**SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

**VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**DRAFT MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**

**WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH 2024 6pm in school**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT/FINANCE FOCUS**

*(February meeting had been cancelled)*

# *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.’*

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| **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 Neill, Mrs C Allan, Ms J Porter, Mrs J Reynolds**

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

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**Minute No.**

**Gov 1 Prayer**

The meeting opened 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 no declarations of interests, gifts or hospitality.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

Dr Forsey and Mrs Hodgkinson were unable to attend the meeting.

**Gov 3** **Approve minutes for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2024 were approved, and signed by the Chair to be filed in school. The approved minutes would be made available on the school website.

**Gov 4 Matters arising from 24th January 2024 minutes and Action Plan**

**Matter arising Gov 5a.** Mrs Comfort queried whether the meeting on yellow lines had gone ahead. Mrs Comfort explained that she had not been aware of the meeting date/time. The Chair and Headteacher had attended the meeting. See this meeting’s agenda item Gov 5a.

**Action Plan update**

1. Biographies and photographs needed from Mrs Neill and Mrs Hodgkinson.

2. All Governors who joined last year agreed that their understanding of the role and issues involved in being a Governor had developed well. Governors would address any specific questions to the Chair rather than arrange a meeting.

3. Mrs Reynolds confirmed that her application to be a Foundation Governor had been approved in February 2024.

4. Consideration of a video for the school website. Ongoing.

5. Trim Trail – on agenda.

6. Veritau meeting to be arranged.

7. Premises monitoring completed – on agenda.

8. Charging and Remissions Policy finalised and agreed by the Chair.

9. Prepare detailed information on the HT role in managing Treetops – on agenda. To be presented to Governing Body in May 2024.

10. PAN and admissions – on agenda.

11. LED/fluorescent lighting audit and follow up. The HT reported that the audit had been completed and that funding to replace the lighting had been included in the 2024-2025 Start Budget.

12. Staff subject leaders to contact Governor links to arrange monitoring visits. Ongoing. See update on agenda item 25 for latest monitoring reports.

13. HT to contact Governors to arrange monitoring of pupil behaviour for learning. See update on agenda item 25 for report on this monitoring.

14. Attainment and progress detailed report. The Headteacher provided an update with her report in this meeting. This will also be included in the July meeting which will have a School Improvement focus.

15. Trim train – on agenda.

16. FoSS annual submission to Charity Commission. The Headteacher reported that the last submission was made on 4th July 2023. It was therefore agreed that FoSS would be asked to report to the Governing Body in the July meeting annually.

17. Mrs Reynolds had met the Headteacher and visited the school to discuss SIAMS. See agenda item 25 for update.

18. Clerk had circulated NYC Governor training information. It was confirmed that any Governors wishing to book on training could do so by contacting the school office. Mrs Comfort expressed an interest on the curriculum training.

19. The Headteacher would contact the previous Governor who had expressed an interest in re-joining. Governors discussed other local contacts who might be interested in the role.

20. The Headteacher confirmed that she had discussed street parking with staff.

**Gov 5 Chair’s opening remarks**

**a) Yellow lines.** The Headteacher and Chair had attended a meeting with local councillor Malcolm Taylor and the Parish Council regarding yellow road markings. The outcome of the meeting was that local councillor Mr Malcolm Taylor would take the matter forward. Paul Crosby, NY (North Yorkshire) highways project officer was not able to attend the meeting.

**b) HR advice relating to Treetops.** The Chair provided the written HR guidance received to all Governors and explained the next steps. This would be taken forward in the May Governing Body meeting.

**Gov 6 Order of business**

Agreed

**Gov 7** **Headteacher’s report**

**a)** **Admissions.** The Headteacher informed Governors that 19 applications had been received for 2024 Reception places. The Headteacher asked Governors to discuss how many pupils should be accepted, taking into consideration that the PAN (published admissions number) is 15 and that no precise information is yet available for the 2025-2026 intake. The budget forecasts with intakes of both 15 and 17 pupils had been circulated.

***A Governor questioned the budget implications of the different options.*** The Headteacher noted that there would be a deficit budget irrespective of whether the intake is 15 or 17 pupils. The Headteacher also commented however that additional income expected through Pupil Premium and EHCP (education, health and care plan) had not been included in the budget forecast. The Chair highlighted that other schools would be in the same position and that funding from Government would need to increase.

***A Governor questioned whether there would be sufficient classroom space for an intake above the PAN.***The Headteacher confirmed that there would be sufficient classroom space, including for one-to-one work with a Teaching Assistant (TA) if needed. A Governor noted that according to educational research, classroom space not class size has greatest impact.

***A Governor asked what were the challenges arising from a previous Reception intake of 17.*** The Headteacher explained that there were challenges with space when the children reached Year 2, however advised Governors to bear in mind that numbers fluctuate, for example when families leave the area.

The Headteacher would need to inform the local education authority (LA) how many pupils the school could accept. The LA would then allocate places. The Headteacher noted that accepting 17 might mean that no one needed to be turned away if some families ultimately decided to take their second choice. See agenda item 8 for decision on PAN.

**b)** **Safeguarding.** There were no safeguarding concerns. (See also agenda items 19 and 20 on safeguarding).

**c)** **Attendance.** The Headteacher reported that attendance was more settled and that she was continuing to work with families to support attendance.

***A Governor questioned how the Headteacher responds to requests for absence during term time.*** The Headteacher stated that in general such absence was not authorised however approval is given if there are exceptional circumstances.

**d) Staffing and CPD (continuous professional development).** There had been little change in staffing since the last report.

Mrs Neill (Maths subject lead) described Maths Hub CPD, including a visit to Burton Green Primary School. The had been useful discussions about Maths teaching and practical resources, and also mixed age group teaching which is now in the planning stage for September. The school had ordered some new resources as follow up from this CPD. It was noted that the Maths Hub lead had always been very positive about the school during her visits.

The Headteacher described the Cross Authority Network Meeting which she had attended for the first time in March. The aims of the meeting were to support Headteacher wellbeing and to provide the opportunity for discussions on various topics with Headteachers from different Local Authority areas. The Headteacher had found this to be an extremely valuable and positive experience. The Headteacher emphasised that it represented good value for money and she would find it very useful to attend again. The meeting is held termly.

The Headteacher also described CPD on how to delegate which used a scheme based on a short personality quiz. This approach provided ideas on how to shape your approach to delegation for different types of people. The Headteacher would be sharing this with the staff. The Chair mentioned 360 degree feedback as another useful tool. Mrs Comfort described approaches that facilitated recruitment by looking at the different types of people already employed in a team and identifying any gaps for recruitment purposes.

***A Governor questioned whether Headteachers from the different areas were all experiencing the same issues.*** The Headteacher confirmed that everyone had the same experiences and highlighted as an example the impact of “snowplough parenting” on children’s resilience and parents’ attitudes to schools.

**e) Premises/Health and Safety.** Mrs Allan (Premises Link Governor) and the Headteacher carried out a monitoring walk-round of the premises. The Local Authority premises lead Janet Morris also visited the school a week later. Mrs Allan and the Headteacher had produced a report with key actions for follow up. Mrs Allan shared the main findings with Governors in the meeting. The report had also been uploaded onto the Google Drive for Governors. The Headteacher would be contacting DB Services to address the issues identified in the walk-round, including the water coming in around the fire door and the leak in the main hall. Mrs Allan asked whether the Chair of Governors would be able to write to NYC to emphasise the need for the leaks to be fully repaired.

Mrs Allan described the outbuildings at the back of the school. Mr Comito would be carrying out repairs. Governors discussed the potential for clearing this area on a parent help day.

***A Governor questioned where responsibility lies for premises.*** The Headteacher stated that Mrs Hinde, the School Office Manager, had been investigating this issue and had organised meetings with NYC Property Service and DB to seek clarity on this. The Headteacher noted also that Mrs Hinde had investigated energy supplies and established that the school energy costs should be lower.

Governors discussed the potential for developing the outbuildings as an additional space for the children. It was noted that a fundraising initiative for this as a specific project could appeal to both parents and other funders. A Governor reported that the Diocese could be willing to fund projects linked to spiritual initiatives. It was agreed that a list of project ideas for the next 5-10 years would be developed by the Headteacher.

**f) School Development.** NYC SIA (school improvement advisor) Michele Hattersley visited the school in February to review the school’s progress with the Foundation subjects, an area of development identified by Ofsted in June 2023. The Headteacher had uploaded the SIA visit report on the school’s Google Drive for Governors. The Headteacher noted the key actions for next steps, including identifying the “ready to progress” criteria.

Deep Dives. The Headteacher reported on English and History Deep Dives which had been completed by the Subject Lead with Governor input. The notes had been uploaded on the Google Drive. The feedback from Governor involvement in Pupil Voice was extremely positive. Mrs Comfort noted that the older children were not as keen as the younger children on the miming/gestures technique for remembering a story. Mrs Comfort was impressed by the children’s articulate, thoughtful and reflective responses.

SATS. The Headteacher reported that mock SATS had taken place and that the children were doing very well overall. The Headteacher would be bringing in Maths booster sessions after Easter whereas last year these had been needed much earlier.

**g) Wellbeing.** Mrs Carter would be producing a half-termly wellbeing newsletter instead of adding a section to the weekly school newsletter. The Headteacher highlighted that Neurodiversity Awareness Week had been taken up in school already in Year 2 using materials provided. Mrs Neill would be taking this forward with the younger children.

**h) After school clubs.** The Headteacher reported that there had been reasonable take up of the after school clubs. She noted that hockey would be available for KS2 in the Summer.

**i) School and Community Links.** The Headteacher explained that the school would be discussing with the Church how to establish firmer links.

**Gov 8 PAN**

See agenda item 7a for the discussion on admissions. Governors agreed that no decision would be taken to change the PAN at this point.

**Gov 9 Budget monitoring report**

Governors noted the in-year deficit currently showed at -£39k. The Headteacher pointed out that Pupil Premium and EHCP funding would be added to the budget, and that Treetops should become profitable.

***A Governor questioned how much additional funding was made available for children who needed top up funding.*** The Headteacher explained that the school is expected to cover the first £6k of additional costs and then additional funding is dependent on what is needed.

The Chair emphasised the duty to educate the children and not to cut TA support. The Headteacher emphasised the quality of the TA team. The Chair noted the stability of the staff over the last two years which reflects a great strength of the school.

***A Governor questioned the worst case scenario of running a budget deficit.*** The Headteacher explained that the school would need to put forward a plan to show the LA how the deficit would be reduced. The Chair pointed out that the school had almost reached capacity in terms of pupil numbers therefore a £50k deficit would indicate that government funding is insufficient.

The Headteacher informed Governors that the Bursar would be attending the May meeting and that there would be the opportunity then to raise further questions about the Start Budget.

**Gov 10 Strategic spending update: Trim Trail**

The Headteacher had provided verbal feedback on the three quotes in the January Governing Body meeting. She had subsequently reviewed the quotes with the Premises Link Governor, Mrs Allan, and taken the decision to go ahead with Mr Comito who had previously completed high quality work at the school and had provided a reasonable quote for this project. The Trim Trail would be useful for the younger children in particular.

**Gov 11 Treetops**

The Headteacher reported that the children were settling down well now. The homework club is well established and had been welcomed by the parents. On staffing, the Headteacher informed Governors that a fulltime playworker would be recruited to start from September as the students would be leaving their placements in the Summer Term.

***The Chair questioned the figures for Treetops presented in the budget and noted that it seemed to be currently breaking even.*** The Headteacher commented that the Bursar was taking a cautious approach.

**Gov 12 Schools financial value standard (SFVS)**

The Chair reported that he had reviewed the SFVS and had no further comments to add to his email. The Headteacher confirmed that she had completed the SFVS as he had indicated. Governors approved the SFVS.

**Gov 13 SEND report**

Deferred to the Summer Term due to time pressures for the Headteacher (SENCo).

**Gov 14 Pupil Premium report: spending and impact 22-23**

The Headteacher stated that the 22-23 spending and impact report had been published. The 23-24 pupil premium report had also been completed.

**Gov 15 Sports Premium action plan 23-24**

The Headteacher reported that the action plan would be developed by Tara Parmar.

**Gov 16 Safer internet: Veritau update from meeting with HT**

* **GDPR and IT compliance**
* **Asset management plan advice**

This action is pending due to Headteacher’s time pressures. The Chair emphasised the importance of GDPR compliance.

The Headteacher updated on how effectively Smoothwall is ensuring safe internet access in school. She emphasised the immediacy of notifications of attempted inappropriate searches which allowed timely discussions with anyone involved. A Governor noted the importance of teaching children about appropriate use of the internet.

**Gov 17 Premises update**

See agenda item 7e.

**Gov 18**  **Health and Safety update**

See agenda item 7e.

**Gov 19 Annual safeguarding audit for NYC: approval by Governing Body**

The Headteacher stated that the safeguarding audit is now required every two years. It is next due in Autumn 2025 to cover the academic year 2024-2025.

**Gov 20 Safeguarding update from HT**

The report from the January Safeguarding monitoring visit by SIA Michele Hattersley had been circulated to Governors. *(The Headteacher had provided a verbal report on this visit in the January Governing Body meeting.)*

**Gov 21 Any bullying or racist incidents**

The Headteacher stated that there had been no bullying or racist incidents.

**Gov 22 Supporting mental health and wellbeing**

See agenda item 7d and g, and 25a and b.

**Gov 23 Approval of policies**

None

**Gov 24 Governor vacancies**

a) Governors discussed ideas for recruitment, including directly approaching individuals with skills/knowledge needed on the Governing Body. The Headteacher would contact the previous Governor who had expressed an interest in re-joining.

b) The Chair reminded Governors that he would be stepping down no later than Christmas 2024 and urged anyone interested in taking on the role to come forward so that a smooth transition could begin.

*Ms Porter had to leave the meeting at 7:35.*

**Gov 25 Governor monitoring – feedback**

**a) SIAMS.** The Headteacher highlighted the need to provide opportunities for staff to share their experiences from elsewhere. Discussions about how to strengthen links with the Church were developing. As Foundation Governor, Mrs Reynolds provided feedback that the children had been very calm in their classrooms during the monitoring visit. Mrs Reynolds raised the issue of regular prayer and the Headteacher agreed this was something being looked at again.

**b) Feedback from monitoring visit by the Chair, Vice Chair, Mrs Reynolds and Ms Porter, including a focus on behaviour for learning.** The Governors all found it invaluable to spend time in the school. The Headteacher commented that Ofsted had noticed how well the Governors know the school. Governors reported that the children had spoken to them very confidently. Governors commended the children’s intelligent and thoughtful comments. On behalf of Ms Porter, Mrs Comfort asked the Headteacher to pass on to the staff how impressed the Governors were with the quality of education and the good life that the children have in the school. The Chair stated that he was proud to be a Governor of this school. He praised the professionalism of the teachers. Mrs Reynolds commented that the school seemed a happy place where the children were enjoying learning.

**Gov 26 Governor training feedback and forthcoming dates**

The Clerk had circulated upcoming dates for NYC Governor training. Mrs Comfort expressed an interest in the training on the curriculum and would contact the school office to book a place.

**Gov 27 Correspondence**

None

**Gov 28 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk**

None

**Gov 29 Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 8th May 2024 Finance/resources meeting**

The meeting closed at 7:40pm.

Signed: Date:

Chair of Governors

**List of papers circulated by email in advance for this meeting:**

1. Draft agenda

2. Sutton on the Forest January 2024 draft Governing Body meeting minutes

3. Action plan Sutton on the Forest FGB January 2024

4. Start Budget 24-25 v15 (detailed and summary)

5. Start Budget 24-25 v17 (detailed and summary)

**List of papers shared in advance on Google Drive for this meeting:**

1. HT Report March 2024

2. SIA final visit report School Development February 2024

3. SIA final visit report Safeguarding and Attendance January 2024

4. SFVS 2023-2024 for submission to NYC

5. Accident report proforma

6. Wraparound childcare guidance

7. Charging and Remissions policy 2024-2026