

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MAY 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 J Fineran (Staff Governor), Dr K Forsey, Mrs C Allan, Mrs S Hodgkinson, Ms J Porter, Mrs J Reynolds

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Christine Knights (Clerk), via TEAMS Sian Carling (Bursar)

**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 declarations of interests, gifts or hospitality. There were no items for AOB or apologies for absence. Mrs Hodgkinson had given advance notice that she would arrive a few minutes after the start of the meeting. The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

**Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 were approved, signed by the Chair, and passed to the Headteacher to be filed in school. The approved version of the minutes would be put on the school website.

**Gov 8 Outturn statement**

The Bursar highlighted the budget carry forward forecast of £34,400 and actual carry forward of £32,339. The Bursar noted that the £50k donation from the Diocese had not been received within the financial year 2022-23 however £8,700 had been spent which related to this income (Early Years outdoor area and fencing/gates). This is identified in the Outturn statement comments column. The Bursar noted the accrual to ensure the budget was not out of balance. She stated that given £8,700 of the £50k donation had been used, the 2023-24 budget would show just below £42k as the donation amount.

**Mrs Fineran questioned** the Bursar on the details of the accrual. The Bursar provided further information and highlighted the references in the Outturn statement.

**The Chair questioned** the Bursar for clarification of whether the budget carry forward figure £34k in the Outturn statement included the Church donation. The Bursar stated that it did not.

**Gov 9 Approval of 2023-2024 Start Budget**

a) The Bursar presented the Start Budget. There had been an increase of 0.5% per pupil in the minimum funding guarantee set by the Government irrespective of the pupil numbers in school. The supplementary grant introduced last year had now been rolled up into the delegated funding. There had been a slight increase in the SEN and Pupil Premium funding. The Budget included an assumption of 4% increase in the teachers' pay award and £1925 plus 3% for support staff.

**Dr Forsey questioned** whether this was a realistic assumption for teachers given strike action currently taking place and whether this figure was being used by all schools. The Bursar explained that 4% had been taken from the STRB (School Teachers' Review Body) and that this was the figure being used in all schools' budgets. Going forward, the budget would be revised to reflect actuals.

The Bursar highlighted that the budget was based on 93 pupils on roll at the October 2022 census. The staffing structure remained the same and the budget reflected this, and included a slight change due to the specifics of the new appointment. Support staff would remain at 148.5 hours per week. The assumption for the second and third years of the budget was that staffing would remain the same.

**A Governor questioned** what would be the position for the school's budget going forward without the £50k donated by the Church. The Bursar explained that some expenditure included in this budget would not be possible in that case and these areas of expenditure are noted in the detailed budget. The in-year position in 2023-24 of £20k and balance brought forward of £32.3 allowed a carry forward into 2024-25 of £52.4, and going forward also a positive balance carried forward into 2025/26. However the Bursar drew Governors' attention to the in-year deficit of -£40.8 in 2024/5 and -£46.6 in 2025-26. The Bursar highlighted that if pupil numbers were to stay the same

for the next 3 years and the staffing remained unchanged, there would be a significant in-year deficit and that the in-year position is indicative of how the budget is going.

**The Chair questioned** whether the Bursar had included the increase in teachers' salaries into the future years of the budget and also the potential increase in government funding. The Bursar stated that although future increases in salaries had been included, future increases in government funding had not been included. The Chair emphasised that therefore the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the budget was highly speculative.

**The Chair questioned** whether the income stream included in the budget included the £2billion that government had stated would be provided to schools ie £35k per school. The Bursar identified increases in government funding eg deprivation increases, Pupil Premium and SEN funding increases, for example. She noted that there had definitely been an increase therefore, and the assumption is that this will continue. The Bursar had provided the Chair with the detail of how the funding is arrived at, and the Chair noted that this had been useful.

**Dr Forsey questioned** whether there is an assumption that the school would receive sparsity funding each year. The Bursar explained that this had now been included in the funds delegated by the LEA rather than provided as a separate grant. Governors discussed funding related to prior attainment which leads to a situation where high performing schools receive less income.

b) The Chair noted that the school would reach its maximum intake with just 16 more pupils therefore the ability to generate further income was limited. The Headteacher and Mrs Fineran provided examples of the levels of staff in other schools and noted that benchmarking indicates that the school is in line with other similar schools currently.

**Dr Forsey questioned** whether schools across the board are generally running with an in-year deficit. The Bursar stated that this was not the case and that many schools had already made changes to their structure.

Governors concluded their discussion and the Chair noted that across the country many schools were struggling with the issues raised in the discussion.

Governors approved the Start Budget.

The Chair thanked the Bursar and the Bursar left the meeting at this point.

#### **Gov 4 Matters arising from 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 minutes and Action Plan update**

**Agenda Item Gov 11. Vision and Strategy.** Dr Forsey questioned whether Governors had discussed including the school's ethos emphasising the importance of the "whole child". The Chair stated that this needed to be included in the statement of values.

**1. Governor biographies.** In progress. Governors reviewed the website. The Headteacher would take forward the feedback to the school admin team.

**2. OFSTED preparation.** Governors had now contacted the link staff member or confirmed that they would be doing so shortly. Action in progress.

**3. Staff survey.** The Headteacher and Mrs Fineran noted the challenges of ensuring anonymity in a survey of a small staff team, and emphasised the atmosphere of general openness amongst staff. The Headteacher requested that this item should be retained in the action list for further consideration.

**The Chair questioned** whether each staff meeting included an agenda item under which staff could raise issues of concern. The Headteacher confirmed this was the case and also noted the process whereby staff could approach the Chair of Governors. The Chair stated that this had only happened on one occasion since the Headteacher had been in post.

**4. Annual Governance Statement 21-22.** Pending.

**5. Read KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) and Caspar briefing. Sign confirmation on Google Drive.** All Governors confirmed that they had read the KCSIE and Caspar briefing. Some Governors reported difficulties accessing the Google Drive therefore the Headteacher agreed to update the Google Drive record for all.

**6. Chair to write to unitary authority re yellow lines.** Pending.

**7. Circulate subject action plans to Link Governors.** This action was in progress. See also action update no. 2.

**8. Circulate new school prayer.** Action completed.

**9. New Governors to sign disclosure declaration and register of business interests, and return these to the school office.** Completed.

**10. Add all Governors to NGA Learning Link as users.** Completed.

**11. All Governors to add their training to the Google Drive.** This is an ongoing action and would be deleted from the Action List.

**12. HT to update Governors on next steps following up on parent survey.** As had been reported in the previous meeting, immediate next steps had been taken and further initiatives to follow up on the parent survey would be included in the SEF (School Self Evaluation Form). Governors would continue to monitor the SEF. This action could therefore now be deleted.

**13. Contact local colleagues for examples of Ofsted inspection questions.** The Headteacher emphasised the importance of meetings between the Governors and link staff members to enhance Governors' knowledge of their subject link areas, with emphasis on being able to respond to the question "how do you know?" The Headteacher also noted the importance of contextual safeguarding and County Lines.

**14. Send link for SG and Prevent online training to new governors.**

Completed.

**15. Chair to meet new Governors for informal discussions as part of the induction process.** Chair to re-send dates. Some Governors were having difficulties with emails and with access to Google Drive. The Headteacher would investigate whether the school email could be used to access the Google Drive to avoid the need for two email addresses which seemed to be causing duplication and confusion.

**16/17. Send information on NYC training to new governors.** This was done but the training was full. The Clerk provided the latest new date for the training "Introduction to Governance" (17<sup>th</sup> July 6pm-8pm online). Governors to book training through school office.

**18. DBS application for new governors.** The Headteacher reported that all DBS applications were in progress.

**19. Maintenance Day.** It was agreed that this would be deferred and removed from the current action list. The Headteacher emphasised that this was not a priority given the small amount of maintenance needed and the workload already on staff.

**20. Ofsted practise.** It was agreed that this would be included in the June meeting agenda rather than organising a separate additional meeting.

**21. Consider Diocese maintenance contract.** Action completed. Update agenda item Gov 12f.

**22. Clarify terms of NYC Maintenance contract.** Action completed. Update agenda item Gov 12f.

**23. Contact Rob Delaney to replace wire on fence and other small maintenance jobs.** Ongoing.

**24. Solar lighting.** To be investigated later in the year.

**25. Contact NYC for H&S replacement advisor and visit.** The Headteacher reported that a new H&S advisor was now in place and had visited the school. Update agenda item 17.

**26. All link governors to contact subject leaders.** In progress.

**27. Submit SFVS.** Completed.

**28. Invite pre-school children to visit.** Invited.

**29. Draft strategy for school.** In progress.

There were no further updates to the Action List.

#### **Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks**

The Chair thanked Ellie Baldwin for her services to the school and wished her well for the future.

There were no further opening remarks.

#### **Gov 6 Headteacher news updates**

See below.

#### **Gov 7 Order of business**

It had been agreed that the agenda items addressing the Outturn statement and Start Budget would be brought forward and taken before agenda item 4.

#### **Gov 10 Pupil numbers**

See agenda item Gov 9 and 12

#### **Gov 11 Staffing**

See agenda item Gov 9 and 12.

#### **Gov12 Headteacher report**

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

##### **a) Pupil numbers**

The Headteacher had presented the current pupil numbers and class organisation in the written report. She had stated in the 2023-24 budget discussions that the assumption had been made that the staffing levels would remain unchanged and this report presented the detail and numbers comparing the current position with 92 children on roll with next year when 89 children would be on roll. The Headteacher noted that 9 children would be joining in Reception in September.

##### **b) Staffing and class structure**

The Headteacher presented the proposed class structure and staffing, emphasising the importance of retaining a Reception class and how this would work. The Headteacher highlighted the children's emotional needs and the positive aspects of movement across different groups in some sessions. The Headteacher noted that there would need to be detailed planning each half term. Mrs Fineran emphasised the huge amount of work done to develop the curriculum based on the current class structure and the benefit of this being retained.

**Governors questioned** how the free-flowing would work in practise and the Headteacher provided various example scenarios.

**A Governor questioned** how personal care would be provided if a teacher needed support. The Headteacher explained that staff could use their walkie-talkies.

Governors supported the approach. The Headteacher would discuss the ideas with the staff after half-term.

**A Governor questioned** whether an exit interview would be offered to the member of staff leaving this summer. The Headteacher confirmed this would be the case.

#### **c) Attendance**

The Headteacher's report included detailed attendance data. The Headteacher stated that there were no concerns. No further comments.

#### **d) Staff roles and responsibilities**

The Headteacher's report included details of the staff team and their lead responsibilities, and the link governors. There were no comments/questions.

#### **e) Staff CPD**

The Headteacher's report highlighted the CPD (continuing professional development) and the impact in the school. There were no comments or questions.

#### **f) Premises**

The Headteacher drew Governors' attention to the updates on premises and maintenance. The Headteacher reported that she had taken the decision to move to the Diocese property management scheme. She had left the NYC Responsive scheme with immediate effect and had given notice of leaving the NYC for scheduled works for which a year's notice is required.

#### **g) School Development**

The Headteacher had updated the SEF (self-evaluation form) and provided the link to the Google Drive in her report. The Headteacher noted that she had gone through the SEF with the staff team on the most recent staff training day.

#### **h) Attainment and Progress**

The Headteacher reported that the Year 6 children were coping well with the SATs (standard assessment tests). The upcoming tests were listed in her report.

**A Governor questioned** how SATs results were used and this was explained by the Headteacher and Mrs Fineran. It was noted that this would be the last year of Year 2 SATs.

**A Governor questioned** what would happen if a child did not pass Year 1 Phonics on the retry in Year 2. Mrs Fineran explained that support would be in place and confirmed that there was no requirement for the child to continue to repeat the test.

#### **i) Curriculum/Extra Curricular**

Parent Governors noted how much the children were enjoying the hockey. The Headteacher stated that the quality of swimming teaching at Yearsley is very high and highlighted that 3 teachers and 3 lifeguards are available in the lessons. However transport costs are high. Governors noted the high costs of transport to swimming pools and discussed various ideas for alternative pools.

The Headteacher reminded Governors of the requirement to provide swimming lessons and that the school has to cover the costs. The objective is for children to be able to swim 25m by the end of Year 6.

There were no further comments or questions on the Headteacher's report.

**Gov 13 Pupil premium update**

Nothing to report currently.

**Gov 14 Sports Premium update**

Nothing to report currently.

**Gov 15 Staff and pupil health and wellbeing**

The Headteacher stated that wellbeing was generally fine. She was pleased that there had been a successful outcome to the recent recruitment process.

**Gov 16 Safeguarding**

a) The Headteacher noted that the new Behaviour Policy would be brought to the June Governing Body meeting for approval. She explained that the major change was the removal of the traffic light system.

b) The Headteacher stated that staff were completing short quizzes on KCSIE, contextual safeguarding etc and recording this in the Google Drive. Ms Porter suggested this would be a good idea for Governors too. It was agreed that the Headteacher would send the quizzes to Governors to allow them to keep their knowledge of safeguarding up to date.

c) There were no safeguarding concerns.

The Headteacher's report listed the dates of the latest check on the Single Central Record, NYC Safeguarding Health Check and visit to school by the Safeguarding Governor.

d) Fencing. The Headteacher confirmed that the H&S advisor had been satisfied that all the fencing was secure.

**The Chair questioned** whether action would be taken with respect to the fence by the hedge and suggested more bushes could be planted there. See also agenda item Gov 18.

**Gov 17 Health and Safety**

The Headteacher reported that the LEA H&S advisor had carried out an inspection on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The report is in the H&S folder on the Google Drive. See also agenda item Gov 18.

**Gov 18 Premises**

The Headteacher referred to the LEA H&S advisor inspection (interior and exterior) and emphasised that it had been extremely thorough. It was agreed that the Premises Link Governor, Mrs Allan, would visit school for a monitoring walk-through using the action list provided by the H&S advisor.

**Gov 19 Governor training feedback and updates**



The Clerk provided the details of the NYC School Improvement Meeting to be held on July 4<sup>th</sup> (no charge) and the NYC Introduction to Governance training to be held on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The Chair confirmed that the NYC Introduction to Governance training would be useful and that new Governors should book onto this training. The Headteacher noted that the Diocese also provide Governor training.

**Dr Forsey questioned** whether there was any guidance available regarding ongoing Governor training. The Chair stated that the Introduction to Governance was important for all Governors but that other training depended on each governor's specific role. (See also agenda item 16b regarding ongoing Safeguarding training).

**Gov 20 Governor monitoring feedback and schedule**

Governors were now contacting the staff leads in the relevant subject areas and monitoring would be taking place.

**Gov 21 Governor appointments/vacancies**

The Chair commented that no further volunteers had come forward to express interest in joining the Governing Body. Mrs Reynolds would follow up with a contact. The Clerk would contact the Diocese to find out whether a staff member could be a Foundation Governor.

**Gov 22 SEN update**

No update currently

**Gov 23 Policies**

None

**Gov 24 Correspondence**

None

**Gov 25 Any other business**

None

**Gov 26 Date of next meeting: Wed 14<sup>th</sup> June 6pm. General Meeting.**

**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 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 draft minutes
3. Action plan Sutton on the Forest FGB March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023
4. Outturn statement 2022-23
5. Start Budget 2023-24
6. Headteacher's Report to Governors 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 – by hand in the meeting