

FOWLMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Wednesday 4 December 2019
7.00pm in School

MINUTES

Present:

Sarah Burge (SB), Chair
Philip Atkin (PA), Head Teacher
Bruce Gilliam (BG)
Joanna Grazebrook (JG)
Gill Heathcote (GH)
Clare Hobro (CH)
Ashley Meggitt (AM)
Andrew Page (AP)
Nico Schonken (NS)
Hayley Woods (HW)

Lynsey Perkins (LP), Assistant Head Teacher (Associate Member)

Lisa White (LW) (Camclerk) in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.00pm. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Hayley Woods (HW).

Standing Items

2. Welcome to new Staff Governor

The Chair welcomed Joanna Grazebrook, new Staff Governor to the meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising


Draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2019 were circulated prior to the meeting and were approved by the Governing Body and signed by the Chair as a true record.

Matters arising from the meeting held on 13 March 2019

Item 5 Safeguarding

SLT to look into holding an evening for parents regarding the general safeguarding of children. *A discussion took place at the September FGB meeting as to the best way to share information on issues such as 'County Lines'. Governors discussed whether this could be tied in with an internet safety / general child safeguarding evening. During this discussion, it was agreed that resources on such subjects be shared with parents along with a handout and display boards at Parents' Evening, as well as the possibility of sharing information after one of Class 4's assemblies.*

Put together a display / provide leaflets for the Parents' Evening after this one. ACTION PA/LP c/f

Signed  Date *5/12/2019*

Matters arising from the meeting held on 8 May 2019

Item 6a Annual Child Protection and Safeguarding Monitoring Report

Share completed report at July FGB meeting. Completed but not yet available to share. To be shared at the next FGB meeting. See agenda item 5c. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Matters arising from the meeting held on 17 July 2019

Item 5 Safeguarding

Write up Safeguarding visit report. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Share relevant Safeguarding documents with CH. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Complete the NSPCC online Safeguarding training course. **ACTION COMPLETE**

*A discussion followed with regards the requirement of regular Safeguarding training. **During this discussion, the Governing Body agreed for three governors per year to complete the NSPCC online Safeguarding training course. ACTION COMPLETE***

Senior Leadership Team to arrange formal Safeguarding training for regular volunteers. *The Head Teacher explained that the intention is to invite the school's regular volunteers in for some basic Safeguarding training. In addition, the school will provide them with a Guidance for Volunteers Policy. ACTION PA/LP c/f*

Item 6 School Policies

Share a Behaviour report at the December FGB meeting. See agenda item 11a. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Item 10 School Development Plan 2018/19

Circulate some proposed dates for an additional Finance and Premises meeting. **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Item 14 Urgent Matters

Arrange an election for a staff governor. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Matters arising from the meeting held on 25 September 2019

Item 4 Minutes from July Strategy meeting

Rewrite minutes from this meeting taking into account governors' requested changes and brought to the next FGB meeting in December for further review. **ACTION SB c/f**

Item 8d Annual Child Protection Return

Share Annual Child Protection Return at the December FGB meeting. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Look into and complete the Home Office on-line Prevent training. ACTION COMPLETE

Item 11 School Policies for Approval

Additional section to be added to the Anti-Bullying Policy with regards the changes to lunchtime football. **ACTION PA c/f**

Ask School Nursing Team for advice with regards encouraging parents to have their child vaccinated to prevent infection for a child with cancer, should this instance arise. **ACTION PA c/f**

Item 12 School Risk Register

Circulate template for a risk register. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Signed Date 5/2/2020

Each Committee to put together their own risk register. **ACTION COMPLETE**
Add this as a standing FGB agenda item. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Item 13 School Improvement Plan 2019/20

Add an additional line to the SIP on how the new Behaviour Policy works for pupils with SEND. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Add an additional line to the SIP to ensure that the behaviour system does not fail should agency staff need to be employed. **ACTION COMPLETE**

As a follow-on action, it was agreed that an updated SIP be circulated to governors for the next FGB meeting in February. ACTION PA

Communication to also be included in the SIP and added as an agenda item to the next FGB meeting in December. **See agenda item 12. ACTION COMPLETE**

Item 14 Monitoring Visit Reports

Next Behaviour visit take place before the March Strategy meeting. **ACTION NS c/f**
Add this visit to the Governance Year Planner. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Carry out a Website review. **ACTION BG c/f**

Early Years Foundation Stage monitoring visit to take place before the end of the Autumn Term. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Add this visit to the Governance Year Planner. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Item 16 Urgent Matters

Update the governor email distribution list to include LP. **ACTION SB c/f**

New model Complaints Policy from CCC to be reviewed at the next FGB meeting;
Add as an agenda item to the FGB meeting in December. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Contact from developers has been received asking if the school will support the proposed housing development.

Add as an agenda item to the FGB meeting in December. **ACTION SB c/f**

E-Schools will no longer be available and a discussion needs to take place on where governor documents can be stored.

Add as an agenda item to the FGB meeting in December. **ACTION COMPLETE**

School day

There is no longer a school bus at pick up time as there are so few children who need this therefore a taxi is currently being used.

Education Support services to be contacted to discuss this. **ACTION PA c/f**

4. Training Module

It was noted that the fourth training module to be completed by governors was 'School Teacher Appraisal and Capability'. Unfortunately, there seemed to be some confusion on this and the majority of governors had not completed the module. **As a result, the Chair proposed and agreed that she would collate a list of all the required training to date and circulate to all governors. ACTION SB**

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Governors to then complete any outstanding training and confirm they have done so.
ACTION ALL

5. Safeguarding

a) Reports from Safeguarding Governor

It was noted that a brief discussion on Safeguarding took place under Item 3 Matters arising where NS explained that the handover to CH will be actioned this term. In addition, it was noted that a Safeguarding visit will be carried out before the end of the term.

b) Safeguarding Training

It was noted that CH has completed the NSPCC online Safeguarding training course.

c) Annual Child Protection Return

As noted under Item 3 Matters arising, the Head had circulated the Annual Child Protection Return to governors for their review prior to the meeting.

PA explained that there are some items that are not yet complete on the return, but as it is not possible to proceed unless a date is entered, he has added dates to these items, although they are not yet actioned.

A governor asked if these items are diarised to ensure they do not get missed and the Head explained that it depends on what the items are, as some of them are not statutory and with the new 'My Concern' system, this is not always necessary.

Items for Information or Approval

6. Head Teacher's Report

It was noted that a Head Teacher's report was circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting and included updates on the following:

- Pupil numbers
- Class structure
- Attendance
- Staffing
- Behaviour and Safety
- Training and Professional Development

Attendance

Governors asked:

Question:

The overall attendance figure of 95.9% is low, if you take out the child with severe medical difficulties, what is the figure?

Answer:

I do not have this information. The overall attendance figure is low due to two pupils, one with long-term absence and one with medical issues. These two pupils have had a significant impact on our attendance rates so far this year, but over time, this impact will decrease as one pupil is now off-roll and the other one will be returning to school following their medical difficulties.

Question:

How much of the attendance data is published?

Answer:

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The overall attendance figure is published on the Compare School Data website.

Governors noted however the low unauthorised absence figure of 0.5% and how the attendance rate for Pupil Premium and SEND pupils has improved.

Staffing

The Head stated that there are currently no staff vacancies.

A discussion followed regarding the appointment of an English Subject Lead and the Head explained that once staffing is more settled, the Senior Leadership Team will consider who to appoint as Subject Leads for English and Humanities. It was noted that for the time being, PA is taking on the English Subject Lead role.

A governor queried whether as a result of this, staff may not be receiving sufficient support for these subjects but the staff at the meeting explained that this is not the case.

Behaviour and Safety

It was noted that governors will also discuss behaviour and safety under Item 13a of the agenda.

However, the Head explained that the school has changed the way in which behaviour incidents are logged and that the number of incidents logged has increased as staff are now also recording minor incidents.

The Head advised that although 147 incidents of poor behaviour have been logged, staff have also recorded 731 positive behaviour reports for the same period.

A governor asked if information on the number of positive behaviour incidents could also be included in future Head Teacher reports and it was agreed that this would be done. ACTION PA

A further governor asked if the report could also contain a breakdown by category of the values awards that are given to pupils and it was agreed that this would be done. ACTION PA

Safeguarding

The Head drew governors' attention to the Safeguarding data that was included in his report and explained that there has been four times the average number of reports this term with four cases being referred to Social Care.

The Head did not share any significant detail of these cases with governors but explained that the general trend is that families are not coping as well at home and seem more stressed than before which is causing them to make decisions that they would not normally make.

Governors asked:

Question:

Are there any positives that we can take from this i.e. are children finding it easier to talk to staff now the new school Behaviour Policy is in place?

Answer:

Not really, but yes, children are able to open up and talk to staff.

Question:

Do you think that the system in place at school works?

Answer:

Yes.

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Question:

Is there anything identifiable from these cases that the school could use to benefit other families?

Answer:

The incidents are all quite different. The school has looked into parenting courses but these are often chargeable and parents may not want to take this cost on. We can ensure that parents are aware of such courses though.

It was noted that governors agreed to continue to monitor this to determine if it is a trend or a random occurrence.

7. School Policies for Approval

The following updated policies were circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting:

- Complaints Policy;
- Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy;
- Pay Policy;
- Equalities Statement and Objectives.

The Head explained that the Complaints Policy had only recently been approved by governors and that he had checked this against the latest Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) model policy on the Knowledge Hub. The Clerk however advised that a new model Complaints Policy and Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy had been circulated. **On this basis, the Chair agreed to check whether the school's latest Complaints Policy was in line with the updated CCC model policy. ACTION SB**

It was noted that there were no queries on the Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.

The Head advised that the Pay Policy had been based on a model EPM policy.

A governor asked who, at Fowlmere is the Pay Body and it was noted that the Governing Body is and that Pay discussions have been delegated to the Personnel Committee.

It was noted that there were some minor queries on the Pay Policy which were addressed during the meeting.

The Head explained that updated data has been included in the Equalities Statement and Objectives for 2019.

An in-depth discussion took place with regards to narrowing the gap in attainment between boys and girls and the following was noted:

- Nationally there is a gap in attainment between boys and girls;
- There is a gap at Fowlmere. At the end of Key Stage 2, in the three-year average in reading, boys outperformed girls by a scaled score of 0.3, significantly narrowing the gap for boys;
- At the end of Key Stage 2, in the three-year average in mathematics, boys outperformed girls by a scaled score of 4.7. The actual difference in 2019 was 1.9 with boys outperforming girls at Reading;
- Some structural changes have been made in the way that teachers interact with girls in order to improve their performance in Maths i.e. non competitive and 'no hands-up' policy.

Following this discussion, it was agreed that this matter would be a focus for the Standards Committee and that a Maths monitoring visit looking at the provision for girls will be scheduled. ACTION Standards Committee

It was noted that the Governing Body approved the above policies.

8. Minutes from Sub Committees

It was noted that minutes from the Premises and Finance Sub Committee meeting on 1 July 2019 were circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting. There were no governor comments or queries.

9. School Risk Register

As noted under Item 3 Matters arising, each Committee has put together their own risk register.

It was agreed that the Chair will collate the individual Committee risk registers and add in any FGB risks and circulate a completed risk register for discussion at the next FGB meeting in February. ACTION SB

10. Updates from Cluster Working Group

The Chair explained that at the last Chairs' cluster meeting it was agreed that Heads and Chairs of the cluster schools would meet to formalise a vision for a soft federation. The Chair further explained that a draft vision will be shared with governors. It was noted that any feedback would be given to the cluster working group and the revised vision (taking into account any changes requested by governors) would be brought to FGB meetings in September 2020.

A governor asked:

Question:

Can you define what the ideas are behind a soft federation?

Answer:

Mutual teacher and school support, shared financial benefit, collaborative working within the cluster group, shared training and expertise between the schools and the genuine wish to support each other in terms of need to ensure all schools within the federation can be the best they can be.

A further governor asked:

Question:

What is the timescale for the implementation of this?

Answer:

A lot of what I mentioned above is already happening but it is more of getting a formal agreement in place. There should be a final version for governors to consider at the July FGB meeting.

At this point, the Chair explained that governors could also attend these cluster group meetings if they wish to.

A governor stated that consideration of the intention to form a soft federation needs to be given at the March strategy meeting.

Items for Discussion

11. School Improvement Plan 2019/2020

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a. Behaviour Report

It was noted that a Behaviour report was circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting.

LP gave governors an overview of the changes that have been implemented following the introduction of the 'STEPS' approach and the new therapeutic Behaviour Policy, the challenges, the strengths and the next steps.

A robust discussion took place with regards the current issue of ensuring every member of staff is 'STEPS' trained given that there are still three members of staff who have not completed the training. LP explained that this is due to these staff members working on a part-time basis and therefore not being able to attend after school training sessions.

Governors asked:

Question:

How do staff inform parents of any 'antisocial behaviour'?

Answer:

This is either done face-to-face or by telephone.

Question:

Has the 'STEPS' approach and the new Behaviour Policy met your expectations? Has it delivered what we wanted?

Answer:

It has definitely had a positive impact and long-term it is the right approach to take. For some pupils with more complex needs and therefore, not purely behavioural issues, additional support is needed. The hope is that we will see a big impact by the end of this academic year.

Question:

You mentioned in your report that the training is quite intensive, is it possible to combine training with other schools?

Answer:

I am only qualified to train a certain number of people. We would need to use an external trainer for larger groups.

On behalf of the Governing Body, the Chair thanked LP for all her work on this matter.

12. Communication Working Group Update

NS thanked CH for the research that she had carried out on this matter.

NS then updated governors on the Communication Working Group's work so far and explained that the Governing Body needs to decide on the following:

- Do we want a social media presence?
- What is our message?
- Who is our audience?

NS explained that on searching, there is a Facebook page for Fowlmere Primary School but it only contains limited information about the school. NS further explained that the school needs to claim this Facebook page and populate it. NS then advised that it is possible to restrict posting of information on this page to solely the owner i.e. the school.

A discussion followed with regards content, who would be responsible for updating the page and how best to promote the school to increase pupil numbers.

During this discussion, the following was noted:

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- Recommendation to use Facebook only, no other social media;
- Need to ensure that how Facebook is used is included in the school's Communications Policy;
- Only information that is in the public domain i.e. already on the school website, in the newsletter etc., will be posted on the page;
- Ensure that the required outcome i.e. promotion of the school, is at the forefront of anything that is included on the page;
- Concern raised that parents will want to post on the page but it was noted that there are already closed parents groups for each class;
- Concern over who is going to be responsible for keeping the page updated as the staff are already at full capacity;
- Suggestion to claim the page, add some content as a test to establish if it has any impact.

The following actions were therefore proposed and agreed:

- **Claim the current Facebook page. ACTION NS;**
- **Talk to PA regarding 'test' content and trial it. ACTION NS/AM/HW**

The Chair thanked the Communications Working Group for their work on this matter.

13. Monitoring Visit Reports

- a) Behaviour Report
It was noted that this visit has been carried out and the report has been written.
- b) Website Monitoring Visit
It was noted that this visit is ongoing.
- c) Confirmation of dates for:
 - i. Curriculum Monitoring Visit – Completed;
 - ii. Science Monitoring Visit – Completed;
 - iii. EYFS Monitoring Visit – Scheduled;
 - iv. NQT Monitoring Visit – Completed;
 - v. H&S Monitoring Visit – To be carried forward;
 - vi. School Condition Monitoring Visit – To be carried forward.

14. Online file storage

At a previous FGB meeting, it was noted that the school would no longer be able to use the e-Schools website and therefore, the Governing Body would need to store their files elsewhere. However, the Head advised that this is now not the case and that the school will still have access to this website. **On this basis, it was proposed and agreed that the Chair will update the Governors' area. ACTION SB**


15. Urgent Matters

The following items of other business were discussed during the meeting:

- i. Cambridgeshire Schools' Budget Consultation
It was noted that information on the 2020/21 School Budget Consultation and a scenarios tool were circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

The Head advised that response to the Schools' Budget Consultation is required by 10 December and explained that governors are also able to respond if they wish to do so.

The Head explained that there is currently at £16.2m deficit in the High Needs Block which will be funded by the County Council's reserves. The Head further explained that once this deficit has been paid, there will be no more

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reserves and that the Council can take 0.5% of the Schools block to move to the High Needs block.

It was noted that the Council is expecting the 2020/21 high needs funding from central government to increase by around 8.4% compared to this year but that this is not matching the growth in demand. The Head explained that the Council is therefore proposing to move £6.5m or 1.8% of the schools block grant to cover the shortfall and that this will have a hugely significant impact on Fowlmere Primary School and that there is a major concern that this could force small schools to close.

During an in-depth discussion on this matter, the following actions were proposed and agreed:

- **Governors to respond to the Consultation. ACTION ALL**
- **Chair to arrange a meeting with the cluster Chairs with Jonathan Lewis. ACTION SB**

ii. **Communications Code**

It was noted that a Communications Code was circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting. The Head explained that this is based on a model policy and recommended the Governing Body adopt this policy.

Governors expressed concern over some of the content of the policy and the language that had been used, in particular, within the Code of Conduct section and a robust discussion followed.

Staff advised that there is the need to outline when staff will respond to parents and that it is important to ensure there is a measure to protect staff in difficult situations and that this policy covers these aspects.

Following this discussion, it was proposed and agreed to separate the Code of Conduct from this policy and bring both documents to the next FGB meeting for approval. ACTION PA

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 5 February 2020

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

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