



Sussex Road Community Primary School
Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body
held on 14 September 2021 at 6.30pm through virtual governance arrangements

	Present:	Michael Webber (MW) (Chair) Sarah Bowles (SB), Headteacher (HT) Emma Burns (EB) Alison D'Alton (ADA) (SBM) Abby Jeffrey (AJ) Emma Sangster (ES) Jo Winkler (JW) (Vice Chair)	
	In attendance	Lesley Hardwick (Clerk)	Action
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence from Andrew Pembroke and Olly Swann were received and accepted. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.		
2	DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS No declarations of interest were received in respect of any item on the Agenda. The Chair reminded Governors to declare any interests that might arise as the result of discussions at the meeting.		
3	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING Minutes of meeting held on 15/9/21 <u>The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.</u> Update on Action points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Governance Structure, roles and responsibilities</u> – The Chair reported that he had now discussed these issues with the majority of Governors and would outline his proposals, which had been discussed with the Vice Chair and HT, later in the meeting. • <u>HTPM Panel</u> – The Chair confirmed that Emma Sangster had volunteered to become a member of the Panel • <u>Monitoring Priorities</u> – <i>The Chair reported that he had sent a list of monitoring responsibilities to the HT and would discuss monitoring arrangements further with her and with the Vice Chair outside the meeting.</i> <p>It was confirmed that all other actions had been completed or dealt with through other agenda items.</p> Matters Arising There were no other matters arising from the minutes		MW

4	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Governors discussed two Co-opted Governor applications. The Chair advised that a third potential new governor would be coming into the school on 20/10/21 to meet with the HT.</p> <p>Isabelle Campbell</p> <p>The Chair referred to the CV that had been circulated with the meeting papers. He noted that Isabelle Campbell was a parent, and an accountant by background and currently Commercial Finance Director at the Financial Times, but also was active in promoting and supporting wellbeing in her workplace and in various networking groups. She was also a trained yoga and mindfulness teacher and ran a wellbeing consultancy. Governors agreed unanimously that Isabelle would be a valuable addition to the Board.</p> <p><u>Isabelle Campbell was appointed as a Co-opted Governor for a four-year term of office, with effect from 20 October 2021.</u></p> <p>Carla Thompson</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that Carla Thompson had been a Sussex Road governor previously and had made a significant contribution as the Safeguarding governor. He advised that she was a Safeguarding professional and explained that she had contacted him to confirm that she would like to rejoin the Board, as she now had time to devote to the role. The HT commented that Carla had been an excellent Safeguarding governor during her previous time on the Board and would welcome her return.</p> <p><u>Carla Thompson was appointed as a Co-opted Governor for a four-year term of office, with effect from 20 October 2021.</u></p>	
5.	<p>STRATEGIC PLAN/HT'S REPORT</p> <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>The HT confirmed that she had uploaded a 'live' copy of the Plan to Sharepoint but recognised that there had been some issues with access. <i>The Chair suggested that in these circumstances, and as new governors had just been appointed, approval of the Plan should be deferred to the Term 2 meeting. This proposal was agreed.</i></p> <p>A Governor questioned the rationale behind the Plan, which seemed to be shorter than in previous years. The HT explained that detailed actions to deliver the priorities had not yet been added to the Plan. She advised that there were no hard progress and attainment targets within the Plan, as the aim of Priority 1 (which would normally include these targets) was to ensure good progress in response to lost learning. She also advised that specific progress and attainment targets had also been taken out of staff performance objectives this year, in recognition of guidance that all staff should move up the pay scale if they were eligible to do so, unless there were concerns about their performance. The HT confirmed that the Plan was based on research and was in line with the school's vision and values.</p> <p>A Governor noted that there were four rather than three strategic priorities this year and questioned the reason for this change. The HT pointed out that the response to the pandemic remained a major focus for the year and it was appropriate it should be a separate priority area.</p> <p>A Governor noted that Sussex Road was currently a Good school and was within the Ofsted 'window'. She commented that the Plan did not include any references to becoming Outstanding within its priorities and asked whether this should be added.</p> <p>The HT confirmed that statements of this nature would be included in the SEF. However, she pointed out that the new Ofsted Framework was very challenging and that a school would need to be truly exceptional to be judged as Outstanding. She suggested that the</p>	SB

<p>focus on dealing with the impact of the pandemic on learning, and the very difficult circumstances of the previous two academic years had resulted in the school not being in as positive a position as it had been previously and she added that there were also five new members of staff this year, and an acting leadership team. Governors supported the HT's approach but suggested that the SEF should include a reference to the school's long-term aspirations.</p> <p>With regard to the aim to 'close the gap', a governor noted that progress was strong, but asked how the school would demonstrate this. The HT confirmed that the school would be able to demonstrate the progress that had been made but commented that it was not relevant to compare the current position against the most recent published data.</p> <p>A Governor questioned the rationale behind the Cultural Diversity Strategic Priority. The HT confirmed this had been something she wished to promote within the school, pointing out that Sussex Road had a predominantly White British demographic and children needed to learn about different cultures.</p> <p>A Governor asked to what extent the Plan had been created with reference to the Ofsted Handbook. The HT advised that she used the Handbook when updating the SEF which in turn informed the Strategic priorities. She added that the Leadership Priority recognised that there had been significant changes within the Leadership team and that several staff were new to post and that Wellbeing had been included because it was such a significant issue for the school post-covid.</p> <p>A Governor noted the focus on mental wellbeing and asked whether the Plan should also include some aims relating to physical learning. The HT confirmed that proposals for physical learning were set out in the Sports Premium Plan. The Governor pointed out that OPAL was a significant project and suggested that there should be some reference to it within the Plan. The HT agreed to amend the Plan to include an aim relating to the project.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked Governors to pass any comments or questions on the draft Strategic Plan on to the HT. It was confirmed that the Strategic Plan would be brought back to the FGB for approval in December and that Governors should also review the SEF.</i></p> <p>Headteacher's Report The HT had no significant issues to report.</p> <p>Monitoring Priorities for 2021-22 <i>The Chair confirmed that he would discuss the priorities with the Vice Chair and HT outside the meeting.</i></p> <p>Reports from delegated Governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Report from OPAL Lead Governor</u> – The OPAL Lead Governor reported that, following the OPAL group meeting in the summer, a request had been sent to parents for donations of items of play equipment, but advised that the response so far had been disappointing. She advised that a survey had also been sent out to parents and that 25 responses had been received. A Governor asked how the survey and request had been sent. The OPAL Lead Governor advised that both had been sent in emailed letters. A Governor questioned whether parents knew what the OPAL project was aiming to achieve. The OPAL Lead Governor confirmed that there was a link to information about the project in the letter but acknowledged that parents might not have been sufficiently interested to use the 	<p>All</p> <p>SB</p> <p>MW</p>
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	<p>link to find out more. The OPAL Lead Governor advised that there would be a whole school meeting with the OPAL mentor at the next Inset day and commented that the mentor would be looking around the playground and identifying how the proposed activities might fit onto the site. The SBM, who had attended the July meeting suggested that the priority for the OPAL Group would be to raise the profile of the project and she suggested that uploading information directly to the website was likely to be more effective than sending out a link. The HT advised that the school had now renewed its Survey Monkey licence and that an online survey might generate more response than one sent out by email. A Governor commented that, although the school did not participate in the various Facebook groups, this could be a way of raising the profile of the project within the school community and/or requesting donations.</p> <p>A Governor commented that there were close links between the OPAL project and the Sports Premium noting that there was still a substantial amount of unspent Sports Premium funding and asking how the funding would be used. The HT advised that she had selected some appropriate play equipment and explained that the intention was to provide a bank of equipment that could be lent to families to use over a weekend, particularly those who were struggling financially. She confirmed that the family/child(ren) would be asked to record what they had done with the equipment, to evidence the impact of the scheme, and she added that it was hoped that having equipment to use outside school would increase engagement and encourage the child(ren) to take part in activities at school.</p> <p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The Chair asked the HT to provide a brief Safeguarding update. The HT confirmed the transition of DSL responsibilities from the DHT to herself before she left on Maternity Leave had been smooth and that there were no significant safeguarding issues to report. She advised that KCC was working with a school absentee, that more children were subject to CHIN Plans than previously, with some likely to escalate to Child Protection Plans, and that the number of reported domestic abuse cases had also increased. She also commented on the time that she spent each day dealing with safeguarding issues, which had also increased. A Governor asked whether additional resources were required to help the SB and leadership team manage the increased workload. The HT commented that the issue that she and other leaders faced was the amount of time spent following up on referrals to outside agencies, recording any lack of content and re-diarising a further follow up call. A Governor pointed that the school was in a positive financial position and suggested that should therefore be possible to provide some extra resources if needed. The HT confirmed that she would consider potential options to manage the situation in future.</p>	
6	<p>FINANCE AND RESOURCES</p> <p>Report from Finance Resources and Personnel Committee Meeting held on 13/10/21</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Committee had appointed Olly Swann as its Chair and Emma Burns as Vice Chair. The draft minutes of the meeting (not yet approved by the Committee Chair) had been uploaded to Sharepoint for information. It was noted that, in addition to financial monitoring, the Committee had considered resources, health and safety and staffing issues.</p> <p>A Governor noted that the Committee had agreed to waive letting fees for Polkadots' Breakfast and After School Clubs for a limited period and commented that the provision was reasonably priced and relied on by parents. The Chair recognised the value of Polkadots' provision but pointed out that the Board (through the Committee) had a responsibility to ensure appropriate financial management and that the current</p>	

	<p>arrangements could therefore not continue in the long term. A Governor noted that she was aware that Polkadots had taken measures to reduce its own running costs. The HT pointed out that many parents' long-term working arrangements were uncertain at present and it was not yet clear how more flexible working would impact upon demand for wrap-around care in the long term. She also commented that other pressures on household incomes might also impact on take-up of before and after school provision.</p> <p>Six Month Financial Monitoring Governors noted that the In-Year deficit had reduced to -£70,104 (against the budget estimate of -£88,519 and that the projected rollover was £149,062 (against the approved budget rollover of £130,647).</p> <p>Write Offs or Virements for approval There were no write offs or virements requiring FGB approval.</p> <p>Contracts, tenders and expenditure for approval There were no contracts, tenders or expenditure requiring FGB approval.</p> <p>Premises/Maintenance issues The SBM reported that she had now received confirmation that the safety surface under the new play equipment would be classed as permitted development and did not require planning consent.</p>	
7	<p>POLICIES The Chair pointed out that the Statutory Policies presented for approval were mostly Kent models, negotiated with the Unions where appropriate. He noted that the Policies had all been uploaded to Sharepoint for review and suggested that any queries not yet raised with the SBM should be referred to her outside the meeting. The HT thanked the SBM for preparing all the polices for approval at this FGB meeting.</p> <p><u>The following Policies were all approved:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Teacher & Support Staff Pay Policy</u> • <u>Behaviour in School (Statement of Principles)</u> • <u>Capability of Staff Policy</u> • <u>Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school Policy</u> • <u>Discipline and Conduct of Staff Policy</u> • <u>Early Careers Teacher Induction Policy</u> • <u>Finance Policy and Procedures</u> • <u>Managing Allegations against Staff Policy</u> • <u>Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy</u> 	
8	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>Proposals for future Governance The Chair thanked all governors for their input into this item. He advised that there was a clear desire to move to daytime meetings and that from his discussions, Thursday afternoons would be the preferred time for FGB meetings. He advised that he would send an email with his proposals as to what should be covered within each meeting, but confirmed that the focus for FGB meetings should be the Strategic Plan and progress toward the agreed aims and aspirations for the year. He noted that, for its discussions to be effective, governors also needed to have a clear view of what 'Good' should look like.</p> <p>A Governor supported the proposed arrangements but pointed out that it would not be possible to cover all monitoring on the day of the meeting and that this would need to be</p>	

	<p>reflected in the monitoring schedule. <i>The Chair confirmed that he would discuss this further with the Vice Chair and HT and produce a schedule, although he suggested that the monitoring would be informed by the main items on the agenda for the FGB meeting later that afternoon.</i> He noted that the monitoring schedule would deliver a clear focus for the term.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked the Clerk to email proposed rescheduled dates for FGB meetings to governors.</i> The Clerk confirmed that she would do so but advised that she was already heavily committed on many Thursday afternoons within the meeting 'window'.</p> <p>Training attended since the previous meeting and to be attended in Term 2 Governors advised that they had attended HTPM Panel training, the District Governor briefing and completed the safeguarding e-learning module. Forthcoming training included Safer Recruitment training and Prevent training (which needed to be recorded on the SCR).</p> <p>TEP Monthly Governance Bulletin Governors noted the content of the October Bulletin.</p> <p>GovernorHub Declarations <i>The Clerk confirmed that she would contact governors who had not completed these declarations outside the meeting.</i></p> <p>Skills Audit The Chair noted that the Board needed to develop a clear succession plan and identify training needs.</p>	MW
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9	CHAIRS ACTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE The Chair confirmed that he had not taken any Chair's Action or dealt with any correspondence since the previous meeting.	
10	ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of other business.	
11	CONFIDENTIALITY. No items of confidentiality were identified.	
12	DATE OF NEXT MEETING13 The date of the Term 2 meeting was still to be confirmed.	
13	IMPACT OF MEETING It was suggested that the next meeting would be more impactful, as governors would be discussing the SDP and SEF in more depth. However, it was agreed that there had been some useful discussion on the draft Strategic Plan and on governance arrangements. The meeting closed at 7.30pm.	

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	A further application to potentially be considered at the Term 2 meeting
14.9.21	9	Staff declarations regarding KCSIE and safeguarding update training to be reviewed as part of a safeguarding visit	End T2	MW	
14.9.21 19.10.21	11 5	The draft 2021-22 Strategic Plan to be brought to the next meeting for approval	19.10.21	SB	Deferred to Term 2 meeting. The FGB to also review the SEF
19.10.21	3, 5, 8	Monitoring responsibilities to be discussed by the Chair, Vice Chair and HT and a schedule circulated	Term 2 FGB	MW/SB/JW	
19.10.21	8	Proposed dates for rescheduled FGB meetings to be circulated	Start of Term 2	LH	
19.10.21	8	Reminders to be sent to governors who have not yet completed GovernorHub declarations	Term 2 FGB	LH	