



**Sussex Road Community Primary School
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body
held on 11 November 2016 at 6.30pm at the School**

	Present:	David Wake(Chair) Sarah Bowles (SB) (Headteacher) Andrew Chesworth (AC) Alison D’Alton (ADA) (SBM) Nicola Furlonger (NF) (Vice Chair) Des O’Dwyer(DD) Sara Phelps (SP) Nigel Rawlings (NR) Louisa Rowlands (LR) Michael Webber (MW)	
	In attendance	Lesley Hardwick (Clerk)	Action
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence from Vanessa Lines, Amanda Sermon and Carla Thompson (work commitments) were received and accepted		
2.	DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS No declarations of interest were received in respect of any item on the Agenda.		
3.	<p>GOVERNANCE OF THE SUSSEX ROAD GOVERNING BODY</p> <p>The Chair reminded Governors that there was a longstanding action for the Governing Body to review its own model of governance and that he had called this Extraordinary FGB Meeting to provide the opportunity for all Governors to consider whether the current model was the correct way to proceed with the governance of the School.</p> <p>For the benefit of those Governors who were new to the GB, the Chair explained that the School operated the ‘Circle’ model of governance, with no Committees and with appointed monitoring pairs reporting directly back to the FGB. He advised that he did not believe that this model was currently working effectively. In particular, he suggested that the current monitoring system created silos of competency, as monitoring tended to be carried out in isolation and the results not shared sufficiently to enable all Governors to be well briefed. He commented that this resulted in the risk that Governors might not be sufficiently well briefed in any discussion with Ofsted, and therefore suggested that another way to operate to share information and knowledge needed to be identified. He asked Governors for their comments and suggestions.</p> <p>A Governor commented that she had previously clerked for the School when it operated a Committee structure, but that the GB had been much larger in size at that time and she suggested that it would be difficult to operate a Committee structure with a smaller GB without increasing the burden on governors in respect of meeting attendance. She also remarked that, as a member of staff, she had found the Action Plan presented to her following the recent Health and Safety visit to be particularly helpful in giving her actions to work towards and report back on.</p> <p>Another Governor advised that she had joined the GB at the point that it moved from a Committee model to the Circle model and explained that one of the reasons for the change had been the amount of repetition in reporting the same information to a number of different Committees and that it had also been felt that Governors were spending too much time attending meetings and insufficient time getting to know the School. She commented that the Circle model was intended to give Governors the opportunity to drill down more deeply into specific areas of the School’s activities and feed this information</p>		

back to the full FGB. However, she remarked that she did not feel that the analysis in monitoring reports was strong enough in all cases and supported the suggestion that they should include clear actions to hold the leadership team to account.

Another Governor suggested that there was a risk in operating a Committee structure that Governors' focus would be narrowed to the areas covered by their Committees and would lose site of the wider view of the School. The Clerk advised that the usual model for a Committee structure would be to operate with two Committees, although Governors would always be able to attend meetings of the Committee that they did not sit on if they wished to do so.

A Governor advised that, although he supported the principle of the Circle model, it was not currently successful and he felt that Governors therefore needed to work more 'smartly' in a number of ways. In particular, he suggested that the monitoring pairs needed to take a clearer focus and identify areas where action needed to be taken. He commented that Ofsted would expect Governors to provide specific evidence to demonstrate their impact and to identify areas where they had made a difference, citing as an example the recent lobbying on the School's behalf to resolve problems with the water supply. He also suggested that more focussed monitoring reports would also provide all Governors with a greater understanding of the specific area that had been monitored.

Governors agreed that the Circle model of governance should be retained.

Governors then discussed ways in which it could be made to work more effectively.

The HT pointed out that monitoring activities needed to reflect the priorities of the Strategic Plan. She advised that this was the way that the SLT monitored progress against the Strategic Plan and suggested that there needed to be a strict monitoring timetable set for the whole of the academic year to deliver monitoring in accordance with the milestones within the Plan and that Governors needed to be held to account in respect of their compliance with this timetable.

Governors noted that the standard Monitoring Report Form already included a section to record any actions that they had identified necessary, and suggested that the monitoring governors needed to make sure that this was completed and brought to the GB's attention. The HT commented that monitoring would be more effective if Governors reflected on the information that they had been given at their monitoring visit and followed up on actions at a subsequent visit or through further communication with her or with the relevant member of the SLT. It was noted that Governors needed to produce their reports in a more timely manner.

A Governor asked the HT for her opinion of where the GB was weak in its governance of the School. The HT advised that Governors were able to identify areas of weakness, or subjects for action through their monitoring but failed to follow up to satisfy themselves that improvements had been made or action taken. She also commented that the monitoring schedule tended to 'slip', pointing out that it was already half way through the year (in terms of the time before formal assessments took place) and questioned how many Governors could claim to know the Strategic Plan well.

It was suggested that monitoring reports should be circulated more promptly, rather than being held until the next FGB meeting. The Clerk advised that she uploaded reports as soon as these had been cleared by the HT and sent to her for uploading to the Governor Zone, but remarked that she sometimes did not receive the reports for some time after the visit had taken place.

A Governor also suggested that the GB needed to use its time at FGB meetings more effectively and reconfigure its agendas if necessary to concentrate on progress against the Strategic Plan and the results of monitoring visits. He also suggested that there

needed to be capacity within the agenda for Governors to have a meaningful discussion on any pressing issues that required action to be taken. It was pointed out that all reports to the FGB needed to have a connection to the Strategic Plan. The Clerk confirmed that that this would accord with good practice, although the GB also needed to comply with the LA's financial monitoring and other compliance requirements. It was suggested that reports to the GB should be taken as read unless they related directly to the Strategic Plan or required Governor action or approval. . Governors considered whether the model Monitoring Reporting Form needed to be amended to reflect the focus on the actions required.

A Governor suggested that the background information uploaded to the Governor Zone needed to be rearranged so it was easier to find information about a particular topic, for example finance documents. He also suggested that it would be helpful if there was a shared calendar accessible through the Governor Zone that could be used to record monitoring visits and other governor meetings. The HT contacted the website provider to investigate whether such a calendar could be embedded within the site, although it was confirmed that as an alternative a link could be embedded to a 'Google' or similar cloud-based calendar.

It was suggested that there needed to be some form of 'Audit' plan that the Chair could use to hold Governors to account. **The Chair agreed to develop and take responsibility for a 'Governance Calendar' that could be used for this purpose.** It was noted that communication would be key to a more collaborative way of working, and a Governor suggested that it would be worthwhile exploring 'instant messenger' applications that might prove to be more effective than the use of email. It was also recognised that there needed to be more robust tracking and monitoring of Governors' own performance against the annual monitoring plan.

It was noted that some Governors were still more active between GB meetings than others and it was pointed out that all Governors needed to play their part. It was also pointed out that the GB needed to consider its succession planning. The Clerk commented that one of the advantages of a Committee model was that it provided an opportunity for other Governors in addition to the Chair and Vice Chair of the GB to take on a leadership role, although she suggested that there were also opportunities in the Circle model, for example through chairing the Pay Committee or Data Group. In response to a question, it was confirmed that there was no restriction in the number of Governors who could participate within a monitoring group and it was noted that having a larger membership could make it easier to ensure that at least two Governors were able to attend a meeting. The Clerk commented that this could be particularly helpful, as guidance that she had receive from the LA indicated that monitoring should be taking place more frequently than the established pattern of one visit in each 'seasonal' term. Another Governor suggested that it might also be helpful for Governors to rotate between monitoring groups to develop knowledge and expertise across the whole range of school activities.

Governors reviewed the current monitoring arrangements. **It was agreed that the current arrangements, should stand.** The Chair advised that the Data Group was to be expanded to cover monitoring of SEND, Safeguarding and Pupil Premium, although he acknowledged that there would still need to be a named Governor with responsibility for SEND and Safeguarding to comply with regulatory expectations. It was confirmed that monitoring should therefore cover:

- Outcomes (the expanded Data Group, as above)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management
- EYFS
- Health and Safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Monitoring • Pay Committee <p>Governors indicated the areas which they would be interested in covering. The Chair confirmed that he would work up revised monitoring arrangements based on these preferences. He also confirmed that he would contact the HT to ask for an update on progress against the actions in the Strategic Plan and organise some early monitoring visits based on this information.</p>	DW
4.	<p>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>Use of the BACS Payment System Governors approved a proposal to move to the BACS system which would improve the security and efficiency of payments.</p> <p>Water Supply to the Millenium Building The HT and SBM provided an update on progress in resolving these issues. The SBM confirmed that it had now become clear that the solution proposed by the LA before the Summer break would not have effectively solved the problems that the School had been experiencing and that it had now been agreed a pressurised water tank would be installed to feed the Servery and toilets in the Millennium Block. The HT confirmed that the LA was now treating the matter as an urgent health and safety issue. She advised that the LA had also accepted that there had also been some shortcomings in the standard of the construction of the new KS1 block, which included the boiler not having been properly commissioned and confirmed that this was now being resolved. The SBM also advised that following an investigation of the school's unusually high water bills, it appeared that the grey water tank was being filled by fresh water from the main, rather than rainwater drainage and that this water was then draining away rather than being used to flush the toilets as intended.</p> <p>Breakfast and After School Club Provider A Governor asked whether the HT had received any negative feedback from parents following the Clubs' provider's Inadequate Ofsted judgement. The HT advised that, conversely, parents had been anxious to confirm that they were satisfied with the quality of the provision. She provided further information regarding the judgement, which had arisen as a result of unclear guidance regarding the need for DBS for a trainee on an apprenticeship and advised that she understood that the provider was intending to appeal against it. She also commented that she had been willing to talk to the Inspector about the School's relationship with the provider, but had not been given the opportunity to do so. Governors who used the provision advised that they had received an email from the provider.</p>	
5.	<p>CONFIDENTIALITY. No issues of confidentiality were identified.</p>	
6.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING It was confirmed that the next scheduled FGB meeting would be held on 6 December 2016 at 6.30pm. The meeting closed at 2.50pm.</p>	

Signed.(Chair).....Date

ACTION LOG

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Details	Deadline	Responsibility	Status
26.5.16 13.9.16 13.10.16	5 3 3	A whole-GB training session on data to be arranged	End T2 2016/17	SP/SB	To be arranged
26.5.16 13.7.16 13.9.16	10 3 3	A written report to be prepared on the Health & Safety Monitoring visit	13.7.16	DW	Visit completed – report to be circulated
13.7.16 13.10.16	11 3	Statement of Behaviour Principles to be brought back to T1 FGB for approval	T1 FGB	LH/SB	Deferred to December meeting
13.9.16	4	The parent governor vacancy to be filled	End T1	SB/ADA	In progress
13.9.16	5	Elections to be carried out for the GB Chair in January 2017 and then again in Sept 2017 to provide continuity with the Vice Chair election	LH	Jan 17/ Sept 17	For Term 3 meeting
13.10.16	3	The Chair to meet the Chair of the SRSA to agree how the Working Group is to be taken forward and a further report is to be made to Governors in Term 3	End T2 End T3	DW DW/LH	
13.10.16	3	The remit of the Outcomes Monitoring Pair to be reviewed against the Ofsted Inspection Framework descriptors	End T2	LH	
13.10.16	8	The Chair and HT to meet with the LA to resolve the outstanding water supply issues	End T2	DW/SB	
13.10.16	11	The most current Parent Election procedures and forms to be sent to the SBM	End T1	LH	Completed
13.10.16	11	An Extraordinary FGB to be arranged to discuss the model of governance and GB Development Plan	30.11.16	DW/LH	Completed
13.10.16	11	1-2-1 meetings to be arranged with all Governors	30.11.16	DW/All Governors	
13.10.16	11	Governor Role Descriptors to be sent to the Chair	End T1	LH	Completed
11.11.16	3	A comprehensive monitoring calendar to be created to set a programme of visits for the remainder of the academic year	End T2	DW	