

**SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND**  
**VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**GENERAL MEETING**  
**FINAL APPROVED MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2nd 2020 at 7.00 pm via Zoom**  
**FOCUS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT with budget update**

*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, Mrs H Morris

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Christine Knights (Clerk)

Minute No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Gov 1 Prayer**

The Chair opened the meeting with the School Prayer.

**Gov 2 Apologies for absence, consents and declarations of interest.**

**Reminders regarding confidentiality, gifts and hospitality. Notification of AOB.**

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

The Chair noted AOB items: update on FOSS finances and FOSS reports to the Governing Body.

**Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated October 21<sup>st</sup> 2020**

Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 with amendment to the date in Item Gov 3.

The minutes would be signed electronically by the Chair and filed in school.

#### **Gov 4 Matters arising from minutes and action plan dated October 21<sup>st</sup> 2020**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

#### **Action Plan**

Item 1 – on hold

Item 2 – Governors were reminded to send a brief biography to Mrs Berthinussen

Item 3 – remit of link governors included in monitoring schedule

Item 4 – OFSTED focus FGB tbc in 2021

Item 5 – SEN Annual Report 2019-2020 had been circulated and would be included on January agenda 2021.

Item 6 – HT would send the link to Chair for the contracts review

Item 7 – HT had sent the inventory of electrics work to Mr Redfern

Item 8 a – Governors to read KCSIS – all have now confirmed (school staff have recorded this on the school system, Governors have sent written confirmation by email to clerk).

Item 8 b – Basic Awareness training – Clerk had received written confirmation from several Governors who have completed this online training (school staff have recorded this on the school system). Clerk would contact other Governors to follow up whether this training had been completed.

In future the Google Drive could be used to record training by Governors.

Item 9 – to be done

Item 10 – the updated Child Protection Policy would be uploaded on to school website in December

Item 11 – to be done

Item 12 – monitoring schedule ready on Google Drive

Item 13 – scheme of delegation to Headteacher signed and filed in school

Item 14 – new Governors to be invited to join Committees

Item 15 – no new link roles had been suggested therefore this item would be removed

Item 16 – Veritau questionnaire not completed by HT due to staff absence requiring her to cover teaching

Item 17 – list of jobs for maintenance day prepared by HT and on Google Drive

#### **Gov 5 Chair's Opening Remarks**

There were no opening remarks.

#### **Gov 6 Order of business**

Governors agreed the order of business. The SEND report would be included in the January 2021 agenda.

#### **Gov 7 Budget update from Bursar**

## Budget monitoring

a) The Bursar informed Governors that the anticipated positive outcome at the end of 2020-21 would be slightly less than had been envisaged in the Start Budget (approximately £500 less). Staffing changes in the Autumn Term had initially indicated an end-of-year deficit however other changes had mitigated against this.

b) Positive changes had included an increase in SEN and Pupil Premium funding, a FOSS donation, reimbursement of costs associated with COVID and also COVID catch-up funding (the first tranche having been received this term and two further payments still to come). There would also be savings in utilities towards the end of the year. It was noted that there had been a resignation during the first lockdown.

c) The budget reflected a reduction in estimated income including from TreeTops and from school meals (although there would also be a reduction in costs associated with meals).

d) **A Governor questioned** the detail for school meals income and costs. The Bursar explained that the exact figure was not available yet. Schools were being 100% funded for universal free school meals for Reception, Yr 1 and Yr2 children for the full school year. Therefore school had income from meals, County had not made any charge, and therefore the net figure was a profit. With respect to catering staff, County had charged 60% of what would normally be charged to ensure that the service would be maintained.

e) **A Governor questioned** school meals costs. The Bursar stated that the charge for the school from County was £2.58 on the current one-year deal. School receives back £2.34 for universal FSM (Reception, Yr 1 and Yr2). Governors discussed whether, now that a move to Red Box was no longer under consideration, it would be good to set up a three-year deal. The cost then would be £2.54, therefore this decision was put on hold for the time being. The Bursar added that the quote from County was based on pupil numbers last year and an increase in admissions would lead to an increase in the number of meals and a reduction in price.

f) **A Governor questioned** the capital expenditure figures to establish whether County had yet taken the payment for the recent work on the electrics. It was confirmed that £2.5 k had been spent on whiteboards, £2k would be debited by County for the electrics and that the remaining budget would be spent on the playground. Governors discussed the need for County still to come back to complete a number of small jobs on the electrics, however it was noted that it would not be possible to withhold payment. The Headteacher would contact Alan Collier to follow up on the remaining work.

There were no further questions on budget monitoring.

**It should be noted that the Chair of Governors was not able to participate in this discussion due to problems with Zoom.**

## **Revised budget**

g) The Bursar explained that this budget had been prepared to inform Governors' discussions of future plans. It had been set using the latest North Yorkshire funding information, based on a minimum funding guarantee assumption of 2%. This year's pay awards, from September 2020, in the range 2.75% to 5.98% had been included, as had a 2.75% increase for support staff. Future incremental rises had also been included. The Bursar noted that the teachers' pay and pensions grant would be funded in the future through the National Funding Formula, at £180 per pupil. The COVID catch-up funding at £80 per pupil (in three tranches) had also been included in this revised budget over the two financial years included within this academic year. The budget was based on the up-to-date census figure, ie 86 children on census date 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. It was based on the assumption of a 15 pupil intake each year for the next 5 years. The Bursar confirmed that the forecast for the next 5 years was looking very positive. The school had moved from the threat of a deficit position to having a positive balance carrying forward. It was noted that the budget dropped in year 5 because the SEN and PP funding was not known.

h) The Bursar noted that staffing had increased but that the school's finances were covering this.

Governors approved the revised budget.

i) The Bursar confirmed that senior leadership development could be supported within the revised budget. She emphasised that the level of demand for places at the school demonstrated that the school needed the capacity to grow. This would be discussed further under Item Gov 9.

## **Benchmarking**

j) The Bursar explained that the benchmarking exercise was set against other North Yorkshire schools selected automatically on the basis of similarity in pupil numbers (chosen within the range 65 – 85 to reflect the school's 2019 census figure of 75 used in the exercise), numbers of children on FSM, pupil mobility and location (eg village school), and also only included schools that did not have a nursery. The benchmarking process formed part of the SFVS (school financial value standard) assurance and audit exercise (deadline end of March). The Bursar reported that the school was broadly in line with other schools in the sample, and where not, the reasons were clear.

k) Leadership costs seemed to be higher than average but this was because the school had a teaching head. HLTA and GTA costs also seemed higher than average but these staff covered gaps and supply costs were therefore lower than average.

l) The benchmarking showed that the delegated funding per pupil received by the school was over the national average although still at the lower end in this

sample due to other schools receiving higher pupil premium because of pupil mobility (services children) and also prior attainment. The Bursar noted also that the number of pupils receiving free school meals was low at the school.

m) The teaching costs per pupil were in line with the other schools. Admin costs were low but this was because in some schools admin staff cover the finance and Bursar role, whereas for Sutton these costs are not reflected in the admin costs. It was noted that sickness in 2019-2020 had been high. This was known and understood.

n) ICT learning costs were high relatively because of the large recent investment in this area. Building and maintenance costs were in line with the other schools, showing these to be well managed and under control.

o) The contribution to visits was high because the school organised trips and residential which some others do not.

p) **The Chair questioned** the selection of comparator schools because this meant that benchmarking was against different schools each time. The staff governor noted that she was familiar with some of the schools in this sample and confirmed that they were very similar to Sutton. The Bursar ensured that in each exercise, the schools in the sample were similar to Sutton, with the Sutton in the middle of the range in terms of size. The next benchmarking would include different schools, with pupil numbers from 76 to 96, because of the increase in pupil numbers at Sutton to 86.

Governors had no further questions and noted the report.

## **Gov 8 Headteacher Report**

q) The Headteacher introduced her report. She highlighted the excellent attendance of 97.72% for the period 4<sup>th</sup> September to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The Headteacher also noted the increase in numbers on roll to 88.

r) Staff updates. The Headteacher reported the resignation of Mrs Hunt, for personal reasons, and Governors joined the Headteacher in expressing gratitude for Mrs Hunt's wonderful contribution to the school. It was noted that Mrs Bird had now begun her maternity leave and Governors wished her well.

s) Governors discussed the school performance information. The Headteacher explained that predictions were based on teacher assessments. The Headteacher reported that Phonics assessments had now been completed and noted that although 75% was below national average in 2019, predictions had been accurate. In response to a Governor question, the Headteacher drew Governors' attention to the impact of 2 children with SEN in a small cohort (total 8 children).

**A Governor questioned** whether teachers had any concerns following the assessments. The Headteacher emphasised the challenge of predictions for

EYFS children and the difficulty of knowing how KS2 children would have performed had schooling not been interrupted due to COVID. Teachers had taken where the children were up to in February 2020 as the starting point for their assessments.

**The Chair of Governors left the meeting at this point to try to resolve internet problems.** Governors therefore changed the order of business to cover items 16 and 17 in his absence.

#### **Gov 16 Governor meeting papers: access to Google Drive demo**

t) The Headteacher demonstrated Google Drive. She would send instructions to Governors to clarify how to access the Governor folder.

Mrs Gale queried whether she had been allocated a school account and password. The Headteacher would follow this up.

**A Governor questioned** whether it would be possible for link Governors to have access to relevant folders eg literacy on the Google Drive. The Headteacher would investigate this possibility but noted confidentiality issues could be involved. The Headteacher would look into how and whether documents could be shared with link Governors through the Governor folder.

The Headteacher showed Governors how and where to record having read policies eg Keeping Children Safe in Education. It was agreed that this would be an efficient approach to record keeping for the Governor Body.

#### **Gov 17 Governor monitoring: how to access a tutorial on monitoring**

Headteacher would consider how best to use Google Classroom to support the Governor monitoring role.

**The Chair of Governors returned to the Zoom meeting at this point.**

#### **Gov 9 Senior leadership development**

u) It was noted that the Headteacher's performance management meeting had taken place and objectives for 2020-21 had been agreed.

Governors discussed the importance of opportunities for staff to progress in their careers through training and development. This would help retain the excellent members of staff working at the school now. Governors discussed the development of middle leaders in the school. The Headteacher noted the importance of having an identified person to stand in for her in her absence, a need which had been highlighted for example during her recent two week self-isolation under COVID test and trace requirements.

The Headteacher described possible approaches to building leadership in the school which had been confirmed as financially viable with the Bursar.

It was agreed that strengthened leadership capacity and development opportunities for staff were needed. This would be discussed further at the January Governing Body meeting with a view to implementation Easter/Autumn 2021.

v) **A Governor questioned** the need to continue operating with two bubbles in school. The Headteacher confirmed that it was becoming increasingly difficult for the older children, however she had been advised by County to continue with two bubbles to avoid having to close the whole school should a positive COVID test occur. A Governor noted that with siblings in the different bubbles infection could nevertheless spread across school. The Chair noted the importance of considering the pros and cons of continuing with two bubbles, given the impact on wellbeing and behaviour. The Headteacher emphasised that whole school activities were taking place, observing distancing, eg assembly, watching the Christmas play together, and a staff pantomime.

It was agreed that this issue would be reviewed regularly and included on all Governing Body agendas.

w) **A Governor asked** about staff wellbeing. The Headteacher noted that overall the staff were fine, but had the same ups and downs as everyone at the moment. A Governor described how confidential advice on wellbeing had been made available at his workplace. It was agreed that the Headteacher would send all staff a link to allow them direct access to mental health advice confidentially, through the school's health insurance.

#### **Gov 10 SEF**

Governors noted the report. Queries regarding recent assessments had been addressed under Item 8. There were no further questions raised.

#### **Gov 11 Safeguarding Annual Report**

Governors noted the report.

#### **Gov 12 Health and Safety**

The H&S advisor visit had been deferred to January at the Headteacher's request. There was nothing to report at this point.

#### **Gov 13 Premises**

The Headteacher reported on recent repairs and maintenance. It was agreed that Premises Governors Mr Redfern and Mr Graham would meet the Headteacher to review premises before the end of term.

#### **Gov 14 Veritau Questionnaire**

Deferred to the January FGB meeting due to sickness absence in school.

#### **Gov 15 Parent Governor election**

The Headteacher reported that one parent had been nominated for election, Mrs Drury and provided the Governing Body with a summary of her experience, noting that she was currently a member of the FOSS Committee.

In the case of the number of nominations being equal to or less than the number of places to be filled, then those nominated automatically become elected governors. Mrs Drury would therefore be welcomed to the Governing Body and invited to the next meeting. Mrs Berthunissen would be asked to take forward the necessary administrative processes.

#### **Gov 18 Sports Premium/Pupil Premium**

The Headteacher stated the Sport Premium spending document is not up to date as the 2019-2020 needs completing. The Pupil Premium report is still to be finalised.

#### **Gov 19 Policies**

**Pupils with Additional Needs**  
**Exclusion Policy**  
**Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy**  
**Child Protection Policy**  
**H&S Policy**  
**Behaviour Policy**  
**Medical Policy**  
**Fire Safety Policy**  
**Asthma Policy**  
**Appraisal Policy**

The Chair of Governors noted the need to include the date of approval and review date on each policy. He also commented on the need to add inserts to the Child Protection Policy which the Headteacher confirmed had been done. No further questions or comments were raised.

Governors approved these policies.

#### **Pay Policy**

The Headteacher stated that Governors' input was needed for this policy, for example in defining criteria for TLRs. It was agreed that the Headteacher would discuss the details of the policy with the Chair and Vice Chair. The policy would be brought back to the FGB in January for approval.

#### **Gov 20 Correspondence**

There had been no correspondence.



## **Gov 21 Any Other Business**

### **FOSS update and process for reporting to the Board**

x) The Headteacher reported that the Treasurer of FOSS would prepare a report annually to the Governing Body. Governors welcomed this and confirmed that this approach reflected correct procedure.

y) Governors noted that an update from FOSS to parents would be welcomed. The Chair of Governors would write to the Chair of FOSS to this effect. Governors agreed that it was important to establish that FOSS is an independent charity. It was noted that the administrative work carried out in school on behalf of FOSS could give rise to confusion about the role of school with respect to FOSS and that it would be useful if payments could be made by direct bank transfer to FOSS.

z) FOSS had recently donated £8k to the school and had further funding still available. The Headteacher emphasised how hard the FOSS committee volunteers work and how much this was appreciated. She reported that FOSS had raised £1500 through their Christmas initiatives. A Governor recommended including information on how FOSS funding had been spent in the school newsletter. Governors joined in praising the hard work done by FOSS.

## **Gov 22 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 7pm via Zoom Finance Focus**

The Chair of Governors recorded the Governing Body's appreciation of the more than 10 years' service for the school by Mrs Hunt and asked the Headteacher to pass on the Governing Body's thanks for all her hard work.

The Chair thanked Governors for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 21:20.

Signed:

Date: