



**Minutes of a meeting of the full Governing Body
of William Fletcher Primary School
on Monday 21 June 2021 at 6.30 pm**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was held online using Microsoft Teams

Present:

Trish Amesbury (TA) (Co-opted) (Chair)
Kate Hopcraft (KH) (Co-opted)
Anna Isles (AI) (Co-opted)
Andrew Lister (AL) (Co-opted)
Deborah Nind (DN) (Headteacher)
Oliver Petter (OP) (Local Authority)
Charlotte Rayner (CR) (Co-opted) (from 6.40 pm)
Neil Shewry (NS) (Parent)
Rosie Staniland (RS) (Staff)
Kate Thorpe (KT) (Parent) (until 7.25 pm)
Daniel Wickham-Jones (DWJ) (Parent)

Absent – apologies received in advance and accepted:

Vicky Ball (VB) (Vice Chair) (Co-opted)

In attendance:

Clare Saunders (CS) (Clerk)

The meeting was opened by **TA** at 6.35 pm. The meeting was **quorate**.

1. Welcome

TA opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and commented on how quickly the school year seemed to have passed, noting that this was the final meeting of the year.

2. Apologies for Absence

VB had sent her apologies. These were accepted. The Clerk added that **VB** had asked her to pass on her sincere thanks to the staff for their hard work throughout the year, and to the other governors for their work and commitment to the school.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

There were no updates.

4. Urgent Additional Items

There were no items.

5. **Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 27 April 2021**

item 4: DN has not yet found out the final date for requesting a cap on the intake figure but will do so this week. **Action:** DN to enquire about the cut-off date.

item 6 (6): TA said that she had not yet contacted Paul Austin although she had had Link Governor discussions with DN. **Action:** all Link Governors who have not yet made contact with their Priority Leads to contact them as soon as possible.

item 6 (7): KT confirmed that she has attended appraisal training. TA encouraged all governors to consider attending it.

(6.40 pm – CR joined the meeting.)

item 7: the Clerk and KH have completed the paperwork and it has been sent to Governor Services. Action completed.

item 15: dates of meetings next year will be discussed at item 6 below.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2021 were **approved** by governors, and signed by TA.

6. **Chair's Items**

Governors' Awards

TA explained the rationale behind Governors' Awards for the benefit of the newer governors, saying that the children receiving them were nominated by class teachers (two pupils per class) and that they were intended to recognise individual pupils for progress or achievement in several aspects of their life at school. She told governors that the awards had not been possible last year but that she and DN were keen to restart them this summer, and that the teachers had been asked to nominate children to receive them. The children would be receiving certificates and badges at the end of the summer term. DN added that although these were usually given out at a special assembly, this year it would be done via Zoom, but that the ceremony would still be made special for the children.

Dates of full governing body meetings for 2021-22

The meetings of the full governing body in the next school year will be held on:

Tuesday 28 September 2021

Tuesday 30 November 2021

Tuesday 18 January 2022

Monday* 21 March 2022

Tuesday 3 May 2022

Tuesday 28 June 2022

*This meeting will be on a Monday.

All meetings will begin at 6.30 pm. It is hoped that they may be in person, but this will be decided in accordance with the guidance at the time.

Dates of committee meetings for 2021-22

Curriculum

Thursday 16 September 2021

Thursday 18 November 2021

Thursday 6 January 2022

Thursday 10 March 2022

Thursday 28 April 2022

Thursday 16 June 2022

Meetings to begin at 2.00 pm, unless otherwise notified by **CR**.

Performance and Standards

Wednesday 15 September 2021

Wednesday 17 November 2021

Wednesday 5 January 2022

Wednesday 9 March 2022

Wednesday 27 April 2022

Wednesday 15 June 2022

Meetings to begin at 9.00/9.15 am, unless otherwise notified by **AI**.

Resources

Action: **VB** to arrange dates for committee meetings and inform all governors and the Clerk.

Governors' terms of office

TA reminded governors that **KH**'s term of office as Parent Governor had expired on 18 June and that she was now a Co-opted Governor. She added that elections for a new Parent Governor would be held early in the new term.

Referring to the two vacancies for Co-opted Governors, **TA** said that she had been contacted by someone who was interested in this and that she was going to discuss the opportunity with them.

There are three governors whose terms of office will expire in the next school year:

AI – 15.01.2022

KT – 08.02.2022

RS – 31.08.2022

7. Headteacher's Report

A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

DN told governors that she was very aware that most of them had been unable to visit school this year and that consequently they would not have seen the children's lovely art displays, so she had included some photos of the work within her report.

The impact of Covid restrictions

DN referred to the fact that this day was the original date set for the final lifting of Covid restrictions, saying that everyone is disappointed that restrictions remain at school, that the children are unable to talk to and play with their friends who are not in their "bubble", the Y6 children will be unable to have transition days to secondary school, and the children who will be coming to school for the first time in September will be unable to have their visits this too.

Monitoring and assessment

DN told governors that she and **AL** had conducted learning walks around school and had been really pleased with what they had seen. They had looked at what the children were learning, and how they were being supported. She added that these observations would always lead to some questions and that these feed into the School Development Plan.

Staffing

Referring to the fact that Emma Brown will be leaving at the end of the summer term, **DN** recorded her thanks to Mrs Brown for all her work at the school over the years. She told governors that she had first appointed Mrs Brown as an NQT at Tackley School so she had worked with her throughout Mrs Brown's career so far, and had been delighted to see her grow and develop as a teacher and as a leader. **DN** said that she wished Mrs Brown well for her new role and emphasised how pleased she was that working at William Fletcher could help teachers to progress in their careers. She informed governors that Paul Austin had been appointed as a temporary Assistant Headteacher, that Hannah Haynes would be leading Foundation Stage and KS1, and referred to the other class staffing changes outlined in her report, reflecting that there are always some teachers who are keen to be leaders within a school and that it is a testament to the school and to the work of the governing body that they are able to develop their careers in that way.

Conclusion

DN thanked the governors for their continued commitment to the life of the school and emphasised how invaluable their work had been, also mentioning the time they had given up to be stewards for parents and children in the mornings.

KT asked whether **DN** thought the restrictions on school life would continue in September, and she replied that she attends weekly meetings with other Headteachers in the partnership; in common with other schools, William Fletcher has two plans for the autumn: going back to normal or keeping everything as it has been this year. She added that by the autumn most, although not all, of the staff will have been double vaccinated, emphasising that she has been determined to ensure their safety at all times.

NS asked about the attendance figures, saying that although the school's absence figures are always below the national average, he wondered how they compared to those of other schools in Oxfordshire. **DN** answered that she had not been given figures for Oxfordshire recently but that when she last had them, the school's attendance figure was much higher than the average. She also said that she was now receiving a lot of requests from parents to take their children out of school for holidays because now that foreign travel is essentially impossible, there is an extremely high demand for holiday accommodation in this country and parents are looking at going in school term time. **NS** asked if she was being more lenient with such requests, and **DN** replied that she was prepared to listen to each request on its individual merits but that she tended not to authorise holiday unless there were genuinely exceptional circumstances. **TA** agreed with this approach, saying that there was a need to be consistent. **NS** asked whether fining was common in other schools; **DN** responded that none of the schools in the partnership fined for unauthorised absence and there were very few occasions when a fine would be warranted.

8. School Development Plan

DN had circulated the current version of the SDP 2020-21 in advance of the meeting.

Priority One: The Quality of Education

Target 1(a)

DN highlighted the first paragraph of her report, emphasising that although the disruptions to children's school life in the last 16 months have inevitably created gaps in their knowledge, there has been a great deal of work done to identify these gaps and address them eg with the tutoring programme which is in place. She commented that the staff needed to continue to support the children who have gaps in their knowledge or skills.

Target 1(b)

Referring to the teaching of foundation subjects, **DN** reported that history and RE in particular are going very well but that some additional work around geography is needed, and that she and the staff team will investigate how best to do this.

Target 1(c)

DN confirmed that the Arts Award work had had to be put largely on hold – eg the drama work with Oxford Playhouse could not take place – but that some work had still been done.

Priority Two: Behaviour and Attitudes

Target 2(a)

DN told governors that she and **AL** thought a key area next year for the SDP would be developing children's communication skills.

Priority Three: Personal Development

Target 3(a)

DN emphasised that although some work on this had taken place this year, she wanted to continue working on this area in the next academic year.

Target 3(b)

DN said that she wanted to look at how the website can be used to support children's learning and communication with parents and carers, explaining that teachers had lost some of their links with families due to the Covid restrictions preventing parents from entering school to drop children off. She said that these connections needed to be reinstated although there had been some gains from the new system in that the children had become more independent – coming in to school alone, sorting out their own coats and book bags etc – but that this had meant the teachers no longer saw the parents in person. She concluded that it was important to maintain the children's new independence while re-establishing the links with parents.

Target 3(c)

DN reminded governors that the school's accreditation as a Rights Respecting School needed to be renewed, and commented that Amy Lancaster had run the conference extremely well. She added that the links with the school in India will provide a wealth of learning opportunities.

Priority Four: Leadership and Management

Target 4(a)

DN confirmed that CPOMS has been working well in recording safeguarding and behaviour issues.

Target 4(c)

AL reported that teachers have been assessing children against Age Related Expectations (ARE), and recording their findings, and he explained that this gives the subject leaders an idea of how much progress is being made. He emphasised that the teachers have tried to ensure that the children are assessed on the actual foundation subjects themselves – not on their ability to read and write, but on their actual subject knowledge. He said that he was working on a policy for assessing foundation subjects which would be ready before the end of term, and that generally the staff assessing the subjects had said the process had gone well.

(7.25 pm – KT left the meeting.)

DN concluded by saying that it was now time to think about what would be in the SDP for 2021-22, that formal assessments were underway in school this month and that although some of the objectives would be driven by the data from those, there was also room for other suggestions, and she invited input from governors.

DWJ asked whether the school ever captured data on how children who had left to go to secondary school were progressing there; **DN** replied that years ago she would meet the secondary school teachers to talk about how the Year 7 children were getting on, but that this does not happen now, and that she only tends to hear if there is a specific issue.

In reply to a question from **NS** about the website, **DN** said that there had not been sufficient time to devote to updating it this year, that it was eight years old and although it

was good when it was first established, it now needed revamping and would be looked at in the next school year.

KH asked whether there should be a reference in the SDP as to how the classroom environment facilitates learning, and **DN** replied that the classroom environment was something which was frequently considered by teachers – eg in relation to SEND children – but that it had never been included in the SDP.

AI mentioned that, at the end of the recent meeting of the Performance and Standards Committee, there had been a discussion on the changes which had had to be made because of the Covid pandemic, and what could be learnt from them, and she suggested that this could be helpful for the next SDP. **TA** agreed, saying that some useful things had come out of it and that it was important to be mindful of them.

OP referred to the international links referred to in the current SDP, saying that he felt these were particularly important for this generation of children in helping them feel connected to the rest of the world, and that this was a strong point to work on.

9. Safeguarding

DN reported that Paul Austin has completed *Train the Trainer* for safeguarding training, and recently ran a safeguarding session for governors and volunteers. She thanked those governors who attended, commenting that she would no longer be the only person at the school able to train staff in safeguarding, and that it would be beneficial to have two people running the training.

DN updated governors on the numbers of children within each of the safeguarding categories. She explained that when a child moves down to the Child in Need level from having a Child Protection Plan, this shows that a substantial amount of work has been done by the family, the social worker and the school working together, but she emphasised that there are still termly meetings between the family and the professionals so there a safety net remains in place.

DN added that as well as the three safeguarding categories, she also has children who she is keeping a watch on, to ensure they do not need safeguarding input.

TA commented that the work around safeguarding is considerable, and that governors needed to understand how much was involved.

10. Health and Safety

DN reported that the CCTV is up and running, and that since it was installed there have been no more incidences of youths entering the school grounds in the evenings.

DN confirmed that the gate onto Rutten Lane had been replaced and that parents have commented on how much easier it is to use.

Referring to the flat roof which needs repairing, **DN** said that this was now on an OCC list and would be done either over the summer or early in the autumn, adding that she was delighted that progress was finally being made with this, and that the county would be paying for it. **TA** expressed her thanks to everyone involved in getting this issue resolved.

11. **Governor Training**

TA asked that all governors continue to look the various training opportunities offered by Governor Services and to book for anything that would be of use to them. **Action: all governors** to book and attend training courses which would be helpful, and to let **VB, TA** and **DN** know of any training completed.

TA added that she and **DN** would like to arrange for someone from Governor Services to talk to governors in the next school year about the importance of understanding the strategic nature of a governor's role.

12. **Resources Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 June 2021 had been uploaded to GovernorHub and circulated in advance of the meeting.

In **VB**'s absence, **TA** referred to the discussions which the committee had had around the quotes for the toilets, the repairs needed to the roof, pupil numbers, health and safety, and the need to follow the DfE guidance for school trips even though after school activities appear to have different restrictions.

13. **Performance and Standards Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27 May 2021 had been uploaded to GovernorHub and circulated in advance of the meeting.

AI reported that it had been very useful to have Emma Brown join the meeting to speak about the three year Pupil Premium strategy, which is on the school website.

KH asked about the mentoring for KS2 Pupil Premium children, and **DN** explained that these children each have a mentor within the Senior Leadership Team, and that they meet with them in each half of the term to discuss whatever the child wants to talk about. She said that the mentor might suggest a suitable book for the child or talk about things which the child is finding difficult at school, and that feedback is given to the class teacher.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Wednesday 15 September 2021.

14. **Curriculum Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 June 2021 had been uploaded to GovernorHub and circulated in advance of the meeting.

CR told governors that most of the meeting had been a time to reflect on the impact of the last 15 months on the school. She highlighted a discussion which **KH** had led around Link

Governors, emphasising that maintaining this contact with teachers had been important in the past year when learning walks had not been possible, and she thanked **AL** for having produced a very useful form to assist with the conversations with teachers. She added that the committee had wanted more clarity about how the records of the discussions between governors and teachers would be kept and used. **KH** suggested that Link Governors who have yet to meet their Priority Leads this term could try using the form. **Action: Link Governors** to use the new form in their next discussion with Priority Leads.

DN commented that the discussions between governors and subject leads are extremely important conversations for the teachers, who can use them to crystallise their thinking about their subject, because it can be difficult to understand on a daily basis exactly what is being done across the whole school. She added that Ofsted may ask in-depth questions so it is very useful for subject leaders to have that experience of talking about their subject in a formal way, and that in order to get the strategic overview that governors need, they have to understand the strengths of the ways in which different subjects are taught. **CR** asked whether the records of the discussions would go anywhere except to **DN**, and **DN** answered that they could be useful as reference material for governors preparing to speak to Ofsted inspectors, but that it was important for teachers and governors to be able to have open and frank conversations.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday 16 September 2021.

15. Any Other Business

TA thanked the governors for their work during what had been a very trying year for everyone, and mentioned in particular their stewarding work at the school, and their willingness to sign up for this at a moment's notice. She added her sincere thanks to **DN** and all the staff at the school for everything they had done this year and for their commitment to the school and the children. **Action: RS** to pass on the appreciation of the governing body to the staff.

CR thanked the Clerk for her work during the year, and **TA** added her own thanks.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 28 September 2021

Items for inclusion on the Agenda should be sent to the Clerk a fortnight in advance.

The meeting closed at 8.02 pm

CS 22.06.2021