**Fulfen Primary School**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in the School**

**on Tuesday 12 March, 2024 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Mrs. Ballett (Vice-Chair), Mrs. Davies (Headteacher), Mr. Field,

Mrs. Copper, Mrs. Dingle, Mr. Ritchie, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Kilgallen,

Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Tranter, Mrs. Witcomb

Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)

Mrs. Hawkins (School Business Manager)

Mrs. Malcom (Staff)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Governor** | **Role** | **Term Starts** | **Term Ends** |
| Mrs. Ballett | Co-opted | 05.07.21 | 04.07.25 |
| Mr. Field | Co-opted | 24.05.22 | 23.05.26 |
| Mrs. Poxon | Co-opted | 07.10.22 | 06.10.26 |
| Mrs. Smith | Co-opted | 12.03.24 | 11.03.28 |
| Mrs. Witcomb | Co-opted | 24.11.22 | 23.11.26 |
| GAP |  |  |  |
| Mrs. Davies | HT | NA | NA |
| Mr. Boardman | LA | 05.04.22 | 04.04.26 |
| Mrs. Copper | Parent | 29.11.22 | 28.11.26 |
| Mrs. Dingle | Parent | 25.01.22 | 24.01.26 |
| Mr. Ritchie | Parent | 25.01.22 | 24.01.26 |
| Mrs. Wright | Parent | 29.11.22 | 28.11.26 |
| Mrs. Kilgallen | Staff | 23.07.22 | 22.07.26 |

**1 Welcome and Introductions:**

Governors were welcomed to today’s meeting by the Vice-Chair who was deputising for Mr. Boardman. Governors were thanked for everything they continue to do to support the life and work of the School which has recently culminated in an Outstanding judgement having been received from Ofsted. Usual meeting protocols were in evidence with documentation made available on GovernorHub in advance of the meeting and the usual opportunities made available for Governors to ask questions in relation to the circulated material. There was a high level of engagement through the meeting.

The meeting was quorate.

**2 Apologies:**

**Resolved:** That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mr. Boardman and Mrs. Poxon.

**3 Governing Board Matters:**

**Membership**

A number of membership issues were discussed at this point in the meeting.

It was confirmed that this will be the last meeting Mrs. Tranter will be attending in her Co-opted Governor role. Mrs. Tranter was thanked for her long service as Governor at Fulfen Primary and she was wished every success for the future. Governors will now need to appoint another Co-opted based Governor and will need to take account of skill sets when making this future appointment.

**Resolved:** That the Chair/Vice-Chair progress this action.

A nomination was put to the LGB to co-opt Mrs. Smith onto the Board membership. Before a decision was made, Mrs. Smith outlined the skills and competencies that she could bring to the Governor role and was generally enthusiastic about the opportunity that could be made available to her.

**Resolved:** That Governors unanimously ratified this nomination. Mrs. Smith will now be added to the membership information on the School website and GIAS with the Vice-Chair arranging for her induction. Mrs. Smith was formally welcomed onto the LGB by the Vice-Chair and she was wished every success over her four-year term of office.

There are no other vacancies that need to be addressed at the present time.

**Confidentiality**

Governors were reminded that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting. The usual reminders around social media activity were made.

**Register of Interests**

Governors are reminded that they should be going onto GovernorHub in advance of each LGB meeting to check any submitted declarations (business/pecuniary) are up to date. The Vice-Chair will ensure Mrs. Smith completes this task in advance of the Summer 1 LGB meeting.

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

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 is available on GovernorHub for Governors to refer to at their leisure. An audit of signatures has also been captured with the Vice-Chair to ensure Mrs. Smith both logs a declaration on GovernorHub and adds her signature to this hard copy document.

**Instrument of Government (IoG)**

The latest IoG is available on the Hub for reference purposes.

**4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on Tuesday 23 January, 2024 (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 Mrs. Ballett via electronic or hard copy signature.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Ballett add her signature to the ratified minutes.

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

The action matrix from the January minutes was reviewed. The following progress update can be reported:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minute** | **Action** |
| 3 | The action taken to address the recent Co-opted Governor vacancy is referenced in these minutes. |
| 3 | The Chair/Vice-Chair will address the new Co-opted Governor vacancy with Mrs. Tranter leaving her post. |
| 3 | An update on declarations has already been provided. |
| 3 | The action in relation to the Code of Conduct has already been minuted. |
| 4 | The December minutes have been made available as a public record. |
| 4 | The ratified December minutes have been signed. |
| 8 | Mrs. Hawkins confirmed she has not yet given feedback to Staffordshire County Council (SCC) on her recent audit experience. This action will follow. |

**6 Reports:**

**Chair and Vice-Chair’s Actions**

The Vice-Chair confirmed she had taken no action on behalf of the LGB since the last meeting.

It was reported that the Chair had supported the SLT with interviews for the new Deputy Headteacher. The Headteacher confirmed an appointment has been made with a start date for the new member of staff to be after Easter. Governors were reassured that the new postholder brings a wealth of knowledge and practical experience with her when it comes to Safeguarding/SEND and will add real value to the existing workforce. Fulfen pupils were praised at this point for the role they have played in the recruitment process with Governors feeling their input should be celebrated in a future newsletter. This example of pupil inclusion is just one of the many examples that is championed by school leaders with the importance of stakeholder voice very much a key component of success at Fulfen Primary School.

**Link Governor Reports**

It was confirmed that whilst there were no formal Link Governor reports that needed discussing at tonight’s meeting, a number of Governors do intend to visit the School in the coming weeks to meet with staff representatives. These activities are crucial to hold school leaders to account in key areas and to ensure Governors are fulfilling the core competencies associated with the Governor role.

**Headteacher’s Report**

The Headteacher’s Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Report is presented in a format that Governors are happy with and which facilitates an effective level of challenge. The following key points were noted:

**6.1**

The first part of the Report focused on the SLT’s key priorities when it comes to school improvement. Governors noted the referenced priority areas and asked for more information on the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, particularly in terms of how this third party is supporting schools with ready to use training materials and materials to support long-term planning, for example.

Governors were also pleased to note that there is a key priority linked to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils. Not only does this focus reflect a national trend but there are also benefits of supporting pupils pastorally which will have a marked impact on behaviour for learning and academic aspirations.

It is important Governors use this strategic information when carrying out visits in schools. Governors must triangulate what they read, what they hear and what they see with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) providing a rich source of reference material in support of this triangulation process.

**6.2**

The number on roll were noted. Whilst it was pleasing to hear that the School is set to meet its PAN this September, there is still one year group (Year 4 - 48 pupils) that is causing an issue from a funding perspective. Whilst there are reasons to account for this low number, the reality is that this cohort is going through the School with the financial implications being experienced for several years.

**Governor Challenge:** Not surprisingly, Governors asked what strategies are available to the SLT to ‘change the dial’ in this particular area. Governors queried whether direct marketing could be used to target admissions into this year group and also whether initiatives such as HAF could be used to drum up interest and raise the profile of this strategic issue. Governors asked about how long the School finances will be impacted by this scenario and whether at Key Stage 2 (where the restrictions on numbers do not exist) there is the opportunity to take more pupils into Years 3, 5 and 6.

The Headteacher gave her perspective on the situation, acknowledging that going above PAN in Key Stage 2 may be on the one hand be lucrative from a financial perspective but this has to be weighed up against the potential adverse impact on the teaching and learning environment and the quality of education being received by current pupils. Governors acknowledged the current situation is a challenge which in itself provided a contextual reference point for the budgetary discussions which occurred later in the meeting.

**6.3**

The latest attendance metrics were shared. The statistics on the whole represent a healthy picture when compared with national benchmarks although there are significant challenges that need to be overcome, almost on a daily basis. The staff with accountabilities in this area do look to work with families who have particular barriers to overcome and there is a policy that is implemented around this Key Performance Indicator (KPI) with statutory action taken if particular thresholds are reached. Governors acknowledged that the SLT is doing all it can in this area with all Governors hoping that the Government’s national communications strategy will add additional gravitas in this area.

As an aside, the current pupil mobility of the School was shared. The Headteacher reported that the three children leaving the School mid-year were for genuine reasons with no overarching trend/pattern in this metric to address.

**6.4**

The latest SEND profile of the School was shared with Governors including how the vulnerable groups align with national benchmarks. Other than asking how the children with EAL needs are managing to access the curriculum on a daily basis. Governors noted the supplied information.

**6.5**

The deployment of staff at Fulfen is very much the operational remit of the SLT to determine. That said, Governors welcomed the latest update around staff mobility and what actions the SLT is taking to mitigate any areas of risk such as maternity leave, long term absence, staff moving on, etc. There was a discussion around the three ECTs and how they are settling into life at Fulfen with Governors interested in what ongoing support and guidance these staff receive to ensure they have every opportunity to fulfil their potential so early on in their teaching journey. The Headteacher provided her perspective on this matter. As a final point, the Headteacher confirmed the staffing structure for September has yet to be finalised It is likely there will be some movement of roles and responsibilities to ensure the School is in the best position to deliver its school improvement priorities and academic success in 2024-25.

**6.6**

The main health and safety update was provided at the last LGB meeting with the outcome of the Audit. There were no additional matters to raise at tonight’s meeting.

**6.7**

The key site and premises upgrades were listed in the Report. Governors were pleased to hear that the roofing work was coming to an end and that the hall flooring will be replaced over the Easter holidays – two important projects that the School needed to keep on top of. There was also some discussion around the work of the tree surgeon and how frequently a check of this nature should be carried out across the School site. The Headteacher provided the necessary clarification on this matter. Finally, there were some positive soundings around the coach company and how their parking behaviour has improved in recent times – very much a welcome development by Governors.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher be thanked for her informative report.

**7 Filtering and Monitoring:**

Mrs. Malcolm joined the meeting at this point.

Mrs. Malcom had been invited to tonight’s meeting to talk about one of the latest key changes to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – filtering and monitoring.

Quoting directly from the Governor Information Pack (GIP):

Filtering is a system that blocks access to harmful sites and inappropriate content such as when pupils enter certain search items into a search engine. This helps prevent pupils from accessing unsafe content such as pornography, racism, extremist viewpoints, misogyny and the promotion of self-harm and suicide.

Monitoring involves reviewing user activity on the School’s devices so swift action can be taken if pupils are exposed to harmful content. This could include physically monitoring screens, using a supervision console, reviewing network and internet traffic logs and using device monitoring software.

Mrs. Malcolm shared in detail how Fulfen is currently meeting its statutory responsibilities in these two areas. Governors were given lots of examples of how the necessary filtering of content and monitoring of devices plays out through a typical school day with all staff clear as to the key accountabilities they have in these two areas. Governors were also given the opportunity to experience the filtering/monitoring procedures for themselves by using Ipads within the meeting itself – an exercise that provoked some interesting discussion points.

Governors followed up on a number of key lines of enquiry in this area including:

* How ‘blocking’ of internet content is appropriately balanced to ensure there is no adverse impact on teaching and learning.
* Whether the filtering system used in school could be transferred to the home environment.
* What support and guidance is available to parents to help them understand and implement filtering and monitoring protocols outside of school.
* How the staff would tackle an issue with online safety if it started in the home environment and then becomes known in school.
* The role the PSHE curriculum plays in raising the importance of staying safe online.
* The escalation protocols for any matters of concern and how particular issues are logged and captured on the School’s online Safeguarding monitoring tool.
* The need to educate parents on these issues so they are operating from a position of strength when it comes to discussing their child’s digital footprint and online use.
* What else Governors and the SLT can do to promote a healthy relationship with technology.
* What action is taken with mobile phones in school, particularly as mobile phones are another digital device from which unsafe online content can be accessed.
* Where does the responsibility of the School/parent/carer start and stop when it comes to filtering a child’s access to online content and monitoring the use of a digital device.

These were all excellent lines of enquiry which were discussed in detail at the meeting. Governors were reminded that there is information on the School website around online safety with Mrs. Malcolm also looking to provide regular updates in each school newsletter as to practical/pragmatic actions parents/carers can take to safeguard their children when using digital devices. This work will continue into the future as the School cannot afford to get complacent in this area.

Mrs. Malcolm was thanked for her information update. She confirmed she was more than happy to take further questions from Governors around this aspect of KCSIE outside of this meeting.

Mrs. Malcom gave her leave of absence at this point from the meeting.

**8 Safeguarding Report:**

Governors received a Safeguarding Report which covered the due diligence that is exercised around this critical area of school life, the latest referral patterns for 2023-24; any incidents of bullying and what actions were taken to support pupils in their designated areas and, finally, any actions that are in place to address any issues around attendance and punctuality.

Governors picked up a number of themes for further discussion which included the fact the staff at school go above and beyond to keep pupils safe and secure; the way CPOMS can be used to build up a chronology of events if there are any Safeguarding concerns; the use of lanyards across school to distinguish particular groups of adults; the benefits of having worry boxes and safe areas within the classrooms so pupils have the opportunity to self-regulate and, finally, the nature of the relationship between trusted adults and the pupils (witnessed by a Governor) who know they can approach any staff member, regardless of post and seniority, for help and ongoing support. Governors commended the work of Mrs. Tranter and her team for the dedication and tireless efforts that go into this area of school life.

**9 Policy Ratification:**

There were a series of policies that needed to be ratified at this point in the meeting. They included:

* Disciplinary
* Educational Visits
* EYFS
* Recruitment and Selection
* Whistleblowing and associated form to raise concerns.

Other than highlighting a couple of amendments, Governors were happy with the content of this policy documentation.

**Resolved:** That all policies be ratified with immediate effect.

There was a discussion around the need for the School to have a Parent Code of Conduct Policy and a Vexatious Complaints Policy, borne out by the abuse and threatening behaviour that has been seen in some interactions with the parents and wider community in recent weeks/months. This situation is simply unacceptable with nobody needing to go their place of work where they experience such unacceptable behaviour from this stakeholder group (albeit the main protagonists are very much in the minority).

**Resolved:** That Governors endorse the spirit and intention of both policies. The SLT will now work with interested parties (i.e. Chair/HR) to finalise the wording of both documents before publishing them both online. A communications plan may also be needed around the Parent Code of Conduct to ensure everybody is clear as to the expectations around future engagement with staff/school leaders.

**Resolved:** That the Headteacher/Chair progress this action.

**10 SFVS:**

There is a requirement for all schools to complete the SFVS and submit it to the Local Authority (LA) by the required deadline. The SFVS helps provide schools with the assurance they need that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial and resource management. Governors were happy with the contents of this document.

**Resolved:** That Governors ratify the completed SFVS. This document will now be submitted to the LA.

**11 Budget Update**:

There was a budgetary update at this point in the meeting – ***see Confidential Appendix.***

**12 Reflection:**

Governors were asked to reflect on what has been achieved in tonight’s meeting that will improve outcomes for pupils.

Reflections included the work that is taking place around filtering and monitoring to keep Fulfen pupils safe; the work on policy ratification to ensure staff are being protected from abusive/inappropriate behaviour; the focus on school improvement priorities which will have a positive knock on impact for pupils; the difficult decisions that may need to be taken around the Budget to secure a sustainable future for the School; the appointment of a new Governor to the Board with particular skills sets, the upgrades to the School site and, finally, the fact pupils are always at the heart of the decision making process.

Governors were thanked for these reflections.

**13 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 11.

There were no further items/materials identified for exclusion.

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

The schedule for 2023-24 has also been finalised and can be confirmed as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Date and Time** |
| Summer 1 | 21.05.24 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Summer 2 | 02.07.24 (5.30 p.m. start) |

The meeting schedule for 2024-25 was also finalised after the meeting and can be confirmed as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Date and Time** |
| Autumn 1 | 01.10.24 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Autumn 2 | 03.12.24 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Spring 1 | 28.01.25 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Spring 2 | 25.03.25 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Summer 1 | 20.05.25 (5.30 p.m. start) |
| Summer 2 | 08.07.25 (5.30 p.m. start) |

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

The meeting was brought to a close by the Vice-Chair.

CBallett 20.3.24

(Vice) **Chair Date**

**Fulfen Primary School**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in the School**

**on Tuesday 12 March, 2024 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Action Matrix**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Minute | Owner | Action Required | Action Update |
| 3 | Chair/Vice-Chair | Take Co-opted Governor vacancy forward. |  |
| 3 | Vice-Chair | Ensure Mrs. Smith completes all induction related tasks. |  |
| 4 | HT | Make January minutes available as a public record. |  |
| 4 | Vice-Chair | Sign ratified January minutes. |  |
| 9 | HT/Chair | Take forward Parent Code of Conduct and Vexatious Complaints Policy. |  |
| 10 | Mrs. Hawkins | Submit completed SFVS to LA. |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 21 May, 2024 at 5.30 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.