



**Minutes of a meeting of the full Governing Body  
of William Fletcher Primary School  
on Tuesday 23 March 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) (Parent)  
Anna Isles (AI) (Co-opted)  
Andrew Lister (AL) (Co-opted)  
Deborah Nind (DN) (Headteacher)  
Oliver Petter (OP) (Local Authority)  
Charlotte Rayner (CR) (Co-opted)  
Neil Shewry (NS) (Parent)  
Rosie Staniland (RS) (Staff)  
Kate Thorpe (KT) (Parent)  
Daniel Wickham-Jones (DWJ) (Parent)

**Absent – apologies received and accepted:**

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

**In attendance:**

Clare Saunders (CS) (Clerk)

The meeting was opened by **TA** at 6.33 pm. The meeting was **quorate**.

**1. Welcome**

**TA** opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

**VB** had sent her apologies for absence. Governors agreed that these were accepted.

**3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests**

The Register is up to date. There were no updates.

**4. Urgent Additional Items**

There were no items.

**5. Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 26 January 2021**

**item 5:** TA indicated that she would deal with training later in the meeting.

TA thanked OP for having emailed her about possible candidates for the vacancies for Community Governors.

NS attended all three committee meetings this month. Action completed.

TA asked whether all governors had ticked their own Declarations on Governor Hub to indicate that they had read *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. The Clerk commented that she had checked this morning and that NS had not yet made his Declaration, although he had read the document. NS ticked the Declaration. Action completed.

**item 6:** TA asked whether Link Governors had emailed their Priority Leads and asked that, if they had not done so, they make contact with them as soon as possible.

**Action:** Link Governors to email Priority Leads if they have not done so already.

TA reported that she had contacted OCC about AI's suggestion that the zigzag road markings be extended along Rutten Lane as one of the entrances to the school is currently along the nursing home lane; she said that apparently this had been agreed and would be happening, in April or May. Governors agreed that the traffic issues had recently got worse and that the behaviour of some motorists was putting parents and children in danger, but that there were limited measures which the governing body could take. It was therefore hoped that the work planned by OCC would improve the situation.

**item 8:** DN confirmed that she had passed on the thanks of the governing body to Clare Pink, and that Clare had appreciated this.

**item 11:** TA thanked the Committee Chairs for having submitted the Minutes of their meetings in good time before the FGB meeting. CR reminded governors that the next meeting of the FGB was very soon – because of the need to approve the budget – and that, because of the Easter holidays, it would not be possible to hold committee meetings more than a week before it.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2021 were **approved** by governors, and signed by TA.

**6. Chair's Items**

*Appraisal Training*

TA asked whether any governors had signed up for the appraisal training. DWJ said that he had signed up for a date in the summer term; KT and NS said that they had also tried, but had not found any availability. It was reported that more courses had been added to the training programme. **Action:** KT and NS to look at the training programme again and to book places on the appraisal training if there are spaces available.

### *Governors' Terms of Office*

**TA** reported that there is only one term of office ending this year – **KH**, in June. She said that she had spoken with her and that she was willing to continue as a governor. This would be discussed at the next meeting. She suggested that any election for a Parent Governor should be held back until the start of the next school year, as these are such exceptional times. **Action: the Clerk** to ensure that Governors' Terms of Office is on the Agenda for the next FGB meeting.

## **7. Headteacher's Update**

A written report had been circulated in advance.

**DN** highlighted the very good attendance figure, saying that since the return to school on 8 March, this had consistently been 98%/99%. She added that there were some children away this week with colds, which was to be expected once they started mixing with each other again. She expressed the hope that the figures continued to be good, saying that she and the staff team were very aware of the need to maintain a high level of attendance.

**DN** paid tribute to Helen Yaxley, who would be retiring at Easter after 21 years working as a TA at the school. She commented that Helen had also been a school governor and that her contribution to the school had been immense, adding that it would be strange not to have her there after Easter. She recorded both her thanks to Helen for everything she had done for the school and also her good wishes to her for a very happy retirement. **TA** agreed, saying that Helen had made a huge contribution and that the governors also wished to record their thanks to her.

**DN** drew governors' attention to the list of *Notable Events* in her report, saying that there had been fewer of these than normal because of the ongoing disruption to school life, but that the staff had been able to arrange some interesting things for the children, and that they hoped to be able to get out and about more in the near future. She added that it was important for the children to have the benefit of these additional activities and visits.

**DN** invited governors' questions on her report.

**KH** asked about the National Tutoring Programme which had received a lot of coverage in the press, and whether the school had found it helpful. **DN** answered that the school had been given around £21,000 for their "catch up" work, and that they needed to identify the gaps which needed filling. She said that the school could work with tutors who were looking at specific areas – in particular, they were working with Reading Quest (KS1) and Third Space Maths (Y4 and Y6). She commented that there had been issues with the maths tutoring as the IT system at school had proved problematic but that Reading Quest was going well and was quite intensive, so she was hoping to see good progress with this.

**DN** added that there were TAs working with individual children or small groups each afternoon, once the teacher had identified that morning which children needed additional learning support. She referred to the YETI forms which the children were given to help them start self-identifying which areas they needed to work on. She said that this was a useful skill for the children in Years 5 and 6 to learn.

**CR** remarked that she had been very interested to read the comments made by the children concerning what they had enjoyed about lockdown. **DN** agreed that these had been really interesting eg their experience of having more ownership of their daily learning, and that she wanted to explore how the school could develop that sense of ownership.

**KT** asked whether there was any guidance about the other activities which the school had usually provided eg swimming, forest school, music lessons – and whether there was a plan as to how these would be managed when they could restart eg would children who had missed out earlier in the year get their turn, with others doing the activities for a shorter period of time? **DN** replied that, at the moment, bubbles of children were unable to mix with other bubbles but that the current guidance would expire on 31 March and new guidance would be issued with effect from 1 April. She said that people who had been shielding would be able to return to work after Easter, and so, for instance, the school would be able to restart its drumming sessions in the summer term. However, it was likely that bubbles would still be unable to mix for some time, and it was too early to plan some of the activities normally offered. She added that the number of Covid-19 cases in the county was still relatively low and that the intention was to keep them low, and that being able to restart certain activities would depend on how case numbers in the area looked.

**KT** asked whether parents could offer their time to help in class at the moment, adding that she had been asked this question by a parent. **DN** replied that she would love to open the school to volunteers, as had always been the case in the past, but that at the moment anyone who is coming in to school needs to take lateral flow tests twice a week. She said that, if the advice changed, she would be keen to welcome volunteer helpers back.

**KT** referred to Gifted & Talented children, asking whether it was still possible in the current situation to ensure that they are being adequately challenged, when the emphasis has to be on ensuring all children catch up on their learning. **DN** answered that the teachers are spending time identifying the gaps but also the gains from learning in lockdown, and that the school is trying to ensure that it is business as usual, that all children make the best progress they can. However, she emphasised that she had wanted to ensure that the return to school was as gentle as possible, that the children should come back and get settled in as easily as they could, that staff should address any anxieties the children had, make the school day fun and provide creative activities. She added that there was a lot of learning going on but that this could be done in many different ways, and that progress and attainment would be assessed at the end of the summer.

**DWJ** asked about the lateral flow test results, and whether the tests were disposed of at school. **DN** clarified that the tests are done twice a week, at home, and that each staff member reports the result of their tests to school and on the government website.

**TA** asked about the children's mental health and whether the school is having to deal with specific issues. **DN** replied that all the children (except two who had been anxious) had been very happy to return to school; however, from the second week onwards, there had been some different behaviour – children pushing the boundaries – and that teachers had had to be very clear with the children about their expectations of learning behaviours. She said that she felt the extreme behaviours had resulted from the wider situation of the

pandemic, and that the staff had been giving intensive support to deal with the behaviour on a 1:1 basis where necessary. She mentioned that there had been additional PSHE sessions, allowing the children the chance to talk to each other, and that her assemblies had focussed on trust and connecting with each other. **TA** asked whether there had been any additional resources for this, and **DN** explained that Clare Pink had been working very hard with the children, and that she herself had had children in her study to talk to on an individual basis. She emphasised that she and the staff had been prepared for this when the school reopened, as similar issues sometimes arise after any long summer break.

**8. Safeguarding**

**DN** gave governors the numbers of children within each category – Child Protection Plan; Child in Need; Early Help – and reported that all staff are up to date with their safeguarding training.

**9. Health and Safety**

**DN** reminded governors that the audit had gone very well and that the school had scored 100%. She confirmed that all staff are up to date with health and safety training, and that some staff would be doing First Aid training after Easter, which was quite a substantial time commitment.

**DN** told governors that CCTV would be installed at Easter, and that she was very pleased about this as, with the better weather, it was possible that the school would be targeted by youngsters climbing over the fence in the evenings, and hopefully the cameras would deter them. **TA** asked whether there had been any incidents of vandalism lately, and **DN** replied that there had not been any recently.

**10. Governor Training**

In **VB**'s absence, **TA** reminded governors of the need to notify both herself and **VB** if they attend any training relevant to their role, even if this was not provided by OCC Governor Services.

**11. Resources Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 March 2021 had been uploaded to GovernorHub.

**TA** asked **NS** and **KT** to summarise the important points from the meeting in case governors had any questions; **KT** said that the meeting had discussed the budget and that there was concern over the possible pupil numbers for September; it appeared that the numbers would be smaller than anticipated, maybe just over 30, which had staffing and cost implications for the school. She added that Sandra Morris would have to do two budgets, to take account of two possible scenarios.

**NS** told governors that the committee had discussed the school lunches contract and had decided to renew it with Fresh Start; **DN** added that every time a contract comes up for renewal, the school is under a duty to review it and see what alternatives are available. She said that she had felt it would be a good idea to stick with Fresh Start as at the moment there was no opportunity to explore the quality of the other options available.

Referring to the likely drop in intake in September, **OP** asked whether this was due to a variation which happens in any village over time, or whether there was a specific reason for it; **DN** replied that, across the whole county except for the city centre itself, numbers are likely to be lower this year. She reminded governors that the school could accommodate 45 children but that the intake looks likely to be 30; that would mean needing only one teacher, but if the number increases at all, there would have to be two teachers. She said that the number would be known at the end of April, and that if only 30 children come in September, the school will be overstaffed in January.

**NS** reported that repairs to the roof have been assessed at around £100,000 and that consequently the school is on a list for government funding as it would not be able to afford the work from its own resources.

**TA** asked whether pupil numbers had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and **DN** replied that, nationally, home schooling was now on the rise – and that this is particularly true in Oxfordshire. She pointed out that other schools had had pupils withdrawn from school, although this had not happened at William Fletcher.

Referring to the expected intake of pupils in September, **KH** asked whether **DN** and her staff hoped to be able to visit the children at their pre-school settings, as it had not been possible last year; **DN** said that although it had been useful to do the doorstep visits to homes last year, she hoped that it would be possible to resume the normal pattern of pre-school visits this summer, but that she was waiting for advice on this from the DfE. She added that it had been difficult for the parents of FS1 children to get to know each other, given the way in which drop-off and collection times now worked.

**KT** asked how many prospective parents usually visited the school, and **DN** estimated that this was around 70-80%. **KT** suggested that a virtual tour could be produced for parents who were unable to come to the school at the moment, and **DN** replied that some other schools did provide virtual tours but that these were very expensive to obtain. She told governors that she was not aware of any families from the village who had chosen not to send their children to the school in September.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday 22 April 2021.

## 12. Performance and Standards Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 March 2021 had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

**KT** commented that the virtual visit by Korky Paul had been an excellent experience for the children and that all the parents she had spoken to, had said how much they appreciated it. **DN** agreed, saying that Emma Brown had organised it for World Book Day, and **TA** asked that governors' thanks be recorded. **Action: DN** to pass on the governors' thanks to Emma Brown for her work in organising the World Book Day event.

**14. Curriculum Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 March 2021 had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

**CR** said how interesting it had been to have **AL** speak to the committee about the maths teaching in school, and she thanked him for giving up his time in this way.

**NS** agreed, saying that it had been really fascinating to hear about the way in which maths was taught – as it had been in January, listening to Caeron Phillips speak about PE. **CR** emphasised that these sessions with teachers talking about their own subjects are particularly important at the moment as governors are unable to do the usual learning walks. **TA** recorded the thanks of the governing body to both **AL** and Caeron Phillips for their valuable contributions.

**AL** said that the teachers who have attended a meeting of the Curriculum Committee to speak about their subjects have found it an extremely positive experience, and he thanked the rest of the governors on behalf of the staff.

**15. Any Other Business**

It was agreed that, having attended several committee meetings now, **NS** would join both the Resources Committee and the Curriculum Committee.

Governors discussed the fact that the next meeting of the FGB would be only a month away, because of the need to discuss the budget at that time, and that the Easter break would be immediately before it. They agreed that there would be no need for the Curriculum Committee and Performance & Standards Committee to meet before that FGB meeting, but that the Resources Committee would still need to meet on 22 April as planned. It was also suggested that the other two committees might bring the dates of their June meetings forward so that there was not too long a gap between their meetings in March and their final meetings of the year. **Action: AI** and **CR** to arrange new dates for their final committee meetings, and to notify all governors and the Clerk of these dates.

**KT** asked whether **DN** thought that at some point it would be worth having a reflection on lessons learned from the past year, or whether this was something the staff were already doing. **DN** answered that this would be happening and that it would be very useful to have input from governors.

**DN** thanked all governors for their help with stewarding at the start and end of each school day, saying that their help had been invaluable and that it had also been good for parents to see who the governors are. She emphasised that she was very appreciative of the governors' help and she wished everyone a very happy Easter.

**16. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 27 April at 6.30 pm online**

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

The meeting closed at 7.36 pm

CS 24.03.2021

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Signed .....

Dated .....