

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 12th FEBRUARY 2020 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 J Fineran,

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

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 Morris.
Apologies for late arrival had been sent by Mrs Gale and Mr Graham.
There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality.
The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated 22.1.2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2020, including 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 22.1.2020.

There were no matters arising.

Action Plan

Item 4 – Deferred until Autumn term when the new IT will be in place. Google Drive use is increasing, providing a greater level of security.

Item 6 – Annual Governance Statement is now on the school website.

Item 8 –Reminder sent to Governors re brief biography (short paragraph) to Mrs Berthinussen for the school website.

Item 9 –MASS scheme discussed in agenda item Gov 14.

Item 10 –Complaint about parking which HT will investigate.

Item 11 – Deferred to March.

Item 13 – Mr Graham will report back on options for the alarm in March.

Item 14 –NYCC Strategic Services meeting discussed in agenda item Gov 5.

Item 15 – SFVS discussed in agenda item Gov 10.

Item 17 – Bursar and Headteacher to circulate the monthly budget papers.

Item 19 – HT reported that ForestTots posters have not been circulated but that there is information on Facebook. Governors discussed the need to ensure that sessions are booked ahead to ensure enjoyment by children who are under 3 years old. It was also suggested that if school agrees to circulate publicity for local organisations, school should also ask for own leaflets to be circulated by those organisations (reciprocal arrangement).

Item 21 – Mr Redfern would email using the previous surveyor's contact details and copy in Mark Bennet. Although the meeting with the previous surveyor had seemed promising, Mr Redfern commented that nothing seemed to have been progressed since then.

Item 24 – Agenda item Gov 17 deferred to March.

Item 25 – Chair had analysed Skills Audit responses (5 on NGA form and 6 on Local Authority form) and would circulate the documents for Governors to review in detail. The Chair had highlighted items where the score was below 3.5 (NGA) or below 3 (Local Authority) which could be areas the Governing Body might look to strengthen through recruitment, for example HR and PR. The Chair noted that the NGA skills audit focused in some cases on experience gained within the education sector. The Chair commented that although the analysis resulted in a low score in certain aspects, this did not necessarily indicate that the Governing Body did not include Governors with the particular expertise. It was positive that all Governors indicated that they

know the school. The Chair encouraged new Governors to take opportunities to meet all the staff.

Item 26 – Mrs Comfort and the Chair would attend the Parents' Meeting on March 2nd and 4th respectively.

Item 27 – Chair encouraged Governors to access School Bus. He had circulated the link.

Item 29 – December progress data for reading was circulated on email.

Item 30 – SEND report on agenda item Gov 16.

Item 31 – no NYCC training available on OFSTED currently.

Item 32 – Headteacher had organised a parent/carers PSHE awareness session.

Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks

Meeting report

a) The Chair and Headteacher met Mr Mark Ashton and Mr Andrew Dixon of NYCC Strategic Services, and Mr Andrew Smith, York Diocese Director of Education, to discuss the sustainability of the school.

b) The meeting had been positive. It was agreed that the school was suffering from under-resourcing but that appropriate strategies were in place.

c) It was suggested that the uplift in pupil funding, promised by the Prime Minister for next year, might benefit the school (£250 increase per pupil 20/21 and £500 increase per pupil 21/22). However the Chair and Headteacher noted that there would be a challenge when the current year 5 pupils leave. At this point the school will lose 16 pupils.

d) It was agreed that Mr Andrew Smith would come to the Governing Body meeting in June to share information on both federation and multi-academy trust sponsorship. The Headteacher commented that although current government policy was no longer that all schools should become academies, this approach could re-emerge in the future.

e) In response to a Governor question, the Chair confirmed that the PAN (published admission number) was discussed in the meeting.

Pupil Numbers

f) Governors discussed how to publicise the school. The Headteacher agreed to arrange a meeting with Tiddlywinks (Easingwold), Puddleducks (York) and Patchworks (Sutton on the Forest), and also to invite the children and parents to come to ForestTots.

Gov 6 Headteacher news updates

It was agreed that the Headteacher would report under the appropriate agenda items later in the meeting.

Gov 7 Order of business

The order of business was agreed.

Gov 8 Budget monitoring report

The Budget Monitoring report dated 31st January 2020 was discussed.

- a) The revenue budget currently forecasts an end of year deficit of -£2587. The Bursar informed Governors that it was still nevertheless possible that the school would close the year in a credit position.
- b) The Bursar reported that recent teaching supply costs had not caused a big change in the school's budget scenario. However, supply costs for the Autumn Term due to the staff absence had had an impact. She also emphasised that the decision to employ a teacher had been taken after careful consideration of affordability by the Bursar and Headteacher.
- c) The Bursar noted that not all budget pots had yet been fully utilised eg ICT, Training and Learning. She also noted that it is possible that both oil and electricity budgets will not be fully spent.
- d) The Bursar and Headteacher will be challenging the £1500 charge for the School Improvement Service.
- e) The school had been informed, by email, that it would not be charged for the new boiler. The charge of £2906 is therefore expected to be returned.
- f) In response to a Governor question, the Bursar confirmed that ICT money, if not spent, could be carried forward. She explained that unless funding was from a particular grant, it could be carried forward.
- g) A Governor asked if anything in the Revenue budget could not be moved. The Bursar explained that only Sport Funding could not be reallocated. Pupil Premium is no longer ring-fenced and can now be used for the benefit of the school. In this school the Pupil Premium funding is used for staffing.
- h) Pupil Premium. A Governor asked if we would have more Pupil Premium funding next year. The Headteacher and Bursar confirmed that according to current planning, there would be more Pupil Premium funding next year. However, this depends on the children on the school register, whether any moves take place and if so at what point in the school year.

i) The school's Funding Statement is due on Friday 14th February and the hope is that there will be an uplift. A budget of £3750 per child is confirmed but the application of the funding formula could change the final figure. It has been confirmed that, unlike in previous years, NYCC will not be taking a percentage from schools' individual budgets for a county-wide SEN budget. It was noted that there could be implications for county-led services for SEN. It was also noted that the new banding has tended to lead to schools receiving lower budgets per pupil than in the past.

j) The Headteacher and Bursar will research whether it would be advisable to adopt a different approach to insurance for teacher absence next year. The Chair recommended taking the average number of days' absence over the last 10 years.

k) The Headteacher drew Governors' attention to the pupil numbers: there are now 78 pupils in total which is more than expected. It is possible that 10 pupils will join the school in September.

l) The Bursar confirmed that nothing has been cut in order to reach this current budget position. Books have been purchased, for example. The Chair also noted the importance of using the staff development budget.

m) A Governor asked the Bursar how many pupils the school would need to join the school each year in order to ensure sustainability ie a "break-even" number. The Bursar explained that this is difficult to establish because the funding changes every year and higher pupil numbers can lead to higher costs. However, the school needs approximately 12 every year.

n) The Headteacher has requested an increase in the Pan from 13 to 15.

o) School structure. The Headteacher explained that the number of classes depends on the spread of pupils in the different year groups. It was acknowledged in the meeting with NYCC Strategic Services (see Gov 5) that three classes would still be needed if numbers dropped below 60.

p) Capital expenditure. Mr Redfern recommended identifying individual jobs within the recommendations for the electrics rather than treating the work as a single job. The Headteacher and Bursar agreed to discuss this once expenditure on ICT had been finalised.

q) It was noted that £5175 has been allocated in this year's budget for ICT and licenses (consumables), £2000 for IT support fees (ICT Learning Resources) and a further budget line of £2000 was still to be utilised.

r) The Chair agreed the need to prioritise early capital expenditure.

Gov 9 **Benchmarking**

The most recent benchmarking report had been discussed at the December Governing Body meeting. There was nothing further to report.

Gov 10 Schools' Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

The Chair presented the Schools' Financial Value Standard to allow input by the Bursar and Headteacher, and discussion with the full Governing Body.

- a) The new SFVS format required considerably more detail.
- b) The Bursar explained the RAG system (red amber green). A Governor queried whether there was a need to inform anyone if an item was coded "red", however the Bursar advised that it would be sufficient to provide an explanatory background note in the comments box, including the date the issue was discussed with the Governing Body.
- c) In response to a Governor question, the Bursar explained that for the SFVS, the "similar schools" are defined on a national level (excluding London).
- d) The Bursar drew Governors' attention to the red flag for support staff. It was a deliberate strategy to have a high level of support staff, and this needed to be explained in the comments box.
- e) The Bursar noted the red flag against energy expenditure. The school is large in size, given the number of pupils. The Bursar recommended noting that the boiler had recently been replaced and thermostats fitted on radiators.
- f) The Teacher Contact Ratio has a red flag, however the Bursar explained that this is because the Headteacher is included in these numbers. In response to a Governor challenged, it was confirmed that teachers are being allocated enough PPA time.
- g) A Governor noted that the Average Teacher Cost is low compared with other schools. The Bursar explained that this was because the teachers and Headteacher (included in this measure) are not at the top of the pay scales. She emphasised that the budget is based on the assumption that everyone would have incremental rises each year. The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring that staff can progress.
- h) Governors discussed the ratio of teaching staff and support staff. The Headteacher emphasised the flexibility provided by support staff, including HLTA, and drew attention also to the reduced need to use supply staff.
- i) Governors discussed the number of classes in the school. The Headteacher explained that classrooms would be moved round during the Easter holidays in order to make the Early Years/KS1 area more cohesive and increase the flexibility for children to move between groups as appropriate. The Headteacher confirmed that prospective parents are informed that Reception children are taught separately in the mornings.

j) In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that Governors were required to declare business interests only which are relevant to the context of being a Governor at the school.

k) Disaster recovery plan. The Chair noted that as yet the school does not have a formalised plan, however the school would follow the Emergency Response Guide 2016 issued by NYCC. The Headteacher confirmed that the school has a Lockdown Policy.

l) Comparison with national deals. The Bursar advised that the comment should note that the school goes through NYCC recommended providers and follows the DfE Deals for Schools framework.

m) A Governor queried the definition of “landlord unit”. It was agreed that this should be replaced with “NYCC surveyor.”

n) Audit. The Bursar advised a note in the comments to the effect that nothing was outstanding from past audits.

o) School Fund. The Bursar stated that there is no School Fund.

p) The Headteacher would check the revisions to the SFVS made during the meeting and submit.

Gov 11 Lettings arrangements

a) A Governor suggested that a spreadsheet detailing lettings, charges etc would be useful. Headteacher would ask Mrs Berthinussen to compile this. The document could then be reviewed each year by Governors.

b) Governors agreed that it was appropriate for Brownies not to be charged for use of the school hall. It was confirmed that the Brownies are covered by their own insurance while using the school premises.

c) A Governor queried whether it would be beneficial, financially and/or to increase familiarity with the school, to seek to encourage groups to use the school hall. It was agreed that, given that the school does not have a caretaker, this would not be pursued.

Gov 12 Contracts review

The Bursar recommended reviewing the document compiled last year.

Gov 13 Strategic forecast

a) The Headteacher and Bursar would begin work on the Start Budget when the Funding Statement had been received. The Start Budget would then be brought to the Governing Body’s May meeting for discussion and approval.

b) The Headteacher noted enormous gratitude to the Bursar who provided brilliant help whenever it was needed. The Chair and Governors joined the Headteacher in thanking the Bursar.

The Bursar left the meeting at this point.

Gov 14 Premises

MASS update

a) The Headteacher informed Governors that she had given notice on the MASS scheme, to allow the school to leave in March 2021.

b) The Headteacher noted that changes to the scheme were due to be announced. She confirmed that it would be possible to remain within the scheme if this proved ultimately to be the preferred approach.

c) The Headteacher reported that NYCC had increased the charges for the MASS scheme by £423. There had also been other increases for NYCC services totalling £2k. The Headteacher had investigated possible ways of reducing costs but no actions were being progressed. Governors agreed that the priority should be increasing pupil numbers.

d) Mr Redfern outlined work discussed with NYCC surveyor which is outstanding. Governors discussed whether this was a breach of contract.

e) The Headteacher agreed to convene a group of Governors to discuss how to approach this issue and consider legal advice.

- Alarm update

Mr Graham would report to Governors in the March meeting.

Gov 15 Health and Safety update

Nothing to report.

Gov 16 SEND Report

a) Mrs Fineran, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), circulated the Whole School Provision Map and the SEND Information Report.

b) The Whole School Provision Map summarises the provision for SEN support, split into 3 Waves and 4 areas of difficulty (cognition and learning, communication and interaction, emotional, behaviour and social, sensory and physical). It is designed to cover the needs of the children currently in school.

c) Wave 1 describes support available to all children, Wave 2 is for children either being monitored or on the SEN register, and Wave 3 is for children with

EHC (Education, Health and Care) plans. Mrs Fineran confirmed that children move between Waves and that this is recorded in school.

d) The Headteacher stated that the school is required to spend £6000 on SEN provision before receiving additional funding.

e) A Governor asked how a child is assessed. Mrs Fineran stated that if a child is not making expected progress, or if the class teacher has concerns, a process is started in order to identify the primary area of need. Steps are then put in place, including through discussions with parents, for example classroom adjustments, Wave One, or booster sessions. After a term, the impact of interventions is assessed, there are further discussions with the parents and if needed, the child might be included on the SEN register or additional booster sessions are provided. Mrs Fineran explained that a child can also be taken off the SEN register as appropriate.

f) If a child is on the SEN register, an Individual Provision Map is developed for them and impact is reviewed against this at the end of each term.

g) A Governor asked if the Provision Map includes recommendations for home. Mrs Fineran gave examples of activities that might be recommended for the home eg targeted reading. Mrs Fineran emphasised that home-based activities would not be onerous because the child will already have been working hard at school.

h) Governors discussed the anecdotal evidence that children who attend pre-schools achieve a higher educational level in primary school.

i) Mrs Fineran explained that the SEND Information Report format had been changed following advice from Mrs Christine Noyse, NYCC SEN advisor. This document will be on the school website and is designed to inform current and prospective parents.

j) Mrs Fineran is working with colleagues to develop a way to track the progress being made by children with SEND.

k) Recent parent feedback indicates that the implementation of the school's SEN policy is recognised as having a positive impact.

l) The Chair thanked Mrs Fineran for her report and Governors joined him in thanking her for her professionalism and enthusiasm in the role of SENCO.

Gov 17 Link Governor roles

Deferred to March meeting due to time constraints.

Gov 18 Governor Availability for Parents' Evening

See Gov 4.

Gov 19 Governor training

Dates of cluster School Improvement Network meeting still to be confirmed.

No other training attended since the last meeting.

NYCC training on OFSTED not currently available.

Gov 20 Governor vacancies

Deferred to March meeting.

Gov 21 Pupil Premium

Nothing to report.

Gov 22 Sports Premium

Nothing to report.

Gov 23 Policies

No policies for review in this meeting.

Gov 24 Correspondence

None

Gov 25 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk

a) The Headteacher had recently begun the Church of England Headteacher qualification training. Governors were assured that the project completed within this training would be relevant and useful for Sutton on the Forest Primary, and that learning from the 9 days required in another school would be brought back to benefit the pupils here. The training would take 18 months.

b) Mrs Craig asked whether it would be possible for the local Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association to develop an initiative under its "Seen to be Green" focus. This would be followed up with the Headteacher.

c) Mrs Fineran explained that she would like to lead a litter pick with her class. Mrs Comfort would look into where to source litter pickers.

Gov 26 Date of the next meeting

Date of next meeting was agreed: Wednesday 25th March 2020 6.00pm

Those present were thanked for their attendance. Meeting closed at 8:40 pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Date: