

# Fulfen Primary School

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in the School on Tuesday 28 March, 2023 at 6.15 p.m.

**Present:** Mr. Boardman (Chair), Mrs. Davies (Headteacher), Mrs. Ballett, Mrs. Witcomb, Mr. Field, Mr. Ritchie, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Copper, Mrs. Kilgallen, Mrs. Poxon, Mrs. Tranter, Mrs. Dingle

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

### **1 Welcome and Introductions:**

Governors were welcomed to tonight's Governing Board meeting by the Chair. There was the usual focus by Governors on a range of strategic matters that affect all aspects of school life with attendees having lots of opportunities to ask questions and seek points of clarification in relation to the circulated material. The Chair ensured that the meeting progressed at a rapid pace given the amount of topics that needed to be covered on the agenda. These topics included some positive success stories such as reviewing children's books versus some more challenging issues which included the parking arrangements at the front of the School.

The meeting was quorate.

### **2 Apologies:**

There were no apologies on this occasion.

### **3 Governing Board Matters:**

#### **Membership**

The Vice-Chair ensures that all relevant membership information is up-to-date on GIAS and Governor Hub. There are no terms of office that expire in 2023 and the Board is currently carrying one Co-opted Governor vacancy. This vacancy will only be filled once an individual can be identified who will complement the skills and attributes of the existing membership.

#### **Confidentiality**

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

The Chair reiterated the need for Governors to avoid getting involved in any correspondence about the School on social media. Should parents/carers have an issue they want to raise with the School, they need to approach the School direct.

#### **Declarations**

The Vice-Chair confirmed that as far as she is concerned any declarations of interest (both business and pecuniary) are up-to-date on Governor Hub. If the personal circumstances for any Governor change, they need to go onto the Hub and update their submitted declaration.

In addition, no declarations were made by Governors in respect of any specific items appearing on tonight's agenda.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct has been referenced in previous sets of minutes. Governors confirmed they were happy to continue to abide by the protocols listed in this document.

### **Instrument of Government (IoG)**

There was no further update to report in relation to the IoG. The Vice-Chair keeps this document up-to-date and will approach individual Governors if any piece of information is missing or needs to be clarified.

The Vice-Chair was thanked for all of the administrative support she provides to the Governing Board. Her input is invaluable to ensure the Board is complaint when it comes to key governance processes and procedures.

### **4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on Tuesday 24 January, 2023 (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. Boardman via electronic or hard copy signature.

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

### **5 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting:**

A review of actions from the January minutes was completed. The following progress update can be reported:

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
3	An update on declarations has already been referenced in these minutes.
3	It was confirmed the membership information is now aligned across all relevant online platforms.
4	The Headteacher has made the December minutes available as a public record.
4	The ratified December minutes have been signed.
5	A number of Safeguarding related actions have been taken by the Vice-Chair since the last meeting. Various forms of training including two YouTube videos have been circulated; a crib sheet is being prepared around Safeguarding to support Ofsted Readiness and Governors have been issued with their own personal tracker so they can take account of and record their progress in terms of the various forms of CPD that need to be completed. This belt and braces approach will ensure the Board is fully compliant with its core responsibilities/accountabilities when it comes to Safeguarding procedure and practice.
7	Mrs. Wright shared her key observations from an analysis of five school websites she carried out, specifically focusing on the coverage of each school's extended provision. Whilst praising the general vibrancy and engagement that is delivered within the Fulfen site, Mrs. Wright did feel that the Club information was somewhat buried and queried whether anything could be done to make the information around the Club more front and centre within one click (at the most two clicks) to

	<p>ensure parents can find all of the information they need.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge:</b> Mrs. Wright also asked some questions as to how often the website is audited and offered her support on this front should an additional Governor perspective be required.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Headteacher reflect on this feedback and determine what can be done around the online provision to raise the profile and visibility of the extended provision.</p>
8	Mrs. Steele was present at tonight's meeting to provide an attendance update.
11	An update on the Headteacher's performance management was covered off later in the meeting.
12	The parking issue was an agenda item to be discussed at tonight's meeting. Governors had taken in the circulated material so they were ready to engage in an informed and productive discussion.

As a quick aside, the Vice-Chair confirmed that the Skills Audit has now been completed with the results analysed. Whilst the matrix will be used to inform future training/recruitment decisions, the Vice-Chair felt the Audit did reflect the skills/competencies of the Board with few gaps present. This audit will be carried out on an annual basis to ensure that the Board continues to be fit for purpose in delivering its strategic mandate.

## 6 Attendance Update:

Mrs. Steele had been invited to tonight's meeting to share an attendance update with Governors. The following points were noted:

### 1.1

Mrs. Steele confirmed that the School has always had a strong focus on attendance in terms of supporting families where any barriers around this Key Performance Indicator (KPI) exist and championing a healthy attendance record that is crucial to a pupil's academic progress at Fulfen. Over the course of the pandemic, Mrs. Steele confirmed that as is the case with many schools up and down the Country, the challenges/issues around attendance have increased – whether it is a conscious decision of parents to keep children off school, the increase in term time holidays that are being taken as well as the general winter illnesses and flu like symptoms that always impact a school's attendance figures.

### 1.2

Mrs. Steele confirmed the whole attendance target in 2018 was 96.8%. At the moment, the School is running at 93.75% which indicates the scale of the decline.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors challenged how this reduced figure compares with the current national benchmark.

Mrs. Steele confirmed that whilst the SLT will not accept the current figure (it needs to be higher), the percentage is broadly in line with the current national benchmark.

### 1.3

Governors were informed what proactive actions senior leaders have taken around attendance, both in terms of tracking the data and looking to hold families to account in this area. Regular meetings between Mrs. Steele and Mrs. Tranter ensure the attendance of vulnerable groups is tracked with key actions agreed in relation to individual pupils and their families. Sometimes there is a feeling that senior leaders are swimming against the tide – in one case a vulnerable pupil has not attended the School in the last two years which is clearly having an adverse impact on the School's overall data set. When it comes to persistent absenteeism, senior leaders again monitor those children who are currently operating below

the 90% threshold. In these instances, an escalation procedure kicks in where a variety of actions/initiatives can be deployed to get a pupil back on track. Assemblies and class awards are also used to reinforce positive messages around the need for a healthy attendance record.

#### 1.4

Governors were made aware that the DfE and Ofsted are very focused on a school's attendance record. Both stakeholders are looking for the attendance rates in schools to return to pre-pandemic levels and are keen to hear what strategies schools are using to challenge any bad habits and support families where there is a genuine barrier/need that needs to be overcome.

#### 1.5

One area that was discussed in detail was the number of days that children can be absent from school (unauthorised absence) before the School moves to issue a penalty notice. At the moment, this threshold stands at 6 days (12 sessions). Governors felt that from September this threshold should be reduced to 3 days (6 sessions) in the first instance. Not only would this move strengthen the message around the importance of children being in school and accessing the curriculum on a regular basis but would also mean 'the week away' option would no longer be possible without incurring some kind of financial penalty. Governors do sympathise with families but at the same time felt strongly that the education of children is of critical importance, particularly given how much learning has been lost in the pandemic.

**Resolved:** That Governors ratify this attendance-based decision that will take effect from 01.09.23. The Headteacher will now arrange for the necessary communication to go out to parents on this matter.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Steele be thanked for her update. At this point she gave her leave of absence from the meeting.

### 7 Performance Management Update:

There was a requirement to consider the Headteacher's performance management appraisal that has recently been carried out involving a number of Governors, the Headteacher and an external consultant – **see Confidential Appendix.**

### 8 Finance Update:

As always, Mrs. Hawkins had provided a detailed budgetary analysis for the School's three budgets – Main School Budget; Nursery Budget and Club Budget – **see Confidential Appendix.**

### 9 SEF:

The Headteacher took another key section of the SEF – Behaviour and Attitudes – and shared her key observations with Governors.

Key points can be summarised as follows:

#### 1.1

Behaviour and attitudes demonstrated by Fulfen pupils on a daily basis are to be commended. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships, both with each other and with staff. Pupils receive love, care and support and respond in kind with incredibly positive attitudes to their work and to school life in general.

## 1.2

The SLT has focused on the lunchtime experience to address any unstructured time. This was causing some low-level behavioural issues that were creeping into the afternoon sessions. The playground has now been zoned off with lots of interesting outdoor activities that engage pupils and ensure that the time they spend outside has real purpose and focus. This change has had a dramatic impact on the number of incidents now being reported. As an additional point, it was confirmed that there are now TAs out on the playground alongside lunchtime supervisors. This again is having an impact with all staff collaborating well to enhance the lunchtime offer.

## 1.3

The behaviour routines of 'Ready', 'Respectful' and 'Safe' are understood by all pupils with all year groups able to articulate what these routines mean for them in terms of everyday school life. It was confirmed that the local high school adopts the same routines which reflects an excellent synergy of practice.

## 1.4

Good behaviour is recognised sincerely rather than just rewarded. Children are praised publicly and reminded in private. Comments from external visitors are always complementary about the children's behaviour and the way they conduct themselves when moving around the School site.

## 1.5

It was felt this area of the SEF is really strong with a culture around behaviour and attitudes that has been cemented over a number of years. This consistency of approach has made a big difference.

## 1.6

Attendance is part of this SEF judgement and has already been referenced in these minutes. Senior leaders continue to be vigilant in this area.

## 1.7

Exclusions at Fulfen over many years have been at zero. Suspensions are extremely low and tend to centre around pupils with particularly severe behaviour needs, as identified in EHCPs or SEND reviews.

## 1.8

Governors were informed that the best way for them to witness the behaviour and attitudes of pupils is through their Link Governor visits. Those Governors who have managed to get into school spoke warmly about the behaviour/attitudes they have been able to witness at first hand.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors enquired as to the protocols for arranging visits into school.

The Headteacher provided the necessary clarification on this matter.

## 10 Reports:

### **Chair and Vice-Chair's Actions**

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

### **Link Governor Reports**

A series of Link Governor reports had been circulated in advance of tonight's meeting. They included Pupil Wellbeing; Staff Wellbeing and the School Website. The reports were comprehensive in nature and contained some challenge-based questions and responses that Governors can take in at their leisure.

**Resolved:** That the Vice-Chair be thanked for undertaking these recent Link Governor activities.

The reports not only provide staff representatives with a good level of engagement with Board members but the reports can also be retained for audit purposes as evidence of Governors carrying out the core competencies associated with their governance-based role.

**Resolved:** That other Governors ensure Governing Board visits are carried out in the coming weeks with the relevant reports to be submitted and circulated in advance of the next Board meeting. This will include a visit to be scheduled with the Finance Link Governor, Mrs. Poxon to coincide with the setting of next year's budget.

Any update relevant to Governor training has already been referenced in the course of these minutes.

### **Headteacher's Verbal Update**

The Headteacher, having given her formal Report at the last meeting, was asked to provide a short verbal update of any recent developments that needed to be shared.

She spent a few moments talking about recent staff mobility (i.e. the recruitment of a new Year 2 teacher); the recent specialist clubs that have been introduced as part of the extended provision (for example, cheerleading, karate, golf, street dance, etc.) with the vulnerable pupils also able to access this provision earlier in the School day; recent school visits that pupils have benefitted from (so important to broaden horizons and develop a cultural capital) and, finally, recent CPD that staff have been accessing to develop/enhance their professional practice.

Governors welcomed this informative update.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors asked what action is taken in relation to pupils who cannot go on particular school trips and instead remain in school. There were also questions around how the recent writing CPD will benefit not just those pupils who are on track to meet age-related expectations but also those pupils where additional stretch and challenge are required.

The Headteacher provided the necessary clarification on both of these points.

### **SEND Report**

Mrs. Tranter had provided a SEND Report for Governors as at Spring 2023. This report focused on a number of key lines of enquiry including the number of Fulfen pupils with SEN support or EHCPs compared to primary age SEND children nationally; the primary categories of need in relation to SEND pupils; the role positive play has at Fulfen; the number of pupils open to external agencies; SEND attendance; key initiatives around SEND deployed at the School and, finally, any training/monitoring delivered by the SENco and Inclusion Manager.

**Governor Challenge:** Other than some questions around how various aspects of the data compare to national benchmarks, Governors were happy to take in the contents of this Report

at their leisure. Mrs. Tranter confirmed she is always available should Governors wish to follow up on any key lines of enquiry in relation to her supplied narrative.

**Resolved:** That Governors engage with Mrs. Tranter outside of tonight's meeting if they have any questions around the provision Fulfen makes for its vulnerable cohort.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Tranter be thanked for her informative overview.

## **11 Parking Issue:**

The parking issue has been on the agenda for a number of meetings with the Chair ensuring at tonight's meeting that this matter received the necessary airtime. In preparation for the discussion, Governors had been sent a series of links to a court case and the School's current car park risk assessment.

There was a wide-ranging discussion around the current parking issues/challenges that are being faced by senior leaders/staff; the procedure for issuing car parking passes and under what circumstances they are renewed; the need for passes to be available to some vulnerable pupils that have particular needs; the actions of a minority of parents that continue to be unacceptable; the risk to a child being hit/knocked over by a car coming out/exiting the School site at speed and, finally, the reaction of parents to various initiatives that have already been introduced to bring some sort of resolution to the ongoing issues.

**Governor Challenge:** Before getting too quickly into solution mode, Governors felt that a number of key questions needed to be answered.

Firstly, should passes be issues in the first place. Governors felt that a blanket ban on the issuing of all passes was perhaps a step too far and that they should continue to be handed out.

Secondly, if Governors are of the opinion that passes should continue to be issued then some form of criteria needs to be established to ensure that when they are distributed they are meeting the most urgent pupil needs. With so few spaces available, a set of criteria is going to be needed to be able to differentiate between different requests in a fair and equitable manner.

Thirdly, due consideration is going to need to be given to the control measures that will need to be put in place around the passes (i.e. expiry date) as well as broader considerations around how/when the message is going to be released to parents; how any policy-based documentation will be amended to reflect the toughening stance; whether any site improvements can be made to support the new stance that will be taken (i.e. second barrier) and, finally, how the implementation of the new set of rules and procedures will be monitored on a daily basis (including any sanctions to be applied when circumstances dictate it).

Governors made it clear that whatever is agreed as a way forward will have pupil wellbeing and safety at the heart of any decisions that are taken.

The Chair confirmed he would take the feedback away from tonight's meeting and work with the Headteacher on drafting a set of revised criteria that builds on any existing guidance. This criteria will be shared before the next Board meeting to ensure it can be ratified at the next governance forum.

**Resolved:** That the Chair take account of this action.

## **12 Safeguarding Audits:**

Governors were informed that two Safeguarding-related audits have been completed since the last meeting – an audit of the electronic Single Central Record (SCR) on 31.01.23 and an audit on site of physical files on 07.03.23. Recommendations have come out of both audits which are being addressed by senior leaders to secure ongoing compliance in this area. There were no specific concerns to raise with Governors at tonight's meeting.

As an aside, it was agreed Mrs. Copper would carry out a termly check of the SCR from this point forward. This will provide an extra check and balance in the system along with further evidence of focused Governor engagement.

## **13 Children's Books:**

A selection of children's books was shared with Governors in the meeting. Governors provided some really positive feedback on the pupil evidence in terms of presentation, vocabulary, variety of approach, application of particular skills and spelling, punctuation and grammar which were clearly differentiated across the different year groups. In fact, at times it was almost impossible to tell which books had been produced by the vulnerable cohort compared to its peers.

Governors congratulated staff on what they were seeing in front of them at tonight's meeting and felt looking at the books that pupils must be thoroughly motivated and engaged in their teaching and learning environment – long may this continue.

## **14 Policies:**

There was one policy that required ratification at tonight's meeting – the Disciplinary Policy.

**Resolved:** That this policy be ratified with immediate effect.

## **15 SFVS and Scheme of Delegation:**

The SFVS and accompanying Scheme of Delegation had been shared with Governors in advance of tonight's meeting.

Mrs. Hawkins confirmed that both documents had been tweaked to reflect changes in financial practice. Governors were asked to formally ratify both of these documents.

**Resolved:** That the Scheme of Delegation be ratified with immediate effect.

**Resolved:** That the SFVS be ratified with immediate effect.

Mrs. Hawkins will ensure the SFVS is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) by the end of March deadline.

## **16 Any Other Business:**

There was no additional business on this occasion.

## **17 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 items be included as a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minute 7 and Minute 8.

There were no further items/materials identified for exclusion.

**18 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

The meeting schedule for 2022-23 has been finalised and can be confirmed as follows:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
Summer 1	09.05.23 (5.30 p.m. start)
Summer 2	11.07.23 (5.30 p.m. start)

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.

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Fulfen Primary School

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in the School on Tuesday 28 March, 2023 at 6.15 p.m.

#### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
4	HT	Make January minutes available as a public record.	
4	Chair	Sign ratified minutes.	
6	HT	Arrange for communication around revised attendance threshold to go out to parents.	
6	Governors	Approach Mrs. Tranter direct if they have any further questions in relation to support given to vulnerable cohort at Fulfen.	
11	Chair	Draft revised parking criteria with support of Headteacher and share with Governors.	
15	Mrs. Hawkins	Submit SFVS to LA.	

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9 May, 2023 at 5.30 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.