuss with a potential candidate.
- Item 21 – completed
- Items 22 and 23 – linked with marketing strategy agenda item in this agenda
- Item 24 – completed
- Item 25 – on agenda
- Item 27 – completed
- Item 28 – completed

#### **Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks**

- a) The Chair welcomed Mrs Comfort to the meeting and thanked her for taking on the role of Governor.
- b) The Chair then informed Governors, with regret, that Mrs Williams had decided to stand down from the Governing Body at the end of the summer term. However as she was willing to continue until then, Mrs Williams was re-elected unanimously as a Co-opted Governor, backdated to 7<sup>th</sup> May. The Chair thanked Mrs Williams for her support and her willingness to continue for the present time.
- c) The Chair thanked the Headteacher and the team, and all Governors who participated, for all the hard work involved in achieving a successful report from the SIAMS inspection. Governors joined the Chair in congratulating the Headteacher and the team in school. The Headteacher emphasised that the

highlights of the report were the comments on the school's caring and inclusive approach.

d) Further good news was that the Business Manager's latest reports indicated that the school is no longer operating in deficit. The Chair thanked the Headteacher and the Business Manager for tackling this and establishing an effective system of budget management and monitoring. Governors thanked the Chair for his detailed review of contracts, which had also made a valuable contribution.

e) FOSS were thanked for arranging a "bags to school" collection which raised £220.

f) Renewal of Mrs Morris' term of office had now been approved by the Diocese and the Chair thanked her for her past service and her willingness to continue as a Foundation Governor with the school.

g) The Chair of the Parish Council, Mr Shearman, had been in contact to discuss views on the school sign as some members of the Parish Council were concerned about the design. The Chair outlined the following in his response: that the Governors have given approval for the Headteacher to work with an external design company to create a design for a school sign which reflects the school's image and is compliant with any necessary planning requirements; the school has been informed that the proposed sign does require advertising consent planning permission and an application will be made after the Easter Break; that the final design may be subject to changes required by the planning department; and that Governors will be asked to formally approve the design on 8<sup>th</sup> May (see item Gov 14).

h) The Chair thanked all Governors and parents who had been involved in the Maintenance Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, and Mr Redfern for organising the day.

i) The Chair had received notification of the need for Governors to undertake training on the new complaints process, and encouraged Governors to consider joining the session on 22<sup>nd</sup> May at Northallerton which he will be attending. Governors wishing to attend should contact Mrs Berthinussen.

j) The new Governor Handbook has been circulated by the Clerk.

#### **Gov 6 Headteacher updates**

Updates were included in the Headteacher's report (item Gov 8)

#### **Gov 7 Order of business**

It was agreed that Item Gov 12 would be taken at 6.30 when Mrs Geaney arrived.

#### **Gov 12 Marketing**

a) The Chair had invited Mrs Geaney to share her professional expertise with Governors to support their work towards defining a clear strategy to market

the school with the ultimate objective of attracting 13 pupils to join the school each year.

b) During the discussion Mrs Geaney outlined key elements of defining a marketing strategy:

- Consider the relative effectiveness of different marketing channels
- Define who might be considering the school and how their decision is made. Factors could be: reputation; geography; OFSTED reports; the professionalism of the website; contacts with school staff; experience of visiting the school; recommendations from friends and family; attending Treetops; attending Open Days.
- Identify triggers for people to change schools.
- If the choice, either to join at reception stage or later, is influenced by recommendations from friends and family, identify how to encourage parents with children at the school already to be advocates for the school
- Identify advocates for the school to build relationships with pre-school providers
- Identify what makes the school different and ensure that these key factors are emphasised. Parents could be attracted by: the grounds; small school; size of school hall; small class sizes; supportive families; thriving fundraising group; inclusive approach.
- Organise activities to attract the people who might be considering the school to come to events there.
- Consider Facebook

c) Developing links with nurseries and pre-schools

Governors identified the need to forge links with local nurseries and pre-schools at a personal level eg Headteacher/staff visits, and provide leaflets to publicise Open Days. Governors believed that relationships had the biggest impact in efforts to spread information about the school. There was concern amongst Governors about the time involved in building personal relationships.

Governors also mentioned that geography had to be taken into consideration.

There were possibilities for opening up school premises for use by pre-schools, having toddler sessions in school, offering forest school sessions or craft sessions for pre-schoolers and older children during holidays, sharing use of the school grounds.

Mrs Geaney recommended finding schools where effective links with pre-schools had been achieved to establish how to approach this. Mrs Geaney suggested that Governors might consider their ideas in detail, using the analytical approaches outlined above. The Chair emphasised that the ideas need to be brought together in a clear plan.

d) The importance of social media and the Internet

It was noted that the school does not appear on internet searches for local schools. The Chair will seek to resolve this issue with advice from a contact who specialises in this area.

The Chair put forward the suggestion of grouping the key information for parents interested in bringing their children to the school under one tab on the school website.

Mrs Geaney supported the suggestion that a school Facebook page would be useful. The Headteacher agreed to take this forward.

e) Researching what attracts parents to the school

A Governor suggested surveying new parents to find out what attracted them to the school. Mrs Geaney recommended SurveyMonkey for this purpose.

f) Opening up the school for community days

To build familiarity with the school facilities, particularly the grounds and the large school hall, the school could be opening up to offer refreshments/parking for local events eg Sutton 10K, Sutton and Huby Show, Open Gardens events.

g) Spreading news

Mrs Williams would continue to send items to the Easingwold Advertiser. It is important to continue to tell the good news stories about the school.

The Chair would include the positive news about the improved budget position in his letter to parents at the end of term, emphasising this is a further step in the journey the school is taking.

h) The Headteacher and Chair would pull together a marketing plan on the basis of Mrs Geaney's input and the discussions.

The Chair thanked Mrs Geaney for joining the meeting and her very helpful input. Mrs Geaney then left the meeting.

## **Gov 8 Headteacher's Report and SIAMS**

a) The Headteacher had circulated the SIAMS report to Governors. She emphasised that the school aims to keep building strength in the factors

inspected under SIAMS. Governors congratulated the Headteacher and staff on the excellent results.

- b) The school is no longer operating in deficit. The Headteacher emphasised however that it is still crucial to be smart financially.
- c) There will be 12 children, and possibly 2 or 3 others too, joining the school in September, including siblings and new families. There is the option of using the spare classrooms more effectively to support learning in Class One.
- d) There is a strong staff of teachers and support staff throughout the school.
- e) Fluidity between year groups is a strength of the school. It is clear that children in reception, year 1 and year 2 are reaping the rewards.
- f) The new grounds maintenance team are highly effective.
- g) The Headteacher will remind families, through her newsletter, that SATS are a test of the school not the children. The results of year 6 “mocks” have been very positive.

#### **Gov 9 SEND report**

The Headteacher reported that Mrs Fineran would be the new SENCO lead, with an extra half a day a week for the role. Mrs Fineran would be attending the appropriate training course. Governors thanked Mrs Fineran.

#### **Gov 10 Curriculum matters (Rolls Royce etc)**

- a) The team have mapped out a 2-year rolling programme of topics, including how the outdoor space would be used to support learning.
- b) The need for a more consistent approach had been identified for teaching and learning in English, and an online resource had been selected to support this. Writing is the priority focus.
- c) The £1k funding had been received from Rolls Royce. The entry into the next stage of the competition has been submitted, and if this is successful, the school will be informed by 19<sup>th</sup> July.
- d) The school had received £2k capital funding from the sugar tax to be used to support gardening and food.

#### **Gov 11 Subject leader report: Maths**

- a) Mrs Fineran described the concept of Maths Mastery which had been introduced in education in 2014. The aim is to make maths achievable for all, to ensure learning is deep and sustainable, and there is continuous building, through small steps, on previous learning. Mrs Fineran provided handouts to demonstrate the approach to Governors.

b) The White Rose Maths Scheme is used consistently throughout the school, from year 1 to year 6.

c) Learning is still differentiated in the independent work, even though the approach is to take the children through the steps together. If children need extra help, individual attention is provided. Open ended investigation is used with children who need greater challenge.

d) The children make use of a variety of concrete apparatus in problem-solving, and are able to choose the approach that suits the way their own minds work.

d) There is greater emphasis on reasoning and problem solving. More reading and comprehension skills are also involved. Often children who find maths easy, still find the reasoning and problem solving challenging. Year 6 children are demonstrating improved reasoning and problem-solving, and improved reading and comprehension, in comparison with the beginning of this academic year.

e) In the next academic year “number talk” will be used. Mrs Fineran is trialling this currently. Number talk is purely mental maths and involves talking more about maths. The children do the maths in their heads and then talk through their ways of getting to their answer. This is just one small part of a lesson but talking through their approaches inspires children to look at problems differently and also allows them to identify where errors happen.

f) Maths Mastery has a huge impact on children’s confidence and in the understanding of maths because of the very small steps involved in building up the learning. The children do not develop a fear of maths.

g) Maths Mastery also helps the teacher to identify exactly where children need specific help, because of the small steps.

### **Gov 13 Governing Body Skills Audit**

a) The Chair will circulate both the NGA and the NYCC proformas for Governors to complete as each takes a different approach to a skills audit. Together, these questionnaires will identify gaps in expertise on the Governing Body.

b) The Chair requested that Governors complete the questionnaires and return them to him before the next Governing Body meeting.

### **Gov 14 Governors’ in principle approval of school sign**

Governors agreed in principle for the Headteacher to go ahead with the school sign.

### **Gov 15 Feedback from Governor visits**

- a) There had been no Governor visit since the last Governing Body meeting.
- b) Mr Redfern updated Governors on the situation with the electrics upgrade. Discussions with NYCC had lacked clarity therefore both Mr Redfern and the Chair would pursue further information through the relevant contacts
- c) The Headteacher confirmed that, despite recent heavy rain, there had been no further leaks.

### **Gov 16 Governor training**

The Clerk informed Governors that the Diocese Education Conference would take place on 20<sup>th</sup> June at York Racecourse and the NYCC School Improvement Network meetings for Governors would take place on 6<sup>th</sup> June in Northallerton and 11<sup>th</sup> June in Harrogate.

Governors were requested to contact Mrs B Berthinussen if they are interested in attending.

### **Gov 17 Election of Deputy Chair of Governors.**

The Chair reported that the Governing Body needed to elect a new Vice Chair at the next meeting. The role involves supporting the Chair and standing in for the Chair in his absence.

The Chair asked Governors to consider taking on the role and invited anyone interested to contact him.

### **Gov 18 Policies: Single Equalities Policy**

This policy would be considered at a later meeting.

### **Gov 19 Correspondence**

There had been no correspondence.

### **Gov 20 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk**

There was no other business to discuss.

### **Gov 21 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June at 6.00pm.

The Chair noted that he would not be available on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July, which is currently the date of the last meeting of the school year.

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm.