

## **Minutes of a meeting of the governors of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School held at the School on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 4pm.**

### **Present**

Lee Jowett – Co-opted Governor (Chair)  
Rob John – Co-opted Governor  
Jo Webb – Parent Governor  
Neil Thorpe – Staff Governor  
Sharmen Rahman – Parent Governor  
Rhian Jones – Headteacher

### **In Attendance**

Jenny Bosworth – Associate Member  
Robyn Cooper – Clerk to Governors

### **1) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Penny Cooper, Dan Cheetham, Nazma Hamid and Susan Hind.

### **2) Declaration of Governors' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest declared in the business to be transacted.

### **3) Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018 had been previously circulated to all governors and were taken as read, confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **4) Matters Arising**

#### Item 4 Matters Arising:

- The link governor information had been forwarded to Ms Jones for the website and to all governors for information.
- The health and safety walkthrough had been completed by Ms Webb and Mr Thorpe. Ms Webb explained that they had fed back to Ms Jones and would write a report for the next FGB meeting. She explained that the only issues were slight untidiness, staff carrying hot drinks and some items in medical kits were just out of date. Ms Webb highlighted that they also observed a playtime.
- The list of visits had been completed and forwarded to Ms Jones for the website and to all governors for information.

#### Item 6 Governor Visits

- Mr Jowett had forwarded the pro-forma to all governors.

### **5) Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher's Report had been previously circulated to the governing body. Ms Jones had invited questions by email prior to the meeting:

***Q (JW): Attendance I note 46 children have less than 90% attendance. This seems quite a high proportion to me in the school. Is this the usual level for Sparkenhoe? Could we hear some further explanation about how attendance is managed with these***

***children? I also note that unauthorised absence is higher this year. Could we understand why please?***

Ms Jones informed the governing body that the percentage of pupils with attendance below 90% was higher than the previous year (31). She explained that Mrs Cooper had undertaken additional analysis and circulated this to the governing body.

***Sharmen Rahman joined the meeting***

Ms Jones explained that there was more illness in school (e.g. flu, asthma, operations and chicken pox), which was the main reason for attendance below 90% for some children. She highlighted that when the analysis was reviewed there was genuine illness with medical evidence. Ms Jones informed the governing body that a year 3 child and year 5 child had not been in school since December but they as the school did not have details of their new school they could not be taken off roll. She highlighted that the percentage of PA pupils without a reason was small and those between 85-90% should get over 90% by the end of the year.

Ms Webb queried whether there were pupils in school with long term medical conditions. Ms Jones stated that there were a few (she explained that there were a fair proportion of children with chronic asthma).

Ms Jones stated that the unauthorised absences were mainly due to holidays and the length of time they were not in school was longer compared to the previous year. She highlighted that one family were 4 weeks late following the Christmas holidays and another family was away for 23 days. Ms Jones explained that the school could not take the child off roll as they had evidence they were coming back (e.g. flight times). The governing body discussed the potential impact of Ramadan on absence.

Ms Jones outlined the process for absence and informed the governing body that if the unauthorised absence was for over 20 days they could warn the family that the child could lose their place, however if the school had flight details they could not be taken off roll. She explained that parents were issued a fine and the absence was unauthorised unless there were exceptional circumstances and the school had received proof.

Mr Jowett asked whether the snow day would have an impact. Ms Jones stated that as the day the school closed due to snow before Christmas had fallen on a Monday so did not have a large impact. However, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March the snow had made a big impact on attendance with 129 children not attending school (95 not including F1). She highlighted other schools in the city were shut but all schools in the local area remained open. Ms Jones explained to the governing body that they would be sending a letter home to all those families highlighting the school's disappointment and state that if medical evidence could not be provided the absence would be unauthorised. She stated that this would impact the unauthorised absence percentage. Ms Jones highlighted that the absences were spread across the school.

***Q (JW): Absence management. I note the increase. I think we will need to review this in terms of any staff stress survey outcomes in due course, and see if there are any underlying causes.***

Ms Jones highlighted that staff absence was lower than the same period last academic year so they were on track to have lower staff absence overall this year. She explained that there had been a number of unavoidable long absences. Ms Jones explained the return to work process and no stress at work had been flagged during these meetings and the offer of support was always provided.

**Q (JW): Healthy eating. Just to note the research report (University of Birmingham) that concluded that school interventions in healthy eating/obesity reduction have limited impact.**

The governing body noted the research report. Ms Jones highlighted the importance of recognising that the initiatives suggested to school take time and capacity. She stated that they could educate the pupils about a healthy lifestyle however more time was spent at home. Ms Jones highlighted that it was a school improvement plan priority but there was the question about measuring impact. She explained that they would look at anecdotal impacts (e.g. have packed lunches improved), height and weight checks in years 2 and 6, participation in school in and outside of school. The governing body discussed the importance of recognising that schools were part of a solution but could not be seen as the solution.

**Q (JW): EYFS/Y1 Phonics target. It would be interested to hear thoughts about whether higher targets in F2 are having an impact on Y1.**

Ms Jones stated that higher targets in F2 do have an impact in year 1. She explained that there was a much higher proportion of children who achieved a GLD last year and consequently more would meet the phonics target. Ms Jones highlighted that this was cohort dependent. She highlighted that the high GLD for the cohort was the reason for the higher phonics target.

**Q (JW): In Y2 Writing greater depth is much lower than Reading and Maths. Why?**

Ms Jones highlighted that this was the same across the whole school and not just in year 2. She explained that the standards required to attain expected in writing included a number of technical skills, which took longer for the school's children and their lower starting points. Ms Jones highlighted that there was robust teaching of phonics and maths and the children's skills developed quickly, however the development of writing skills took longer, particularly independent writing. She explained that the vast majority of children did not write at home and parents found it easier to read or practice maths skills with their children. Ms Jones also highlighted that the impact of impoverished language impacted the children's ability to attain the Greater Depth requirements, particularly in terms of creativity and being able to use language to interest the reader.

The governing body queried whether the school had writing competitions. Ms Jones explained that there was a writing hall of fame for pupils who had demonstrated improved writing and made good progress. She highlighted that the writing coordinator had visited another school this week that had high writing greater depth results to look at their practice. Mr Jowett suggested a governor's writing competition. Mrs Bosworth also highlighted that she could come in for a visit focussed on writing.

**Q (JW): Interesting to note how targets vary by year - is this built up from the target tracker profile information?**

Ms Jones explained that the targets took into account prior attainment. She stated that they reviewed Foundation Stage for year 1 targets; however they had to take into account the difference in curriculum. Ms Jones stated that they also took into account staff perspectives on the children as well as evidence in books and interventions etc. She explained that children who achieved expected in year 2 were targeted to be expected in year 6. Ms Jones informed governors that the current year 6 results were still using old levels in year 2 so there was still

some disparity. She explained that they tried to close gaps as children moved through the school. Ms Jones explained that the turbulence had an impact.

**Q (JW): Any observations on how new permanent SLT is settling in?**

Ms Jones stated that the new permanent SLT was working well. She highlighted that the new Assistant Headteacher had taken on more initiatives and had led on the moderation process.

**Q (LJ): Could you clarify the number of LAC in school (Headteachers report states 2, but target tracker states 1)?**

Ms Jones stated that there were 2.

**Q (LJ): Who was the designated LAC designated teacher?**

Katherine Burns

**Q (JW): Does the school know which secondary schools the year 6 pupils were moving to?**

Ms Jones stated that it was a mixture - Moat, Judgemoor CC, Crown Hills CC, Madani Boys and Girls, Sir Jonathan North CC, Soar Valley College, City of Leicester and Babington. She stated that a couple of girls had been allocated Lancaster. The governing body discussed secondary schools and free schools.

## **6) Review of Policies, Procedures and Publications**

### **a) SEND Policy**

The SEND policy had been circulated to the governing body. Ms Jones highlighted that there were no changes. The governing body agreed the policy.

### **b) Behaviour Policy**

The behaviour policy would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

**ACTION: Agenda Item**

### **c) Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policy**

The safeguarding policy had been circulated to the governing body. Ms Jones highlighted that there had been no changes to the Whistleblowing policy. She explained that the Safeguarding policy was based on the model LA one. Ms Jones highlighted that on page 7 they had kept in a section which had been removed from the model policy. Mr Jowett queried whether they had to inform the authority of the change. Ms Jones stated that they did not have to as it was linked to school practice. The governing body agreed to adopt the policy.

## **7) Provisional Budget Approval**

Ms Jones stated that they received the budget from the LA on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February and circulated it to the governing body. She highlighted that the budget used the new national funding formula and took the governors through it. Ms Jones highlighted the changes linked to the new funding formula. She confirmed that the amount was based on the census data. Ms Jones explained the minimum funding guarantee.

**Q (Rob John): Was the overall budget more or less than the previous year?**

Ms Jones stated that it was approximately £80,000 more than the previous year.

**Q (JW): Did the budget include the bulge class?**

Ms Jones stated that this budget included the bulge class as it was based on the census data for October 2017. She stated that the budget for 2019/2020 would not include the bulge class

pupil numbers. Ms Webb stated that the governing body would need to be mindful of this going forward.

The governing body noted the budget for 2018/2019.

### **8) Schools Finance Value Statement (SFVS) (to follow)**

The SFVS had been circulated to the governing body including the changes agreed at the previous meeting. The governing body agreed the SFVS, which would be signed by the Chair and sent to the LA.

### **9) Review of Buyback**

#### **a) Review Clerking Arrangements**

The clerk left the room while the following item was discussed. The governing body agreed to continue to buy into the LA clerking service for the 2018/2019 financial year.

It was agreed to continue with the monthly FGB meetings going forward.

#### **b) Review HR Contract**

Ms Jones highlighted that at a previous meeting the governing body had agreed to review other HR providers. She took the governing body through 3 potential providers:

- Local Authority HR – Ms Jones stated that they currently paid approximately £6000 annually for up to 30 hours of advice and guidance, safer employment and SCR audit. It was highlighted that they paid extra for services like Headteacher's recruitment.
- Judicium – Ms Jones explained that Judicium was an all in package with potential add-ons that the school could buy into. She stated that it would be £5587 without the add-ons. Ms Jones highlighted to the governing body that she had spoken to other Headteachers and they had indicated that the advice was good but meetings were not often face to face.
- Flint Bishop – Ms Jones stated that this was a solicitor based in the East Midlands and the school would have a named contact in Leicester. She explained that the school would buy in blocks of time and 12 hours would be £1560, which would include phone calls, emails and face to face meetings. Ms Jones stated that the school would be able to buy additional blocks of time at £140 per hour.

#### **Q (Rob John): How many hours did Ms Jones use from the LA last year?**

Ms Jones stated that she had used about 3 hours of the 30.

Ms Jones confirmed that she had heard good things about both external providers from other Headteachers. She recommended to the governing body to buy into Flint Bishop.

The governing body agreed to buy into Flint Bishop for a year.

### **10) Governor Visits**

#### **o Pupil Premium**

The visit will be arranged for May 2018.

#### **o Health and Safety**

The visit had been done and discussed under Matters Arising.

#### **o Computing**

A computing visit would be arranged for this term.

- **Sports Premium**

Mrs Rahman would join Prof John for the sports premium visit on 16<sup>th</sup> March.

The governing body discussed the governor links with year groups and whether visits needed to be undertaken. It was suggested that this would be promoted within school and classes/year groups could invite their link governor in for something in school.

## **11)Governing Body Business**

### **a) Training and Development**

The following training was reported:

- Mrs Rahman - Governor Induction (21<sup>st</sup> February)
- Ms Webb – HR policies (19<sup>th</sup> February)
- Mr Jowett – Chairs and Vice Chairs Seminar (8<sup>th</sup> February)

The following upcoming training was reported:

- Mr Jowett - SEN training (8<sup>th</sup> March)

It was reported that the LA governor training was moving to a pay as you go system from the summer term.

## **12) School Improvement Plan Update**

The updated school improvement plan had been circulated to the governing body. Ms Jones stated that there was good progress and highlighted the actions for the summer term. The governing body noted the plan.

Mr Jowett asked about the governor’s role in the upcoming parents evening as this had been discussed at a previous meeting. Mrs Bosworth stated that a governor presence would be positive. Ms Jones highlighted that there was a healthy living day on the last Friday of term (23<sup>rd</sup> March) and suggested a governor presence. It was agreed that governors would attend the parents evening if possible (13<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March).

## **13)Safeguarding competencies framework**

The safeguarding competency questionnaire will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **15)Documents Received by the Chair of Governors**

- Letter from Nick Gibb MP congratulating the school on the results

## **16) Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

**17) Date of Next Meetings**

- Monday 9th April 2018 (first day back after Easter)
- Wednesday 9th May 2018
- Monday 4th June 2018 (first day back after half-term)
- Monday 2nd July 2018

**18) Staffing update**

*The following item is minuted as confidential and is not available for public inspection, in accordance with The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 Part 4 section 15 (3) (a)*

Signed .....9<sup>th</sup> April 2018