

THE GOVERNING BODY OF HOWARD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Minutes of the annual meeting of the Governing Body held virtually via Microsoft Teams at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, 15 September 2020.

PRESENT

Mr G Muir (Chair), Ms V Birchill-Edmondson, Ms H Blackburn, Mr O Bryden, Mrs V Farrell, Mrs J Galloway, Mr R Jeffrey, Mrs M Peace, Mr J Pickles (Head Teacher), Mr J Ratcliffe.

In Attendance

Mr G Sale (Minute Clerk)
Ms J Hayes (Prospect Governor)
Mrs S Mollett (Acting Deputy Head Teacher)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Governors agreed the following:

- (a) That nominations will not be accepted from Governors not present at the meeting.
- (b) That the term of office of the Chair be for twelve months.
- (c) That in case of a tie there would be a revote.
- (d) That Mr G Muir be unanimously elected.

RESOLVED: That Mr G Muir be unanimously elected as Chair for twelve months.

Mr G Muir joined the meeting at 6:16 pm

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Mrs J Leighton (with consent).

There were no declarations of interest.

(a) Protocols and consent to Governor absence

RESOLVED: That Governors confirmed their protocol for apologies for absence was to grant consent on an individual basis depending on the circumstances.

(b) Governors' Code of Conduct

The Local Authority (LA) approved Governor's Code of Conduct was unanimously adopted by those Governors present.

RESOLVED: That the Governor's Code of Conduct was unanimously adopted by those Governors present.

(c) Declaration of Business Interest Information

The Chair confirmed access to the online business interests form on behalf of the Governors. All completed returns would be retained by Kirklees Business Services and made available for inspection when required.

(d) Get Information about Schools (GIAS)

The Head Teacher confirmed that the School's record would be updated to reflect approved Governor appointments and terms of office.

(e) 'Alternative arrangements' for remote meetings

RESOLVED: That the 'alternative arrangements' for remote meetings set out in regulation 14 of The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 be approved.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were notified to be brought up under any other business:

- Monitoring and Visits.
- Dogs on the School Site.
- Use of the School Hall by External Organisations
- Staffing Committee
- Governor Dashboard and Skills Matrix.

4. REPRESENTATION

(a) Appointment of a Co-opted Governor

The Chair welcomed Ms J Hayes to the meeting as a prospective Co-opted Governor. Ms Hayes introduced herself to the Governing Body, having recently retired from a varied teaching career. She informed Governors that she continues to tutor Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Initial Teacher Training (ITT), as well as serving on the Governing Body of another School in Bradford and the Green Light Teaching School Alliance.

RESOLVED: That Ms J Hayes be invited to serve as a Co-opted Governor.

(b) Staff Governor Vacancy

The process for appointing a new Staff Governor was discussed, including guidance for the election process if more than one staff member was nominated. The Chair proposed that the appointment be completed ahead of the next Governing Body meeting on 9 November 2020.

ACTION: Head Teacher to determine interest at the next Staff meeting on 16 September 2020.

5. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Governors agreed the following:

- (a) That nominations will not be accepted from governors not present at the meeting.
- (b) That the term of office of the Vice-Chair be for twelve months.
- (c) That in case of a tie there would be a revote.
- (d) That Mr J Ratcliffe be unanimously elected.

RESOLVED: That Mr J Ratcliffe be unanimously elected as Vice-Chair Chair for twelve months.

6. REVIEW OF COMMITTEES

(a) Membership

RESOLVED: That Committee Membership be as follows:

Finance, Premises and Resources Committee

Head Teacher
Mr O Bryden
Mrs V Farrell
Mrs J Leighton
Mr R Jeffrey
Mr G Muir
Health & Safety Governor

Standards and Effectiveness Committee

Head Teacher
Ms V Birchill-Edmondson
Mrs V Farrell
Mrs J Galloway
Mrs M Peace
Mr J Ratcliffe

Staffing Committee (to include Head Teacher's Performance Management)

Head Teacher
Ms V Birchill-Edmondson

Mr G Muir
Mrs M Peace
Mr J Ratcliffe

Staff Dismissals Committee

Ms V Birchill-Edmondson
Mr O Bryden
Mr G Muir

Staff Dismissal Appeals Committee

Mr R Jeffrey
Mrs M Peace
Mr J Ratcliffe

Governor Monitoring Committee

Mr O Bryden
Mr R Jeffrey
Mr G Muir
Mrs M Peace

(b) Terms of reference

The Chair acknowledged the LA Committee Matters document, with a view to adopting the model terms of reference for the agreed committees. It was agreed that all committees would adopt the LA Committee Matters terms of reference

RESOLVED: That all Committees adopt the LA Committee Matters terms of reference.

7. TO APPOINT GOVERNORS WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

RESOLVED: That the following Governors be appointed with specific responsibility for:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Special Education Needs Governor | Mr J Ratcliffe |
| Governor Training Contact | Mrs V Farrell |
| Governor for Looked After Children | Mrs M Peace |
| Child Protection Governor/Safeguarding Governor | Ms J Hayes |
| Early Years Governor | Mrs M Peace |
| Health and Safety Governor | Mr J Ratcliffe |
| Equality Governor | Mr R Jeffrey |
| Premium Link Governor | Mr O Bryden |
| Data Protection Governor | Mr G Muir |
| Staff Wellbeing Governor | Mr J Ratcliffe |

Link Governors

The ability for Link Governors to build relationships with respective classes was discussed, particularly given ongoing limitations to external visitors on account of continuing COVID-19 restrictions. The Head Teacher advised that each case would need to be assessed according to risk and potential benefit.

RESOLVED: That the following Link Governors be appointed to each class:

Year 6 – Mr O Bryden
 Year 5 – Mr R Jeffrey
 Year 4 – Mrs J Leighton
 Year 3 – Ms J Hayes
 Year 2 – Mr J Ratcliffe
 Year 1 – Mr G Muir
 Reception & Nursery – Mrs M Peace

8. CHAIR'S DELEGATED POWERS

RESOLVED: That the Chair be given the following delegated powers:

- (a) Change of date of a scheduled meeting, for good reason.
- (b) To grant retrospective consent to absence in the event that a governor would have become disqualified if the matter had to wait for the next governors' meeting.
- (c) To determine in advance of a meeting whether any items of the agenda should be deleted from the copy to be made available at the school.

9. DELEGATION OF FINANCIAL POWERS TO THE HEAD TEACHER

RESOLVED: That the Governing Body delegates to the HT the power to carry out on its behalf the following delegated duties:

- (i) Planning and conducting the affairs of the school to remain solvent.
- (ii) Establishing proper financial management arrangements and accounting procedures, which comply with the LA's financial regulations and standing orders and maintaining a sound system of internal controls.
- (iii) Ensuring that funding from the LA and any other sources is used only in accordance with the conditions attached to that funding.
- (iv) Providing such information as the LA may reasonably require to satisfy the LA that the financial management and organisation of the Governing Body are such as to enable it to fulfil the obligations specified for it.

- (v) That the HT be authorised to spend up to a limit of £5,000 without prior referral to the Governing Body.

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2020 be approved as a correct record by the Chair and signed at a future meeting.

11. MATTERS ARISING

(a) School Website

Q: How is the development of the new School website progressing?

A: The homepage is now completed and available to view. The remaining pages will be completed and published in time for the website to go live by the end of September/beginning of October. The current website contains the required statutory information until the new website is live.

(b) Gutter Clearing

Q: Will the guttering on the School buildings be cleaned again?

A: Unless there is unexpected surplus money to do so, the cost of clearing the gutters again cannot be justified in the near future.

(c) The Key for School Governors

Membership of The Key for School Governors was discussed for the benefit of the Governing Body. A 15% discount to the annual cost of £525 would be applied given the School is an already subscribed to The Key for School Leaders.

RESOLVED: That the School register for access to The Key for School Governors.

ACTION: Mrs V Farrell to register for The Key for School Governors on behalf of the Governing Body.

12. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

There were no reports from committees.

13. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT, SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, SCHOOL EVALUATION FORM AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS

A copy of the report had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The Head Teacher provided a verbal summary and invited questions from Governors.

(a) COVID-19

The Head Teacher reported that there had been no major issues since the beginning of the autumn term, with all children settling in well.

The School has adopted a proportionate approach to establishing routines and putting safety measures in place, and the Head Teacher has been open with staff about the likely necessity to adjust and adapt procedures on an ongoing basis as is required. He also mentioned that use of the playground is currently working well.

Governors commented that certain staff needed to be more prompt at opening the doors to children in the morning given current problems with overlapping drop-off windows. It was raised that the queue for Reception was often lengthy, with parents turning up early, and that Nursery parents did not always adhere to the one-way system. The Head Teacher noted these issues. Collection of children from the kitchen at the end of School is also taking place frequently despite not being permitted. The Acting Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) agreed to create more signage to make this clear to parents.

An additional cleaner has been employed by the School, working between 11:00 am – 6:00 pm daily. This ensures that high contact points are routinely cleaned, and that the toilets are able to be cleaned thoroughly several times a day.

Q: Is there an additional cost associated with the extra cleaner?

A: There is no additional cost up to October half term owing to money owed from staff being absent during lockdown. A temporary agreement has been put in place with the cleaning agency until Christmas, at which point this arrangement will need to be reviewed. Whilst the cost beyond October half term is substantial, the additional level of cleaning and safety provided to staff and children is necessary.

Managing children's ongoing attendance was mentioned to be a current issue, with 10-20 phone calls per day from parents concerned that their child(ren) is displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Whilst in most cases children are suffering from normal seasonal cold symptoms, the School is encouraging all parents to seek advice from 111 before sending their children to School. The situation is currently exacerbated given the reduced availability of antigen tests nationwide.

The Head Teacher reported continuing additional demands on staff across the School resulting in sustained high workloads. Whilst the School is currently operating successfully, this is having an impact on the collective wellbeing of staff. All staff are dedicated to the care of the School's children, often with a lack of regard for their own health and wellbeing. The Chair acknowledged the extra efforts of staff to keep children safe, but hoped that this situation will not need to be sustained indefinitely.

The Head Teacher raised that additional work required by teachers to deliver the catch-up curriculum to children, as well as contingency planning for potential home learning, would be ongoing pressures on staff time. Governors sought to ensure that a high quality of teaching provision was maintained despite the increased workload.

The Chair acknowledged the latest school Risk Assessment (RA) which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

Q: Is everything proceeding as expected within the RA?

A: All is working well across the School site. From a finance perspective, however, costs are still high to cover ongoing additional expenses such as cleaning supplies. New bins have also been purchased.

Q: Is any extra money available to the School to help with the additional costs?

A: A claim has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) for reimbursement of money spent and lost on account of COVID-19 to date. Whilst the claim was comprehensive, it is unlikely that the School will receive any reimbursement.

Q: Is use of equipment in the playground being managed to prevent cross contamination?

A: The ball court is used for Physical Education (PE) lessons and is cleaned thoroughly between classes. The adventure playground is currently out of use on account of repairs needed and will not likely be considered for use again until after the winter months.

Q: Why are some support Staff are not listed in section 3 of the HT's report?

A: Occasions where support staff work with children on a 1:1 basis have not been included.

Q: Are pedal bins across the School site safe for children's use? Is there a risk of trapped fingers?

A: Children are largely supervised whilst using the bins. The bin lids are not heavy and come down slowly.

Q: What is the Head Teachers initial assessment of the mental wellbeing of children since returning to School?

A: The majority of children are content to be back in School, with a return to normality aided by a renewed sense of routine. Teachers have been conscious to acknowledge COVID-19 without dwelling on the details, concentrating on children's experiences of returning to School. Some children are visibly nervous about symptoms including coughs in their peers, but most will soon learn that this is normal.

The first strand of the School's Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum is about health and wellbeing. In addition, a cross-year group art project is underway to rebuild a sense of belonging and community across the School. This project will result in a large display in the new entrance hall.

(b) School Development Plan

A copy of the School Development Plan was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

Q: How will the proposed parent workshops be run? Will they be open to all parents or only a select group?

A: The workshops will focus on helping parents to support their children in School.

The DHT led changes to the approach to reading in the School, as part of which expectations for home reading were made clear. The workshops are likely to be run virtually, broken down by class and with limited numbers to facilitate meaningful conversations. The aim is to share tips and guidance with parents, and multiple workshops are likely to be necessary.

Q: Has a plan for the continuation of teaching in the event of another lockdown been compiled?

A: This is in progress and will be completed by the end of September 2020. Other Schools nearby are in a similar position, continuing work on their plans throughout the month. The main difficulty is determining how home learning can be comparable to that delivered in the classroom. The most likely situation is that one or more class is required to isolate, and so most effort is being focused on planning for this eventuality.

It was agreed that the outcome targets outlined in Section A be approved provisionally, pending detailed scrutiny at the first meeting of the Standards and Effectiveness Committee.

RESOLVED: That outcome targets be brought back to the next Governing Body meeting, after consideration by the Standards and Effectiveness Committee.

(c) School Evaluation Form

The Chair introduced this item, with the School Evaluation Form having been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Some areas relating to standards of education were flagged as 'requires improvement' due to the delayed introduction of the new School curriculum. Efforts to embed the new curriculum last year were impacted due to COVID-19, but teacher training took place before the summer holiday and further ongoing training is planned this year.

The Head Teacher confirmed that the introduction of a new curriculum is a long process to work through, which is likely to take the entirety of the 2020-21 academic year. It is important for all staff to have a deep understanding of the new curriculum and its impact on children before it is considered to be fully completed. Subject leadership is now better established across the School, with every staff member having a written action plan as well as responsibility for a curriculum area. Improvements have been made to reading and phonics, which are likely to be key areas of interest for Ofsted. The DHT has established a clear rationale for the new reading curriculum, and work will continue across every other subject in a similar manner.

The school's vision is in the process of being rewritten for the purpose of clarity.

Q: Have there been any recent episodes of bullying within the School since returning in September?

A: No cases have been reported to the School's leadership.

14. SAFEGUARDING

It was reported to Governors that another family has moved to a child protection plan over the summer holidays.

15. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

(a) School Fund Audit Report

It was confirmed that the School Fund Audit Report would be made available for the Finance Committee meeting in October.

(b) SFVS

The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) was signed and returned by the School in January 2020.

(c) Finance update

A report was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting, since there had been no prior F & P sub-committee meeting.

There is an overspend on building repairs and maintenance work, but the majority of spending is now complete. The figure reported does not include work to the red staircase over the summer. All work was necessary and done at the lowest cost, utilising the Site Manager's time where possible.

With regards to ground maintenance, staff have worked hard to secure improvement to the Early Years playground at little or no cost.

Spending is currently on track for learning resources, at a running total of c.£12,000, if the additional expenses attributed to COVID-19 are not taken into account. With COVID-19 extras included, a current running total of £19,048 equates to 69% of the total budget available (£26,519).

Of the £2,680 budgeted for swimming, only £80 has been spent with swimming on hold for the time being. The Head Teacher commented that the School has booked the earliest possible swimming slots for children (when able to resume), in doing so minimising the potential for cross contamination from previous swimmers.

Governors commented that the School's contingency funds are being used. It was explained that, whilst the contingency has been reduced, this is on account of a number of factors: a decrease to the teaching budget; an increase to the Educational Teaching Assistant (ETA) budget; and an increase in Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding on account of two new children. The latter cannot be reflected simply in the budget, and is instead reported as a credit to the ETA budget from the LA.

The overall financial position is not as healthy as the school would like, largely on account of c.£20,000 necessary spend on COVID-19 which will limit future investment on resources and training.

Ms H Blackburn left the meeting at 8:09 pm.

16. TEACHER APPRAISAL POLICY & TEACHER PAY POLICY

It was confirmed that both the Proposed Teacher's Pay Award 2020 and the Support Staff Proposed Pay Award 2020 have been allowed for in the School's budget.

RESOLVED: That both awards have been allowed for in the School's budget.

17. POLICIES FOR REVIEW BY FULL GOVERNING BODY

(a) Whistleblowing Policy

The Chair proposed adopting the LA model whistleblowing policy, which he confirmed having reviewed on behalf of the Governing Body.

RESOLVED: That Governors approved the whistleblowing policy.

(b) Keeping children safe in education; and Safeguarding Child Protection Policy

The Head Teacher confirmed that updates to the LA model safeguarding policy reflected changes to the keeping children safe in education statutory guidance.

RESOLVED: That Governors approved the safeguarding child protection policy.

(c) Designated Teacher Policy

RESOLVED: That Governors approved the designated Teacher Policy.

(d) NQT Policy

Q: The policy provides for mentors to be allocated to each NQT. Do teachers in the School currently have enough time to take on this additional responsibility?

A: This would be factored into teachers' rotas as necessary; however, the School currently has no NQTs.

Q: Should a specific Governor have oversight of NQTs?

A: Governors should ensure that staff are doing what is needed to implement the NQT policy, with the job of mentors and the school's senior leadership to support NQTs.

The Chair and the Head Teacher noted that evidence of policies being implemented would be gathered by the relevant monitoring Governor.

The Head Teacher noted that many policies now require approval by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

18. CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2022/23

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred until the next Governing Body meeting on 9 November 2020.

19. LONG TERM STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, it was agreed that recovering children's lost education from the past six months, as well as ensuring sufficient financial recovery, be the immediate objectives for the School.

It was also noted that the Chair will be retiring as a Chair at the conclusion of the 2020-21 academic year.

20. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND GOVERNOR VISITS

(a) Governor visits

The Chair stressed the need for active monitoring to take place, and the need for a follow-up meeting with the Head Teacher to decide how best for Governors to conduct remote monitoring. The focus of the class monitoring should be delivery of the new curriculum.

ACTION: The Chair and Head Teacher to coordinate a follow-up discussion in relation to governor visits.

It was agreed that the Health and Safety (H&S) Governor be permitted to visit the School site to undertake a physical assessment.

ACTION: The Head Teacher to organise a site visit for the H&S Governor.

Monitoring of Finance and Safeguarding would continue remotely in the immediate term.

(b) Governor training

The Chair alerted Governors to the new dashboard provided by Kirklees Business Solutions, and encouraged each Governor to sign up to access links to relevant online training.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Use of the School Hall by external organisations

The Head Teacher sought Governors' approval in principle for community use of the School premises outside core hours. Proposals have been received from several organisations including the Dogs Trust (who have a RA), Slimming World and a local church (who used the hall over the summer). The primary concern would be how the space can be cleaned appropriately, providing that adequate safety measures have been put in place by the groups themselves.

The legality of community activities was discussed, with it being concluded that the three propositions currently under review were permitted in line with the latest COVID-19 restrictions.

The Head Teacher stressed that whilst the desire to utilise the hall would have a positive financial impact, he was conscious not to raise any concerns with children's parents. Given relationships with parents have been managed well to date, he proposed being open with the school community to be provide reassurance in advance.

Governors agreed in principle to allow selected community groups to utilise the hall outside normal hours.

This is predicated on the School seeking reassurances from external organisations regarding the current restrictions as well as a RA.

ACTION: The Head Teacher to gather together information relating to the current proposals and send to Governors for detailed consideration.

(b) Visitors to School

The Head Teacher sought views from Governors regarding restarting visits from volunteers (including reading friends). It was proposed that visitors to the School premises be minimised, with the exception of direct emotional support to children and any activities able to be undertaken at a distance.

RESOLVED: That unnecessary visits to the school site continue to be minimised.

(c) Dogs on the School Site

Potential new rules surrounding dogs being admitted to the School site were discussed in light of recent events.

ACTION: The Head Teacher to monitor the situation and report back to Governors in due course.

(d) Governor Dashboard

The Chair explained that this new tool provided by Kirklees Business Solutions would be utilised in future for all meeting documentation. In addition, news articles and Governor training can be accessed.

(e) Governor Skills Matrix

ACTION: The Chair to send the skills matrix template to new Governors (Ms V Birchill-Edmondson and Ms J Hayes) for completion.

The Chair thanked Ms H Blackburn for her time and expertise as a Governor for the School, and in particular her tenure as Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.

22. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the next meetings of the Governing Body be held at the School (adhering to social distancing requirements in the hall) on the following dates:

Full Governing Body

Monday 9 November 2020 (5:00pm)

Monday 1 February 2021 (5:00 pm)

Standards and Effectiveness Committee

Tuesday 13 October 2020 (5:00 pm)

Monday 18 January 2021 (5:00 pm)

Finance Committee

Tuesday 13 October 2020 (6:00 pm)

Monday 18 January 2021 (6:00 pm)

23. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:10 pm.