

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**FOCUS ON RESOURCES/FINANCE**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 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 V Gale, Mr G Redfern, Mrs T Comfort, Mr M Graham, Mrs H Morris

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Christine Knights (Clerk), Caroline Davies (Bursar)

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**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.**

Apologies for absence, with consent, had been received from Mrs Fineran and Mr Fahy. Mrs Gale had sent apologies for an unavoidable late arrival. Mrs Craig apologised that she would have to leave the meeting at 7pm.

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality. The Headteacher declared an interest: her brother-in-law had designed the new house crests. Mr Graham had made a donation to school funds for a gate which was no longer needed by the school.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

**Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated 23.10.2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record. The signed copy was passed to the Headteacher to be filed in school.

**Gov 4 Matters arising from the minutes and Action Plan dated 23.10.19.**

There were no matters arising.

**Action Plan**

Item 1 – a data summary would be provided to Governors in January 2020.

Item 2 – Skills Audit complete. Chair to analyse.

Item 3 – SEF report will be presented in January 2020.

Item 4 – All Governors to complete actions a) b) and c). The Clerk will bring a sign-in sheet for Governors to sign for all 3 actions in January.

Item 12 – Still to arrange for Headteacher and Mr Fahy to meet to discuss IT

Item 13 – Chair has circulated the link to Safer Recruitment Training. Cost of training is £25 per person. Governing Body required to have two people who have completed the training. Mrs Morris has completed it. Chair also to complete. Any other Governors interested to contact Chair.

Item 15 – Child Protection Policy was approved by FGB in October 2019

Item 16 – It was agreed that contact details of individuals should not be on the school noticeboard. Mr Graham will contact the alarm company to establish how to link the alarm to a mobile phone, or other options.

Item 18 – the Chair has produced the Annual Governance Statement. Not yet on website.

Item 19 – it was agreed that further feedback on options for maintenance services was not needed. Governors were satisfied with the information gathered so far as a background for taking a decision on how to proceed.

Item 20 – Governors were reminded to send a brief biography to Mrs Berthinussen for the school website.

Item 21 – School Council discussed zigzags. The children will carry out traffic surveys in the Spring Term

Item 22 – Headteacher is to send out a letter on late arrivals and attendance.

Item 23 – Mrs Comfort and Mrs Fineran had arranged to meet to discuss MFL curriculum.

Item 24 – New House names: Squirrels, Rabbits, Hedgehogs and Foxes. Also trophy purchased for House competitions.

Item 25 – The Headteacher would provide a training session on pupil performance data in January 2020 FGB. Clerk would check whether the webinar had been circulated.

Item 26 – Safeguarding review on the agenda.

Item 27 – See Gov 5h below.

Item 29 – Health and Safety report on agenda.

Item 30 – See Gov 16 below.

Item 31 – Chair has circulated Link Governor roles to all Governors.

Item 32 – Remit of Link Governors to be defined by Headteacher.

Item 33 – Chair has passed information on hyperlinks in Child Protection Policy to Mrs Berthinussen. Policy to be uploaded on to school website.

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

### **Contact with NYCC on budget**

a) The Chair had spoken to Mr Andrew Dixon of Strategic Services regarding budget forecasts and sent him the school's latest financial information.

b) The Bursar had also received a request from Strategic Services for the school's figures. The Bursar had emphasised the Governing Body's ongoing close scrutiny of the budget and informed Strategic Services that benchmarking confirmed the school's frugal approach. She had confirmed to Strategic Services that the school's budgetary position could only be improved by an increase in pupil numbers.

c) The Bursar had been asked by Strategic Services whether the school had plans to combine classes to deal with the financial position reflected in year 5 of the forecast. The Bursar commented to Governors that issues for year 5 would need to be addressed at the appropriate time.

d) The Headteacher emphasised the importance of a separate reception class or a reception class combined with a nursery class. Mrs Gale noted that a separate Year 6 is also important to parents. Governors expressed a hope that Sutton on the Forest Pre-School would specifically recommend Sutton on the Forest Primary School to prospective families.

e) The Chair reported that there would be a follow-up meeting with Mr Andrew Dixon in the near future when it is anticipated that more information will be available from Strategic Services to help the school's planning.

### **SFVS**

f) The Chair would discuss his draft amended SFVS with the Headteacher and then forward it to the Bursar for comment and feedback. The new format of the SFVS raises issues such as a Business Continuity Plan and a Disaster Plan which had not been included in the previous SFVS.

g) The final version would be brought to Governors in January 2020.

### **Grounds Maintenance Contract**

h) The Chair sought confirmation that the recommendations from the June 2019 inspector have been actioned.

### **Legal Advice Regarding MASS Contract**

i) The Chair had established that one hour of free legal advice is available from NYCC Legal Services. The draft letter would be updated by Mr Redfern if necessary, and then used by the Chair as a basis for a telephone discussion with Legal Services to explore withdrawal from the MASS scheme.

## **Gov 6 Order of business**

The order of business was agreed as presented.

## **Gov 7 Revised budget**

The school's Bursar Caroline Davies provided the following key information for discussion.

Budget Monitoring for month ended 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019

a) school income of £5552 is higher than the Start Budget figure for several reasons: a higher level of pupil premium funding than expected; £1000 award from Rolls Royce project; income from East Barnby visit; higher than expected Free School Meals funding.

b) there is an overspend of £3656 due to supply teacher costs, additional MASS costs and also the expenditure on East Barnby.

c) The actual in year position is £1895 in credit.

d) The Chair and Headteacher will meet monthly to discuss the budget and also circulate all monthly budget documents to Governors.

e) The Bursar emphasised that overall the budget is on track and that the only main overspend is on supply teaching. Next year Governors may wish to review the insurance to cover supply teacher costs earlier (current cover is paid after 16 days' absence).

The Chair invited questions for the Bursar.

f) Mr Redfern queried the £19,153 payment due from other schools on the Budget Forecast Ledger (p 2). This related to the sports teacher shared between Sutton on the Forest and 4 other schools. The arrangements for sharing the teacher's time will be changing over the 5 years. The Bursar has retained the same figure throughout the 5 years because it is not yet clear how the arrangements will differ. The Headteacher noted that the government plan is for Sports Premium to be paid to secondary schools who will then lead on sport in primaries, however this has not yet been put in place.

g) Mr Redfern queried the number of children included in the 2019 Census in the Revenue Financial Forecast. The Headteacher confirmed that the figure for Reception in 2020/21 should be 10, and then this should be carried forward in future years. The Bursar would make the changes and recirculate the Revenue Financial Forecast.

h) Mr Redfern asked whether full use would be made of the devolved capital fund. The Headteacher confirmed that the staff need new laptops. The Bursar confirmed that the devolved capital would be spent in financial year 2019-20.

i) The Bursar recommended exploring establishing a nursery and provided some guidance.

j) Mr Redfern offered to put up posters to publicise Forest Tots.

k) Governors agreed the budget in principle subject to the revised Revenue Financial Forecast document being circulated by the Bursar.

l) Governors confirmed their agreement to going forward with the deficit as presented by the Bursar and would continue discussions with NYCC Strategic Services on how to increase pupil numbers. The Chair emphasised that he would be seeking support from NYCC for this.

m) The Chair and Governors thanked the Bursar for her very helpful presentation of the school's finances.

#### **Gov 8 Review outturn of school fund**

See Item Gov 7

#### **Gov 9 Schools' Financial Value Standard (SFVS)**

See Item Gov 5f for Chair's update.

#### **Gov 10 Benchmarking**

The Bursar drew Governors' attention to the following:

- a) The HLTA and GTA hours are higher than in some other schools but this is part of a cost effective approach to staffing.
- b) The admin staff hours per week are in line with other schools.
- c) SEN and Pupil Premium funding per pupil received by the school is low in comparison with other schools (ie when divided by total school numbers).
- d) "Other income" per pupil is higher than in other schools, reflecting the fact that the school organises a lot of trips and visits to which parents contribute.
- e) The ICT Learning Resources graph reflects the recent investment in IT.

In response to questions from Governors, the Bursar confirmed the following:

- f) Energy spending, although on the higher side, is not out of line with other schools in the benchmarking group.
- g) The proportion of staff on a leadership scale looks on the high side but this is because a lot of the schools in this benchmarking exercise have a shared headteacher.
- h) Benchmarking shows that generally the school is either in line with other schools or else keeping spending lower than other schools.

The Bursar confirmed that the benchmarking exercise demonstrates the frugal approach and high level of scrutiny exercised by the Governing Body.

#### **Gov 11 Headteacher's Report (verbal update)**

- a) The Headteacher thanked the staff for their support during a colleague's long-term sickness absence. She also informed Governors of the excellent contribution made by the supply teacher. The Headteacher informed Governors that she had been involved in teaching extra hours as part of the cover arrangements. The Headteacher was pleased to report that the colleague has now recovered.
- b) The Headteacher informed Governors that due to her high recent workload she would provide information on the SEF in the January meeting.
- c) Pupil Premium.  
The Headteacher reported that there are 3 children on Ever 6 currently in school. Two of these children are being provided with extra support, however this is not needed for all three.
- d) Sport Premium.  
The Headteacher reported that cricket, hockey and York Knights sessions have all been booked.

e) Parking for drop-off and pick-up. Mr Graham raised concerns about parents parking on grass verges, in front of the drives of local houses and also blocking the school entrance. It was agreed that the Headteacher would address this in the school newsletter, requesting parents to park on just one side of the road through the village, and not to block driveways.

f) The Headteacher had received a follow-up report after a meeting with Red Box. She would report to the Governing Body on this in January.

g) The Chair and Governors thanked that Headteacher and staff for all their hard work and emphasised how much it is appreciated.

#### **Gov 12 Premises**

The Headteacher reported that a new surveyor from NYCC had recently visited the school. Mr Redfern offered to contact the surveyor, Alison Bushell, to discuss her recommendations and feedback.

#### **Gov 13 Safeguarding review**

The safeguarding review has been completed and discussed with the safeguarding governor Mrs Craig.

#### **Gov 14 Health and Safety update**

The Headteacher reported that a review of H&S documentation had been carried out and that everything was found to be in order.

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

No Governor visits had taken place.

#### **Gov 16 Governor training**

##### **Feedback from School Improvement Network cluster meeting**

a) Mr Graham and Mrs Craig had attended the SIN meeting. The main focus had been on the new OFSTED framework and implications for Governors. Sutton on the Forest School should expect a one day visit by two inspectors. The day before the inspection, the Headteacher would have a 90 minutes telephone conversation with the inspectors. On the day of the inspection, the focus would be on discussions with the middle leaders. The framework includes new criteria and also an emphasis on “deep dives” into the curriculum.

b) Inspectors would engage with Governors to discuss the curriculum, for example how the subject curriculum had been developed, how it was sequenced, curriculum progression and how the teachers check on pupil progress. The Chair highlighted the importance of the Link Governor role in allowing Governors to develop this understanding. The Headteacher

reminded Governors that a monitoring schedule had been circulated. She offered to provide a training session on curriculum development.

c) Governors are expected to understand how well the teachers know their subjects. The Headteacher emphasised the importance of subject leaders coming to Governing Body meetings to discuss their subjects and their approach to teaching. The Governors have discussed Maths with the subject leader Mrs Fineran and other subject leaders will be included on future agendas.

d) Mr Graham explained that the inspection would be more focused on the attitude and behaviour of the children than previously.

e) The Headteacher explained that inspectors would use the childrens' books to engage with children about their work. Governors could use the same approach on Link Governor monitoring visits.

f) Mrs Comfort outlined an approach discussed in the NYCC Introduction to Governance training. Governors from one school had decided to take a proactive approach and develop a list of ten points to be raised in the discussions with inspectors.

g) Mr Graham emphasised the importance of consistency in responses from the Governors, the Headteacher and the staff.

h) The Headteacher confirmed that there would be a "deep dive" on Early Reading. She reported that the school is strong in this area and that Reception children are doing well in Phonics.

i) Mr Graham reported that there had been a discussion on "off-rolling." This technique of removing children from a school's data is seen more often in secondary schools than primary schools. There is sometimes however an issue in relation to children from Forces Families.

j) Mr Redfern asked whether OFSTED inspectors would use Governing Body meeting minutes to establish whether school subject leaders had met Governors. Mr Graham explained that Governors would be expected to visit the school quarterly, but inspectors would be unlikely to be using meeting minutes to establish the Governors' knowledge of the school.

k) Mrs Morris emphasised the usefulness of "learning walks" in building up an understanding of the school.

l) Mrs Craig reported that schools had been encouraged to share specialist teaching staff such as music teachers.

m) The Chair stated that it would most likely be 12 months or more before the school would be inspected. At least one Governing Body meeting should be scheduled to focus on OFSTED.



## **Feedback from NYCC Introduction to Governance training**

n) Mrs Comfort had recently attended Part II of the NYCC training “Introduction to Governance – getting started in school governance” and had found it to be very useful. Mrs Comfort emphasised that there is a lot of material to cover and commented that it would have been useful to have had the documentation in advance of the session.

### **Gov 17 Skills audit feedback**

The Chair would be carrying out an analysis of the skills audit.

### **Gov 18 Chair 360 review feedback**

The Chair confirmed that this feedback had been passed on by the Clerk.

### **Gov 19 Policies for approval**

The SEN policy had been updated and would be presented to Governors at the January meeting.

### **Gov 20 Correspondence**

a) The School Council had sent a letter proposing changes to arrangements at lunch time. Governors agreed that these were positive suggestions.

b) Governors emphasised that the quality of meals at the school is very high.

c) The Chair would write a response to the School Council, thanking them for the correspondence and confirming that options would be considered.

### **Gov 21 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk**

Governors were invited to the following events

:

Christmas lunch Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December

School play by KS1 children Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December (2pm and 6pm)

Victorian Christmas event by KS2 children 17<sup>th</sup> December (2:30).

Christmas sing-along 20<sup>th</sup> December (at 2:45pm).

### **Gov 22 Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020  
6.00pm

Those present were thanked for their attendance and the meeting closed at  
8:20 pm.

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

Date: