

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

**APPROVED MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 6pm in school**

**FINANCE/RESOURCES FOCUS**

***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 (online), Mrs J Neill, Mrs C Allan, Ms J Porter

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Christine Knights (Clerk), Sian Carling (Bursar - online)

**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.  
Mrs S Hodgkinson and Mrs J Reynolds had sent apologies which were accepted.

**Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 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 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 minutes and Action Plan**

**Action Plan update**

**The Headteacher reported updates as follows:**

**3. HT to ask Veritau for advice re asset management plan and GDPR/IT compliance.** The Headteacher reported that the School Office Manager Mrs Helen Hinde was working on this.

**4. Prepare detailed information on the HT role managing Treetops.** The Headteacher reported that she had researched HT pay banding locally and had received information from one local colleague. She was also aware of other information through published recruitment details. Mrs Allan highlighted that according to the HR advice from NYC (North Yorkshire Council) the Governing Body is not required to collect this information. It is suggested by NYC as an option to guide them in their decision-making. The Chair noted that NYC HR had not shared this information on HT pay banding in their advice. The Headteacher agreed that she would continue to prepare information on the role in managing Treetops. See also agenda item Gov 11.

**5. LED lighting audit follow up.** The Headteacher would ask Mrs Hinde to obtain quotes from local electricians.

**6. Monitoring visits.** The Chair had organised a Maths monitoring visits for May. Mrs Hodgkinson had arranged a learning walk.

**7. Potential contacts with relevant skills /knowledge for the Governing Body.** The Headteacher had been in contact with Mrs Helen Morris.

**8. Chair to consider writing to NYC about school maintenance long-term issues.** The Chair noted that he would be doing this.

**9. HT to develop a list of projects for next 5-10 years.** The Headteacher reported on a meeting with Mrs Reynolds and Rev Steve which explored a range of ideas. See agenda item Gov 12.

**All items on the Action Plan were ongoing.**

**Gov 6 Order of business**

It was agreed that agenda item Gov 7 and Gov 8 would be taken at this point as the Bursar had joined the meeting online.

**Gov 7 Outturn statement**

a) The Bursar highlighted the main differences between the Start Budget and the Year End position. The carry forward in the Start Budget had been £79k whereas the actual balance brought forward to 24/25 was £98k.

b) There were three main variances which gave rise to this: the majority of savings were from property services; there had been some savings in resources; some income had been generated by Treetops. The Headteacher noted that the decision to move from the NYC (North Yorkshire Council) for the ad hoc maintenance issues to DBE had proved highly cost effective. It was also an efficient approach allowing repairs to be carried out well and on a timely basis. With respect to Treetops, the Bursar noted that no evidence of income/expenditure had been available when the Start Budget was set. The priority had been to achieve a break even position with current staffing and expenditure.

The Headteacher and Governors were pleased with this Year End position.

#### **Gov 8 Approval of 2024-2025 Start Budget**

a) The Headteacher confirmed that a Reception of 16 pupils had been used for the 24/25 Start Budget. Governors had reviewed the implications of Reception numbers in the March meeting and had been presented with draft Start Budgets based on 15 and 17.

b) The Bursar highlighted the carry forward balance in the Start Budget of £98k and the October 2023 census showing 90 pupils. She stated that with staffing levels remaining at the current level there would be an in-year deficit of £40k in 2024-2025. This Budget would therefore make use of reserves.

c) The Bursar provided the following information regarding funding provided to schools. The pupil level had been set at £4,610 ie the minimum a school would receive. This is higher than in 2023-2024. The Bursar noted that this year NYC had re-introduced a 1.7% cap on any gains above this figure, however this had not affected this school. The school funding per pupil would have been less than £4,610 therefore NYC had provided top up funding for the school. NYC had put £500,000 from reserves into the funding stream for education.

***A Governor questioned why NYC had put £500,000 into the funding.*** The Bursar explained that this was because otherwise schools would not have all received the minimum funding of £4,610 per pupil.

d) The Bursar informed Governors that there had been an increase in the lump sum and sparsity funding. There had also been a 1.9% increase in EHCP (education, health and care plan) funding and a slight increase in pupil premium funding. NYC had transferred 0.5% of the Schools DSG (dedicated schools grant) to the High Needs Budget for SEND (special educational needs and disabilities).

e) The Bursar noted that there had been a 0.5% increase in teachers' pensions contributions. The school had received a grant to offset some of these costs. There had also been a 6% increase in support staff salaries and 3% increase in teaching staff salaries. This and any increments due in the year 2024-2025 had all been included in the Start Budget.

f) The Bursar stated that with funding and staffing remaining the same, this would be an unsustainable position for the school.

g) The Headteacher noted that there would be some slight changes to staffing which would be reflected in the revised Start Budget in December. She also noted that there would be an EHCP at some point. The Bursar emphasised that she had not yet included any EHCP funding and that this could affect the bottom line unless additional staff needed to be recruited. In response to a Governor question, the Headteacher stated that EHCP funding is provided from the date of the panel decision, rather than being backdated.

h) Governors discussed the Start Budget.

**A Governor questioned** why Treetops had been included in the Start Budget as breaking even when there has now been evidence of profit made in the Spring term. The Bursar explained that the Start Budget presented a worst case scenario. The Headteacher noted that the implications of the Year 6 children leaving and new children joining in Reception, and of the current need to recruit staff were not yet known and that therefore a break even scenario was advisable.

**A Governor questioned** why the income for the Community Funded Extended School dips in Year 2 of the budget then picks up again in Year 3. The Bursar explained this is because in Year 1 the students get paid additional hours but as they leave in July this is not included in Year 2. The Year 3 figure is an estimate.

**A Governor questioned** whether students could be found to replace those leaving and noted that there would be more pupils joining the school than leaving. The Headteacher had found that students were not taking up this placement for 2024-2025 and the decision had been made to recruit a member of staff. The implications of the change in pupils are not yet known and recruitment was proving challenging. The Bursar stated that this could be reviewed in December.

**The Chair questioned** the Bursar on the position in comparator schools. The Bursar commented that the low birth rate was having greater impact elsewhere with lower Reception pupil numbers being seen than in Sutton on the Forest school. She also noted that it is not abnormal to see in-year deficit in primary schools this year. The official benchmarking will be published in November. The Chair stated that the maximum number of children for Sutton is 105, therefore if with 102 children there is still an in-year deficit and no changes have been made with staffing, the school is not being funded appropriately. He noted that Government is not providing enough funding to

cover pensions contributions and salary increases. The Chair summarised therefore that all schools will be in the same position.

i) Governors discussed the in-year deficit and the way forward.

**A Governor questioned** whether the Governing Body should have a plan regarding how the deficit will be dealt with. The Bursar agreed that this is the responsibility of the Governing Body and noted that options such as changes to staffing or developing partnerships could be considered. The Bursar agreed with Governors that the school is underfunded but pointed out that it is Government funding which having this impact. Governors supported the Headteacher in maintaining the current staffing level. The Chair emphasised that the staffing ratios are based on need, and that the stability and increase in pupil numbers is due to the Headteacher's approach.

Governors discussed whether there might be funding available again in the future from the local parish church. The Chair expressed the view that this was highly likely and Governors agreed, on the basis of recent discussions. Governors noted that a project based approach might be appealing for the church.

The Headteacher noted potential increases in pupil numbers in 2024-25 and also reduction in staff hours in response to a recent request from a member of staff.

The Headteacher and Chair pointed out that in-year deficits had been forecast previously and that a positive year end position had been achieved. Governors agreed.

The Governors approved the Start Budget 2024-25.

#### **Gov 9 Pupil numbers**

The Headteacher had included this information in her written report. There were 95 pupils on roll on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024. There would be 16 pupils in Reception and there would be a waiting list for places in Reception. The Headteacher noted that attendance data in the report needed to be amended.

#### **Gov 10 Staffing**

The Headteacher included the staffing update in her written report.

a) She noted that Laura Robinson had settled well into the school and had expressed interest in the SENCO role. The Headteacher informed Governors that the NPQ for SENCO is still funded by Government. The Headteacher would act as joint SENCO in 2024-2025.

b) Mrs Neill reported on latest input from the Maths Hub. The focus in this academic year is on the development of Mrs Neill and then next year it would be a whole school approach. The Hub advisor had given positive feedback on

how practical resources were being used in school. Mrs Neill would be visiting a school in Knaresborough to learn about their use of a different Maths scheme (which is available at no cost). This scheme is well regarded for mixed age classes. Mrs Neill also reported that the White Rose Maths scheme used in Sutton would be producing resources for mixed age classes in the Autumn.

c) **A Governor questioned** whether there are Hubs for other subjects. The Headteacher stated that other Hubs do exist, and that she was exploring the English Hub, particularly because the English scheme currently used in school is very expensive.

d) The Headteacher reported positively on the recently appointed caretaker.

e) The Headteacher noted that the training day after Easter was used to look at the Behaviour Policy again to ensure more consistency across the year groups.

f) The Headteacher reported that she had now completed her final assessment for the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship).

g) The Headteacher reported that Laura Robinson would be completing Adaptive Teaching Project training through the Locality Board.

#### **Gov 11 Consideration of Headteacher Pay Banding**

It was agreed that the Headteacher would provide written information on the management responsibilities and additional duties associated with Treetops for consideration in the June Governing Body meeting.

#### **Gov 12 Headteacher report**

*(HT report circulated in advance. These minutes record Headteacher updates under listed agenda items)*

In addition to the updates included in the relevant agenda items, the Headteacher reported on the following.

**a) SATS** (standardised assessment tests) would be taking place in week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> May. There had been one child disapplied from one test.

**b) Treetops.** The Headteacher stated that currently a snack is provided at 3:45pm and that this would be reviewed in May. New rules had been introduced for scootering and children were being required to wear helmets. New equipment including a football table had been purchased. Provision is made for the children to be involved in crafts. Governors welcomed these initiatives.

**c) Holiday clubs.** The Headteacher reported that the Easter club went well and that the Summer club is nearly full. The viability of holiday clubs needed to be reviewed due to the difficulty of finding staff.

**A Governor questioned** whether an external provider could use the space to run holiday clubs if Treetops could not continue in the holidays. The Headteacher stated that this could be a possibility. A Governor made a plea for continuation of the holiday clubs if at all possible and emphasised how highly these were valued by families. A Governor noted appreciated of the strong link between Treetops and school, in particular how information provided to the school was passed on the Treetops.

**d) After school clubs.** The Headteacher reported that there had been low sign-up for after school clubs and children were also not attending regularly/dropping out. It was noted by a Governor that it is important for children to learn about the importance of commitment. In response to a Governor question, the Headteacher stated that some schools charge a low fee to encourage commitment. The Headteacher noted that none of the clubs are full, except football which is run by a private provider. She noted that netball, hockey and forest school clubs are popular in the Autumn term. This term the drama club had not been well attended. The Headteacher highlighted the impact on staff workload and morale and noted that in the Autumn term with darker evenings this was a particular concern.

**A Governor questioned** how Ofsted regarded after school clubs and was it a requirement for schools to run clubs. The Headteacher noted that there are already lunchtime clubs and a lot of children go to Treetops, or have activities outside school. The Headteacher stated that Governors had suggested after school clubs. She recommended asking the children what they would like. A Governor suggested a survey on the impact of after school clubs on staff wellbeing and asking children their views through Pupil Voice. The Headteacher and Governors agreed.

To close, the Headteacher highlighted the Skip 2B fit that had been booked for each term next year, including a parent day.

**e) Links with the community and local church.**

i) The Headteacher shared ideas that had been discussed in a meeting that involved herself, Foundation Governor Mrs Reynolds, Rev Steve Whiting and his wife Mrs Sue Whiting. The aim is to build stronger links between the school and the church through finding natural connections, for example in History.

**A Governor questioned** whether the idea of having assemblies in the church had been discussed. The Headteacher confirmed that this had been discussed. Also the idea of the children making a display for church each term.

ii) The Headteacher reported that the school would be involved in the Huby and Sutton Show. The children would be making a frieze for the entrance to the show and other ideas were being explored.

### **Gov 13 Premises update**

See H&S update in agenda item Gov 14 below.

### **Gov 14 Health and Safety update**

The Headteacher had included the H&S update in her written report.

a) The Headteacher noted that the Paperwork Evaluation Inspection visit report from the H&S advisor Mrs Janet Morris had been made available to Governors on the Google Drive and circulated. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

b) Mrs Janet Morris had provided manual lifting and ladder training to staff.

c) The Headteacher reported an issue with some lighting in school which would be dealt with by a local electrician. This will be an opportunity to obtain a quote for the LED lighting.

### **Gov 15 Safeguarding update from Headteacher**

There were no safeguarding concerns.

### **Gov 16 Any bullying or racist incidents**

There had been no bullying or racist incidents.

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

**a) Planning application.** The Chair outlined a local planning application and responses.

**b) Parking.** The Headteacher outlined recent parking related issues. The Chair recommended sending out a letter to parents informing them that the school were trying to get yellow road markings and that it would help in this if parents would park considerately. The Headteacher planned to involve the children in making posters about safe and considerate parking for display around the school entrance. She highlighted that this is linked with the school value of respect.

### **Gov 17 Supporting mental health and wellbeing**

**a) Staff wellbeing.** The Headteacher reported that in general the staff are fine and pleased with the pupil numbers in particular. Wellbeing work in school will be continuing when the lead member of staff reduces to 4 days. Mrs Porter would send the Headteacher some ideas on staff wellbeing.



**b) Pupils.** The Headteacher reported that pupil wellbeing is good. She noted that the Year 2 children were definitely ready to move into Year 3.

The Chair highlighted that wellbeing is about leadership, and personal and professional development. The staff see a supportive leadership team.

**Gov 18 Approval of policies**

There are no policies to be approved.

**Gov 19 Governor vacancies**

There are currently two vacancies. Ms Porter had mentioned a possible contact who could be approached. The Headteacher would follow up interest expressed by a previous member of the Governing Body.

**Gov 20 Governor monitoring – feedback**

Monitoring due to take place in the following week.

**Gov 21 Governor training – feedback and any upcoming dates**

Clerk had circulated a list of training.

**Gov 22 Correspondence**

None.

**Gov 23 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk**

The Headteacher asked if the July Governing Body meeting could be held online. Governors agreed.

**Gov 24 Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 General meeting**

The meeting closed at 7:45pm

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

Date:

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

1. Draft agenda
2. Sutton on the Forest March 2024 draft Governing Body meeting minutes
3. Action plan Sutton on the Forest FGB March 2024
4. Start Budget 24-25 v15 (summary)
5. Start Budget 24-25 v17 (summary)
6. Start Budget 24-25 v 15 (detailed)
7. H&S Inspection Report

**List of papers shared on Google Drive:**

1. HT Report March 2024
2. Start Budget 24-25 v15 (detailed)
3. Start Budget 24-25 v17 (detailed)
4. 23-24 year end report (summary)
5. 23-24 year end report (detailed)