

Governors of Fairisle Junior School

Minutes of a Meeting of the Whole Governing Body Tuesday 28 April 2020, 3.30pm

Governors present:

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

Associate members present:

Bev Bessey

In attendance:

Maria Hughes (Business Manager)
Sophie Lee (Clerk)

This meeting was held entirely online.

1) Apologies

None.

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 3 March 2020 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair at the next meeting held in person.

4) Matters Arising – Including Action Points

All actions from 3 March are complete except those listed below. BS has spoken to the Headteacher about health and safety, including safety of staff and pupils during Covid-19 and the building site.

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

Action B: Write a health and safety report once a term.

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

Action D: Attend one staff meeting this term (Wednesdays at 3.30pm). Email BB/JPD in advance.

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

Action F: Review SEND report with Robin Hayes.

Action G: Write up outstanding governor visit report on Herne Bay School.

Action H: Ask all governors if they received enough guidance from Mandy Gard's visit.

Action I: Write a report on Mandy Gard's visit.

All gobs

BS

All gobs/
Clerk

All gobs

Clerk

NW

KM

All gobs

KM/NW/JPD

5) Covid-19 Report to Governors

AP requested a short report on the school's Covid-19 response and this is on Google Drive. The school closed on 23 March which was an awful day with tears in Y6.

The Headteacher wrote to all parents and gave out a mobile phone number they can call 24 hours a day for safeguarding concerns or emergencies. We have had four or five calls on this phone, mostly about free school meal vouchers. Some children have been upset and the Head has spoken to one or two on the phone.

Since 23 March FJS has been open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children (defined by the government as children with a social worker). We have a skeleton staff with a teacher, members of support staff, member of the admin team and a cleaner who works early in the morning and concentrates on surfaces.

Only a small part of the school building is open including one classroom, Y6 toilets and the area outside the Head's office. Between five and 17 children have attended each day.

In the week before Easter holiday parents were given a letter if their child needed to attend so they could present it at any LA provision. Some FJS pupils are attending Oasis, Banister, Wordsworth, Oakwood and Shirley Warren schools instead. We are practising social distancing although this can be hard. Most children attending have parents who are critical workers.

Staff working from home received a work pack from Holly Cleveley including online training, subject leadership tasks (including updating skills progression documents) and planning. Due to differing circumstances staff have set their own (negotiated) deadlines. There is a central document to track all tasks and deadlines and next Wednesday a staff meeting will be held online.

Children start school at the normal time and we have arranged to work around some parents' shift times. Before the Easter holidays the kitchen was providing a hot meal but after Easter the kitchens combined into a local hub at Oakwood Primary and packed lunches are now delivered to us.

Cleaners have been very flexible and children do not share resources. An emergency evacuation drill saw all pupils evacuated in 45 seconds.

For children at home our website is updated each week by Holly Cleveley with bespoke plans for each year group tied to the topics they would be learning at school. We have also communicated to parents through our twitter feed.

The designated safeguarding leads met before the school closed to produce a list of vulnerable children. If a child had a social worker they were invited to continue to attend, but if the parent refused and for all other vulnerable children we contact them by phone at least once a week.

Child protection pupils are contacted daily, children in need twice or three times per week and all others (around 43 children) are contacted every week. This is time-consuming and staff have dealt with FSM voucher problems and children who are not very interested in talking.

Staff ask how the children are, about work, exercise and also talk to social workers for CP children. One parent is not answering calls so we have spoken to the social worker who will visit them this week.

Parents are cheerful and everyone so far is healthy. Sometimes a family will phone the school when their child is not on the list of vulnerable children and we will phone back. We also give out support websites for Covid-19.

Question from PC: Are any of the children attending school unwell?

The Headteacher reported that none of the children are unwell.

Question from AP: Are pupil premium children accessing the internet and what provision is being made for them if they do not have equipment at home?

The Headteacher said they had given out FSM vouchers. In the first week they sent a

QR code voucher through Wand for £11.50 to 57 parents who requested it (equal to five days of lunch) and parents chose a supermarket.

A government scheme was set up on 31 March at £15 per week but the changeover was very difficult. A total of 122 children qualify for FSM and every parent has had vouchers every week from 3 April. New four-week vouchers take parents up to around 21 May but have been very slow in coming.

(Maria Hughes logged in to the meeting.)

The government promised to provide laptops and 4G dongles to vulnerable children, defined as those with social workers and those on FSM, but then backtracked on including FSM children. We have been asked to produce a list of pupils with social workers and whether they need a laptop, although 4G dongles will only be given to Y7-Y13 children.

Governors thanked the staff for all of their hard work. There have been many positive comments from parents on twitter about the school's communication and hard work.

Teachers will soon call each child in their class and we have produced written guidance for these calls and created an Excel spreadsheet listing parent and child details. Teachers mainly make calls when they are on the rota to work in school.

On twitter the Head has asked parents not to stress about schoolwork as teachers will get pupils back on track but we cannot fix emotional trauma and no children are behind or ahead.

6) Budget 2020-2021

AP thanked the Headteacher and Maria Hughes for their work on the budget. There have been problems as we could not access Business World outside of school before yesterday. There was also a massive update in Business World yesterday. The updated budget is the final budget with outturns for 2019-20 and AP has inserted columns to show variances.

Under employee costs there is a slight overspend in salaries as we have recruited two NQTs and two teachers are returning from maternity leave. There are five new children with EHCPs in 2020-21, with a lunchtime assistant assigned to two of these. We will probably need more lunchtime assistants and that has been factored in.

There are some big variances from last year. The assistant site manager did not start from the beginning of the financial year and we have recruited a workload assistant. We have backdated the apprentice levy as it had not been paid in previous years. Employee costs for 2020-2021 total £1,544,217 compared to £1,322,810 last year.

Under premises the playground work is shown in repairs and maintenance and we have a quote coming. The fire risk assessment is in this year's budget but was not completed due to the building work; it will be done as soon as the building completes.

Question from AP: So some of the variances are due to work planned for 2019-20 delayed to 2020-21?

Maria Hughes said yes, the fire risk assessment was due in February/March but the LA agreed that we could defer renewing the FRA until after the extension is complete.

Water charges are cheaper than last year and charges at the infant school were similar.

Question from AP: Have we paid all water bills as the spend is only about 50% of what

it should be?

Maria Hughes confirmed that all bills are on there now. The fact that the cost is halved with the infant school may not be reflected in last year's budget.

Premises costs are £119,730 for 2020-21, up from £84,521, which includes new items for the building works and playground. Under transport there are no massive changes and the budget is £6300 this year compared to £5618 last year.

Under supplies and services there is some delayed spending. All SLAs are in this section. Superstar Sports was shown in the wrong line last year but this has now been corrected. We have paid city catering twice for the service charge.

Question from AP: Will we get a refund?

Maria Hughes said we may not pay this year but we will get in touch with them.

Total supplies and services costs for 2020-21 are £306,121, down from £348,900 last year.

Under internal recharges there are two codes for housing operations (lighting and fire alarm checks etc). We pay for 12 months of commitments at the beginning of the financial year but they do not reduce these when we pay a bill. At the end of the financial year we must ask them to remove the commitments otherwise it looks like we have spent around £6k more than we actually have. What we have spent in this code is actually shown in repairs and maintenance term servicing.

A confidential minute covers an item discussed at this point.

Under loans and financing we still have the £49k direct revenue financing.

Under income there is a big increase in SEN top-up funding due to five more EHCP pupils coming to us in 2020. The teacher pay and pensions grants and growth funding is slightly down. Our budget share has increased by 1%.

Question from AP: Where is the donation we were getting due to the extension delays?

The Headteacher stated the £20k from the LA will go into our capital fund. They will not allow us to put it in revenue as it is money from the sugar tax. The LA put £3k into our revenue fund which they should not have done. We will receive the full £20k and we must match fund that.

Question from AP: Is this the last set of figures?

The Headteacher said there could be more changes.

AP was thanked for her help with the budget. Governors approved the 2020-21 budget.

The Headteacher attended an online meeting with Ed Manger from Sienna Construction, Richard Hards, Clodagh Freeston from planning and Tom Robinson from Faithful and Gould. They hope to reopen the extension site next Monday or Tuesday with about three months of work left, so it should be finished by the start of August.

(Maria Hughes logged out of the meeting.)

7) School Improvement Officer Report of Visit

The SIO report is on the Drive. Staff are very pleased as Mandy Gard stated the school has continued to make rapid progress, is a self-improving school with a strong learning culture, the teacher governor role has been developed and there are no major changes needed, only tweaks.

8) Behaviour Report Spring Term 2020

The behaviour report on the Drive shows that consistency is improving. PE is slowly improving with the same people coming in 80% of the time and teachers not being asked to deal with issues so often. Simon Woods and PE staff have also been asked to make phone calls to parents. JPD noted we should stick with it in PE as she can see a difference and the strike charts we pass over are working.

Some parents are using the strike system at home. This term 300 children did not receive a single behaviour report (up from 260). Behaviour is good and the poor behaviour is generally from the same children.

9) Safeguarding

A report covers 3 March to 25 April. There were 40 home issues and a number of police reports (all about domestic violence). City schools feel they are doing the work of children's services as they are contacting children and parents more than children's services.

Our two EHCP children were offered places on our Covid-19 provision but agreed the children were safer at home. Another two pupils with EHCPs are joining us from April. Nine staff members have used free online wellbeing courses. The safeguarding report shows the guidance given to all teachers when phoning parents.

10) Policies

The staff attendance and absence policy was reviewed but is unchanged.

Question from AP: The policy includes staff names, should it give job titles instead?

The Headteacher said he was hopeful these staff members would not change for some time.

An annexe on Covid-19 has been added to the safeguarding policy. The local authority designated officer (LADO) has changed to Jemma Swann and we have had cause to contact her since the site closure. The annexe covers reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and what staff should do if they have concerns about a child or colleague during the pandemic.

Question from ST: Does the staff attendance policy have updates on Covid-19, eg: on self-isolation?

The Headteacher stated it does not but he could ask Robert Atkinson as we could write something across the federation.

Governors approved the staff attendance and absence policy and Covid-19 annexe to the safeguarding policy.

11) AOB

11.1 Governors congratulated all school staff on their efforts during the Covid crisis.

11.2 A confidential minute covers an item discussed at this point.

11.3 A quote to redecorate the whole school was £46k. However, the assistant site manager is now decorating during the closure (we have all the paint). Each class takes him about five days. At the moment this has cost £300.

11.4 In the autumn 107 pupils took part in the Active Live survey and we received the Gold (highest) rating. Governors congratulated the school.

11.5 We have been asked to continue the school's provision for select pupils during

the half-term holiday.

Question from AP: Will there be a financial implication of that?

The Headteacher noted that the DfE state we can apply for funding but this may be difficult. All staff are being paid normally in the half-term holiday. We will make sure the staff who work during half-term have not had to work in the week before or after (or something similar) using a rota system.

13) Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next whole governing body meeting is on Tuesday 2 June 2020 at 3.30pm.

The meeting closed at 5pm.

ACTION POINTS FROM 28 APRIL 2020			
	Action to be completed	By whom	By when
A	Attend assemblies to talk about the role of governors and give termly updates on governance.	All govts	TBC
B	Write a health and safety report once a term.	BS	End summer term
C	Attend one visit between meetings plus events emailed from BB. Clerk to email date reminders.	All govts/ Clerk	Ongoing
D	Attend one staff meeting this term (Wednesdays at 3.30pm). Email BB/JPD in advance.	All govts	TBC
E	Confirm dates/times from leadership cycle and send to governors regularly.	Clerk/BB	Ongoing
F	Review SEND report with Robin Hayes.	NW	2 June 2020
G	Write up outstanding governor visit report on Herne Bay School.	KM	2 June 2020
H	Ask all governors if they received enough guidance from Mandy Gard.	All govts	2 June 2020
I	Write a report on Mandy Gard's visit.	KM/NW/JPD	2 June 2020
Agenda Items for Future Meetings			Date
	Presentations from Robin Hayes/Holly Cleveley on SEND/more and most able	Robin/Holly	TBC
	Look at history from infant school to Y6	All govts	TBC
	Update on building extension	PH	Ongoing
	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