

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Spring (2) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 27th March 2025 at 9.30am
Location: At the academy

Membership

'A' denotes absence

Mrs D Carter
Mr P Gawthorpe (chair)
Mrs K Heaton
Mr R Lilley (principal)
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
A Mrs M Norton Allen
Mrs K Phoenix (vice principal)
Mrs M Pimm
A Mrs S Sparks
A Cllr N Turner
Mrs S Wichmann

In attendance

Miss J Littlewood (clerk to the governors)
Mrs V Dashper (school business manager – SBM)

FGB/20/25 Apologies for absence Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs M Norton Allen (work commitments);
- Mrs S Sparks (personal).

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

Governors **DETERMINED** that moving forward no absences would be accepted without apologies – the chair **AGREED** to follow up with relevant parties.

Chair

FGB/21/25 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda.

FGB/22/25 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the governing body membership list.

The clerk highlighted the following vacancies on the governing body:

- 1 x partnership governor.

In addition, the clerk drew attention to the following ends of terms of office:

- Mrs S Sparks (co-opted governor) – 5th July 2025.

The chair **CONFIRMED** that Mrs Sparks had indicated her willingness to continue as a co-opted governor.

Governors **NOTED** and **DISCUSSED** the information provided by the chair and it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Mrs S Sparks as a co-opted governor (effective 4th July 2025).

Governors **AGREED** to continue to explore options for recruitment to the vacant position.

Clerk

FGB/23/25 Approval of minutes of spring (1) term meetings and any additional special meetings

The minutes of the spring (1) term meeting held on 23rd January 2025 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 23 January 2025 were to be signed electronically by the chair.

Chair/
Clerk

Actions in the minutes were reviewed. It was noted that they had been undertaken or were to be discussed in the meeting.

FGB/24/25 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

Minutes of the following committees were **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**:

- Finance & Personnel Committee (27 February 2025);
- Audit Committee (27 February 2025);

Actions in the minutes had been completed or continued to be in hand within the timescales indicated.

a Finance & Personnel Committee

The chair alerted governors to the following actions that required discussion at the FGB meeting:

i) F&P/10/25 Y6 residential

The principal reported the final figures and subsidy for the Y6 PGL Caythorpe trip:

- total amount payable per child = £240;
- academy subsidy per child = £100;
- amount to be paid by parents (per child) = £140.

Q. Governors asked about the final number of places booked and how many deposits had been paid?

A. The principal confirmed that 65 places had been booked, and 50 deposits received to secure places – the final confirmation of numbers to PGL was pending.

ii) F&P/16/25 Estates Management – see confidential item

iii) F&P/11/25 Schools Resource Management Tool (SRMT)

Governors **RECEIVED**, **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the 2024/25 budget and three-year forecast as presented to the summer term F&P committee meeting (6th June 2024).

In addition, governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **RATIFIED** the following approvals from the F&P committee meeting (27 February 2025);

- support staff pay award (effective 1 April 2024);
- catering review and revised meals costs;
- services for schools (NCC buyback);
- revised three-year forecast.

b Policies

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **RATIFIED** the following policies approved at committee:

- acceptable use of technology code of conduct;
- finance policy (updated Jan 2025);
- GDPR policies (14);
- gifts and hospitality policy;
- ICT equipment loan agreement/policy – staff;
- lettings policy;
- risk management policy;
- volunteer policy.

FGB/25/25

Holding executive leaders to account: summary of principal's report and governors' question and challenge

The principal drew governors' attention to the report uploaded to Governor Hub and highlighted the following key points:

Academy context

- current numbers on roll = 570 (including foundation stage);
- net capacity = 575;
- class organisation from September 2025;
- pupil mobility across all year groups: 5 leavers and 22 starters;
- ethnicity and EAL (22 distinct first languages);
- 44.91% of pupils were eligible for pupil premium.

Q. Governors enquired about FAD places in September 2025?

A. The principal informed governors there were 68 first preferences (PAN = 75).

Q. Governors queried whether the SEN needs of potential FAD pupils were known?

A. The vice principal notified governors that initial investigation had shown that 5.5% of the potential FAD pupils had known SEN needs, some of whom were already in receipt of funding – until offer day and numbers were confirmed then this figure was unofficial.

Q. Governors questioned how many of the 68 were currently in foundation stage?

A. The vice principal shared that around 45 were currently with the school in nursery.

Q. Governors asked about steps to encourage more parents to apply for FSM to increase pupil premium numbers?

A. The vice principal reported that the focus moving forward was obtaining an application from all new starters as rules now meant that families were able to apply once and never needed to reapply despite their personal circumstances.

The principal continued with the presentation of his report and highlighting the key areas:

Achievement

- Y1 phonics looked positive (high 70's, low 80's);
- Y2 phonics re-check was less encouraging – the reasons were shared;
- progress across KS2 was broadly 'good;'
- Y6 combined currently stood at 42%;

SEND

- there were currently 18 x EHCPs across the school;
- a provision mapping tool, recommended in a national 'Schools Week' article, had been purchased from Peterborough Keys Academy;

Behaviour

- **see confidential item**

Q. Governors enquired about the Y6 combined figure?

A. The principal reassured governors that on last year's evidence a combined in the low 50's was feasible.

Q. Governors queried the cost of the provision mapping tool?

A. The principal advised that the tool had cost £500 – one key principle was that no provision was generic, it was all specific interventions – the intention was to use the list of interventions, integrate and customise the tool to the academy.

Attendance

- whole school attendance stood at 93.9% (national = 94.7%);
- persistent absence stood at 17.3% (FFT national = 15%);
- parents continued to take holiday absence during term time;
- it was hoped that the new national framework for issuing penalty notices would impact on the term-time holiday issue;

Staffing

- **see confidential item.**

Q. Governors questioned the significant decrease in EHCP attendance?

A. The principal shared that a large portion of this was due to medical reasons.

Governors **THANKED** the principal for the clear, concise report and answering the questions posed.

FGB/26/25 Monitoring and overseeing financial performance

The school business manager (SBM) explained that the budget review was scheduled for 1st April 2025 so any updates would be presented to the summer term F&P committee.

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the following matters, presented and discussed at the F&P committee (27 February 2025):

- budget plan and agreed adjustments;
- budget assumptions;
- staffing decisions;
- Schools Resource Management Tool (SRMT);
- decision re. action taken related to HMRC support call (NMW);

In addition, governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **RATIFIED** the approval of the quote to move to cloud hosting services operated by SAAF.

FGB/27/25 Management accounts (P6) & cash flow (P5)**a** *Management Accounts*

The chair **CONFIRMED** that he had received the management accounts for period 6 (February 2025), and they had also been uploaded to Governor Hub.

b *Cash Flow (P5)*

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the cash flow spreadsheet (P5) in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook – **see confidential item**.

FGB/28/25 Update on appraisal process for principal and staff including an update on the wellbeing of staff

The principal informed governors that:

- he intended to review appraisal processes post-PRP changes with a view to re-introducing targets next year;
- currently staff were working to drive through whole school SIP targets via training and development;
- his targets had been set and were progressing well.

FGB/29/25 Confirm arrangements to review Child Protection and Safeguarding recording and reporting systems (CP safeguarding file audit)

The principal notified governors that:

- a SCR check had been undertaken;
- additional safeguarding training was still outstanding for some governors;
- **see confidential item**;
- a meeting was to be arranged for the safeguarding governor to conduct the confidential file audit with the DSL.

CM

FGB/30/25 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action

Governors **DETERMINED** that the reports had been received at the spring (1) FGB meeting and actions undertaken.

FGB/31/25 Communication received and updates**a** *From principal – see confidential item***b** *From clerk – Governor Newsletter*

The clerk drew attention to the content of the second 2025 spring term edition of the Nottinghamshire Governor e-newsletter and highlighted the following items:

- a welcome back and overview of the content from the Governor Services Team Manager – Sinead Allan;
- HR and finance updates including:
 - key dates for close down, budget setting and NCC buyback services;
- school admission updates;
- safeguarding in education news and updates;
- NCC catering and facilities management update;
- governance updates such as:
 - GDPR and governing bodies;
 - enhancing governor wellbeing;
 - the role of the chair and headteacher;

- special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards;
- navigating challenging situations on a board of governors;
- articles related to:
 - children's wellbeing and school's bill – summary of key items;
 - the 'families information services' (FIS);
 - the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme funding 2025;
 - teacher degree apprenticeships;
- national updates/articles with news (and links) from Ofsted and the DfE including:
 - improving the way Ofsted inspects education;
 - DfE policy on the use of AI in education;
- governor termly briefings;
- a message from the chair of NAGS, Susan Beasley.

FGB/32/25 Estate Management

a *CIF Assurance visit*

The SBM advised that:

- the CIF assurance visit had been undertaken on 19 March 2025;
- attendees included representatives from Eddisons, G&H and Arcadis (acting on behalf of the DfE);
- the visit was brief – discussions incorporated:
 - an overview of the project; and
 - the academy's disappointment regarding the lighting situation following the works to the BMS;
- a tour of the site (where works had been undertaken) was conducted and photos taken;
- the Arcadis representative confirmed that everything discussed was to be included in his report to the DfE.

The principal added that the wrong window actuators had been sent causing a delay to the fitting – the opening of the windows remained problematic.

b *Lighting (LED)*

The principal updated governors on the progress being made related to the installation of LED lighting.

Furthermore, the SBM added that:

- options for sourcing a provider and lease continued to be investigated;
- access to the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) through the DfE framework had now been activated;
- DfE had confirmed that:
 - any leased assets not included on the list (general consent); or
 - where leases related to LED lighting systems had not been sourced with support from the GHBS or the recommended route on 'find a framework;'
 had to be submitted to the secretary of state.
- a meeting with a procurement specialist from the DfE had been arranged for 3rd April 2025.

FGB/33/25 Report from training co-ordinator including review of governor training audit and requirements for 2025-2026

Governors **AGREED** the following training had been undertaken:

- governor conference – Mr P Gawthorpe.

Mr Gawthorpe provided feedback regarding the governor conference, the networking opportunities and the keynote speakers.

The clerk provided governors with a short presentation of the new 'Effectiveness' tool on Governor Hub and the chair **REQUESTED** that all governor completed this before the next meeting.

**All
governors
/Clerk**

FGB/34/25 General Data Protection Regulations

Governors **REVIEWED** and **CONFIRMED** the appointment of:

- Mr R Lilley – SIRO;
- DPO Service – DPO;
- **tb**c – IGG (information governance governor).

All to note

The SBM confirmed that there had been no data breaches, FoI requests or SARs.

FGB/35/25 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governors

Governors **DETERMINED** that the following monitoring visits had been undertaken or scheduled:

- health & safety – Mrs D Carter;
- phonics – Mrs S Sparks;
- safeguarding (confidential file audit) – Mrs C Middleton;
- SCR check – Mrs C Middleton.

The chair **REQUESTED** that all outstanding monitoring forms be completed and uploaded to Governor Hub as soon as possible.

All to note

FGB/38/25 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account

Governors identified impact through:

- consideration and discussion regarding governance matters including:
 - membership, vacancies, recruitment;
 - governor monitoring visits and governor training;
- scrutiny and challenge relating to staffing matters, specifically:
 - vacancies, recruitment and capacity;
 - appraisal and wellbeing;
- increased awareness and understanding of pupil data through questions and discussion related to:
 - impact of increasing pupil numbers on:
 - class organisation; and
 - availability of classroom space;
 - support for SEND and pupil premium pupils;
 - actions to improve parental engagement related to FSM and PP;
 - attainment and progress;
- questions and consideration related to estates management and liaison with local and national companies;

- consideration and review of policies and the spring (2) term governor newsletter;
- questions, challenge and discussion related to behaviour, attendance and SEND;
- consideration and discussion in relation to safeguarding, finance and GDPR.

Accountability continued to be evidenced in all governing body and committee meetings through regular review of actions, question and investigation.

FGB/39/25 Confirmation of dates for summer term 2024/25

The governing body

agreed

- Thursday 1st May 2025 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 5th June 2025 (4.00pm) – F&P and Audit Committees;
- Thursday 17th July 2025 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting.

All to note

Governors **AGREED** the dates for the 2025/26 academic year as presented.

FGB/40/25 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

that there were six confidential items and that the confidential sections of the following reports:

- spring (1) term FGB minutes;
- principal's report and linked documentation;
- financial report and associated documents;
- governor monitoring visit reports;

be deemed confidential but that all other papers and reports be made available as required.

The meeting closed at 10.47am

Signed:



(chair)

Date: **1st May 2025**