

SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
FOCUS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th JULY 2022 at 6:00 pm (in school)

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 Comfort (via Zoom), Mrs D Craig, Mrs J Fineran, Dr K Forsey, Mr Mark Graham, Mr G Redfern

IN ATTENDANCE: Christine Knights (Clerk)

Minute No. _____

Gov 1 Prayer and Welcome

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 had been received from Ms Porter. The apologies were accepted.

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair to be filed in school. An unsigned version would be made available on the school website.

Gov 4 Matters arising from the 15th June 2022 minutes and Action Plan

1 and 2. Contracts review. The Headteacher had tried several times to sign the Chair up to the NYCC system, however he still had not received a login. The Headteacher had recently contacted NYCC again.

3. Governor biographies on website. The Headteacher noted that all the updates were ready and would be done when the administrators have been shown how to do this by Mrs Berthinussen.

4. Buying in Business Manager services. The meeting in a local school for the school administrators to discuss this would now take place in September. It had been deferred due to COVID.

5/6. Learning walks and Autumn monitoring schedule. The Headteacher would be developing a monitoring schedule for the Autumn term.

7. Links between school and Easingwold Library. Mrs Comfort reported that although she had been tasked by the library to discuss extending the scheme whereby schools could borrow around 60 books a term (as had been piloted locally), NYCC had now decided not only not to extend the scheme to other schools but also to stop the scheme in those pilot schools. The justification given was that schools had been given money to purchase books when the previous arrangement with the library ended. Easingwold Library had asked Mrs Comfort to pass on their disappointment and apologies that the scheme would not be going ahead.

8. Circulate Reading Deep Dive report. The Headteacher had decided to send out this report after the visit by the NYCC Early Years Advisor, however this visit had been postponed to September. The Link Governor would be invited to join this meeting.

13. Insight login. All Governors except Chair confirmed having received this. Headteacher to request Chair's login again.

14. HT to invite Andrew Smith to talk to Governors re Academies. Governors discussed exploring approaches adopted by various Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) and also experiences of setting up a MAT. The Chair noted that the Governors' development of a strategy for the school would feed into any decisions. The Headteacher highlighted the need to take this forward with speed to ensure the school could take the lead rather than be required to join a particular MAT.

All other actions were ongoing.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes or action plan.

Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks

a) The Chair highlighted the very welcome news that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) had committed to provide a substantial gift to the school. This would be funding to be used as decided by the school. Governors expressed their huge appreciation and gratitude to the PCC. The Headteacher provided further information (see below).

b) NYCC had requested an explanation of the school's budget deficit in the Start Budget for 23/24 and 24/25. Governors had chosen not to include future sparsity funding for these years, because the amount to be received by the school was not yet known. This explanation would be provided to NYCC. It was agreed that an estimate of sparsity funding, based on the figure for 22/23 would be included in a revised Start Budget to demonstrate to NYCC the budget position if future sparsity funding is received as expected.

Gov 6 Order of business

The agenda was agreed.

Gov 7 Election of Chair

Governing Body's Standing Orders stipulate that the Chair of Governors should be elected each year. Professor Howard Hall was re-elected unanimously. There had been no further nominations.

Gov 8 Election of Vice Chair

Governing Body's Standing Orders stipulate that Vice Chair of Governors should be elected each year. Mrs T Comfort was re-elected unanimously. There had been no further nominations.

**Gov 9 Headteacher update and data review
Evaluation of progress against SDP
Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)**

a) Pupils. The Headteacher noted that transition for the Reception children had gone well, and outlined the classroom arrangements for September onwards. The Headteacher informed Governors that there would be one child leaving the school to complete primary school elsewhere this summer. The Headteacher noted that staff had worked hard to meet the needs of the child and they would be missed.

b) Finance. The Headteacher stated that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) had committed to providing a gift of £50k to the school and that there was also a possibility that further funds would be made available in the future. The Governors and Headteacher emphasised the importance of ensuring this money is used to address key priorities. The Headteacher emphasised the importance of improving the insulation of the outdoor classroom and other issues including the Year 5/6 classroom, decorating and lighting.

Dr Forsey and Mr Graham described ecopods and raised the possibility of exploring this approach as an option for the school. Mr Graham emphasised that the cost for a fully zero carbon, to meet current DfE (Department for Education) specifications, could be in the region of £250k but that cheaper options were also available. Dr Forsey stated that the PCC gift opened up the opportunity to source match-funding for projects.

The Chair questioned whether the NYCC capital budget for 22-23 had been fully spent. The Headteacher confirmed that this was the case.

The Headteacher requested approval for the PCC gift to be used to purchase much needed resources immediately. Governors agreed.

The Chair emphasised the importance of:

- developing a strategy for the school and then ensuring that funding is used in line with this strategy
- identifying a person with fundraising expertise to join the Governing Body to help maximise the opportunities provided by the PCC donation and to explore other sources of funding.

c) KS2 data The Headteacher had circulated a review of the data with a commentary highlighting issues to consider and next steps.

The Headteacher noted the following key points from the report. Year 6 children had not been in school full-time since they were in Year 3 but a greater percentage had achieved the expected standard in Reading, Maths, Writing and Science than the average for schools nationally. The percentage of children achieving the expected standard in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling was slightly below the national average. The Headteacher reported that no children in school had achieved Greater Depth in Reading and Writing. One child achieved Greater Depth in Maths. The Headteacher noted that national Greater Depth data was not yet available.

The Headteacher reported that the school had now invested in a new spelling scheme “Spelling Shed”. The Headteacher noted that nationally Writing had been impacted by the pandemic and had been the most difficult to work on through remote learning.

Mr Redfern questioned how this scheme differed from the scheme currently used, and whether it would be used throughout the school. Mrs Fineran, who had experience of the scheme from a parent perspective and was now exploring it from the teacher perspective prior to its introduction, explained that one advantage immediately was that it has a more user-friendly interface. The Headteacher confirmed that Spelling Shed would be used throughout the school.

Dr Forsey questioned whether there was evidence that Spelling Shed was a better scheme and would lead to improvements. The Headteacher outlined evidence from colleagues who had seen improvements in children’s work after using the scheme. The Headteacher and Mrs Fineran explained the importance of children understanding the purpose of their writing and the context, and that this would be supported by the Spelling Shed scheme.

The Headteacher drew Governors’ attention to the progress matrices. Maths was particularly solid.

The Headteacher had provided three previous years’ statutory assessments for Reading and Maths (pre-pandemic: 2017, 2018, 2019) for comparison.

The Chair questioned what lessons could be taken from the results and applied now to Yr 5 children. The Headteacher had highlighted next steps in her report and emphasised the importance of Writing being a focus across the whole school.

Dr Forsey questioned whether the issue with Writing related to motor skills. Mrs Fineran stated that prose creation was the key aspect needing focus.

The Chair questioned the extent of impact of the pandemic on KS2. The Headteacher stated that all schools have had the same experience but if schools' results had not been affected then it would be interesting to understand why not. Colleagues across the cluster, for example, had noted Spelling needing improvement and this would now be emphasised in KS1 in school.

In summary the Headteacher commented that considering the extent of disruption to education experienced by these children, the results were positive.

d) KS1 teacher assessment and test data. The Headteacher had circulated a review of the data with a commentary highlighting issues to consider and next steps.

Reading, Writing, Maths

The Headteacher explained that a test for Reading and Maths feeds into the teacher assessment, whereas Writing is entirely based on teacher assessment. The National data presented in the report was unconfirmed as yet.

Maths was meeting national standards at Expected and above at Greater Depth. Reading was slightly above national standards at Expected and below at Greater Depth. Writing was below national with only 3 children meeting Expected. The Headteacher reported that Writing was moderated internally and it was identified that stamina for Writing was the issue. The Headteacher emphasised the disruption experienced by the Yr 2 children, not only from COVID but also with a change of teacher mid-year.

Mrs Fineran outlined the strategy for Writing, which was as described in the discussion on KS2. She emphasised that these children have a lot of ideas and that the development of Writing just needed a little more time, particularly with respect to letter formation, joining and spelling. Dr Forsey noted that letter formation was not embedded because the Foundation stages had been impacted by the pandemic. Mrs Fineran described Little Wandle Phonics which had recently been introduced at a cost of £4.5k in Yr1 and Yr2, and for catch-up in other groups as needed, to improve letter formation and comprehension in Reading.

Dr Forsey questioned the staff support for Little Wandle Phonics. The Headteacher stated that the resources came with extensive staff training, and that in addition she was exploring ideas for an external trainer.

Mrs Comfort questioned how Governors could help. The Headteacher highlighted the importance of Governors coming in to school to talk to Subject Leaders and pupils (Pupil Voice).

Dr Forsey questioned whether there is a professional network for Reading, Writing and/or Maths along similar lines to STEM. The Headteacher stated that there was not, and that there was no Government funding for this. Although Maths was still included in STEM, the support did not meet the school's needs.

Phonics. The Headteacher had circulated the data. She noted that the Phonics results, at 87%, were above national average of 75.8% for Yr1. One-to-one focus for the children who did not reach the expected standard was in place and the children were making considerable progress already. Likewise in the Yr2 re-check, 67% had reached the expected standard and additional support was in place where needed now and going forward. No national standard was available yet for the Yr2 re-check.

Mr Redfern questioned whether results from the assessments were published. The Headteacher explained that this year, no schools specific data would be published by the Government, just national data. She added that in inspections, OFSTED would review the data but would focus on how the data was being used and catch-up.

The Headteacher noted the importance of parental involvement and their understanding of the new curriculum (to be launched in September), and on the Maths schemes and Spelling schemes for example. The Headteacher stated that all this information was on the school website. The Chair proposed a series of parent meetings but also emphasised the importance of avoiding overwhelming the staff with multiple parents meetings. The Chair asked the Headteacher to consider how this could be done. The Headteacher commented that she was also keen to encourage parents to come in to school to celebrate the children's work. Mr Graham commented positively on the school newsletter. D Forsey asked that Headteacher to consider how to include children on photographs without their faces showing in cases where necessary. The Headteacher noted that she would like children to take photographs of their own work to encourage their involvement in what they are learning and to keep a record.

Dr Forsey questioned whether the school had enough tables/iPads. The Headteacher confirmed there were enough and explained access to materials.

It was agreed that the curriculum should be included on the agenda of the Governing Body meeting in September.

e) NYCC advisor input/SEF

The Headteacher stated that the NYCC advisor had assessed the school as "Good". The Headteacher would give feedback to NYCC regarding the school's requirements for input from the NYCC advisor.

The Headteacher noted that she was confident that the children would continue to make progress supported by the approaches outlined above.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for her report.

Gov 10 SEND progress data report

Deferred to September.

Gov 11 Safeguarding

The Headteacher drew Governors' attention to steps taken with respect to a child who had been out of education now for 4 weeks. She expressed frustration at the response of NYCC and her attempts to contact the Attendance Officer and SEND Key Worker.

Dr Forsey questioned the extent of communication with the family. The Headteacher detailed her own work with the family and the child, and the staff's work with the child also. The Chair emphasised the need to document everything.

Gov 12 Sports Premium annual report

Deferred to September

Gov 13 Pupil Premium annual report

Deferred to September

Gov 14 FoSS Annual Report to Governors

Deferred to September

The Headteacher reported that FoSS were working hard to continue to attract involvement by more parents and that this was happening gradually.

The Chair questioned whether FoSS could engage more with parents at drop-off and/or pick-up. The Headteacher noted caution in approaching parents was needed and this could be counterproductive if parents were to feel they were being asked to do more than they could cope with.

Dr Forsey questioned how people could find out what was going on now that the WhatsApp group was no longer in use. The Headteacher noted the emphasis currently was on encouraging people to attend the meetings.

The Chair questioned whether the first parents' meeting to discuss the curriculum in September could also include input from FoSS. The Headteacher had scheduled this meeting for 2nd week of September. The suggestion was noted.

Gov 15 Governing Body Self-Evaluation

The Chair reminded Governors that a Self-Evaluation was needed annually. He circulated the NGA (National Governance Association) "Governing Board Self-Evaluation Questions: RAG rating guidance." Governors reviewed each of the 20 questions and then discussed the RAG rating and next steps to be added to the Action List from this Governing Body meeting.

It was agreed that the development of a strategy for the school was essential.

The Clerk would summarise the discussion. The Chair, Vice Chair and Headteacher would discuss how to take this forward. A discussion by the Full Governing Body would be scheduled in the Autumn.

Gov 16 Annual Governance Statement 2021-22

The Chair would draft the Annual Governance Statement 2021-22 and bring it to the Governing Body for approval in September.

Gov 17 Governor renewals and vacancies update

a) The term of office of the Staff Governor Mrs Fineran would end on 31st August. The Headteacher would initiate the Staff election process to establish if there were multiple interested parties. Mrs Fineran expressed a willingness to continue.

b) The term of office of Foundation Governor Mrs Craig would end on 2nd September. Mrs Craig would like to continue and therefore the Headteacher would contact the Diocese to confirm a further term of office for Mrs Craig.

c) Mr Graham confirmed that although he would no longer be a parent of a child in school, he would continue as a Governor if needed, until the end of his term of office. Governors agreed that this would be helpful.

The Chair thanked all for their support of the school.

Gov 18 Feedback from Governor visits

No visits had taken place since the last meeting.

Gov 19 Governor training: feedback/update on any planned training

Nothing to report.

Gov 20 Policies for approval

None.

Gov 21 Correspondence

None.

Gov 22 Any other business

None

Gov 23 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21st September 6.00 pm
General + focus on strategy

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.
The meeting closed at 8:30 pm

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Date: