

SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 10th 2021 at 7.00 pm via Zoom
GENERAL MEETING

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, Mrs H Morris, Dr Katherine Forsey

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 apologies for absence from Mr Mark Graham which were accepted. There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality. The Headteacher noted that her brother-in-law had designed a postcard which she would be sending out to the children.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

There had been no notification of AOB however several issues arose during the meeting: leaking roof, MASS scheme update, school re-opening, parental feedback.

Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature of the meeting dated January 20th 2021

Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on January 20th 2021, noting one amendment regarding follow-up with FOSS. See matters arising.

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

Gov 4 Matters arising from minutes and action plan dated January 20th 2021

It was agreed that the Headteacher would contact FOSS regarding their report to the Governing Body. The Chair noted that the report should follow the template used for the Charities Commission.

Action Plan updated on 20th January 2021

The Chair noted that Actions 1-16 had been reviewed in the FGB held in January and that there were no further updates to report.

Item 17 – Headteacher had shared the folders with Dr Forsey

Item 18 – Letter to parents re current situation was drafted. See Item Gov 5b.

Item 19 – Chair contacted NYCC re Stillington consultation. See Item Gov 5c.

Gov 5 Chair's Opening Remarks

a) The Chair noted that there seemed to be reason to hope that primary schools would re-open from 8th March. The Headteacher and Governors agreed that indications suggested this was a strong possibility. All agreed that children, parents and staff were very much looking forward to and needed a full return to school.

b) The Chair thanked Mrs Comfort for her input into drafting the Governors' letter to parents on the current situation.

c) The Chair reported that he had been in contact with NYCC's Mr Andrew Dixon to discuss the next stage of the consultation process regarding the proposal to lower the age range of Stillington Primary School to provide a nursery class. Following the discussion with Mr Dixon, the Chair had taken the decision to submit no further comments on the consultation. He did however write to Mr Dixon to reiterate the concerns he had raised in discussions with him over the last few months.

Gov 6 Order of business

Governors agreed the order of business.

Gov 7 Headteacher update

d) **Remote learning.** The Headteacher reported an improvement in general wellbeing again in the last couple of weeks although there was certainly "lockdown fatigue" and everyone was hoping and ready for school to re-open. Mrs Fineran and Mrs Morris both agreed: the routine was working well and there was clarity about expectations. The children enjoyed the Google Meets and uptake of remote learning was impressive: Yr 5/6, Yr 4 and Yr 3/2 were

very much involved in their learning and highly engaged. It was noted that the situation was more challenging for Reception and Year 1 children because ideally these children need someone to be with them to support their engagement in remote learning.

e) **Safeguarding.** The Headteacher stated that there were no safeguarding concerns currently. She noted the need nevertheless for ongoing focus on mental health for the children, parents and staff.

f) **SENCO.** Mrs Fineran reported that most children with SEND were in school. She had telephoned all the children not currently attending school to discuss whether school could do anything differently to support them. It was noted that one child with EHCP was at home and school had been able to provide face-to-face sessions during this lockdown period.

g) **Education Recovery Commissioner.** The Headteacher emphasised the importance of a long-term thought-through plan for education to deal with the impacts of the pandemic. Governors discussed the appointment of Mr Kevan Collins and expressed support for the broad approach he had outlined so far, particularly the importance of well-being in any recovery plan, and also the understanding that a variety of different options would need to be available and delivered differently locally. The Headteacher noted that the Headteachers' union was inputting strong and considered views on the way forward, and that options such as extending the school day and /or shortening school holidays reflected a knee-jerk reaction which was being unhelpfully highlighted in the media. The Chair emphasised that Headteachers know what is needed in their schools.

h) **Forward planning. The Chair questioned** what the children at Sutton on the Forest Primary would need in terms of recovery. The Headteacher stated that in 2021-22, whilst the Reception, Yr 1/2 would be taught as separate classes, they would be focused on as a single unit when appropriate in order to address need and impact on learning. This would allow the children to be grouped appropriately and taught correctly while still retaining the year groups which is very important for the children's self-esteem. The emphasis for all children would be to ensure their mental wellbeing was strong as this is fundamental to their learning. Mrs Fineran noted that it is a positive that most SEND children had been in school, but that she is conscious of the gaps in their learning. There must be recognition of the time and investment that would be needed to ensure the children were mentally healthy.

i) **Wellbeing. The Chair questioned** whether there were noticeable overt signs of mental health difficulties in any children. The Headteacher explained that some children were quite down and were facing long days with early starts at breakfast club and after school club too, so were tired. Some children were experiencing challenging times at home with family difficulties as a result of the pandemic's economic impact. Children were often missing their friends. Governors noted also that media coverage of the discussions around the need for children to catch up on their learning could cause anxiety for parents. Governors acknowledged their own experiences of children with emotions

nearer the surface than usual, and fully endorsed the importance of the messages around mental wellbeing.

Gov 8 Budget update

j) Governors noted the positive variance of £14k, which added to the brought forward balance of £4k, meaning that the expected out turn currently stood at £18k. The Headteacher stated that the reasons for this had been covered in detail in the January meeting, and included the resignations and a pension which was not being taken.

A Governor questioned what the apprenticeship levy was. The Headteacher explained that the levy allowed the school to fund a staff member in the apprenticeship scheme.

A Governor questioned what the Diocese “bought in service” was. The Headteacher explained that this referred to the SLA (service level agreement) for support from the Diocese.

The Headteacher noted that £6k would be taken from these budget figures to cover the deposit for the Early Years area.

k) The Headteacher had met the Bursar to begin to discuss the 2021-22 Start Budget. It had been agreed that the Bursar would prepare 2 budget scenarios, based on a pupil intake of 15. This would be circulated to Governors for discussion at the March FGB meeting.

Gov 9 PAN

l) The Headteacher asked Governors to consider numbers for the 2021-22 intake and the impact on future years. She had circulated the figures for pupils on roll moving forward. The Headteacher noted that although currently she was working on the basis of 16 children in Reception, there were still families who had not applied to any school, and she expected there to be at least 17 applications for the school.

A Governor questioned how many siblings there would be in the next two years. The Headteacher informed Governors that there would be 5 siblings in 21-22 and in 22-23.

A Governor questioned the implications of numbers going above 30 in a class. The Headteacher explained that schools were not allowed to have more than 30 pupils in a class in KS1, therefore at this number the class structure would need to be adapted.

The Headteacher noted that NYCC needed the school’s decision on whether the 21-22 intake would be capped, and advised Governors to set a cap of 17 this year, and then in future years 15.

Governors agreed to set the cap at 17 for the intake of 21-22.

m) Mr Redfern proposed two possible approaches to increasing the amount of classroom space available to allow the school to respond to increasing pupil numbers. It was agreed that Mr Redfern and Mr Graham would develop proposals which Governors would then consider taking forward with NYCC.

Mr Redfern would check whether there were any implications for internal work under listed building status.

Gov 10 Senior leadership development and staffing

It was agreed that this would be considered in the March FGB when Governors would have the Start Budget figures.

Gov 11 SFVS (school's financial value standard)

The Chair stated that there had been an extension to the submission date to 29th May. It was agreed that as the SFVS was almost ready, the Headteacher would follow up the notes highlighted by the Chair and submit as soon as the document was finalised.

Gov 12 Veritau update

The Headteacher reported on her meeting with Veritau. She had noted her disappointment that it had taken a year for Veritau to send their report to school. Since receiving the report, it had not been possible to take forward the work due to time pressures. The Headteacher confirmed to Governors that data training had been completed by staff.

The Chair questioned whether the school administrator could help. The Headteacher confirmed that she would be working with Mrs Berthinussen and setting aside a day to cover this.

Gov 13 FOSS annual report to Governors

See action under agenda item Gov 4.

Gov 14 SEND

-Annual report 19/20

n) Mrs Fineran, in her capacity as SENCO, presented the 19/20 report which had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting (doc: SEN Governor Report dated 2nd December 2020). The report included 19/20 and current data. Mrs Fineran highlighted that there are thirteen children currently on the school's SEN register, including two children with EHCP, equivalent to 14.7%. The national average for children with SEN on roll is approximately 13%.

o) Mrs Fineran outlined the procedure staff follow if they become aware of a child having additional educational needs, emphasising that parents are contacted and involved from the outset. Additional support is put in place, and the child is monitored. If the additional support is needed on an ongoing basis, the child would then be included on the SEN register. Currently two children were being monitored.

p) Mrs Fineran noted the primary areas of need in the school, which in most cases related to cognition and learning. In some cases this combined with other areas and a child would be supported across all areas in such cases.

q) Mrs Fineran discussed the attainment and progress data, noting that these were based on teacher assessments in 19/20 due to COVID. The outcomes were as expected for all the children. Mrs Fineran noted that the support targeted reading and writing, which were the greatest areas of need in school. She informed Governors that she had been looking closely at how children with SEN could be tracked at a more granular level, which would then allow the progress being made to be recorded, and also a clearer picture of the barriers to learning to be identified. The Headteacher added that due to COVID restrictions, possibilities for meetings and monitoring were limited to an extent, and therefore realistically the more granular approach would only be fully realisable from September.

-Whole School Provision Map

r) The Whole School Provision Map was circulated in advance of the meeting. Mrs Fineran noted the importance of Quality First Teaching. Mrs Fineran emphasised that good teaching for SEN children made good teaching for all children. She stated that Wave Two support included the current approaches in school but did not represent an exhaustive list of options. She explained that Wave Three was when more support was needed, and included for example one-to-one support, consultation with an education psychologist and also possibly EHCP.

This document would be included on the school website. Mrs Comfort thanked Mrs Fineran for the report and noted how clear and helpful it was. In response to a **Governor question**, Mrs Fineran agreed that Wave Three should include explicit mention of communication and interaction.

-SEND Information Report

s) Mrs Fineran stated that it is a legal requirement that this document exists and is on the school website. It is a report primarily for parents, and needs to be accessible to all. It names Mrs Morris as the SEN Governor. Mrs Fineran had audited the document against the Code of Practice. The document now required Governor approval.

Governors approved the SEND Information Report.

It would now be put on the school website.

SEND policy

t) Mrs Fineran explained that the policy had been updated and audited against the guidance.

Governors approved the policy.

It would now be put on the school website.

u) Mrs Fineran noted that the Accessibility Plan still needed to be finalised and then approved by Governors before going on the school website.

v) Mrs Fineran updated Governors on her experiences studying for the National SENCO Award course.

The Chair thanked Mrs Fineran and noted that it was evident that she put a lot of hard work and thought into her role as SENCO.

Gov 15 Correspondence

There had been no correspondence.

Gov 16 Any Other Business

w) Leaking roof

The Headteacher noted that the roof was leaking in the usual problematic area and that this was being addressed. Mr Redfern suggested making the surveyor Mr Mark Bennet aware of this. The Headteacher agreed and would recommend Mrs Berthinussen copied him in to emails.

x) MASS scheme (NYCC Maintenance and Servicing Scheme)

The Headteacher reported a change in MASS leadership and approach which suggested the scheme would be improved. She would be discussing this with the Bursar. Mr Redfern suggested establishing whether notice to leave in 2022 could be given now if the school committed to the scheme for a further year. The Headteacher agreed and would keep Mr Redfern informed.

y) School re-opening

The Headteacher advised Governors to expect new rules and guidelines if schools opened on 8th March. She would keep Governors informed and send the relevant documentation to them directly.

z) Parent feedback

The Headteacher expressed the appreciation felt by everyone in school for all the positive feedback and lovely messages being sent in by parents.

Gov 17 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 24th March 2021 7pm via Zoom

The meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Signed:

Date: