

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Autumn (1) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 19th September 2024 at 4.00pm
Location: At the academy

Membership

'A' denotes absence

Mrs D Carter
Mr P Gawthorpe (chair)
A Mrs K Heaton
Mr R Lilley (principal)
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
Mrs M Norton Allen
Mrs K Phoenix
Mrs M Pimm
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/77/24 Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs K Heaton (personal);
- Cllr N Turner (work commitments)

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

FGB/78/24 Declaration of interest

All governors present completed and signed the following documentation:

- declaration of business interests;
- declaration of eligibility;
- governor code of conduct 2024.

The SBM agreed to follow up with the absent governors.

VD/Clerk

In addition, governors **AGREED** to access their profile on Governor Hub and tick the appropriate boxes to provide further evidence of the above actions.

All to note

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

FGB/79/24 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.

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

FGB/80/24 Determination of office of chair and vice-chair

In line with the articles of association, governors **DETERMINED** the term of office for both positions as one year.

FGB/81/24 Election of chair

Mr Gawthorpe indicated that he would be prepared to stand for the position of chair.

Mr Gawthorpe left the meeting at 4.10pm

In the circumstances, there being no further nominations, it was:

resolved

that Mr Gawthorpe be elected chair for a period of office expiring at the date of the 2025 autumn term meeting.

Clerk

Mr Gawthorpe re-joined the meeting at 4.11pm

FGB/82/24 Election of vice-chair

Mrs Middleton indicated that she would be prepared to stand for the position of vice-chair.

Mrs Middleton left the meeting at 4.12pm

In the circumstances, there being no further nominations, it was

resolved

that Mrs Middleton be elected vice-chair for a period of office expiring at the date of the 2025 autumn term meeting.

Clerk

Mrs Middleton re-joined the meeting at 4.13pm

FGB/83/24 Approval of minutes of summer (2) term meetings and any additional special meetings

The minutes of the summer (2) term meeting held on 18th July 2024 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 18 July 2024 were to be signed electronically by the chair.

**Chair/
Clerk**

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

FGB/62/24 Approval of minutes of summer (1) term meetings and any additional special meetings

Q. Governors asked if there had been any progress on setting up a parking working party?

A. The principal advised that the parking working party had still to meet due to participants availability – the principal acknowledged the importance of ensuring a meeting was held this term and agreed to contact the relevant people.

All to note

Q. Governors enquired whether a solution to the parking issue was close?

A. The principal shared that there was a potential solution – the ground behind the school – however this was reliant on the neighbouring academy and council agreement.

Q. Governors queried how many spaces the additional land might provide?

A. The principal reported that the land would double the number of car parking spaces.

FGB/70/24 Communication

Q. Governors questioned whether there had been any movement on the Net Capacity matter (F&P/27/24)?

A. The SBM reminded governors that the outcome had been that the academy was required to follow the process of significant change in order to correct the net capacity anomaly – this process was to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

FGB/84/24 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

Governors **AGREED** there had been no committees since the last FGB meeting and the child protection policy was to be submitted to the next meeting for approval.

Clerk

FGB/85/24 Review risk management arrangements

The SBM provided the following updates for governors:

- there had been no change to the risk management policy approved in July 2024; and
- the academy continued to back the RPA at £25 per pupil or placement regardless of any claims.

FGB/86/24 Overseeing financial performance

The SBM presented a brief summary of the financial picture which included reference to:

- a) teachers pay award;
- b) private day care setting – **see confidential item**;
- c) management accounts;
- d) investment account update – **see confidential item**

a Teachers Pay Award

The SBM informed governors that the 'praying period' in government for the STPCD was still underway and ended on 8th November 2024 – if accepted then the pay award was as per the following proposals:

- 5.5% uplift to all pay points and allowances for both teachers and leaders applicable from 1 September 2024 – the proposed draft pay points were included in the letter from the LA (for information purposes only as appendix 1) which had been uploaded to Governor Hub;
- the removal of the performance related pay requirement from September 2024 effective from the new appraisal cycle 2024/25;
- moving the list of administrative tasks from an annex in Section 3 (Guidance) to Section 2 (the main body of the STPCD);

All to note

- clarifying that “where reasonable, appropriate and agreed by both the individual teacher and the relevant body, PPA time can be taken in one weekly unit, and it can be taken away from the school site.”

Q. Governors asked if there was funding with the pay award?

A. The SBM confirmed that the DfE had stated that they had provided almost £1.1 billion in additional funding via the core schools budget grant (CSBG) to cover the average estimated cost of the 2024/25 pay award for both teaching and support staff.

The SBM alerted governors that 8 November (end of the ‘praying period’ in parliament) was the academy payroll cut-off date therefore an extension to 11 November had been requested to be able to apply the pay award in November – a response to this request was pending.

VD/Clerk

Q. Governors enquired what happened if the cut-off date was missed?

A. The SBM explained that due to December being a short month for payroll actions ‘Dataplan’ (the payroll company) did not apply pay awards through this period – if an extension was not agreed the award would be paid in January 2025.

Q. Governors queried whether the award was backdated and if staff were aware of the implications?

A. The SBM concurred that the award was backdated to September 2024 whenever it was applied, and staff had been apprised of the situation and the possibility that the pay award may not reach salaries until January 2025.

Q. Governors questioned whether there was an impact on the academy budget?

A. The SBM advised that the budget had assumed the pay award would not be funded, so the budget was to be updated and work on year-end was underway.

All to note

b Private Day Care Setting – see confidential item

c Management accounts

The chair **CONFIRMED** that he had received the management accounts for July 2024, and they had also been uploaded to Governor Hub.

The SBM notified governors that the August management accounts had been delayed due to year end and month end processes – they were to be presented at the next F&P committee meeting (10 October 2024).

VD/Clerk

d Investment account update – see confidential item

FGB/87/24 Academy Handbook 2024

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the academy handbook 2024 which had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

All to note

Q. Governors asked if there was anything in particular to note?

A. The SBM conveyed that the changes/updates were highlighted on page 8 of the handbook.

All to note

The SBM drew governors’ attention to the closure of the ESFA (effective 31 March 2025) with all its functions being integrated into the DfE.

FGB/88/24 Premises – estates management

The principal and SBM reported on the following estate matters:

- BMS works (CIF);
- DfE conditions survey;
- LED lighting (finance/operating lease);
- Projects.

A BMS works (CIF)

The principal outlined the progress of the installation of the BMS system, and the challenges and complexities faced by the company once the deconstruction work had begun. He communicated that:

- the work had not yet been completed though he praised the hard work of the company thus far;
- a report had been produced highlighting all the issues encountered.

The principal shared that:

- all the windows were now working though many of the actuators on the windows needed replacing – G&H had agreed to undertake this job;
- there was a list of issues that needed rectifying including the hot water system which was not fit for purpose – a solution was being explored and quotes sought.

All to note

Furthermore, the principal alerted governors that instruction had been given for the company to use the contingency to action all necessary steps to resolve the identified issues in the first third of the report and consult with the academy when necessary – this was potentially feasible for all aspects except the lights.

The SBM agreed to provide an update to the F&P meeting (10 October 2024) in relation to the progress of the BMS works and any additional finance that was required.

VD/Clerk

In addition, the SBM summarised the lighting complications: to get the current lighting fully operational required further investment and time and then once working, if the lights were then replaced with LED this caused the new system to become ineffective.

b DfE Conditions Survey

The principal informed governors that a conditions survey (**FGB/66/24**) had been conducted during the summer holidays and whatever was highlighted in the report qualified for funding.

Q. Governors enquired about the lighting?

A. The principal verified that the lighting had been identified during the survey as a 'must' i.e., category 1 urgent need for replacement however, the report may not be available for 6-9 months.

C LED Lighting (finance/operating lease)

The SBM updated governors on the developments in relation to a finance/operating lease (**F&P/26/24 b** and **FGB/64/24 b**):

- advice from the auditors in line with IFRS16 – general consent was a finance lease rather than an operating lease for the LED lighting;
- this meant reference to 'Get Help Buying for Schools' (GHBS) and 'Find a Framework' (FaF);

- contact had been made with GHBS and FaF and the only approved provider for LED lighting (FaF) was the LASER framework;
- LASER offered a survey to advise on supply, site visits and written specifications required – once this had happened then GHBS needed to be approached to find a lease provider;
- registration with Crown Commercial Services – DPS had been actioned – details had been provided by GHBS.

Q. Governors requested clarity around Crown Commercial Services – DPS?

A. The SBM advised governors that CCS-DPS provided government and public sector access to funding for obtaining an asset. DPS offered a choice of financing options including leasing and asset secured loans.

Q. Governors queried the use of G&H to carry out the work?

A. The SBM confirmed she had approached GHBS about obtaining the required permissions to allow G&H (who were currently undertaking works) to carry out the LED lighting work – a reply was pending.

VD/Clerk

Q. Governors questioned whether there had been any liaison with MAFs?

A. The SBM assured governors that she had communicated with MAFS that the academy was not moving forward with the proposed option of an operating lease.

Q. Governors asked if MAFs were able to offer a finance lease quote?

A. The SBM concurred that they could however the provider would need to be an approved provider through the above services (CCS-DPS).

Q. Governors enquired whether there was any recourse back to the LA?

A. The principal revealed that an attempt had been made around latent defects but although the LA had visited the site, there had been no acknowledgement of fault thus no help with remedial action.

d Projects

The principal provided a brief update on the following:

- foundation sandpit – this had been completed (£40,274.74) and was extremely popular with the pupils;
- associated gate works (£1,064.40) which had also been finished;
- additional costs re. variance to the scope of work (£4,415.75).

Q. Governors queried what the variance related to?

A. The principal explained this related to the removal of a huge bush and the installation of a second 'digger' for the pupils.

The principal read out a letter of thanks from the foundation pupils.

Q. Governors questioned progress on the privacy screens (window graphics)?

A. The principal agreed to email the designs to governors

FGB/89/24 To review

a Examination Results

The principal reminded governors that this had been discussed in detail at the summer (2) term FGB meeting (**FGB/67/24 c**) however, he alerted governors to changes with the rules and regulations of the checking exercise and consequently an application had been made for four children to be removed from the data.

Q. Governors asked about the impact on outcomes of the removal of the four children?

A. The principal shared that there would be a positive impact across the board though he cautioned that agreement with the applications was pending.

RL/Clerk

b Admissions

The principal provided governors with the current data:

- total pupil numbers = 548;
- Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 were full;
- there were 2 places in YR, with the most available places in Y1 and Y2;
- there was 1 x Y4 appeal pending.

Q. Governors enquired about the size of waiting lists?

A. The principal apprised governors that most waiting lists were 5 or 6 strong.

Q. Governors queried the maximum class numbers in KS2?

A. The principal clarified that the maximum number in a class was 34.

c Draft School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The principal notified governors that:

- the SIP had been completed and been scrutinised by SLT;
- the SIP was to be emailed to governors and uploaded to Governor Hub;
- targets set for this year were: GLD – 60%; Y1 phonics – 78%; KS2 targets set in line with FFT50.

RL

FGB/90/24

Update on appraisal process for principal and staff including an update on the wellbeing of staff

The principal reminded governors that appraisal was in an interesting position at the moment with the government announcement that there was to be a separation for teachers of pay progression and appraisal.

Q. Governors asked about the implications of this for staff?

A. The principal explained that the pay progression of staff through MPS and UPS was to be removed completely from performance management – the full details of how this was to be implemented had not yet been published.

Q. Governors enquired about the delay to the publication?

A. The principal clarified that it was not possible for an implementation plan until after the 'praying period' in parliament had been completed (8 November 2024).

Q. Governors queried what was to happen in the meantime?

A. The principal informed governors that the 2023/24 appraisal cycle was unaffected – the plan was to continue the process for 2023/24 as normal to the end of the cycle.

The principal reassured governors that the academy system was to set targets linked to the SIP and staff chose two for their targets with a further whole school target, common across the whole school.

Q. Governors questioned what was happening with the 2024/25 process?

A. The principal conveyed that the proposal was to continue with no change to appraisal and target setting – once it was confirmed that there was to be no link between appraisal and pay progression, then the two systems would exist in parallel.

Mrs Phoenix left the meeting at 5.10pm

2024-25 pay progression proposals

The principal presented the anonymised recommendations for performance related pay progression for teachers in school, consisting of:

- incremental pay progression (MPR); and
- progression to and within:
 - the upper pay scale (UPR)
 - the leadership pay scale.

He drew governors' attention to the process undertaken which comprised of:

- appraisal objectives set in the context of the requirement of all teachers' performance to be at least good and to meet the statutory Teachers' Standards in line with all relevant linked documentation;
- opportunity for all staff to agree their objectives with their appraiser and to appeal if agreement was not reached;
- quality assurance of all targets.

In addition, the principal reminded governors that the recommendations in terms of pay progression were made on the basis:

- that the academy had fully complied with the following policies agreed by the Governing Body:
 - the appraisal policy and guidance and the statutory appraisal regulations;
 - the current School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD);
 - the pay policy and guidance;
- of eligibility, successful appraisal and principal's recommendation.

The principal notified governors that staff who wished to move to/through the UPR/leadership pay scale:

- were alerted to the option to do so in the spirit of transparency and openness; and then,
- those staff indicated/applied to do so and were required to:
 - provide 2-years' worth of evidence of sustained and significant contributions to the academy before making progression;
 - demonstrate performance at the level expected of a UPR/leadership teacher; however,
- ultimately bore the responsibility to indicate/apply for pay progression themselves.

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the recommendations.

After a full and frank discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the pay recommendations presented and in principle, the application of any confirmed national uplift/pay award when received.

Mrs Phoenix rejoined the meeting at 5.15pm

The chair **ADVISED** governors that Mr Clive Richardson had been appointed as the external advisor.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the appointment of:

- Mr Gawthorpe and Mrs Norton Allen as the principal's appraisal governors; and
- Mrs Middleton as the QA governor.

The principal shared that his appraisal meeting was being arranged for autumn (2) term – a date to be finalised and confirmed with appraisal governors.

RL

FGB/91/24 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action

a *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*

The clerk provided a summary of the content of the report and drew governors' attention to the following:

- the revised DfE statutory guidance for schools, academy trusts and local authorities which set out the key duties and responsibilities;
- the statutory guidance was to be applied from 19th August 2024 to improve and maintain high levels of school attendance;
- as part of its strategic responsibilities, the local authority was to produce a new strategy for improving school attendance in Nottinghamshire.;
- the expectation on schools to develop and publish a school attendance policy which covered:
 - attendance expectations;
 - named attendance staff contacts;
 - day-to-day attendance management processes;
 - the school strategy for using attendance data and reducing persistent and severe absence; and;
 - the point at which sanctions were to be used;
- the statutory requirement for schools to share their daily attendance data.

In addition, the clerk shared that the report highlighted:

- the statutory guidance and regulations underpinning the changes;
- the new attendance register codes being introduced;
- a strong emphasis of a 'Support First' approach;
- the new national framework for legal intervention;
- the availability of an updated NCC 'Improving School Attendance' toolkit;
- actions for governors.

b *Safer Working (recruitment and selection), Teachers Pay and HR updates - September 2024*

The clerk provided a summary of the content of the report and highlighted the following information:

- Teachers Pay Award 2024 and related policies;
- school support staff pay award update (April 2024);
- equality impact assessments (EqiAs);
- employee wellbeing;
- counselling support for all school-based employees – reminder
- Minimum Service Levels – Strike Action
- updates in relation to:
 - Recruitment and Selection Safer Working Documents 2024;
 - School Employee Code of Conduct;
 - School Induction Policy;
- counselling support for all school-based employees – reminder

- length of the school week
- the new SENCO qualification requirements from September 2024;
- actions for governors.

FGB/92/24 Safeguarding information for consideration and action

The principal informed governors that:

- the NCC NSCP SiE safeguarding audit was being compiled and was to be submitted to the autumn (2) FGB meeting;
- all staff had read KCSiE 2024 and signed to confirm the fact;
- governors needed to read KCSiE 2024 and tick the appropriate box under their profile on Governor Hub;
- all governors needed to complete annual safeguarding training module on Governor Hub called 'The Key – Safeguarding for Governance.'

[Safeguarding for governance | GovernorHub \(thekeysupport.com\)](https://thekeysupport.com)

Principal
/Clerk

All

All
governors

FGB/93/24 Health & Safety

The principal reported that during the summer holiday clean, a glass pane in one of the staff room windows had been discovered to be damaged – action had been taken to replace it.

Q. Governors asked about the costs?

A. The SBM shared that the cost had been £4,990 – the RPA had approved reimbursement of the amount (less £250 excess).

The SBM added that Bassetlaw District Council had approved the identified tree survey work to remove the deadwood from one of the lime trees which had a TPO (tree preservation order) – the next step was to appoint someone to do the work – this was underway.

FGB/94/24 Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the academy aligns with the agreed vision of the Trust

Governors **AGREED** for this item to be deferred to the autumn (2) FGB meeting.

All to note
/Clerk

FGB/95/24 Communication

a From the principal

The principal alerted governors of the receipt of

- the 'thank you' cards from the foundation stage pupils for the sandpit;
- **see confidential item;**
- a letter from the ESFA to the accounting officer;
- a letter from the local authority re. the teachers' pay award.

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** both the ESFA accounting officer letter and letter from the local authority.

b From clerk – Governor Newsletter

The clerk drew attention to the content of the first 2024 autumn term edition of the Nottinghamshire Governor e-newsletter and highlighted the following items:

- a welcome back from the Governor Services Team Manager – Sinead Allan;
- HR updates including available training and policy changes;
- school admission updates;

- safeguarding in education news and updates;
- an article about Nottinghamshire local area partnership SEND strategy 2024-2027;
- national updates/articles with news (and links) from Ofsted and the DfE including:
 - working together to improve school attendance;
 - school suspensions and permanent exclusions;
 - elective home education (EHE);
 - providing remote education – guidance for schools;
 - children missing education (CME);
 - the new government's legislative agenda - schools;
- governance articles relating to:
 - what governors need to know – headteacher reports, information and data;
 - governing body responsibilities – school visits;
 - do you have an associate member on your board;
 - clerking of governor meetings by school administration staff;
- Children's Society's 2023 annual report on the wellbeing of children in UK;
- transforming public procurement (TPP) - changes for schools and MATs;
- governor termly briefings and a message from the chair of NAGS;
- governor recruitment: support for boards from Governors for Schools;
- Em-Ed governor training update.

FGB/96/24 Report from training co-ordinator including review of governor skills audit and requirements for 2024-2025

The chair **HIGHLIGHTED** that finance training for all governors had been scheduled for 10th October 2024 (3.00pm).

All to note

The SBM confirmed she had circulated:

- the training programme available; and
- the update for the GDPR training which governors needed to complete.

All

Governors **AGREED** the following training had been completed or scheduled:

- SEND training – Mrs M Pimm;
- new governor induction – Mrs K Heaton;
- GDPR training – all governors;
- annual safeguarding training – all governors.

All to note

FGB/97/24 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body

The chair **REMINDED** governors to:

- consult with the principal prior to each visit;
- ensure at least one governor link visit per term for each governor link;
- complete visit forms once a visit had been undertaken.

All to note

Q. Governors enquired whether there was a monitoring schedule so that visits might coincide and reduce staff workload?

A. The principal proposed to speak to the staff and suggest that they contact the relevant link governor to arrange a visit.

RL

FGB/98/24 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, roles and responsibilities;
 - eligibility/business interests, code of conduct;
 - governor training and monitoring visits;
- scrutiny and challenge relating to financial and estate issues, specifically:
 - operating leases and contractual liabilities;
 - progress of infrastructure works;
 - developments related to leasing arrangements with Cherubs;
- increased awareness and understanding of staffing matters through questions and discussion related to:
 - the national changes to pay progression and appraisal processes;
 - pay recommendations; teachers' pay award and its impact;
- consideration and review of the Corporate Directors Reports and the autumn (1) term governor newsletter;
- questions, challenge and discussion related to:
 - admissions, applications and appeals;
 - summer outcomes and checking exercise;
- consideration and discussion in relation to risk management arrangements, safeguarding, the SIP and health & safety.

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

FGB/99/24 Confirmation of dates for autumn term 2024/25

The governing body
agreed

- Thursday 10th October 2024 (4.00pm) – F&P and Audit Committees;
- Thursday 21st November 2024 (9.30am) – F&P followed by
FGB & Members Meeting;
- Thursday 5th December 2024 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 5th December 2024 – AGM/Members Meeting (after the FGB).

All to note

FGB/100/24 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was
resolved

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

- summer (2) term FGB minutes;
- premises and estates matters;
- staffing;

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

The meeting closed at 5.45pm



Signed:

(chair)

Date: **4th December 2024**