

Fulfen Primary School

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in a virtual setting on Tuesday 6 July, 2021 at 6.15 p.m.

Present: Mr. Middleton (Chair), Mrs. Davies (Headteacher), Mrs. Ballett,
Mrs. Connock, Mrs. Poxon, Mrs. Tranter, Mrs. Larner, Ms. Burley,
Mrs. Witcomb, Miss. Green

Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)
Mrs. Hawkins (School Business Manager)

1 Welcome and Introductions:

Governors were welcomed to the final Governing Board meeting of the year by the Chair. Meetings continue in a virtual setting although it is anticipated with the start of the new academic term that a blended/hybrid approach may be adopted in terms of the format of governor meetings. Documentation had been circulated in advance of the meeting and, as always, members were given ample opportunity to ask questions and seek points of clarification as appropriate.

The meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies:

Resolved: That an apology for absence be received and accepted from Mr. Holmes.

Resolved: That apologies not be received and therefore not be accepted from Ms. Mason and Mrs. Lightfoot.

Governors are reminded that any Governor who does not participate in full Governing Board meetings for more than six months without their apologies being accepted by the Governing Board are automatically disqualified.

Governors noted that this was the second meeting in a row where apologies had not been received from either Ms. Mason or Mrs. Lightfoot. It is not compulsory that Ms. Mason attends all meetings in her Associate Member role but, turning to Mrs. Lightfoot, the Chair confirmed he would contact the individual in question to ascertain her future intentions in relation to her governance-based role. If Mrs. Lightfoot cannot attend meetings and steps down from the role, then the necessary Parent Governor election will need to be instigated.

Resolved: That the Chair progress this action, updating the Clerk/Headteacher as appropriate.

3 Confidentiality:

Governors were reminded that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting.

4 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations of interest were made by Governors in respect of any specific items appearing on tonight's agenda.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on Tuesday 25 May, 2021 (including Confidential Appendix) be approved as an accurate and true record.

Resolved: That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection.

A copy of the Minutes will be retained for audit purposes and signed by Mr. Middleton via electronic or hard copy signature.

Resolved: That Mr. Middleton add his signature to the ratified minutes.

6 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting:

As is customary practice, the Clerk had generated an action matrix to the May minutes. The following progress update was noted:

Minute	Update																		
5	The Headteacher has made a copy of the March minutes available as a public record.																		
5	The Chair is aware that previously ratified minutes need to be signed for audit purposes.																		
6	<p>A meeting did take place between the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk to discuss a range of governance matters. This included a review of the completed Skills Audit (the Chair reporting there were no red flags that needed immediate attention); a discussion of the meeting schedule for the new academic year (see conclusion of these minutes) and a focus on Link Governor engagement and agreement of the matrix for 2021-22.</p> <p>On this last point, the following listing has been agreed:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Link Area</th> <th>Link Governor</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SEND/Safeguarding</td> <td>Mr. Holmes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EYFS</td> <td>Mrs. Larner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health and Safety/Premises/Staff and Pupil Wellbeing</td> <td>Chair</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance</td> <td>Mrs. Poxon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Statutory Grants</td> <td>Ms. Burley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Curriculum</td> <td>Mrs. Witcomb</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Standards</td> <td>Mrs. Lightfoot</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Governor Training and School Council</td> <td>Vice-Chair</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Governors were more than happy to adopt these Link Governor roles for the new academic year. Hopefully, members will have the opportunity to visit school to carry out engagement activities associated with the above areas as a result of restrictions easing in relation to the pandemic. Despite the on-going challenges of covid-19, a number of statutory checks including SEND/Safeguarding and Finance have managed to go ahead with it is hoped more to follow in the Autumn Term.</p> <p>The Clerk added at this point that he would share some information with Mrs. Lightfoot and Mrs. Witcomb around what being a Link Governor in relation to standards and the curriculum entails. Some of this support will involve signposting to existing resources that are already available.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk progress this action.</p>	Link Area	Link Governor	SEND/Safeguarding	Mr. Holmes	EYFS	Mrs. Larner	Health and Safety/Premises/Staff and Pupil Wellbeing	Chair	Finance	Mrs. Poxon	Statutory Grants	Ms. Burley	Curriculum	Mrs. Witcomb	Standards	Mrs. Lightfoot	Governor Training and School Council	Vice-Chair
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	<p>Finally, the Vice-Chair confirmed that her spreadsheet of relevant Governor information was nearing completion but did acknowledge that she is still chasing up one or two outstanding items of information from Board members.</p> <p>Governors who have any outstanding actions were asked to work with the Vice-Chair to ensure, come September, a fully audit of governance-based information is in place. Members were also reminded that they have access to the Key and were reminded that they can continue to access training opportunities via this online portal. Governors thanked the Vice-Chair for this reminder and will look into this matter over the Summer Break.</p> <p>Resolved: That Governors follow through on this action.</p>
8	The School Business Manager confirmed signatures had been added to the SFVS and it was submitted to the Local Authority (LA) by the required deadline.
8	<p>Mrs. Poxon and the School Business Manager confirmed they would meet in the Autumn Term to discuss any matter arising from the SFVS, specifically the areas where 'In Part' has been answered.</p> <p>Resolved: That Mrs. Poxon/the School Business Manager follow up on this action.</p>
9	<p>It was confirmed the costing model around the Buildings Plan proposal would be shared at the Autumn Term 1 meeting. The proposal is still being worked up at the present time.</p> <p>Resolved: That the costing model be presented in the Autumn Term.</p>
10	Governors will have opportunities in the Autumn Term to carry out Link Governor activities linked to core themes in the School Development Plan (SDP).
15	It was confirmed the folder structure issue on Governor Hub has been resolved.
15	<p>There was a discussion around Ofsted Readiness and the key documentation that Governors need to be aware of, prior to any external inspection. The Headteacher confirmed the SDP and Self Evaluation Form (SEF) are the two documents that Governors do need to familiarise themselves with so they can talk from an informed position on different areas of school life. It was confirmed that both of these documents will be available for the Autumn Term and will be uploaded to the Hub once they are ready for publication. The Chair asked that the Headteacher provide a short verbal presentation on the SEF and its core components at the first meeting of the new academic term.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Headteacher prepare this presentation for sharing with Governors.</p>
17	The meeting schedule for 2021-22 is confirmed at the end of these minutes.

As an aside, Mrs. Tranter confirmed the Covid Catch Up funding statement is available online which highlights the spend and impact of this ring-fenced funding stream.

Mrs. Tranter also responded to a request from the Chair as to the current challenging behaviour being exhibited by a select number of pupils at Fulfen and what measures/strategies continue to be put in place to support these children.

Mrs. Tranter confirmed that she does what she can to ensure the children exhibiting these challenging behaviours have the right support structures in place, even if this means at times recommending that the pupils concerned might have their needs better met by accessing more specialist provision away from Fulfen.

Governors were informed that the areas of Safeguarding and SEND continue to be a huge drain on resources at Fulfen. Whilst staff with accountability in these areas will fight for every layer of support that can be put in place for the vulnerable cohort, the reality is that as well as

coping with a sustained level of challenging behaviour, Mrs. Tranter is also managing a dozen or so EHCPs at the present time which is more than double the national average. The impact on Mrs. Tranter's time is immense and whilst she will always look to do the best for the School's vulnerable cohort, there is a real concern that the current arrangements are simply not sustainable.

Governor Challenge: With this in mind, the Chair concluded that it would only be right to engage with the SLT outside of tonight's meeting to establish what other forms of support can be put in place. The Governing Board does not want to involve itself in the operational detail on this issue but it was felt some strategic considerations did need to be taken into account, it only to free up additional capacity and take the wellbeing of Mrs. Tranter into account.

Resolved: That the Chair progress this action.

When it comes to additional administrative based support, a number of suggestions were put forward including the use of central government initiatives such as 'The Kickstart Scheme' to provide additional capacity in a number of administrative-based roles around school. Mrs. Poxon also confirmed that she had details of an apprenticeship scheme through the Chamber of Commerce that the School might want to investigate further.

Resolved: That Mrs. Poxon share these details with the School Business Manager.

Governors look forward to receiving an update in the Autumn Term as to how this area of school life has been progressed. Governors passed on their thanks to Mrs. Tranter and her team for everything they continue to do to champion the needs of the vulnerable cohort.

7 Reports:

Chair/Vice-Chair's Actions

The Chair and Vice-Chair confirmed they had not taken any specific actions on behalf of the Governing Board since the last meeting.

Link Governors

Link Governors have already been referenced in the course of these minutes. It is assumed that Link Governor visits will start up again in the Autumn Term at which point reports will be generated for audit purposes. There was no further action to take at tonight's meeting.

Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher provided Governors with a verbal update at tonight's meeting, having shared a more formal report at the Summer Term 1 Governing Board meeting. The following key headlines were noted:

1.1

Governors were informed that the Assistant Headteacher had vacated her post at the School. Some supporting context around the departure was provided. The Headteacher explained that the greatest impact on the School of this recent development has been the curriculum planning and design which was the Assistant Headteacher's main area of accountability.

The SLT has been left in a position where it has had to pick up the review of the curriculum and ensure by September the curriculum intent and implementation are fit for purpose. A decision has been taken to dispense with the current Cornerstones Curriculum that is no longer meeting the needs of pupils and to replace it with the Chris Quigley curriculum approach, albeit adapting it to meet the needs of the local, Fulfen context. Staff including

middle leaders have really stepped up to the mark when it comes to carrying out deep dives into each of the curriculum areas to understand more fully what action needs to be taken to ensure purposeful curriculum intent is realised from September. The Headteacher confirmed that the School already has a strong model in certain subjects (i.e. Art and PE). The task now is to ensure that a consistent approach is taken in all subject areas so pupils can recover with their learning and ensure by the time they leave Fulfen that not only are they equipped with important life skills but they also have embedded knowledge and understanding which is played out across both the core academic subjects and wider curriculum areas. Whilst the departure of the Assistant Headteacher is not ideal from a timing perspective, the Headteacher felt the circumstances that have played out have allowed school leaders to reassess and reignite curriculum-based discussions that can only have a positive impact on Fulfen in the mid to long-term.

To reassure Governors, the Headteacher confirmed the curriculum will be monitored closely in the Autumn Term to ensure the intent of the model is being realised and that any teething issue when it comes to implementation are being discussed and mitigated. The Link Governor with responsibility in this area will also be important in putting various challenge-based questions to leaders on this area of school life and reflecting on the extent to which the three i's – intent, implementation and impact – are being secured.

The Headteacher commented that getting the recovery curriculum right in terms of planning and implementation is crucial when pupils have lost so much time away from mainstream education. Following various monitoring-based activities and dialogue at pupil progress meetings, it is clear the pandemic has impacted significantly on standards across year groups with the greatest impact being felt lower down the School. Clarity around expectations will be really important next year and whilst Fulfen will not be alone in experiencing these dips in performance, it is essential the curriculum acts as an enabler and facilitator to get pupils back on track with their learning to fill any gaps and to ensure core concepts are embedded and consolidated across the learning groups.

Governor Challenge: Governors asked that with the Assistant Headteacher no longer in post who in school was taking overall responsibility for the curriculum.

The Headteacher confirmed that whilst she is ultimately accountable, she has been working hard to empower leaders in school, to set them the challenge and then to review the models/proposals put forward. This approach has worked well, not only from a job enrichment perspective but it has allowed staff to own and solve a set of problems – important when trying to secure staff buy-in in the mid to long-term.

Governor Challenge: Governors challenged how the SLT intends to fill this vacant post.

The Headteacher confirmed that there are number of internal candidates who could take on this leadership role. As far as the Headteacher is concerned, she is in no immediate rush to fill the post, preferring instead to build up the talent pool in school so that when the post is formally advertised a number of able and competent individuals will step forward.

At this point the discussion moved into territory that warranted being reported as a confidential matter – **see Confidential Appendix.**

Governor Challenge: Governors asked whether the curriculum model that is being delivered would include pupils moving around a number of staff over a designated period of time.

The Headteacher confirmed this was a model akin to secondary, not primary schools. In the primary school sector, staff are expected to teach all subjects with the quality of teaching expected to be of a high standard whatever subject is being delivered in the classroom. Ofsted would look for this if they did carry out a deep dive into a particular subject area and

there would be an expectation that staff and leaders can talk from an informed position about the intent, implementation and impact of any given curriculum area.

Governor Challenge: With there being a national dip in standards in lieu of the pandemic, Governors challenged over how the SLT will benchmark its data at the current time.

The Headteacher confirmed that for all schools the most important starting point is to establish the academic baseline after so much time away from mainstream education. This will allow the SLT to plan future interventions, to fill gaps and to tailor the recovery curriculum to pupil needs, whether that plays out at an individual, small class, group or year group level. No statutory data exists this year so from an Ofsted perspective there will be a focus on different aspects of the recovery plan and how it translates into key strategic documentation – i.e. the SDP and SEF.

The triangulation of these areas will be crucial to ensure no input is wasted and whilst benchmarking performance may be difficult for some time to come, the various cluster Heads meetings and/or LA updates will be useful in understanding how the picture is emerging across Staffordshire. The important point is that staff know their pupils best and will do whatever they can to recover their learning so by the time they come to leave Fulfen to take their next educational step they will be ready.

1.2

The Headteacher did remark how much she has welcomed the opportunities for leaders to come together in school and to discuss the School's strategic approach for September. Leaders are finding time to talk over recent CPD courses they have accessed and this is resulting in lots of good ideas and best practice being shared. Investing in leaders of the future is a crucial component of any school's on-going sustainability and the Headteacher felt the talent pool currently in place at Fulfen is an area that warrants this attention.

1.3

Governors were not surprised to hear that the recovery curriculum is taking up so much of the leadership's time at present. There is no margin for error given the extended disruption in the system that has been faced and the SLT remains confident that the proposed recovery plan when it comes to curriculum design and implementation will deliver the results and impacts everybody wants to see.

Resolved: That the Headteacher be thanked for her verbal update.

8 Financials:

Attention switched to a budget update at this point in the meeting. The School Business Manager had provided members with both a budget variations report and an updated income/expenditure report which displayed the differences between the ratified budget as at 25.05.21 and the present day. Mrs. Hawkins explained that she was discussing with Entrust the need to replace the current budget on the system with the amended budgetary figures shared at tonight's meeting. This discussion remains on-going. Governors were informed that the latest financial information shared still balances which is important to minute for auditing purposes.

Governor Challenge: Governors challenged that to aid understanding a simple spreadsheet or equivalent needs to be set up which documents the variance changes in the amended budget. Although the School Business Manager had provided this update in a narrative format, it was felt a spreadsheet solution would make the changes more visible and easier to follow through.

Resolved: That Mrs. Hawkins take note of this action.

Overall, Governors had no significant challenge to offer in relation to the updated figures. They took confidence in the fact the Finance Link Governor is happy with the revised financial data and that the necessary due diligence has been applied.

Resolved: That Governors formally ratify the differences in the Budget that were reported.

Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Poxon were thanked for all the hard work and scrutiny that they continue to apply around the School finances.

9 Staffing Changes:

Governors were brought up to speed with the latest staff mobility changes for 2021-22. The Headteacher confirmed the details of a couple of new starters which included an NQT (ECT from September) and a fixed term Year 1 teacher to cover a period of maternity leave. The way the SLT was covering the departure of the Assistant Headteacher from a business continuity perspective was also discussed as was the teaching resource that is going to be placed in Year 6 with its added significance as the country emerges from the pandemic.

Overall, the Headteacher is more than happy with the relatively stable team she has in place for September and knows that her staff are extremely motivated and driven to push on with the delivery of the revamped curriculum and support pupils on-going pastoral and academic-based needs.

10 Fulfen Club Restructure:

There was a requirement at tonight's meeting to agree the Governor Panel membership for the planned Fulfen Club restructure and also the constitution of an Appeals Panel in the unlikely event this forum needs to be convened at short notice. Following some supporting context as to where the School has got to with this undertaking, the following panel membership was agreed:

Initial Committee – Mrs. Poxon, Mrs. Larnar, Mrs. Witcomb

Appeals Committee – Mr. Middleton, Ms. Burley, Mrs. Ballett, Mr. Holmes

Governors were thanked for supporting the School with this task. The School Business Manager will be in touch with the Governors who have volunteered for the initial committee once any action needs to be taken.

Resolved: That Mrs. Hawkins contact Governors as needed in this area.

11 Policy/Document Ratification:

Governors were asked to formally ratify two policies/documents at tonight's meeting – the Business Continuity Plan 2021-22 and the RSE Policy that has been subject to a consultation in line with statutory guidance.

In terms of the Business Continuity Plan, Governors noted that the document was based on a pre-existing template. The Headteacher confirmed there were no significant material changes that had been made to this policy other than updating various contact details. On this point, it was noted that the Assistant Headteacher's details need to be removed.

Resolved: That the Business Continuity Policy be formally ratified subject to the minor tweak being actioned.

Looking next at the RSE Policy, the Headteacher confirmed that if she did not receive any further feedback by 12.07.21 then the Policy would be taken as formally approved. There were no specific points of challenge shared at tonight's meeting.

Resolved: That Governors take note of this action.

Resolved: That the Headteacher publish both policies online so they are available to the wider school community.

12 Staffing Matter:

The next item on the agenda focused on a confidential staffing matter – *see Confidential Appendix*.

Staff members were asked to leave the virtual meeting before this agenda item was discussed.

13 Any Other Business:

There were a number of additional items of business that were raised at this point in the meeting.

1.1

It was confirmed a number of membership changes will need to be made to the current Governor information on the Hub and Get Information about Schools (GIAS). The Clerk will liaise with Mrs. Steele over this action.

Resolved: That the Clerk progress this matter.

1.2

Governors who have seen the new library felt it was a fantastic addition to the School. Any initiative that will foster and instil a love of reading in pupils is to be commended and Governors know what benefits this reshaped learning environment will bring to current and future generations of Fulfen pupils. The Headteacher thanked Governors for these kind words.

1.3

Governors wished all staff and the leadership team a restful and peaceful Summer Break. There is no doubt the last 12-18 months have tested the resilience and fortitude of the whole School community and everybody should be really proud of what has still been achieved. The Headteacher thanked Governors for these kind words and also their resolute support over this challenging period.

14 Confidentiality:

Governors were asked to identify if there were any items/materials, which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting, which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Governors were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda, which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

Resolved: That it be identified that the following item be included as a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minute 12.

There were no further items/materials identified for exclusion.

15 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:

The Clerk in the immediate aftermath of the meeting provided a schedule of dates for 2021-22. These dates can be provisionally confirmed as follows:

Term	Date and Time
Autumn 1	05.10.21 at 6.15 p.m.
Autumn 2	07.12.21 at 6.15 p.m.
Spring 1	25.01.22 at 6.15 p.m.
Spring 2	29.03.22 at 6.15 p.m.
Summer 1	24.05.22 at 6.15 p.m.
Summer 2	12.07.22 at 6.15 p.m.

Resolved: That the Chair/Headteacher liaise with the Clerk if any of these dates are an issue so alternative provision can be made. The Vice-Chair will share these dates with Governors at the start of the Autumn Term.

All that was left to do was for the Chair to thank all Governors for their attendance and contributions to tonight's meeting.

The meeting was brought to a close by the Chair.

Chair

Date

Fulfen Primary School

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in a virtual setting on
Tuesday 6 July, 2021 at 6.15 p.m.**

Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
2	Chair	Contact Mrs. Lightfoot to ascertain future intentions in relation to Governor role.	
5	HT	Publish May minutes.	
5	Chair	Sign ratified minutes.	
6	Clerk	Share Link Governor information as noted.	
6	Governors	Access Governor training on the Key.	
6	Mrs. Poxon/SBM	Meet to discuss SFVS judgements (In Part).	
6	SBM	Present costing model in Autumn Term (Buildings Project).	
6	HT	Present SEF to Governors in Autumn Term.	
6	Chair	Meet with SLT over reported SEND/Safeguarding capacity concerns.	
6	Mrs. Poxon	Share contact details – chamber of commerce.	
8	SBM	Take note of financial related action.	
10	SBM	Contact Governors as needed around Fulfen Club restructure.	
11	HT	Tweak Business Continuity Plan and publish both documents online.	
13	Clerk	Liaise with school over Hub/GIAS update.	
15	HT/Chair	Check 2021-22 meeting schedule.	
15	Vice-Chair	Inform Governors of meeting dates at start of Autumn Term.	
CA	Various	Progress action as indicated.	

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5 October, 2021 at 6.15 p.m.

Absent Governors to be informed.