

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Spring (1) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 25th January 2024 at 9.30am
Location: Hybrid – onsite and via Zoom

Membership

'A' denotes absence

Mrs D Carter
Mr P Gawthorpe (chair)
Mr R Lilley (principal)
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
A Mrs M Norton Allen * denotes virtual attendance
Mrs M Paton
Mrs K Phoenix
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)
Mrs M Pimm (prospective co-opted governor – observer)

*Until the chair was able to join the meeting, governors **AGREED** for the vice-chair to lead*

FGB/01/24 Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs M Norton Allen (work commitments);
- Cllr N Turner (personal).

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

FGB/02/24 Declaration of interest

All governors present **CONFIRMED** they had accessed their profile on Governor Hub and ticked the appropriate boxes to provide further evidence of completion of the following documents:

- declaration of business interests;
- declaration of eligibility;
- governor code of conduct 2023.

The SBM declared an interest in item **FGB/10/24 a**, and it was determined that the SBM leave the meeting for this item.

In addition, the vice-chair and principal declared an indirect interest in item **FGB/06/24 b**

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

FGB/03/24 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

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

The principal alerted governors to the expression of interest received from Mrs M Pimm for the co-opted governor vacancy – he outlined the skills and experience of the prospective governor and the benefits her membership brought to the governing body.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the appointment of Mrs M Pimm as a co-opted governor subject to satisfactory completion of all statutory checks and relevant documentation.

Mrs M Pimm joined the meeting at 9.45am

Governors **WELCOMED** Mrs Pimm to the governing body and introductions were made.

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 D Carter (co-opted governor) – 24th June 2024;
- Mrs C Middleton (community governor) – 22nd June 2024.

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

FGB/04/24 Approval of minutes of autumn (2) term meetings and any additional special meetings

The minutes of the autumn (2) term meeting held on 7th December 2023 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 7 December 2023 were to be signed electronically by the vice-chair.

**Vice-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/101/23 Update on appraisal process for principal and staff including an update on the wellbeing of all staff

The principal informed governors of the situation regarding the appointment of external advisor – he explained that:

- the appointment was dependent upon:
 - confirmation of the workload reduction taskforce proposal to the DfE to remove performance related pay (PRP) for all staff by September 2024;
 - the proposed replacement system to manage performance;
- if the decision was to continue with PRP for headteachers, Mr P Abbott was to be appointed as external advisor.

FGB/05/24 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

All governors **CONFIRMED** that there had been no committee meetings held since the autumn (2) term FGB meeting (7 December 2023).

a Policies

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the sickness absence policy;

b Determination of admission arrangements 2025/26

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the admissions policy 2025-26 and the admission arrangements for 2025-26 were determined in line with the School Admissions Code 2021.

Q. Governors asked whether the SYNERGY system allowed sight of FAD applications?

A. The principal advised that the applications were visible and the number of first choices (65) but not which of the applications were first choice.

Governors **NOTED** the healthy number of first choice applications.

*Mr Gawthorpe, Mrs Paton and Mrs Sparks joined the meeting at 10.00am
Mr Gawthorpe led the meeting from this point.*

FGB/06/24 Overseeing Financial Performance – financial reporting

a Premises update

The principal reported that:

- work had been completed on the school crossing (see **FGB/104/23**);
- slight adjustments were to be made to the signage for the crossing to ensure high visibility;
- a report was pending from 'VIA East Midlands' re., crossing patrol training - this was to ensure that the national highways standards (both of the crossing and of the role) were in line with what effectively was a private car park;
- door closers had been installed across the site (see **FGB/104/23 b**) – the foot operated door holders were pending delivery/fitting;
- foundation stage signage had been installed – thermoplastic markings:
 - no scooters /bikes beyond this point;
 - rainbow 'welcome to foundation' completed;
- finger post signage was pending;
- an upgrade to the staffroom to allow multi-use had been completed.

Q. Governors enquired about the specification quality of the crossing?

A. The principal verified that the crossing had been finished to a high specification in line with the standards found on a crossing on the public highway.

Q. Governors queried how the crossing patrol was to work?

A. The principal explained that two crossing patrol persons had been employed (am and pm) and the system was to be trialled in the first instance – the longer-term solution was to be discussed at the working party meeting. However, the academy was awaiting confirmation from VIA (Notts) if they would be able to offer training as a buy back service.

Q. Governor questioned how the 'pass holder' parking system might work?

A. The principal outlined the parking challenges and the proposed re-issuing of passes, linkage to cars, colour-coded scheme, parents to sign an agreement before a pass was issued.

Governors **DISCUSSED** the moral and legal obligations of the school, communication methods with parents and the actions the school was able to take.

Mrs K Phoenix joined the meeting at 10.16am

b Staffing update – see confidential item

Mrs M Paton, Mrs K Phoenix, left the meeting at 10.35am and re-joined at 10.55am

c Investment

The SBM notified governors that as agreed at the F&P committee meeting (see item **F&P/45/23**) and in line with SHA investment policy, transfer to an alternative Lloyd's account had now been completed and a monthly statement would be received from the bank.

d Management accounts

The chair of governors **ACKNOWLEDGED** that:

- in line with the academy trust handbook (ATH), he had received P4 December management accounts; and
- the period for review included the cash flow/balance on 31 Dec 2023.

e MIS system – update

The principal provided governors with an update on the situation regarding the MIS system (see items **F&P/31/23**, **F&P/48/23** and **FGB/103/23**).

The principal advised that it had become clear that the process required for the installation was far too complex both in time commitment and financially therefore the academy had withdrawn from the process.

The SBM added that had the academy been a SIMS school then the transfer/installation would have been much more straightforward for BROMCOM. However, as a ScholarPack school, it had been realised that the work that sat behind any integration would fall heavily on the school itself.

Q. Governors asked about the way forward?

A. The principal shared that the MIS still needed to be updated and the likelihood was that the academy would enter negotiations with ARBOR because:

- the cost differential was small compared to current outlay;
- both ARBOR and ScholarPack were run/operated by 'The Key' and therefore the transfer should be relatively straightforward.

Q. Governors enquired whether any payments had been made to BROMCOM?

A. The principal reassured governors that no payments had been made and requested governor approval to re-investigate ARBOR.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** for the academy to re-investigate ARBOR as a potential MIS system.

		Action
FGB/07/24	Update on appraisal process for principal and staff including an update on the wellbeing of all staff. The principal reported that: • appraisal was on track for all staff and new targets set for 2023-24; • the appointment of a new external advisor had been discussed under FGB/04/24; • staff wellbeing and workload remained a priority; • the government agenda on workload was being closely monitored; • see confidential item.	All to note
FGB/08/24	Confirm arrangements to review Child Protection and Safeguarding recording and reporting systems (CP safeguarding file audit) as per the Trust's scheme of delegation The safeguarding governor informed the meeting that: • the NCC NSCP SiE safeguarding audit had been completed and returned to the LA by the deadline; • a safeguarding visit had taken place on 18th January 2024 where a confidential file audit had been undertaken. Governors CONSIDERED whether a short report on this element of safeguarding might be beneficial – it was agreed that safeguarding section of the principal's report captured the value of the safeguarding team and delivered the justification of the work provided. The principal proposed that the family support worker was offered the opportunity to present a report to the governing body about the work of the team. All governors present CONFIRMED they had ticked the appropriate box under their profile on Governor Hub to confirm they had read KCSiE 2023.	RL
FGB/09/24	Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action <i>Growing Up in Nottinghamshire School Survey</i> The clerk provided a summary of the content of the report and drew governors' attention to the following: • in the academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24, all Nottinghamshire schools had/have the chance to participate in a free health and wellbeing survey for pupils; • the survey was commissioned for two years from the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU); • headlines from the 2022-23 survey included: ○ primary (responses from pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6); ○ secondary (responses from pupils in Years 7, 8 and 10); • actions for governors involved supporting the project by monitoring; ○ participation in the survey; and ○ use of the results in schools and across organisations; • questions for governors to ask, specifically: ○ what were school plans to undertake the survey; ○ if the school had already participated – what were the findings and how the school planned to respond. • how the governing board might support NICE recommendations for a whole school approach to health and wellbeing.	

FGB/10/24 Communication received and updates**a From the headteacher – see confidential item**

Mrs V Dashper left the meeting at 11.28am and re-joined the meeting at 11.30am

b From clerk – Governor Newsletter

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

- a welcome back from the Governor Services Team Manager – Sinead Allan;
- school admissions information 2025-26;
- wellbeing support for headteachers, staff and governors;
- safeguarding in education news and updates;
- an article about:
 - what happens if Ofsted receives a complaint about a school;
 - governor recruitment and succession planning;
- national updates/articles with news (and links) from Ofsted and the DfE including:
 - 2023 annual report from Ofsted;
 - changes at Ofsted;
 - SFVS (school financial value standards) checklist update;
 - early years updates including the EYFS funding benchmarking tool;
 - primary school accountability 2023;
 - school workforce planning;
 - DfE – collecting and publishing governing board diversity data;
- governor termly briefings;
- a message from the chair of NAGS, Susan Beasley;
- governor recruitment – support for boards from Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools;
- an article about the national wraparound childcare programme;
- governor learning and development updates including the Governor Conference (2nd March 2024) at Eastwood Hall.

FGB/11/24 Health and Safety (H&S)

The principal communicated that further to **FGB/06/23 a**:

- the parking working party consisted of himself plus:
 - Mr P Gawthorpe;
 - Mrs M Norton Allen;
 - Mrs M Paton;
 - Cllr N Turner;
- he had agreed to arrange:
 - the working party meeting; to be held prior to
 - the parental/public meeting;
- feedback was to be submitted at the end of term to the FGB meeting.

RL

RL/Clerk

FGB/12/24 Report from training co-ordinator including review of governor skills audit and requirements for 2024-2025

Governors **DETERMINED** that the following training had been attended or was to be booked:

- governor induction – Cllr N Turner, Mrs M Pimm;
- Prevent – Mrs C Middleton;

Action

- safeguarding/child protection – Mr P Gawthorpe;
- safer recruitment – Mrs K Phoenix.

The chair **ENCOURAGED** all governors to attend/book online training courses through the SBM, particularly in relation to:

All to note

- health and safety; and/or
- HR - Governors Roles in HR Process.

The SBM advised that the training dates for the Spring term had been uploaded to Governor Hub.

All to note

FGB/13/24 General Data Protection Regulations

The SBM notified governors that:

- there had been no data breaches, FoI requests or SARs since the last meeting;
- staff had been provided with an update from the ICO on email security, involving misuse of the 'bcc' field in email addresses – fines had been issued by the ICO for such breaches, including the NHS and charities.

FGB/14/24 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body

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

- governor induction visit – Mrs M Pimm;
- health & safety – Mrs D Carter;
- safeguarding – Mrs C Middleton;
- safeguarding confidential file audit – Mrs C Middleton.

All to note

The chair **REMINDED** governors to:

- liaise 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

FGB/15/24 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, vacancies and recruitment;
 - governor training and monitoring visits;
- discussion and questions relating to financial matters, specifically:
 - investment;
 - management accounts; and
 - progress and complexities associated with the installation of a new MIS;
- increased awareness and understanding through questions and discussion in relation to staffing matters such as the:
 - impact of workload and appraisal on wellbeing;
 - affordability of staffing arrangements;
 - capacity to offer services to other establishments;
- consideration and review of policies, the Corporate Directors report and the Spring (1) term governor newsletter;

- questions, challenge and discussion related to estates management and health and safety including:
 - pupil safety and progress regarding traffic control (on and offsite);
 - mitigation and responsibilities;
- consideration and discussion in relation to safeguarding and GDPR.

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

FGB/16/24 Confirmation of dates for 2023/24

The governing body

agreed

Spring Term 2024

- Thursday 22nd February 2024 (4.00pm) – F&P/Audit Committee;
- Tuesday 26th March 2024 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;

All to note

Summer Term 2024

- Thursday 2nd May 2024 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 6th June 2024 (4.00pm) – F&P/Audit Committee;
- Thursday 18th July 2024 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting.

FGB/17/24 Holiday Dates 2025/26

The principal presented the term dates for 2025/26 which were in line with Nottinghamshire County Council.

FGB/18/24 Confirmation of dates for 2024/25

The principal circulated the proposed meeting dates for 2024/25 which had also previously been uploaded to Governor Hub and reminded governors of the dispensation for academies to incorporate extra Inset Days.

Inset dates 2024/25

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following Inset days from the principal which included the proposal to incorporate an additional Inset Day to support the introduction of a new scheme of work for grammar across the school:

- Monday 2nd September 2024;
- Monday 4th November 2024;
- Monday 2nd June 2025;
- Tuesday 3rd June 2025;
- Monday 28th July 2025;
- Tuesday 29th July 2025.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that the governors **APPROVED** the Inset days.

Inset Days 2025/26

The principal also presented the Inset Days for 2025/26 for approval.

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following Inset Days from the principal:

- Monday 1st September 2025;
- Friday 17th October 2025;

- Friday 13th February 2026;
- Thursday 23rd July 2026;
- Friday 24th July 2026.

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that the governors **APPROVED** the Inset days.

FGB/19/24 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

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

- autumn (2) term FGB minutes;
- staffing matters and linked documentation;
- governor monitoring visit reports;
- financial report and linked documentation;

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

The meeting closed at 11.56am



Signed:

(chair)

Date: **26th March 2024**