

Fairisle Junior School Whole Governing Body Meeting

Tuesday, 11 July 2023 at 3.30 pm

Venue – Fairisle Junior School, Fairisle Road, Lordshill, Southampton, SO16 8BY

Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Role	Attended	Apologies accepted	Absent
Nikki Webb (NW)	Chair	X (arrival indicated)		
Gary Natella (GN)			X	
Phil Chapman (PC)	Vice Chair	X		
Peter Howard (PH)	Headteacher	X		
Alison Powell (AP)		X		
Bev Bessey (BB)	Staff Governor/ Deputy Headteacher	X		
Brent Schwarz (BS)		X		
Also in attendance:				
Liz Irving (LI)	Clerk			
Carol Donnachie	School Business Manager			
Donna Reeve	Education Welfare Officer, Southampton City Council			
Robin Hayes	Assistant Headteacher and SENCO			

1.	Apologies for absence
	<p>The Chair had advised in advance of their late arrival, and therefore the Vice-Chair opened the meeting at 15.35. Apologies were accepted from GN.</p> <p>Governors welcomed Robin Hayes, Assistant Headteacher & SENCO, and Donna Reeve, Education Welfare Office at Southampton City Council</p>
2.	Dionne Reeve – Education Welfare Officer for FJS
	<p>i. PH invited DR to explain the EWO process to the Board, and referred governors to the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Table of Responsibilities● Working Together To Improve Attendance

	<p>ii. Engagement: DR spoke of the importance of setting high expectations for attendance with a clear policy that is robustly implemented and followed up.</p> <p>DR suggests that schools take a light touch approach with families at the beginning with playground conversations, building up to formal letters, with paper letters being more impactful than email.</p> <p>RH advised that the approach at FJS was to try not to send too many letters, as families with attendance problems may be struggling on other fronts and receiving a lot of mail.</p> <p>DR advised that the threshold for sending a letter is 93% which can help to keep attendance above the 90% persistent absence threshold.</p> <p>The trigger point for involving the EWO is 10 unauthorised absences and the referral must be supported by evidence. The EWO and school act as a team.</p> <p>NW joined the meeting at this point.</p> <p>iii. Actions: Families are encouraged to join parenting groups or 1-2-1s before the stage is reached of issuing a parenting order via the courts.</p> <p>A detailed discussion took place regarding the different sanctions that could be applied by the courts at different stages in the process, the unsatisfactory nature of these sanctions, and the difficulty of enforcement. A governor observed that the school does all it can to improve attendance, but is limited by the sanctions available.</p> <p>DR and governors agreed that it was a difficult and frustrating situation.</p> <p>A governor with experience as a magistrate explained that the information seen by the courts is very sanitized and does not give any sense of how much work the school has undertaken with a family to improve attendance. Schools are often not asked to attend court to give evidence.</p> <p>The governor observed that the threat of a criminal record is little deterrent to people who reach that stage of the process. Fines for unauthorised absence for holidays also have little impact as families will often still save money overall by travelling in term time.</p> <p>iv. Penalty Notices: PH reminded governors that the school does not receive the money from penalty notices, so this is not the motivating factor in issuing them. The Leave of Absence form explains the possible consequences of unauthorised absence.</p> <p>A brief discussion took place regarding exceptions circumstances in which the headteacher may opt to allow a term time absence. DR said these exceptions need to be defined in the Attendance policy and in information to parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Question: are more families giving mental health as a reason for non-attendance? ● Response: DR confirmed that this is the case and gave a number of examples. BB highlighted that this presents a safeguarding issue. DR explained that unless pupils go missing or are otherwise doing anything untoward beyond not coming to school, the EWO and school are limited in what they can do. The EWO will monitor the situation. <p>v. PH said that it is not the role of the school to provide online learning or learning packs for children who are not attending. DR explained that this is why it is important to see children face to face to encourage attendance. They can be easily forgotten when not being seen.</p> <p>vi. PH reported that there is one serious case review pending at FJS.</p>
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	<p>vii. A governor observed that FJS average attendance is 93% (the trigger point for letters), compared to 96% before the pandemic. Attendance has improved a little, but there has not been the progress that the board would like to see.</p> <p>viii. DR described measures being taken in other schools to promote good mental health in pupils.</p> <p>ix. A governor suggested that the time has come for the school to take a harder line on severe absence as these pupils have such a big impact on overall attendance figures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: what more can governors and school leaders do to improve the situation? • Response from DR: it is difficult to suggest any further steps due to the legal constraints. <p>x. RH said that the school needed to maintain very high standards for pupils and families, and to not permit families to use attendance as leverage for other concessions, e.g. time out of lessons, alternative activities or lower attainment expectations.</p> <p>xi. Punctuality: DR talked about the proactive management of punctuality to try and prevent late arrivals from becoming U codes, e.g. giving incentives for going a week without a U code. DR observed that some of these families get little by way of praise. PH highlighted the In It To Win It days, which pupils love and which encourage attendance.</p> <p>xii. Third Parties: DR referred to the involvement of third parties such as CAMHS, which can complicate the process in some instances. DR stressed the need for communication to include all professionals involved.</p> <p>Governors thanked DR for attending and for her overview of the EWO process.</p> <p><i>DR and RH left the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>xiii. A governor suggested that it would also be helpful for the board to meet with DR's manager, but noted that PH has requested this without success.</p> <p><i>CD joined the meeting at this point.</i></p>
3.	<p>Declarations of interest:</p> <p>a) to declare an interest in any item on today's agenda</p> <p>b) to declare any changes to the register of business interests.</p>
	<p>A governor advised that they are now a special police constable in another county. The clerk advised that this does not need to be recorded on the Register of Interests.</p>
4.	<p>Budget Update (3 months)</p>
	<p>CD joined the meeting to give the first quarterly financial update.</p> <p>i. Staffing: CD highlighted the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching salaries – PH confirmed that all new appointments are already in the budget Support staff – CD advised that there will be an increase in spend on support staff, in part due to an increased need from EHCPs. Money is available to cover this, and the budget will be revised accordingly in October. Support staff increases have not yet been paid and will be backdated to April 2023. <p>ii. Surplus: PH reported that the Carry Forward figure confirmed by SCC Finance is £388k, which is a substantial surplus roughly £140k in excess of the recommended 10% of</p>

	<p>budget. In response to an email from SCC requesting a breakdown of how the excess would be used, PH has advised that that £140k has been committed to increased teaching capacity, support staff, reading books, etc. This was discussed and agreed with the Chair.</p> <p>SCC have highlighted that the surplus is likely to exceed 10% in the next financial year as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: will any of the excess be spent on the buildings? • Response: money for building work has already been included in the budget. • Question: what is the reason for the £45k increase in Agency staff costs? • Response: CD explained the following – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school employs a person for “supply”. b. Additional costs pertain to two supply TAs who will be staying on. There will be 1.5 agency TAs from September. c. Three agency teachers are leaving. <p>PH explained some of the benefits of retaining long-term agency staff rather than employing directly, and reminded the board that the school does not pay National Insurance, holiday or sick pay for agency staff.</p> <p>The board thanked CD for the financial update.</p> <p><i>CD left the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>The board agreed to amend the order of the agenda as PC needed to leave early.</p>
5.	Minutes of the meeting of 2 May 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision: the minutes of the meeting of 2 May 2023 were approved.
6.	Matters arising including action points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Minibus: PH confirmed that the new contract has been negotiated and will be signed shortly. ii. Chromebooks: PH advised that some chromebooks have been recovered from families. iii. Dinner money subsidy: PH reported that there has been no pushback from parents in relation to ending the subsidy on school meals. <p>Please refer to Summary of Actions following the minutes for updates.</p>
7.	Reports from & Questions to follow up from governor visits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. PC visited the school on the Escape Room In It To Win It day, which was very well run and greatly enjoyed by pupils. PC felt this was good value for money. PC also attended for SATS monitoring. PC observed that a different management system for SATS worked brilliantly, keeping stress for pupils to a minimum so they could do their best. ii. NW also attended the Escape Room day, where NW observed great teamwork, and a child who was not initially engaged being gradually brought in through prompting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: NW to share written report of visit. iii. AP visited Maths on 25 May to follow up on training needs identified in November. Some pupils who were falling behind have had intensive tuition which AP would expect to see

	<p>reflected in results. PH observed that Covid recovery work to close the gaps will be required for several years, until the 2022 Year R intake are right through FJS.</p> <p>iv. BB reported on her visit to History and Geography, where it has been identified that the school needs to work more closely with the Infant school.</p> <p>History has improved as a result of the interviews BB conducted in her governor role. This now needs to extend to the Geography subject leader.</p> <p>The new History scheme is proving positive and is helping staff with their subject knowledge. The Geography scheme needs some tweaking to fit the school's needs.</p> <p>v. BB observed that the whole school needs to look at differentiation and adaptation for SEND.</p> <p>vi. NW has recently conducted a SEND walk with RH. NW spoke with pupils with additional need identified in advance by RH, and also looked at their books. NW observed that work had been marked and comments made for pupils to respond to. Pupils had done this, but it did not appear that this had been followed up to allow pupils to know if they had completed the work correctly or not.</p> <p>NW did observe teachers following up with SEN pupil in class to check their understanding, although there were a couple of classes where this did not happen.</p> <p>vii. NW met with the Curriculum Lead following their in-depth report to governors. NW expressed concern that this person is taking on too much. BB observed that they have very high standards. NW will meet the Curriculum Lead again in Autumn 2.</p> <p>viii. PC will attend the Head Girl & Boy presentations on Friday.</p>
8.	Ofsted Inspection Outcomes and Next Steps
	<p>i. Governors extended heartfelt thanks and congratulations to staff, pupils and parents for an excellent Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>ii. This as an ungraded inspection. The Inspector found that FJS continues to be a Good school, and the report reads very well.</p> <p>PH felt that the inspector understood the school and that the report reflected this. Governors observed that the feedback session was even more positive than the report, with some areas that would have been Outstanding in a graded inspection.</p> <p>PH said it was a team effort, and those interviewed did really well.</p> <p>iii. BB highlighted that one development area mentioned by the report had already been identified by the school and a plan was in place.</p> <p>iv. 25 parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, with the Inspector sharing lovely feedback with governors and senior leaders.</p> <p>v. PH thanked governors for their support and involvement.</p>
9.	Year 4 MTC and Year 6 SATs Initial Outcomes
	<p>i. Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) – Year 4:</p> <p>77 of 84 Year 4 pupils took the test, which had a maximum score of 25.</p> <p>a. 36 children achieved 25/25.</p> <p>b. 15 children achieved 24/25.</p>

	<p>c. The average score was 23/25 compared to 19/25 in 2022 and a national average of 20.4.</p> <p>d. 45% of FJS pupils achieved full marks compared to a 31% nationally.</p> <p>Governors congratulated Year 4 on their achievements.</p> <p>ii. SATS:</p> <p>PH reported a 30% uplift in combined results.</p> <p>Results for Expected and Greater Depth were up across all categories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Question: Does the uplift from last year's results reflect the impact of Covid last year? ● Response: PH said that this Year 6 are still affected by Covid. The following were contributing factors to improved results: staff development, careful planning, SLT in Year 6 lessons from January, and Easter School. <p>PH is very proud of the work that all staff and pupils in Year 6 have done. Results were published to parents on the day and PH visited all Year 6 classes to tell them how proud he is of their achievements.</p> <p>iii. Governors extended their thanks to all pupils and staff, and congratulated the school on the excellent results.</p>
10.	Staffing 2023-2024
	<p>i. PH reported that the school is fully staffed for September.</p> <p>ii. Transition day has been postponed until 12 July due to industrial action. New members of staff will also attend.</p>
11.	Policies:
	<p>i. Admissions 2024-25: no changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision: the Admissions Policy for 2024-25 was approved. <p>ii. Feedback: BB said that this policy has been in development for some time. It has been discussed at length with teachers and learning support staff and is informed by DfE and other sources of guidance. The policy will be published on the school website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision: the Feedback policy was approved. <p>iii. Children with Medical Issues Who Cannot Attend School – no changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision: the policy was approved.
12.	Any other business
	<p>i. Cycle of governance:</p> <p>The periodic SCR check has been scheduled.</p> <p>Behaviour and Environment learning walks will take place in Autumn 1.</p> <p>The clerk advised the board of the following statutory requirements to include in the plan of work:</p> <p>a. Annual safeguarding training: governors are welcome to join the INSET on 4 September.</p>

	<p>b. PREVENT training: The clerk advised that if this has been completed since September 2022 it will not need to be repeated but does need to be evidenced.</p> <p>c. e-Safety: in line with KCSIE, governors need an awareness of the measures the school has in place. PH will arrange this.</p> <p>ii. School calendar: Governors are invited to attend the presentations for the Head Girl & Boy on Friday 14 July.</p> <p>iii. Feedback: the school has received a very complimentary email from a member of the public who observed Year 6 at Paultons Park. This will be published in the newsletter.</p> <p>iv. Year 6 Exit Survey: PH has had a brief look at the responses. There is some brilliant feedback and very insightful and sensitive comments from pupils, some of which will go in the newsletter.</p> <p>v. Sports Premium Strategy: the document has been uploaded to the Governor Google drive, with the questions raised by the Finance link governor corrected. This must be published on the school website by 31 July. PH has thanked Simon Woods, PE lead, for drafting the document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision: the Sports Premium Strategy was approved. <p>vi. Dates for Autumn meetings: these were agreed and will be scheduled by the clerk.</p>
13.	Close
	<p>On behalf of the board the Chair relayed how happy governors are with all the of the hard work undertaken this year, and extended thanks to the entire school team. It has been worth it to achieve such a good Ofsted report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Chair to draft a statement for the newsletter.
	The meeting closed at 17:30

	Action to be completed	Who	By when
Agenda item	ACTION POINTS FROM 11 JULY 2023		
7	NW to share written report of visit.		
13	Chair to draft a statement for the newsletter.		
	ACTION POINTS FROM 2 May 2023		
1	BB to send sample pupil questionnaires to PC. Update: subject leader questionnaires have been sent to governors, but c/fwd pupils	BB	Next meeting
2	BB to book a debrief meeting after governors have met with subject leads.	BB	Next meeting
3	LI to set up governor adverts on Govs for Schools and Inspiring Governance.	LI	Next meeting
	ACTION POINTS FROM 20 SEPTEMBER 2022		

	Action to be completed	By	By when
1	Meet linked subject leader (by end of summer term). Update: some meetings remain outstanding	All govs	c/fwd