

## Governors of Fairisle Junior School

### Minutes of a Meeting of the Whole Governing Body Tuesday 5 November 2019, 3.30pm

Governors present:

1. Steph Thurston (Chair)
2. Peter Howard (Headteacher)
3. Jess Planter-Dixon
4. Mike Dant
5. Phil Chapman
6. Katherine Minns
7. Nikki Webb
8. Brent Schwarz

Associate members present:

Bev Bessey

In attendance:

Robin Hayes (Assistant Headteacher)  
Sophie Lee (Clerk)

#### 1) Apologies

Alison Powell.

#### 2) Declarations of Interest

Declarations relating to today's agenda: none. Changes to the register of business interests: none.

#### 3) Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes from 1 October 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair with one amendment; the penultimate paragraph on page 2 should read "MD noted that one Y5 child he interviewed appeared to be behind in reading."

#### 4) Matters Arising – Including Action Points

All actions from 1 October are complete except those listed below. Mandy Gard will provide governor training as part of her 28 February visit from 9am. PC and MD have interviewed pupils.

**Action A:** Arrange for MD to look at books of same children/meet English leaders after half-term.

BB/MD

**Action B:** Write a report on the curriculum presentation.

JPD

**Action C:** Attend assemblies to talk about the role of governors and give termly updates on governance.

All gov's

**Action D:** Write a health and safety report once a term.

BS

**Action E:** Attend one visit between meetings plus events emailed from BB. Clerk to email date reminders.

All gov's/  
Clerk

**Action F:** Invite governors to staff meeting.

ST/PH

**Action G:** Look at history on Chromebooks/recent history work. BB to arrange date.

BB/PC

**Action H:** Look at maths on Chromebooks. BB to arrange date.

BB/BS

**Action I:** Confirm dates/times from leadership cycle and send to governors regularly.

Clerk

#### 5) Reappointment of BB as Associate Member

BB was reappointed as associate member.

#### 6) Budget Review 2019-2020

The move from Agresso to Business World was delayed from 1 March to 1 October and we cannot do any reporting at the moment. *(BS entered the meeting.)*

The Headteacher has worked with school finance officer Kiranveer Kaur who says our budget is very healthy. Minor increased staff costs include a 2.75% rise for teachers and pension increases. A revised 2019-2020 budget is on the Drive and AP had emailed questions in advance.

Question from AP: Do teaching costs for future years include estimates for spinal point increases?

The Headteacher said yes. *(BB entered the meeting.)*

Question from AP: Under 1340 special assistants why have we spent more than half?

The Headteacher said this code has been decreased from £160k to just above £150k. Some assistants left at the end of summer term as they were supporting pupils with EHCPs and we do not have as many EHCPs now.

Question from AP: Why is 1964 employee – other expenditure so little to date?

The Headteacher replied that the apprenticeship levy will come out of this code.

Question from AP: Under 2003 R and M term servicing we have already spent more than the original budget, so why have we not increased this code?

The Headteacher stated that the LA put in a commitment and then the money is spent but they do not cancel the commitment until the end of the financial year.

*(JPD entered the meeting.)*

Question from AP: Why do 4011 to 4035 all look low?

The Headteacher said that the bulk was spent in September/October ready for the year.

Question from AP: Why is 4053 general provisions over the revised budget? We put in £600, actual spend is £2891 and the revised budget is £3500?

The Headteacher explained that much of this was for food, eg: Y6 leavers' do, the sleepover, sports evening and some federation items. We get all the money back.

Question from ST: Why put the budget up to £3500 if we get the money back?

The Headteacher reported that it comes back in under a code in the nine thousands.

Question from AP: Why have we spent nearly three-quarters of 4089, bought in professional services – curriculum?

The Headteacher said much of this is spent as one lump sum at the start of the year.

Question from AP: Is 9046 (lettings) the charge for sports facilities?

The Headteacher said yes, for Simon Woods and photocopying for Simon/Alex Pope.

AP stated that the rest of the revised budget looks reasonable and future years will usually show a fictitious deficit because some expenses (particularly staff pay) will include a full year of inflation but the income is at current year prices.

Governors approved the revised budget for 2019-2020.

## **7) LA Building Extension Update**

The second progress meeting was held before half-term; progress has been quite slow. Columns in the school may contain asbestos and builders need to check because the steel structure will join to the columns; checking can only be done on weekends or holidays. The school has been opened for three or four weekends and will open for several more in future. No asbestos has been found so far.

Builders have changed the fire break above the suspended ceiling. They are happy that they have done everything they can and are waiting for steels to be delivered. They have poured the sub-floor.

Work planned in the next three weeks includes steelwork design and fabrication, fabrication of curtain walling, removal of existing curtain walling, asbestos work, the

ceiling removal and replacement (done) and electrical work including replacing lights.

The completion date is now 2 April 2020, 43 working days after the contract completion date, due to the steel/asbestos issue.

**Question from ST: How will the delay impact the school in September?**

The Headteacher stated that by September the build will be finished.

**8) Performance Against SIP Targets**

We have started using a focus week approach for each year group in each half-term. In the first half of term there is an intensive focus for each year and then we go back in the second half of term to look at targets. One complete round of focus weeks has been done.

JPD reported that the focus week approach has been much better. Staff were worried initially and thought they might be gruelling, but they are done over a week and so give a true reflection of behaviour and learning and books.

The Deputy Head reported they have been hard work for the SLT, with work left to certain SLT members sometimes to carry things out themselves. There is also more paperwork. Governors can come in and PC/MD have done pupil conferencing.

The Deputy Head said that focus weeks are quite time-consuming for everyone involved and we are still working on getting the balance completely right. It has also cost us more for supply as pupil progress meetings are done within the same time so over four weeks we had four supply staff in.

The positives include the fact that focus weeks are not so taxing when doing pupil progress as one year group is done at a time. It is not a good idea to do a focus week at the end of a half-term as it is too stressful. It may also be best not to hold one in the first week of a half-term.

Both the year groups and SLT have been given action points and the SLT will discuss issues tomorrow. It was noted that Y6 had only had three actual school weeks at the time of their focus.

Pupils are not always getting enough time to practise learned skills in all year groups. Staff have had good discussions on pedagogy resulting from focus weeks. Although staff might not be getting explicit coaching and mentoring in a class we are doing it because we are discussing what is going on.

Objectives 1 and 2 on the school improvement plan are about quality of education and English, heavily oriented towards English and maths. We will start to do a deep dive in our focus weeks. It should be two weeks spent weighing the pig and then let the staff work to improve.

This week is the second Y6 focus week, including a book look. Only two out of four teachers will be observed and the year leader will be out of class with SLT. The English leaders will be invited to talk to governors about SIP objective 2.

Objective 3 is on personal development. The DfE relationships and sex education guidance has changed. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education but not PSHE or science.

Behaviour is good but is still monitored. Some Y3 parents do not like the strike system but we have very good behaviour here and continue to use strikes. If we know about bullying we deal with it properly and there are clear boundaries. An assembly is held

AGENDA

each half-term on behaviour with one today on lunchtime behaviour.

**Question from MD: Do you follow up on strikes?**

The Headteacher said yes, every one.

The Deputy Head explained that for three strikes in a session pupils get a behaviour form. If they get three forms in a week they see her and miss lunch. For six or more strikes they spend Friday lunch with a year leader. Strike charts are collected every week. One child is getting 37 strikes a week so the mother will be called in and the child will probably be put on a behaviour chart.

**Question from ST: How do we ensure consistency from each teacher?**

The Deputy Head replied that her summer behaviour report gave recommendations for the next year group. There were two Y3 girls last year who needed more consistency so she spoke to the teacher and they have had more strikes. A staff meeting on behaviour is tomorrow. For each strike the child loses two minutes of break/lunch as they need an immediate consequence. SLT also check during focus weeks. They can see a clear pattern for strikes given by staff on job shares.

The criteria for strikes were put together by the children, with medium and high level behaviours. Y3 also have some low level behaviours.

**Question from MD: Do you compliment children who get no strikes?**

The Deputy Head said that they do not; they could consider calling out their names. The Headteacher noted that we expect good behaviour and 90% never get strikes. PC noted that complimenting pupils should be done with sensitivity as they may not want to be seen as swots.

Objective 4 is attendance and punctuality. Objective 5 is improving leadership and management, including ensuring colleagues are trusted to do their job well.

JPD reported that her focus week did not feel like a normal observation and felt learning-based. She feels there has been a shift as far as trust is concerned over the last four years and the OFSTED Good judgement helps to give staff more room. Mandy Gard found that there was a newfound confidence among leaders. JPD noted that preparing for focus week involved only the preparation teachers do anyway.

Objective 5 also includes staff well-being and JPD reported a definite work/life balance shift in school. Marking contracts have changed which has had a massive impact on time spent marking and it is all going in the right direction.

**9) Year Group Focus Weeks/Y3 Settling-In Survey**

The Y3 settling-in survey was done as part of their focus week, with 100% saying they liked their teacher and they were kind and fair.

Other answers were mostly in the 90s apart from "Children behave well in my class" at 64%. Y3 are a well-behaved group but may have said that after seeing strikes given out. We do not want teachers to hold back on strikes just so children think behaviour is good. Strikes are new to Y3 children and the question may need re-wording.

When asked if work is not too easy or too hard 77% said yes and 79% said they had been asked how school could be better. Comments were overwhelmingly positive and Y3 have settled in well.

A summary of focus weeks will go on the Drive and an example report was shown to governors. The focus is quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management. Each week includes lesson observations, work scrutinies, talking to children, pupil conferencing and transitions around school.

The reports list key strengths of the year groups and areas to develop for the year and SLT. They also say well done to staff. On the whole focus weeks have been a really positive exercise but are hard work.

## **10) Governor Visits**

### Autumn Term, Pupil Interviews in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6

MD found it difficult to get children to talk, although Y6 was no problem. There were marked differences between good and bad pupils in Y6. Y5 were a bit more problematic, Y4 very problematic and Y3 were the most difficult to get responses from. One Y3 child was very talkative but others less so. All pupils said they did not notice the difference between the infants and junior school.

The Headteacher did re-word questions for Y3 and we could vary questions for each year group. The Headteacher noted that generally by October half-term pupils have settled in. It may be that a range of governors need to interview pupils instead.

PC found that older children were well aware of the behaviour policy, younger children less so. Y4 were a bit challenging. When talking to Y3 he spent twice the time with each child and they did notice a difference in their new school, such as having to eat in break time. MD found that children liked sitting anywhere they wanted in the hall as there are no pre-set places like in the infant school.

PC found children did notice a difference at the junior school and thought English is harder but maths is easier. All pupils knew about strikes. In Y4 and Y3 in particular many children had English as a second language. The children were an absolute delight. Governors need to spend time with Y3 pupils to encourage them to talk.

Governors will ask Mandy Gard for tips on interviewing children, possibly using creative conversations and activities to encourage talking. It may be better to start interviewing in Y3 and then work up to Y6.

## **11) Attendance and Punctuality, SEND Report, Pupil Premium Strategy**

*(Robin Hayes entered the meeting.)*

The pupil premium strategy is largely unchanged; please email any questions to Robin.

**Action J:** Review SEND report with Robin Hayes.

NW

Attendance and punctuality dipped last year. Attendance for autumn 1 was 96.2%, equal to the same period last year, and lates have decreased by five hours. Sessions lost for term-time holidays have nearly doubled, probably due to the Platt court case.

We ask for penalty notices to be given but the LA do not always issue them or they are not paid and never followed up, so there is no perceived downside to term-time holidays. The LA run out of time to follow them up so they can be ignored. A child needs to miss 10 consecutive sessions to get a fine and parents know this rule and exploit it, but we cannot change it as it is LA policy.

During inspections OFSTED will ask to see an attendance analysis, clear behaviour and attendance policies and details of work with pupils with particular needs.

### **Question from ST: Do you have a different tolerance level for particular pupils?**

Robin Hayes stated that in virtually every situation they do not as attendance in a primary is dependent on the parent. He could not think of any child whose needs prohibit them from attending every day except in the case of illness. One child has a medical reason for poor attendance but this is authorised with relevant evidence.

**Question from PC: What is the LA policy on fine collection? Do they send fines to a collection agency?**

The Headteacher reported he had submitted a freedom of information request on how many penalty notices were issued and paid and how many were not issued after a school's request. We ask the LA to issue notices and they say yes or no, but we always request them. There were hundreds of notices last year that were requested but were never paid and not followed up.

**Question from PC: If a request does not meet the LA criteria do you get feedback?**

The Headteacher said no. (*NW entered the meeting.*)

Members of the SLT welcome children into school each day which can discourage parents from being late. We do not have a formal attendance policy. There may be a legitimate issue behind absence such as illness.

We send a range of forthright letters to parents in different circumstances, eg: if there is a pattern of absence or a warning if their child is near persistent absence (below 90% attendance). If they are PA we will refuse to authorise absences without medical evidence. Last year parents were sent termly attendance reports for two terms and the summer report also contained attendance information for most of the term.

There is an option to do home visits but we have limited capacity to do these and the employee who used to do them has left.

**Question from ST: Why have we not replaced that employee?**

The Headteacher said that she was employed across the federation but this was not sustainable long-term. Federation attendance is good and did not decrease after she left.

Following the letters and any home visits there are two opportunities to meet parents and then they can be referred to the education welfare officer (EWO). The EWO will start an assessment and if this is unsuccessful we start a process called Fast Track to Attendance which is dealt with by the LA and in reality is very lengthy. Court is the ultimate end point and once any sanctions are given the whole process starts again.

Lates are more difficult to tackle, with 41 hours lost to lateness in autumn 1. We can send letters and have meetings but have no powers beyond that. If a child arrives after 9.20am they miss the session.

**Question from ST: Why can't there be consequences for lateness?**

Robin Hayes reported that the parent has legal obligations on attendance but if they are routinely late there is no legal recourse, only what we think of here and we cannot necessarily penalise the child. The only action we could take is with the parents and we need to consider the tone and approach taken with parents.

**Question from KM: Do the letters say how many hours late the child has?**

Robin Hayes said yes, the letters say they have lost x number of minutes. The Headteacher confirmed we write in the newsletter that if they miss five minutes a day they will miss a total of x hours and we also put numbers in reports.

The Chair noted that we need to complain to the LA that they do not do enough to support us on attendance.

**Action K:** Write to LA about their lack of support on attendance.

ST/PH

Rewards and prizes are given for good attendance, including family cinema tickets to get the family involved.

**Question from KM: Has attendance improved after implementing rewards?**

Robin Hayes said that attendance was stationary from last year to this. The Headteacher noted that attendance did improve directly after the rewards came in. Attendance is a bit stagnant because of one year group.

Next steps on attendance are:

- governors to be aware of new DfE guidance, the practice known as off-rolling (this never occurs at FJS) and LA part-time timetable guidance
- consideration of school capacity to tackle attendance issues and how we challenge parents, particularly for lateness
- consideration of whether termly attendance reports should go to all parents (including in the summer term).

The Chair noted that as attendance was stagnant we should consider what to try differently this year. BB will produce a timetable for staff standing at the front entrance hall in the morning, with one person there for 20 minutes after doors are closed. Dropping off a child late should be uncomfortable.

FJS has had two children in recent years whose parents chose to electively home educate them; this happens across the federation. OFSTED states that to get Good we need to take appropriate, swift and effective action on attendance. *(Robin Hayes left.)*

**Action L:** Email suggestions on attendance to Robin Hayes.

All gobs

**12) Dates from Leadership Cycle**

A Y6 book look takes place tomorrow afternoon and governors can come in any time this week.

**13) Safeguarding**

A report shows 1824 incidents for 1 October to 25 October. The safeguarding self-evaluation tool has been completed. One item is yellow as a staff member on maternity leave has not read part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education but all other points are green. We make use of informal LA network meetings and a designated safeguarding lead is always in school as we have four.

**14) Business Manager Update**

A new business manager will start work at FJS next Monday.

**Question from ST: Who will train her?**

The Headteacher will do much of the training with support from the LA finance team.

**15) AOB**

**15.1 Action M:** Begin link governor work on curriculum.

PC/JPD

**15.2** A playground inspection report is on the Drive.

**Question from BS: Have the repairs identified in the report been completed?**

The Headteacher replied that the inspection was done on 28 May but the report was received today. He told Graham Pugh he is unhappy with that and received an apology. The Headteacher is sure all repairs have been done but will check with Graham Pugh.

**15.3 Action N:** Review food standards.

MD

**16) Time and Date of Next Meeting**

The next whole governing body meeting is on Tuesday 3 December 2019 at 3.30pm. *The meeting closed at 5.15pm.*

<b>ACTION POINTS FROM 5 NOVEMBER 2019</b>			
	<b>Action to be completed</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
<b>A</b>	Arrange for MD to look at books of same children/meet English leaders after half-term.	BB/MD	3 Dec 2019
<b>B</b>	Write a report on the curriculum presentation.	JPD	End of this term
<b>C</b>	Attend assemblies to talk about the role of governors and give termly updates on governance.	All govts	End spring term
<b>D</b>	Write a health and safety report once a term.	BS	End spring term
<b>E</b>	Attend one visit between meetings plus events emailed from BB. Clerk to email date reminders.	All govts/ Clerk	Ongoing
<b>F</b>	Invite governors to staff meeting.	ST/PH	3 Dec 2019
<b>G</b>	Look at history on Chromebooks/look at recent history work. BB to arrange date.	BB/PC	3 Dec 2019
<b>H</b>	Look at maths on Chromebooks. BB to arrange date.	BB/BS	3 Dec 2019
<b>I</b>	Confirm dates/times from leadership cycle and send to governors regularly.	Clerk/BB	Ongoing
<b>J</b>	Review SEND report with Robin Hayes.	NW	3 Dec 2019
<b>K</b>	Write to LA about their lack of support on attendance.	ST/PH	3 Dec 2019
<b>L</b>	Email suggestions on attendance to Robin Hayes.	All govts	3 Dec 2019
<b>M</b>	Begin link governor work on curriculum.	PC/JPD	3 Dec 2019
<b>N</b>	Review food standards.	MD	3 Dec 2019
<b>Agenda Items for Future Meetings</b>			<b>Date</b>
	Update on building extension	PH	Ongoing
	English leaders to talk about SIP objective 2		3 Dec 2019
	Performance against SIP targets	All govts	Ongoing
	Agree newsletter updates on the budget, decisions made and governor roles	All govts	Once a term
	Safeguarding (standing item, to include CPOMS reports, safeguarding meeting summaries and accident reports)	PH	Ongoing