

# Fulfen Primary School

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in a virtual setting on Tuesday 7 December, 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

**Present:** Mrs. Ballett (Vice-Chair), Mrs. Davies (Headteacher), Mrs. Connock,  
Mrs. Poxon, Mrs. Tranter, Mrs. Larner, Mrs. Lightfoot, Mrs. Witcomb,  
Miss. Green

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

### 1 Welcome and Introductions:

Governors were welcomed to the second meeting of the Autumn Term by the Vice-Chair. The meeting started a little later than normal to accommodate the availability of the Clerk and the Vice-Chair deputised for the Chair who unfortunately could not be in attendance.

Preparation for the meeting was as effective as normal with documentation, including a purposeful agenda, uploaded to Governor Hub in advance of the meeting. There were a number of governance issues and sensitive school-based matters that needed to be addressed during tonight's meeting forum. As always, Governors asked lots of pertinent questions and a healthy level of engagement took place.

The meeting was quorate.

### 2 Apologies:

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

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

### 3 Declarations:

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

### 4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on Tuesday 5 October, 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 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 Clerk had generated an action matrix to the October minutes. The following progress update was reported:

Minute	Update
5	<p>Governors by now should have submitted all relevant declarations on Governor Hub. The Vice-Chair will chase up any outstanding returns in this area with a full audit to be in place by the end of the Autumn Term.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the Vice-Chair progress this action.</p>
5	<p>A number of membership updates were shared at this point in the meeting:</p> <p><b>1.1</b> The term of office for Ms. Burley expired on 08.11.21. Governors wanted to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Burley for her contribution as Governor to the life and work of the School.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> The School has two prospective Parent Governor vacancies to fill. After going out to request nominations from the parent community, two candidates have stepped forward – Mrs. Dingle and Mr. Ritchie. As there are two posts and two interested parties, a formal election process is not required. The two individuals can now be formally invited to the Spring Term 1 meeting where they will take up their posts as Parent Governors.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> The Local Authority (LA) is still to confirm the end date for Mrs. Larner. The Clerk will chase up this issue as a matter of urgency.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> There was a discussion around how the one remaining Co-opted Governor vacancy might be filled. This matter will be discussed with the Chair outside of tonight's meeting to confirm next steps.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That these membership issues be picked up in advance of the Spring Term 1 meeting. By taking these actions, the Board should be a lot closer to having a full complement of Governors in place.</p>
6	<p>It was confirmed a public copy of the June minutes is available and has been signed by the Chair.</p>
7	<p>Link Governor engagement has been a challenge with the ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic and the fact there now appears to be a new variant of concern in general circulation. This matter will be revisited in the New Year to determine next steps.</p>
9	<p>The Executive Summary linked to the School Evaluation Form (SEF) is still being drafted and will be shared with Governors at an appropriate point in the Spring Term.</p>
11	<p>Reference has already been made to Link Governor engagement in the course of these minutes.</p>
15	<p>The performance management of staff was covered off as an agenda item at tonight's meeting.</p>
16	<p>The listed policies that were shared at the last meeting have now all been published online.</p>

## 6 Chair/Vice-Chair's Actions:

The Chair was not in attendance to comment on this agenda item. Although not specifically linked to the governance function 'Power to Act', the Vice-Chair confirmed that she had uploaded the latest governance-based information to the Hub and was looking into a variety of training options for Board members with more information in this area to be shared in the Spring Term.

## 7 Headteacher's Report:

The Headteacher was asked at this point to share a brief verbal overview of school life covering the period up to October half-term. This fits in with the two meeting cycle each term where at one of the meetings, the formal Headteacher Report is issued to Governors. The following headlines from the verbal update can be noted:

### 1.1

The focus for the leadership team when it comes to Ofsted Readiness is continuing to drive through school improvement and to use new and known network contacts to validate the approach that is being taken. Governors were informed that one of these contacts who is an Ofsted Inspector will be coming into school in the New Year to engage with the leadership team in a variety of strategic-based areas. This activity will no doubt include a review of documentation such as the SEF and School Development Plan (SDP) which is the roadmap staff are using to ensure the key priorities as agreed at the start of the year are being realised. Governors were pleased to see that the leadership team is open to this external engagement which can only benefit the School on its journey of continuous improvement.

### 1.2

Governors were informed that the latest cycle of pupil progress meetings has taken place.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors queried the strategic purpose of these meetings.

The Headteacher confirmed there is a particular focus on pupils who are reading below age-related expectations with a real focus on the teaching of phonics and what else can be done to support all children to become confident, fluid readers. A variety of evidence is used in these meetings to build up a holistic picture of each child (i.e. books, internal data drops, pupil voice) with the support package then tailored to meet the needs of each individual pupil. No stone is left unturned in these engagement sessions with staff held accountable for the progress of their class.

### 1.3

The Headteacher confirmed that extra capacity has been added to the Safeguarding team with Mrs. Crittenden being added to the staffing structure.

**Governor Challenge:** Governors enquired as to what the new staff member will bring to this critical area of school life.

It was confirmed Mrs. Crittenden is already having a positive impact in this critical area of school life, both in terms of her visibility around school but also the experience she is bringing to the role as a retired Chief Inspector. The leadership team feels that Mrs. Crittenden will be a real asset to the School when it comes to Safeguarding practice and compliance going forward with a real opportunity to secure an Outstanding judgement for Safeguarding whenever the next external inspection comes. Governors were really pleased to hear not only of the calibre of this appointment but also that Mrs. Tranter will no doubt benefit from the extra support that is now available.

#### 1.4

The Headteacher confirmed that she now attends regular Staffordshire Heads meetings to network with professional colleagues and to share best practice. Already, the value of this engagement has become clear with Heads agreeing to a peer-on-peer assessment model that will see a group of Heads visiting a school to review a particular issue before hosting a similar engagement session themselves. The Headteacher is excited about this development, particularly as it will allow the Headteacher to observe practice in other schools and take away any best practice that could enhance the Fulfen offer even more.

#### 1.5

The performance management of staff was referenced but was revisited again later in the meeting.

#### 1.6

It was confirmed the ongoing management of the pandemic continues to be a challenge with staff continuing to be resilient in this extended period of uncertainty. It was reported that the School continues to have a robust Risk Assessment in place with additional escalation protocols available if they are needed.

#### 1.7

Governors were reassured that the new statutory requirements around the new EYFS curriculum continue to be monitored closely with a variety of quality assurance layers put in place. A special mention was also made of the work that has gone into the School's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy including its rollout and associated monitoring checks.

#### 1.8

The Headteacher was pleased to announce that the intention is for Xmas festivities to take place as close to a normal state as possible. Only time will tell whether any further tweaks to the intended programme need to be made.

#### 1.9

Governors were given a sense of the kinds of discussions that take place during staff meetings which both inform staff of any new initiatives and provide them with opportunities to develop their own professional practice.

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

### **8 Pupil Premium Update:**

Mrs. Tranter took the opportunity to share with Governors the work she has been doing around the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement. She explained that the Report was in a new DfE template, that it was research based in terms of identifying how different barriers should be reduced/removed and that it included the recovery premium funding which has been added this year in lieu of the on-going challenges of the pandemic and the disruption to learning.

The overall purpose of the Statement is to show any external stakeholder how the School intends to spend the funding that is available this year and the effect that last year's spending of Pupil Premium had within Fulfen. The primary target of this ringfenced funding stream is essentially disadvantaged pupils but it is important to note that some of the initiatives deployed will generate a whole school impact.

Mrs. Tranter outlined the amount of funding that is available to the School this year – around £65K. She confirmed that whilst the strategy does afford those opportunities for regular personalised interventions, the primary focus in the first instance is on high quality teaching through a rich and varied curriculum that enables every child to thrive both academically and

socially. It is when pupils fall behind their peers that the intervention-based programme kicks in with each personalised offer being reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The Statement outlines the barriers that need to be mitigated, the outcomes that need to be secured and how the funding has been broken down into teaching initiatives, targeted academic support and wider initiatives linked to areas such as attendance, behaviour and wellbeing. Governors noted all of this information.

Mrs. Tranter then spent some time outlining those areas of the curriculum where an additional focus is really starting to deliver some positive responses. Some case studies of individual pupils were shared where the funding is having a real impact and there was also some discussion around how staff are prepared to step out of their comfort zones and to try different things to bring about a positive change in an individual. Governors welcomed the fact that staff are supported in this way to be creative and innovative in their approach.

Mrs. Tranter concluded this section of the meeting by confirming that the Statement will be published online before the end of the year. This item will no doubt be revisited in future meetings and the information is particularly useful for the Link Governor who will carry out further engagement in this area.

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

At this point, Mrs. Tranter gave her leave of absence from the meeting.

## **9 Reception Baseline Assessment:**

Governors received an update on the Reception baseline assessment which is a statutory requirement from September 2021. The data was uploaded to Governor Hub and the Headteacher explained how the staff use this diagnostic alongside their own internal assessments to determine the starting point for pupils from which any progress can be tracked. The data that was shared indicates that pupils are entering school at a lower base than would previously have been the case – not that surprising given the pandemic impact and how it has affected younger children with many aspects of their early development.

Governors found the circulated information useful and will explore it in more detail following tonight's meeting.

## **10 Health and Safety Update:**

Governors received a Health and Safety Audit Report from an external audit that had been carried out in school on 04.11.21. The purpose of the Audit was to determine whether the School's health and safety management systems conformed to planned arrangements; have been properly implemented and maintained and are effective in meeting health and safety policies and legal responsibilities.

The School scored '2' out of a possible '5' despite there being areas of exemplary practice. The narrative in the Report is telling – i.e. 'the school is currently operating at Level 2 – Managing/Moving/Developing Health and Safety Management Arrangements. This is due to a weakness in the weighted area of the audit, which is easily rectified.'

Mrs. Hawkins reassured Governors that the leadership team has already taken steps to rectify some of the reported issues and this work will continue.

Slightly frustrating was the fact the School went into this audit with no provision for a pre-audit engagement activity. This is not the way all external providers operate and Mrs. Poxon

confirmed she may have a possible contact in this area – potentially to review practice once all of the points in the current action plan have been addressed.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Poxon share these details.

There was also some discussion around the School's Business Continuity Plan and how the leadership team can ensure the level of detail in this plan would meet the requirements of any external audit. Ideally, a template can be taken off the shelf in this area with local contextualisation then applied to the contents.

Again, Mrs. Poxon confirmed she had a professional contact who could support the leadership team with this activity and agreed to make some representation on behalf of the School to the individual concerned. Mrs. Poxon was thanked for this kind gesture.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Poxon progress this matter.

Governors were satisfied that the audit outcome was very much based on a weighted criteria which can be easily rectified. Updates can be provided at future meetings but for now Governors were comfortable that the necessary level of due diligence is being applied in this area.

#### **11 Premises Update:**

Mrs. Hawkins confirmed that the funding for an internal project in school which would remove the risk of any direct access to Early Years by external visitors has now been granted by the LA. The schedule of works must be completed within a relatively short timeframe and the Headteacher confirmed how the small financial contribution that is required from the School will be found. Governors were pleased to hear of this development which can only be a positive benefit to the School from a Safeguarding perspective. All attendees look forward to seeing the outcome of this work and how the internal environment in school will be enhanced as a result.

#### **12 Financials:**

A series of financial related matters were discussed at this point in the meeting. Some of these matters were of a confidential nature and both Mrs. Connock and Miss. Green gave their leave of absence from the meeting - **see Confidential Appendix.**

#### **13 Any Other Business:**

The only items of any other business were a reminder that the two new Parent Governors need to be formally invited to the next meeting and that the Vice-Chair will also look to share training opportunities with the Board as they become available.

#### **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 meeting schedule has already been confirmed for 2021-22 with the following dates agreed:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
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.

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.

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Fulfen Primary School

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Board held in a virtual setting on  
Tuesday 7 December, 2021 at 6.30 p.m.**

### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
4	HT	Make October minutes available as a public record.	
4	Vice-Chair	Sign ratified minutes.	
5	Chair	Ensure all declarations (business/pecuniary) have been submitted on Governor Hub.	
5	Various	Progress membership related actions as stated.	
9	Mrs. Poxon	Share details of health and safety contact.	
9	Mrs. Poxon	Make representation on behalf of school with network contact in relation to Business Continuity Plan.	
CA	Various	Progress actions as listed.	

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25 January, 2022 at 6.15 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.