



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	Monday 17 th January 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), Charlotte Mitchell (CM), 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 TA. LR has now left her role at FJS so is no longer a staff governor. The LGB thanked LR for all of her hard work on the committee and wished her the best of luck in her new role.	
2	Welcome new members, visitors or staff presenting The LGB discussed moving this meeting next year to the third week of term to allow more time for preparation after the Christmas break.	
3	Declaration of any personal or business interests DEM declared an interest as a governor who works at the school.	
Ensuring Accountability (18:15-18:45)		
4	Agree Minutes of previous meeting on 17th November 2021 Both minutes and confidential minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
5	Matters arising SF explained that school is currently in talks with PMG regarding a new school uniform for The Elms and they have agreed to provide a logo which parents can sew onto the existing uniform to allow them to continue to use the current uniform. LE explained that the school will have two versions of the new school logo – one for letterheads etc. with the school values on and another more muted one for uniform. The final version should be with SF for final sign off shortly. LE gave an update on the PTA. The group has had to look creatively at how to raise money without being formally set up as a PTA yet and also given the situation with Covid. The LGB thanked Cristina Blewett who organised many of the prizes for the raffle, which rose over £400 for school. SF confirmed that school now has a licence to hold future raffles for fundraising, which lasts for a year. AC confirmed that the Resources committee discussed the issues around staffing and resources at the last meeting and this will be looked at again at the next meeting on the 28 th January. This will be raised with the Trust Board to ensure that the right support is coming from them. There are some lines of enquiry which are being looked at currently; he will update on this as he receives further information.	
6	Receive update on the Single Central Record DB came in to school before Christmas to look through this and ensure it is up to date and	



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	<p>accurate. SF confirmed that the Trust will be sending someone to check this also at some point as this has been looked at during the recent Ofsted inspections in Trust schools. <i>Is there anything you need from us for this?</i> SF: No. We have not had this on the agenda previously but this seems to be getting looked at by inspectors now. <i>Is updating this part of the grade 6 Admin role currently being advertised?</i> SF: Yes; we need one person to add information on and another to check that it is accurate.</p>	
<p>Governor and Headteacher Reporting (18:45-19:15) (Governor questions and comments in italics)</p>		
7	<p>Headteacher Report SF uploaded this to GovernorHub in advance of the meeting for governors to review.</p> <p><i>We should change NQT to ECT (unless they started NQT in previous academic year) Well done for completing assessment in December!</i> SF: Yes she was a NQT and started in January 2021 so she is not classed as an ECT.</p> <p><i>Unauthorised absence has decreased which is good although persistent absence has increased. Are you managing to make progress with these families as a school?</i> SF: Some of these families have COVID issues and have been nervous about sending them through. We are doing our best to encourage the children in and chasing absences each day. Pastoral leader continues to work with vulnerable families.</p> <p><i>How are you coping with demands of your job and picking up any additional administrator tasks?</i> SF: Still currently having to work long hours and still fitting 5 days into 3. Replaced the caretaker role now with admin!</p> <p><i>Following from the above question, and further to discussions we have had, what else can we as Governors do to help?</i> SF: Not sure. We will hopefully have a new administrator very soon. Perhaps we could look at the dates of the meetings as I have struggles to get paperwork done i.e. HT report etc. straight after a holiday and with sufficient time for LGB to read before the meeting.</p> <p><i>How would you currently describe the atmosphere in school? Difficult for governors to judge as minimal visits due to Covid.</i> SF: OK, staff are struggling with shortages and having to stretch themselves to cover absent colleagues. However, many staff are being very flexible and adapting their teaching and learning to ensure there is little impact as possible on the children. Support staff have been amazing and many have stepped up and taken classes for us. Most are managing to still smile each day!</p> <p>There was low staff morale in the Y6 team before Christmas with staff absences causing stresses in the group. Thanks to the staff that did the best they could to help with this and thanks to CM who managed this really well.</p> <p>There have been a couple of Covid breakouts since Christmas and some staff absences with it too. This impacts on the children as if there are 3 cases in one class within 10 days</p>	DOC 2



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we need to isolate the class and manage outside time really carefully. Staff are resilient and very hard working but it has been tough.
LR has now left her role in the office so SF is now covering some of this admin work. Emma Cheedy has also helping in the office supporting Jess.

The Nest has been going well and making a positive impact.
Mrs Spence sounds like a fabulous person after reading all those comments!
SF: Very effective member of staff.

There is an obvious need for a provision like the Nest when looking at the data. It seems to be proving a huge success.

Attendance is not too bad considering the Covid situation; many of our children had it over Christmas so were able to come back to school after the holidays.

When we met in the summer we talked about re-establishing school behaviours – how is this going? Bullying does not seem to be a big concern in the Heads report.
SF: It has got better with a focus on values particularly this term. We are ensuring that the children get awarded for showing school values, which they appreciate. Year 5 tends to be the year where some of the children show some issues with behaviour but the Y6 and Y5s are currently behaving well. The Y3s are growing well into their new place in the school and the behaviour concerns that we did have about them have pretty much disappeared. The focus on school values and learning behaviours in the classroom has really helped.

Hearing a child's view of the NEST was amazing to read and thanks to the NEST team for all of their hard work. The children's comments were such a huge compliment to Sonja.
SF: The Nest has had such a massive impact on some of the children who were in and out of class with behaviour issues and are now coping much better.

Are you back to whole school assemblies?
SF: No, we are doing virtual ones but hopefully not for too long.

It is great that your trips are going ahead this year; how can we support on smaller local trips to the Folly etc.?
SF: We have tried to choose trips which will impact upon the children's learning and hope to do more trips in the Easter/Summer term. We are also holding a sports holiday camp over the February half term with a particular focus on encouraging the PPG children to attend. We are also looking forward to starting after school clubs next term.
AP thanked SF for all of her hard work and also asked SF to pass on thanks to the whole team for everything they do for the school and the best place possible for the children. The LGB recognised that for some staff this has meant taking on more work and extra jobs all round to help the school to run successfully.

Is there anything we could give staff to show our appreciation?
SF: Time is what I think they would value most and I would like to find a way to show



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	<p>appreciation to them, should budgets allow, giving them back extra time to support their leadership and subject development. Perhaps arranging another event outside with governors at Easter would be a nice way for the LGB to show support.</p> <p>SF thanked those governors who were able to support our activities at school before Christmas, such as the carol singing.</p>	
8	<p>Receive and review data from Term 1</p> <p><i>It is obvious the pandemic has had a massive impact on all pupils but data suggests PP are struggling even more so academically. Data suggests 1/15 currently on track to meet expected in reading, writing and maths. Does this group of students have additional input from Covid recovery money? If so, what is currently in place?</i></p> <p>SF: This cohort of children were always going to struggle to meet their targets (before Covid) because of the high level of SEND needs in the year group. We have used the Recovery PPG funding to support Year 6 PPG children during the Autumn term. This has been one day a week with a teacher. We are now looking at the next cohort of children and whether we need any other input via the National Tutoring Programme.</p> <p><i>Do you think SATs will go ahead as normal this year? Are the Y6 cohort prepared for this (thinking more emotionally and in terms of wellbeing)?</i></p> <p>Sf: I think they will go ahead and staff are working towards this. Staff have already used past SATS papers and the children are showing good resilience.</p> <p><i>Looking at the overall cohort, writing currently has the biggest gap – linking to the SDP, will the measures being taken be sufficient to close the gap?</i></p> <p>SF: Writing is an increased focus for the year group and we will continue to monitor progress to decide what additional steps need to be taken.</p> <p>SF was confident that the Y6 data is going in the right direction and explained that the writing issues with the Y6s is happening everywhere nationally with this year struggling to get to expected levels.</p> <p>SF also highlighted that the current Y6 have a large ground of SEN pupils, which make up 40% of the total year group. We already knew we would struggle with getting them to expected levels because of this.</p> <p>SF had also produced a SEND report for Term 1, and uploaded this to GovernorHub ahead of the meeting for governors to review.</p> <p><i>Data looks encouraging. Spelling seems to be the lowest. Do the children have support with this in school? What support is available?</i></p> <p>SF: Spelling has always been the weakest. We have looked at a new spelling programme for SEND pupils and we will be taking on Read, Write, Inc. this year to help.</p> <p><i>‘Staff morale has been low’ is a huge concern. What do you have in place/plan to do to help improve this?</i></p> <p>SF: It is a challenging time for staff with all the changes that are taking place alongside COVID. I am trying to be as transparent and informative as possible so that they all know what is happening but it has been quite challenging when we can’t meet face to face for meetings</p>	



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	<p>currently.</p> <p><i>Is staffing absence due to Covid?</i> SF: Mostly, but we have also had some nasty bugs that seem to have wiped people out for a number of days.</p> <p><i>Thank you to everyone involved in preparing the documents for the meeting. Your time and effort is appreciated!</i> SF: Thank you.</p>	
9	<p>Sports Premium reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and challenge Sports Premium Report 2020-21 - Receive and review Sports Premium Plans 2021-22 <p>SF explained that these have not yet been completed as the staff member who leads on this has not been in school. The reports will be uploaded onto GovernorHub for governors to comment on and approve outside of committee.</p> <p>SF explained that the school struggled to spend this funding last year as many of our plans could not be carried out due to Covid.</p> <p>ACTION: SF to upload this to GH as soon as possible and governors to comment and question as appropriate.</p>	ALL
10	<p>Update on new school</p> <p>AP and PF attended a project update meeting last week and received an update on the various key actions taking place in the project and everything is moving along as expected against the key milestones. Admissions will not be confirmed until March which is very tricky as it does not leave much time for both schools to confirm classes, resources and a staffing structure for each school.</p> <p>PF suggested that it might be useful to go through the timeline to understand for the project to confirm what has been done and what is yet to happen.</p> <p>SF, Sally Robins (SR) and Louise Warren (LW) have had a few meetings to look at aligning the curriculum across the two schools. They have also spoken about how to support Bryn Jones (BJ) who is stepping up as Acting Head when SR leaves FIS at February half term. SR has agreed for CM to go to FIS and support BJ for two days a week which is good for her own CPD and also good support for BJ. Heads are also planning ways to make links between existing subject leads at FJS with those at FIS to help to support the gaps in English and Maths subject leadership which will appear at FIS when Jo Baird (JB) and SR leave. SR explained that the next meeting will focus more on school values and strategic plans for September. SR also explained that it is vital that the Heads have confirmed the overall curriculum for both schools before passing this down to subject leads. This is a bit tricky as we are not yet sure about the leadership structures of both schools and potential staff structures but we cannot wait until this is confirmed before moving ahead with this. Both schools are expected to be visited by Ofsted in 2022/23 as new schools.</p> <p>SF has some ideas on accommodation for the new cohorts and some thoughts about staffing structures. By the summer the staff structure and plans for which teachers are teaching each class needs to be confirmed.</p> <p><i>Are there enough existing FJS staff to resource the EYFS at the school from September or is</i></p>	



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	<p><i>this likely to be resourced externally?</i></p> <p>SF: This is likely to be sourced from outside of the current school staff as EYFS is a specialist area. Current staff are potentially able to cover KS1 but it is not possible to resource an EYFS team from our existing staff. There may well be staff moving between the two schools though, to cover different areas or take on new roles to resource the schools.</p> <p>AP reiterated that the LGB is very happy to provide support the schools in their transitions as needed. SF confirmed that the LGB is a valuable sounding board for her and feedback from parents via the committee is really helpful for governors to provide. Going ahead the LGBs of both schools will be key in ensuring that schools are meeting the needs of children in Faringdon. In terms of resourcing, helping the schools to be ready for the children they will be welcoming would also be useful.</p> <p>AP and PF are meeting with Liz Holmes (LH) from the Trust Board next week to look at LGB structure for both schools.</p> <p>AP confirmed that he has shared with Duncan Millard (DM) the views of no staff LGB members on the leadership structure, as part of the consultation process, together with feedback on the timings and approach on the process. The consultation on a leadership structure for both schools closes on 25th January, with a final decision to be published by the Board on 1st February.</p> <p>LE reminded governors of the importance of ensuring that communications from the Trust are published in a timely way as decisions are made, as this will help her to plan with SF how best to communicate these updates with parents.</p> <p>AP also asked how school is open to feedback from parents and stakeholders about their concerns and worries and how this will be fed back to the school via governors. PF suggested an information evening for parents at FJS where concerns from parents could be captured.</p> <p>AM confirmed that there is also clerk to the governors email address for the LGB that could be used to collate feedback if this would be useful.</p> <p>DH confirmed that she would also be interested in working on this, to ensure that parents are able to feed back to the LGB and the school.</p> <p>ACTION: LE, AP and DH will work together to consider how best to gather feedback from parents and bring suggestions to the next LGB meeting.</p> <p>SF informed governors that the new marketing lead at the Trust has now put the Trust on social media platforms so this could also be utilised for this purpose.</p>	<p>LE/AP/DH</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>PTA update</p> <p>LE confirmed that she is happy to be involved but not able to lead on this going forward. AM confirmed that she is helping to set up a PTA at FIS with a parent who knows lots about setting up PTA groups and might be able to provide some advice about how to ensure that the group is set up properly.</p> <p>LE suggested that she contact the other parents who volunteered to help with the PTA to see if they might be able to drive this forward.</p> <p>ACTION: LE to contact those who have volunteered to help with a PTA at school to see if any of these individuals might lead on taking this on.</p>	<p>LE</p>
<p>Strategic Matters (19:15-19:45)</p>		



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12	<p>OFSTED DM has advised that a section 5 inspection is likely in 2022/23 but this might move forwards to the next academic year. If the LGBs are working together more closely moving forwards this will help to support both LGBs to prepare for a visit. DM has set up some training for governors to attend – one on preparing for Ofsted. AP has already asked governors via GovernorHub to sign up for this. ACTION: Non-staff governors to sign up for this training and also ensure that their training records are up to date on GovernorHub to reflect training which is undertaken.</p> <p><i>How often is PREVENT and data protection training needed?</i> SF: PREVENT training needs to take place every 3 years. Data protection training needs to take place annually.</p>	ALL
13	<p>School Development Plan An update on this was sent out ahead of the meeting.</p> <p><i>Promoting wellbeing and staff workload is currently red on the SDP. Please can you comment on this and outline plans to progress?</i> SF: We need to evaluate this properly through a staff audit. PPA cover has been disrupted with the need to cover staff absences due to COVID so we will need to give teachers back time for this when possible. Additional subject leader time will also be given to enable staff to prepare for an all-through primary curriculum. We have reduced the number of staff meetings to give staff more time.</p> <p><i>Do you have any concerns about the SDP?</i> SF: Some of the areas have already been completed and some others will now take precedence over the last three terms.</p> <p>SF confirmed that the SLT are working on Teaching and Learning and looking at research from EEF to drive forward improvements. The new home learning policy will be going out to parents shortly. Priority 5 (conversion to an all-through Primary school) will be the main focus for the rest of the year but we will keep monitoring the other priorities and update these as they progress.</p> <p><i>Will existing KS2 subject leaders at FJS become the leaders for the same subject at KS2 across both schools?</i> SF: Yes they will so we are able to share information and experience across the schools.</p>	
14	<p>Finance LE gave an update to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The overall picture from Tracey Wright (TW) is that we are further ahead with the budget than we expected; we should have more information at the Resources meeting next week. - TW has added a shortfall on rents for the year into the figures for the year. <p>SF confirmed that the current picture is unclear at the moment as we have made some savings but paid out for agency staff to cover staff absences so it is hard to predict how this might reflect in the budget for the year.</p>	
15	<p>Health and Safety / premises update TG confirmed that he is due to meet with SF to catch up on this.</p>	



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	<p><i>Do we know whether the Trust has appointed a new H&S person?</i> SF: A new person has been appointed to work alongside Jo Ray.</p> <p>SF informed governors that there was a flood at school from one of the upstairs classrooms in Block A, down into the visitors' toilet in Reception. SF explained that Martyn Roper was amazing at helping her to work this issue out and stayed late to support and try and find the source of the leak. The problem was when the pipes shrunk at night when the heating went off the leak began. We managed to get this fixed but did have to move a class for two weeks out of the area and to leave the heating on full over the holidays which will have an impact on the budget in terms of spend.</p> <p>Alex Hancock has now taken on the caretaking for FIS, FJS and JBL. He opens and closes the school each day and works on compliance for one day a week at each school. He is already having a positive impact. Taking into account the jobs which Alex will be able to carry out instead of hiring contractors, he will work out comparable to the cost of a full time caretaker.</p>	
16	Resources No further update.	
17	Staffing update No further update.	
Other Matters (19:45-20:00)		
18	Chairs Comments AP asked governors to ensure each submits a couple of questions in advance of the meeting each time. SF asked for questions to be submitted by the end of Friday the week before the meeting date to allow time for her and TA to collate responses. SF confirmed that the process which has been set up is really helpful in terms of not having duplicate questions.	
19	Any other business agreed as being urgent: IP asked about the process for recruiting a new staff governor as LR has now left; AM confirmed that the school now needs to go through a staff election process. A new governor should be in post for the next meeting. <i>Are there any plans for a celebration in school for the platinum jubilee?</i> SF: We will do something in school to celebrate rather than have an extra day off. DB offered to link SF with a colleague at work who is leading on connecting his school to primary schools in the area to provide support in various subjects; SF confirmed this would be appreciated.	
20	Next meeting date: 9th March 2022	