

Governors of Fairisle Junior School

Minutes of a Meeting of the Whole Governing Body Tuesday 11 January 2022, 3.30pm

Governors present:

1. Nikki Webb (Co-Chair)
2. Peter Howard (Headteacher)
3. Phil Chapman (Vice-Chair)
4. Lloyd Viney
5. Alison Powell
6. Katherine Minns
7. Mike Dant

Associate members present:

Bev Bessey

In attendance:

Sophie Lee (Clerk)

This meeting was held entirely online.

1) Apologies

Steph Thurston (Co-Chair), Brent Schwarz.

2) Declarations of Interest

Declarations relating to today's agenda: none. Annual declaration of interests: no changes to the register were declared.

3) Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes from 2 November were agreed and the Co-Chair will be asked to sign them off via email.

4) Matters Arising, Including Action Points

All action points are complete except those listed below. There have been no subject leader meetings recently but governors will be invited each time.

The LA have a new fire risk assessment supplier and they assessed us last week. They are not concerned about stairwell displays so BS does not need to review this.

A letter and consultation papers about the co-operative trust will be sent to parents shortly once the DfE has answered some questions.

Catch-up and the SIP are covered in the Head's report and the Headteacher spoke to Cara Whit from FFT tutoring today. Governors should write an item for the newsletter this term.

Action A: Meet your linked subject leader.

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

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

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

Action E: Write an item for school newsletter.

5) Headteacher's Report

The number of safeguarding incidents are shown. There have been a number of changes to the safeguarding status of children.

Question from AP: Do we receive additional funds for these children during the year?

The Headteacher explained there are no additional funds for CP or CIN children. The only safeguarding money is for looked after children who require personal education plans, with a sum for each child.

All gov's
BB
BS
BB
All gov's

Question from PC: About half the incidents are from about three or four pupils, could you show the general level and then the number of incidents per individual?

The Headteacher replied it is not correct to say that three or four pupils cause half the incidents. Staff enter any safeguarding or child protection concerns into CPOMs. This could be a conversation with a parent or professional for example or public protection notices (PPNs). Domestic violence issues form most of the PPNs.

Question from AP: Was there another column showing the number of children in the past?

The Headteacher said yes, we used to have two separate tables for incidents versus children, but CPOMs changed and that is no longer allowed.

ACTION F: Get report on how many children are having CPOMs entries written about them.

PH

Question from PC: Is there any correlation between incidents and poor attendance?

The Headteacher noted in some cases there is. Some children have quite chaotic lives due to domestic violence, drugs/alcohol or involvement with police or children's services. It is very important we see more vulnerable children day in day out to keep them safe.

Question from PC: Do you give priority to these particular at risk children?

The Headteacher stated we always react within the first hour of a child not in school, whether CP or CIN or not. Text messages are sent home and if there is no reply we follow up and follow up again.

There are 22 governor monitoring questions from The Key on the Drive, covering issues such as covid, safeguarding and the new Natasha's Law on food labelling (with which we are compliant). Please look at the 22 questions.

The fire risk assessors said FJS was the best school they had ever seen and had exemplary management of fire safety.

In autumn we had 115 COVID cases. The guidance changed today so if you are asymptomatic with a positive lateral flow test you no longer need a PCR confirmation. We will update the risk assessment which is a live document. Handwashing and ventilation is key. We have bought an air purifier for about £250.

Question from AP: Will that save on fuel costs as windows will not need to be open?

The Headteacher agreed that we would not need to open windows. Air purifiers are not cheap but they keep people safe and if effective we could get more. The DfE only bought 7000 and we do not qualify for one.

Question from AP: Do they require maintenance? Do they filter covid allergens?

The Headteacher reported the filters need cleaning every six months. The HEPA filters remove viruses and other allergens.

Question from PC: Could you fit the filters to classes with air conditioning?

The Headteacher noted we cannot retrofit HEPA filters to what we already have.

We received 13 CO2 meters before Christmas which are now in classes and have ordered some extra for the Business Manager's office and other rooms.

Question from AP: What was the cost of CO2 meters?

The Headteacher reported they are £40 to £50 each and we only paid for three or four.

Question from PC: Have the meters been triggered?

The Headteacher reported they are always on and plugged in and read twice a day by site managers. We have a full overrun of parts per million every day and have had no really high readings. We want under 1500 and had one reading just over 1500.

The Headteacher wrote to parents on the first day of term explaining the latest covid guidance. Attendance was not great at the end of autumn term. For the first week back it was 91%, the highest since before October half-term.

A teaching and learning update shows that we have much more of a culture of learning and teachers are getting to know children better with good relationships. Staff need to refer to class charters.

6) Review of SIP/Report from Mark Lindfield

SIO Mark Lindfield visited on 4 November and was very positive. He checked our SIP and self-evaluation and his full report is on the Drive.

(NW joined the meeting at this point.)

7) Questions and Update on Co-operative Trust

A letter to stakeholders, consultation plan and FAQ are on the Drive. We could be forced to become an academy if we do not join a co-operative trust, but it is mainly about cementing relationships, economies of scale, employing staff across the trust and retaining our relationship with the LA.

Question from PC: Could we have our own inclusion policy, not fixed to the LA?

The Headteacher said we could but are happy aligning with those LA policies at the moment.

In a co-operative trust the governing body are responsible for admissions but we would continue to use the LA admissions department and comply with LA policy. The Headteacher spoke to the Aspire Trust and they use the LA policy but give status to children of staff on waiting lists if a school is full.

Schools are not forced to become trust schools, it is voluntary. We retain our uniform, governing body, times of the school day, ability to spend money as we see fit, national curriculum, OFSTED and LA school improvement officer.

The FAQ document shows that a trust school can dispose of surplus non-playing field land after consulting the governing body and trust.

Question from PC: On economies of scale, is it planned that we amalgamate buying or keep independence to use our preferred supplier?

The Headteacher stated we do not have preferred suppliers but get best value from the market. There is a place for economies of scale with paper, photocopying contracts etc.

Question from PC: What about services bought from the LA? Could you align that?

The Headteacher noted we could look at that.

Question from an AP: Is there potential to hire a part-time purchasing manager who could negotiate discounts to fund their own salary?

The Headteacher stated we could do that and had an attendance officer in the past across our group of schools. In HR we already have Robert Atkinson but we cannot employ him across the group of schools until we are a co-operative trust.

Question from PC: The trust has its own governors, are they appointed for one school or covering several schools?

The Headteacher replied that each school retains its own governing body who are responsible for the strategic direction. Each chair of governors and headteacher sit on the trust board that oversees the trust. The school governing bodies retain their independence. There is also a trust forum of stakeholders to give feedback and ideas.

Question from AP: If it is a separate legal entity does it need a separate VAT registration?

The Headteacher said he believed not as it is still under the LA umbrella.

Question from AP: Do we need a separate bank account for salaries? Does someone need to check a bank account and reconcile it back to the school's account?

The Headteacher said he does not think so but will find out more. Salaries are paid from part of our budget and he authorises salaries every month. We employ Strictly Education to reconcile salaries.

ACTION G: Check if we need a separate bank account for salaries as a co-op trust.

PH

Question from PC: Are Sinclair Primary waiting to see what happens?

The Headteacher reported that Sinclair, Holy Family, Mansel Park, Bitterne Park and Our Lady and St. Joseph's are in the Holy Family Partnership and therefore not allowed to be trust schools, as some are already trust schools as church schools. They will be partners instead.

A letter has been sent to all staff and the Headteacher met all staff teams. A FAQ document for stakeholders is on the Drive with a summary of the consultation plan and a parent's meeting will be held soon. We could become an academy instead of a co-op trust but not all academies are accountable to the local community.

Question from PC: Is the trust a limited liability company? What financial obligations do the governors have?

The Headteacher said no, it is a charity and he believes the liability is one pound. AP agreed it is usually a nominal amount such as £1 for a limited liability partnership.

(MD joined the meeting at this point.)

Question from LV: Were there any questions from staff?

The Headteacher explained that most staff questions were on teacher deployment. If we need to support a school we might ask a teacher if they want to spend time there, but the reason to become a trust is not so we can parachute our teachers into schools that are not doing well.

Question from MD: Will we have complete control over the school site? Will we need to pay more for maintenance?

The Headteacher noted we would have more control but will not pay more. We will enjoy the same benefits as now, for example the grounds maintenance service.

Question from MD: Could we sell off part of the site?

The Headteacher said we could if we wanted at the behest of the governing body and parent council. We probably do have to consult the LA.

Question from MD: What if the LA refused?

The Headteacher reported we would presumably not be able to do it. We would have more freedom to do that kind of thing if it is in the best interests of children.

Question from MD: Could we extend the car park with our own money?

The Headteacher stated we might be able to.

8) Reports From and Questions to Follow Up From Governor Visits

AP met maths leader Holly Cleveley via Zoom on 18 November. A maths deep dive took place in March 2021 to identify gaps in learning due to covid. Children from the infant school had gaps in all subjects that need addressing.

AP saw the progression in calculation and geometry progression of skills documents. SIO Mark Lindfield also spent time with the maths department and scrutinised children's books which was helpful. Staff have used pre-assessments as well as formative assessments to identify learning gaps. There were no end of key stage assessments in 2021.

Question from AP: Will end of key stage assessments take place this year?

The Headteacher reported that at the moment they will go ahead.

We still have the facility to use our website for future distance learning. LV added that we have now switched to using Google Classroom for remote learning as it is more flexible and can provide more feedback more easily.

Maths is sometimes the first lesson of the day so if pupils arrive late they can miss it. We need more differentiation for more able pupils which is a work in progress. More able children are not given work at higher year levels, eg: Y5 children are not given Y6 work.

Linking maths to other subjects such as geography and science is also a work in progress. AP will follow up on maths later this term.

Governors were asked to please remember to do catch-ups for their link roles, which can be via Zoom. A more concerted effort is needed on catch-ups and governors need to be proactive about their roles.

Mark Lindfield stated in his report that the board needs to re-establish governor visits to school and link those visits to the school improvement plan.

9) Revised Covid Risk Assessment

The covid risk assessment was reviewed at the end of December and again at the start of term; it is a live document. Government guidance has reduced the number of days for self-isolation. The contingency framework has also been updated in light of the guidance and both documents are on the Drive.

Governors thanked the Head for all the time he has spent working on covid issues.

10) Policies

The admissions policy is the LA policy, with 15 January the final application date for next September.

In the child protection and safeguarding policy a couple of paragraphs have been changed in light of the sexual abuse in schools report, strengthening the language on sexual abuse and making it clear "that kind of thing can happen anywhere".

There are no changes to the governor expenses policy.

Question from AP: Have there been any expense claims?

The Headteacher noted there have been no claims during his time at FJS but the school pays for governor training and subscriptions.

LV explained the changes to the e-safety policy which has been renamed the online safety policy. We have moved from using "lock it block it show it tell it" to Google Internet Legends, an approach that emphasises children being part of a community.

The national curriculum objectives have been added to the policy. There are five pillars in the programme with lesson plans and online games to support teaching and all pupils have now been taught all the pillars.

Governors were shown the Project Evolve website which contains resources for lessons with age-related topics. The same safeguards are still in place. Information has been added on how we communicate the policy.

The policy contains non-negotiables and we have updated planners to include information for parents on online safety at home. Internet Legends includes a message to be kind which was a weakness of "lock it block it" in terms of respect.

Information has been added encouraging children to talk to parents and saying parents may ask questions to keep you safe. It also includes places to get further advice. Internet safety day is held in February.

LV will create a display board to reinforce Internet Legends and will meet with federation schools to show how we introduced this so they can move to it if they wish.

Governors approved the admissions, child protection and safeguarding, governor expenses and online safety policies.

11) Report from Pay Committee

The pay committee met on 2 November and received information from the Headteacher to enable them to agree pay levels for teachers for the next 12 months, taking the budget into account.

12) AOB

12.1 Governors agreed to reappoint NW and PC as co-opted governors from 1 March 2022 to 28 February 2026. A letter has been sent to parents about the upcoming parent governor vacancy (ST's term of office ends 23 January).

12.2 We now have free access to GovernorHub via The Key. PC has completed a range of LA governor training courses and some have been brilliant. They now charge for these.

12.3 The proposed service level agreements for 2022-2023 are on the Drive. This year we will buy an extra day per term of the educational psychologist but there are no other differences from last year. Governors approved the SLAs.

12.4 An Arbor financial benchmarking report is on the Drive and has been discussed by AP, the Head and Business Manager. We get a greater proportion of income from fixed services/grants compared to national schools and none from lettings so some statistics appear skewed.

Staff total spending is more than some other schools as we make a decision to use quality teaching and use less supply. We spent more on educational supplies mainly due to buying many laptops for remote learning, with decreases in printing and photocopying costs.

There are some anomalous items, for example water and sewage, but the bill arrived in April and the LA charged it to the new fiscal year. Our budget is managed well and we have a surplus carried forward.

12.5 The schools monitoring group now meet once a year and no longer assign grades or send letters, instead RAG rating all schools from each service perspective.

They only discuss schools where they have concerns.

They have RAG rated FJS as green across the board. We have asked them to continue sending letters to headteachers.

Governors noted this is a testament to how hard all staff have worked in the last couple of very stressful years. Governors thanked all leaders, teachers, support staff and everyone working at Fairisle Junior.

13) Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next whole governing body meeting is on Tuesday 22 March at 3.30pm. Governors will decide nearer the time whether in-person attendance is possible.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.

ACTION POINTS FROM 11 JANUARY 2022			
	Action to be completed	By whom	By when
A	Meet your linked subject leader.	All govs	22 March
B	Invite governors to the subject leader Zoom staff meetings.	BB	Ongoing
C	Write a health and safety report once a term.	BS	End autumn term
D	Invite governors to Zoom elements of leadership cycle.	BB	Ongoing
E	Write an item for the school newsletter.	All govs	End spring term
F	Get report on how many children are having CPOMs entries written about them.	PH	22 March
G	Check if we need a separate bank account for salaries as a co-op trust.	PH	22 March
	Questions to follow up from governor visits	By whom	By when
	Agenda Items for Future Meetings		Date
	Review of catch-up (standing item)	PH	22 March
	Review SIP at first meeting of every term	PH	Summer term
	Performance against SIP targets	All govs	Ongoing (every other meeting)
	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