

FOWLMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Wednesday 23 September 2020
7.15pm via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Philip Atkin (PA), Head Teacher
Sarah Burge (SB), Chair
Bruce Gilliam (BG), (from 7.50pm)
Jo Grazebrook (JG), (from 7.40pm)
Clare Hobro (CH)
Andrew Page (AP)
Nico Schonken (NS)
Hayley Woods (HW)

In Attendance:

Lisa White (LW) (Camclerk)

1. Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.15pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from Ashley Meggitt and Lynsey Perkins.

Apologies for their late arrival were received from Bruce Gilliam and Jo Grazebrook.

The Chair asked the Clerk whether Item 3 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair should take place prior to Item 3 and the Clerk advised that it should. It was therefore noted that the Chair referred governors to Item 3 of the agenda.

Standing Items

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

As noted above, this item was taken out of order.

SB advised that she was happy to continue in her role as Chair for the next academic year. SB left the meeting whilst the Governing Body discussed her re-appointment. NS nominated SB as Chair of Governors.

It was noted that the Governing Body unanimously approved the appointment of SB as Chair of Governors for the 2020/21 academic year.



Signed

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NS advised that he was happy to continue in his role as Vice-Chair for the next academic year. NS left the meeting while the Governing Body discussed his re-appointment. SB nominated NS as Vice-Chair of Governors and this was seconded by AP.

It was noted that the Governing Body unanimously approved the appointment of NS as Vice-Chair of Governors for the 2020/21 academic year.

4. Approval of Terms of Reference and Standing Orders

Draft Standing Orders for the Governing Body and its Committees were circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting.

The Chair advised that given the current situation, governors can expect that meetings will continue to be virtual for the next year, adding that should a face-to-face meeting be required, governors would receive seven days notice.

It was noted that the Standing Orders had already been updated to reflect this change.

The Chair also advised that the number of FGB meetings per year has been changed to five, with the sixth meeting dedicated to a strategy discussion.

It was noted that the Governing Body approved the Standing Orders for 2020/2021.

Chair to sign the Standing Orders as approved. ACTION SB

In addition, the Code of Conduct for 2020/2021 was circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the Governing Body approved the Code of Conduct for 2020/2021.

Chair to set up a form on Microsoft Teams for governors to confirm that they have read the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it. ACTION SB

5. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

It was noted that an annual declaration of pecuniary interest form was circulated to governors prior to the meeting for their completion.

The Clerk asked those governors who have yet to do so, to please complete them and email them to her at their earliest convenience.

Forms outstanding from PA, SB, CH and JG. Complete forms. ACTION PA, SB, CH and JG

2. Minutes of the last meetings and matters arising

As noted above, this item was taken out of order.



Signed

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Draft minutes of the FGB meeting held on 8 July 2020 and confidential minutes were circulated to governors for their review prior to the meeting and were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair after the meeting.

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**

Matters arising from the meeting held on 25 September 2019

Item 16 Urgent Matters

Update the governor email distribution list to include LP. **Ongoing issue. ICT to action. PA to add LW c/f**

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**

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 – pending current situation**

Item 15 Urgent matters

School Budget Consultation

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

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.

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 7 Parent, Pupil and Staff Voices



Signed

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Add an in-depth discussion regarding staff voice in response to the proposed change in length to the school day. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Matters arising from the meeting held on 6 May 2020

Item 5 Polices for Approval

Add a paragraph regarding the use of social media to the Communications Code. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Matters arising from the meeting held on 8 July 2020

Item 3 Minutes of the last meetings and matters arising

Chair to sign updated copy of Standing Orders to reflect the need to hold virtual governor meetings. **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Item 5 Head Teacher's report – September Plans

Updated Risk Assessment and School Improvement Plan to be shared with governors. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Item 12 Governance

Advert for the role of Co-opted Governor to be placed in the Fowlmere and Thriplow News, The Listing and on the Great and Little Chishill Facebook pages. **ACTION SB c/f**

Add meeting dates to the Microsoft Teams calendar. **ACTION COMPLETE**

6. Safeguarding

The Chair asked CH if she is happy to continue in the role of Safeguarding Link governor and she confirmed she was happy to do so.

The Chair then asked the Head Teacher if there were any other items for discussion and he advised that there was no further information to be shared other than what was included in his report.

Items for Information or Approval

7. Covid-19 Related Updates

The following documents were shared with governors for their review prior to the meeting:

a. Risk Assessment

PA explained that the Risk Assessment has been updated to reflect current practise now that children are back in setting.

It was noted that the Governing Body approved the updated Risk Assessment.

b. Staff well-being upon return to work

PA gave a brief overview of the current situation including information regarding some positive cases locally that have contributed to any pre-existing anxiety that staff had due to the pandemic.



Signed

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PA then asked JG, as Staff Governor for her perspective and she advised the following:

- Normal does not appear to have any meaning any more;
- There is a plan in place, staff are adhering to this plan, the plan works but there is anxiety as it is not possible to control things outside of school. For example, if parents send their child to school with symptoms. Whilst this is not unexpected, it is not acceptable and adds to any pre-existing anxiety;
- Seeing the Head Teacher rushing around more than usual also adds to this anxiety;
- The situation is weird and stressful but staff are making the most of it. There is not anything else that staff can do;

A governor asked if parents are adding to this anxiety and whether further communication is needed with parents, but PA advised that parents are being reasonably sensible and are not the cause of additional anxiety.

It was noted that governors were concerned that members of staff are stressed and anxious but there is nothing the Governing Body can do to help.

PA explained that the anxiety is not necessarily created by school and is more due to how an individual perceives the current situation.

PA added however that children do not appear to be anxious.

It was noted that governors will continue to monitor staff well-being at future meetings.

c. Plans for closure

PA explained that the school has a number of plans in place to cover a further school closure. These include but are not limited to:

- Emergency activities added to eSchools for use if necessary. If a bubble has to isolate, the hope is that the teacher is fit and well and able to add work on a daily basis and engage directly with pupils;
- Discussion surrounding individuals who need to self-isolate. Teachers have been asked to share the work that is being done in class with these children. Work should be provided from day 3 of a child self-isolating;

d. Provisions for SEND pupils

A governor asked:

Question:

Does the school need to be providing specific support for our vulnerable pupils?

Answer:

We are currently establishing where any needs are and talking to all teachers of SEND and vulnerable pupils to ascertain where they are in their learning. Once we have this information, we will make a plan accordingly.

We are carrying out SEND assessments and are continuing to work with the SEND link teacher in making our plans to narrow any gaps in learning.



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8. 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:

- School Data
- Staffing
- Behaviour and Safety
- Statutory Outcomes 2020

The Chair asked governors if they had any questions on the information included in the Head Teacher's report.

It was noted that although pupil behaviour is no longer recorded on BromCom and therefore behaviour incidents are not included in the Head Teacher's report, governors asked whether an overview could still be provided.

On this basis, it was proposed and agreed that a governor monitoring visit be arranged to assess behaviour outside.

Schedule a governor monitoring visit on behaviour at lunchtimes. ACTION NS / PA

Governors asked:

Question:

What is the classroom behaviour like now all children are back in setting?

Answer:

We have had to re-establish the routine but generally speaking, children are behaving well and happy to be back in school.

PA added that with the new rules in place, children now have to sit at their desks all day (except at break and lunch times) and so there are no natural breaks (i.e. carpet time). PA explained that this has been an additional challenge for staff when managing behaviour.

PA also advised that behaviour on the Butts is also good with children playing in a calm manner.

A governor asked whether this is due to not having as many children playing at the same time and PA replied that this is possibly the reason why, plus the new play equipment has helped to keep children engaged.

As Staff Governor, JG added that although the variety of moving around the classroom is not possible, the children have bought into the new behaviour system.

Finally, governors noted that the numbers on roll of 103 is a positive.

There were no other comments or questions on the Head Teacher's report.

9. School Improvement Plan for 2020/2021

Governors asked:

Question:

What do you think is feasible and reasonable to achieve before Christmas?

Answer:



Signed

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We have a lot to do but I do want to continue the focus on behaviour. We have had some good results so far and I want to keep pushing forwards on this.

Another focus for this term is work around the quality of provision. We have made a start on this and as mentioned before, we are meeting with class teachers to review the SEND provision and how we can support our SEND pupils. We are also in the process of arranging planning meetings.

Question:

Is it possible to move a review of the quality of provision to the Curriculum Committee and have this as a focus for this term as there is no data to discuss?

Answer:

Yes.

It was noted that the Governing Body agreed for the Curriculum Committee to focus on the quality of provision for this term.

PA added that he has created a School Improvement Team document that includes the plans for Priorities 1, 2 and 3. PA also advised that the Covid-19 Recovery Plan has been added to this and his intention is to also include the Subject Action Plans and SEND Action Plan. PA explained that this will be a live document that can be reviewed and added to at any point. Tasks for staff to complete linked to these priorities will also be included.

a. Working with outside school improvement partners during Covid-19

Governors asked:

Question:

Are visits from our school improvement partners still possible?

Answer:

A lot of the training is online, but we can still have visitors in school as long as the guidelines are followed. As a school, we will continue to use the school improvement partner as we saw the benefits of using them.

Question:

Do you think that the school improvement partner's visit contributed to the improved behaviour in school?

Answer:

Yes, to some extent. It helped me to focus on the right areas.

10. School Policies for Approval

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

- Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy

PA advised that there have been no changes to this policy.

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

PA advised that this is based on the Local Authority model policy and has been updated in line with the new Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) guidance.

Governors asked:

It refers to training for all staff on how to spot signs of abuse in children. What is the training process for new starters?



Signed

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Answer:
Training on this is still face-to-face.

Annual Safeguarding training has been undertaken for this year with a focus on the children's return to school.

Question:

Is there a requirement for another staff member to be Safer Recruitment trained?

Answer:

The requirement is that one person on the panel needs to be Safer Recruitment trained. Myself and the Chair are both trained and there would be no need for another staff member to complete this training. Another member of the Personnel Committee could do the training if appropriate.

A governor asked whether the rolling programme of governors completing the NSPCC training is continuing and the Chair advised that it will be. It was noted that once AM has completed this training, BG will be the next governor to undertake it.

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

11. Updates regarding Collaborative Working with Local Schools

The Chair advised that there is nothing to report currently other than that the next meeting is scheduled for 15 October.

12. Vacancy for Co-opted Governor

As noted previously, someone with an educational background would be a great asset to the Governing Body.

Items for Discussion

13. School Surveys

a. Staff

It was noted that data on the staff survey was shared prior to the last FGB meeting but due to time constraints, this was not discussed. During a discussion governors stated that it is important to review the survey results but as a Governing Body, it is difficult to support staff other than lessen the burden of reporting.

Governors asked:

Question:

With regards transition between lessons and pupils' behaviour, if the question was asked now, would the responses be the same given the earlier comments on the improvement in behaviour?

Answer:

There is still work to do to fully embed the new behaviour system. For those staff who are on board with the new system, they would agree that behaviour has improved. Those staff who are still working in the same way, will not have seen an improvement in pupils' behaviour.



Signed

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We are only on week 3 and it will take time to work this through.

A governor expressed their concern that only 4 out of the 5 teachers completed the survey, but it was noted that the reason for this is that one teacher missed the deadline.

Following this review, governors noted the following:

- Overall a positive response – specifically staff feel well supported by the Senior Leadership Team;
- There are some inconsistencies, but the school will continue to tackle this with training;
- Governors need to be reassured that the individual needs of pupils are appropriately met – this will be picked up in the Standards Committee meetings. Without the usual data however, it may be more of a challenge to triangulate this.

It was noted that the next Staff survey will be scheduled for the Spring term in order to lead into School Improvement Planning.

b. Pupil voice

The Chair asked if a date for the Pupil Voice has been scheduled and PA advised that it has not but will be arranged soon.

c. Parent

It was noted that a Parent survey will be scheduled for Spring 1.

d. Governor Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

The Chair asked governors to complete a SEF for discussion at the next meeting.

**Governors to complete SEF for discussion at FGB meeting in December.
ACTION All**

14. Governance

a. **Continuation with all GB meetings online**

As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was noted that governor meetings would continue to be held virtually the foreseeable future.

The Chair then proposed that going forwards, governor questions on any reports or papers should be asked in advance of the meeting in order to give the SLT time to collect any information needed to answer these questions.

It was noted that the Governing Body agreed to this proposal but a governor queried whether the SLT would have sufficient time to prepare in advance of the meeting. The Chair replied, saying that reports would be circulated 7 days in advance with a requirement for any questions to be emailed to the SLT by an agreed deadline.

During this discussion, governors agreed that the agenda would be circulated two weeks in advance of the meeting, with the papers shared one week before.



Signed

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It was noted that the Governing Body approved this proposal and agreed to implement the same system for the Committee meetings.

b. Committee Membership

It was noted that Committee Membership remained unchanged as follows:

Finance and Premises

Andrew Page (Chair)

Philip Atkin

Sarah Burge

Clare Hobro

Nico Schonken

Standards

Nico Schonken (Chair)

Philip Atkin

Sarah Burge

Bruce Gillian

Joanna Grazebrook

Ashley Meggitt

Andrew Page

Lynsey Perkins

Hayley Woods

Personnel

Hayley Woods (Chair)

Philip Atkin

Sarah Burge

Bruce Gilliam

Clare Hobro

Ashley Meggitt

c. Dates of Meetings

It was noted that dates of Committee meetings have been finalised and are uploaded to the governor Teams site.

The Chair asked the Clerk whether she is able to see these meetings, who advised that she is not able to.

Head Teacher to arrange for the Clerk to have a school email address to enable access to this site, with emails automatically forwarded to her LA email address. ACTION PA

FGB meeting dates confirmed as follows:

Wednesday 2 December 2020

Wednesday 10 February 2021

Wednesday 10 March 2021 (Strategy meeting)

Wednesday 5 May 2021

Wednesday 14 July 2021

d. Monitoring visits

It was noted that the following monitoring visits are to be scheduled:

- Behaviour (NS)



Signed

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- Safeguarding (CH)
- Early Years (HW)
- Covid-19 (BG)
- Health and Safety (Finance and Premises Committee)

15. School PR for Reception 2021 Intake

PA advised that social distanced visits will be arranged for those families who wish to visit the school, adding that LP will also produce a video of the school as she did for this year's intake.

16. Urgent Matters

Governors asked:

Question:

There are rumours of a circuit breaker for the October half term, will this happen?

Answer:

I do not know but schools are being asked to be prepared for Tier 4.

Question:

What happens if a year group is sent home to self-isolate? Does that include key worker and vulnerable children?

Answer:

Yes, it does.

Lastly, on behalf of the Governing Body, the Chair wished to congratulate the school and its staff on the excellent job they are doing in such difficult circumstances.

Date of Next Meeting: 2 December 2020

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



Signed

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