



**Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting  
held on Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 2.00pm**

Present: Face to face: Angela Wrighton (Chair), Vivien Harrington, Roger Billings, Fiona Hall, Sarah Young (Head).

Via Teams: Peter Godfrey.

Shelley Taylor (Deputy Head), Wendy Foster (Business Manager), Gill Leah (Clerk).

***Governors' questions and comments are in bold and italics.***

**1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked that anyone with a declaration of interest should withdraw from the relevant agenda item. Agreement of previous minutes and action points would be done in September.

**ACTION: Agenda item**

**2. Consideration of apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received and accepted from Rachel Middleton, Jo Callender and Paddy Bennett. No apologies had been received from Dianne Davis, Paul Hinson and Liam Davies.

**3. Headteacher's Report including reports from each Key Stage Team Leader and Fiona Drake, plus Residential report and Curriculum review update.**

This included information from Key Stage Team Leaders, Fiona Drake and Mark Fincham and was on Governor Hub. ***The Chair thanked everyone who contributed to an informative report.***

***Is there anything being done to reassure parents re transport and journeys to and from school in advance of the hopeful return to some level of normality? Are we assured that transport will be possible with the correct guidelines in place for Sept?***

The Head reported that Norfolk County Council had put out advice to transport providers and schools but not yet to parents. There will be a meeting of Heads and Local Officers next week which the Head of Transport will attend. Concerns around transport have been expressed by parents. Transport providers have been given guidance, e.g. hygiene routines, very low numbers of passengers (e.g. a 6-8 vehicle will take 2 children, 33 seater coach will have 7 passengers), masks are optional, drivers should be consistent. However, arrangements for September are not yet known. In September they will not have enough vehicles for the increased number of children returning if the guidance is still the same. Some children may not return if they have medical needs.

***Does the Head have any concerns re staffing, etc., regarding the hopeful return to some level of normality?*** There are some concerns that some staff may not wish to return. When the school re-opened there were 3 particularly anxious staff, so they did not have face to face duties until they felt reassured at the procedures put in place. Some people who were shielding were upset not to have been able to come back.

***Is there any good practice which has begun during this period which has the potential for development for future use?*** Virtual meetings with other agencies seem to work well. Travelling expenses and time would be reduced. ***What about Google Classrooms for learning?*** Our children find it very difficult to complete online work. Many parents wanted hard copies of work. However, they have worked well as communication between children and teachers.

This whole period has created far more work, for Wendy: risk assessments, school closure; re-opening. Teachers are working far harder – virtual meetings, organising photocopies, emails etc. from parents. It has cost a lot in postage, e.g. work, food vouchers.

**Has it improved teacher/parent relationships?** Yes. Greater contact with parents will be encouraged in future.

#### **4. Staff Wellbeing update / staffing issues / report**

The Review of Wellbeing of Staff had been on Governor Hub. The Deputy Head answered questions on it.

**Do the Governor data requests reflect the principles aimed at supporting Workload and Wellbeing and help the Leadership team manage staff wellbeing? Do we as a Board make additional or duplicative data requests that we could reduce?** It does not affect the workload or wellbeing. There may be some duplication, which could be reviewed. Data needs to be regularly reviewed as good practice. **Do Governors use the data effectively?** There may be some limitations in what school is supplying to Governors. That will be reviewed.

**What might we stop doing or do differently to support the Leadership team improve/maintain staff workload and wellbeing?** There had been changes to the leadership which had brought some change; some staff embrace change, some do not. She did not think anything needed to be done differently. CPOMS and Scholarpack had been introduced recently, but were a positive change as they supported staff and can be used at home; this made systems more efficient and speedier. Staff, however, may not realise how fortunate they are in terms of workload compared to a mainstream school. Staff had done a lot of CPD over the term; safeguarding will probably be provided online in future. EHCPs should be reviewed twice a year, not just the official annual review. Teaching assistants are paid for 35 hours or 37 hours per week compared to other special schools (32.5 hours). That means TAs have time to communicate with teachers and mark books, etc.

**Are there any staff that are causing particular challenges? Do you feel well equipped for the hopeful return to some level of normality?** There had been some issues between staff which cannot be addressed until they have returned.

**Who is on the Wellbeing Committee, is there a governor?** There are two representatives from each key stage – mainly teaching assistants. Paul Harrod has been organising them. The last meeting had been positive. In September, it will be important to monitor the wellbeing of staff as well as children. **Should there be a Governor on the Wellbeing Committee?** They will be consulted about that at their next meeting. There have been some good suggestions so far. School staff have received 100 hours free counselling support. There had already been some virtual sessions and face to face ones. One member of staff advised they had used the Norfolk Support Line. **Governors stated they would be happy to be involved in the Wellbeing Committee.**

**What is the role of the new librarian?** The librarian will manage all the libraries including the library bus, looking after the stock, running the lunchtime club. The post will also include monitoring and running Accelerated Reading, our new reading scheme and the delivery of morning phonics sessions. There may also be an intervention role for the librarian.

**I know we do have already a Policy / Procedures for new Staff Induction so are we to assume these are not being applied consistently and if so how do we ensure this happens from now on?** This is always a massive challenge. The following are in place: an induction book, a brief induction with various staff members, health and safety induction; they have a mentor. The Head said there are a lot of challenges as some members of staff prefer different methods and amounts of induction. In the future it may be beneficial to organise peer review meetings. All special school Heads are finding the same problems. Anyone new to the school has probationary interviews so issues can be addressed then. The Chair said she had spoken to new members of staff who seemed happy with their induction.

#### **5. Attendance / behaviour report**

Up to 72 children are now attending school. Percentages of children have steadily gone up since Easter. Children who were leaving at the end of term mainly decided not to return to school as it would only be for a short time. Some places had been offered and declined for a variety of reasons.

Behaviour – risk assessments have been completed to assess whether it is right for each child to return. For some children it would be very difficult if they were not in the usual place with the usual staff.

Free school meal vouchers have been provided which had entailed a lot of work.

Staff – a lot of staff were absent already leading up to the school closure.

The Head asked whether Governors were familiar with the school report for which the County had provided a template.

Teachers made weekly contact about children and fed back information to the SLT about whether they were struggling at home. The Chair had seen the document and the information it contained. School had highlighted cases of children who had not been contactable.

**A Governor was surprised that the data had not been collated by the Local Authority.**

The Business Manager said that a lot of information had been provided to the DfE through a weekly survey and to County, incurring a lot of extra work.

## **6. SIDP update and forward planning**

Comments had been added to the SIDP. It was not surprising that many objectives had not been completed. They would be carried forward.

The Chair informed Governors of the outcomes of the Governors page of the SIDP: Item 1 completed in Feb; 2 not monitored due to Covid crisis; 3 visit completed and follow up discussions; 4 Governors informed; 5 reviewed each PDBW; 6 not done due to Covid crisis; 7 monitoring not able to be done after March; 8 completed. She said that she would add those comments to the SIDP and would renew the link page.

***KS2 appears to have completed all elements of the SIDP that apply specifically to KS2, will they be developing new goals? KS3 and KS5 appear not to have progressed/ completed any elements of the SIDP that are specific to them. Is this to be expected given Covid or during the closure and limited attendance could some progress have been expected?*** New goals will be set or previous ones continued as applicable.

The full Curriculum Review had not been completed and is likely to be another year before it is done. A survey of teachers at KS3 had been done and a decision made to embed some vocational courses in the curriculum in September.

## **7. Pupil progress information relating only to meeting of EHCP targets**

Performance management targets had included setting and monitoring pupils' EHCP targets. There will be a central bank where all the targets are stored to make it easier for staff to access to monitor. Current DfE guidance states that 'reasonable endeavours' should be made to meet the need or target. After 25 September this will no longer apply. Tutors are now setting activities and providing resources to support EHCP targets. This was included on the weekly spreadsheet which teachers had to complete.

## **8. SBM report including Strands, premises, funding, etc.**

Very detailed information had been provided by the Business Manager. ***Governors realised how hard she worked and thanked her.***

She advised that she was monitoring the cliff for falls every time it rained heavily. There had been a little slip last week; photos were taken by a drone to monitor differences.

A lot of refunds had been made because of cancellations of trips, etc., involving a lot of work.

## **9. Budget Revision 1**

***Is this based on 180 pupils on roll from September?*** Yes, but it is now at 181.

***Does Wendy have any concerns re budget plan revision? Is there anything specific she believes as Governors we should be aware of?*** No.

***It looks as though we will have a substantial surplus, 11.65%, I believe the LA claw back some if it is above a certain %, do we have any plans to mitigate this and be able to use some for ongoing work with pupils or maintenance of the building etc?*** By the end of 3 years, there will not be a big surplus. The 8% does not apply to all the budget. She predicted there will be no clawback.

There was some money available to extend schools. The work on this had stalled but the Head of Estates and Capital would be coming out in August to look at the state of the accommodation; the classroom block is a very bad environment. The stumbling block with adding classrooms to the school site is the narrow entrance into school. ***A Governor volunteered to be present if needed.***

It is not known whether the Government's extra funding promised recently will go to special schools. Strands Charity Shop has not yet reopened.

Projected profit from the shop was £20,000; this sum has almost been reached as the shop has received a grant of £10,000.

£650 million will go out to schools; £350 to pupil premium children. However, Year 7 Catch Up funding has been removed. Sports Premium is going to continue for this year. Universal Free School Meals may be removed. There is uncertainty about what money can be claimed back e.g. free school meal vouchers.

**Governors agreed Revision 1 of the Budget.**

#### **10. Pupil Premium / Catch Up / Sport Fund report**

There is a carry forward for this year because not all the money has been spent. A new intervention post has been created.

#### **11. Safeguarding report**

Mark Fincham had provided a Safeguarding Report which was on Governor Hub.

***It's clearly been a challenging term, what plans do we have in place to support pupils returning to school in September in support of their mental health?*** See item 15.

#### **12. Agree Intimate Care Policy**

The policy was agreed and ratified subject to a minor amendment.

Mark Fincham has been drafting a new Safeguarding Policy. There had already been some changes required and more were expected. It was proposed that it would be sent to the Clerk when ready who would put it on Governor Hub with a request to Governors to send comments/agreement by 15<sup>th</sup> July. **ACTION: Mark Fincham / Clerk / Governors**

#### **13. M. Smith – honorarium payment**

***The usual payment was agreed.***

#### **14. Dates for Governor meetings for next academic year, updated Governor page of SIDP, Annual Governor statement and information regarding HTPM ongoing**

The Chair had posted the proposed dates on Governor Hub. An extra finance meeting had been added in May at the Business Manager's request. School Improvement meetings had been moved to the first half of term to spread meetings out. The Meet and Greet staff meeting had been moved to end September which it was hoped would be a face to face meeting held in the hall. Staff could be asked to attend to meet Governors if they wanted.

***Can I suggest we allocate one of the Governor's overarching responsibility for the Website and compliance with DfE compliance, just to make it easier for ourselves?*** That is included in the Governor page of the SIDP. The Chair suggested that a volunteer could be requested in September. **ACTION: FGB agenda item**

The Chair advised that the Headteacher's Performance Management cycle was set over 18 months due to the Head's operation; it will therefore take place in July 2021.

#### **15. Plans for September re-opening**

The Head said that amendments to original plans had been made based on guidance that came out last week and after discussion with special school colleagues. She had sent out a questionnaire to special schools. Only 3 schools will be opening on 7 September. At Sidestrand, for the first 2 weeks pupils will come back to the classes they were in in March – half Monday/Tuesday and half Wed/Thurs. Friday will be PPA for teachers plus visits by new children and parents. The Recovery Curriculum is a return to school routines and dealing with different children's experiences and anxieties. Only 3 families have had a bereavement in their extended family. However, there is a sense of loss among pupils so staff will work on restoring their wellbeing. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> week children will move to new groups including new pupils. On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> full-time normal service will be resumed. There will be a static timetable until half term. School will need to work with transport but staggered start and finish timings would be difficult to organise.

***What is the maximum number in a bubble?*** For the first 3 weeks a bubble of 5; from week 4 a bubble of 10-14 (their whole class). It is not possible to keep to the same bubble for transport, so plans have been made in the best interests of the children. In terms of social interaction for our children it is a very limited bubble so it needs to be extended. Over time 2 bubbles will form a pod, then key stages for larger groups. If someone gets tested positive for Covid-19, their bubble will go home for 14 days as well as their transport bubble.

**Provided there is no increase in Covid, you aim to follow the guidelines?** The guidelines are conflicting and our school is different from other schools. Guidance has changed on a daily basis. This is the first time there has been any guidance specifically for special schools.

**Do you have Union input?** Unions were raising issues that had already been dealt with.

**Are you able to initiate a coronavirus test?** Not for pupils. Parents have to do it and advise school. A Home-School agreement will be sent out to inform them.

#### **16. Any other business**

**Admissions:** The Head said that last Wednesday there were no places available in the school but 57 referrals had been received. In all there had been 30 vacancies and 170 referrals. Every referral EHCP plus school report plus various other reports had been read in advance making a massive workload for admissions. Over 300 children will not have places at the end of this year. **Is there anything that can be done?** Reducing EHCP assessments and looking at inclusivity in mainstream schools would help. She has asked for another mobile for extra classroom space. **It does not sound like a good use of your time.** It is thought that in the future a central panel will decide. The place should be offered or not in 15 days; currently deadlines are not being met.

**Governors said that the Senior Leadership Team and Staff had done an amazing job in very challenging circumstances. Governors asked that their best wishes be given in the newsletter to staff at the end of term.**

The meeting closed at 4pm.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
1. Minutes and action plans of previous meeting to be included in September's agenda.	Clerk (agenda item)	Next FGB
12. Safeguarding policy to be provided for Governors to agree on Governor Hub.	Mark Fincham / Clerk / Governors	
14. Link roles, e.g. website and DfE compliance, to be an agenda item.	Clerk	Next FGB