

Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting for Alferton Park School held on Thursday 6th February 2025 at Alferton Park School

Present: Mrs J O'Donnell – Headteacher (HT)
Mr J Glasby (Chair)
Mr W Jowett (WJ)
Mr R Sowter (RS)
Mrs F Franklin (FF)
Mrs C Higgins (CH)
Mrs E Durham – Deputy Headteacher (ED)
Mrs L Squires (LS)
Mrs C Davies (CD)
Mrs B Wells (BW)

In attendance: Mrs J Osment – Clerk
Ms R Dallman – School Business Manager (SBM)

Meeting opened at 1.40pm

24/35 Apologies

The chair noted and accepted apologies from Mrs S. Norton. The meeting was quorate.

24/36 Declarations of interest

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

24/37 Agree any other urgent business

The following urgent business items for this meeting were agreed:

- Governing board effectiveness

24/38 Minutes of the Full Governors Meeting held on 12th December 2024

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and will be electronically signed by the Chair on GovernorHub.

24/39 Matters arising from the minutes

24/24 - The harmful sexual behaviour continuum to be shared with governors (ED) - This has been completed and emailed to Governors. Any incidents of sexual behaviour are included in the Headteachers report.

24/40 Standing item - HT report, School Development Plan and School Self-Evaluation

The HT report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

GQ – It sounds like good news from Griffiths Foods.

Yes – they have committed to supporting the Deershed and hopefully the library too.

GQ - The majority of absences are due to health reasons. What are the other reason?

Weather, such as snow, ice and flooding.

GQ – What about holidays during term-time?

As a school we try to be sympathetic to families requesting term-time holidays if they are reasonable and requested in advance, as a lot of our pupils struggle with crowds.

GQ – If the holiday is unauthorised are parents being fined?

That is the decision of the Local Authority. They have access to our attendance data and can choose whether to issue a fine or not.

GQ - Who receives the fine?

The Local Authority.

We are gently trying to change attitudes to attendance. We have sent letters to the families of pupils with less than 90% attendance.

GQ - How do we compare against other schools?

We are generally inline with other special schools in the area.

GQ – What does DEBP stand for?

Direct Education Business Partnership.

Governors loved the Something Special episode.

24/41 Standing item – Safeguarding

HT will meet with the Safeguarding governor after the meeting. If there is anything to report it will be added to Governorhub.

24/42 Standing item – Health & Safety

The Health & Safety Report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

GQ – When is the next fire and lockdown practice?

We have had several fire practices recently. We are due to have a lockdown practice soon.

GQ – What about pupils who refuse to move, or are not easy to move quickly?

All pupils have an individual plan for fire evacuation. If it is a known drill then they don't need to be moved. If it is a real fire then will do what we can to evacuate them safely, such as using sliding mats.

GQ – Could the fire brigade visit to make it a pleasant experience?

In the past this has encouraged pupils to set the alarm off, but it is something we could consider.

GQ – There was a recent incident in another school where the threat was already in the building. Would lockdown be different if this was the case here?

Our lockdown procedure would not be as effective if the person was already in the building, however it may lead to confusion to have different procedures for different situations. It is something we need to consider, as none of our classroom doors can be locked.

We have one identified pupil who is a known risk and their bag is checked regularly. Most pupils bags are generally checked daily for other reasons. It might be that we have to take precautions like count knives and scissors back in after lessons.

CD will make enquiries about lockdown procedures at other schools and report back.

24/43 Standing item – GDPR

The GDPR Report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

All incidents have been reported and investigated.

Data Protection Impact Assessments for approval:

Governors gave unanimous approval for the following DPIA's (minute number 24/43)

Class Dojo

GDPRiS

24/44 Standing item – Personnel report

The personnel report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

For clarity, the planned sixth form classes to be built by the pool will be referred to as the Post-16 Centre and will be part of the school. This is separate to the Deer Shed Café which will be run by the charity.

We are looking at how an attendance officer / early help support can assist the workload of the Family Liason Officer.

We have had another LSA resignation, and seek approval to recruit a replacement.

Governors gave unanimous approval for this, and the staffing requests in the personnel report.

24/45 Standing item – Finance

The finance report was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting.

We will receive base funding in September for all the new places – this is included in the budget. The budget also factors in a 2.8% pay increase for teachers and support staff from September, which needs to be funded by the school.

There were no questions on the finance report.

24/46 Wellbeing

No update on wellbeing.

24/47 Post-16 Block, Deer Shed and EYFS classroom update

(i) Tenders for the modular buildings

Governors reviewed the tenders this morning.

Four contractors returned tenders. All agreed that McAvoy seemed to be the best fit for both design and cost. There is meeting scheduled for next Friday with McAvoy to explore this in more detail.

(ii) Staffing proposal for Post-16 Centre

The proposal for an Assistant Head for the Post-16 Centre was circulated by email and all questions have been answered.

GQ - Would the Assistant Head for Post-16 also be responsible for the pool?

Yes, due to location. Currently it is the remit of the Assistant Head for the Pre-Formal Pathway.

Pupils at the Post-16 Centre will be able to use all the provisions at the school (canteen, horticulture, rebound etc), and any provisions required by the bespoke pathways for each pupil.

A site manager for the Post-16 Centre is included in the budget

GQ – How would we delegate responsibility for the Post-16 Centre and Deer Shed, for instance in the event of a fire?

There will be identified fire and deputy fire wardens.

GQ – Is there anything to be gained by restructuring the role of the Assistant Head for Pre-Formal Pathway to cover the Post-16 as well?

The Pre-Formal Pathway workload is already at capacity – it covers two pathways and EYFS. We need someone to make the Post-16 section outstanding so it needs a dedicated role.

This is also comparable to leadership teams at other special schools and we have identified the skills that we need.

Governors gave unanimous approval for the staffing requests for the Post-16 Centre.

GQ - Could it lead us into providing 19-23/24 education?

It's a stepping stone, if we get the Post-16 section right.

GQ - Do we get many post-16 pupils?

Yes we used to get a lot more, hopefully the opportunities of the café etc will lead to more interest.

(iii) Rules for the Deer Shed café

Rules of Engagement for school and café were discussed. If the café is run as a registered charity and a separate entity then the trustees of the charity make the decisions, not the school governing board.

GQ – To avoid conflicts of interest it is advised that:

- The Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair of Governors, the LA Governor, Headteacher and the Deputy Head Teacher should not be trustees of the charity.
- After initially setting up the separate entity, the School Business Manager should not be a trustee of the charity.
- At least one Governor should be a trustee who should report back if anything could affect the school in any way.
- Funds must never be transferred from the school to the charity. The charity could transfer funds to the school if they choose.

GQ - How are staff going to be employed?

They will be employed directly by the charity.

GQ – Does the charity have Articles of Association?

Yes, this is all in place.

GQ – Can the governors see a copy of the Articles of Association?

This will be provided (SBM)

GQ - Who will own the new buildings?

The Local Authority will own the buildings and will be the landlord.

GQ – Could the ownership change?

Yes, if the school become an academy.

GQ – Will the charity lease the modular building used for the café?

Yes, for a peppercorn rent.

GQ – What about insurance for the café?

The risk protection arrangement (RPA) for the school will cover the buildings used by the school. The charity would need a separate employers' liability insurance to cover any damage caused.

There will be a contract between the trust and the charity which will cover maintenance, insurance, liability etc.

The school needs to ensure that the charity is run to be in the best interests of the pupils.

GQ - At some point in the future, could the Local Authority demand the building is used for classroom space?

Yes, but this will be more difficult with a contract in place and a building that is specifically designed as café.

GQ – Where do charitable donations go?

They go into the Deer Shed charity bank account. Donations need to be designated to either Friends of Alfreton Park or the Deer Shed.

GQ - Can money be donated to the actual school?

No, just items such as books.

24/48 Audit of private school accounts

The accounts have been audited, thank you to WJ for the connection.

24/49 National Grid Proposals

There are two proposed routes, one of which is within 0.4km of the school. Parties within 0.4km should have been consulted about the route, but an old map was used in error and didn't show the new school site.

There is an option to take the cables underground instead. The consultation period ends this year.

24/50 Standing Item – Policies for approval:

Admissions arrangements
Careers guidance and provider access policy statement
Teacher appraisal
Administration of Medicines
Privacy Notice Pupil
Privacy Notice Workforce

Policies approved by Headteacher, and provided for information:

Allegations of abuse against staff
Charging and remissions
Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
Teachers Pay Policy

Governors gave unanimous approval for the policies.

24/51 ILP data

GQ - Larch class is now very big.

It is, a few pupils have moved into that class that didn't work out on other pathways. Next year we will have 3 classes on the semi-formal pathway which will reduce class sizes.

There is a class with a lower percentage of exceeded or expected. The reasons for this are included in the report, and this is not a concern – it is not reflective of the learning or the teaching.

Ofsted do not require this data, we just find it useful to monitor teachers performance. We appreciate that pupils health and personal situations can impact the data – as long as these anomalies are recognised and understood.

24/52 Any other urgent business

- Governing board effectiveness

If any governors have not completed this yet on Governorhub, please could they do so.

The meeting ended at 3.03pm.

Next meeting 1.30pm on 20 March 2025