



Faringdon Junior School

Gloucester Street Faringdon Oxon SN7 7HZ

Tel: 01367 240232

office@fjs.faringdonlearningtrust.org

Part of the Faringdon Learning Trust

Headteachers - Sharon Farrell and Taniya Ahmed

Chair of Governors - Adam Pickford

MINUTES

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Where	Virtually via Teams
Date	Wednesday 17 th November 2021	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	
	Apologies for absence and acceptance/non-acceptance	
1	TA to join the meeting at 7pm. Apologies were sent and received from PF who was unwell.	
	Welcome new members, visitors or staff presenting	
2	AP welcomed all to the meeting. HC will attend around 6.35pm to give the LGB a verbal update on SEND.	
	Declaration of any personal or business interests	
3	None were made at this point in the meeting.	
	LGB constitution	
4	AP was re-elected as parent governor as he was the only candidate for the vacant governor role. The LGB voted to appoint TG as a community governor to replace Caroline Tilling who has now left this post on the LGB.	
	Ensuring accountability	
	<i>Governor comments and questions in italics</i>	
	Agree Minutes of previous meeting on 27th September 2021 ACTION: AM to ensure Ofsted is added to future agendas. SF gave an update on the logo which was chosen for the new school, The Elms. LE is assisting in moving this forward. SF confirmed that as part of looking at the leadership of both new schools we are looking at having shared values so ours may change a bit to reflect this but we should shortly find out more about this.	AM
5	<i>What if we want to changes values in the future, will we need to alter the uniform?</i> SF: We will have new designs for the school logos to be used for letterheads etc. We could leave them off of the uniforms in order to not need to alter them in the future. <i>Will it make the uniform more expensive to have lettering on it?</i> SF: I will find out about how we are charged for the uniforms. <i>How many values do we currently have?</i> SF: We are looking to have 3 shared values across both schools going forward.	SF



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	<p>TA has added the new school to the SDP for this year. TG has not yet completed his action to summarise the H&S audit actions. TA has sent out a letter to introduce herself to parents and carers. LE gave an update on the PTA which she is leading on: the group has been set up and are in email contact. DEM and DH are supporting on this. Lots of Y3 mums are willing to be involved and there are several others who are happy to help out. LE confirmed that there will be person leading on each of the elements of the fundraising plans. They are hoping to hold a raffle this year in order to raise money for the school rather than trying to organise an event as the risks of Covid transmission is too great at this time. The group has already gathered some prizes and needs to confirm the price of raffle tickets. ACTION: LE to liaise with SF to find out which newsletter it would be best to advertise the raffle in. LE will also liaise with Tracey in the central team about what to do with the funds which are collected. The group discussed the possibility of parents being able to donate directly to school. ACTION: LR to set up a FOFJS donations page onto ParentPay in order for parents to be able to donate on an ad-hoc basis. LE suggested that we need to decide what areas we want to spend money from fundraising on at school – such as the projector so that we can have movie nights going forward. AP reminded governors to check their online Declarations of Interest and also to provide LR with an updated version of their own section for the Meet the Governors page of the website. The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. ACTION: AM to send LR a final copy of the minutes to be uploaded and also to mark these as signed on Governor Hub.</p>	<p>LE/SF</p> <p>LR</p> <p>AM</p>
6	<p>Matters arising Minutes from this item are included in the confidential minutes.</p>	
7	<p>Review and approve annual Safeguarding Audit DB gave an update: He met earlier today with SF, CM and HC to look at his link governor role. He was shown how Safeguarding is done at the school and was really impressed. DB has considered the audit report and will look through this again in more detail. ACTION: Governors to agree the report out of committee. Governors to raise any issues by 1st December in order for the audit report to be signed off and submitted on time.</p>	
8	<p>Receive SEND update from Helen Cox HC attended the meeting to give a verbal update on SEND at FJS. HC explained the key significant issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing: currently we have 13 EHCPs in school. Since September HC has applied for 8 more which are likely to be successful. There are two children with extra funding already and there are two children who still need EHCPs to be applied for. This will double our level of EHCPs to 24. FCC has 30 in the 	



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whole school, so this is a huge percentage of our pupils.

At the moment we only have 6 full time TAs and 12 part time TAs (12 full time equivalent). This means we don't have one TA per EHCP child and with the numbers coming through we will not have enough staff. We also have almost 80 SEN children who need extra support. EHCP children are legally entitled to receive support.

- Recruitment: we are struggling to recruit for TAs as we really need candidates with experience and high calibre candidates to work with these children. The situation is the same Trust-wide and locally, with lots of local schools struggling to recruit candidates of a high enough calibre. Even the agencies are not currently able to provide the candidates for these roles.
- SENCo workload: HC's workload is huge. Each EHCP comes with legal requirements which result in more administrative workload and HC is concerned about burnout and whether it is tenable for her to continue in her role in this way.

5 years ago there was one EHCP child and 35 on the SEN register; now there are 13 EHCP children and almost 80 on the register.

The Nest is proving to be very successful with many children enjoying their time there and parents reported back at the recent parents evening that their children were enjoying the space and feeling the benefit of this. Sonya is running the Nest as a pastoral worker and undertaking lots of training to improve her skills and strengthen her knowledge. She is a very experienced TA and has a really good relationship with the children.

The software that we have bought into school to monitor the provision of school support for SEN children is proving to be very successful.

32 of our pupils are both PP and SEND children.

The admin support for HC at school has given her more capacity on the 3 days she is in school. However the workload is still huge. The admin assistant is currently working 20 hours per week but this needs to be closer to 30 hours to meet the administrative need. We need to think about longer term what SEND will look like and how we will resource this going forward.

HC has put herself onto an Early Years SEND training course to enable her to be able to provide this support to the school when it becomes an all-through Primary.

Thank you for visiting the meeting to give us a perspective on your role and the situation at school. Thank you also for your work at school to support the SEN and EHCP children.

Is there capacity for us to provide a space for the Nest when we become an all-through Primary or will we need this space for classrooms?

SF: We will monitor this over the year and decide at the end of the year when we have a better idea of our final numbers for next year whether we continue to provide space and staffing for this. This is also SEND space in the new Primary school for support



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space for the children so this might be available to be used for the Nest.

What is the tipping point at which the high number of EHCP children starts to affect the teaching and learning within the classroom for the school population at large?

HC: A lot of the EHCP children were already receiving SEND support but because they could not obtain enough support when their issues are smaller these then grow and some of these children then get so far behind that they end up as EHCP children. We are not able to nip these issues in the bud at the start as we don't have the resources so this is out of our control.

Can we find a way to use resources differently when we become an all-through Primary?

HC: If we can find a way to nip the smaller issues in the bud in the Early Years this will certainly have an impact on the level of EHCP children later on.

Can we draw on the experience of the SENCo at FIS?

HC: This would be great but she is leaving her role at Christmas.

We need to be mindful of the impact of putting resources into those who have EHCPs so we cannot resource those SEN children who need further support with their issues. The LGB recognised that this was the case.

What happens if we don't meet the requirements in the EHCP?

HC: The EHCP is a legal document which sets out the support that these children legally should be receiving, in terms of hours, staffing support etc. so although the end responsibility lies with County we are obliged to provide this.

Regarding recruitment, is there any way of moving staff within the school to recruit candidates at a lower level from outside of the school to carry out their roles?

HC: SF and I allocate those existing TAs with the most appropriate experience to the place where they need to be at the start of each year. We are not getting people applying for jobs at all, let alone candidates with the right levels of experience and knowledge.

Would more admin hours help as a potential solution to tackle your workload?

HC: Yes because Vicky would then be able to tackle some of the work involved in the EHCPs and currently carried out by the classroom TAs.

Is your meeting at the start of the year which is carried out with SF carried out across the Trust, in terms of resourcing? Could we move resources around within the Trust to provide support to other schools?

HC: This has not been done but it is unclear whether this can happen or whether these staff would need to apply to each school for roles that existed. It seems that the level of need is the same across the schools within the Trust.



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	<p>SF informed the LGB that the school is still being consulted all of the time with requests for FJS to take on new SEN and EHCP children and because we have spaces in the school it is hard for us to resist these.</p> <p><i>We have a particular challenge which is only getting worse and we need to consider how the support which is needed by the EHCP children in particular is affecting children overall. This needs to be looked at on a Trust-level.</i></p> <p>TA explained that when she joined the school she was really impressed by the pastoral team within the school and particularly the work of HC. There are options for us to look at in terms of recruiting a team of more specialised teachers or TAs to support those children who need more help.</p> <p>ACTION: Resources committee to look at potential ways to ameliorate the staffing issue at school at the meeting next week.</p> <p>ACTION: AC to consider the best way to bring this issue to the fore at Trust-level.</p>	<p>Resources</p> <p>AC</p>
9	<p>Receive update on the Single Central Record</p> <p>This was not covered in the meeting.</p>	
	<p>Governor and Headteacher reporting</p> <p><i>Governor comments and questions in italics</i></p>	
10	<p>Headteacher Report</p> <p>The report had been uploaded to GovernorHub ahead of the meeting for governors to review and TA had responded to questions which were uploaded to Governor Hub by governors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><i>Is it difficult to recruit TAs at the moment?</i></p> <p>TA: Yes.</p> <p><i>Will the zero hours caretaking contract work as an interim until a new caretaker is found? Are staff still helping with opening/locking of the school?</i></p> <p><i>Is the zero-hours contract to cover compliance issues as well or general caretaking?</i></p> <p><i>Important to acknowledge the significant "above and beyond" commitment from Sharon, Taniya, Charlotte and other staff in covering for the lack of caretaker. What proactive support are you getting from the Trust to expedite the appointment of a replacement?</i></p> <p><i>Are you managing to keep on top of all necessary compliance checks with absence of caretaker?</i></p> <p>TA: The zero hours caretaking contract is an effective solution to ensure compliance checks are regularly carried out. Tina was interviewed for this role and appointed for the zero hours contract. This obviously does not solve the day to day opening and lock up of the school and staff have continued to offer their time and support with this. A Lone Working risk assessment has been completed and shared with staff to ensure they understand the risks associated with the opening/closing of the school and more</p>	



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importantly, that they undertake the necessary actions associated with minimising risk e.g. buddying up. Where recruitment continues to be challenge, the Trust is looking to appoint a key holder to support the opening/closing of school.

Great feedback from learning walk – well done to a dedicated team!

What strategies do you employ to try and improve persistent attendance and do they have a positive impact?

Is there a way to determine the Covid-related absences, which I assume have pushed the non-attendance figure higher than it normally would be, or determine the % of pupils that were either in school or accessing home learning, as opposed to being absent from any learning? Given the current Covid situation 97% of pupils actually in school every day seems like it might be unattainable.

TA: Attendance is tracked, recorded and analysed routinely. The pastoral team work proactively with our vulnerable and high needs families on attendance issues employing a range of strategies including pastoral support to ensure attendance and readiness to learn is maintained. All reasons for absences are coded including Covid-related absences so this can be distinguished. School's procedure for tackling attendance is to review attendance at the end of every half-term and send a letter 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 is sent since this is now categorised as a 'persistence absence'. Our Persistent Absence Pupil Tracking procedure ensures that parents are contacted and a meeting with the Headteacher is arranged should further absences continue. At all stages, parents are offered support and invited to share any information concerning their child's absences that school does not know.

We had planned to send the first set of attendance letters following our half-termly analysis but have decided to put these on hold given the recent Covid-19 outbreak and increase in Covid-related absences. We will review this at the end of next half-term.

How well is remote learning working for children who are absent from school (but able to learn)?

TA: *Age-appropriate curriculum activities that match class learning content are set and uploaded onto Google Classroom so pupils can continue learning at home if they are well enough to do so. Learning content is regularly reviewed and updated by class teachers.*

Well done on completing all performance management meetings and the plan for support staff.

Well done on the feedback and massive attendance for School Choir.

The racist incidents are unusual – is there anything behind this?



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TA: Following the review and implementation of our Relationships and Behaviour policy, staff remain highly vigilant concerning any racist behaviour/language. On occasions when incidents have been fully investigated, incidents reported as 'racist' have sometimes been the result of pupils using language inappropriately rather than using it racially. Pupils have therefore responded positively to a reflective and restorative approach.

Extended services – what support can the LGB give to get this up and running for Term 3?

What is the impact of long term sickness on staffing?

Please add into the SDP a recurring definition of what each coloured tick represents so we all interpret in the same way.

Lots of progress made during Term 1 – well done!

How are staff and children coping with the delivery of new content in school whilst identifying gaps from remote learning?

How well is remote learning working for children who are absent from school (but able to learn)?

How do we identify and cater for members of staff who have the biggest development requirements linked to the transition to all through Primary?

Linked to the above, have staff been identified or volunteered to take a class role in EYFS or KS1 (assuming that subject leads will still need to cover the full breadth of provision)?

How do we balance Covid risks with ensuring that all classes get access to a range of offsite enrichment activities during this academic year?

Will the review of marking policy help to reduce teacher workload?

How will staff well-being best be supported in the coming period?

TA: Staff strengths and developments are identified through performance management meetings. We have a range of experienced and less experienced teaching staff and subject leaders. The Deputy Headteacher who is leading on curriculum has been working with subject leaders and providing support to the less experienced members of staff. Professional development targets for appraisal have been explicitly linked to preparing and planning for the full implementation of EYFS and KS1 curriculum. CPD and professional development opportunities have been mapped including: subject leader twilight sessions, partnership with FIS, subject leader meetings etc. We are allocating staff meeting time to allow for these sessions to take place to support teachers workload. TA is attending an employee wellness session. The review of the marking policy will be carried out as part of our approach to revising our teaching, learning and assessment policy (SDP priority 1) but as always, with a



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	<p>focus on staff well-being and as led by SDP priority 4. Specifically, the marking policy review will focus on expectations and the quality of written feedback (e.g. acknowledging work pieces v in-depth feedback).</p> <p>PPG Report <i>Well written and very clear report.</i> <i>With a recent increase in Covid cases in school, how confident are you that the strategy will help to minimise the risk of PPG pupils failing further behind should further virtual learning be necessary?</i> <i>How many Y6 pupils are benefitting from the Tutor Teacher support, and how many of these are PP pupils? Is the PP funding covering all of the costs for the Y6 pupils or just for the PP pupils? (</i></p> <p>TA: Based on EEF evidence-based approaches, our strategy is targeted through a focus on high quality teaching and targeted interventions. Wider strategies include a focus on attendance, SEL, well-being and mental health – and these explicitly link to SDP priorities. Whilst we are confident that this is a robust plan to ensure PPG pupils make rapid and sustained progress, we acknowledge that this could be another unpredictable year. DEM is resuming her role this term as school's Tutor Teacher for one day a week and is currently working with our Year 6 team to agree groups of pupils.</p> <p><i>Thank you for the answers to the questions which were really well answered. This seemed to be a good way to get this part of the meeting off of the agenda to allow us to concentrate on other subjects at the meeting.</i></p>	
11	<p>School Development Plan This was updated before the meeting and written questions received and addressed in advance of the meeting via GovernorHub.</p>	
12	<p>Update on new school Already covered in the Headteacher's report.</p>	
	<p>Strategic Matters <i>Governor comments and questions in italics</i></p>	
13	<p>Finance AC confirmed that we have ended the year in a better position that we were expecting. The site work has completed over the summer. Two big risks for us this year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The costs associated with the school changing to an all-through Primary, some of which are hard to predict. 2. Premises. We spent a good portion of our reserves last year to improve the site but there is a growing list of other issues that will need to be addressed shortly. <p>AC suggested that the LGB look at the items on the list and discuss the issues and possible costs and risks associated with these at a future meeting. AC will also raise</p>	



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	<p>this at Board level.</p> <p>SF confirmed that school is struggling staffing-wise with some children not receiving enough support for their needs and the time of TAs being very tight. Some EHCP children have to share resources, which is not ideal. Staff are doing their best to support each other but inevitably this does cause some strain.</p> <p>SF also reminded governors that we will need to equip the school for KS1 and Early Years and although we will get some money for this from OCC but we cannot yet predict how much this will be. We are also not sure about pupil numbers for 2022 yet which will directly affect future funding.</p> <p><i>Does funding for the new school resources come from the Government or from the Trust?</i></p> <p>AC: This is hard to define as it is not clear exactly how this is divided.</p> <p><i>Can we somehow piggyback onto the back of this funding to help to equip our school for the new pupil groups?</i></p> <p>AC: We will as always do as much as we can to get the best we can for both schools and Jo Ray (JR) and Anne Lynn (AL) in the Central team are working hard to get the best funding we can for the changes ahead.</p>	
14	<p>Health and Safety / premises</p> <p>TG was not at the meeting so there was no update on this.</p>	
15	<p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegated Authority • Teachers Pay Policy • Accessibility Plan • Anti-bullying policy <p>All policies were made available on GH ahead of the meeting. The LGB confirmed that they had read these and voted to accept these.</p>	
Other Matters		
16	<p>Chairs Comments</p> <p>AP had no further comments to make.</p>	
17	<p>Any other business agreed as being urgent:</p> <p>AC reminded the Resources committee that the first meeting of the year is next Friday, 26th November at 4pm, online.</p>	
18	<p>Next Meeting Date:</p> <p>17th January 2022.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.23pm</p>	