

Sussex Road Community Primary School Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on 13 July 2021 at 6.30pm through virtual governance arrangements

| | Present: Nicola Furlonger (Chair) Sarah Bowles (SB), Headteacher (HT) (Items 1-11 (part) Emma Burns (EB) Alison D'Alton (ADA) (SBM) Louisa Rowlands (LR) | | | |
|----|---|---|--------|--|
| | Emma Sangster (ES) | | | |
| | | Olly Swan (OS) (Item 5 onwards) | | |
| | | Michael Webber (MW) (Chair-elect from Item 9) Jo Winkler (JW) (Vice Chair) | | |
| | In attendance | Carly Birkett (Acting Headteacher) (AHT) (Items 1-11) Lesley Hardwick (Clerk) | | |
| | | | Action | |
| 1. | APOLOGIES FC Apologies for ab were received a | sence from Abby Jeffrey and Andrew Pembroke (both due to ill health) | | |
| 2. | No declarations | OF BUSINESS INTERESTS of interest were received in respect of any item on the Agenda. The Chair mors to declare any interests that might arise as the result of discussions at | | |
| 3. | MINUTES OF L | AST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING | | |
| | | 8 meeting held on 17 May 2021 | | |
| | The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021 were approved as an accurate record (to be signed by the Chair of Governors at a future date). | | | |
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| | Action Points | | | |
| | PPG Spectrum could be | wed progress against relevant outstanding actions: <u>end</u> – The AHT confirmed that the impact of interventions for PPG children seen within the data. The overall impact of the PPG strategy for 2020/21 published on the website and could be discussed in more detail at ng visits. | | |
| | <u>Issues arising from PE monitoring</u> – The Vice Chair recalled that there had been some discussion about the inclusion of outdoor activity within the PE curriculum. The AHT confirmed that skills relating to outdoor activities had been included in the PE curriculum. | | | |
| | <u>Queries on Year Group data</u> – The AHT confirmed that these queries had been dealt with during monitoring visits. | | | |
| | <u>OPAL</u> – The Chair reported that EB had volunteered to be the GB's representative on the Working Group and OPAL Link Governor. | | | |
| | | Working Policy - The Chair confirmed that this Policy had been circulated | | |
| | with the ı | meeting papers for information, as it did not require governor approval. | | |
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| 4. | MEMBERSHIP | |
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| | Co-opted Governor Vacancies The Chair advised that LR would be resigning as a Co-opted Governor at the end of the academic year and that, with her own resignation, there would be five vacancies on the GB from September. She thanked LR for her support and for her contribution to the GB over the past five years. | |
| | The Chair confirmed that the advert on Inspiring Governance had been extended for a further period of time, but that there had been no expressions of interest. She also advised that an advert had been published on the school website, and that, although this had been intended to encourage applications from the wider community, she had been approached by a parent who would be interested in joining the Board herself. She reported that this parent had substantial financial experience, which had been identified as a required skill through the skills audit but pointed out that there was also a need to ensure there was a balance between parents and independent governors. A Governor commented that the need to have a sufficient number of independent governors had been highlighted recently when trying to convene a Complaints Panel and noted that this had been an issue for some time. Another Governor agreed with the need for balance but also pointed out that it could be difficult to fill all five vacancies with completely independent applicants. <i>However, it was agreed that, as the parent who had expressed interest had relevant skills and experience, she should be advised that the GB would reconsider its requirements in</i> | NF |
| | September. | |
| | | MW |

The AHT confirmed that children would be set reading and other holiday challenges but that the school would not be setting catch-up homework, as she believed that children and staff all needed a break over the summer.

• Have there been/are there any expected changes to the overall plans for using Covid catch up funding? If so, what is the rationale for the changes?

The AHT remarked that changes to the plans were driven by the children, and pointed out that the School's plans were based on research on what actions would have the greatest impact. She commented that the picture was mixed and children's needs varied, with some needing academic support and others support on their learning behaviours. The AHT confirmed that catch-up would remain a focus for the strategic plan for 2021/22. She also advised that she had spoken with the School Improvement Advisor about bringing the intervention teachers into classrooms rather than taking children out of class for interventions. She commented that this approach had already been used in KS1 and was working well and that she was considering how the intervention teacher could best be used in KS2. She stressed that there was no single 'best' way of working and that the approach needed to be based on the most appropriate way of delivering interventions for an individual child or group of children. A Governor commented that this issue had also been discussed with the SENCO at a recent SEND monitoring visit.

• Are there plans to hold anu further parent workshops in the autumn term, ensuring the school continues to maintain our positive relationships with families?

The HT confirmed that the school held a workshop on Phonics each year, and advised that she would consider a Maths workshop for parents to explain the White Rose Maths scheme.

The SEND Governor spoke about her monitoring visit. She reported that the visit had included a discussion with the SENCO about the intervention data, and commented that it had been striking that 34 children had moved out of interventions since the beginning of Term 6. She had also discussed the amount of data that governors needed to see, whether the focus should be on headline rather than detailed data and whether more detailed data would add value. The Chair commented that preparing detailed data created too much work for the SENCO and suggested that headline data would provide the information governors needed. Another Governor agreed that the full board only needed to see headline data, although monitoring visits provided an opportunity to look at the data in a more granular way. The AHT suggested that the data for the FGB on catch up interventions should record the numbers involved in interventions, how long children had been in intervention groups and how many had been able to leave, as this would provide an indication of the impact. A Governor agreed that this information would identify trends and areas for governor inquiry about issues that might need to be addressed.

The SEND Governor reported that there had also been a discussion about the rationale of prioritising the intervention groups for children who would be able to catch up quickly. The AHT confirmed that this had been the approach initially but that the success in moving children out of the intervention groups had provided capacity to work with children who needed more support to catch up or had more complex needs. She pointed out that children with SEND had continued to receive their normal support throughout this period. The AHT also explained that the school had also focused initially on the children who had not engaged with remote learning or who had found it difficult, adding that some of those children had caught up over a short period of time but that others needed ongoing support.

the AHT if she had any concerns about engagement with hard to reach families. The AHT pointed out that there would always be a group of families with whom the School struggled to engage, but that the School remained in close contact with these families and did everything possible to encourage better and more timely attendance, including using PPG to pay for Breakfast Club places or encouraging parents to accept support from Early Help,

<u>Strategic Priority Two: To embed a coherent and progressive curriculum that promotes remembering and greater depth learning</u> – The Governors who had carried out Curriculum Monitoring reported on their visit. They reported that it had been clear that curriculum development work was continuing and that staff were enthusiastic. They had received presentations from two members of staff and had noted that the work on metacognition was progressing well particularly in EYFS. They had discussed the possibility of providing information for parents on the subjects that children would be studying next year so they could support their learning over the Summer, and the need to support new staff joining the school in September to familiarise them with the school's approach to curriculum development as quickly as possible.

A Governor asked where the school was on the journey to embed the

curriculum,. The AHT commented that the School was where it needed to be in respect of skills to deliver an enquiry based curriculum but that there would be no end to the journey, as the curriculum would be adapted for every different cohort and staff would continue to gain knowledge through ongoing CPD. The HT remarked that the curriculum was constantly evolving and that although there had been no change in the guidance from the Government, there was no guarantee that the balance between knowledge and skills based curricula might need to shift again. She remarked that it was inspirational that the pace of school improvement had continued over lockdown. A Governor remarked that the best curricula were those that were dynamic and responsive and adapted to meet changing circumstances. The HT commented that the details of the curriculum, such as the chosen texts, needed to adapt for the cohort, community and local issues. [OS joined the meeting]

- <u>Strategic Priority Three: To extend out outdoor learning provision creating a</u> <u>strategic values-based approach to play</u> – The OPAL link governor reported that the OPAL Team had now been established and had had its first meeting. She explained that OPAL would be supporting the School for two years, to help it improve outdoor and playtime provision and advised that the Team had completed an audit against a tool provided by OPAL which would provide a 'baseline', and which had been used to develop an Action Plan, which included:
 - Development of a Play Policy which would be shared with the FGB.
 - A survey of parents' and pupils' views.
 - Creation of an OPAL page on the website.
 - A review of resources, and consideration of options for storing them.
 - A request for parental donations/fundraising.

The OPAL link governor advised that the Team would be meeting again in mid-October and confirmed that she would bring a further update to the October FGB meeting.

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The AHT commented that it was pleasing to see how passionate the OPAL Leaders were about the project and how this passion was being shared with staff. She remarked that this was a different way of viewing play, utilising all the time that children were on the school site. The OPAL link governor commented that she had been surprised at the amount of support available to the school and added that the discussion at the meeting had included the logistics of resources and storage. The AHT explained that each child should have access to four pieces of equipment to use outside, which would require a significant amount of storage.

Monitoring Reports

Reports from recent monitoring visits had been discussed as part of the Strategic Plan update. With regard to Curriculum Delivery, the AHT commented that staff had worked in a more collaborative way this year and that as a result all staff were more aware of the point that the School had reached across all curriculum subjects. She advised that this way of working would continue to help the new subject leaders familiarise themselves with the School's curriculum.

Headteacher's Report

The AHT had nothing further to add to her report.

A Governor had queried the implications of recruiting a high number of ECTs and how these were being addressed. The AHT explained that Early Career Teachers (ECTs) had replaced Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). She advised that the most significant impacts were the requirements for a half day release time each week, and for ongoing mentoring and support throughout the two year ECT period. She confirmed that the School employed a teacher who would cover release and PPA time and that there would be release time within the ECT mentor's timetable to enable her to work with the ECTs.

Improvement Advisor's Note of Visit

Governors reviewed the Improvement Advisor's Note of Visit.

A Governor commented that the attendance figure of 97.5% was positive, and had also been pleased to note the positive comments about leadership. Another Governor asked whether the attendance figures took account of periods of isolation. The AHT explained that different codes were used for children who were isolating or who were not able to come into school because their bubble had been closed and that these absences did not count towards the attendance figures. The Safeguarding Governor remarked that he had been pleased to note that the Improvement Advisor had reviewed the SCR, welcoming this external validation as he had not been able to come on site during the year to review the Record in person.

Changes to Risk Assessment

The AHT advised that minor adjustments had been made to the Risk Assessment over Terms 5 and 6, but that it would be reviewed in August to take account of any new guidance. She confirmed that the Covid-related restrictions in school would not change on 19/7/21, despite the national relaxing of restrictions, as she wished to reduce the risk of staff and pupils having self-isolate at the beginning of the Summer holidays. A Governor asked whether the School was likely to allow external visitors on site in the Autumn, including volunteers and people running external clubs. The AHT commented that this was a difficult question to answer, but that current guidance suggested that schools could return to 'normal' in terms of allowing visitors on site, provided that the HT felt that it was safe to do so. The SBM added that all volunteers had been off site for such a long period of time that the School would have to reapply for DBS clearance for them before they could come back into school. A Governor commented that there was likely to be a large backlog in applications if all schools needed to do this. In response to a question the SBM was not sure if the requirement to renew DBS clearance would also apply to governors. She also pointed out that all staff and governors would need safeguarding update training at the beginning of the academic year.

Key Elements for 2021/22 Strategic Plan

The AHT confirmed that Covid-Catch Up would remain a priority, together with wellbeing and the work with OPAL. She advised that the School would also need to focus on

| WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING | |
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| The Safeguarding advised that he had not prepared a report for this meeting, but confirmed that he had not been aware of any significant safeguarding concerns or issues that had needed to be escalated. He had also been pleased to note that the IA had found that the SCR was complete and up to date. | |
| FINANCE AND RESOURCES | |
| Financial Monitoring The Chair reported that there had only been 'light touch' monitoring this term, as there had been a delay in financial information being received by the SBM from the LA. | |
| LA Feedback on the 2021/22 Budget and Three Year Financial Plan Governors noted the LA's feedback. The SBM confirmed that the School had been aware of all the points that had been raised. | |
| Current Financial position Governors reviewed the June monitoring report, noting that the projected outturn was £148,568, a positive variance against the submitted budget (£130,647). The SBM reported that the School had recently received a legacy or donation from a former member of staff, which would be used to purchase reading books for children in the lower school. She confirmed that a letter of thanks had been sent to the executors on behalf of the school. | |
| A Governor noted that the report on the use and impact of PE funding needed to be uploaded to the website. The SBM confirmed that the report would be updated and uploaded at the beginning of the Autumn Term. | ADA |
| The SBM reported that there had been an attempted fraudulent use of the School's credit card at the end of June and that the card had been cancelled as a result. She confirmed that there had been no financial loss, and that new credit cards would be issued over the Summer as part of the introduction of a new credit card scheme for Kent schools. | |
| Virements and Write Offs There were no virements or write offs requiring approval. | |
| Contracts, tenders and expenditure above delegated limits There were no contracts, tenders or expenditure requiring FGB approval. | |
| Premises/Building Maintenance Report The SBM referred to the information included within the HT's report, noting the works that would take place over the Summer. | |
| A Governor asked whether work on the new play equipment installation had started. The SBM advised that the bases and surfacing had been installed, but that the installation would now be completed over the Summer, as there was still a delay in sourcing the timber for the play equipment. She added that the work on the Forest School would go ahead as it did not need such high-quality timber. | |

| | Health and Safety Update/Report from Health and Safety Governor The Health and Safety Governor advised that that he had been given access to the School's health and safety records and had been impressed at the Caretaker's . meticulous record keeping. He noted that the recent Fire Officer's inspection had identified the need for an additional fire alarm call point to be installed but had not identified any issues of concern. | |
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| 8. | POLICIES No policies had been presented for approval. | |
| 9. | GOVERNANCE | |
| | Governance Structure for 2021/22 The Chair confirmed that she would take time over the Summer to reflect with the Chair-elect and Vice Chair on the governance structure, roles and responsibilities for 2021/22. | NF/NW/ JW |
| | With regard to the Governance model, the Chair referred to the discussion that had taken place following the external Governance Review earlier in the year and noted that there had not been a desire to move from the current Circle model, although she suggested that there was scope to move to a 'hybrid' model incorporating a Finance Committee with some delegated decision-making authority. She advised that the Clerk had suggested some potential dates for meetings if this option was adopted at the September FGB meeting. | |
| | The Chair commented that Covid-19 had forced the GB to monitor in a different way over 2020/21, and believed that this had been more efficient. She therefore suggested adopting a more flexible approach and not setting out in advance how many visits should take place and what their focus should be. A Governor remarked that taking the lead from the AHT, in respect of the areas that monitoring should cover had been effective, and that the more flexible arrangements had enabled more governors to take a wider view of the school's operations. She also commented that remote monitoring might have helped the school to involve more staff in the monitoring process. Another Governor pointed out that the GB would need to be guided by the HT when putting monitoring arrangements in place for the next financial year. The Clerk pointed out that the Area Governance Officer had stressed at the feedback meeting for the Governance Review that monitoring (apart from statutory areas such as SEND and Safeguarding) should be guided by Strategic Plan priorities. A Governor remarked that this would not prevent a more flexible approach with different areas being the focus of monitoring at different times in the school year. It was noted that this approach would also help to integrate new governors into the monitoring process. A Governor supported the move towards a more flexible and collaborative approach to monitoring, and added that governors also needed to be mindful of the impact of too many separate monitoring visits on staff time. | |
| | A Governor reported that the AHT's performance management cycle had been completed, and that the cycle for the HT would begin early in the new academic year on the HT's return from maternity leave. <i>It was noted that an additional governor would be needed to join the HT Performance Management Panel.</i> The Clerk advised that Governor Service usually ran governor training on HTPM panels at the end of Term 6 or at the beginning of Term 1. | All |
| | A Governor commented that, although she appreciated the need for balance on the GB, parents had an existing link and commitment to the school and might be more prepared to put themselves forward for the vacant positions. | |
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Succession Planning

The Chair referred to the email that she had sent to governors outlining her intentions. She explained that she would remain a governor until the end of the academic year (31 August) but would be stepping down as Chair at the end of term (23 July). She explained that the School needed to have a Chair in place across the Summer and that Michael Webber had volunteered to take on this role. The Clerk asked if any other governors wished to self-nominate for the Chair position. There were no new volunteers.

Governors elected Michael Webber as Chair of Governors for the period from 23 July 2021 to the first meeting of the new academic year when fresh elections would take place for the Chair and Vice Chair in accordance with the Board's Terms of Reference.

The Chair congratulated MW on his appointment. MW thanked governors for electing him to this position of trust, commenting that he was privileged to have this opportunity. *He confirmed that he would speak to all governors individually over the Summer and that he would also be approaching a number of potential new governors.*

Meeting dates for 2021/22

Governors reviewed the suggested FGB meeting dates. The SBM commented that the January meeting date was close to the deadline for the nine-month financial monitoring submission. The Clerk commented that it might be possible to arrange a finance monitoring or committee meeting to enable governors to review the monitoring statement before it was submitted to the LA.

A Governor asked whether the FGB would be able to revert to face to face meetings. Governors agreed that online meetings did not provide the same opportunities for interaction, and agreed that meetings should be held on site if possible, but also felt that there should be the option for governors to take place in meetings remotely if they were unable to attend in person, or felt uncomfortable doing so. The AHT confirmed that the school had the IT capacity for governors to join a face to face meeting remotely through a whiteboard or screen. The Clerk confirmed that she would provide the option for Teams meetings when sending out meeting invitations.

The meeting dates for 2021/22 were confirmed as:

- <u>Tuesday 14 September 2021 (Admin Meeting)</u>
- Tuesday 19 October 2021
- Monday 29 November 2021
- Thursday 20 January 2022
- Monday 28 March 2022
- Tuesday 24 May 2022
- Wednesday 20 July 2022

Monitoring Reports not discussed elsewhere

There were no monitoring reports that had not been discussed under other agenda items.

Staff Survey Results

Governors reviewed the results of the staff survey.

A Governor commented that the results were overwhelmingly positive , particularly in respect of comments made about leadership, wellbeing and the culture and ethos of the school.

A Governor had noted in a question raised before the meeting that the survey was extremely positive about the support and approach from the SMT over the last year and had asked if these strategies (such as drop in sessions) would continue to be available to staff next year. The AHT confirmed that the whole leadership team was aware that staff were under a great deal of stress and that wellbeing and workload were an

Covid - 19. The minutes have been reviewed and are confirmed by the board on 14 September 2021 to be an accurate record of the meeting and any decision making

Initial

MW

integral part of addressing this. She remarked that it was important that staff felt that they could approach leaders if they had a concern.

| | A Governor noted that some support staff had commented that they sometimes felt 'out of loop' and asked if the SLT had thought about how this might be addressed. The AHT remarked that this perception amongst some support staff was not new and had often been discussed by the SLT. She confirmed that although briefings for teachers had continued under Covid restrictions, the termly briefings for TAs had not taken place, for logistical reasons. She explained that TAs' contracts only required them to be on site or to work during school hours and that it was not possible to require TAs to remain at the end of the day for a briefing. The HT remarked that this was always an issue for schools but suggested that it might be useful to talk to other schools to see how they managed to arrange meetings for their TA teams and to also ask TAs how this issue might be addressed. She noted that some TAs run before or after school interventions, as this had been found to have more impact on children's progress. | |
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| | The HT commented that the survey had been carried out at the end of the most challenging year, and that it was encouraging to have had such a good response, particularly regarding the ethos of the school. A Governor remarked that it had been a pleasure to read such a positive report when the last 18 months had been so difficult and congratulated the leaders on such an achievement. Another Governor concurred with these comments. | |
| | A Governor asked whether the results of the survey had been shared with staff. The AHT advised that she had shared it with the SLT, but not with staff, but that she would now do so. She commented that she believed that the survey reflected the feeling of positivity within the School and the incredible way that staff had responded to the challenges of the past year. | |
| | [Note from Clerk: The AHT has subsequently confirmed that the survey results were previously shared with staff] | |
| | Governor Training OS reported that he had attended the Governor Services Wellbeing in Education training course. The Training and Development Governor advised that Governor Services had published dates for next year's training courses, although these were becoming fully booked very quickly. The Chair noted that the dates for the District Governor briefings had also been confirmed. | |
| | The Chair noted that Governors would need to have safeguarding update training at the beginning of the new year and asked if they could join the staff update session. The AHT confirmed that the update training would be held as part of the Inset day at 11.00am on 1/9/21. She also advised that the session would be recorded for new staff and for any governors who were not able to attend the Inset Day session. | |
| | TEP Monthly Governor briefing Governors reviewed the June bulletin. The Chair noted that the September update was likely to include updates on KCSIE/Child Protection and other statutory guidance. | |
| 10. | CHAIR'S ACTION AND CORRESPONDENCE The Chair confirmed that she had not taken any Chair's Actions since the last meeting and had not received or entered into any correspondence. | |
| 11. | ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS The Chair commented that it had been a massive honour and privilege to serve as a governor and as Chair and that she had seen the school make an incredible journey. She | |

| 13. | DATE OF NEXT MEETING The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 14 July 2021. | |
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| 14. | IMPACT OF THE MEETING The Chair remarked that the GB had made important decisions to put governance arrangements in place for the Summer and beginning of the new academic year, and that the reports from monitoring teams had shown evidence of challenge. Governors had raised pertinent questions about the Strategic Plan's priorities and had recognised the progress that had been made. A Governor commented that it had also be helpful to have both the HT and AHT at the meeting to support the transition process. | |
| | The meeting closed at 9.00pm | |

Signed.(Chair).....Date

ACTION LOG

| Meeting Date | Agenda Item | Details | Deadline | Action By | Status |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---|----------|--------------|---|
| 18.3.21 17.5.21 13.7.21 | 4 3 4 | The Clerk to check Inspiring Governance for further expressions of interest in the Co- opted vacancies. Governors to contact the Chair if they are aware of any other potential new governors | End T4 | LH | The Chair-elect to contact potential new governors over the Summer. The parent who had expressed interest in becoming governor to be advised that she would be contacted again in September. |
| 13.7.21 | 5 | The OPAL Link Governor to report back to the October FGB Meeting | 19.10.21 | EB | |
| 13.7.21 | 6 | The PE Funding Impact Statement to be updated and uploaded to the website | End T1 | ADA | |
| 13.7.21 | 9 | The Governance Structure, roles and responsibilities to be discussed over the Summer | Start T1 | NFJ/W/ MW | |
| 13.7.21 | 9 | The Chair-elect to speak to governors individually over the Summer about their roles on the FGB | Start T1 | MW | |
| 13.7.21 | 9 | A Governor to be recruited to join the HT Performance Management Panel | End T1 | All | |