

Minutes of a meeting of the local governing body of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School held at the Ark on Monday 4th July 2022 at 4pm

Present

Rhian Jones – Headteacher
Jo Webb – Local Governor (Chair)
Jenny Bosworth – Local Governor
Emma Cull – Local Governor
Nick Allsopp – Local Governor
Kasam Mohamed – Local Parent Governor
Michael Cooper – Local Staff Governor

In attendance

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Fatima Mangerera.

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 – 23rd May 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd May 2022 had been previously circulated to all governors and were taken as read, confirmed, and signed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to a typo.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The Sustainability Strategy had been shared with governors
- Ms Webb needed to share her safeguarding visit report and organise another visit for this term.

5. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report had been circulated to the governing board. Ms Jones highlighted the following:

Ms Jones reported that attendance remained low at 93.2% due to the impact of term time holidays. Mrs Cooper explained that they had a lot of no-notice holidays and requests, which they always challenged.

Q: Had the school always had attendance issues in terms of holidays?

Ms Webb stated that they had, and it was the same in other schools in the Trust. She highlighted that families had not had the opportunity to go away during the pandemic.

Q: Does the policy of fining work?

Mrs Cooper stated that it did not as the holiday was usually still cheaper. She stated that it was not a deterrent.

Ms Jones highlighted that the DfE planned to increase the amount parents were fined. Mrs Cooper also highlighted that the new guidance looked to bring consistency across LAs as currently individual schools did not always fine parents.

Q: Was it reoccurring families?

Mrs Cooper stated yes, and they were all warned. She stated that if it's the third instance in a pupil's school career the parents could be taken to court. Dr Allsopp asked whether that happened in practice. Mrs Cooper stated that it did in some instances but had not happened at Sparkenhoe.

Ms Jones highlighted the persistent absence data and that there was a core group with very poor attendance. She explained that this was mainly pupils with EHCPs.

Q: Was there any overlap with pupil premium?

Mrs Cooper stated that there was not many that overlapped.

Q: What was the reason for the persistent absence for SEND pupils?

Ms Jones explained that it often due to the behaviour of the children at home and parents not physically able to get them into school due to their needs (e.g., ASD) She provided an example of a couple of families.

Q: Do the pupils who were PA have a specific TA?

Ms Jones explained that they did, and they had a good relationship.

Q: What action can the school take to support?

Mrs Cooper explained that they had agreements with them, but they were voluntary. Ms Jones stated that they pointed them in direction of Early Help, but this was also voluntary. She stated that parenting courses available were not specific enough for ASD. Mrs Cooper also highlighted that most were not running post Covid. Ms Jones stated that parents could apply for support through the Disabled Children's Service but some did not want support.

Q: Could the Family Support Worker support?

Ms Jones stated that she could, but the parents would want to have the support. She stated that the FSW would have more opportunity to target families next year. Mrs Cooper highlighted that the FSW was trained to run the parenting course, so hoped this could take place next year.

Q: I noted the increasing proportion of pupil premium in school noted, would this result in more income?

Mrs Cooper stated that it would next year as funding was based on the October census.

Q: Was the proportion of SEND pupils higher than National but lower than 18/19?

Ms Jones stated that it was. Mrs Cooper explained that there were more EHCPs in school and there had been a change in qualification of SEND for the register and they had taken the lower-level pupils off. Ms Webb noted that the data was not comparable. *She asked whether there was a higher proportion than 5 years ago.* Mrs Cooper stated that there were certainly more high needs pupils.

Q: Was the mobility data cumulative?

Ms Jones explained that it was.

Q: Was there an impact in terms of cost and time for the school with new to the country arrivals?

Ms Jones highlighted that there was an impact attainment outcomes depending on the year that they start. She highlighted that they had a positive impact on the school community.

Q: Was additional support was required? And was this a stress on provision?

Ms Jones stated that there was for some children. She explained that there was some stress, but they tended to do some immersion. She stated that they would join in with phonics for example. Ms Jones highlighted that it was often easier if they joined lower down the school but it also depended on the child and their home language.

Q: Had there been a change in cohort?

Ms Jones stated that it had always been mixed. She stated that it had changed over a long period and was much more mixed now. Ms Jones stated that the current largest migrant group into school was Bengali Italians. The wealth to the school community that this mixed cohort brought was highlighted. Ms Webb highlighted that the children were very accepting. Mrs Cooper highlighted that staff were too. She stated that they often had requests from other schools about their EAL provision, but they did not have specific interventions. Ms Jones highlighted that they only withdrew pupils from class for short periods of time.

Ms Jones highlighted that there had been an increase in child protection caseload this term. She reported that they would lose 3 LAC this summer. Mrs Cooper informed the governing board that the whole school safeguarding training was scheduled for 10th October at 3:30pm. All governors were encouraged to attend.

ACTION: All Governors

Ms Jones highlighted the staffing for next year.

Ms Jones highlighted the pressure put on resources from the LA making schools one of the few referrers to the Government's Household Support Fund. The amount of work each application took was highlighted.

Q: Was there a reasoning behind it?

Ms Jones stated that she was not sure, but the process was intrusive. Mrs Cooper explained that they already had a backlog and there was a lack of capacity. She stated that they had asked Jane Ridgewell to lobby the LA. Contacting the local councillors was also suggested.

The governing board discussed the issue in depth and agreed that additional time and resources this was taking out was concerning. It was agreed that the governing board would write to the LA about their concerns.

ACTION

Kassam Mohamed joined the meeting

Ms Jones highlighted the attainment as outlined in the report. She stated that they knew that writing would be an area of focus, and this would be included in the school development plan. Ms Jones highlighted that there were tweaks to be made in English and engagement with writing to ensure units were more meaningful.

Q: Greater Depth writing was different in year 2 and 6?

Ms Jones explained that they had external moderation for year 6 and it had been a hard process. She took the governing board through the process and the school's experience. Ms Jones highlighted that the issues were around consistency. She reported that following the moderation process they had re-moderated greater depth writing across the school. She explained that it was difficult to get the solid 6-7 pieces of writing from February to the moderation process and this was why they were looking at tweaking writing going forward.

Dr Allsopp noted the upward trajectory with the statutory data and the strong bounce back from covid, which was very positive. Ms Jones stated that greater depth writing would likely be similar across the city. She stated that year 2 writing was low but there was a group who were close. She stated that reading and maths was positive. Ms Jones stated that the GLD was positive, and staff were pleased. The extra phonics sessions were also highlighted.

Ms Webb congratulated the year 2 team on behalf of the governing board.

Q: Was there any standardised testing in the non-statutory years?

Ms Jones explained that they undertook internal assessments. Dr Allsopp asked whether this was moderated across the Trust. Ms Jones explained that it was not because schools had different systems. She stated that they had the data from the other schools that used the same system. Mr Cooper explained that they undertook writing moderation across the Trust.

Q: What was happening in terms of oracy? Was it measured?

Ms Jones explained that this was measured through learning walks - watching lessons and listening to children's responses. She stated that it would ultimately come out in the writing and reading attainment. Ms Jones highlighted that the ALT review had said that the learning behaviours of the children were exemplary. She stated that the way the class was set up also supported this (e.g., purposeful talk with a partner). Ms Jones highlighted that the moderators had said that the use of language was good and literary devices used were sophisticated.

Ms Jones highlighted the priorities outlined in the report and took the governors through them.

Ms Jones also highlighted the SEF update.

Ms Jones took the governing board through the premises update. She explained that they were looking at a new online stress survey. Ms Jones reported that the LA health and safety audit had taken place on the 29th June.

Q: Were there any issues in terms of trips, e.g., reluctance, affordability?

Mrs Cooper explained that they had supported a few parents in terms of funding, but they had not received many requests. Ms Jones explained that they had stayed local in terms of trips due to the rising bus prices. Mrs Cooper highlighted that this would also impact the cost of residential.

The school improvement plan had also been circulated for information.

6. Local Governing Body Business

a. Training and Development - safeguarding

- Mrs Cooper stated that she would also bring the e-safety staff training to governors. She stated that there was an expectation that all staff have online training.
- Mrs Cull and Mrs Bosworth had attended preparation for Ofsted training.

b. Governor Visits

- Mrs Bosworth would arrange an EYFS visit early next term.
- Ms Webb attended the outdoor performance as a parent.

ACTION: JB

7. Review of Policies, Procedures and Publications

The following policies had been circulated to the governing board:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Medicines Policy

The governing board approved the policies as presented.

- E-safety Policy

The e-safety policy would be delayed until September to update with the child protection policy.

8. Staffing – see HT report

There were no further updates.

9. Finance Updates

Mr Bott explained that it was the last 2 months of the financial year, and the school was in a good position and there were no concerns. He noted that the challenges for next year's budget had been discussed at the last meeting.

Mr Bott shared the benchmarking report with the governing board. He highlighted that the area of concern was supply staff costs, but this was due to the use of supply for SEN TAs. Mr Bott highlighted that the report did not include the context.

Mr Bott explained that the school had been assigned a pupil in F2 with severe needs. He reported that they were looking at undertaking works to put in a changing room with a hoist for dignity for the child and to support the staff. Ms Jones explained that an occupational therapist had undertaken a site survey. She explained that the school

felt that the suggestion of wheeling the child on the potable hoist was not acceptable. Ms Jones highlighted that they did have other children that needed to be changed and the need for the hoist, so they would pay for more than suggested. Mr Bott highlighted that it would also future proof the facilities.

Q: What would happen when the child progresses to the other building?

Ms Jones stated that this would be something to consider.

Q: Was there any funding?

No. They had looked at every avenue.

Q: Would any staff training be needed?

Yes. It would be £150 per person.

Mr Bott reported that the work would cost £28,000 and landlord approval was needed. He explained that it was taking time to get the approval. He stated that they had been hopeful to get the work done over the summer but if not, a temporary solution would be put in place.

The governing board approved the expenditure for the works.

a. CIF Bids [Standing Item]

Mr Bott provided an update on getting a longer lease for the Gopsall building. He explained that it was currently with the solicitors. The LA had reviewed the rent value as £15,000. Mr Bott explained that to submit CIF bids there needed to be a 45-year lease.

10. Safeguarding - audit

Mrs Cooper reported that the audit was work in progress and she would email it round when complete.

ACTION: PC

11. Extension of school day

Ms Jones explained that in the recent White Paper it required all schools to have a minimum week of 32.5 hours by 2023. She stated that this meant that they needed an extra 15 mins on the day. Ms Jones explained that they were looking into the options as there would be a financial impact in terms of contract. She took the governing board through the options being consider. Ms Webb highlighted that they would have to consider staff with caring responsibilities.

12. Health and Safety – see HT report

This item had been covered in the headteacher's report.

13. Attenborough Learning Trust

Ms Webb reported that she had attended the ALT Chair of Governor's catch up on the 14th June 2022. She explained that they had discussed the governance calendar, the growth of the Trust, governor recruitment, school improvement arrangements and training.

14. Documents Received by the Chair of Governors

There were no documents to share.

15. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

16. Date of Next Meetings

- 19th September 2022
- 24th October 2022
- 21st November 2022
- 6th February 2023
- 27th March 2023
- 22nd May 2023
- 3rd July 2023

Ms Webb thanked governors, leadership team and Clerk.

17. Staff absence request (confidential item)

The following item is minuted as confidential and is not available for public inspection.

Signed Date: 19th September 2022