

**FOWLMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL  
MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

**Wednesday 6 May 2020  
7.15pm in School**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

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

Lisa White (LW) (Camclerk) in attendance.  
Lynsey Perkins (LP) (Associate Member)

**1. Apologies for absence**

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.25pm.

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chair advised that an amendment to the Governing Body's Standing Orders was required as there is currently no provision for remote participation to meetings. Given the current pandemic, it was noted that the Chair is allowed to amend this requirement under a Chair's Action in order for the Governing Body to hold virtual meetings.

The Chair then ran through some meeting etiquette for virtual meetings.


**Standing Items**

**2. Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising**

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 were circulated prior to the meeting and were approved by the Governing Body and signed by the Chair after the meeting as a true record.

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Signed .....



Date .....

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## **Matters arising from the meeting held on 17 July 2019**

### **Item 5 Safeguarding**

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 pending current situation.**

## **Matters arising from the meeting held on 25 September 2019**

### **Item 16 Urgent Matters**

Update the governor email distribution list to include LP. *PA now has tenancy rights and has set up a Governors2020 email group. Clerk to also be added to this group.* **ACTION PA**

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. **Contact made but no response received. Pending appeal in progress. ACTION SB c/f.**

## **Matters arising from the meeting held on 4 December 2019**

### **Item 4 Training Module**

Governors to complete any outstanding training and confirm to the clerk that they have done so. **ACTION ALL c/f**

Chair to add JG to the NGA membership list so she is able to access online training. **ACTION SB c/f**

### **Item 12 Communication Working Group update**

PA to liaise with HW, NS and AM regarding the use of photographs on the Facebook page. **ACTION PA C/f**

### **Item 14 Online file storage**

Chair to update Governors' area. **Governors and clerk are currently unable to access the 2019/20 files. It is hoped that the files on eSchools can be transferred to Microsoft Teams now that this has been set up. SB will explore this and trial it plus provide training to those governors who need it. ACTION SB**

### **Item 15 Urgent matters**

School Budget Consultation

Chair to arrange a meeting with the cluster Chairs and Jonathan Lewis. **ACTION SB c/f pending current situation.**

*The Head Teacher advised that there has been an agreement to meet with the Secretary of State and propose that there is a reduction in the per pupil minimum funding value which will mean the top slice is spread more evenly across all schools. This should mean that although smaller schools, such as Fowlmere, will still be significantly affected, larger schools will also have to bear some of the cost.*

Communications Code

Head Teacher to separate the Code of Conduct from this policy and bring both documents to the next FGB meeting for approval. **See agenda item 5. ACTION complete.**

Signed  Date *12/7/2020*

## **Matters arising from the meeting held on 5 February 2020**

### **Item 3a Safeguarding Training for Governors**

AM to complete the NSPCC online training. **ACTION AM c/f**

## **Matters arising from the meeting held on 11 March 2020**

### **Item 4a Our five-year vision**

Circulate updated SIP to governors once complete. **ACTION PA c/f**

Include an update on Behaviour at the next FGB meeting. **ACTION PA c/f**

### **Item 5 Did we make an impact?**

Chair to consider how best to structure future agendas. **ACTION SB c/f pending current situation.**

### **Item 7 Parent, Pupil and Staff Voices**

Parent, pupil and staff voice to be brought to the next FGB meeting. **Complete and ready to feed into School Improvement Planning with the exception of pupil voice due to current situation. ACTION PA c/f**

## **Matters arising from the confidential minute from 11 March 2020**

Chair to check whether the Governing Body of the other local school has had similar conversations. **See agenda item 6. ACTION complete.**

### **3. Safeguarding**

The Head provided an overview on the current situation from a Safeguarding perspective as follows:

- It is much more challenging to have an eye on everything, largely as we are not physically seeing children in school;
- School staff are trying to make sure we are seeing children online regularly. Pupils have been grouped and different staff have been given the responsibility to check on / make contact with them;
- If a pupil is not seen online, staff are phoning to check that there are no issues from a Safeguarding point of view;
- A small group of slightly more 'at risk' pupils have been identified. None of these children are under Social Care, but we are aware that there are some issues;
- If there are any concerns, teachers are able to use MyConcern to log these concerns. Following this, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will then make contact;
- There are also some children who are under Social Care who are being checked on regularly;

#### **Governors asked:**

##### **Question:**

**If you have to contact Social Services, is there capacity for someone to act on your concern?**

##### **Answer:**

Yes, with all the usual caveats and there is still the requirement to meet threshold. It will be done differently though due to the current situation i.e. via video.

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**Question:**

**Have you been given guidance on how to make those telephone calls and what signs to look out for?**

**Answer:**

The only real difference is that it is over the phone rather than face-to-face. It is the same procedure, just a different way of doing it.

The Childline number is on eSchools and we made sure every child knew this before school closed. Each child is also linked to every staff member so that if a child sends a 'whistle' message, someone would always pick the message up.

In addition, the SLT are staffing the office during the week, so if there are any concerns, these are being picked up.

**Question:**

**In school, you can talk to a child without the parents, but if the child is at home and they raise an issue, having the parents at home may prevent them from talking to you. How are you dealing with this?**

**Answer:**

It is more of a challenge if it is an issue that the school is not already aware of. We are obviously aware of any known issues, but we are using our best endeavours to give children a vehicle to express any concerns they may have.

**Items for Information or Approval**

**4. Head Teacher's Report**

It was noted that a Head Teacher's report was circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting. The Head explained that he had structured his report in response to the current unprecedented situation. The report covered the following areas:

- Background information;
- Home Learning;
- Safeguarding;
- Essential Worker and Vulnerable Pupil Childcare;
- School Meal and Free School Meals;
- Staffing;
- School Holidays;
- Statutory Processes;
- Training;
- Return to School and;
- Reception Intake 2020.

The Head drew governors' attention to the attendance information contained within the background information and advised that effectively, the school closed on 20<sup>th</sup> March and therefore, from that point onwards, no attendance figures have been recorded. It was noted that the usual rules with regards attendance have been suspended by the Department for Education until the situation returns to normal.

The Head then gave governors an overview of the home learning and advised that staff have been asked to assess where each class is in relation to the home learning. The Head advised that between one third and one half of classes have been described as pupils being active online, with approximately one third accessing the online learning sporadically. With regards the remainder, it is difficult to ascertain what they are doing as there are a mass of alternative resources available. The Head stated that there will be children who are not doing very much home learning but that based on information from other schools and County, two thirds of children accessing online learning is good.

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**Governors asked:**

**Question:**

**Are the third of pupils who are not accessing online learning, the children who you have identified as needing regular telephone calls?**

**Answer:**

They may be part of this group. They may be logging in, but we are not seeing any work submitted. Others may be doing other types of learning, such as cooking, forest school work etc.

**Question:**

**Are you expecting there to be a bigger gap for our disadvantaged children when they return to school?**

**Answer:**

There will be for some of them, but not for others. Some families are very engaged and doing lots of work. We have provided laptops and other resources to help our disadvantaged pupils. We do however have some families where the level of engagement is quite low. It is not a uniquely disadvantaged family issue though. We expect there to be a huge discrepancy across the board when we return to school.

**Question:**

**Are you happy with the level of work being undertaken? Are you pushing for more work to be completed?**

**Answer:**

We have pushed things like the WhiteRoseMaths and asked that if no other work is completed, that the daily Maths lessons are undertaken. Unfortunately, we are not in control of what people do with the resources and information provided.

JG advised that some parents in Class 3 have asked for a bit more structure to help children work through the day, which she has provided, explaining to all parents why she has done this.

Finally, the Chair drew governors' attention to the Reception intake of 20 children for the next academic year. It was noted that this is up to the school's Published Admissions Number (PAN), which is a great result.

The Head explained that despite the high number, there are still no children from Great Chishill and Heydon this year, and so the intake could have been even higher. As such, the Governing Body needs to consider its strategy with regards increasing pupil numbers to see if they can affect a change. The Head did state however that if it is purely due to geographical location, then the school will not be able to change this.

In addition, the Head explained that children from Heydon do not choose Fowlmere Primary School and that the families that do join Fowlmere, are usually those who cannot take their children to school, and therefore use the school bus to bring them to Fowlmere. The Head advised that it is primarily the disadvantaged families from Great Chishill that join the school.

## **5. School Policies for Approval**

It was noted that the following policies were circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting:

➤ **Mobile Phone Policy**

The Head explained that this is a basic update from the previous policy to include clarification around visitors to school and access to mobile phones;

**It was noted that subject to a minor query regarding staff use of mobile phones, which will be revised, the Governing Body approved the Mobile Phone Policy.**

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- **Communications Code**  
The Head advised that there were no major changes since this policy had last been approved by governors.

**A governor asked whether a paragraph regarding the school's use of social media should be included as the school now has a social media presence on Facebook and it was agreed that this will be added.**

**Add in a paragraph on social media. ACTION PA**

**It was noted that subject to the minor amendment noted above, the Governing Body approved the Communications Code.**

- **Code of Conduct**  
The Head explained that at a previous FGB meeting, governors had requested that the Code of Conduct be separated from the Communications Code. In addition, the Head advised that this updated version takes into account governor comments regarding communications with parents from a review.

**It was noted that the Governing Body approved the Code of Conduct.**

#### **6. Updates regarding Collaborative Working with Local Schools**

It was noted that this item was discussed under a confidential minute.

#### **Items for Discussion**

#### **7. School Budget**

It was noted that the following reports were circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting:

- Funding 2020/21;
- Comparative Funding 2019/20;
- Income and Expenditure (from Orovia);
- 2020/21 Budget Commentary and;
- School Group Staff Summary.

The Head drew governors' attention to the 2020/21 funding report and thanked those governors who responded to the recent funding consultations as the level of response did have an impact, with smaller schools taking less of a hit this year.

The Head explained that there has been a fall in funding this year compared to 2019/20 with a total funding amount of £427.5k for 2020/21. The Head further explained that this is largely due to a reduction in pupil numbers. The Head then drew governors' attention to the increased lump sum funding figure of £115.9k.

As noted above, a Budget commentary report was circulated along with the Income and Expenditure report. The Head drew governors' attention to the following:

- There will be PTA contributions this year, but these are not factored in to the Budget;
- The majority of expenditure items are the same as last year although the higher staffing costs seen last year due to staff absences, are not replicated in 2020/21;

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**A governor asked:**

**Question:**

**If we are expecting that some staff may need to self-isolate, will we need to employ additional supply staff? Do we need to increase that Budget line?**

**Answer:**

It is difficult to judge at the moment. The Government has made money available for exceptional costs relating to Covid-19. I expect most of this to impact in the Summer term. In addition, before schools closed, it was hard to get supply staff.

- Building maintenance costs are reasonable as the caretaker and I can complete much of the work. Some decoration is needed but that can be allocated to a Capital Project;
- Water, sewerage, oil and electricity costs are best estimates;
- ICT support costs are higher this year as we have moved to Office 365;
- Some Pupil Premium funding has been allocated against Educational Visits to cover families who are unable to afford school trips;
- No costs for swimming due to the current situation but a budget for training is still required;

A brief discussion took place with regards the ability to furlough staff from areas where you receive an income, i.e. the After School Club. The Head explained however, that this is not possible, as the community's key workers need this wraparound care. The Head advised that it is hoped that this cost will be covered by Covid-19 funding from the Government.

**A governor asked:**

**Question:**

**What is the cost of this?**

**Answer:**

Approximately £7k to £8k.

- The school is not currently paying Lunchtime Co for the school meals although they initially asked for this. They are a public sector supplier so we do have to pay them in particular ways and there is some guidance around that. They are still receiving the Free School Meals (FSM) and Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) funding;

The Head then summarised the Budget as follows:

- Revenue balance of £4,170 so this year, the school is basically funding +£20k;
- Pupil numbers should increase next year which will have a positive impact on the Budget going forward;
- There will be income from the PTA which will mean the carry forward will be higher than expected;
- Capital funding will be used to purchase ICT equipment and cover building maintenance.

**A governor queried the figures with regards the Funding and expenditure advising that they were unable to reconcile the numbers. The Head shared a 2020/21 Funding scenario report which provided more detail as follows:**

- Employee costs - £404.6k;
- Funding - £427.9k;
- Other income – £94.3k (FSM, USIFM, After School Club income, Government pensions contributions);
- Other expenditure – £137.4k;
- Balance of -£20.2k;
- Balance b/f £24.4k;
- Balance c/f £4.2k.

**Following this clarification, it was noted that the Governing Body approved the 2020/21 Budget.**

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On behalf of the Governing Body, the Chair thanked the Head for his hard work in delivering this Budget.

#### **8. Moving Subcommittees to Virtual Meetings**

The Chair asked governors to confirm that they were happy to continue with the Committee meeting schedule and that meetings will now be held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In addition, the Chair explained that her intention is to set up Sub-Committee folders in Teams where all committee files can be stored.

**It was noted that governors were content with this approach.**

**Following this, it was agreed that the Chair will review the structure of how the files will be stored on Microsoft Teams and the Head will set up the relevant folders / directories.**

**Chair to review structure of how the files will be stored on Teams. ACTION SB**

**Head to set folders / directories up. ACTION PA**

**Committee Chairs to arrange upcoming meetings. ACTION HW / AP / NS**

#### **9. Urgent Matters**

The Chair asked for an update on staff wellbeing particularly during this unprecedented time.

**Governors asked:**

**Question:**

**What are we doing to make sure staff are being supported during the current situation?  
Do we have anything in place to monitor staff wellbeing?**

**Answer:**

We are feeling very well supported at the moment. Staff are in regular contact and are looking out for each other. The SLT are baring a lot of the load.

**Question:**

**As a staff body, do you think that if a member of staff is struggling in the current situation, this would be identified?**

**Answer:**

Yes.

**Question:**

**Are staff receiving support and resources from Unions?**

**Answer:**

Yes. However, as a staff body, we are working together rather than relying on external support.

The Head advised that all staff have been very flexible and the need for staff to be in school has been minimal. During the Easter holidays, half of the staff were given time off, with the other half off after the school holidays as the school recognised the importance of staff having a break.

In addition, the Head explained that the SLT are looking at ensuring all staff have a full week off at Half-Term, even if it is not from Monday to Friday. The school acknowledges that when school re-opens, there will be new and more difficult challenges to face.

Signed .....



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Finally, the Chair wished to congratulate and praise all of the staff at the school for the fantastic way that they have dealt with this unprecedented situation and wished to note that from the very start of the pandemic, the school was well prepared for what was to follow.

It was noted that the Head will feed this back to all staff and reiterated that it is a real team effort.

**Date of next meeting: 8 July or 13 July 2020 via Microsoft Teams**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed



Date

12/7/2020

