



**Minutes of a meeting of the full Governing Body
of William Fletcher Primary School
held in school
on Tuesday 29 November 2022 at 6.00 pm**

Present:

Trish Amesbury (TA) (Co-opted) (Chair)
Vicky Ball (VB) (Vice Chair) (Co-opted)
Kirsty Colquhoun (KC) (Parent)
Kate Hopcraft (KH) (Co-opted) (from 6.12 pm)
Anna Isles (AI) (Co-opted) (from 6.20 pm)
Andrew Lister (AL) (Co-opted)
Deborah Nind (DN) (Headteacher)
Oliver Petter (OP) (Local Authority)
Charlotte Rayner (CR) (Co-opted)
Rosie Staniland (RS) (Staff)
Neil Shewry (NS) (Parent)
Daniel Wickham-Jones (DWJ) (Parent)

Absent – no apologies received:

Julia Merchant (JM) (Parent)

In attendance:

Clare Saunders (CS) (Clerk)

The meeting was opened by **TA** at 6.00 pm. The meeting was **quorate**.

1. Welcome

TA thanked everyone for being prepared to move the time of the meeting forward, and noted that it was good to be meeting again in person for the first time since March 2020.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

TA noted that there were still some governors who had not yet completed their declarations and confirmations on GovernorHub. **Action: AL** and **JM** to ensure that these are completed by the end of 30 November as **TA** needs to confirm to Governor Services that these have been done.

The **Clerk** reminded governors that the Register of Pecuniary Interests has to be uploaded to the website.

DWJ commented that he needed to refresh his Safeguarding training. **VB** suggested that he could do this via The Key. **Action: DWJ** to complete the training and notify **VB** and Sandra when he has done so.

4. Urgent Additional Items

TA stated that there would be one item to be dealt with in Any Other Business.

5. Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 4 October 2022

item 4: the declarations were added to GovernorHub. Action completed.

item 6 (5)(8): DN reported that she had been unable to find the national figure for attendance in 2021-22, despite looking extensively. She commented that it might not have been published but said that she would keep looking for it. **Action: DN** to let governors know if the figure is published.

item 6 (6): VB confirmed that the dates for meetings of the Resources Committee had been arranged and all governors notified. Action completed.

item 8: TA reiterated that governors who had not yet read the two Codes on GovernorHub and confirmed that they had done so, should do this before the end of 30 November.

item 11: DN had circulated the revised policy. Action completed.

item 10: DN had sent the SDP to **KH**. Action completed. **OP** questioned one of the allocations of Link Governor roles and **TA** commented that **KH** had been doing the allocations, so she would check with her when she arrived.

item 13: TA encouraged governors to take advantage of training opportunities – not just on areas of day-to-day school business but also those which are wider knowledge-based.

item 15: the ToR is on the agenda. Action completed.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 were **approved** by governors and signed by **TA**.

6. Chair's Items

There were no items.

7. Headteacher's Report

DN had circulated a written report in advance and invited governors' questions.

Attendance

OP: Please can you clarify the terms used in the tables of attendance figures?

DN: These are:

EAL – children with English as an additional language

FSM – children entitled to free school meals (Pupil Premium children)

SEND (K) – children with special educational needs or disabilities but without an EHCP

SEND (EHCP) – children with special educational needs or disabilities with an EHCP

DN reported that the overall attendance figure from the start of the school year to 21 November was 96%; she commented that although this was very good indeed, the figure for the individual groups of EAL, FSM and SEND children was less so. Referring to the group of seven SEND children with EHCP, she reminded governors that, with a small number like this, the absence of one child can make a proportionately larger difference.

(6.12 pm – **KH** joined the meeting.)

DN referred to the figure of 93% attendance of the Pupil Premium group, saying that the staff were spending a lot of time working with those families to improve attendance.

CR: Does the term “unauthorised” mean that the families have asked for absence to be approved, but had it refused? Or have they not asked?

DN: It could be either scenario but it is usually a request for a term time holiday. As a school, we have a legal duty of care to ensure that children are in school and, if they are not, to make sure that we know where they are and that they are safe. The register is taken at 9 am and after that Sandra rings the parents of children who have not arrived to check where the children are.

CR: Is there a cultural reason for some of the unauthorised absences?

DN: Yes – some of the EAL children without authorised absence are travelling to their family’s birthplaces; they would be unable to do it in the time allowed for half term holidays.

There are a lot of colds and flu around at this time of year and it is quite common for a child to be ill for five school days; but we follow up with those families whose children have had a week off this term, to make sure that they realise the child needs to be in school for the rest of the year. We also encourage families to send children to school if they have only a light cold, not a temperature.

DWJ: What is the process to be followed when there is an absent child and you are unable to contact the parents?

DN: We generally have several contact telephone numbers for each child, and will try all of them. Usually, we manage to speak to someone on one of those numbers. If not, we can call the police and request a welfare check. I have in the past gone to a child’s home with another member of staff to satisfy myself that the child is safe.

OP: At what point would the attendance figures be flagged up by the local authority?

DN: There is an Attendance Officer who is supposed to make contact with us on a termly basis but this has not yet happened. It is a new system which has been introduced since

the government made attendance at school a priority. We can ring the Attendance Team for advice and this has been very helpful in dealing with some family situations.

Involvement with outside agencies

DWJ: I see that there are Speech and Language Therapists working with 15 children. Is that a high number compared to previous years?

DN: Yes, it is partly due to the pandemic. These are children who were only two years old when the first lockdown began; they missed out on socialisation and therefore on certain aspects of speech and language development eg learning cues by watching others.

(6.20 pm – **AI** joined the meeting.)

CR: I imagine the work is on nuance, the use of language, rather than finding that they are unable to speak properly at all.

DN: Yes, absolutely. And we are fortunate to have so many different specialists in school working with our children.

CR: This reflects the fact that schools are not just providing education in the traditional sense – they have additional responsibilities to support the children in ways which must be addressed before the learning can begin.

KH: How did the phonics evening go?

DN: It was very well attended. It is always exciting when the new Foundation Stage children enter the school, and their parents are very keen to support them in learning to read. Hannah gives the parents confidence in helping their children to read. Then we ran a similar evening for KS1 parents but not as many of them came. They may think that by that time, their children do not need the same level of support, so we need to think of ways to do this differently to encourage them to come. In the past we have tried curriculum evenings when more than one subject is covered, and that may be something to try again.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

CR: You have referred to the mental health issues which some children experience; do you have any concerns about the mental health of your staff?

DN: Today we have had a health and safety audit, and I was asked about whether anyone on the staff was off with stress. I was able to say “no”. I try ensure that they are not working too hard – I have individual conversations with staff members about how much they are doing, and the need to have a balance between home and work life. Teaching is concentrated into discrete blocks of time with the half terms and longer holidays at the end of each, and I try to make sure that the staff take proper breaks and do not work in the holidays. There are no easy answers although the wellbeing group meet regularly, which is a very useful forum. In February, we are going to have someone come in to talk to us about teacher wellbeing.

CR: Has there been more focus on wellbeing while you have been here?

DN: Yes, there is more emphasis on it now. The staff are all individuals and I monitor their wellbeing on an individual basis – what works for one might not work for another.

DWJ: Do you use any timesheets?

DN: No but I know how long the staff are in the building. Sometimes I go round the classrooms and tell them to go home – but of course I do not know how much they are doing at home.

AI: Why would the school need timesheets?

DWJ: They could be used to monitor how much work the staff were doing. You could identify people who were working too many hours. Timesheets do rely on people completing them honestly, though.

CR: The teaching unions make use of timesheets occasionally and pick teachers at random to collect data on working hours.

NS: Are you concerned about any staff in particular?

DN: From time to time, I have had conversations with individuals as to how they are feeling and what I can do to help them.

DN referred to the Civic Service which the school had attended, and thanked **KC** for her help in organising this. **KC** commented that the feedback about the school had been excellent, and that some people had said it was the best service for years.

DN concluded her report by expressing her thanks to the staff team, saying that, with so much to do, it would be easy for them to be deflected from their real purpose but that they always remained focussed on the children in front of them and did their best for the school.

8. Review the Length of the School Day

DN informed governors about the government's White Paper on education which recommended that the school week should be 32.5 hours, saying that this would become statutory in September 2023. She added that the school week at William Fletcher is currently 31 hours 15 minutes, the school day being 8.45 am – 3.00 pm, so it will be necessary to extend each school day by 15 minutes.

AI asked whether there would be issues around additional staff pay; **TA** replied that there were implications for the budget as the teaching assistants would need increased pay.

Governors discussed whether the additional 15 minutes would be better at the beginning or the end of the school day. The following points were made:

Most children learn better in the mornings;

There is always a number of children who do not arrive on time, so to make the start even earlier would potentially mean more children being late;

A later finish could create problems for families with children at more than one school – especially for those collecting children from the Marlborough;

If children learn better in the mornings, lunchtime could be pushed back by 15 minutes to give a longer morning;

There is a safety aspect to having an earlier start in the winter as the mornings are dark;

Other options, eg where people who are not teachers do the additional time with the children, could be considered.

CR asked whether other schools in the Partnership had decided what to do about the additional time, and **DN** replied that one had added time on to the end of the school day.

CR commented that the additional 1¼ hours a week will have an impact on other work that teachers need to get done. She asked how to find the statutory guidance on this issue, and **DN** answered that it was on the Key or could be found on Google as *DfE White Paper*.

Governors agreed that the main issue was what would be in the best interests of the children at William Fletcher and how they would get the most benefit from the additional time. It was agreed that **DN** would consult with staff and then all governors' committees would individually discuss the issue. **Action:** the **Clerk** to ensure that this item is included on the agenda for the next meeting.

9. School Development Plan

AL highlighted two areas of the SDP:

Priority One: Quality of Education

Target 1.3

AL reminded governors that this was aimed at increasing the number of children working at Greater Depth in maths; he said that he had told staff about this and that they had chosen which children to target, specifically ones near the top of the Expected Level. There had also been discussion as to how to communicate to the children what was needed. He told governors that children always score lower in reasoning tests so the staff had looked at how to improve those scores.

Target 1.2

AL highlighted this target which deals with phonics teaching and early reading, referring to the Essential Letters and Sounds Phonics programme. He reported that there had been an Inset day with Julie Sargeant and that there had been some follow up on this. He explained that the phonics scheme covered up to the end of Y1, but that some children in Y2 had not had the full scheme; it could be used in school with older children who may also have gaps in their knowledge. He added that both the KS1 and lower KS2 teachers had had training on the scheme, and that Hannah Haynes was very open to other teachers observing her as she uses the scheme.

DN asked all Link Governors to arrange to meet with their Priority Leads as soon as possible. **Action:** **Link Governors** who have not already done so, to talk to their Priority Leads before the end of term.

It was agreed that **TA** would be the Link Governor for Attendance.

KH confirmed that she had assigned Link roles to all governors and that she had not had comments from any governor that they were unhappy with their allocation, but said that

she would make changes if anyone wanted her to. She commented that she had so far only had notes from four meetings between staff and governors, and emphasised that governors should make appointments with the Priority Leads as soon as possible.

DN suggested that the meeting notes should be kept on GovernorHub – governors could upload the notes themselves and all governors could see them. This was agreed.

Action: **KH** to create a new folder on GovernorHub for the notes.

10. **Safeguarding**

DN confirmed that she had worked through the audit points, and told governors that 10% of schools would be chosen by the local Safeguarding Team for a spot check at random. There had been three actions to address:

- a) Communicating regular safeguarding updates to the school volunteers;
- b) Reviewing the hire of school premises policy – this has now been done;
- c) Reviewing the way safeguarding concerns are recorded electronically – staff training on this has been done. The next step will be to ensure that actions are followed up.

TA thanked **DN** for her work on the audit, commenting that this is a substantial job and that, although the document itself is helpful, the work involved is time-consuming.

11. **Health and Safety**

VB told governors that she had done a walk around and that there had been no major concerns – she highlighted just the extension leads which had been partly coiled within their housing, and which should be fully unwound before use.

DN confirmed that a health and safety visit had taken place that day, and that everything was fine and there had been no actions arising from it.

12. **Governor Training**

VB reminded governors that the Key had several new courses, and that it would be useful to have one or more governors trained on school finance. **KC** confirmed that she would be doing the course, as well as *Safer Recruitment*, soon. **NS** added that he had registered to do *Taking the Chair*.

VB said that she would redo the governing body skills audit, so that governors could see the gaps in training. **Action:** **VB** to update and circulate the governing body skills audit.

13. **Resources Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022, had been uploaded to GovernorHub and circulated in advance of the meeting.

DWJ asked what the outcome was of the discussion by the committee around the charging policy, and **VB** replied that there would be wording to make it clear that parental contributions were voluntary but that the trip would not be able to go ahead without them.

It was still the case, however, that no child would be excluded if the contribution was not made. **TA** added that parents are always encouraged to speak to the office if they have difficulty making the payment.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday 5 January 2023 at 10.30 am, via Teams.

14. **Performance and Standards Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 had been uploaded to GovernorHub and circulated in advance of the meeting, along with the Terms of Reference 2022-23.

Governors approved the Terms of Reference.

AI told governors that Paul Austin had spoken to the committee about reading, and that the committee had looked at the SEF. She added that she would be keeping Ofsted on the agenda for the committee meetings.

The next meeting of the committee will be held at 9 am in school, on Wednesday 11 January 2023.

15. **Curriculum Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 had been uploaded to GovernorHub and circulated in advance of the meeting.

CR reported that the committee had planned the meetings for the year ahead and invited subject leads to join future meetings. She commented that other governors were always welcome to the meetings but asked that they notify her of their intention to do so.

CR said that the committee had looked at the website, that they liked the new look of it, and that it was compliant except that the SENCo contact details need to be shown separately from those of the school itself.

The next meeting of the committee will be held at 4 pm on Thursday 5 January 2023.

16. **Any Other Business**

TA asked that preparation for an Ofsted visit be a standing item on the agenda from now on. **Action:** the **Clerk** to ensure that this is added to the agenda of future meetings. **TA** reported that she, **DN**, **AI** and **NS** had met to discuss possible Ofsted questions and answers, and that these would be circulated to all governors. She added that, when Ofsted do visit, only a few governors will be needed to speak to them, and that this will depend on governors' availability.

DN told governors that she would be leaving the school in July, and that she was announcing this now so that there was plenty of time to appoint her successor. She expressed her thanks to everyone who had supported her during her time at the school. **TA** said that she would be greatly missed but that the school and governors were grateful to her for all she had done. She told governors that she would contact OCC for an information pack so that the process of recruitment could begin, and that it was hoped to get the advert out by Christmas. An interview panel of governors would be needed in due course. **DN** added that she would be telling the parents the next day.

- 17. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 17 January 2022 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 7.15 pm

CS 30.11.2022

