

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 TUESDAY 12th MAY 2020 at 6:00 pm (via Zoom)

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, Mrs H Morris

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.

There were no apologies for absence. All Governors had given agreement for the meeting to be held on Zoom and were able to attend.

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality. Mrs Pye noted that her brother-in-law had designed the postcard which had been sent out to pupils.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated 12.2.2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2020, were agreed as a correct record. The Chair would sign these electronically and forward the document 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.

The Chair advised Governors that the meeting would be focused on urgent matters only, following the DfE's COVID-19 guidance on school governance. He therefore recommended that the Action Plan should be carried forward for consideration at an appropriate time in the future. Governors agreed.

Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks

The meeting would focus on Start Budget approval and plans for school reopening. There were no further opening remarks.

Gov 6 Headteacher news updates

The Headteacher would report under the appropriate agenda items.

Gov 7 Order of business

The order of business was agreed.

Gov 8 Approval of 2020-2021 Start Budget

Year End position

a) The Bursar highlighted the positive year end position, which was £3k more than predicted, at £4714. This could be carried forward.

b) A Governor queried whether money had been saved because of the school having been closed. The Bursar explained that the timing of school closure meant that COVID-19 had not had an impact on last year's budget.

Start Budget

c) The Bursar explained that the potential impact of COVID-19 had not been factored into the Start Budget. It had been decided at County level that this approach to the 2020-21 budget would make it more straightforward to establish any future impact of COVID-19 on expenditure and income.

d) This Start Budget largely follows last year's approach but there is a change to staffing expenditure. The Headteacher would provide more information.

e) The Bursar noted that the figures circulated most recently included the 12 new starters joining reception in September.

f) A Governor asked whether this Budget takes into consideration the possible need for schools to work with children in small groups (no more than 15) due to the pandemic. The Headteacher explained that this Budget did not take into consideration any potential implications of the COVID-19 situation.

g) A Governor queried whether the deficit in 2022-23 is due to the number of children leaving from Year 6 at that point. The Bursar explained that this figure is based on the 73 children forecast to be in school in 2022, however this could go up. The relevant census will be taken in October 2020.

h) The Chair queried whether the figures included the uplift promised by the Government for this year and next year. The Bursar confirmed that the uplift of £250 per child was included and that £3750 per child was guaranteed for 2020-21 and £4000 per child for 2021-22.

i) The Chair challenged why the school would therefore be receiving less income next year given that there will be more children on roll. The Bursar explained that the funding formula would need to be looked at in detail to demonstrate the reasons for this but that many factors are taken into consideration in setting school budgets, including SATS scores, the numbers of children with SEN, numbers with English as a second language, and numbers who receive free school meals, all of which bring additional funding attached to the level of deprivation of pupils in a school.

j) The Bursar stated that the LEA is regulated by a variety of factors and that when it is possible to meet in person she would be happy to go through the funding statement in detail with the Chair.

k) The Chair noted that this is a question to be addressed to the local MP Kevin Hollinrake: the Government promised an uplift for schools – where is it?

l) A Governor noted the significant increase in teaching costs. The Bursar explained that this figure included increments and also further staffing requirements which the Headteacher would cover later in the meeting.

m) The Headteacher queried the amount of capital budget that would be available. The Bursar stated that although the final allocation had not yet been received, the capital budget would be approximately £4800. In addition there would be £2600 carried forward from last year.

n) The Headteacher explained that flooring would be needed in Class 1 so that the children could have access to water, sand and paint at all times. The Bursar confirmed that the capital budget could be used for this.

o) Mr Graham had researched flooring contractors and received quotes in the region of £700 from two companies with experience in schools. A third quote was significantly higher and therefore would not be pursued. Mr Graham would pass the information on to the Headteacher.

p) A Governor queried whether FOSS could provide funding for the flooring, however the Headteacher noted the challenges for FOSS fundraising this year. Already two major fundraisers, the Easter hampers and the Summer Fair, had been lost due to the current crisis.

q) There were no further questions. Governors unanimously approved the Start Budget.

r) The Chair and Governors thanked the Bursar.

The Bursar left the meeting at this point.

Gov 9 Finance: update on spend to date and any unusual spending requirements

All finance updates included under item Gov 8.

Gov 10 Headteacher report

School re-opening

a) The Headteacher reported having started to develop a risk assessment for re-opening using a School Bus checklist. NYCC would be making a template available for schools on Friday. The Headteacher would circulate the risk assessment to Governors as soon as possible after the weekend.

b) The Chair emphasised that the school would not be at liberty to re-open if it would be unsafe. The NGA (National Governance Association) had advised that Governing Bodies needed to be informed about the formal risk assessment.

c) The Headteacher reported having contacted all staff to establish when and if people could be available if school were to re-open. She emphasised the importance of being mindful of the challenges being faced by staff.

d) The Headteacher had contacted the parents of all children in Reception, and Years 1, 2 and 6, to find out whether they would send their children to school if it re-opened. All except 2 children would be attending.

e) The children of key workers would be continuing to attend.

f) A Governor queried what would be the situation if one parent wanted a child to attend and the other parent did not. The Headteacher and Chair emphasised that it was not the role of the school to resolve this issue.

g) In response to a Governor query, the Headteacher explained that in planning for re-opening she would need to consider a range of factors, including whether it would be possible to offer a full school day, and a possible need to stagger start times and breaks. By the end of the week she would have a clearer idea of what the situation could be going forward.

h) The Headteacher would email all parents on Friday to share information about potential re-opening. She emphasised that if R goes above 1, school would not be re-opening (R = reproductive rate of COVID-19).

i) The Headteacher informed Governors that she would continue to send them copies of all communications with parents.

j) The Chair of Governors thanked and praised the Headteacher for the impressive regular communication with parents.

k) The Deputy Chair asked the Headteacher to pass on the Governing Body's appreciation for the fantastic response to the crisis by the staff.

l) The Headteacher commented that the children have also been fantastic and that one pupil has made such an outstanding contribution to supporting others that she would be nominated as "wellbeing champion" in September.

m) The Chair asked the Headteacher to clarify the steps to be taken if someone in school tests positive for COVID-19. The Headteacher had received new guidance, in the context of schools re-opening, that afternoon, and would follow this guidance. She would forward this to Governors.

n) The parent of a child in school had tested positive recently therefore the school had been closed and all staff had been tested. School would re-open as soon as all test results had been received, providing there were no positive cases. The approach would then follow most recent guidance.

End of Year reports

Plans for how to ensure children have the opportunity to catch up

o) It is a legal requirement that schools should provide parents with an End of Year Report on their child.

p) The Headteacher would provide parents with End of Year reports on their child's attainment level as on 23rd March, in terms of "working towards", "working at expected level" or "working at greater depth". This would be based on the content taught by that point, for Reading, Writing and Maths. There will be no end of year data, and the reports will not include whether the child has achieved a "good level of attainment" for children in Early Years. The Headteacher will send out a letter explaining the approach.

q) The Headteacher advised Governors that the work planned for the Summer Term would be repeated in the Autumn Term. It is hoped that by around November, the children will be caught up. At this point, another report would be sent to parents. This report would not include any narrative, as this would be provided in discussions at a parents' evening the following week. Governors supported the Headteacher's approach.

r) A Governor asked how the summer report would be interpreted at secondary schools. The Headteacher explained that secondary schools perform their own baseline tests and that as yet primaries have not been approached for information. Mrs Fineran had recently attended a meeting in her SENCO role, where the emphasis had very much been on transition. Baseline assessment would only take place when the children had settled.

s) The Headteacher described plans to help September's new Reception children who would be missing their transition experiences this summer. The children currently in school would be producing a video tour of the school. Something similar could also be used to introduce the staff, for example through staff reading stories in video clips.

Gov 11 Staffing update

a) The Headteacher briefed Governors on 2020-21 staffing plans, including the impact on the budget, cover arrangements and how consistency would be ensured for the children. She confirmed that staff have all been consulted and are happy with the plan.

b) The Headteacher emphasised that the TAs provide a useful level of flexibility and a great breadth of skills for the school. Further detail is still to be finalised with respect to how and where the TA time will be allocated.

c) PPA time (planning, preparation and assessment) is to be taken outside school and cover provided by school staff.

d) The Headteacher noted that it is possible that there will need to be some recruitment for a fixed term position at TA level, however given current uncertainties, she is planning to finalise this decision later in the term.

e) The Chair asked when staffing arrangements would be communicated to parents. The Headteacher stated that this information would be shared after half-term as usual.

f) The Headteacher reported that the Early Years /KS1 area now feels to be in the heart of the school and that the reorganisation has been very successful.

g) In view of the fact that the Reception children will be having the mornings on their own from September, a Governor queried whether the school could now be regarded as having four classes, and if not whether it is now time for the Governing Body to consider re-introducing a fourth class.

h) The Headteacher briefed Governors on the staffing and cost implications of employing an additional teacher, as would be needed for a new fourth class. She emphasised that with the recent changes in Class 1, the school is offering great advantages for Reception children which are being recognised by parents who come to look round the school.

i) A Governor queried whether it would be possible to approach parents who had made the school the second choice for their child, to see if they would be interested in joining Sutton. However, the Headteacher explained that this would not be possible and that 2nd choices would now have been confirmed.

j) The Chair asked at what point the school would be required to have a fourth class. The Headteacher stated that class sizes could not be greater than 30.

Governors agreed that the school has a good number of new starters this September and to return to discussions around class numbers in the Autumn term for academic year 2021-22.

k) Governors fed back to the Headteacher that there have been positive comments on social media and through word-of-mouth about the school. In a specific example, parents of children at the school had been very supportive and encouraging for a parent who was finding the challenges of home schooling and lockdown difficult. It was noted by Governors that there is a feeling of real community around the school.

Gov 12 Staff and pupil health and wellbeing

a) The Headteacher informed Governors that the staff are all managing the situation and looking out for each other. They have a WhatsApp group and keep in touch directly regularly. The Headteacher has ensured staff are not brought in to school if they are not needed.

b) There has been no face-to-face contact with the children by staff (except those attending) but the feedback from the parents is that the children are fine. Although work is being put on the Google Drive for the children, the Headteacher is emphasising that it is important to follow the children and not to force school work. A parent sought advice from the school and as a result the staff developed a folder of work specifically for their child and also made wellbeing advice available. The Headteacher has tried, through her newsletters, to reassure parents and show understanding of the challenges, including for those who are trying to juggle looking after children with full-time work.

c) Governors asked how families were managing the need for children to access the internet. The Headteacher explained that it has been possible, in some cases, for school ipads to be loaned to families.

Gov 13 Safeguarding

a) The Chair asked whether there were any vulnerable children, and if so how they were being supported and whether the Headteacher had documented actions taken. The Headteacher confirmed that this is in place and everything possible is being done to try to support such children.

b) Each child on the SEN register has been contacted regularly and a record of this contact has been made. Work has been set and individual needs have been met in cases where necessary. Mrs Fineran, as SENCO, has made SEND learning resources available and set up a dedicated area online with materials. This has been shared within the cluster.

Gov 14 Approval of Annex to Child Protection Policy

Governors approved the Annex unanimously.

Gov 15 Governor re-appointments

a) The Chair explained that parent governors who had reached the end of their term were being allowed to continue until a parent governor election could be organised.

b) The Chair therefore, with the support of Governors, asked Mrs Gale if she would be willing to continue on the Governing Body. Mrs Gale agreed. The Chair thanked Mrs Gale for this support.

c) The Clerk confirmed that no other Governors were approaching the end of their term of office.

Gov 16 Correspondence

None

Gov 17 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk

In response to a Governor query, the Clerk confirmed that it was not necessary to catch up on the meeting scheduled for March which had been cancelled due to the national lockdown.

Gov 18 Date of the next meeting

Date of next meeting: Wednesday June 17th 2020

Those present were thanked for their attendance. Meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Date: