

SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF URGENT MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 11th JUNE 2020 at 6:00 pm (via Zoom)

Additional meeting for urgent discussions

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), Mr G Redfern, Mrs T Comfort, Mr M Graham, Mrs J Fineran

IN ATTENDANCE: Christine Knights (Clerk)

Minute No. _____

Gov 1 The meeting had been called on an urgent basis to discuss full re-opening of the school and to seek approval for additional staff recruitment. The meeting agenda and information/ budget options had been circulated in advance to all Governors. The meeting was held via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Gov 2 Apologies had been received from Mrs H Morris, Mrs Gale and Mrs Craig.

Gov 3 Full school re-opening

The Headteacher summarised the arrangements for re-opening the school for all year groups. She confirmed that current arrangements (for reception, yr 1 and yr 6, plus key worker children, in 3 bubbles, with staggered lunches /drop-off) had been working well, that parental feedback had been positive and the children seemed happy.

a) A full risk assessment for full re-opening had been carried out and discussions with the school’s advisor had taken place.

- b) All parents had been contacted. All except nine children would be returning to school. Governors asked whether families could still opt-in at a later date, and the Headteacher confirmed that it had been made clear that the decision would need to be regarded as final, unless exceptional circumstances arose.
- c) The Headteacher described the practical and staffing arrangements for full re-opening from Wednesday 17th June. There would be 5 bubbles, including 2 bubbles using the school hall, playtime with the bubbles kept in five marked out zones in the playground, with their own equipment, staggered lunchtimes and staggered start-times. Two volunteers would be helping at lunchtime so that the teachers could have a break during the day. The Headteacher would not be allocated to a bubble to allow some flexibility.
- d) The school would be closed on Fridays for a full clean and to allow the teachers time for preparation and online work. If key workers' children had no alternative support available, they would be able to come to school and this bubble would be in the hall on that day, with the same teachers already working with this bubble.
- e) In response to a Governor query, the Headteacher stated that in the case of rain, the children would stay in their classrooms at lunchtime and lunch would need to be brought to them.
- f) The children already attending school would be kept in the same bubbles after re-opening on Wednesday.
- g) The Headteacher emphasised the importance of avoiding complacency and to this end had decided it would be necessary to put in place some tape to mark off areas in corridors and also direction arrows.
- h) The Headteacher commended the staff for their positive attitude and willingness to "go the extra mile".
- i) Governors joined the Headteacher in praising the staff.
- j) Governors congratulated the Headteacher and staff on the approach to the current crisis and their team's exceptional offer to the children and families.
- k) Governors approved school re-opening to all year groups but noted that the offer should be kept under constant review and that it should be made clear to families that there could be changes.

Gov 4 Staff recruitment

The Headteacher had previously reported to Governors that there had been a recent unexpected resignation. She explained that this had led her to rethink staffing plans for the Autumn term. In view of pupil numbers continuing to rise and also the impact of COVID-19 on schooling for children since March, the

Headteacher had decided to put forward plans for staff recruitment with a different class structure for Governor approval.

a) The Headteacher's preferred option would be to recruit a new additional teacher (NQT) and TA to allow the school to offer four classes: reception/yr 1, yr 2/3, yr 4, and yr 5/6.

b) The Headteacher noted that a four class structure had been discussed by Governors in previous meetings and identified as a preferred strategic approach, budget permitting.

c) In response to Governors' concerns that some parents prefer the school to offer a stable pattern of joint classes, the Headteacher explained the importance of ensuring a balanced number of children in each class to ensure high-quality teaching and learning, underpinned by a fair workload allocation for staff.

d) The Headteacher explained the need to ensure the class structure allowed the most effective and appropriate use of TAs as possible, for example including in providing support for children with EHCP or SEN.

e) Governors discussed the numbers of children currently in the school and the likelihood of an increase in September and in future years. The Headteacher noted that she is still receiving enquiries for places in academic year 20-21. The current position is that in September 2020 there will be between 81 and 83 children.

f) A flexible schooling request, based on some attendance and some home-schooling, was discussed in terms of a policy approach.

g) The Chair emphasised that the Governors' role was strategic therefore further clarification of the implications for the future of the school's financial position would be a priority.

h) Governors requested further clarification from the Bursar of:

- the funding allocation per child and the modelling used for budget calculations in future years

The different budget versions do not seem to reflect a specific budget allocation per child, therefore it is not possible for Governors to see how much difference an increase in school numbers would make, per child, going forward. There does not seem to be a further uplift per pupil as promised by the Government in 21-22.

- how the funding allocation per child is calculated by the LA
- Governors acknowledged the distribution of funding reflects levels of disadvantage, as outlined by the Bursar in the May meeting, however Governors would like more clarity on the implications for this school. The algorithm used must be dependent on pupil numbers but seems not to be so in a transparent way.

i) It was agreed that:

- Governors would send budget questions to Mrs Fineran, who would consolidate these and forward them to the Bursar. Mrs Fineran would then have a discussion with the Bursar and feedback at the scheduled Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting on 17th June.
- The Headteacher would provide the latest confirmed update on school numbers at the FGB meeting on 17th June.
- The Headteacher would in the meantime find out more information about local NQTs available to start in September 2020.

j) Governors agreed in principle to the recruitment of a new additional teacher and TA, subject to clarification of the budget position and the school numbers for September.

k) A final decision on the recruitment proposal would be taken in the FGB on Wednesday 17th June.

Gov 5 Date of the next meeting

Date of next meeting: Wednesday June 17th 2020

Those present were thanked for their attendance. Meeting closed at 7:00 pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Date: