

Minutes of a meeting of the local governing body of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School held at the Ark on Monday 16th March 2020 at 4pm

Present

Rhian Jones – Headteacher
Jo Webb – Local Governor (Chair)
Emma Cull – Local Governor
Emanul Hoque – Local Parent Governor
Kassam Mohomed - Local Parent Governor

In attendance

Neil Thorpe – Associate Member
Tom Bott – Business Manager
Robyn Cooper – Clerk to the Local Governing Board

Prior to the start of the meeting, Ms Webb welcomed Emma Cull to the local governing board and introductions were made.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Penny Cooper, Jenny Bosworth and Nazma Hamid.

2. Declaration of Governors' Interests

There were no declarations of interest declared in the business to be transacted. For transparency purposes:

- Jo Webb was a governor and Vice Chair at Fosse Primary School, which had recently received an academy order.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting – 10th February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th February 2020 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 from the Minutes

Item 4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- Ms Webb would send the pupil premium visit report to the clerk for circulation.

ACTION: JW

- The clerk had circulated the link governor job descriptions.

Item 6 RHE

- RHE update was provided under item 7.

Item 9 Review of Policies

- Anti-bullying policy would be included on a future agenda.

5. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report had been circulated to the governing body.

Ms Webb had submitted the following questions:

Q (JW): Are there any underlying trends in pupil turnover? I see that new pupils join from local schools, but S pupils don't leave to attend a different local school. Is this correct?

Ms Jones would circulate an answer to the governing body by email.

ACTION: RJ

Q (JW): 2. Could you explain to the governors how you manage such high turbulence - from the perspective of teaching and social dynamics in year groups?

Ms Jones explained that it was managed because staff were so used to it in school and all new pupils were welcomed into school by everyone. She also highlighted that teachers were very good at assessment on the spot of new pupils. Ms Jones stated that if additional support was needed, interventions were arranged if required.

Q (JW): Is it correct to infer that there is a fairly stable core cohort in the school, and the pupils who leave are likely to be replaced by new pupils who are more likely to leave themselves? Or has this changed?

Ms Jones stated that there was a fairly stable cohort and those pupils who join the school in-year were often the ones that left and then were replaced by further new pupils. She explained that there were a large group of pupils who were children of PhD students who would stay between 3 and 5 years.

Q (JW): I'm mindful that the school has performance targets for improved outcomes at EYFS and KS1, but the data isn't showing much positive change. I recognise the issues with the cohorts (SEN, turbulence etc), but as this is an area on which an Ofsted review would focus, could you talk us through how the quality of learning and teaching has improved in the last three years, and how you can assure us this is the case? The point about 32% of Y2 children being SEN is noted.

Ms Jones stated that it was a valid point and took the governing body through the issues that had been identified. She explained that pupils were receiving a solid base, but the missing part was taking children on to independent learning. Ms Jones stated that they had also identified that they needed to rethink the pace of phonics teaching. She stated that they would continue to re-evaluate phonics and monitor the tweaks and changes. Ms Jones informed the governing body that she had attended phonics training and they had identified a lead member of staff to monitor phonics regularly. She stated that they would ensure that assessments were used to go back and reteach where necessary. Ms Webb highlighted that there was a wide range of preparedness for learning evident in the pupils who joined the school in EYFS. Ms Jones stated they would re-evaluate the activities and staff had received training. She highlighted that Mrs Bosworth had been very positive about the atmosphere in EYFS and behaviour management.

Q (JW): Sickness absence, stress etc. I note the difference in levels between teachers and other staff. Has there been any review of how some of the issues around support staff absence might be addressed? Is there any difference in motivation and job satisfaction? Are you doing any work amongst the staff on building positive relationships with each other?

Ms Jones explained that there were fewer teachers which would result in some of the difference. She also highlighted that there were a number of older support staff in school and there were more health problems for those staff, which they had to be mindful of.

Ms Jones stated that there was not a difference in motivation and job satisfaction when you speak with staff, who knew and were happy in their roles. She stated that they did talk to staff about wellbeing.

Q (EC): Does the school have a wellbeing strategy?

Ms Jones explained that the school had access to counselling services that they could refer staff to. She stated that staff had access to a counselling phone service without a school referral but a face to face session had to be requested. Ms Jones stated that strategy was part of the ethos of the school. She stated that a teacher was starting to put together materials to ensure pupils and staff knew where to go if they have an issue. Ms Jones confirmed that they undertook staff surveys and the stress awareness survey and issues were addressed through the outcomes.

Q (JW): Interesting to see the shift in attainment/targets in KS2 especially compared to last year. Why is this?

Ms Jones explained that the targets were cohort dependent and the current year 6 was a good cohort. She highlighted that the current year 5 were also a very stable cohort. Ms Jones stated that year 4 had seen lots of turbulence. She explained that attainment and targets could change year on year and turbulence was a factor. Ms Webb asked whether there was an increased proportion of greater depth. Ms Jones stated that there was and that they had been working on it as part of the reading strategies, Maths No Problem and the mastery work. Ms Webb highlighted that this was an objective for the last 3 years and improvement could be seen in every year group. Ms Jones highlighted that it had particularly improved in reading and maths. She explained that writing had improved in some year groups more so than others and they continued to make minor changes, but overall it was a good picture of improvement in greater depth writing.

Ms Jones read out the comment from Ms Webb:

Finally, as a parent of a child in the school. Your description of the impact of the curriculum as leading to 'more inventive and engaging lessons' chimes very true: my child has been even happier during lessons because of the range and variety of her learning opportunities, and it's been very motivating. An anecdote, but it triangulates with the statement.

The governors who were also parents of children at the school discussed the creative and inventive activities. Mr Mohamed highlighted the change in spelling work at home as particularly positive. Ms Webb highlighted that the photos in the report also highlighted the broad learning opportunities in school.

6. School Improvement Plan review

The spring review of the school improvement plan had been circulated to the governing body. Ms Jones explained that the online safety and parent awareness was a big area to address and more thought was needed about how it would work. She stated that they had not yet started the Positive and Peaceful Places Award. Ms Jones

highlighted that the actions for next term were included. The governors noted the update to the school improvement plan.

6. School Improvement Leicester –Spring Term commentary report

Ms Jones explained School Improvement Leicester and what was included for the school. She informed the governing board that they were in a triad with Taylor Road Primary School and Highfields Primary School. Ms Jones explained that the focus for the triad visit to Sparkenhoe was the curriculum and took the governing board through the recommendations as outlined in the report and next steps. Ms Webb stated that she was pleased that the experience of the triad was more positive and beneficial to the school.

Q (EC): What support will staff get to undertake the recommendations/next steps?

Ms Jones explained that they had reviewed the work being undertaken. She reported that Mr Cheetham had delivered a further inset with staff. She explained that staff would also undertake planning together in year groups with others supporting to feed in. Ms Webb stated that the structured support and challenge provided by the SIP was welcome.

7. RHE [Standing Item]

Ms Jones reported that there had been 3 meetings with parents on RHE where the statutory guidelines and equality act were shared and the links to lessons. She stated that they had given parents an outline of what would be taught and when. Ms Jones explained that they had postponed the remaining meetings in light of Corona Virus and would also look at whether any particular group of parents had not engaged and would benefit from their own meeting.

Ms Jones stated that all parents had thanked the school for explaining everything. She stated that there had not been too many difficult questions and parents had asked about withdrawal from lessons and been informed that they could not. Ms Jones stated that everyone had been happy with the explanation. She explained that there were concerns from some parents about teaching about LGBT in years 5 and 6, but the school explained that they were preparing the pupils for modern society.

The governing board discussed ensuring parents had enough information. Ms Jones stated that they would put the information on the website. She explained that they did not want to do this prior to the meetings as it was more beneficial to be able to speak alongside the presentation. Ms Jones stated that they also had resources and books out for parents during the meetings.

Ms Webb stated that she had attended two of the meetings highlighted that parents were engaged and there was a positive atmosphere with trust in the school evident. She queried whether they had reached the Somali parent groups. Ms Jones stated that some of the Somali parents had attended but there were Somali and Bengali families who they had not reached. She suggested that a session for those families would be offered.

The governing board discussed the importance of the pupils understanding and using the correct words. Ms Jones highlighted that one parent had thanked the school at the meeting for explaining this and that this would be taught as part of the curriculum.

8. Local Governing Body Business

a. Local Governor Vacancies and Recruitment

The 2 local governor vacancies were noted. Ms Webb would look into the Inspiring Governance recruitment site.

ACTION: JW

b. Areas of responsibility

It was agreed to continue with the link areas agreed at the last meeting for this academic year and review them in September.

c. Training and Development

The following training was reported:

- Mr Mohamed had attended the ALT Safeguarding training. He reported that it had been a very informative session.
- Ms Webb had attended the initial DSL training on the 4th March. She would bring her certificate in for the school's records.

ACTION: JW

- The Clerk would send the Learning Link information to Mrs Cull.

ACTION: Clerk

- Ms Webb would circulate the details for other Trust training sessions.

ACTION: JW

9. Governor Visit Reports

There were no reports to come to the meeting.

10. Review of Policies, Procedures and Publications

a. PE Policy

The PE policy had been circulated to the governing board. Ms Jones explained that they had reviewed and streamlined the policy. The governing body noted the information included on interventions and health and safety. The governing board agreed the policy.

11. Finance Updates

Mr Bott shared plans for a project for the Gopsall playground to install a fenced ball court. He explained that he had sourced three quotes for two pieces of work:

Fencing and removal of playground items (includes mesh roof netting)

- Durasport £18,297
- Creative Play £14,638
- Able canopies £11,480 + Costs for removal and Net - Likely taking the price to £17480

Mr Bott recommended Creative Play. He highlighted that the company provided the cheapest quote but unlike the other companies manufactured their own products.

Astroturf

- Durasport £23,458

- Creative Play £34,272
- Play Right £30,593

Mr Bott recommended Dursport as they were the manufacturer of the product.

Mr Thorpe asked whether the Trust had undertaken any research on Creative Play. Mr Bott stated that they had and explained that they had references and all the documentation, memberships of associations and insurance. He explained that they had offered the opportunity to visit other projects they had undertaken. Mr Thorpe highlighted the importance of ensuring what was installed was right.

Mr Bott explained that they planned to undertake the work in the summer holidays. Further checks would be undertaken in relation to whether they would need planning permission. The governing board discussed the appropriate gaps and measurements for fire exits etc. Mr Mohamed asked whether the court met the safety regulations for a fire exit with one entrance. Mr Bott confirmed that it did.

Mr Bott highlighted that the court would have different lines included for multiple use.

Mr Bott reported that there was work to do in relation to the dip in the playground surface and took the governing board through potential options.

Ms Webb queried how the space between the fence and wall would be maintained with concerns about rubbish gathering. The governing board discussed the options and Mr Bott suggested discussing solutions with the company.

The governing board agreed recommendations from Mr Bott.

- Creative Play for the fencing
- Durasport for the AstroTurf

a. CIF Bids [Standing Item]

Mr Bott stated that there was no news to report on the CIF bids.

12. Health and Safety

a. Health and Safety Audit

Ms Jones reported that an action plan had been received from the audit, which had been circulated. She explained that following a revisit from the LA health and safety team the school had moved from 'requires improvement - poor effort' to 'broadly compliant – good effort'. Ms Jones reported that they had booked on the required stress management training and an invacuation had been undertaken. She reported that the invacuation had been positive and there had been feedback on issues that they had not thought about prior to the test. Ms Jones stated that a checklist had been put together which would go to staff.

13. Staffing

- Ms Jones took the governing board through the recent resignations and vacancies. She explained that they were discussing recruitment from within the Trust. Governors would be involved in teacher recruitment.
- An advert for an SEND teacher would be published this week

14. Attenborough Learning Trust

- There were no updates from the Trust.
- Ms Jones reported that all network meetings and school visits had been cancelled due to the Coronavirus.

15. Documents Received by the Chair of Governors

There were no documents received by the Chair to bring to the governing board.

16. Any Other Business

Ms Jones provided the governing board with an update on the school's response to the Coronavirus and the plans which were in place. She stated that the challenge was the uncertainty and not knowing how to answer parental and staff concerns. Ms Jones explained that a large number of parents had not sent their children to school because they were either self-isolating, concerned about the virus or some had severe health concerns. She stated that some were ill with a cough and temperature but had not said they were self-isolating. Ms Jones explained that there were staff concerns, particularly as there were some older members of staff in school, some who were over 70 and were concerned about their health.

Mr Mohamed asked whether any pupils had been sent home. Ms Jones explained that they had not sent any pupils home and there was nobody presenting symptoms.

Ms Jones explained that they had started to put planning together ready to send home in the event they do close. She stated that she had put together a template for staff. Ms Jones stated that they would not be asking staff to work at home and contact with parents would be done by Ms Jones. She explained that plans were in place for one particularly vulnerable child.

Ms Jones explained that the planning for work at home was based on the most disadvantaged child and what they would have at home. She stated that they would provide reading books. Ms Jones stated that there would be extra things for those who have internet access. Ms Jones stated that they would provide English and maths work for everyday and a list of writing and ideas for parents to do at home.

Ms Jones reported that the emergency building plan had been done. She stated that they would treat it like a normal closure and undertake a clean on the first day and then the site manager and Premises Officer would come in once a week to undertake the weekly checks on a rota. She stated that she would undertake this as a contingency if staff were ill.

Ms Webb asked about those pupils on free school meals. Ms Jones stated that they were waiting for further guidance. Mrs Cull asked how many FSM pupils there were.

Ms Jones stated that it was 19%, around 70 children. She stated that they had also been asked to think about those who were vulnerable but not FSM.

Ms Webb asked whether Ms Jones felt supported. Ms Jones stated that she did and there was a good team in school and the Trust. She stated that there was a meeting after school for all staff on the 17th March to ensure she had an updated list of emails for all staff so they could communicate as a group.

Ms Webb stated that as a parent, she felt informed from the school.

Ms Jones explained that meetings and training had been cancelled by the Trust and city wide to ensure staff wellbeing.

Mr Mohomed asked whether the absences would be authorised. Ms Jones explained that if a pupil was self-isolating it would be classed as a Y code which did not impact attendance. She stated that they had to be careful as to who it was used for and they had asked parents to be clear when they were self-isolating.

17. Date of Next Meetings

Meetings for 2019/2020

- Monday 11 May 2020
- Monday 22 June 2020

Signed Date: