

Minutes of a meeting of the local governing body of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School held at the Ark on Monday 16th September 2019 at 4pm

Present

Rhian Jones – Headteacher
Lee Jowett – Local Governor (Chair)
Kassam Mahamed – Local Parent Governor
Muhammad Hoque – Local Parent Governor
Nazma Hamid – Local Staff Governor

In attendance

Penny Cooper – Deputy Headteacher
Dave Nimmo - Director Finance and Operations (ALT)
Tom Bott – Business Manager
Robyn Cooper – Clerk to the Local Governing Board

Prior to the start of the meeting, the new local parent governors were welcomed to the governing board and introductions were made.

1. Election of Chair of Governors

The local governing board unanimously elected Lee Jowett as Chair of Governors for the 2019/2020 academic year.

2. Election of Vice Chair of Governors

The local governing board agreed to defer the election of Vice Chair to the next meeting.

ACTION: Agenda Item

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Prof John and Mrs Bosworth.

4. Declaration of Governors' Interests

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

5. Register of Interests

Those governors present duly completed the register of business interests, which would kept in school for audit purposes.

Mr Nimmo and the Clerk would seek clarification on the date of appointment for new governors.

ACTION: DN/Clerk

6. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting – 24th June 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th June 2019 had been previously circulated to all governors and were taken as read, confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item 4 Matters Arising

- Ms Webb had sent a copy of her safer recruitment certificate to the school
- Mr Jowett provided the governing board with an update on the library bids. He explained that the Foyles Trust was aimed more for schools that had no budget to spend on library resources. Mr Bott noted that the school could struggle in light of the school's financial position in comparison to other schools. Mr Jowett stated that it would be worth pursuing an Awards for All bid as this was not linked to budget position. He highlighted that the Awards for All focus was a bid primarily benefitting the parents and community.

Item 5 Headteacher's Report

- A date was being arranged for in-house safeguarding and health and safety training session.

Item 11 Safeguarding

- Mr Jowett would arrange a safeguarding visit for this term.

ACTION: LJ

8. Updated Fire Risk Assessments

Mr Nimmo informed the governing board that the last fire risk assessments carried out for all 3 sites were completed in 2009-2010. He explained that as part of the conversion to academy status it was agreed that the LA (using Arcadis) would undertake a risk assessment on the school's behalf. Mr Nimmo stated that the Ark and Saxby sites were assessed as moderate risk as did the other schools within the Trust. He explained that due to its age, the Gopsall site was assessed as high risk and there were actions that needed to be taken quickly. Mr Nimmo explained that there was no central fire alarm that activates in all zones and the majority of fire doors do not have fire stopping properties. He stated that the Trust considered temporary and permanent works to ensure that the children and staff in Gopsall were safe when they returned to school in the autumn term. He explained that the independent survey undertaken by the Trust confirmed the findings from Arcadis. Mr Nimmo stated that temporary fire alarms were installed, and further permanent works could be funded by a conditioning and improvement bid to the DfE. He stated that Barkers had committed to replace the fire doors, however this did not take place over the summer, which had been a frustration for the school. Ms Jones confirmed that the work on the doors was currently being undertaken. Mr Nimmo confirmed that the Trust and school had put measures in place to ensure the children and staff in the building were safe.

Mr Nimmo informed the governors that he was in contact with the chief fire risk assessor at the LA to discuss the authority covering the £16,000 cost. He stated that he would be meeting with the risk assessor and Edelle Weaver to discuss this.

Q (LJ): How often should the assessments have been carried out?

Mr Nimmo explained that there was a standard pro-forma on Extranet, which the school should undertake annually. He stated that this should have been looked at as part of the health and safety audit.

Q (SH): Was the work on the fire doors being undertaken outside of school hours?

Ms Jones confirmed that it was.

Mr Bott highlighted that the risk assessments provide a plan that the school and Trust can work towards. Mr Nimmo reported that the senior management team had put together an action plan, which had been submitted to the Trust and they were happy that the appropriate response was there. He thanked the team on behalf of the Trust.

Q (LJ): In terms of lessons learned, what should they have been doing as a governing body?

Mr Bott explained that the issues should have come out in the health and safety audit. Mr Jowett highlighted that the board knew now that this was something that should be checked. He highlighted concern that it had not been picked up by the LA.

Mr Nimmo stated that schools could make two conditioning improvement bids per academic year and the Gopsall site needed a new roof, windows and now work from the fire risk assessment. He stated that they would need to decide which 2 were the priorities and suggested that this would be fire and roof. Mrs Hind highlighted that the priority should be safety.

9. Finance Updates

Mr Nimmo explained that the school had received £487,879 from the LA on conversion as the combined capital and revenue surplus balance. He stated that during the 5-month period from April to September there was a deficit of £67,000, which was expected. Mr Nimmo explained to the governing board that this was due to underestimated predictions on costs for catering, some need for remedial premises work and invoices from the LA for the previous financial year and the impact of the early LA closedown. He stated that the Trustees had been made aware of the reasons for this.

Mr Nimmo highlighted that it was positive in terms of the work of governing board and senior management team over past number of years that they had provided the head start as they had managed finances tightly, however the challenge now was to balance in year and think about how to reduce the surplus.

Q (LJ): What would be a typical reserve for school like Sparkenhoe?

Mr Nimmo explained that many schools had a surplus of £100-200,000 and that was where the other schools in the Trust sat. Mr Bott explained that the guidance from the LA was that a carry forward higher than 10% of the budget could be clawed back. He stated that 10% of the school's budget would be £150,000.

Mr Nimmo explained that the surplus should be kept for educational costs, the buildings costs could be covered by the bid. Mrs Hind asked whether the surplus could be used to recruit staff. Ms Jones explained that staffing would be an ongoing cost and the school still needed to decrease annual spend slightly. She explained that one use of the surplus would be new equipment for the playground as part of the promotion of exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

Q (LJ): How much can the school bid for in a SIF?

Mr Nimmo stated that he did not think there was a maximum value.

Q (KM): Could the money be spent on equipment for children to use at home if they did not have access? E.g. computers

Ms Jones stated that it could be used for that purpose. She explained that the school had done a similar thing in the past with e-readers.

Mr Nimmo left the meeting

Mr Bott circulated a budget report to the governing board. He took the governors through the report and highlighted the following:

- The budget for the 5-month accounting period from April to the end of August was based on 5/12^{ths} of the previous years (highlighted in red). The actual spend was highlighted in green and the variance outlined.
- Mr Bott explained that the LA closedown on the 1st February and the conversion on the 1st April resulted in some bills being carried over into the 5-month period.

Q (LJ): Were there any issues with having to delay paying invoices?

Ms Jones stated that they had contacted the suppliers, but a couple of the larger supply companies could not be paid until the following financial year.

Mr Bott took the governors through an overview of the spending from April to the end of August:

- The capital and revenue budgets were delegated by the LA in one lump sum (£437,000 revenue and £40,000 capital).
- I01 Funds delegated from the LA was less than budgeted for by £31,173 due to an overestimation of EYFS numbers.
- I09 Catering income was less than budgeted for due to the timing of grants, but this would balance out over the year.
- E03 Education support staff variance was not an overspend but rather an issue of coding on conversion.
- E11 Other staff related insurance was higher than budgeted for as ill health liability had to be taken out which was not expected.
- E17 Rates. The invoice for district heating from the previous financial year. The issues with District Heating had been discussed at previous meetings. Mr Bott reported that they had received a bill at the end of August and hoped this would continue.
- E26 Agency supply teaching staff was overbudget due to receiving invoices from the previous financial year.
- The expected carry forward was £437,490 and with the variances, the actual carry forward was £420,300.

Mr Bott reported that he was discussed the budget with Ms Jones, Mrs Cooper and Mr Cheetham about setting the budget going forward to ensure it balanced in-year so the larger carry forward can be used for other one-off costs; more exciting projects that will make a difference for the pupils.

10. Local Governing Body Business

a. Review of Governing Body & 2018/19 Action Plan

The self-evaluation audit and review of the governing body for 2018/2019 action plan had been circulated to the governors. Mr Jowett explained that an audit and action plan and review had been completed for the last couple of years.

The governing board reviewed the self-evaluation audit and the points that had been assessed as amber at the start of last academic year:

Number 5 - How do we make use of good practice locally and from across the country?
Following a discussion about the links starting to be made in the Trust and the practice undertaken by the governing body board, the governors agreed to move the evaluation to Green.

Number 11 - How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing body's activities and agenda setting?

The governors agreed to leave this part of the evaluation as amber and continue to work on it this academic year.

Mr Jowett asked the governors to read through the audit and send him any feedback.

ACTION: Governors

The review of the action plan for 2018/2019 had been circulated and was noted by the governing board. The review would be uploaded onto the website.

ACTION: LJ/RJ

b. Action Plan 2019/20

The action plan for 2019/2020 had been circulated to the governing board. Mr Jowett took the governors through the plan, which was agreed. The board would review the plan in 6 months' time.

Mrs Hind suggested that something could be added on the code of conduct.

c. Training and Development – team training date (see Doodlepoll)

Details of the courses available through the teaching school, LA and online through Learning Link were circulated to the governing board. Mr Jowett reported that he would circulate a date for the in-house training session once all governors had responded regarding availability.

Mrs Cooper invited governors to the whole school child protection training 10th October at 3:30pm. She would also circulate Part 1 of the revised Keeping Children Safe in Education to all governors.

ACTION: PC

It was confirmed that Section 128 Checks had been carried out for all governors and DSB checks for the new parent governors were in progress.

d. Governor Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct had been circulated to the governing board. The governors would look through the Code of Conduct in more detail at the October meeting.

ACTION: Agenda Item

e. Governor Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities were agreed:

- Safeguarding – Lee Jowett (Susan Hind Vice-Link Governor)
- Maths – Nazma Hamid
- Literacy – Susan Hind
- SEND and LAC – Lee Jowett

Mr Jowett would circulate a copy of the job description document produced by the LA outlining the expectations for link roles and suggested questions.

ACTION: LJ

Governors to send an email to Mr Jowett if interested in taking on another link role.

ACTION: All Governors

f. Constitution of the Local Governing Body

Mr Jowett explained that they had previously discussed increasing the size of the governing board from 7 in order to increase capacity. He proposed to the governing board to increase the number of local governors by 2. Mr Jowett explained that Jo Webb wanted to continue on the governing board and brought a strong skill set and knowledge and Jenny Bosworth could move from Associate to Local Governor, again bringing her skills and knowledge of education. Mr Jowett also proposed that Neil Thorpe was appointed as an Associate Local Governor bringing his knowledge and skills on health, safety and premises.

Mr Jowett proposed an advert out further associate local governors outlining the skills needed.

Mrs Hind stated that it was a real strength to have different opinions and knowledge on the governing board and agreed that Jo Webb and Jenny Bosworth had the skills needed as well as providing good challenge.

The local governing board agreed to the proposed increase in constitution by 2 local governors and the appointment of Neil Thorpe as Associate Member. The decision was subject to the approval of the Trustees.

11. Arrangements for the Headteacher Performance Management and Pay Committee

The Headteacher's Performance Management would be undertaken by 3 governors with the CEO to support. Mr Jowett, Mr Mahamed and Mrs Hind expressed an interest in being involved. Mr Jowett would circulate some suggested dates for both the performance management and pay committee and also contact Prof John.

ACTION: LJ

12. Proposed collaborative arrangements with other Governing bodies

Mr Jowett explained that when the school was LA maintained the governing body had collaborative arrangements in place with other schools for HR panels. He stated that Hazel Community primary had been in contact about continuing this arrangement for this academic year. The clerk advised that now the school was an academy, the collaboration arrangements could not be made with maintained schools as they were following different regulations. The clerk suggested that the school would be able to call upon support from the other LGBs in the Trust if additional governors were needed.

13. Review of Policies, Procedures and Publications

a. Swimming policy

The policy and risk assessment had been circulated for information, which was noted by the local governing board. Mrs Hind asked which year group went swimming. Mrs Cooper clarified that year 5 went swimming, which was arranged in two ten-week blocks. Ms Jones stated that this year group were enthusiastic. Mr Jowett thanked the school for undertaking the work for the school to take pupils swimming and stated that he would come and undertake a spot check this term.

ACTION: LJ

b. Local asbestos management plan

The revised local asbestos management plan had been circulated to the governing body. Ms Jones explained that the plan had been updated following the new asbestos surveys in which some additional asbestos had been identified. Mr Jowett confirmed that he had attended the INSET day where Mel Thorpe had taken all staff through the procedures for asbestos. The governing board noted the plans.

c. Annual safeguarding audit

The annual safeguarding report return had been circulated to the governing body and was noted.

Mrs Cooper stated that the updated safeguarding and child protection policy would come to the next meeting.

ACTION: Agenda Item

14. Attenborough Learning Trust

The local governing board received the following updates:

- Ms Jones confirmed that the school would receive 7 additional days a year (in addition to the 2 days allocated by the Service) of Educational Psychologist time through the Trust.
- Mrs Ridgewell had undertaken work with Speech and Language Therapy Department at DMU to arrange for students to come into the schools and undertake project work. This would include intensive sessions to boost language and talking.
- The Trust networks had been set up and currently included – assessment, attendance, SENCo, ICT, business managers and premises. Each network got together every half term to look at common needs across the Trust.
- Mr Bott confirmed that the Trust were starting to look at how they could use combined buying power to reduce costs.

15. School Improvement Leicester

Ms Jones explained School Improvement Leicester to the local governing board, the new triad process and work of the School improvement partner. She explained that the school were in a triad with Highfields Primary and Taylor Road Primary and they had attended their first meeting, which had been very positive and provided a lot of challenge. Mr Jowett attended as Chair of the Local Governing Board. Ms Jones explained that they had chosen to buy in to continue to work with Leicester schools as an outward facing Trust. Mr Jowett stated that it was positive to have external scrutiny and suggested that going forward other governors could attend the triad meetings. The triad report would come to a future meeting.

16. Documents Received by the Chair of Governors

- NGA newsletter

17. Any Other Business

RSE

Mrs Cooper, Mrs Hind and Mr Mahamed had attended the RSE Briefing at City Hall. It was suggested that this would be included as an agenda item at the next LGB meeting. Mrs Cooper stated that setting up a working party had been suggested at the briefing. This would be looked at during the next meeting. Ms Jones stated that they wanted to the LGB to lead on the consultation and policy in school. A document would be put together on what the Government expects in the new policy, what the school already do and any implications so parents would have something to look at during the consultation.

ACTION: Agenda Item

18. Date of Next Meetings

Meetings for 2019/2020

- Monday 21 October 2019 (first day back after half term)
- Monday 18 November 2019
- Monday 16 December 2019
- Monday 10 February 2020
- Monday 16 March 2020
- Monday 11 May 2020
- Monday 22 June 2020

Forward plan

Child Protection update

Signed  21st October 2019