

Minutes of a meeting of the local governing body of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School held virtually via Microsoft Teams Monday 22nd March 2021 at 4pm

Present

Rhian Jones – Headteacher
Jo Webb – Local Governor (Chair)
Nick Allsopp – Local Governor
Michael Cooper – Local Staff Governor

In attendance

Tom Bott – School Business Manager
Dan Cheetham – Deputy Headteacher
Penny Cooper – Deputy Headteacher
Robyn Cooper – Clerk to the Local Governing Board

1. Presentation on the curriculum

Mr Cheetham provided the local governing board with an overview of the curriculum in school, sharing an example of a progression map, topic development, context statements, subject lead arrangements and the connections across units, other subjects and the wider world.

Q (NA): In relation to the context statements, when you talk about the relevance what was this referring to? Progression or the real world?

Mr Cheetham explained that prompting the older children to make the links will be easier with the younger year groups needing more prompting and guidance. He explained that the relevance would be skills and knowledge from other areas, some PSHE and wider world links. Mr Cheetham stated that they would put the lesson in context within a unit of work. He highlighted that not all lessons will have links. Dr Allsopp highlighted that it would rely on the teacher so the links could be different dependent on the teacher. Mr Cheetham highlighted that teachers planned the units together and this would be part of it. He explained that the links to previous units were already on the medium-term plans. Mr Cheetham stated that the different slant and personality brought to the topics was good for the children. He stated that they were also encouraging teachers to improve their general knowledge in relation to links to wider world.

Q (NA): Was there space in the curriculum to bring in things that are very relevant to the community? E.g. history topics.

Mr Cheetham provided an example from year 1 – my grandparents lives. He highlighted that there were also units of work tailored to where they lived – buildings, land use of Highfields compared to other areas of Leicester. Mr Cheetham stated that there was also city-wide topics, for example the King Richard III unit. He explained that teachers could also bring local context through the context page. Mr Cheetham stated that they were trying not to be too prescriptive.

Q (JW): Where teachers were moved around year groups, does this impact the approach to the curriculum?

Mr Cheetham stated that teachers had not been moved around this year but had done in the past. He stated that moving teachers around did work well as it allows them to look at the long- and medium-term plans with fresh eyes.

Q (JW): What were other schools doing in terms of curriculum?

Ms Jones explained that schools were doing different things. Mr Cheetham explained that the National curriculum was open to interpretation and some schools used bought in schemes of work. Mrs Bosworth stated that she saw a lot of different approaches in schools in her role and it was positive that the school had created a curriculum that was flexible and played to strengths. She highlighted that prescribed schemes could deskill student teachers and this approach allowed teachers to keep up their skills. Ms Webb highlighted that the school had high expectations for the teaching staff. Ms Jones stated that the high expectations did not mean high workload but rather ideas behind flow and sequencing. Mr Cheetham highlighted that they provided what they wanted the teachers to teach but not how to teach it.

Ms Jones highlighted that she had attended an Ofsted briefing with Mrs Cooper on arrangements in lockdown. She stated that it had been highlighted that governors would be asked how they knew that what they were told was happening in school. Ms Webb highlighted that governors could attend things virtually and parent governors could also provide input.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Emma Cull and Michael Cooper.

3. Declaration of Governors' Interests

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

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting – 25th January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25th January 2021 had been previously circulated to all governors and were taken as read, confirmed, and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item 5 Matters Arising

- Ms Webb would follow up with governors re skills audit.

ACTION: JW

- Ms Webb would circulate the final version of the 2020/2021 action plan.

ACTION: JW

6. Headteacher's Report

The headteacher's report had been circulated to the governing board. Ms Jones highlighted that she had also circulated the visit notes from Vincent Hampton (SIL) from the autumn and spring term and the remote learning review (SIL).

Q (JW): In terms of the triad report, did the process now have a more positive developmental purpose?

Ms Jones explained that it was an external person now and they were asking the right questions in terms of developing practice further.

Q (NA): In terms of safeguarding, how had the children settled in and had any issues emerged from that you were not previously aware of?

Mrs Cooper explained that the majority of children had settled in well. She stated that she had spoken with the children that they were aware of and there had been very few changes in home life or behaviours. Mrs Cooper stated that they had continued to receive Operational Encompass information and had followed these up and supported the parents. She stated that generally the children were pleased to be back in school with the security and routines.

Q (JW): Nursery numbers were still low?

Ms Jones stated that they had increased from 39 in the autumn to 48 (with 4 full time so 52 in total). **Ms Webb asked whether this had impacted on numbers or applications for F2.** Ms Jones stated that they did not have the information until April. She stated that there was a shortage of applications for F1 for September. She stated that there were currently 25. **Ms Webb asked whether this was an impact of Covid-19.** Ms Jones stated that it was partly down to local demographics which would impact Foundation Stage across the city. She stated that some other city schools were lowering their PANs. Ms Jones stated that they were thinking of ways forward. She stated that there was also some reluctance due to lockdown too. Mrs Cooper highlighted that the other year groups were full. **Ms Webb noted that there was still a lot of mobility.** Mrs Cooper stated that they thought this would always be the case due to the parents being at the university and this was the main reason for the mobility.

Q (JW): Could you summarise what you have found in terms of progress and pupil learning?

Ms Jones explained that in the autumn term they focused on where they wanted the pupils to be rather than where they should be. She explained that they had identified pupils from F2 to year 6 who needed support. Ms Jones highlighted that as expected there were those who would continue to need additional input and quality first teaching to get where they wanted them to be. She stated that they had altered the long-term plans for those children. Ms Jones explained that the remote learning helped to keep in touch with children but there was a group who needed to be in the classroom and have the experience of school to sustain continued everyday progress. She stated that the children benefitted from online learning but there were those who had further to go.

Q (JB): You have identified main priorities; will you update on progress?

Ms Jones explained that in terms of remote learning they knew what they were doing if it happened again. She stated that teachers were aware of what they did not manage to cover in terms of units. Ms Jones explained that they would pick up and build on with current objectives rather than going back.

Q (JW): When governors had met previously, you had said that those further up the school were closer to their expected level? Is this still the case?

Ms Jones stated that on the whole it was still same. She stated that they needed to be careful of making judgements too early as the children needed time to get back with friends and get back into school routines. Ms Jones stated that they needed to make sure FS, year 1 and 2 were not moving on too quickly and that content was embedding.

Q (JW): How were year 6 doing?

Ms Jones explained that there would be some pupils that won't be age expected that would have been without the lockdowns, but it was important that the secondary schools know that and know their potential. She explained that they would work more on whole child and skills for those children.

Q (JW): Had secondary schools been in touch in terms of transition?

Ms Jones stated that they had started to get in contact and would be undertaking some online meetings. She stated that there was a transition day tentatively booked.

Ms Webb asked about the staff stress survey. Ms Jones explained that there were a couple of groups of staff still to complete the survey, but no issues had come out of it so far. She explained that staff had undertaken in the first week in January. **Ms Webb asked whether the switch to Teams had a negative impact for teachers.** Ms Jones stated that staff had gone with the online teaching and appreciated the difficulties but happy it provided the opportunity to get together. Mrs Cooper explained that teachers had embraced online learning and looked to find ways to make learning better for the children. Ms Webb stated that you got a real sense of the teacher's personality in the online lessons. Ms Jones explained that SLT had supported teachers in lessons daily as there was a pressure of being watched by parents.

Q (JW): Would the increase in FSM result in an increase in pupil premium?

Mrs Cooper explained that the impact would be seen next year as pupil premium was based on the October census.

The governing board thanked the staff for all their work.

7. Local Governing Body Business

a. Local Governor Vacancy and Parent Governor Vacancy

Ms Jones stated that with pupils back in school they could undertake an election and she would arrange this after Easter.

ACTION: RJ

b. Training and Development

There was no training undertaken since the last meeting.

c. Governor roles

It was noted that the Health and safety link governor role was currently vacant.

d. Skills audit

Ms Webb would follow up with governors re skills audit.

e. Governor remote visits

The following visits would be arranged in the summer term:

- SEND – Mrs Bosworth to arrange with Ms Jones
- Health and safety – Ms Webb to arrange with Ms Jones
- Early years – Mrs Bosworth would arrange a follow up visit.

ACTION: JB

ACTION: JW

ACTION: JB

8. Finance and Staffing Updates

a. Outturn [Standing Item]

- Mr Bott explained that he was producing the monthly outturn for the Trust, which had been circulated to the governing board. He stated that next month he would produce the 7-month budget for the ESFA with 5 month predicted budget for the remaining financial year. This would be shared at the next meeting.
- Mr Bott reassured the governors that the budget was looking positive. He stated that Dave Nimmo (DFO) was happy with the budget and he was also meeting Ms Jones regularly.
- Mr Bott informed the governors that they would look at next year's budget after easter with the intention to set a balanced budget from Sept 2021-Sept 2022.
- Mr Mahomed informed the governing board that he had attended the Trust resources committee meeting and they were happy with the progress that the school were making in terms of finance and that the intervention was working. He stated that they had discussed the aim by next year to set a balanced budget.

b. CIF Bids [Standing Item]

There were currently no updates on the CIF bids.

c. Benchmarking

The benchmarking document had been circulated to the governing board. Mr Bott highlighted that the benchmarking was undertaken by the Government and warned that it did not consider differences across schools. It was highlighted that the school's spend on premises was 20% higher than similar schools, however the context was that Sparkenhoe had three sites.

9. Health and Safety

a. Stress Survey

This has been discussed under the Headteacher's report.

10. Review of Policies, Procedures and Publications

The following policy had been circulated and was agreed by the governing board:

- SEND Policy

The following had been circulated for information:

- Accessibility Plan
- Intimate Care Policy

11. Safeguarding

A safeguarding update had been included in the Headteacher's report. The following was highlighted:

- Whole school prevent training had taken place
- The school were looking into domestic violence training for staff
- Safeguarding training for governors would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION: Agenda item

12. Attenborough Learning Trust

Ms Webb provided the governing board with an overview of what had been discussed at the ALT COG meeting including recruitment, the recruitment and retention policy, the number of children attending during lockdown across the Trust and the link Trustee role.

13. Documents Received by the Chair of Governors

LA Clerking SLA – the school had agreed to continue to buy into the service.

14. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

15. Date of Next Meetings

- 24th May 2021
- 5th July 2021

Signed  Date: 24th May 2021