

Sussex Road Community Primary School Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on 19 October 2017 at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room at The Vauxhall Inn, Pembury Road, Tonbridge

	Present: Nicola Furlonger (Chair) Sarah Bowles (SB) (Headteacher) Andrew Chesworth (AC) Alison D'Alton (ADA) (SBM) Vanessa Lines (VL) Claire Robertson (CR) Louisa Rowlands (LR) Carla Thompson (CT)				
	In attendance	Lesley Hardwick (Clerk)	Action		
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies from Des O'Dwyer (childcare issues) and Michael Webber (on holiday) were received and accepted.				
2.	DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS No declarations of interest were received in respect of any item on the Agenda.				
3.	Minutes of FGB meeting held on 12 September 2017 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair. Action Points Governors reviewed progress against outstanding actions: • Pay and Reward Policy – The HT confirmed that this Policy was subject to wider review and would be brought back to the next meeting. It was confirmed that all other action points were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda. Other Matters Arising There were no other matters arising from the minutes.				
4.	The HT advised the Governors. The Governors. The Governors. The Governors at Georgi and direct the strategies of the Governors at Georgi and the Governor and the Governor and The HT confirmed from the last inspection of the HT advised the Governor and Three Thre				

The Chair recalled that that the Ofsted inspectors had indicated that the School was nearly Outstanding in some areas and questioned whether the term 'outstanding' should therefore appear in the Strategic Plan, as something that the School wanted to achieve. The HT commented that there was likely to be a difference between what Outstanding would mean to Ofsted and what it might mean to the School, and remarked that she would not wish to adopt a 'tick box' approach, or change the ethos of the School simply to meet Ofsted's criteria. She added that she would want children to come to the school because they liked the ethos and 'feel' of the school, and because the curriculum was seen as good and, although the School was obviously working to improve Outcomes and to help every child to do their best, this was not necessarily Ofsted's vision of an 'outstanding school'. She confirmed that she would prefer the School to aim for excellence, rather than to 'becoming Outstanding' and to aspire to be the best it could be

A Governor remarked that an Ofsted outstanding judgement might attract more families to the School, the School was currently so heavily subscribed that there was little opportunity for parents or prospective parents to exercise a real choice.

A Governor questioned which Schools were part of Sussex Road's collaboration. The HT advised that the other Schools in the 'official' collaboration group were St Margaret Clitherow, Borough Green and Wateringbury. However, she advised that the Collaboration was not particularly effective, because St Margaret Clitherow was now part of an academy chain and the other two schools were smaller with differing priorities. She confirmed that the School now worked more closely with the Kaizen Teaching Alliance, which included the majority of local selective secondary schools and Woodlands Primary School. She remarked that the focus of the Alliance – governance and emotional wellbeing - were more in line with Sussex Road's priorities than the other schools in the Collaboration, who wanted to focus on Writing. She added that there was now no additional funding available for collaborative working. She also confirmed that Sussex Road would continue to work with other schools who could offer support, advising as an example that the new HT of Judd School wanted to work with Sussex Road as part of his proposal to run familiarisation sessions for children (and particularly PPG children) wanting to take the Kent Test. The Chair added that she was also looking to work with the West Kent Chairs' Forum (led by the Chair of TGS) and that Governor training provides a helpful opportunities for all Governors to make external links with other schools and learn lessons from experience elsewhere.

A Governor asked whether the Three-Year Plan or Vision should make reference to 'Community'. She also commented that the GB had in the past spoken of creating better links. The Chair advised that Ofsted had revised its framework, which now emphasised building links between the School and the wider community. A Governor remarked that the new Chair of the SRSA had also mentioned that the School should increase is presence within the Community. The HT commented that she believed that there were strong community links, both through the curriculum and in school although she remarked that she would like to see the children broaden their horizons and go further afield. A Governor commented that from the discussion on collaborative working, the official collaboration schools were not geographically close and that linking with the community might imply working externally with other local schools. The HT remarked that over the last three to four years the School had successfully built bridges and rebuilt its reputation with the local community, and that this was therefore less of a priority than it had been previously. It was agreed to the implicit references to working with the school community and with partners schools was appropriate.

Leadership and Management Priorities

The HT advised that the four new teachers had all settled in well in their leadership roles and the middle leaders were exploring their roles and knew what was required of them. She confirmed that the middle leaders were now more proactive, and that as a

consequence the SLT was now able to delegate more. She also reported that the School had now employed a SEN Assistant to support the SENCO and advised that profiles had been completed for each PPG child to make sure funding was spent in an impactful way. She reminded Governors that the DfE's expectation was that PPG children who were often working at below age related expectations when they started school, were expected to be working at Greater Depth by the time they left, although they often had no support at home and were also more likely to have mental health issues.

The Chair advised that she was proposing three targets for the GB within this section of the SP:

- Working at optimum efficiency within the Governor Visits Policy, talking to each other between meetings, planning visits and carrying out visits in a more 'imaginative' way, seeking out evidence and not relying on the information provided.
- Making sure the GB had the full range of skills that it needed, succession planning and 'upskilling' existing Governors. The Chair commented that, even within the Circle model, there were opportunities for leadership and team building.
- Giving the GB more of a 'face' within the School, with parents and with staff and increasing the GB's involvement with the local community, for example in newsletters and through a presence at school events. LR confirmed that she was now the SRSA's 'link' to the GB and hoped that this would create a closer relationship. A Governor asked whether the GB had ever sent out a questionnaire to parents. It was confirmed that this had not been done for some time. The Chair suggested that an article from Governors could be included in the next School newsletter. In response to a question, the HT confirmed that the School did not administer the Sussex Road Facebook page. A Governor advised that a new 'secure' site was being promoted by the SRSA on a pilot basis and suggested that this could be a more effective way of sharing information. The HT expressed concern about this proposal from an e-safety viewpoint, pointing out although sites such as this were 'secure' there was still a risk that they could be accessed by someone adopting a false identity and that information could therefore be shared inappropriately or by someone with malicious intentions.

The GB priorities were confirmed.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The HT confirmed that the School was updating its assessment system, to produce information that could be used in reports and shared with parents at consultation meetings. She advised that embedding a broad, balanced and immersive curriculum remained a priority.

Governors noted the reports of monitoring visits on SEND and teaching and learning. A Governor questioned whether Maths should be a specific priority, given the recommendations made by Ofsted. The HT pointed out that the 2017 KS2 Maths results had been very positive (85% ARE) and that the data indicated that Reading was currently more of a concern. One of the QTLA Monitoring Governors reported that she had carried out a visit looking specifically at Maths and was confident that the strategy for teaching Maths at the School was robust and effective.

Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare

The HT reported that Attendance Levels were currently between Good and Outstanding but that the School needed to guard against complacency. In response to a question she confirmed that the attendance figures did not include Year R.

The HT reported that 17 members of staff had now voluntarily taken part in mindfulness training (held after school). The Chair asked whether potentially the School was focussing too much on mindfulness, to the exclusion of other PDBW options. The

HT was confident that mindfulness would evolve and advised that the next step would be CBT training for staff and the introduction of CBT sessions for students. She explained that this was part of the priority to build resilience amongst students and commented that children with mental health needs often had no resilience and that the School also needed to work with families also. A Governor asked whether staff had access to CBT for their personal use. The HT advised that staff were able to access six free half hour counselling sessions through the OT, but that this would involve going through a formal process.

A Governor asked whether the effectiveness of mindfulness and CBT sessions would be monitored. The HT confirmed that the School would carry out baseline surveys of staff and students, including student conferencing and repeat the process in six weeks' time. She remarked that feedback from parents so far was positive. A Governor remarked that some children were ready for mindfulness and that some were not, and that some already had the skills they needed. She therefore questioned whether it was appropriate to deliver the mindfulness sessions to all children. The HT confirmed that she believed that it was good for all children to be exposed to these techniques. A Governor remarked that some children might not need the techniques now, but might need them in future, for example when they moved on to secondary school. The HT commented that she would like to introduce mindfulness within the lower years, as well as KS2. A Governor who volunteered within the School noted that there were some children in younger year groups who would clearly benefit. The HT confirmed that the School would continue to give children as much support as possible, but commented that it also needed to work with parents, as some children 'picked up' on anxieties from their home life. A Governor commented that a full session might be too much for some children, who might find the concept of mindfulness 'boring' and asked whether the School should consider shorter sessions spread out across the week. The HT advised that this would be difficult to manage logistically and added that she believed that children who had too much stimulation sometimes found relaxation 'boring' but needed to have time to be calm. She commented that she had found the collaborative work with the Kaizen Alliance to be very useful when introducing mindfulness within Sussex Road.

EYFS

The HT confirmed that a priority for EYFS would be the development of 'purposeful play', being imaginative and expressive through art and design. She commented that there were many children with ASD in the EYFS cohort, and that this was showing itself in children's anxieties. A Governor asked if the HT felt that this was unique to the current year's cohort, or evidence of a growing trend. The HT advised that she believed that increased ASD was symptomatic of the way in which society was changing, as children were increasingly unable to manage change, leading to separation anxiety, and that there was an increasing incidence of mental health issues at home, which also had an impact for children in school. In response to a question, the HT confirmed that boys had out-performed girls in 2017, and advised that there were also speech and language needs in the current EYFS cohort. The Governor who had carried out the monitoring visit confirmed that performance in EYFS was strong and that the priorities within the Strategic Plan are reflective of the findings of the monitoring pair.

Outcomes

The HT explained that targets would be driven by the expectations for each year group. She confirmed that pupil's targets for the year had been agreed with teachers, and would now be entered into Pupil Asset. She added that these targets formed part of teachers' appraisals and advised that teachers were required to sign to confirm that these were realistic. In response to a question, she confirmed that she would expect pupils taught by students on the highest grades to make 'exceeding' progress and would challenge them if their targets were not met, although she confirmed that these targets were very aspirational.

In response to a further question, the HT advised that the target for a child at ARE at the beginning of the new school year would be that they would continue to be ARE at the end of the year, but that teachers would be expected to identify children who could make accelerated progress. She confirmed that progress would be tracked by teachers across the year and would be discussed at pupil progress meetings, and added that interventions would be put in place for children who were not working at ARE. The HT added that there were different expectations for children with SEND, and that targets would vary from child to child. She remarked that fewer children were now being placed within special schools and that it would be unrealistic to expect that SEND children would make the same level of progress as their non-SEND peers.

The HT remarked that the current Year 6 had a group of very able children, and a group with high SEND. However, she advised that the results of test SATS (using the 2017 test papers) had been very strong. She explained that these results would create the 'baseline' for Year 6 assessments and for the end of year KS2 targets, and confirmed that these would be incorporated into the SP and emailed to Governors by the end of Term.

SB

Monitoring Schedule

The Chair drew Governors' attention to the monitoring schedule in the SP, which set out priorities for all monitoring activities. The Chair questioned whether details of monitoring visits should be programmed within the SP, or be set out in a separate plan. The HT confirmed that she would be content to work with whatever option Governors wished to adopt. It was agreed that a separate Governor monitoring plan should be produced, albeit this could be summarised in the Strategic Plan. The Chair asked that all Monitoring Pairs review the SP priorities and also check the ToRs to see if there were other areas that needed to be monitored and confirm to the Chair by 3 November their proposed monitoring activities / priorities for this year. It was noted that the School should be receiving a higher level of Sports Premium funding this year and that the use and impact of this funding would need to be monitored.

ΑII

The Clerk agreed to send the Chair a copy of a monitoring plan template that she had prepared for other schools. The Chair will compile a monitoring plan for the vear.

The Strategic Plan for 2017/18 was approved.

Monitoring Reports

Governors reviewed monitoring reports that had not been covered during the discussion of the Strategic Plan

- Website Compliance the Chair referred to the checklist that she had completed following her monitoring visit, noting that PPG information needed to be updated.
- Middle Leadership In response to a question, the HT advised that joint observations had not taken place in all cases, but should be completed by the end of Term 2.
- PPG It was noted that PPG students up to Year 4 were meeting targets for ARE and exceeding, but that that the results for Years 5 and 6 had been less positive with no children working at Greater Depth. This remains an area of Strategic Plan priority.
- SEND The SEND Governor reported that the response rate to questionnaires sent to parents of children with SEND from the SENCO had been disappointing with only 19 of 48 having been returned. In response to a question, the HT advised that only 15 families (of 54) had attended the individual meetings that the SENCO had offered, and remarked that the non-attenders included a parent who had claimed that she had not been consulted previously about her child's progress. The HT reported parents who had responded had indicated that they were pleased with the interventions that were being put in place, before, during or after school, driven by the children's needs. She also advised that the SEND

5 Initial FGB 19.10.17

LH/NF

- questionnaires and visit invitations had not included EYFS, where, as mentioned previously, there were a high number of children with ASD. She confirmed that staff were trying to make the EYFS area as 'ASD friendly' as possible, although this was difficult in an open-plan environment.
- PDBW The PDBW monitoring area advised that most issues discussed during her visit had already been covered. With regard to behaviour, she had noted that there had only been one internal exclusion in the term up to her visit and the HT confirmed that this number had not increased. The HT advised that one child would be attending TRAX next term, and that another child with mental health issues might also spend some time there. In response to a question she explained that TRAX was an offsite 'alternative provision' for primary aged children, with children attending for four days each week for a term (with one day in their home school) and then returning to their home school on a phased basis during the subsequent term. She advised that children at TRAX were taught in very small classes (six children and 12 adults) in an extremely nurturing environment which was designed to modify their behaviours. She confirmed that TRAX placements had been successful in the past and added that children needed to have accessed a placement before they would be considered for a managed move to another school. In response to a question from the monitoring governor, the HT confirmed that the SLT was looking to relaunch the 'golden table' to encourage good behaviour at lunch time.

HT's Admin Report

- <u>School Roll</u> The HT confirmed that there were vacancies within Years 2 and 3 but that the School was full in other year groups.
- <u>Staffing</u> The HT reminded Governors that there had been staffing changes in all year groups except Year R. She confirmed that the NQTs were all being well supported and were at least 'sound' in their practice. Lesson drop-ins indicated that progress in classrooms was good. A Governor remarked that it had been noted during a monitoring visit that the confidence of new teachers in delivering Maths had not been as strong and that a few needed extra support. The HT confirmed that any gaps would be addressed by the Maths leader. She also commented that the NQTs had the advantage of having been training in the new curriculum.
- <u>PPA Cover</u> The HT advised that the School had reverted back to the 'norm' of using non-qualified teachers for PPA cover, and that the member of staff providing cover also led the Forest School. A Governor asked whether support from a qualified teacher would be available if necessary. The HT confirmed that the member of staff providing PPA cover was supported by the teaching team and added that she had been training on SEND and behaviour and was starting Forest School training in Term 2.
- Attendance The HT reported that attendance for Term 1 had been 97.4%, but pointed out that this percentage was likely to drop in Term 2 and 3 due to sickness, before picking up again later in the year. She remarked that there was a significant gap in the attendance of SEND and non-SEND children.
- <u>Lunchtime interventions</u> In response to a question, the HT advised that the School had still been unable to recruit lunchtime staff, and that TAs were carrying out playground duties, to improve lunchtime provision. A Governor pointed out that the School needed to support the Forest School teacher as the lunchtime Forest School interventions had had a significant impact.

Other Issues arising from the Strategic Plan No other issues were identified.

5. FINANCE

Six Month Financial Monitoring Statement

The Chair confirmed that the Financial Monitoring team had reviewed the Six Month Financial Monitoring Statement and had been satisfied with the financial position. It had been noted that staffing costs were still subject to further variance, as staff appraisals, and pay increased had not been confirmed at the time of the monitoring visit. The monitoring team had also noted that spending on learning resources to date was quite low. The HT commented she felt that staff had been too busy so far to assess the resources that they needed, but that she would follow this up during Term 2, to avoid having unused funding at the year end.

Governors noted the predicted revenue outturn rollover was £135,720, with a capital outturn rollover of £0.

Pay Committee

The Chair confirmed that the Pay Committee had met with the HT to review the outcomes of class teacher appraisals and had approved the majority of the HT's recommendations, subject to a few minor changes, which were explained in the notes from the Committee's meeting.

The Notes of the Pay Committee's meeting were noted.

Compliance Visit

The SBM reported that SFS would be carrying out a Compliance Visit in November, and that she was currently preparing a portfolio of evidence, much of which needed to be supplied in advance of the visit. She advised that the newest Finance Year Planner required the SFVS action plans produced in March to be reviewed at GB's Autumn meetings, and Governors reviewed progress against the actions identified in the School's 2017 Return:

- <u>Financial Succession Planning</u> The SBM confirmed that members of the Admin team had been trained to carry out financial activities, whilst retaining an appropriate segregation of duties.
- Benchmarking The SBM confirmed that members of the Finance Monitoring Team had now carried out an online benchmarking exercise. The Finance Governor who had carried out this review advised that the had reviewed a number of comparator schools, and had identified that there was a significant difference between similarly sized schools, in terms of funding per pupil and spend. He questioned the reason for these variances. The SBM advised that some schools were still receiving additional grant funding, which had been awarded historically and not cancelled, even though it might no longer be justified. The HT commented that schools also allocated spending to different cost codes, and that it was therefore difficult to make accurate comparisons, and added that some schools were now employing more teachers in preference to TAs which also skewed benchmarking data. She remarked that the new National Funding Formula was intended to remove some of the anomalies in respect of grant funding and advised that as Sussex Road had historically been 'squeezed' on income compared to some other local schools, it should benefit from the redistribution of funding under the NFF, as a large (and full) primary school, although increases would be capped during the two-year 'soft launch. The Chair remarked that it was useful for Governors to be aware of the differences between schools' expenditure and income, especially in terms of PPG and High Needs funding. The Governor who had carried out the benchmarking confirmed that he would repeat this process with a different range of comparator schools and would drill deeper into the reasons behind some of the disparities.

AC

6. PREMISES

Care Suite

The HT reported that she would be meeting the LA again to discuss plans for a Care Suite, but advised that it was felt that was unlikely to be financially viable.

Outdoor Space

A Governor asked for clarity in respect of the GB's role in the Outdoor Space project. She advised that the SRSA was currently holding a large cash balance that had been accumulated for the Outdoor Space project and which needed to be spent to comply with Charity regulations. The HT confirmed that this money should be spent on the playground. The SBM advised that the next phase of the project, based on the outline plans produced by Governor Des O'Dwyer would be the extension and opening up of the meadow area, to link with learning outcomes, including the creation of an outdoor classroom area. The Governor who had raised this issue advised that she had arranged meetings with playspace contractors to review the plans that had been produced previously and obtain costs for the work and asked who would approve the expenditure and supervise the contract. The HT confirmed that this was not a GB matter. She pointed out that children needed to be involved in the decision, with input from the SRSA who were providing the funding, and from the DHT, who would be representing the School. She suggested forming a 'working party' comprised of representatives from the SRSA, pupils and the DHT to take the matter forward. The Chair suggested that DD should also be consulted, as he had developed the original plans. This proposal was agreed. The SBM advised that the LA had indicated that it would provide support for schools in preparing grant applications for projects such as this. A Governor who was also a member of the SRSA advised that the SRSA was concerned that the money was not being spent quickly enough.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY/SAFEGUARDING

It was confirmed that a Health and Safety visit had been carried out during the previous week, and that Governors had noted that a number of actions from previous visits had not been completed, including moving books from the stairwell (flagged as a fire risk) and nets for the Forest School area (a safety risk). The SBM confirmed that these actions would be taken forward.

ADA

8. POLICIES

Staff Code of Conduct and Teacher Job Descriptions

The Chair advised that these documents had not been included in the papers for the meeting and did not need Governor approval. Nevertheless, she felt that it would be useful for Governors to be aware of both documents, especially as the new Governor Visits Policy suggested that Governors should follow the staff code of conduct when in school for monitoring visits.

The HT agreed to circulate both documents after the meeting.

SB

Governor Visits Policy

The Chair advised that the LA had produced a new Governor Visits Policy for Schools that followed the Circle Model, and was encouraging schools to adopt it. She commented that the new policy included confirmation that monitoring visits should include the questioning and challenge that would be expected in the Committees that they were replacing. She advised that she had made some amendments to the LA's model, to encourage Governors to consider a more imaginative approach to monitoring whilst remaining non-operational.

A Governor noted that the new Policy recommended that no more than three monitoring visits should take place a year and remarked that this advice appeared to conflict with the expectation that Governors should spend more time in School.

	It was noted that three monitoring visits from Governors with 'statutory' responsibilities and those monitoring school plan would still result in a significant number of visits, and take up a considerable amount of staff time. The Chair suggested that it would be good practice for monitoring groups to plan their visit to specify what they would be discussing, and that in some cases specific action points arising from a meeting could be passed on to another monitoring pair if they were due to undertake a visit. A Governor remarked that all Governors needed to work productively in their groups to ensure monitoring was effective. The Governor Visits Policy was approved in principle, subject to any further comments from Governors (which would be brought back to the next meeting).	Mon. Govs
	Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy The HT confirmed that this policy had been updated to comply with the new Kent Model. The Child Protection Policy was approved, subject to the amendment of the Safeguarding Governor (CT)'s title.	
	Charging and Remissions Policy The SBM confirmed that this policy had been reviewed by the Finance Monitoring Team. The Charging and Remissions Policy was approved.	
	SEND Policy The SBM reported that there had only been a few minor changes to the Policy approved previously. The SEND Policy was approved.	
	Finance Policy The SBM advised that she had added a table to this policy setting out financial delegations, but that there had been no changes to approval levels. The Finance Policy was approved.	
9.	GOVERNOR ISSUES	
	Revised Terms of Reference The Chair explained that, since the September FGB meeting, the LA had produced a revised set of Terms of Reference. The Clerk highlighted the key changes to the previous model, which now included discrete sections within the GB's ToRs for Inclusion and Safeguarding, explicit reference to the requirement to appoint 'statutory' governors for finance and health and safety in addition to SEND and Safeguarding and some additional financial monitoring requirements, that mirrored the ToRs for a Resources Committee in the 'Two Teams' model. The Revised Terms of Reference and Standing Orders were approved.	
	Governor Training It was agreed that the two Governor training items would be deferred to the next FGB meeting.	LH/LR
	Governor Recruitment A Governor reported that she was following up a number of potential applicants, including an ex-teacher, a Governor from a Special School and one of the owners of Oaklands Nursery. It was confirmed that progress would be reported back to the next meeting.	VL/NF/ LH
10.	ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS There was no other Urgent Business	
	There was no other Urgent Business.	
11.	CONFIDENTIALITY. No confidential items were identified.	

12.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 5 December 2017 at
	6.30pm at the School.
	The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

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



ACTION LOG

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Details	Deadline	Responsibility	Status
22.3.17 16.5.17 18.7.17 19.10.17	10 3 3 3,9	The Pay and Reward Policy to be amended and brought back to the FGB for approval	End T5	ADA	Policy to be brought back to T2 meeting
18.7.17 12.9.17 19.10.17	11 7 9	Co-opted Governor vacancies to be registered with SGOSS and Inspiring Governors	Start of T1	LH	Ongoing – no candidates yet identified
18.7.17 12.9.17 19.10.17	11 7 9	Governors to contact the Clerk if they know anyone who might be interested in joining the GB	End T1	All	Leads being followed up – update to T2 FGB
19.10.17	4	KS2 targets to be incorporated into the SP and sent to the FGB	SB	End T1	
19.10.17	4	A template monitoring plan to be sent to the Chair	LH	End T1	
19.10.17	5	A further benchmarking exercise to be completed	AC	End T2	
19.10.17	8	Staff Code of Conduct and Teachers JDs to be circulated	SB	30.10.17	
19.10.17	8	Governors to plan topics for their monitoring visits for the remainder of the year	All	End T2	
19.10.17	8	Governors to advise the Chair of any further amendments to the Governor Visits Policy	All	End T2	