

**SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND**  
**VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 AT 6.00 PM in school**  
**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 T Comfort (Deputy Chair), Dr K Forsey, Mrs J Fineran (Staff Governor), Ms J Porter, Mrs C Allan, Mrs S Hodgkinson

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

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

**Gov 1 Prayer**

The Headteacher opened the meeting with the new 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 interests, or of gifts or hospitality.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

There were no items for AOB.

**Gov 3 To consider the appointment of new co-opted governors**

Applications to join the Governing Body had been received from Mrs Caroline Allan, Mrs Sally-Ann Hodgkinson and Mrs Jane Reynolds.

Mrs Allan and Mrs Hodgkinson left the meeting while the Governors considered the applications. Mrs Reynolds had not been available to attend but would be available for the FGB in March.

The applications were discussed within the context of the Governing Body's priorities. It was unanimously agreed that all three applicants would be valuable members of the Governing Body. Mrs Allan and Mrs Hodgkinson were invited to re-join the meeting and their respective appointments for a 4-year term as Co-opted Governors were confirmed with immediate effect.

Mrs Reynolds would be informed that her application had also been successful and Governors looked forward to seeing her at the March Governing Body meeting.

**Gov 4 Approve minutes for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were approved. The final version of the minutes would be signed by the Chair, filed in school and put on the school website.

**Gov 5 Matters arising from the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 minutes and the Action Plan Action Plan update**

**1. Contracts review.** Removed from the Action List.

**2. Governor biographies.** The Headteacher would contact the website developer regarding uploading the Governor photographs and biographies on the school website. Governors were requested to upload their biographies and photos on the Google Drive. The Headteacher would provide the new Governors with school email addresses and Google Drive logins.

**3. Review of budget monitoring and services.** The Headteacher informed Governors that school would continue with a NYCC Bursar. She highlighted the competence of the school's NYCC Bursar assigned this academic year.

**4. Strategy.** Governors would discuss the strategy for the school in the March Governing Body meeting. The Chair noted that key elements of the strategy had been discussed by Governors already, including opening a nursery and also ensuring school is full to its capacity of 105 children. The Headteacher stated that it would be useful to develop the strategy linked with the OFSTED headings. She noted that the school was last inspected in 2018 and that an OFSTED inspection was therefore expected in the near future.

**5. OFSTED preparation.** The Chair and Headteacher had circulated guidance documents for Governors to use in preparing for Ofsted inspection.

**6. Surveys.** The Headteacher stated that Student Voice had been collected in discussions of curriculum and wellbeing. The Parent Survey would be discussed in this meeting's under agenda item Gov 8. The next step would be the Staff Survey.

**7. Annual Governance Statement 21-22.** To be done.

**8. Read KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) and Caspar briefing. Sign confirmation on Google Drive.** Governors were requested to confirm that they had read KCSIE and the Caspar briefing by signing the sheet on the Google Drive. The Headteacher would circulate the online presentation on KCSIE to all Governors.

**9. Subject leaders /Link Governors learning walks.** The Headteacher recommended that these would take place in the Summer Term.

**10. Early Reading report.** Headteacher to circulate.

**11. Register of business and personal interests. Disclosure declaration.** The new Governors were asked to sign the disclosure declaration and register of business/personal interests, and return these to the school office.

**12. Academisation discussion.** The Headteacher reported that she would be attending a Diocese briefing regarding the latest Government position on academisation. The Headteacher would feedback to Governors in March.

**13/14. Check Single Central Record. Ms Porter to visit HT and Mrs Fineran re Safeguarding.** Meeting arranged.

**15. Google Drive.** The Headteacher reported that she had ensured the Google Drive is up to date.

**16. Upload sign up sheet for KCSIE reading on Google Drive.** The Headteacher would check this is available. See also Action 8 above.

**17. Chair to write to unitary authority re yellow lines.** After April.

**18/19.** Completed.

**20. Publicise Governor vacancies.** Mrs Comfort had approached a local librarian. The Chair had written an article which would appear in the March issue of the Parish magazine. Governors offered to share the Governor vacancy information through Facebook if the HT uploaded it on the school FB page.

**21. Behaviour principles.** See agenda item Gov 13.

**22. Circulate subject action plans.** This action was clarified. The subject action plans would be sent to the relevant subject Link Governors.

**23. Add more information on implementation in the SDP (School Development Plan).** The Headteacher confirmed that this had been done.

## Gov 6 Chair's opening remarks

a) Welcome. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the two new Governors for joining the Governing Body and welcomed them to their first meeting.

b) The Chair thanked Mr Graham for his contribution to the Governing Body and the school as a Parent Governor and wished him well for the future.

c) The next meeting would focus on Vision and Strategy. Mrs Comfort requested a single subject meeting to allow proper time for this discussion. The Headteacher noted however that the March meeting was a Finance meeting and would therefore also need to include budget discussion.

d) The Chair confirmed with the Headteacher that the NGA Learning Link subscription was now in place. The Headteacher noted that the Chair needed to add all Governors as users to allow them access to the modules on the Learning Link. Mrs Comfort requested that Governors add any training completed by Governors to the spreadsheet on the Google Drive.

No further opening remarks.

## Gov 7 Order of business

There were no changes to the agenda.

## Gov 8 Headteacher update

**a) Pupil numbers.** The Headteacher reported that there had been 12 applications for Reception 2023. The Headteacher noted that applications to local schools are lower this year because of a low birth rate. The total on roll at the moment was 94. A new child had joined Yr5, one was due to leave because of living too far away and another new child would be joining soon.

**A Governor questioned** whether the school had a waiting list. The Headteacher explained that there is a waiting list for KS1 but there were no spaces in this part of the school.

**A Governor questioned** whether the school would consider raising the PAN (published admission number) in the higher birth rate year expected in 2024. The Headteacher commented that would be for discussion at the time.

**b) Parent questionnaire.** The Headteacher shared the results on screen in the meeting. The response rate was in the region of 70%. The Governors highlighted that the responses were overall positive.

Governors noted that a survey is useful for those who do not feel comfortable coming in to school or are not available to do so, as well as allowing anonymised feedback. The Headteacher stated that she encouraged parents

to raise any questions or concerns with her directly. Governors with children at the school confirmed this.

Governors welcomed that respondents agreed that their child feels safe and is happy at school.

Governors noted the majority of parents responded positively to the statement that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. The Headteacher provided Governors with assurance that she understood the input from a couple of respondents who did not agree with this statement.

**Governors questioned** why a response of “don’t know” could occur with respect to whether the school dealt with bullying effectively. One possibility discussed could be that these respondents had had no experience of this.

**Governors questioned** whether the focus of information from the school on what the children would be learning during the year was sufficient. The Headteacher showed Governors the area of the school website where the curriculum for each subject is available. Governors suggested sending the link to this content to parents and including the link in the newsletter. Governors with children at the school emphasised how useful parents’ meetings are and noted the weekly information provided through the school newsletter. A Governor suggested the possibility that academic aspects needed to be covered more in the newsletter. The Headteacher would consider information sharing with respect to future lessons and activities and thanked the Governors for their suggestions.

**Mrs Fineran (SENCO)** explained that the numbers of responses to question 7 and 8 suggested that respondents had not understood whether question 8 referred to all parents or the parents of children with SEND only. Governors suggested follow up with parents of children with SEND directly.

The Headteacher noted that the school has high expectations for the children and that this needs to be conveyed more clearly. The Chair stated that this needs to be in the school vision.

The Headteacher informed Governors that there is a good range of subjects offered at the school as compared with other schools. Governors also highlighted the good range of clubs.

The Chair concluded by emphasising that overall the feedback from parents had been extremely positive. The Headteacher thanked the Governors for their suggestions on next steps. Governors noted that the questionnaire feedback would be taken on into their discussions developing the school vision and strategy.

**c) Curriculum.** The Headteacher reported on NYCC SIA (School Improvement Advisor) Art deep dive. It had been very useful and good experience for the member of staff. The Headteacher explained that a scheme is used for Art, Music and DT to ensure the curriculum provides for

skills progression. The SIA had emphasised the importance of following the scheme fully rather than selecting from it. The Headteacher noted the need to ensure that the school's values are reflected across the curriculum and that Subject Leaders would be working on this in their next sessions on curriculum development. Dr Forsey recommended looking at the school values which link with specific curriculum areas. The Headteacher stated that Subject Leaders would be focusing on monitoring in the Summer Term and would work with Governors on this. The SIA recommended including children's comments ie Pupil Voice, in the curriculum displays. The next deep dives to be carried out by the SIA would be History, Computing and Inclusion.

## **Gov 9 Budget update**

The December budget monitoring had been made available to Governors on the Google Drive.

### **a) Diocese donation**

**Governors questioned** the impact of the £50k donation from the Diocese on the carry forward figure. It was agreed that further details would be discussed with the Bursar in the next meeting. The Headteacher emphasised the £35k ring-fenced for resources.

Governors highlighted that the Governing Body meeting minutes recorded the information on the donation and its use, and that all Governing Body meeting minutes are available on the school website. Governors noted that this was sufficient in terms of public information provision currently.

### **b) Support staff**

The Headteacher emphasised the importance of support staff. Governors agreed that budget provision for support staff must be protected and emphasised SEND support and absence support. The Headteacher stated that she provides absence cover herself as much as possible to keep supply staff costs down.

The Headteacher stated that another TA would be in the Yr1/2 classroom after the half-term break.

**A Governor questioned** whether this was from within the existing staffing team. The Headteacher confirmed this was the case and emphasised the importance of the existing ability to flex where TA staff are in the school.

### **c) School maintenance**

The Headteacher emphasised the extent to which efforts are being made to keep costs down but quoted as an example a £400 charge for changing two locks on the toilets.

**Governors questioned** whether it would be possible to involve parents, for example by organising a maintenance day. The Headteacher would consider this. She also noted that new grounds staff were needed.

**A Governor questioned** when the drive would be repaired. The Headteacher explained that full resurfacing would have taken all the Summer holidays and all the capital budget, therefore just the potholes would be filled in.

**A Governor questioned** whether solar lighting could be used to improve the lighting outside. Governors discussed energy efficiency generally and the Chair informed new Governors about the Government grant of £11k for improving energy efficiency. The Headteacher emphasised the massive energy costs.

#### **Gov 10 Strategic spending update**

The Headteacher updated Governors on the quotes received for fencing of Yr1/2 area. It was agreed that although more expensive, the detail and known high quality work of one contractor meant his quote would be taken forward. The Headteacher would submit the necessary 3<sup>rd</sup> party transaction documentation.

#### **Gov 11 OFSTED: governor preparation and questions**

The NGA Ofsted guide had been circulated. The Headteacher had also provided a document from the Key titled "Questions Ofsted might ask Governors". The Headteacher highlighted the Safeguarding questions in the document from the Key. The Chair commented that the questions from the Key were more operational and that the NGA Ofsted guide provided a useful generic view on what Governors need to know.

**Governor question:** a Governor noted that a practise session for Governors would be very useful and asked whether this would be possible. The Headteacher would look into this and contact colleagues for example questions.

The Chair stated that Ofsted would be looking for whether the Governors know the school, whether they challenge the Headteacher and whether they have looked at their subjects. The Headteacher emphasised how well the Governors know the school. Mrs Comfort emphasised that Governors needed more knowledge on the subjects. The Headteacher informed Governors that Ofsted visits were lasting two days, even if the school had previously been rated Good or Outstanding.

#### **Gov 12 Safeguarding: audit approval and update**

a) The Headteacher had completed the Safeguarding Audit. The Headteacher recommended that she and the Safeguarding Governor Ms Porter would review the document in detail. The audit would then be on the agenda for approval by the full Governing Body in the March Governing Body meeting.

b) The Headteacher had recently completed Operation Encompass training, a 2 hour training on domestic abuse and the role of schools working in partnership with the police. One of the principles of Operation Encompass is that all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with schools, not just those where an offence can be identified. The training covered how this would be implemented. Mrs Carter would also be doing this training.

c) Positive handling training. The Headteacher explained the importance of this training to ensure safeguarding, including for staff. All staff completed this training.

d) The Headteacher noted that the new Governors needed to record their most recent safeguarding training if appropriate or ensure they completed the Safeguarding and Prevent online training. The Headteacher would send the link for this training to the new Governors.

### **Gov 13 Behaviour principles**

a) The Chair explained that the Governing Body needed to provide clear advice and guidance to the Headteacher on what is expected in terms of behaviour in school and beyond the school gates, and empower the Headteacher to develop and implement the policy on the basis of the principles agreed by Governors.

b) Mrs Comfort and Ms Porter noted that while the policy should allow an individualised approach and flexibility, the underlying principles would not be flexible.

c) Dr Forsey emphasised the importance of the policy being fairly and consistently applied, and monitored. The different ways in which Governors could monitor the behaviour policy were discussed eg observations in school, discussions with staff, challenge of the Headteacher in cases of observations not reflecting the principles.

d) Governors discussed the underlying principles for the Behaviour Policy using examples from other schools to prompt discussion. Key principles identified were: high expectations for behaviour, respect, compassion, right to be heard, right to learn free from disruption, right to safe learning, right to be free from discrimination, an inclusive community, partnership with families, fairness and equity, violence or threatening behaviour would not be tolerated, friendship and perseverance. The school's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of safeguarding pupils with SEND and all vulnerable pupils need to be set out in the Behaviour Policy and known to all staff. The Governors must be satisfied that the measures outlined in the Behaviour Policy are lawful.

The next step would be for the Headteacher to develop the Behaviour Policy on the basis of these principles.

### **Gov 14 Subject leader /Governor links. Governor monitoring planning and feedback.**

The Headteacher welcomed the opportunities to link the new Governors with Subject Leads. She noted that Monitoring would be the priority in the Summer Term. See also agenda item Gov 8c.

### **Gov 15 Governor training**

Sutton on the Forest Primary School Feb 2023 FGB minutes approved by Governing Body  
March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023

The Chair noted that he would meet with the new Governors to begin their induction. The Clerk would also provide information to the new Governors as part of the induction once their school email addresses were confirmed.

**Gov 16 Governor vacancies**

See agenda item Gov 5 item 20 for update on ongoing recruitment initiatives.

**Gov 17 Policy approval**

There were no policies submitted for Governor approval.

**Gov 18 Correspondence**

None. The Chair highlighted that in his 5 years as a Governor there had been no complaints received on any issue and emphasised that this was very much thanks to the Headteacher.

**Gov 19 AOB**

None

**Gov 20 Date of next meeting: Wed 22nd March 2023 Resources.  
To be held in school**

Dr Forsey submitted her apologies for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:30 pm.

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

Date:

**List of papers circulated and on the Google Drive for this meeting:**

Governor applications x3  
NGA Engaging Parents  
NGA Ofsted Guide  
NGA View from the Board  
NYSCP School Safeguarding Audit Tool  
NGA Effective Behaviour Management  
School Behaviour Principles x2 examples (Snaiton and Upper Wharfedale)  
December Budget Monitoring  
Questions Ofsted might ask Governors. Source: the Key  
DfE Behaviour in schools. Advice for headteachers and school staff.  
DfE Behaviour and discipline in schools.