

**Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting for Alfreton Park School held on
Tuesday 7th February 2023 at Alfreton Park School**

Present: Mrs J O'Donnell – Headteacher (HT)
Mrs E Durham – Deputy Headteacher (DHT)
Mr J Glasby – Chair (Chair)
Mrs F Franklin (FF)
Mr W Jowett (WJ)
Mr R Sowter (RSo)
Mrs R Spray (RSp)
Mrs C Higgins (CH) – on MS Teams
Mrs B Wells (BW)
Mrs S Allen (SA)

In attendance: Mrs C Hughes – Clerk
Ms R Dallman – School Business Manager (SBM)
Ms C Young – Assistant Headteacher (AHT)
Mrs S Norton – Recently elected Parent Governor (SN)

Meeting opened at 9:58am

22/42 Apologies

The chair accepted apologies from DHT who will be arriving late to the meeting.

The chair welcomed the AHT to the meeting, who will be covering the Deputy Headteacher's maternity leave after Easter, and SN who was recently elected as parent governor to replace Rsp.

CH joined the meeting on MS Teams.

22/43 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest in any of the items on the agenda.

22/44 Agree any other urgent business

- Academisation webinars.

22/45 Minutes of the Full Governors Meeting held on 29th November 2022 – to agree accuracy and

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the chair.

22/46 Matters arising from the minutes

- SLT to check training log and arrange Flick training for those that haven't done it yet – **completed. FF yet to do the training. ADHT to assist FF with access.**
- SBM to arrange for infection control report for the pool – **Joe Harrison has started it, but it will be completed when he returns to work.**
- HT to amend the wording of the staff code of conduct to 'staff must not' rather than 'staff should not' – **completed and distributed to staff, signed by the chair.**
- Clerk to email out skills audit – **completed. Results emailed out.**
- Clerk to double check retention policy for recording of governing board meetings – **completed. The clerk informed the board that once the minutes of the meeting have been approved by the chair, the recording will be destroyed.**

Q. What specific training should governors do?

A. GDPR, Safeguarding and British Values is mandatory. Safeguarding normally takes place in school but can be done online. Safer recruitment might be useful.

Q. Who is monitoring whether governors have done the correct training.

A. ADHT is. The chair requested the ADHT remind anyone who hasn't done it that they need to.

The clerk will populate GovernorHub with training completed.

Action: Infection control report to be carried over to the next meeting.

22/47 Standing item - Safeguarding

FF confirmed nothing of note to report.

The HT apologised for a missing page in the HT report.

Q. Should Iris be signed off by governors?

A. The SBM explained that it is classed as signed off when it was approved on the GDPR report. The physical Data Processing Agreement is actually quite lengthy.

22/48 Standing item - Health & Safety

The governors confirmed that they had read the Health & Safety report uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

Q. Has the sewage issue been resolved?

A. No. The SBM informed that both pumps had failed yesterday. There is a £500 call out fee every time it fails, so has cost nearly £3k in call outs. It is under investigation with Henry Brothers.

A discussion took place about the smell and sewage system that ended with the school leadership team assuring the governors that they will keep pursuing the matter until it is resolved.

Q. The Fire evacuation plan states that nobody should look for a missing child, is that correct?

A. Yes, the SBM confirmed that nobody can return into the building as it would be unsafe to do so. If there is someone missing it should be reported to the fire manager and they will relay it to the fire controller when they arrive onsite. Fire marshals sweep each area. When a recent fire evacuation occurred at the end of the day, it illustrated how important the fire marshals are as the register was not pertinent at that point, with some people having already left for the day.

Q. Who ensures that no one goes back into the building?

A. No one can be physically restrained against doing so, but the doors are closed. If someone is determined to get back in that's their choice. When a fire marshal sweeps the area, the doors are left closed. People tend to have the same exit route and everyone ends up on the MUGA, which is secure.

Q. Is school up to date on lockdowns?

A. The SBM confirmed a fire evacuation and lockdown are due.

Action: Lockdown and fire evacuation to have been completed prior to the next governing board meeting.

A governor commented that the report should be more in the green than it is showing and said will talk to the SBM following the meeting on those points.

Q. Are there any plans to resume the H&S staff committee?

A. The SBM confirmed yes, she will look into arranging it.

Action – SBM to look into arranging the health & safety committee.

22/49 Standing item - GDPR

There were no questions on the GDPR report that was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

The SBM assured the board that all breaches, no matter how small are reported.

22/50 Standing item – Finances

The SBM handed out a revised report and informed governors that the finances have changed again since the initial report was written.

No longer in a predicted deficit next year due to the following:

- Additional £51k in OLA funding.
- £46k reduction in Teacher budget due to maternity cover arrangements and covering 2 with one staff.
- Costing analysis on staff insurance shows it's costing around £50k more so will not renew.
- £28k increase in the TA budget, but getting better value. 6 grade 8 TA's are due to finish their fixed term contracts in July. Will retain 2 on a grade 8 and 4 with a grade 5 position. Then with the cost saving from the insurance and the differential between grade 8 to 5, there should be enough to afford 74 hours of grade 5 to cover sickness.

No additional external funding proposed as yet.

Q. Did you speak to Andy Walker on Friday and is he aware of any additional funding?

A. The SBM confirmed they spoke on Friday and explained the budget will happen on the 9th March. There was a cabinet meeting at the end of January, and the outcome of that has not yet been made clear for special need schools.

Q. The chair asked, would this plan be put into place regardless of whether there turns out to be some additional funding?

A. The SBM said it would be put into place as well but in tandem.

The SBM explained more about the reasons behind cutting out the staff insurance, from Schools UK.

Q. Do we know of any other schools doing the same thing?

A. The HT confirmed that Brackenfield have also made the same decision. The SBM said that Andy Walker had commented that it made sense. Would need to build a bank of grade 5's and wouldn't be able to use agency staff.

Discussed how it would be important to get good staff, needing people that could commit to Monday – Friday and of a certain standard. Haven't been able to match the correct number of staff with requirements over the past 18 months. The SBM confirmed that the way school recruits needs to be looked at, and ensuring that we get the right support for the teaching and education.

Q. What's the total number of staff on role now.

A. The SBM will confirm the number of hours at a future date.

Q. Are you confident that you will have the correct structure that you need and staffing in the classrooms with the grade 5's?

A. The HT responded that they have researched this model that quite a few special schools seem to have adopted. The HT commented that there will be an adjustment period but will learn along the way.

Q. Could a grade 5 act up to a grade 8 if needed and will they have a different title?

A. The HT responded that yes, they could. The titles are Senior Learning Support Assistant and Learning Support Assistant and Personal Health and Care Assistant.

Q. With regards to the OLA funding, is that £51k repeated again in 23/24?

A. No, 23/24 is estimated at £160k depending on who we get? Lost a high-profile OLA so this year it was about £190k with some overhang from the previous year.

A governor commented that it was more encouraging than the original finance report.

The chair noted his displeasure at the amount of pressure that the school is facing from outside sources, and stated that he is not prepared to continue governing in that manner, believing that sooner or later the funding problem will affect the children.

The SBM explained that some schools have already put redundancies in place and the governors discussed the difficult situation, the lack of control and the worry that the lack of money will ultimately impact the children, and how unfair it is on staff.

The chair thanked the HT and SBM for the work they've done to reduce costs.

A governor requested that school ensure that classes and the everyday routine is kept going and prioritised to ensure on the basics.

The chair asked BW and SA to keep an eye on whether the lack of money has any impact on the teaching and learning in school and report back. The ADHT confirmed that there has been a reduction in subject area bids over the last 3 years. Not as many opportunities being approved anymore. The chair requested that this be noted in case there's ever an opportunity to share this information to anyone that can do something about it.

A governor mentioned the high level of sickness, commenting that it's often a quarter of staff. The SBM confirmed that an analysis showed that in one week alone 185 absent hours were covered. Governors discussed the lack of control over this area as DCC policy has to be adhered to.

The HT confirmed that leave of absence allowance has been tightened up, however that does lead to higher sickness probably, and increased stresses at work cause people to be off sick and the vicious circle goes on.

The chair raised concern for those staff that continually show up and are never off sick.

The leadership team are ensuring deeper cleans in school, strict policies of 48 hours absence for any pupil that's sick etc to try and reduce infection in school.

The SBM said that the leadership team are having the necessary conversations with who they need to, within the remit of the DCC policies and are not letting recurring absences slide.

A governor thought that it had been agreed that staff attendance go on the HT report.

Action: Add staff attendance on the HT report.

22/51 SFVS approval

All governors approved the SFVS that was circulated on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. The SFVS was signed by the chair.

22/52 Standing item – Personnel report

The SBM informed the board that the personnel report, which was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting, included all staff requests necessary and these were all contained in the original January finance figures and also in the latest figures - nothing additional has been added.

The SBM read the personnel report aloud and this was approved by all.

Q. Is school planning on appointing anymore Apprentice TA's?

A. No, there are no plans to. Switched over to focus more on ECT's and ensuring that they get all the support they need.

22/53 Standing item – HT report & School Development Plan update

The HT apologised for the delay in forwarding the Headteachers report, and talked the governors through the following areas:

Admissions

Approx. 68 consultations since August. 125 pupils now on roll and 6 new starters confirmed for September 2023.

Number of places available: Since the last report to governors, we still have 120 commissioned places but will be requesting that this is increased to 130 from September 2023 – I have a link officer meeting next week with the SEND Commissioning Manager. We are monitoring the impact of increasing pupil numbers and we know that in our current building, we are unable to accommodate many more pupils. We are aware of an amount of money at DCC to be used to increase SEND sufficiency and we are looking into the possibility of proposing an additional building in the future to increase our capacity. The funding gained from this would need to balance the need for additional resources such as staffing, family support etc.

We are continuing our group open evenings for parents which are working well and include a presentation from me about the curriculum offer, key staff members, facilities, safeguarding etc.

Further to writing this section, the HT has had a meeting with Steve Parfit (Commissioning Officer at DCC). The HT explained that DCC have a huge number of pupils needing places and very little options for those children, so a discussion was had about capacity at Alfreton Park and 130 places

was agreed upon. The HT informed the governors that this now means 9 new pupils starting in September, not 6. The response to any new consultations going forward will be that school is full, and that they will need to re-consult for September 2024.

Q. The report mentions an additional building – where did this come from?

A. The HT explained that they are aware that they can't take any more pupils in the current building. Sue Pegg who was involved in the new build with DCC, came to look round the school recently and said that she believed there were too many children in the school already. The SBM explained that DCC are currently looking into the provision for special needs education and that she has suggested a hybrid of funding the deer shed with an attached modular classroom, like an enterprise/post-16 unit. They have been asked to put a proposal together. The HT explained that this could free up 2/3 classrooms within the current building, and ultimately post 14/post 16 would get the feeling of moving on but still being within the safety of the school.

The governors discussed this and what it might look like.

Q. Will school get to make sure that the new pupils are right for the places available?

A. The HT said yes, that they have given DCC a list of the exact spaces there are available.

The DHT joined the meeting at 10:49am.

CY was successful for Deputy Head maternity cover, with CC being successful to cover CY.

Pupils - 2 new pupils joined Alfreton Park in January who have settled in nicely and no exclusions to report this time. The decision was upheld for the pupil that was excluded last term.

Quality of education - 2 Teachers currently on informal support plans. One showing a marked improvement, the teacher has said that it's really worked well as a support mechanism. The other teacher is being supported by Marie and is given some more intensive support.

Long term plans – feedback from Teachers last week suggest that the long-term planning following Ofsted has been really successful, they feel it's given them a good structure to plan from and they feel it's improved the delivery of the learning to the pupils. Next 2-year cycle's to be written by CY and Marie shortly so there will be a full 3-year cycle for each pathway.

The chair commented that he doesn't currently feel that the school development plan is interwoven with the governor's strategic plan. He

requested that SA and BW do some work ensuring that the two become more interwoven.

The HT explained that she has tried to find the format that would work with both the school and governing board, but has now found a template with 5 objectives set out and an action plan for each objective underneath, what it is, actions, responsibility, budget implications, intended impact and a RAG rating with an update comment. Wants to add a column which will also link with the SEF.

HT, BW & SA are scheduled to discuss it following the meeting.

Q. Why is the outdoor classroom still not in use?

A. There were more outstanding issues with it than was first realised, including replacing windows, boxing and an unsafe door. School have been assured that these will be fixed during half term.

The SBM explained that she can't draw down the money from the Wolfson Foundation until the work is completed, so this is a worry.

The chair requested that the school ensure that the classroom is open as soon as possible.

Action: HT to upload the School Development Plan to GovernorHub when it's ready.

SN left the meeting at 11am.

22/54 Policies to be approved

The following policies were shared with governors on GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

- Admissions policy
- Allegations against staff policy
- Financial roles and responsibilities
- Leave of absence and flexible working policy
- Letting's agreement

The HT explained that the policy cycle is currently being looked at within the school and will evolve, with an excel spreadsheet to keep a record of when a policy is updated, due to be reviewed etc.

The following issues/questions were raised:

Q. Was the Financial roles and responsibilities a standard DCC policy?

A. Yes.

Q. In the Leave of absence policy the general form is missing, there is just the unusual application forms.

A. Will investigate and add in.

All governors approved the above policies.

Action: to add a general absence form to the leave of absence and flexible working policy.

22/55 360-degree review of chair results

The results of the latest 360 degree of the Chair's performance were discussed and suggestions made to improve certain areas.

22/56 Governing board skills audit results

The results of the governing board skills audit were circulated to governors via GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

The chair raised concern that governors thought that their voice wasn't heard. He said that sometimes he moves the meeting along to try and get it completed within 2 hours. The chair suggested people email the clerk to add items to the agenda if there is anything that they would like to be discussed.

Other areas flagged -

Finance – The chair suggested a good paper on the internet that gives you all the financial responsibilities of the governing body. Link subsequently supplied to Clerk.

Strategy - Already discussed in 22/53. Linking in with the SDP will hopefully improve that.

Risk and Risk Management – Governors discussed the broad questions on what the question meant. Chair suggested that it be beneficial to discuss all aspects of risk-management at some future date.

22/57 Parent governor elections

The chair congratulated CH and SN for their success at the recent parent governor elections. The chair presented RSp with flowers and thanked her for her time as parent governor. The HT and DHT also thanked her for her support.

22/58 Recording of meetings

The chair informed governors at the beginning of the meeting that it is being recorded. The recording will be deleted once the minutes relating to the meeting have been approved.

22/59 HT performance management

Discussions took place between the HT and chair over the process and how the HT performance management targets are currently set and reviewed.

School to look into whether to carry on with the current arrangements or try using the Derbyshire school improvement package. The chair asked if this was her preferred solution and the HT said that it was although there is a cost involved. The meeting suggested that it might be a worthwhile expenditure – the SBM requested that it not be arranged in this financial year.

The process of the performance management was discussed at length. The HT confirmed that they should meet 3 times a year going forward. The Chair has subsequently asked the Vice-Chair to arrange an initial Performance Management meeting for the HT, perhaps with her previous advisor, and then we will reconsider the DCC SIP package.

22/60 Action: School to investigate alternative options.

Arrange new terms of office for Governors JTG, FF, WJ, RSo and Parent Governors

The chair asked the governors whose terms of office are due to expire if they would like to continue for another term, and all governors were in agreement and willing to continue.

Action: Clerk to extend term of office and related administrative tasks.

22/61

Any other urgent business

Academisation – The chair requested that governors look at a series of free webinars on academisation.

Governors discussed what academisation means and what it might look like, both possible positives and negatives.

Action: Clerk to add webinars to GovernorHub.

Q. When do the sub-committee's meet?

A. Financial meetings generally October and March/April (arranged by Andy Walker), Sub-committee's only when there is a matter/problem to be discussed.

RSp thanked all the governors.

The meeting closed at 11:55am.

Next meeting Tuesday 25th April at 10am.