

SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
WEDNESDAY 22nd MARCH 2023 AT 6.00 PM in school
FINANCE/RESOURCES

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), Mrs C Allan, Mrs S Hodgkinson, Mrs J Reynolds

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.

Apologies for absence from Mrs Fineran, Ms Porter and Dr Forsey due to work commitments were accepted.

There were no declarations of interests, or of gifts or hospitality.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

There was one item for AOB: the Children’s Society.

Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 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 4 Matters arising from 8th February 2023 minutes and Action Plan update

1. Governor biographies. In progress. More governor photos/biographies have been added to the school website.

2. Governors to develop strategy for the school. Agenda item Gov 11.

3. OFSTED preparation. Meetings between subject leaders and governors to be arranged either in the following week or in the Summer Term. See agenda item Gov 13 and update on item 7 in action list below.

4. Surveys. Staff survey to be carried out.

5. Annual Governance Statement 21-22. Chair noted that this action was ongoing.

6. 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 by signing the sheet on the Google Drive. For the benefit of new Governors particularly, the Headteacher demonstrated how to use the Google Drive. The Clerk would re-circulate the email with links to KCSIE, Basic Safeguarding Awareness and PREVENT training, the school's Child Protection Policy and the links to the sign-up sheets on the Google Drive.

7. Subject leaders /Link Governors learning walks. The Headteacher noted that subject leaders would have timetabled time in the following week and meetings with link governors could be arranged then rather than waiting until the Summer Term. She would circulate the list of subject leaders.

8. Early Reading report. Headteacher confirmed this had been circulated.

9. Academisation discussion. The Headteacher reported that the Government position had changed. It was agreed that this no longer therefore remained a current priority for detailed consideration.

10/11. Check Single Central Record. Ms Porter to visit HT and Mrs Fineran re Safeguarding. The Headteacher reported that Ms Porter had visited the school. The Single Central Record had been checked by the Office Manager in March 2023. See also agenda item Gov 7b and Gov 10.

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

13. Chair to write to unitary authority re yellow lines. After April.

14. Circulate subject action plans to Link Governors. See item 7 above.

- 15. Circulate new school prayer.** Headteacher action.
- 16. Provide school email address and Google Drive login to new Governors.** Completed.
- 17. Circulate online presentation to KCSIE to all Governors.** Completed.
- 18. New Governors to sign disclosure declaration and register of business interests, and return these to the school office.** In progress.
- 19. Add all Governors to NGA Learning Link as users.** Chair had problems accessing his account and needed to telephone NGA to resolve this.
- 20. All Governors to add their training to the Google Drive.** This is an ongoing action and would be deleted from the Action List.
- 21. HT to update Governors on next steps following up on parent survey.** The Headteacher highlighted the actions taken around communication, notably through additional information in the school newsletter. Further initiatives to follow up on the parent survey would be included in the SEF (School Self Evaluation Form).
- 22. School maintenance day.** The Headteacher would take this forward.
- 23. Submit 3rd party transaction documentation.** This had been circulated to Governors with the meeting papers and attached to the SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard).
- 24. Contact local colleagues for examples of Ofsted inspection questions.** In progress. A local school was currently being inspected by Ofsted.
- 25. Practise session for Governors to prepare for Ofsted.** The Headteacher would circulate possible dates.
- 26. SG audit for approval in March.** See agenda item Gov 10.
- 27. Send link for SG and Prevent online training to new governors.** Links sent. Clerk would recirculate.
- 28. Chair to meet new Governors for informal discussions as part of the induction process.** Chair to send dates.
- 29. Send information on NYCC training to new governors.** Clerk to do. Governors to book training through school office.

There were no further updates to the action list.

The Headteacher asked the new Governors if their DBS applications had been submitted. She noted that a new application was still needed even if

they had a DBS from another organisation. All DBS applications were in progress.

Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks

a) The Chair noted that he had not received any interest in the governor role following publication of his article in the latest Parish newsletter. The Headteacher stated that a member of staff was interested in joining the Governing Body. The Headteacher would approach the Diocese to find out whether a member of staff could be a Foundation Governor.

b) The Chair noted that Mrs Comfort's term of office as a co-opted governor had come to an end and thanked her for agreeing to continue for a further term (March 20th 2023 to March 19th 2027).

A Governor questioned whether there was a limit on the number of parents who could be members of the Governing Body. The Chair noted the challenges of attracting people with no children in the school to volunteer as Governors but also emphasised the importance of seeking to achieve as diverse a Governing Body as possible.

No further opening remarks.

Gov 6 Order of business

There were no changes to the agenda. Mrs Comfort requested an item of AOB to share information on the Children's Society.

Gov 7 Headteacher report and update

The Headteacher had circulated a written report with the meeting papers. She highlighted the following areas, and invited questions.

a) Pupil numbers

91 children on roll.

There had been 12 applications for Reception. There would be one leaver and one joiner for Year 3.

A Governor questioned whether it was a low birth rate year and whether this had had an impact on applications. The Headteacher confirmed that this was the case and noted the impact locally and nationally. The Chair highlighted that applications even this year are significantly improved in comparison with five years ago.

b) Safeguarding (see also Gov 7j and Gov 10)

The Headteacher provided a written update in her report and noted to Governors in the meeting that there were no Safeguarding concerns.

She stated that one child is under a "Child in Need" plan but that there were no Safeguarding concerns with respect to the child.

A Governor asked the Headteacher to explain what a “Child in Need” plan is and the implications. The Headteacher provided general examples of the sorts of circumstances where such a plan is put in place and the organisations that could be involved.

The Headteacher stated that a Safeguarding Health Check had been carried out by NYCC in December 2022 and that the Office Manager had checked the Single Central Register (SCR) in March 2023. Ms Porter, the newly appointed Safeguarding Governor, had visited the school in March 2023. Discussions with Ms Porter had included the SCR, attendance and CPOMs (the Safeguarding software used by school).

c) Attendance

The Headteacher briefed Governors on the emphasis on the importance of attendance nationally and a recent focus on attendance by the school’s NYCC School Improvement Advisor (SIA). The Headteacher highlighted the good attendance at the school, including for children with SEND and EHCP. The Headteacher’s report included attendance data for September to March for all pupils, pupil premium children, pupils with SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities), pupils with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) and a national comparison.

The Headteacher highlighted the importance of pupils arriving at school on time. The SIA had questioned the Headteacher on the school’s approach to lateness when she observed a pupil arriving late. The Headteacher noted that the Attendance Policy for approval in this meeting aimed to clarify this issue. The Headteacher explained the process and expectations in the case of a pupil being late for school.

A Governor questioned whether there would be reasons for lateness which would be accepted as valid. The Headteacher confirmed that this would be the case.

The Chair questioned when the Headteacher would become concerned about the level of attendance in individual cases. The Headteacher stated that below 95% attendance is a concern. There are currently 4 children who are persistently absent but the Headteacher has knowledge of the situation for each of these children.

The Chair emphasised that attendance is an important national issue at the moment and that the Headteacher is responding to the national issue. The Headteacher stated that she does not have concerns about attendance at the school but she does however have concerns about lateness and the impact this has on the child and the rest of the class in terms of disruption.

d) Staff

The Headteacher report included information on staff roles and responsibilities, appraisal and monitoring, and CPD (continuous professional development). Governors had no questions.

e) Premises

The Headteacher highlighted the ongoing problems with the front doors, water heater and boiler and the length of time she had been waiting for a response from NYCC on these issues having led to her decision to order doors privately. The details were all provided in the Headteacher's report. Governors agreed that NYCC were not providing a satisfactory service under the maintenance scheme and supported the Headteacher's decision to approach Simon Quartermaine to discuss the Diocese Property Maintenance Scheme.

The Chair questioned whether the Headteacher was keeping a log documenting the issues and the Headteacher confirmed that she was doing so.

The Chair questioned whether the recently introduced new NYCC maintenance contact was a rolling programme as school had been given to understand. The Headteacher would continue to seek to clarify the situation with regards leaving the NYCC scheme. Governors continued to discuss this in the context of Health and Safety (see below).

The Headteacher noted that there were a number of small jobs eg new wire on a part of the fence at the back of the school, which needed to be carried out. Mrs Comfort recommended Rob Delaney.

A Governor questioned whether the need for part of the wire to be replaced presented that a child could get through the fence. The Headteacher stated that children could not get through.

A Governor questioned whether it was possible to have solar lighting for the path from the playground to the road. It was noted that the need for lighting on this path had been discussed previously and Governors agreed that solar lighting could be an option as this had been used successfully by some village residents. The Headteacher would pursue this later in the year.

Mrs Comfort emphasised that it was important for Governors to note that the Headteacher has a plan for the premises. Governors welcomed the Headteacher's aim to organise a maintenance day for May.

f) Health and Safety (H&S)

The Headteacher reported that the NYCC H&S advisor was still absent due to sickness and that no replacement advisor had been appointed. The Chair stated that this was an unacceptable situation.

A Governor questioned when the last H&S inspection had been carried out. The Headteacher stated that H&S inspection was last carried out in July 2022, and the fire safety inspection had also been carried out in July 2022. The Chair noted that NYCC needed to be informed that they were in breach of contract. Mrs Allan noted her relevant legal expertise and offered support.

g) School Development

The Headteacher emphasised that the school was due to have an Ofsted inspection and outlined what would be involved, including what would be expected of Governors. The Headteacher emphasised that the Ofsted inspectors would look for evidence that the school's self-evaluation was accurate. The Headteacher had circulated the latest update of the SEF (Self

Evaluation Form) and she talked Governors through the details. The Headteacher noted that both Maths and Early Years were strengths of the school. The Headteacher highlighted how Little Wandle was being used in school to support Phonics and Reading, including for assessments and follow up. The Headteacher noted KS1 Writing as an area where improvements had been needed after the pandemic and that the Ofsted inspectors would be looking at Yr3 children and any ongoing impact from the disruption caused during the pandemic. The Headteacher emphasised that the Ofsted inspectors would be looking at all the subjects offered by the school.

The Headteacher described arrangements in place to ensure subject leaders had time for their work on the curriculum. Governors were encouraged to contact subject leaders.

A Governor questioned what kind of evidence of impact inspectors would be looking at. The Headteacher stated that the inspectors would talk to the children and look at their books with them, including children with SEND and EHCP. The Headteacher noted that teachers used quizzes to support and embed learning and that these would be evidence of impact. The inspectors would not request internal data, but she would have data available.

A Governor questioned how many days the inspection would last. The Headteacher explained that a change of grading was not expected therefore this type of inspection, known as an “ungraded inspection,” would usually last one day. A two day inspection would take place if a change of grading was being considered.

The Chair described the Governors’ experience of the most recent inspection. There was a one hour meeting and the discussion had been quite general. The Headteacher highlighted that the discussion in this inspection would focus on the curriculum.

h) Attainment and Progress

The Headteacher had included an update on phonics assessments for children in Reception and Year 1, the good progress of Year 6 children towards SATS and the pupil progress meetings scheduled for the last week of term.

A Governor questioned whether this would be the last year for Year 2 SATS. The Headteacher confirmed this. Governors discussed with the Headteacher how children’s progress would be measured going forward.

i) Finance

The Headteacher stated that the capital funding to improve energy efficiency would be used for the replacement front doors as already discussed in previous Governing Body meetings. See also agenda item Gov 8 below.

j) Safeguarding and wellbeing (see also Gov 7b and Gov 10)

The Headteacher reported that there had been an incident involving a neighbour. The incident was discussed by the Governing Body and further external guidance had been sought on the matter.

k) Extra Curricular activities, community links

The Headteacher had provided a list of recent and upcoming activities. Governors who had children in the school shared the positive experiences of the recent Science week, and the positive impact of parents coming in to school to share their knowledge with the children. Governors welcomed the range of extracurricular activities provided for the children.

Gov 8 Budget update

The January and February budget monitoring had been made available to Governors on the Google Drive and via email with the meeting papers.

The Headteacher stated that these reports indicate that the school's finances are as expected at this point in the academic year. She had nothing of note to report to Governors. The Headteacher confirmed that the Bursar Sian Carling would be attending the next Governing Body meeting in May.

Governors noted the Headteacher's update and the monitoring reports.

Gov 9 SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard)

The Headteacher noted that there were no noteworthy differences between this document and the SFVS submitted last year. The SFVS had been circulated. Governors had no questions or comments.

Governors approved the SFVS. The Headteacher would submit it.

Gov 10 Safeguarding: audit approval and update

a) The Safeguarding audit had been circulated. It had been reviewed and discussed with the Headteacher by Ms Porter, the Governor Safeguarding Lead. Governors had no questions.

Governors approved the Safeguarding audit.

b) The Safeguarding update had been included in the Headteacher's written report and discussed in agenda item Gov 7b and Gov 7j.

Gov 11 Vision and Strategy

a) The Chair introduced this item, noting the documents circulated to Governors and highlighting how the Governors' strategy for a school should underpin the School Development Plan and the Self-Evaluation Form. The Chair described how the vision might include ideas about, for example, what is offered by the school and about the school premises. The Chair invited Governors to share their ideas.

b) Mrs Allan highlighted the idea of opening a nursery. For the benefit of the new Governors, the Chair and Headteacher provided an outline of discussions on the idea of opening a nursery with the Local Authority and local pre-school providers to date. The Chair noted that the Government had recently stated that all schools should have pre-school provision. Governors agreed that the idea should be explored again given changes in the national discussions and the local situation. Mrs Hodgkinson noted her experience of opening nursery schools.

- c) The Chair proposed the following ideas for the strategy and vision:
- Replace temporary buildings and have permanent structures to house Early Years provision
 - Pupil numbers over 90 (currently at 94)
 - Move to using renewable sources of energy
 - Achieving at least Good in Ofsted and SIAMS inspections
 - Offer a broad and balanced curriculum.
 - Prepare children for secondary school and for life

The Chair noted that although certain of these elements were already in place, such as the broad and balanced curriculum, they still needed to be stated in the Strategy and Vision.

d) The Headteacher highlighted the need for Governors to think about whether an option to federate with another school would be considered, if the opportunity were to arise. The Chair and Headteacher provided information on recent local initiatives involving federation and/or headteacher sharing for the new Governors. The Chair and Headteacher also explained sparsity funding and their concerns with respect to the allocations.

e) The Vice Chair, Mrs Comfort, shared her hope that in 5 years' time the school buildings would have been renovated to a good standard so that ongoing maintenance issues which take up so much Headteacher time now would no longer be a concern.

f) Mrs C Allan and Mrs J Reynolds emphasised the importance of linking up with local pre-school organisations to ensure the children have opportunities to come into school. The Headteacher assured Governors that she was in contact with the local playgroup and would ensure that the open invitation to bring the children into school was followed up. This used to happen but it had come to a stop during the pandemic.

g) The Chair offered to draft a Strategy based on the discussion and Governors agreed that this would be a helpful next step.

Gov 12 Policy approval

a) Behaviour principles

These had been based on Governors' discussion in the February Governing Body meeting. There were no further questions or comments.
Behaviour principles agreed by Governors.

b) Attendance policy

This was discussed by Governors under agenda item Gov 7c. There were no further questions or comments.
Attendance policy agreed by Governors.

Gov 13 Governor update (vacancies/training/link roles)

Governors reviewed committee and link role vacancies. The Clerk would update the document and circulate it to all.

The Headteacher would circulate the list of subject leaders so that Governors could arrange to meet them as soon as possible. See also agenda item Gov 4.

Gov 14 Correspondence

None.

Gov 15 AOB

Mrs Comfort informed Governors about services provided by the Children's Society following on from a talk she had attended in the village. Mrs Comfort passed the information to the Headteacher, noting in particular that their work on wellbeing might be of interest to the school.

Gov 16 Date of next meeting: Wed 10th May 2023 Resources. To be held in school

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Date:

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

1. Draft agenda
2. Sutton on the Forest Feb 8th 2023 draft minutes
3. Action plan Sutton on the Forest FGB 8th Feb 2023
4. HT report March 23
5. SEF 2022-2023 March 23

6. Budget monitoring reports for January and February 2023: summary and detail (cont)
7. SFVS 2022-23
8. RPTs at 14.03.23
9. NYSCP School Safeguarding Audit v2 2022-12-14
10. NGA Guide to Being Strategic (Oct 2020)
11. Vision and Values Examples
12. Written Statement of Behaviour Principles March 2023
13. Attendance Policy March 2023