

Governors of Fairisle Junior School

Minutes of a Meeting of the Whole Governing Body Tuesday 12 January 2021, 3.30pm

Governors present:

1. Alison Powell (Acted As Chair)
2. Peter Howard (Headteacher)
3. Brent Schwarz
4. Katherine Minns
5. Phil Chapman
6. Lloyd Viney
7. Mike Dant

Associate members present:

Bev Bessey

In attendance:

Holly Cleveley (Assistant Headteacher)

Maria Hughes (Business Manager)

Sophie Lee (Clerk)

This meeting was held entirely online.

1) Apologies

Steph Thurston (Chair), Nikki Webb (Vice-Chair).

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 17 November were agreed and will be signed by the Chair at the next meeting held in person. (The December meeting was cancelled.)

4) Matters Arising, Including Action Points

All actions from 17 November are complete except those listed below. Governors had not been invited to staff meetings yet but were invited to a meeting tomorrow; BB will email invites to future meetings.

A new leadership cycle of events was produced but we are now in lockdown again so the SLT will meet next week to see what can be continued. We had planned to focus more on monitoring of staff and differentiation but this will not be possible due to online learning.

It is not appropriate for governors to watch teaching at the moment but the Headteacher has been dropping in to catch-ups and lessons. This means children and parents can see him and the teacher is supported. However, meaningful observations via a live lesson are not possible and these lessons are stressful and completely different to running a classroom.

Leaders have given chunks of feedback to teachers but it is hard for them. The Head is going into classes to look at the relationship between teachers and children and the dialogue. This is not a place for governors at the moment but it could be if the lockdown is long-term.

Holly Cleveley noted it has been daunting for some teachers to use Zoom and some have not felt comfortable. It is about supporting and helping teachers and she has given feedback. Leaders have a more informal, supportive role at the moment.

LV reported we have a code of conduct for home learning but it is still a novelty for children and they need the right mindset. The quality of some work has been really good and children have been really engaged. During his self-isolation some children did not like live lessons and preferred to work on their own and parents can manage their

time more easily without live lessons.

Question from AP: Trade unions were concerned with Zoom invading teachers' privacy, has that been an issue?

The Headteacher stated it has not and we have also had no section 44 letters from staff wanting to work at home due to workplace safety. Some heads locally had many letters. We did not open on Monday 4 January and the leader of the council and the LA Head of Education were supportive.

KM and AP met Holly Cleveley yesterday. Maria Hughes has bought access to NGA online training and will chase up the details.

Action A: Invite governors to the subject leader Zoom staff meetings.

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

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

Action D: Invite governors to Zoom elements of leadership cycle.

Action E: Arrange one Zoom meeting with your linked subject leader before next meeting.

Action F: Chase NGA online training. Clerk to email details to governors.

BB

All govs

BS

BB

All govs

Maria

Hughes

5) Covid-19 Update

FJS has had 15 positive covid cases since September (six children, nine adults) including three teachers, one TA, four lunchtime staff and a PE coach. Headteachers provided a test and trace service until Christmas Eve. The Head had to call parents on 23 December to report a Y3 staff member with covid and relevant children had to self-isolate until Boxing Day. Almost all parents were positive and thankful.

It was absolutely the right decision not to open on 4 January and the Head spoke to the Chair at the time. Most local schools were also closed. We have around 67 critical worker/vulnerable children in school and 235 in Zoom lessons, catch-ups, music and PE. About 70 children are not joining Zoom so the teachers are making calls home.

We were given 18 chromebooks in November and our allocation was increased to 88, of which about 57 have been given out.

Question from AP: Are the remaining chromebooks prepared in school and ready?

The Headteacher confirmed they are all ready to go.

Question from LV: Can we keep them?

The Headteacher said yes. Parents have signed a form to say they will return them when their children leave FJS.

Question from AP: Are they given out if pupils are temporarily isolating?

The Headteacher said no. If pupils are self-isolating they isolate for the entire 10-day period.

A letter was sent to critical worker parents reminding them that the best place for children is still at home, but a change in government guidance means many more critical worker children are in. More parents are at work and some parents are stretching the definitions or their companies are telling employees they are critical. We had 25-30 children in school during March lockdown and 65-70 now.

(BS left the meeting.)

6) Home Learning Update

Holly Cleveley explained the home learning arrangements. Home learning was

reviewed in December and we had planned weekly timetables, but decided that in order to give more structure we would break it down into individual days.

Our website has home learning sections for each year group so children can access learning for each day. We have said just try your best, be flexible and do the work in an order that suits you. Governors were shown the website content.

There is a timetable for every day with suggested times to spend on each lesson. There are also additional activities such as challenges. Work is in pdf or powerpoint so it is available to all devices and a complete paper pack can also be collected from the office on Monday morning.

Each day there is contact with the class teacher, eg: a catch-up session, answering questions or celebrating success. There are also live PE and music sessions. We are using Oak Academy online lessons to ensure consistency of approach.

If pupils do not attend we take a register of all sessions and make calls home. Parents can send queries or concerns to homelearning@fjsslive.net. Attendance over Zoom is increasing.

We are constantly reviewing home learning and will meet year leaders tomorrow. A parent questionnaire will ask for feedback. Wherever possible we ensure we are still delivering the spring curriculum at home. The children in school are getting the same learning opportunities and timetable.

Year leaders are choosing to use appropriate resources such as Oak Academy, Bitesize, Hamilton Trust and White Rose maths. We are trying to keep learning engaging. It is important to keep engagement with core learning plus fun ways to motivate children.

Teachers are asking for a minimum of one piece of work emailed to them for feedback and celebration. Pupils are taking pride in their work which is wonderful to see and it is great to see personalised feedback from teachers. It is early days but we are pleased with how it is going and have had really positive comments from parents.

We will keep adapting home learning, embedding it and keeping it engaging and positive. The most important message for parents is that children are happy, feel safe and are enjoying learning.

The Headteacher noted that staff have worked incredibly hard, with teaching in school plus providing a service to children at home and he said well done and thank you. Governors also thanked staff.

Pink group resources on the website give differentiated learning and teachers have spoken to parents of these children. They give a personalised program of tasks. SEN children who need totally different provision have been emailed bespoke provision. Open-ended activities give scope for extension work and weekly projects are optional.

Question from AP: There is access to extra resources for gifted and talented pupils, do teachers follow up on that?

Holly Cleveley said yes, teachers say things like I really think you should try a task and give nudges. It is important not to put a ceiling on children's learning as there may be other children who want to try that challenge.

All children have their teacher's email address with the Head copied in to replies. A parent has tweeted positively about FJS home learning to OFSTED.

Governors thanked Holly Cleveley. *(Holly Cleveley left the meeting.)*

7) Budget Update

Maria Hughes explained the latest budget report after nine months of the financial year. The report shows end of year predictions, figures from the original budget and revised figures from the autumn. The total salaries code is in a good place, predicted to be up £96,314. We have lower supply costs than we had predicted and there are a few backdated salary increases.

Question from AP: Why is there 44% remaining under special assistants? Are we not employing those assistants?

Marie Hughes stated that when this was reviewed there was more of a plan around 1:1 assistants and we probably over-budgeted just in case. We have no vacancies currently for teaching assistants.

Question from AP: Are they not attending school or being paid?

Maria Hughes stated they are being paid. The report is up to date to December.

Premises costs are very close to the planned budget. There is an overspend in grounds maintenance for extra tree surgery and drainage clearance. Total premises costs are up £7185.

Question from AP: Are there any utilities outstanding?

Maria Hughes explained she had factored in electric and gas and one more bill for each.

Under transport we still need to pay for the vehicle and insurance etc. Under equipment and recharges there is high spending under health and safety but we stayed at the revised October budget. There is an overspend in uniform as we placed large orders so there is plenty for the year.

Question from AP: Where is PPE shown?

Maria Hughes stated it is under health and safety. Covid costs are all in one line to track it if we claim from the government. We have completed one claim and are waiting for an update on the next claim.

The figure is high for contract catering, with £85k originally budgeted to feed all FSM pupils for a year. This was reduced to £45k in October as the government paid for FSM vouchers (giving us about £40k). We will probably spend only about £25k so there will be more money we can keep.

Question from AP: Will FSM resume at the beginning of March?

The Headteacher explained we thought the DfE would reopen the voucher scheme but now we are only allowed to order vouchers if the meal provider cannot provide lockdown/isolation boxes. We can only claim £3.50 back for each box but if they cannot do a box we can claim £15 per child per week. The quality and cost of boxes has been in the news so we have ordered one to check the quality. We had good feedback in the autumn on self-isolation boxes. If the quality drops we may need to do something else.

Mobile phone charges include long calls to Edenred about vouchers. There is a slight overspend in computing (purchase of hardware) as we installed sound bars in all classrooms and tidied wires.

Question from AP: There is an underspend in bought in professional services – curriculum and school trips, will school trips show a corresponding reduction in income?

Maria Hughes said yes. In curriculum we would have had more visitors doing training or teaching. There is £7400 shown in school trip income.

The £49k was transferred to our capital budget which paid for playground and kitchen works.

Income includes the school improvement grant, teacher pension and pay grants, University of Winchester payments and the summer payment for SEN top-up funding with the next payment due soon.

There is a predicted difference of £124,770 (surplus) between the revised budget and predicted outturn, with an overall total surplus of £405,675 in the revised budget.

The remaining balance in the capital budget is £9163. The LA gave us £21,488 as a contribution to the playground, which cost us about £80k (£49k transferred into capital).

Question from AP: Will the surplus be clawed back by the LA?

The Headteacher said no as long as we have plans for it. There is a big underspend but we want to upgrade the CCTV cameras and system as cameras in the extension do not work with the old system. We are also changing all blinds in classes in February and there are several other things we wish to spend on.

Question from AP: What is the cost of the blinds?

The Headteacher reported it was approved by governors in autumn at about £6k.

Governors agreed to the CCTV expenditure at £5819 which will give us 12 cameras and more visibility on the car park and side of the building.

The payroll reconciliation budget is shown. Every month our total payroll spend is put into a separate budget which pays our payroll provider and this is reconciled.

A sum of £2.5k has been in the community budget for a long time which we could consider spending. The Headteacher will bring ideas to governors for spending of the surplus.

(Maria Hughes left the meeting.)

8) Reports From Governor Visits Plus Questions To Follow Up

On 27 November AP spoke to LV and Brad Phillips about IT planning and delivery. LV stated that they are looking at the lockdown as an opportunity and expecting IT literacy to improve. They plan to include more computing in the lesson frameworks and this is on the agenda for tomorrow's staff meeting.

IT equipment is cleaned and left for 72 hours before being passed to the next class. This means that some IT-related curriculum areas have experienced slippage but should catch up by the end of the year.

Question from PC: Laptops are cleaned and also left for 72 hours, why do both?

The Deputy Head explained they are being cautious and careful. They have been told they have to do that with books.

Question from PC: But books are not cleaned – are you denying access to laptops?

The Deputy Head stated they do clean the front cover of books.

LV noted they normally have a computing lesson once or twice per half-term so the computers can wait 72 hours for the next class so there is no real loss of learning.

Question from PC: What about the slippage? It does seem over-the-top.

The Deputy Head noted staff felt safer with it. Children are asymptomatic a lot. When

they go back into school they will look into it and see what the guidance is.

AP also met Robin Hayes about the pupil premium. Our website only shows actual expenditure for 2018/19 not 2019/20, but that is understandable given the March lockdown. Robin will look at that but there are now other priorities.

Some expenditure on covid could be classed as PP expenditure if we appear to not be spending to our limit, eg: admin work for vouchers or cost of food boxes. We have contacted every child at home who qualifies as FSM (155 children) to offer food boxes.

Question from AP: Are you funding food boxes from covid expenditure? Could we claim against PP as the vast majority go to PP children?

The Headteacher reported they come out of the contract catering code. We can only claim £3.50 for each child and each box. Most parents prefer vouchers but the DfE are pushing schools towards boxes.

9) LA Dedicated Schools Grant Transfer Proposal

The LA are consulting on a possible transfer of 0.5% from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) schools block to the high needs block. Because our LA is small there are not many special provision schools so some children go to very expensive Hampshire schools. The LA will spend £6.6m for the coming year sending children out of the city.

The Headteacher disagrees with the 0.5% transfer, believes the LA should spend within their means and asked what other LAs are doing differently.

If the 0.5% transfer is agreed there are three options, which would cost FJS either £12.8k, £7.9k or £7.3k. Option 2 is better across LA primary schools. The Headteacher is Schools Forum representative so can vote on this.

Schools in more deprived areas tend to have to contribute most and the least deprived do not contribute anything because of the minimum funding guarantee. Our spend is high on SEN including EHCPs and TAs.

Question from MD: Would any of our children benefit from this?

The Headteacher said no and there is a disadvantage because we lose the money.

Question from MD: If we contribute are we helping children in the city?

The Headteacher said we are but help should come from the LA's own budget.

PC stated he is against the 0.5% transfer. *(PC left the meeting.)*

Question from AP: Would the LA look at our carry forward?

The Headteacher said the LA are asking for money from all potential schools whatever the state of their reserves.

The Schools Forum meeting on 20 January is a public meeting with minutes on the LA website. AP noted we had additional children join since the census used to forecast next year's budget and we could use that as a defence because we have no grants for the extra pupils. She agreed that the 0.5% transfer should not be made.

10) Safeguarding

A report shows 314 CPOMs incidents including pastoral care, child protection and parental contact. We tend not use the domestic violence tab very much but public protection notices come under this heading.

We have had 15 covid cases. Nine staff members had to self-isolate in the last week of term after all being contacted by test and trace within 15 minutes; PHE said this was a

coincidence. We had to close three classes.

On 2 January the Headteacher discussed possible school re-opening with the Deputy Head and then with SLT and year leaders on 3 January. They met other federation heads who all decided not to open on 4 January.

February 12 would have been an INSET day so that was moved to 4 January and we reopened to critical worker/vulnerable children on Wednesday 6 January. There is another INSET on 7 June which could be used in the first two days of January so we achieve 190 schools days open.

DSLs met on Monday about all vulnerable children. They make daily calls to children on child protection and regular calls to other vulnerable children.

Senior staff are still supporting Shirley Warren Primary at a distance and are also supporting leadership at Oakwood Primary. We have received lots of parental feedback, almost all positive, with many comments shown in the report.

11) Safeguarding Self-Evaluation

The LA needs our safeguarding self-evaluation by the end of January. NW has seen it but please email any questions to the Head.

12) Policies

There are no changes to the appraisal guidelines for support employees which is an LA policy, agreed with the unions/associations. The draft admissions policy is an LA policy in consultation with schools. There are no changes.

There are no changes to the governors' allowances policy. There is a further annexe to the safeguarding policy, updated for 2021 and the new lockdown. Governors were asked to examine this annexe.

The appraisal guidelines for support employees, draft admissions policy and governors' allowances policy were approved.

13) AOB

13.1 FJS pupils chose the name of the new Oaklands building site: Starboard Way.

Question from AP: When will people move in? Will there be an influx of pupils?

The Headteacher said the first phase completes in spring 2021. There may be new pupils as there are 103 dwellings (council-owned homes).

Question from AP: Do we have vacancies?

The Headteacher explained we are full in Y4 and almost full in Y6. We have spaces in Y3 and Y5 as they have four classes.

13.2 We received the fire risk assessment and came out of it very well. The Headteacher took issue with a few points and sent comments. He received replies and has sent these to BS for discussion.

13.3 Service level agreements will be discussed at the next meeting.

14) Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next whole governing body meeting is on Tuesday 9 February at 3.30pm.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm.

AGENDA

	ACTION POINTS FROM 12 JANUARY 2021		
	Action to be completed	By whom	By when
A	Invite governors to the subject leader Zoom staff meetings.	BB	TBC
B	Attend assemblies to talk about the role of governors and give termly updates on governance.	All govs	TBC
C	Write a health and safety report once a term.	BS	End spring term
D	Invite governors to Zoom elements of leadership cycle.	BB	Ongoing
E	Arrange one Zoom meeting with your linked subject leader before next meeting.	All govs	9 Feb 2021
F	Chase NGA online training. Clerk to email details to governors.	Maria Hughes	9 Feb 2021
	Questions to follow up from governor visits	By whom	By when
	Agenda Items for Future Meetings		Date
	Service level agreements	PH	9 Feb 2021
	Performance against SIP targets	All govs	Ongoing
	Agree newsletter updates on the budget, decisions made and governor roles	All govs	Once a term
	Safeguarding (standing item, to include CPOMS reports, safeguarding meeting summaries and accident reports)	PH	Ongoing