



Faringdon Junior School

Gloucester Street Faringdon Oxon SN7 7HZ

Tel: 01367 240232

office@fjs.faringdonlearningtrust.org

Part of the Faringdon Learning Trust

Headteacher - Sharon Farrell

Chair of Governors - Adam Pickford

MINUTES

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Where	Virtually via Teams
Date	Wednesday 9 th March 2022	Time	18:00
Attendees	David Border (DB), Heather Bourne (HB), Anthony Cook (AC), Dawn El-Masri (DEM), Sharon Farrell (SF, Head teacher), Taniya Ahmed (TA, Head teacher) Adam Pickford (AP, chair), Ian Pugh (IP), Lucy Edwards (LE), Debbie Hulme (DH), Tom Gilbert (TG), Pauline Forbes (associate member), Alex Molton (Clerk)		

No	Description	Action
	Procedural Matters (18:00-18:15)	
1	Apologies for absence and acceptance/non-acceptance Apologies were sent and received from Charlotte Mitchell (CM) and IP had contacted the LGB to confirm he would join the meeting later.	
2	Welcome new members, visitors or staff presenting None.	
3	Declaration of any personal or business interests PF and DEM noted that their declarations remain the same as for previous meetings.	
	Ensuring Accountability (18:15-18:45) (<i>Governor comments and questions are in italics</i>)	
4	<p>Agree Minutes of previous meeting on 17th January 2022 SF had uploaded the Sports Premium report since the last LGB meeting and confirmed that we did not spend all of this last year so we have carried the remainder of this over to this year and this needs to be spent by July.</p> <p><i>Thanks to DK and SF for this clear report.</i></p> <p>LE, DH and AP had met to discuss how to gather parent feedback and asked SF to add something about this into the next newsletter. The LGB discussed the best way to ensure that all parents are able to access the feedback form and recognised that not all parents would necessarily be able to access this on electronic devices. Governors agreed to use some kind of electronic feedback form, with parents able to ask for a paper copy from the office if this is needed.</p> <p>TG joined the meeting at 6.14pm.</p> <p>SF suggested that paper copies of these forms could be placed at the upcoming parent consultations which will be in person at the start of April.</p> <p>ACTION: DH is still to finalise the questions for these feedback forms and will share these with the rest of the LGB before these are sent out to parents.</p> <p>ACTION: SF to include details of the feedback form in the next newsletter.</p> <p>HB suggested that parents who are coming into school soon for the Ancient Egypt day would be a good audience to give feedback at the time.</p> <p><i>How many of our parents do not have regular access to the internet or online communications?</i> SF: There are a few parents who ask for things in paper form but this does not happen very often.</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>SF</p>



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	<p>The LGB recognised that it will never be possible to obtain feedback from all of the body of parents but understood that all of the parents need to feel that they have the opportunity to feedback if they would like to. We also need to make it as easy as possible for parents to feed back to school.</p> <p>LE has not yet completed her action to contact the other volunteers regarding taking the lead on the PTA group.</p> <p>ACTION: LE to complete this action by the next meeting.</p> <p>DH was the only governor to have reviewed her online training record on Governor Hub. Other governors have signed up for other training as appropriate.</p> <p>ACTION: All other governors to check their profile on Governor Hub.</p> <p>ACTION: TG to carry out the next level of Safeguarding training; DB to send TG a link to this online training.</p> <p>SF informed the LGB that AM has now joined the school as the new office administrator and will be able to assist with supporting on governor training needs.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>LE</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>TG/DB</p>
5	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>Governor and Headteacher Reporting (18:45-19:15)</p>		
6	<p>Headteacher Report</p> <p>This was provided to the LGB ahead of the meeting via Governor Hub and responses compiled by TA.</p> <p><i>What is the reason why 8 pupils will not be taking the SATS - is it usual for some pupils not to take these? Does this affect their transition to ability sets at FCC?</i></p> <p>TA: Yes these are SEN pupils working well below the standard of the national curriculum assessments (6 of which have an EHCP). FCC will take our teacher assessments into account as well as their own assessments of pupils when they join. Both are usually used to inform their ability sets.</p> <p><i>What has been the impact of the conflict in Ukraine around the school? Are we aware that it directly impacts any pupils or families within the school? I note that the school are taking part in the day on Friday to support Ukrainians organised by Brize Norton, but what consideration has been given to explaining the conflict to pupils, and how this may affect any Russian pupils or with pupils with Russian heritage, and also to families who are trying the shield their children from the conflict? Although it is no doubt with good intentions and I am sure the intended focus is on the humanitarian crisis, this situation is not caused by a natural disaster but is one with a victim and 'enemy' and whilst I obviously wholeheartedly condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine I am concerned that the School is seen to be asking pupils to make a political stand without reference to any support for affected pupils/families (either Ukrainian or Russian) or to be facilitating the opportunity for pupils to develop their own viewpoint on the matter. Also, although the newsletter explains it a little better, I overheard several children and parents discussing it on the way out of school on Friday along the lines of Child: "we have to wear blue and yellow on Friday to support Ukraine", Parent: "If you want to support Ukraine that is fine but the school can't tell you who to support/what to think", so maybe there is something lost in some of the messaging to pupils. The Infant School are not taking part seemingly, and have today sent a very clear and considered email out to parents about protecting pupils from the conflict and limiting their exposure, which I appreciate is harder to</i></p>	<p>DOC 2</p>



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do with older pupils.

TA: We have a number of families who are from neighbouring countries to Ukraine. We also have our Service Children who may have heard talk of deployments and humanitarian planning which may involve their parents or other members of the forces community they know. Our pastoral lead is working with staff to both monitor and support pupils (so far she has provided pastoral support to one pupil who shared their upset). We are following DfE guidance in which links such as 'Educate Against Hate' and resources have been shared with teachers to support them in managing discussions that may arise in classrooms. This is largely principled on avoiding misinformation. We have had a local person contact school to ask about releasing doves at school as a sign of peace. We have talked to the children about the situation in assembly along the lines of thinking of the children involved and supporting them, rather than the political stance.

Was there any communication between FJS and FIS before FIS sent their letter out to parents and we decided to go ahead with the day, or do schools decide on their own which way to go?

SF: No, we did not discuss this beforehand but with several military families and service staff it did appeal to us as a school which has these connections.

PF confirmed that due to the younger age of the children at FIS the SLT had decided to ask parents to be cautious about this, but had provided information should parents want to donate.

The school's gas is supplied by a Russian gas company, Gazprom, if anyone considers this to be an issue.

SF: This was raised this at the ALT meeting today. The Trust is in a contract with Gazprom and as we are not near the end of this contract there would be a significant financial penalty to leaving this contract early. An alternative company also has some connections to Russian gas supply so it is a hard to move away from this entirely.

AC confirmed that the Board are due to discuss this at its next meeting will be looking at the risks to the Trust rather than the political element. We entered the contract in good faith to mitigate our financial situation obviously not realising that this situation would ensue.

Regarding the accidents, was the large number of playground incidents in term 1 down to new starters/return to school? Was this unusually high? Also were there significant issues around the location in term 3?

SF: Some of those which were reported in the last term report were not necessarily worthy of being reported. There is no location which is causing any particular issues with accidents or near misses.

What extra support is in place now for your higher ability Maths children who are expected to exceed expectations? How are they being challenged?

TA: Challenge for all pupils with a focus on HA pupils has been a focus since last term's monitoring. CM has been working with teachers on this during staff training and this remained a focus in our maths peer review that took place last week. Teachers are exploring developing a range of strategies such as giving pupils greater autonomy to choose their own starting points and planning for challenge through an emphasis on reasoning and problem-solving



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	<p>opportunities.</p> <p><i>Although no requirement for staff to test is this still encouraged or has it stopped completely? Have you noticed any increase in Covid cases since restrictions have eased? Is Covid still having an impact upon staffing or is this more settled now?</i></p> <p>TA: Yes the DfE are no longer advising regular asymptomatic testing. However we are strongly encouraging testing where pupils or staff have one of the main Covid-19 symptoms. In order to continue to keep our school community safe and to minimise disruption to learning, staff and pupils will continue to be advised to stay at home for 5 days and if they have Covid-19 symptoms, LFTS and PCRs are strongly advised. We do know that this is not enforceable. The number of cases in school has reduced and not risen since restrictions have eased. We do not have any classes in an 'outbreak' situation. Staffing may continue to be affected. We have one staff absence related to Covid-19.</p> <p><i>Great to see clubs returning and a return to more normal school life for children. What additional support do children need, especially PPG, as we emerge from Covid from a learning and wider pastoral support point of view?</i></p> <p>TA: In the autumn term, we used the Recovery PPG funding to support Year 6 PPG children. This was one day a week with a teacher. We are now looking at the next cohort of children and exploring additional input via the National Tutoring Programme. CM is looking into this. Attendance is key and our pastoral lead continues to work with our vulnerable families. Our Early Bird breakfast club offers pupils a positive and settled start to their day for individuals that need it. SENDCo is in the process of organising to deliver sensory circuit training for staff to support pupils with focus and concentration during the school day. The Nest continues to provide a safe space offering a range of learning, social and nurture interventions (though this has been closed for two weeks with because of staff absence).</p> <p><i>Lots of great feedback about the half-term camps. Parents most complimentary.</i></p> <p><i>What realistic attendance target should we be working to for end of year?</i></p> <p>TA: Attendance target for the end of the year is 97%. We are currently at 94.77%. We have sent a first set of attendance letters to parents informing them that their child's current attendance rate is below the school's target. Where attendance does not improve for a pupil, a second warning letter will be sent. At all stages, parents are offered support and invited to share any information concerning their child's absences that school does not know. With declining absences related to Covid-19, we hope to meet our target.</p> <p><i>Absences seem to be staying around the same and under the target 97% - are these still illness related - is this more than we would expect compared to pre-Covid years?</i></p> <p>TA: Yes absences are illness related but because this is coupled with Covid-19 related absences, we continue to fall below target.</p> <p><i>When are mid-year reviews scheduled for?</i></p> <p>TA: These are scheduled for this term. TA and SF are managing these together.</p>	
7	<p>Update on new school ** CONFIDENTIAL**</p> <p>This was taken in closed session due to the confidential nature of the business.</p>	
8	<p>PTA update</p>	



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	LE confirmed there is no further update on this at this time.	
	Strategic Matters (19:15-19:45)	
9	<p>OFSTED SF confirmed that there is no update at this time. AM will work on the school SCR and ensure this is updated; DB to visit school to check this. DEM, AP and PF recently attended a call about the Ofsted experiences of two Trust schools which were recently inspected which was insightful.</p>	
10	<p>School Development Plan TA provided this to the LGB via GovernorHub ahead of the meeting and compiled responses to questions which were posed.</p> <p><i>Sounds like great progress on SEND; will the Handbook be shared with all (not just new) staff as I am sure it will be a valuable resource and reminder?</i> TA: Yes the Handbook will be shared and stored for all staff's access and reference.</p> <p><i>It would be interesting to hear more about the planned action points for staff wellbeing.</i> TA: Many of these are strategic such as promoting wellbeing at staff meetings and being thoughtful about helping staff to manage workload successfully.</p> <p><i>What form is verbal feedback taking? How is it being recorded? How are the leadership team and subject leaders monitoring to ensure that verbal feedback leads to improved output and up levelling of work?</i> TA: This term, we revised our feedback policy and approach to monitoring in collation with staff. We are now working to embed this within school, with a renewed focus on quality first teaching and learning. HB confirmed that this new approach was different to usual observation. She felt it was good, particularly to have a subsequent two-way conversation about the experience rather than just feedback. Better to have observation and feedback straight away as it was fresh in both minds.</p> <p><i>It's so nice to see school life returning to normal with assemblies and clubs etc. Is the School council meeting regularly and do you have an Eco Council? If so, what is their focus for the year?</i> TA: School Council meetings have resumed this term. They recently took part in a walk around the school and have been thinking about what might need to change or be added when infants join us. As always, other topics are discussed as put forward from staff or class suggestion boxes. Ambitious as they are, lots of suggestions have been discussed and shared with staff including points on health and safety, the outdoor learning environment, resources suitable for early years and play equipment.</p> <p><i>Under the curriculum I noted that staff are confident in understanding the curriculum and related assessment – green tick. However, the use of FFT for assessment has a red tick. What forms of assessment are in place now – apart from SATS past papers – and how is this tracked and recorded?</i> TA: 'Set up FFT for assessment in all subjects' – has been acknowledged in red because we currently use FFT for assessment in core subjects. Formative assessment is ongoing (e.g. through questioning, class discussion, quizzes, book and work outcomes) and teachers use this to effectively monitor pupil learning and progress,</p>	



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providing ongoing feedback to pupils. Pupils take summative tests at the end of every term in reading (NFER), SPAG and maths (White Rose). This is tracked and recorded on FFT and this creates a scaled score which corresponds to age attainment indicating whether a pupil is working well below, towards, at or above age related expectations.

You noted that staff mentoring is going well. How many staff are currently being mentored and is this because they are ECT/ New teachers?

TA: Two teachers are currently being mentored (one is an NQT and one is completing his induction year).

Do the knowledge and skills curriculum maps contain info from EYFS/KS1 to help ensure effective delivery from September 2022?

TA: CM is leading on this and making good progress working with FIS and supporting FJS subject leaders to write their knowledge and skills curriculum maps inclusive of EYFS and KS1. Subject leaders have this priority linked to their appraisal targets. They are networking with FIS subject leaders.

Can you give some examples of life experiences given to the children through the curriculum?

TA: Year 6 visit to Hill End – offers the children a unique outdoor learning opportunity, experiencing what life would have been like for the soldiers in the trenches during WW1. Included thought-provoking re-enactments, historical facts as well as local history.

What plans are in place for engaging with the community re the vision of the new primary schools?

SF to update on this.

How has the love of reading / reading every night levels held up in January /February?

TA: Whilst we recommend children to read daily, we know that not all of our children do this. All pupils' reading is monitored by the class teacher and they work with parents to actively encourage this.

Writing / learning stamina was an issue in the early part of the academic year – how far recovered is this now? What further support is needed?

TA: Staff training In January INSET was dedicated to writing. Our English writing leads delivered training specifically focused on improving outcomes in writing through the use of writing cycles, embedding grammar, effective marking and feedback.

Great to see more after school clubs, music and other curriculum enrichment activities going on – excellent feedback on these.

What further support could we provide to PPG / SEND children to help with their MFL learning?

TA: Therese Ziopios is developing a range of approaches that will benefit these groups of pupils including working on knowledge organisers, working with teachers to introduce MFL words/phrases within the classroom learning environment as well as self and peer evaluation.

What is the situation now with staff absences?

SF: We have two now off with Covid and one staff still on non-Covid related absence. I have not been able to pull off a full report on this.



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	<p><i>How is staff morale?</i></p> <p>SF: Being almost back to full capacity has improved this.</p> <p>HB also confirmed that being able to mix more as a team is helping everyone to feel happier. Having assemblies back together again is also really lovely and has helped the children and staff to feel more part of the school again.</p> <p>SF: We have spoken before about children forgetting their learning behaviours and TA spoke to the children about this at the assembly last week – and we subsequently saw better behaviour from the children now we are back together more.</p>	
11	<p>Finance</p> <p>LE confirmed that we currently have approximately £32k in surplus for this year – although this will eventually be spent on the transfer to an all-through Primary.</p> <p>LE has fed details of the current budget situation back to the Trust Board and thanked SF and AC for their support on this.</p> <p>Tracey Wright (TW) has reported that there has been less Pupil Premium income than predicted and a reduction in lettings income for this year.</p> <p>There has been a net saving of £2000 for the Caretaker role which was not filled with a like-for-like role.</p> <p>LE has met with SF to consider a wish list for school and ways to improve the visual aspect of the school and improvements such as painting walls and updating the playground, which could be made before school starts in September. LE and SF will then look at the costs of these different ideas and check whether Alex Hancock could help with some of this work to reduce costs.</p> <p>SF confirmed that the church will not be returning for lettings and Stagecoach has reduced the times of their sessions too which has had an impact financially. However we have had a half-term sports club which generated some income and we hope to do another one over the Easter holidays. The provider may also start some after school clubs in the summer term.</p> <p>PF informed governors of a central pot of money for schools which is collated and then divided amongst schools and could be used to help us to fund some improvements to the school.</p>	
12	<p>Health and Safety / premises update</p> <p>TA and TG did a walk around on Tuesday to look at details of the latest H&S audit and will liaise with SF about this.</p> <p>TG confirmed that most of the items raised were in regard to minor issues such as trailing leads and doors not being locked.</p> <p>TG suggested there are elements of the building which are starting to look quite tired – the roof in the main hall is leaking and there is damage to the plaster on the walls, and items like this need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they are dealt with as necessary.</p> <p>TG suggested that we are likely to need to look at spending money on some premises issues over the next 6-18 months.</p> <p>SF reiterated that there is some work to be done to make the site safe for young children and some cosmetic work which needs to take place too. New signage will also be needed.</p> <p>Both TG and SF confirmed that the new caretaker Alex Hancock, who is skilled in various trades, has been incredibly valuable, as well as reliably opening and closing the school site.</p> <p>SF confirmed that there are a few actions from the H&S audit which took place last year which need to be completed before the next one takes place in April.</p>	



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	<p>AP met with local Councillors, CM and Jo Ray (JR) from the Central team to look at producing alternative entrances to the new school. JR is looking into whether it is possible to expand the current path in the library park to better direct traffic when there are more parents dropping off to the site.</p> <p>SF suggested it would be useful to have a working party of parents to provide some feedback on what parents would like to see and possible entrances which might be used for different year groups.</p> <p><i>We could return to the one-way system for collection and drop-off system which was in place during Covid.</i></p> <p><i>There are also issues with the muddy grass area in the library gardens which gets very slippery when it rains.</i></p> <p>TG and DH agreed to meet with SF to walk the site and look at potential resolutions to the entrance issues.</p>	
13	<p>Resources</p> <p>DEM confirmed that all of the key items have already been discussed.</p>	
14	<p>Staffing update</p> <p>SF noted thanks to HB who has done an amazing job with a student in school recently, and was highly praised by their usual mentor.</p>	
Other Matters (19:45-20:00)		
15	<p>Chairs Comments</p> <p>No further comments.</p>	
16	<p>Any other business agreed as being urgent:</p> <p><i>CM going into FIS to provide support has been really well received by the children and the parents.</i></p> <p>SF explained that there was an incident recently in 3KB, which the staff dealt with incredibly.</p> <p><i>Is there anything different that you need us to be aware of Trust-wise in terms of budgeting for both schools?</i></p> <p>SF: I similarly have questions about how we will go about setting the budget and will be working closely with AL on this.</p>	
17	<p>Next meeting date: 9th May 2022, 6pm in person.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.27pm.</p>	