

SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL
FOCUS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
DRAFT MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 23rd 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 J Fineran, Mrs V Gale, Mr G Redfern, Mrs T Comfort, Mr M Graham, Mr R Fahy

IN ATTENDANCE: Christine Knights (Clerk)

Minute No. _____

Gov 1 Prayer

The Chair opened the meeting with the School Prayer.

Gov 7 A revised order of business was agreed. Item 6 is combined with Item 9.

Gov 8 School Council

a) The Headteacher introduced Year 6 pupil WJ who had been invited to talk to the Governing Body about School Council.

b) Meetings are held on Tuesdays after collective worship. The members of School Council gather ideas from pupils at playtime and during time in the quiet area. Setting time aside for gathering ideas in the classroom was discussed as an idea for the future, and also a “suggestions box”.

c) School Council is involved in charity events, and has raised funds for the British Heart Foundation inspired by a pupil’s experience of illness in his family.

d) School Council will be involved in the decisions on how to use an award received by the school for growing and cooking food.

e) Other ideas gathered by School Council include: a class pet, whiteboards, playground equipment, a slide, and a swimming pool.

f) A noticeboard is going to be put up in school with photographs of the members of School Council and information about activities.

g) School Council members have had a discussion about traffic outside the school and put forward their ideas on how to make the area safer for children eg warning signs, speed bumps.

h) A Governor suggested that the children could be involved in efforts to improve signage around the school and even design a road sign.

The Chair and Governors thanked WJ for his excellent presentation and for giving up his time to come to meet the Governing Body.

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

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs Morris. 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 25th Sept 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th Sept 2019, including one confidential item, were agreed. The Chair signed the minutes as a correct record and passed the signed copies to the Headteacher to be filed in school.

Gov 4 Matters arising from the minutes and action plan dated 25th Sept 2019

a) The school does not have a caretaker, therefore the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and other local Governors act as emergency contacts. It was agreed that their contact details would be posted on the school noticeboard. The Governors would be provided with instructions on what to do in the event of the alarm being activated.

b) Action Plan

Item 2 –Governors to return the completed Skills Audit to Chair

Item 4 – on hold

Item 5 – Governors all to update Safeguarding Training so that the renewal dates are brought together. Headteacher will send out links:

a) Safeguarding basic awareness b) PREVENT training

Item 7 – School Council invited to this meeting

Item 12 – Headteacher has planned a schedule of school Open Days

Item 14 – 360 degree feedback on Chair to be sent to Clerk before 20th Nov

Item 15 – Year 3 children will go swimming. Other non-swimmers to join them

Item 16 – HT delegation signed

Item 17 – Governor specialisms on agenda

Item 18 – OFSTED presentation circulated to all Governors

Item 19 – Draft SDP circulated to all Governors for comment

Item 20 – HT to develop procedures for home working. Mr Fahy agreed to discuss IT issues with Headteacher, including implications involved in home-working. Changing IT support services will be explored.

Item 21 – the Chair will circulate a link for Safer Recruitment training to Governors. Mrs Morris has completed this training and the Chair will do so. Other Governors invited to consider completing this online short training.

Item 22 – Pay Template to be customised

Item 23 – Child Protection Policy on agenda

Item 24 – Appraisal Policy customised

Item 25 – H&S policy amended and recirculated

Item 26 – Governor monitoring and links on agenda

Item 27 – Maintenance issues, including electrics, on agenda

Gov 5 Chair's Opening Remarks

a) The Chair asked all Governors to return the Skills Audit.

b) The Chair will base the Annual Governance Statement on his two letters to Parents from 2018/9.

c) The Chair, Vice Chair and Headteacher met Patchworks Nursery. It was agreed that leaflets about the nursery would be put in school bags and that Patchworks children would be invited to events in school.

d) The Chair, Headteacher and School Administrator met Veritau. A report will be sent to school covering the key points of the meeting, including feedback on GDPR compliance. Overall, the review of policies was positive.

e) The Chair, Headteacher and Mr Redfern met Mr Quartermaine to explore using DBS Services instead of the North Yorkshire Maintenance and Servicing Scheme (MASS) which currently costs the school £7,000 a year.

DBS Services are confident they would provide a better service which would be more efficient and less costly. The school would need to set aside money in the budget for unplanned (reactive) services. Planned maintenance would be covered under contract with DBS and savings through underspend would be returned to the school. The management service fee would be £250. The school would be allocated a building consultant who would help construct a 5 year development plan. There are 44 schools around York who use DBS Services. The Headteacher would seek feedback from contacts in the area.

f) The Chair asked Governors to send Mrs Berthinussen a brief biography for the school website.

g) The School Improvement Adviser, the Chair and Mrs Craig met to conduct the Headteacher's 2018/19 performance review, which was successful, and to set targets for 2019/20, which were closely aligned to the School Development Plan.

h) The Chair thanked Mrs Berthinussen and her husband for producing the photos for the board outside the school office.

Gov 9 Headteacher Report

The Headteacher introduced her report which had been circulated in advance.

a) Pupil numbers

There are 75 children on roll, 5 more than anticipated. By the end of March 2020 the school's financial position will be in surplus, therefore the licensed budget deficit will no longer be required. Governors welcomed this news.

There are 4 children currently holding the school as their first choice for September 2020. This number could change. Open Days for prospective parents have been well attended.

b) Attendance

The Headteacher remains concerned about children arriving late in the morning. The Chair asked whether there has been any improvement since the Headteacher emailed parents about the issue recently. The Headteacher will monitor the situation and consider an individual approach after Christmas.

c) School Development Plan

The Headteacher had considered purchasing a curriculum but at £1,000 this approach was too expensive. A curriculum statement and individual subject statements are currently being drafted in school. These describe what is being taught (content) and how (approach). OFSTED inspectors now carry out “deep dives” into individual subjects. All teachers have a curriculum focus and a subject lead focus as part of their performance management. The aim is for the curriculum to be ready by the end of the Spring Term and trialled in the Summer Term for full introduction in Autumn 2020.

Governors questioned the implications of the new curriculum for staff training. The Headteacher stated that the aim is both to make full use of existing skills, but also to add to the skills of staff. Subject leaders will attend County Pathfinder Cluster sessions. Purchasing schemes of work and online subscriptions will be considered. Mrs Comfort offered to support Mrs Fineran in developing the approach to language teaching.

The Chair suggested that the SDP headlines be communicated to parents. The Headteacher agreed to take this forward in her response to parent questionnaire feedback.

d) Behaviour

The Headteacher stated that there was to be more focus on improving behaviour in school through reinstating the House points system, further embedding the traffic light behaviour system and generally using positive feedback.

In response to Governor questions, the Headteacher outlined the approaches to be used to develop a sense of House identity amongst pupils. Governors suggested that new House names should be considered. The Headteacher would discuss this with School Council.

Other initiatives include: a consistent design for “working walls” in the classrooms (hessian), playground leader training at Outwood to be attended by Year 5 pupils, a review of the approach used at lunchtime to allow the children more time outside.

The Headteacher will be attending a conference in London on Relationship and Sex Education as Sutton is an Early Adopter School. The information will be shared with the cluster schools.

e) SENCO update

Mrs Fineran reported on her initiatives to date, including:

- Reviewing and updating the SEN register, the childrens’ “passports” and individual provision plans (including more pupil voice), establishing individual targets working with the teachers, pupils and parents
- Reviewing and updating the school’s website content on SEN

Next steps include reviewing the school's SENCO policy.

Governors questioned whether Mrs Fineran has enough time allocated for the role and whether she needs any further support. Currently Mrs Fineran has half a day a week timetabled for the SENCO role and she confirmed that this seems sufficient. The Autumn Term is however particularly busy. The Headteacher stated that the time allocation was under review.

f) Parent survey

The Headteacher reported that in general feedback was very positive. The suggestions from parents included:

- a wider range of clubs for younger children

Rugby will be provided in the Spring Term for Years 1, 2 and 3, and other clubs will be considered. School Council will be asked for suggestions.

- information on how to help their children at home

The Headteacher is contacting a company that provides training in this area, and will consider running sessions for parents on Maths.

- more information for parents on progress throughout the year

The Headteacher will be exploring possible approaches to this.

g) School Improvement Adviser

The school is entitled to 1 meeting a year with the SIA and 1 telephone conversation. Mrs Hayes spoke to the Headteacher on the telephone and confirmed that the approach to the SDP was good. She also discussed the pupil data (see below).

h) KS 2 pupil performance summary

The data was circulated to Governors for discussion (no names were shared).

The School Adviser had highlighted that the pupils achieving Greater Depth in Maths should also be targeted to reach this level in Reading and Writing. Also, where pupils are tracking at almost Greater Depth, there should be a focus on supporting them to reach this level.

It was noted that there was a high proportion of children with SEN in this class. The Headteacher explained that the children had made amazing progress and that more work was needed on how to show this in the statistics.

The Vice Chair suggested a training session for the Governing Body to develop a better understanding of the statistical reports on pupil performance.

Governors asked if there had been any surprises in the Year 6 data. The Headteacher confirmed that the data was largely as expected.

The School Development Plan is to focus on Reading and Writing.

i) Staffing and CDP

The Headteacher highlighted that staffing levels after Christmas would increase flexibility and consistency. Governors' attention was drawn to the success of the TA apprenticeship in school which is funded through the Apprenticeship Programme.

j) New classroom

The former library is now being used as the EYFS room providing resources tailored to reception children. Visitors on Open Days are responding very positively to this resource.

The school day is organised so that EYFS and KS1 are working separately in the mornings, and then together in the afternoons when activities lend themselves well to different age groups. If Year 1 children need additional input, on Maths for example, Mrs Chubb works with them in the afternoon.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for the report.

Gov 10 HT Safeguarding review including monitoring visits and training

The Headteacher had completed the safeguarding audit. The Safeguarding Review would be carried over to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

Gov 11 Premises

a) Mr Redfern summarised his concerns with respect to the MASS scheme (see also Item 5e). Mr Redfern drew Governors' attention to the fact that maintenance and repairs requested by the school are not being carried out, either on the grounds of not being included within the scheme or as a result of ongoing delays. Mr Redfern recommended leaving the scheme and signing up with DBS Services. However, he reported that 12 months' notice is required for withdrawal from the scheme and that notice can only be given at the renewal date in March.

b) Governors questioned whether the contract includes a clause on breaches by either party, however Mr Redfern stated that there was no clarity on this issue.

c) It was agreed that the Chair would telephone NYCC legal advice for guidance on this matter, with specific reference to drafting a letter to withdraw from the MASS scheme.

The Chair thanked Mr Redfern for his work on this issue.

d) School sign.

The school had been advised by HDC that planning permission could possibly be granted if the sign were to be positioned back against the hedge. It was also recommended that the school should submit photographs of school signs in other conservation areas (staff are collecting these). Governors discussed the possibility of installing higher gates, however the Headteacher stated that the cost would be prohibitive. The Headteacher is to take forward a repeat application for planning permission.

Gov 12 Health and Safety

The Headteacher would present a full report in the December Governing Body meeting.

A Governor expressed concern about the gates between the courtyard and garden, however the Headteacher reassured the Governing Body that although this is a Fire Exit and therefore cannot be locked, an adult is always on duty here.

Gov 13 Governor training and feedback

a) Mrs Comfort had recently attended Part 1 of the NYCC training “Introduction to Governance – getting started in school governance” and recommended it for anyone who has recently joined the Governing Body.

b) The Headteacher had attended Complaints Training covering the 2019 DfE policy. The school had customised and adopted this DfE policy in September 2019.

c) The Headteacher encouraged Governors to attend the joint cluster School Improvement Network meeting at Linton on Ouse School on 28th November 4:30 – 7:30 pm. Mrs Comfort, Mr Graham and Mrs Craig were hoping to attend. The session is open to all Governors and there is no requirement to book in advance.

Gov 14 Review and approve Governor specialisms

a) The following Governors volunteered to lead on specialisms:

IT – Mr Fahy

Teaching and Learning – Mrs Gale, Mrs Comfort

DT – Mr Graham

PE – Mr Graham

Re – Mrs Craig

Music – Mr Fahy

Art – Mrs Morris

Humanities – Mrs Craig

Science – Mr Redfern

In addition, Mr Redfern would lead on maintenance issues and Mr Graham on property development.

b) The Chair would circulate the updated document with link roles.

c) The Headteacher would define the remit of link roles. The Governors would need to meet the subject teacher to build an understanding of the overall curriculum content, how the subject is delivered in school and the allocation of resources. Governors would follow a monitoring programme which the Headteacher would develop. Governors would report back to the Full Governing Body on their subject areas.

Gov 15 Governor Skills Audit

Governors who have not yet returned the Skills Audit to the Chair were requested to do so.

Gov 16 Chair of Governors 360⁰ review

Governors who have not yet returned the 360⁰ review to the Clerk were requested to do so before 20th November when she would be summarising key points to the Chair (all feedback would be anonymous).

Gov 17 Approval of policies: Child Protection Policy

The Headteacher stated that the updated policy included the amendments recommended by County. The Chair offered to check the hyperlinks to ensure that the links are relevant to the school and remove those which are not applicable.

Governors approved the Policy.

Gov 18 Correspondence

None

Gov 19 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk

None

Gov 20 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 4th December and would focus on Resources/Finances

The meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

Signed:

Date: