



**Sussex Road Community Primary School**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body**  
**held on 11 May 2020 at 6.30pm through virtual governance arrangements**

	<b>Present:</b>	Nicola Furlonger (Chair) Sarah Bowles (Headteacher) Andrew Chesworth (AC) Alison D'Alton (SBM) Vanessa Lines (VL) Andrew Pembroke (AP) (Not present during items 1 & 2 and part of items 3 & 4) Clare Robertson (CR) Louisa Rowlands (LR) (Not present during items 1, 2 and part of Item 4) Emma Sangster (ES) Michael Webber (MW) (Not present during items 1, 2 and part of Item 4) Jo Winker (JW)	
	<b>In attendance</b>	Carly Birkett, (Deputy Headteacher (DHT)) Lesley Hardwick (Clerk)	<b>Action</b>
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	There were no apologies, although John Thompson was absent. <b><i>The Chair confirmed that she would contact him after the meeting.</i></b> The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	NF
2.	<b>DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS</b>	No declarations of interest were received in respect of any item on the Agenda.	
3.	<b>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</b> <b>(This item was taken after the first two decisions under Agenda Item 4 had been taken and MW and LR had joined the meeting)</b>	<p><b>Minutes of FGB meeting held on 17 March 2020</b>          ES pointed out that she had not carried out the QoE visit but had sent information to the HT having read the note of that meeting. <b>The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2020 were approved as an accurate record (to be signed by the Chair at a later date), subject to the change referred to above.</b>  <b>[Andrew Pembroke (AP) joined the meeting]</b></p> <p><b>Action Points</b>          The Chair advised that the GB should only discuss action points that were business-critical or relevant to the School's operations under Covid-19 Regulations. Governors reviewed progress against these outstanding actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Safeguarding Visit</u> – The Safeguarding Governor (MW) advised that the outstanding visit for the academic year would be the review of the SCR, which could not take place remotely. <b><i>He confirmed that he would therefore visit during Term 6, if the lockdown restrictions were relaxed sufficiently to allow this to happen, and that in the meantime he would liaise with the HT and DHT to discuss any safeguarding issues that might affect the School's vulnerable children.</i></b></li> <li>• <u>Arrangements to cover the HT's Maternity Leave</u> – The Chair reminded Governors that at its last meeting the FGB had delegated authority to the Vice Chair (MW) and herself, to take decisions relating to any staffing changes necessary to cover the HT's maternity leave. She reported that the DHT had agreed to take on an Acting</li> </ul>	MW

	<p>HT role during this period, and that the SENCO had also agreed to take on an Acting DHT role, with a significant amount of her SENCO duties being delegated to another member of staff. A temporary Assistant Headteacher (AHT) role (for three days a week) would be created to provide additional SLT support. The Chair also confirmed that these appointments had been made in accordance to the Leadership Pay Scales within the School's Pay Policy and that appropriate provision had been made within the Budget. <b>In response to a question, the HT advised that that the DHT and SENCO were finalising the Job Description for the SENCO support role, which would be advertised by the end of the current week, but confirmed that the SENCO would retain strategic oversight of the delivery of SEND provision within the School.</b> Governors confirmed that they supported the arrangements for SEND delivery on this basis. Governors discussed the new temporary posts in more detail, and any follow-on appointments that might be necessary, and asked if the HT had received any teacher resignations so far (details recorded within the Confidential Minutes).</p> <p>It was confirmed that all other pertinent action items had been completed or were covered under other agenda items.</p> <p><b>Other Matters Arising</b> There were no other matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
4.	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP</b> <b>[The first two decisions under this agenda item were taken before Agenda Item 3]</b></p> <p><b>LA Governor Appointment</b> The Chair reminded Governors that the FGB had agreed previously that Michael Webber should be reappointed as the LA Governor and that the LA had now nominated him to this role. She advised that she had taken Chair's Action to confirm Michael Webber's appointment, to enable his terms of office to run concurrently, and asked Governors to ratify this action. <b>Governors approved the action that had been taken and Michael Webber was confirmed as LA Governor, for a four-year term of office from 28/4/20.</b> [Michael Webber joined the meeting.]</p> <p><b>Co-opted Governor Appointment</b> The Chair reported that Louisa Rowland's term of office as a Co-opted Governor would end on 25/5/20, and that she had expressed interest in serving for a further term. Governors recognised the contribution that LR had made to the FGB, and particularly commented on her impact as Training and Development Governor. Governors agreed that <b>Louisa Rowlands should be reappointed for a further term of office as a Co-opted Governor, for four years from 26/5/20.</b> [Louisa Rowlands joined the meeting.]</p> <p><b>Associate Member, Designated Governor and new Governor Appointments</b> The Chair reminded Governors that recent Governor resignations had resulted in two Designated Governor vacancies – Safeguarding (being covered by MW), and Health &amp; Safety. She reported that she had had initial discussions with a potential new Governor, who had some experience that would be relevant to the Health &amp; Safety Governor role and had SEND knowledge through her experiences with her own children, but who had no direct connection with Sussex Road or the immediate locality (which had been one of the 'gaps' identified by the most recent Skills Audit). A further expression of interest had been received from a potential Governor living and working in Tunbridge Wells, although the Chair advised that she had not yet followed this up. The Clerk added that she had identified a number of local volunteers through Inspiring Governance, and had passed information on to the Chair. The Chair confirmed that she would be happy to have</p>	

	<p>exploratory discussions with this candidate, but questioned whether any formal appointment process was possible in the current situation, as candidates would not have the opportunity to see the School in action. Governors discussed whether to take any action at this time, noting that, although the vacancies meant that more of the workload fell to other Governors, during the current situation, the normal monitoring could not take place and that the workload, in terms of coming into school, was reduced. <b>They finally agreed that it would not be practical to carry out formal process until September, but also suggested that, in the meantime, the Chair could hold initial discussions with potential candidates, for example setting out the School's expectations, especially with regard to time commitment but making candidates aware that it would not be appointing until the next academic year.</b></p> <p>With regard to the appointment of Associate Members, the Clerk advised that it had previously been suggested that former Governor Carla Thompson should be appointed as an Associate Member to enable her to continue with some Safeguarding monitoring pending the appointment of a new Governor. However, a Governor pointed out that the restrictions on undertaking monitoring visits meant that this course of action was no longer necessary. <b>Governors agreed that no further action should be taken.</b> A Governor asked whether the DHT should be appointed as an Associate Member. The Clerk advised that, as an Associate Member, the DHT would have access to FGB papers and would have the right to attend FGB meetings, but would not be able to vote or count towards the quorum. She added that where GBs operated through a Committee structure, Associate Governors could be appointed to, and have voting rights at Committees, but pointed out that this did not apply under the GB's current Governance Model. <b>Governors agreed that Carly Birkett should be appointed as an Associate Member.</b></p> <p><b>Succession Planning</b> Governors discussed the suggestion from The Education People (TEP) that GBs should agree a 'chain of command' to cover the event where the Chair and Vice Chair were both incapacitated through Covid-19. It was noted that both the Chair and Vice Chair were able to isolate and work from home and were therefore not at any significant risk of contracting the virus. <b>It was therefore agreed that no action needed to be taken.</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b></p> <p><b>Headteacher's Report</b> The Chair referred to the Safeguarding Risk assessment that had set out the action that the School would be taking and which had been circulated with the meeting papers. The HT gave a verbal update on the operation of the School under DFE Covid-19 guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Numbers of Children in School</u> - The HT reported that the number of children in school fluctuated from day to day, usually between 14-20 children, depending on key workers' working patterns. She advised that one vulnerable child with an EHCP was in school, and that other children were key workers or members' of staff children, where staff were in School. She confirmed that staff continued to liaise with Social Workers and other outside agencies and that all vulnerable children had been offered a place, although the majority had decided to keep their children at home.</li> <li>• <u>Staffing Update</u> - The HT explained that the DHT and SENCO had set up a rota for staff to come into school, including support staff, confirming that on most days there would be between five and six staff in school, including one SLT member and a member of the Admin team. She commented that staff had been very 'open' to coming into school and praised their positive approach. She added that a number of staff who were self-isolating, or shielding a family member had offered to come into school and that in these cases arrangements had been made for them to work on activities in school but on their own. <b>A Governor asked how often staff on</b></li> </ul>	SB

**the rota were required to come into school.** The DHT advised that teachers and support staff would be coming into school once a fortnight, with SLT members coming in once a week.

- Care for vulnerable children, key workers children including breakfast and after-school provision - The HT confirmed that a member of support staff would work with any children with EHCP plans who were in school, and that, although it was more difficult to support home working, staff were in touch to provide support for children who were working online. She pointed out that these arrangements would need to change if more children were in school after 1/6/20. She reported that Polkadots had asked whether parents wanted breakfast or after-school provision but that none had taken up this option.
- Monitoring the wellbeing and welfare of pupils, staff and stakeholders - The HT confirmed that all children had been phoned by their class teacher, and that the response to that contact had been very positive. She advised that some families had been difficult or impossible to contact and that in these cases the School had liaised with other agencies and had made referrals where necessary. She commented that some parents would not answer calls from a 'withheld' phone number, even when staff had sent a text in advance to let them know they would be contacting them, but that staff continued to try to make contact and referred to one particular case where there had been no response to phone calls or to staff physically visiting the home. CPOMS referrals were being made where staff had concerns about a child's welfare and these were passed on to relevant agencies if necessary. However, she commented that the School was not well supported in this by other agencies, who would close cases referred to them by the School if the parent did not respond to a phone call on the basis that the family was not engaging. **A Governor asked whether the School remained responsible for children's wellbeing when they were not in school.** The HT confirmed that the School would have discharged its responsibility by making an onward referral, and added that detailed records were being kept to demonstrate that the School had done everything possible, although she pointed out that staff continued to feel a moral responsibility towards these vulnerable children. **A Governor asked whether staff had any significant concerns about children who were potentially at risk where families were not responding.** The HT advised that there had been concerns about the wellbeing of the children she had referred to earlier but that the children had subsequently been seen playing outside their home. She noted that in some cases parents with mental health issues would not wish to engage but that where this was a concern the School had made contact with other family members to let them know that they had been trying to get in touch. With regard to staff, the HT confirmed that the DHT and SENCO were talking to staff and that teachers were meeting regularly through Teams. She added that leaders were aware that staff who lived alone were potentially more vulnerable and were keeping in contact with them.
- Free School Meals and Vouchers - The HT advised that before and during the Easter break, the School had been working with Nourish to provide packed lunches for all FSM children, which had been hand delivered where children had not come into school. She reported that working arrangements with Nourish had proved difficult and that the School had therefore moved to the Government's voucher scheme at the beginning of Term 5. She commented on the difficulties that had been encountered, for example the long wait to get onto the website and the delay in processing orders, but advised that the majority of parents had been understanding about having to wait for the vouchers. **In response to a question she confirmed that the vouchers would be backdated to the beginning of the Term, so that some parents had received three weeks' worth of vouchers at once.** She also remarked that in some cases the emails that parents had supplied had been incorrect or out of date, and that some parents might not have the literacy

skills to read or follow the instructions sent to them, but advised that, according to the website, all these issues had now been resolved. **A Governor asked whether parents had reported that some retailers were refusing to accept the vouchers.** The HT confirmed that she was not aware that any parents had experienced these problems although some had found the two-step process (whereby they needed to enter a code in another website to activate the vouchers) difficult. **Another Governor asked whether the School continued to pay Nourish for the meals that they were providing.** The SBM confirmed that she had agreed that Nourish would invoice monthly for the time being, and that these invoices were based on an average that included Universal FSM. The HT added that the number of families claiming FSM had increased, which would secure further PPG monies for the School in future.

- **Health and Safety** - The HT reported that the SBM, SENCO and DHT were coordinating health and safety within the School. She advised that hand sanitiser was widely available within the school, that staff were doing their best to make sure that children maintained social distancing and that children were using the larger EYFS classroom currently, although they might move to Year 1 classrooms shortly to enable the EYFS space to be prepared for photographs that would be used in the information booklets prepared for the new Year R intake. The HT also reported that the Caretaker continued to work his normal hours and that the areas of school in which he was working were cordoned off. The SBM advised that work would be carried out on the gate and fence to the lower playground and that legionella and other safety check were being carried out weekly.
- **Support to parents and carers re home education** - The HT reported that all information was provided on the website and believed that the School was offering a high quality of online provision. A Governor with children at the School confirmed that his children found the provision engaging and a Governor advised that parents who he had met had commented to him on the high quality of the provision. Another Governor remarked that she believed that the school's provision was exceptional, praising the amount of interaction from the school and a Governor with three children who all attended different local schools remarked that Sussex Road was superior to many other local schools in this regard. A Governor commented that she was aware that communication was an issue at some other schools and remarked that she believed that Sussex Road parents were less likely to contact the school with questions because they were confident that information would be shared with them wherever possible. A Governor with a child in Year 6 thanked the School for thinking of this year group during what would have been their SATS week, commenting that many Year 6 children were struggling during the lockdown and that the contact with the school had been very welcome. Another Governor remarked that the 'galleries' which gave children an opportunity to see work produced by their peers were much appreciated, as they gave them a sense of still being part of a class. The HT explained her proposals to showcase work completed by children whilst on lockdown when schools returned and advised that the piece of work that children had selected for the exhibition would be framed by the School and given to them as a keepsake.
- **Safeguarding and online safety** – The HT confirmed that online safety was already embedded within the School.

### **Strategic Plan**

**A Governor asked whether the School was still following through on actions from the Strategic Plan where possible.** The HT advised that meetings with Subject Leaders were still taking place, and that teachers were meeting to develop their curriculum plans, and were making plans for next year. However she advised that some priorities, for example developing separate areas within the playground, could not be taken forward until the next academic year.

	<p><b>Re-opening the School</b>  A Governor asked whether the HT had had any initial thoughts on planning for some classes returning to school on 1/6/20. The HT reported that the Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH) had held a meeting that morning, which had been attended by over 50 HTs, who had all agreed that it would not be possible to reopen their schools as the Government had proposed. She explained that to maintain full social distancing, only five or six children would be able to be taught in one classroom and added that, if Year R, Year 1 and Year 6 all returned there would be 180 children in school, 120 of whom would be in Year R and Year 1, and would be very difficult to control in terms of their social distancing. She pointed out that there was not space within the school to teach 180 children whilst maintaining social distancing and that children would be in unfamiliar classrooms where the furniture and resources were not appropriate for their age group and would be taught by unfamiliar members of staff. She also commented that, where Year 6 were concerned, it was unlikely that it would be possible for them to take part in any of the normal activities that would take during Term 6, such as the school journey, planning a production or compiling a year-book. She also questioned the position regarding PPE for staff and whether it would be appropriate for staff to wear PPE whilst working with children, as some might find it traumatic to be taught by someone wearing a mask. The HT reported that the KAH had asked the HTs to pass on comments and questions, although she noted that schools were still waiting for detailed guidance on how to manage issues such as split attendance, drop-off and pick-up times and lunchtimes. In addition, she pointed out that children who needed 1:1 support would need to have a member of staff close to them in class.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked whether parents would be fined if they did not send their children back to school.</b> Another Governor advised that the DfE had now announced that parents would not be fined.</p> <p><b>A Governor remarked that it would not be possible to 'plan to succeed' in this scenario, given the confines of the school building, and asked if the School could limit the number of children (for example taking one year group only), on the basis that it would not be possible to accommodate a larger number of children safely.</b>  The HT pointed out that there was currently not sufficient information available to plan, and advised that the NEU (formerly NUT) had advised its members not to engage with any plans to reopen schools at this time. It was noted that an EFGB would need to be convened if the HT concluded that it would not be possible to safely comply with the DfE's instructions on school reopening.</p>	
6.	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p><b>Year End 2019/20 Outturn</b>  Governors noted the year end position set out within the Oracle Outturn report. The SBM confirmed that the final Revenue rollover had been £142,929, and the Capital rollover £0.</p> <p><b>Report from Finance Monitoring Governors</b>  Governors reviewed the report from the Finance Monitoring Governors. A Governor referred to the discussion that had taken place regarding the rollover, and confirmed that the SBM had been asked to commit funding where possible to protect the budget against any possible repercussions arising from the economic position following the Covid-19 lockdown.</p> <p><b>2020/21 Budget and Three-Year Financial Plan</b>  Governors reviewed the proposed budget and Three-Year Plan, noting the comments in the notes from the SBM. The SBM confirmed that she had included additional provision</p>	

	<p>within the budget (within E19) to cover the enhanced support that children would be likely to need as they returned from lockdown, and had also allowed for an additional TA post to provide support for children with High Needs Funding (E03). She advised that she had also made provision for additional maintenance and improvement work during the current year (E12 and E13), for example to complete the planned work to the lower playground and increase the Forest School area and for additional bought-in curriculum support (E27). [MW left the meeting, which remained quorate]</p> <p><b>A Governor asked whether it was possible to predict the impact of the lockdown in respect of additional costs to the School during Years 2 and 3 of the Financial Plan.</b></p> <p>The SBM confirmed that this information was unknown, and that she had made a best estimate, based on the information that was currently available. She also pointed out that, although the budget planned for increased delegated funding following the full implementation of the National Funding Formula, it was possible that these predictions might not be realised as the UK economy recovered from the Covid-19 lockdown. She therefore pointed out that although the budget position appeared positive, the School would still need to take a cautious approach in relation to expenditure and suggested that the budget might need to be re-cast several times during the coming year to reflect changing circumstances.</p> <p><b>Governors unanimously approved the 2020/21 Budget and Three-Year Financial Plan.</b></p> <p><b>Other Financial Issues</b> The SBM had no other financial issues to report.</p>	
7.	<p><b>POLICIES</b></p> <p><b>Addendum to Child Protection Policy</b> The Chair confirmed that she had reviewed the document with the Vice Chair and had taken Chair's Action to approve the Addendum to the CP Policy, but noted that there were a number of comments on the draft that had been circulated with the meeting paper that still needed to be resolved before the document was published.</p> <p><b>Governors approved the Addendum to the Child Protection Policy, subject to the resolution of any outstanding comments before the document was reformatted and published on the School website.</b></p>	
8.	<p><b>GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p><b>Governor Training</b> The Chair reported that she had completed an NGA online training course on governor recruitment. The Training and Development Governor advised that TEP's Governor Training was now being delivered through webinars <b>and confirmed that she would circulate information about these courses to Governors.</b> JW commented that these online courses had proved very popular and advised that TEP would be trialling different times for the webinars (which were initially being run at the time that the face to face courses would have taken place). The Chair noted that the District Governor meetings would also be taking place virtually.</p> <p><b>TEP Monthly Governance Bulletin</b> Governors noted the contents of the monthly Governance Bulletin.</p> <p><b>Chair's Actions and Correspondence</b> The Chair confirmed that she had not taken any actions beyond those already reported to the GB, and had not received any correspondence.</p>	LR

<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p><b>Draft Recovery Plan for Governance</b>          JW explained that she had circulated this draft document to Governors for comment and that it would form part of a suite of guidance from TEP for schools which aimed to provide a checklist for governing bodies overseeing their schools' recovery plans. In response to a question she confirmed that the document was still in a draft format at this stage. <b><i>She noted that she had already received some feedback from the Vice Chair and asked other Governors to pass any comments back to her.</i></b></p> <p>There was no other urgent business.</p> <p>The HT asked that the minutes should record her thanks to the DHT and SBM for ensuring that the school site remained safe and that essential supplies were delivered, acknowledging the significant amount of additional work that this had involved. The Chair concurred with these comments. The HT also thanked the Governors and particularly the Chair for their ongoing support.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>CONFIDENTIALITY.</b>          It was agreed that detailed discussions about staffing and appointments to the new SENCO support and AHT posts should be reported within the Confidential Minutes</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>          It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 15/7/2020 at 6.30pm, and would probably take place virtually</p>	
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>IMPACT OF THE MEETING</b>          The Chair remarked that in these abnormal circumstances, it was important for Governors to have an insight into what was going on, and what might happen within the school and the potential impact for staff and children. She confirmed that the GB would continue to offer any support that the HT and SLT needed and thanked them for the successful provision that they had been able to deliver in challenging circumstances.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8.20pm</p>	

Signed.(Chair).....Date .....



## ACTION LOG

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Details	Deadline	Responsibility	Status
16.9.19 17.10.19 29.11.19 17.3.20	5 3 3 9	Governors to contact the Chair if they are aware of a potential governor with Safeguarding experience	End T2	All	On going
29.11.19 10.2.20 17.3.20 11.5.20	7 3 7 3	A Safeguarding visit to be carried out during Term 3	End T6	MW	To be completed by the end of T6 if possible
10.2.20	4	HTs' reports to meetings where the SP is not on the agenda to include a summary of progress against key milestones	Ongoing	SB	To be taken forward
10.2.20 17.3.20	7 3,7	A Condition Report to be prepared and discussed with the Health & Safety Governor	17.3.20	ADA	To be taken forward
17.3.20	4	The DHT to report to Governors once more skills progression documents had been completed	11.5.20	CB	To be taken forward
17.3.20	5	Future monitoring visits to review the use and impact of PE Funding	End T6	JW	To be taken forward
17.3.20	7	The HTs direct input into safeguarding to be discussed during a future visit	End T6	MW	To be taken forward
17.3.20	7	A Health & Safety site visit to be arranged	End T6	AC/ADA	To be taken forward
17.3.20 11.5.20	9 3	A meeting to be arranged with a potential Co-opted Governor candidate	11.5.20	LH/MW/NF	Initial discussions to take place with potential governors with no formal action to be taken until September
17.3.20	9	Discussions on the 2020/21 Strategic Plan to be fed back to the GB	End T6	SB/CB	To be taken forward
17.3.20	9	PPG provision and spend to be discussed as part of L&M Monitoring	End T6	NF	To be taken forward
11.5.20	1	John Tomlinson to be contacted by the Chair regarding non-attendance at FGB meetings	End T5	NF	
11.5.20	8	Details of forthcoming TEP Governor Training webinars to be sent to all Governors	End T5	LR	
11.5.20	9	Comments on the draft Recovery Plan for Governance to be sent to JW	End T5	All	

APPROVED