

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Summer (1) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 2nd May 2024 at 4.00pm
Location: At the academy

Membership
'A' denotes absence

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

In attendance

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

In the absence of the chair, the vice-chair led the meeting

FGB/40/24 Apologies for absence Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs D Carter (work commitments);
- Mr P Gawthorpe (personal);
- Mrs M Norton Allen (work commitments);

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

FGB/41/24 Declaration of interest

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

FGB/42/24 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 D Carter (co-opted governor) – 24th June 2024;
- Mrs C Middleton (community governor) – 22nd June 2024.

Mrs C Middleton indicated her wish to continue as a community governor.

Mrs Middleton left the meeting at 4.06pm

The principal outlined the skills and expertise of Mrs Middleton and the benefits her continued membership brought to the governing body.

Governors **NOTED** and **DISCUSSED** the information available, and it was **resolved**

that governors **APPROVED** the reappointment of Mrs C Middleton as a community governor with effect from 23rd June 2024.

Clerk

Mrs Middleton rejoined the meeting at 4.08pm

Governors **CONGRATULATED** Mrs Middleton on her reappointment and **CONSIDERED** the membership of Mrs D Carter.

Governors **RECOGNISED** and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the valuable contributions Mrs Carter had made to the school and governing body and subject to her agreement, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the reappointment of Mrs D Carter as a co-opted governor with effect from 25th June 2024

Clerk

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

FGB/43/24 Approval of minutes of spring (2) term meetings and any additional special meetings

The minutes of the spring (2) term meeting held on 26th March 2024 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 26 March 2024 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/32/24 Premises

b) William Saunders Partnership

The principal updated governors regarding the smell around school (internal) – he advised that investigation had discovered a (potentially) wrongly wired fan which was blowing air into school – this had been resolved however, the external latent defect was still being explored.

FGB/44/24 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

Governors **AGREED** there had been no committee meetings since the spring (2) term FGB meeting.

FGB/45/24 Overseeing Financial Performance – financial reporting

The SBM drew governors' attention to the financial documentation uploaded to Governor Hub and which had been previously circulated – she provided a short summary of the financial picture which included:

- a) 2023/24 budget overview (as of 18 March 2024) – **see confidential item**;
- b) the three-year forecast – **see confidential item**;
- c) staffing – **see confidential item**;
- d) approval of services for schools;
- e) management accounts period seven;
- f) investment account update – **see confidential item**;
- g) premises – hall floor and music room;
- h) write offs/disposals.

d *Services for Schools*

The SBM informed governors that the prices for the outstanding buy back contracts had now been received and were within the assumptions shared at the spring term F&P committee meeting (**F&P/06/24**).

Governors **RECEIVED**, **NOTED** and **RATIFIED** the approval of those buy back contracts approved at the spring term F&P committee meeting which were subject to confirmation of prices.

e *Management accounts (period 7)*

The SBM confirmed that the chair of governors had received the management accounts (period seven) and they had also been uploaded to Governor Hub.

g *Hall Floor and Music Room*

The SBM notified governors that following a site visit by the appointed contractors, the markings had been established and additional markings had been requested. Consequently, the original quote of £8260 had been revised to £8760 – this was still within the approved spend (see **FGB/32/24 a**) and remained best value.

h *Write Offs/Disposals*

The SBM presented the list of items for disposal/write off:

- 2 x laptop trolleys;
- 6 x laptops

Q. Governors asked if the equipment had been offered to other schools?

A. The principal verified that it had but had been refused.

Governors **RECEIVED**, **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the items listed for write off/disposal.

FGB/46/24 **Condition Improvement Fund (CIF)**

The SBM reported that:

- the CIF bid to replace the BMS system had been successful;
- the funding granted totalled £78,839;
- the school was to contribute £26,295 (this had been built into the budget);
- total costs = £105,134 (which included professional fees – ‘Eddisons’).

Q. Governors enquired about next steps?

A. The SBM shared that a project timing plan was being prepared with a view to works starting on 24th July 2024 – once the plan was finalised, a meeting between school, the contractors and Eddison’s was to be scheduled.

Governors **EXTENDED** thanks and appreciation to the SBM for all the hard work to secure a successful bid.

FGB/47/24 LED Lighting

The SBM advised governors that the school was waiting for a report from the MAF Finance group – MAF had been recommended by Eddisons and offered educational asset financing which was considered a form of operating lease.

Q. Governors queried what advice had been sought around this kind of arrangement?

A. The SBM reassured governors that before proceeding advice would be sought from Streets Accountants and approval may also be required from the ESFA/DfE.

Q. Governors questioned to cost of replacing the lighting system?

A. The SBM apprised governors that the current estimate was £83,000 plus fees if installed at the same time as the BMS.

Q. Governors asked when it was hoped the work might take place?

A. The SBM communicated the hope that the work might be incorporated to run alongside the BMS works during the summer holidays.

Q. Governors enquired whether the amount of potential savings was known?

A. The SBM informed governors that these were currently being calculated by MAF.

The SBM outlined how the arrangement might work and the benefits to the school – more information was to be presented to the F&P committee meeting (6 June 2024).

VD/Clerk

Following discussion, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** in principle; the installation of LED lighting subject to comprehensive information being provided to the F&P committee meeting (6 June 2024).

VD/Clerk

FGB/48/24 After School Club (ASC)

The principal alerted governors that:

- an approach had been made by a local school to access the ASC for their pupils;
- whilst the provision was for pupils of Sparken Hill, the provision was not classed as a trading activity (see conversation at **FGB/07/23** and **F&P/12/23**).

The SBM stated that after further investigation of 'trading activity' a tax expert at 'Streets' had indicated that:

"The income from the additional schools' fees can be classed as the academy's primary purpose, therefore the income received will be part of the academy's charitable trade and exempt".

Q. Governors queried whether there was the capacity to accept more children into the ASC?

A. The principal confirmed that there was the space and capacity to accept more children.

Governors **APPROVED** the expansion of the after-school club.

FGB/49/24 Governor Skills Audit

The principal presented the analysis of the data from the governor skills audit which highlighted:

- areas of strength;
- areas for development including:
 - procurement and purchasing;
 - knowledge of school financial management;
 - local business experience;
 - understanding data (ASP, ISDR, FFT, etc).

Governors **CONCURRED** for training to be organised around these areas in the form of a training plan.

RL

In addition, the principal agreed to produce a one-page summary on the school strengths and areas for development

RL/Clerk

FGB/50/24 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action*Pupil Place Planning*

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

- local authorities retained the statutory responsibility to ensure a sufficiency of school places – this responsibility was discharged at planning area level, rather than at school level;
- pupil projections at planning area level were created in response to the DfE's annual, statutory School Capacity (SCAP) survey;
- each year, the council's pupil place planning team created data dashboards that provided information to every Nottinghamshire school and academy regarding the place planning situation in their local areas;
- each school's dashboard provided details of projected future demand for places at both school and local planning area level;
- actions for governors involved requesting sight of their schools' current dashboards via the principal.

Governors **DISCUSSED** at length the place planning information available:

- the complexities and challenges associated with the calculations related to the school;
- the discrepancies between the funding agreement net capacity and actual;
- the data dashboard in its current format and its relevance to the school; and
- the impact of local housing developments on the school.

Q. Governors questioned why the net capacity (NC) figure on the dashboard stated 630 rather than 575?

A. The principal explained that it was because the original funding agreement stated 630 – this related to when the school was built and had been done so with a net capacity of 630 in the generic circulation spaces even though there was only classroom capacity for 575.

Q. Governors asked if the funding agreement needed to be amended?

A. The principal assured governors that this was being explored but was not straight forward – the SBM reported that she had contacted the ESFA, and the school was waiting for a case worker to be assigned.

VD/Clerk

Q. Governors asked whether there had been any impact due to the new school in Gateford?

A. The principal shared that there had been no noticeable impact yet.

FGB/51/24 Communication

a *From the principal – see confidential item*

b *From clerk – Governor Newsletter*

The clerk drew attention to the content of the first 2024 summer 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;
- safeguarding in education news and updates;
- an article about:
 - cyber security;
 - new governance guides and statutory policy updates;
 - governor allowances and expenses;
- national updates/articles with news (and links) from Ofsted and the DfE including:
 - Ofsted response to 'The Big Listen';
 - mobile phones in school;
 - online safety – DfE non-statutory guidance;
- governance articles relating to:
 - how inclusive is your MAT or local authority;
 - who can attend governor meetings;
 - how to recruit governors;
 - 'success breeds success' – how to grow leaders (NCOGS);
- governor termly briefings;
- a message from the chair of NAGS, Susan Beasley;
- governor recruitment:
 - notification of the closure of inspiring Governance;
 - support for boards from Governors for Schools;
- Em-Ed governor training update.

FGB/52/24 Report from training co-ordinator including review of governor skills audit and requirements for 2024-2025

Governors **DETERMINED** that the following training had been completed:

- data protection training – Mrs S Wichmann;
- governor induction – Mrs M Pimm;
- KCSiE 2023 – Mrs S Wichmann;
- safeguarding (level 2) – Mrs S Wichmann.

FGB/53/24 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body

Governors **AGREED** that the following monitoring visits had been undertaken

- health & safety – Mrs D Carter;
- sustainability – Mrs D Carter.

The vice-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

Mrs Sparks left the meeting at 5.35pm

FGB/54/24 Health & Safety

The principal provided a short update on the following:

- the parking working party had not yet met – a date was to be arranged as soon as possible;
- the doorstops were to be fitted over the Whitsun half-term holiday;
- a comprehensive tree survey had been undertaken by VIA (17th/18th April) and a detailed report had been received which identified the work to be completed.

RL/Clerk

FGB/55/24 Policies

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the following policies which had been uploaded to Governor Hub and also circulated via email:

- adoption leave policy;
- carer's leave policy;
- design technology policy;
- emergency plan;
- English policy;
- flexible working policy;
- paternity leave policy;
- phonics policy;
- pregnancy and maternity leave policy;
- redundancy and restructuring policy;
- science policy;
- shared parental leave policy.

FGB/56/24 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:
 - budget movement, variances and investment;
 - contracts, competitiveness and value for money;
 - grant funding and related projects;
- scrutiny and challenge related to admissions and place planning specifically the impact of net capacity figures on calculations and the steps required to redress the anomalies;
- increased awareness and understanding through questions and discussion in relation to staffing matters such as:
 - recruitment, retention and mobility;
 - structure changes linked to increasing pupil numbers and enhanced nurture provision;
 - benefits of proposed staffing arrangements;

- consideration and review of policies, the Corporate Director's report and the Summer (1) term governor newsletter;
- questions, challenge and discussion related to health and safety including:
 - progress regarding traffic control (on and offsite);
 - actions to be take following the tree survey;
 - internal mitigation work planned;
- consideration and discussion in relation to the expansion of the after-school club;

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

FGB/57/24 Confirmation of dates for 2023/24

The governing body

agreed

Summer Term 2024

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

All to note

FGB/58/24 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

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

- spring (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 5.45pm



Signed:

(vice-chair)

Date: **18th July 2024**