

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Summer (2) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 18th July 2024 at 9.30am
Location: At the academy

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
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/59/24 Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

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

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

FGB/60/24 Declaration of interest

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

FGB/61/24 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.

The principal informed governors that following the resignation of the staff governor (6th June 2024) a nomination/election process had elicited one expression of interest.

The clerk explained that since there was one staff governor vacancy and one expression of interest received, then the member of staff could be appointed, the nomination/election process not having fielded any further candidates.

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

that governors **APPROVED** the appointment of Mrs K Heaton as a staff governor.

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

Governors **WELCOMED** Mrs Heaton to the meeting and the governing body, and introductions were made.

The minutes of the summer (1) term meeting held on 2nd May 2024 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 02 May 2024 were to be signed electronically by the vice-chair.

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:

Q. Governors asked about progress on setting up a parking working party?

A. The principal advised that the parking working party had been constituted but not yet met due to availability issues.

FGB/63/24 **Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties**

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

- Finance & Personnel Committee (6 June 2024);
- Audit Committee (6 June 2024).

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

FGB/64/24 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 reference to:

- a) foundation play and sandpit project;
- b) LED lighting – update;
- c) BFO return re. 2024/25 budget;
- d) management accounts;
- e) investment account update;
- f) overpayment;
- g) staff absence insurance;
- h) telephone contract renewal.

a *Foundation play and sandpit project*

The principal recapped the background and context to the design and planning of a new foundation play area and sandpit (see **F&P/26/24 c**).

The SBM presented the four anonymised tendering quotes specifically for the sand pit area, outlined each of the quotes, the experience of the companies and availability to complete within the timeframe given.

Q. Governors enquired about the budgeted amount for the work?

A. The SBM clarified that the budgeted amount was £60k, the preferred quote came in at £40,274.11

Q. Governors queried whether the quotes included the necessary gate works?

A. The SBM confirmed that the budgeted amount was inclusive of the installation of gates, primarily to allow plant and machinery access, however the actual installation was to be carried out by a separate company.

Q. Governors questioned whether the gates were to be a permanent fixture?

A. The principal verified that the gates were to remain after the sand pit was finished but not for frequent use, only if further plant work was required in that area.

Q. Governors asked if a contingency had been built into the budgeted amount?

A. The principal explained that there was no contingency, and he outlined the rationale for this decision.

Q. Governors enquired about when the work was happening?

A. The SBM informed governors that work was scheduled to start on 23rd July 2024 – she reassured governors that a site contacts form had been put together to be shared with the successful company.

Following discussion and consideration, it was

resolved

that governors **APPROVED** the appointment of tender no. 1, to complete the work.

b LED lighting - update

The principal reported that a meeting had been held with 'Eddisons' and G&H and great progress had been made in relation to the BMS works – he reminded governors that there was the possibility of a further update to operating leases from September 2024 which gave more flexibility to academies.

In anticipation of the operating lease update, the SBM outlined the favourable contractual possibilities explored by MAFs to allow for the installation of LED lighting – MAF's advised these had been sent to Browne Jacobson for final approval and to check there was no liability for the academy.

Governors **APPROVED** the LED lighting operating lease in principle, subject to a positive outcome from Browne Jacobson.

In addition, if Browne Jacobson responded with any amendments, the FGB delegated the chair to use 'chair's action' to ensure the LED project proceeded in a timely manner without liability to the academy and was undertaken to synchronise with the completion of the BMS works.

All to note

c BFO (budget forecast) return

The SBM notified governors that the BFO was to be submitted to the ESFA on 22nd July 2024 based on the 2024/25 budget presented at the last F&P meeting (6th June 2024) – there had been no changes to the budget since then.

d *Management accounts*

The chair **CONFIRMED** that he had received the management accounts (period nine and ten) and they had also been uploaded to Governor Hub.

e *Investment account update – see confidential item*

Mrs Phoenix and Mrs Heaton left the meeting at 10.02am

f *Staffing matters – see confidential item*

Mrs Phoenix and Mrs Heaton re-joined the meeting at 10.21am

g *Staff absence insurance*

The SBM presented the previous summary of quotes (see **F&P/25/24**) and the updated quote from Education Mutual (the preferred option) for governors' approval.

Q. Governors queried whether the team were satisfied that Education Mutual covered what was needed?

A. The SBM assured governors that the quote covered all requirements.

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the staff absence insurance quote of £39,440 from Education Mutual.

h *Telephone contract renewal (landline)*

The SBM provided governors with the details of the current agreement and the review underway – there was no intention to change providers given the commitment to the infrastructure work:

- the costs/charges were small and had not changed;
- a small saving had been made after a move off a PSTN line which was no longer required;
- additional handsets had been purchased;
- a new internet access had been installed.

Q. Governors questioned who had access to the new fibre line?

A. The principal outlined the advantages of the new fibre line and the availability of a guest Wi-Fi facility (active until 6.00pm each evening).

FGB/65/24 **Review risk management arrangements**

The SBM reported that no changes had been made;

- this was due to a delay in the publishing an updated academies handbook this year because of the election; furthermore,
- a revisit of the risk management arrangements would be necessary in September/October in line with the new handbook once published.

VD/Clerk

FGB/66/24 **Premises**

The SBM advised governors that a DfE CDC2 site visit was scheduled for August 2024 which involved site surveyors conducting a visual inspection of the academy buildings and grounds and referring to the estates management policy and assets plan.

All to note

The principal added that as well as basic maintenance work to the building:

- investment in a privacy screen (window graphics) for the hall area was being considered to improve safety and privacy;

- £8k in funding from the Foyle Foundation had been secured to update reading stock/furniture in the library;
- a bid for £20,000 funding from National Lottery for a new minibus had been unsuccessful.

Q. Governors asked if there had been any resolution to the obtaining of a revised lease agreement with Cherubs through the LA?

A. The principal conveyed that the academy was no nearer a resolution and as such, he had notified the LA of the intention to cease the arrangement on the ten-year anniversary (31 October 2024) – no response had yet been received from the LA regarding this.

FGB/67/24

Summary of Principal's report and governors' questions and challenge

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

- pupil numbers and pupil mobility;
- pupil premium;
- SEND;
- 2024 summer term outcomes;
- staff appraisal;
- community team;
- safeguarding/CLA data.

The principal provided a short update on each of the areas which included that:

a *Pupil numbers/mobility and pupil premium*

- current pupil numbers = 567 including foundation stage;
- F2 numbers from September 2024 had returned to normal (74);
- current YR and Y1 were the only year groups with low numbers;
- F1 30-hour places continued to be popular;
- pupil mobility over the year (with reasons);
- whole school pupil premium = 45.13%.

Governors **REQUESTED** that communication related to the remedial work on the doors be circulated to the parent body to help counter any adverse comments made.

RL

Q. Governors enquired why the FSM numbers were higher than pupil premium numbers?

A. The principal agreed to investigate and feedback.

RL/Clerk

b *SEND update*

- there were currently 149 pupils on the SEND list:
 - SEND support = 70;
 - school support = 79;
- of the pupils on the SEND list:
 - 11 x pupils had an EHCP;
 - 7 x pupils were in the EHCP assessment process;
 - 19 pupils received additional funding (AFN or HLN);
- strengths and areas for development within SEND and training undertaken;
- the creation of a provision mainly for the most vulnerable children with SEN

c Summer Term Outcomes 2024

- EYFS – 60% of pupils achieved GLD (up from 50% last year);
- Y1 phonics – 72% of pupils passed the phonics screening check (an increase of 4% from last year);
- KS2 outcomes:
 - reading – 62% of pupils achieved EXS, with 14% GDS;
 - writing – 75% of pupils achieved EXS, with 5% GDS;
 - mathematics – 71% of pupils achieved EXS, with 12% GDS;
 - SPaG – 64% of pupil achieved EXS, with 25% GDS;
 - combined – 48% of pupils achieved EXS in RWM.

Q. Governors queried the increase in GLD?

A. The principal advised that the cohort contained some very able children, but he also alerted governors to the positive impact of the 30 hours provision.

Q. Governors questioned the lower KS2 outcomes compared to last year?

A. The principal shared that although the figures provided were lower than previous years, they represented a challenging cohort in terms of SEND (31%), EHCP (4x (12%)), EAL (22%), FSMs (48%) etc and had been predicted.

In addition, the principal pointed out the level of mobility within the cohort meant that since YR there had been c. 211 pupils in the cohort which demonstrated the reality of the level of challenge.

d Appraisal

- all appraisal targets for teachers were in the process of being formally reviewed before the summer holidays;
- given the previous governments' move to remove appraisal for teachers and the subsequent change in government, it was proposed to pause the appraisal process from September until there was more clarity on the situation.

Q. Governors asked how the principal was to honour the opportunity for career progression if the process was to pause?

A. The principal clarified that he was exploring with other academy chains who had not adopted performance management, about their modus operandi in terms of pay progression as he acknowledged something needed to replace the appraisal process.

RL/Clerk

The principal added that any move to UPS was governed by policy and was not linked to appraisal but the definition/criteria of UPS.

Q. Governors enquired about the union response to the proposal?

A. The principal reassured governors that conversation with unions had been positive and supportive.

Mrs Heaton left the meeting at 10.53am

e Community team

The principal also detailed some of the many parent/family community projects, events and activities held by the academy such as:

- the 'Little Sparklers' playgroup which remained popular and successful in engaging new parents whose children were due to start in the foundation unit – thanks were extended to Mrs Wichmann for her support;
- achievement of 'The Rainbow Flag Award' in the spring term, for investment in LGBTQ families;

- parent/carer coffee mornings held twice every half-term;
- family cooking classes which were always booked up early

f Safeguarding/CLA – see confidential item

In conclusion, the principal outlined the many and varied events and activities held during the summer term.

Governors **THANKED** the principal for the report.

FGB/68/24 General Data Protection Regulations – report from the DPO/Information Governance Link Governor

The SBM drew governors' attention to the document uploaded to Governor Hub which summarised the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill no. 2, introduced to the UK Parliament on 8 March 2023 aimed at relieving the regulatory burdens on businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The SBM explained that the proposed changes had been circulated should the Bill go ahead as planned but the change in government may impact on its passing – a further update was to be provided next term.

VD/Clerk

FGB/69/24 Receive report from the Designated CLA teacher – Children who are Looked After (presented at least once per year)

Governors **AGREED** this item had been covered in detail within the principal's report.

FGB/70/24 Communication

a From the principal

The principal notified governors of the receipt of

- the standard letter from 'Streets' about the start of the next audit process and period;
- an email from the Lion Hotel, who had hosted the Y6 Prom, congratulating the school on the behaviour of its pupils.

Q. Governors queried whether there had been any update on the Net Capacity matter?

A. The principal confirmed that following review of the query with the policy and place planning team, the DfE had confirmed the academy would need to go through the process of significant change to progress any changes.

Q. Governors questioned next steps?

A. The SBM verified that the academy was to engage with the process to effect the change required.

b From clerk – Governor Newsletter

The clerk drew attention to the content of the second 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 statutory changes to policies;
- safeguarding in education news and updates;
- KCSiE 2025 – DfE call for evidence in advance of the 2025 document;
- cyber security in schools – questions for governors and trustees;

- governance articles about:
 - planning the workload;
 - how governors can support effective workforce planning;
 - retaining headteachers – succession planning: a planning guide for governors;
 - effective governance;
 - prevention of vaping amongst children and young people;
- national updates/articles with news from Ofsted and the DfE including:
 - 'working together to improve school attendance;'
 - PE and sports premium;
 - school culture – fundamental British values;
 - updates from Ofsted;
 - music development plan;
 - creating a school behaviour culture: audit and action planning tools;
- governor termly briefings;
- a message from the chair of NAGS, Susan Beasley;
- governor recruitment – support for boards from Governors for Schools;
- Em-Ed governor training update.

FGB/71/24 Review of delegation and organisation of committees

a *Agree committee structure and membership of committees*

Governors **AGREED** to retain the current committee structure and membership:

- finance and personnel – all governors - Mrs C Middleton (chair);
- audit – Mrs D Carter, Mr P Gawthorpe, Mrs C Middleton, Mrs M Norton Allen, Mrs M Pimm, Mrs S Sparks (chair), Cllr N Turner, Mrs S Wichmann.

In addition, governors **DETERMINED** that any matters related to pay progression were to be approved at the finance and personnel committee without the presence of staff governors.

b *Approval of scheme of delegation 2024-2025*

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the scheme of delegation 2024-2025.

c *Note annual planner 2024-2025 to support agenda setting*

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the annual planner 2024-2025.

d *Policy checklist 2024-2025 – statutory policies for schools*

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the policy checklist 2024-2025.

e *Review of and appointment to link governor roles*

Governors **AGREED** to retain the link roles as outlined on the academy website with the following amendments:

- sports and PE – Cllr N Turner;
- training coordinator – Mrs K Heaton.

Governors **CONSIDERED** the value of attending staff training around extended learning walks to support the changes to the Ofsted inspection format and raise awareness and understanding.

All to note

		Action
FGB/72/24	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
FGB/73/24	Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body Governors AGREED that the following monitoring visits had been undertaken • SEND – Mrs S Sparks; • sports day – Mrs S Wichmann. 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/74/24	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; ○ review of delegation and organisation of committees; • scrutiny and challenge relating to financial and estate issues, specifically: ○ budgetary implications of planned ground works; ○ 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: ○ a review of the appraisal process; ○ pay and affordability; ○ recruitment and retention; • consideration and review of the summer (2) term governor newsletter; • questions, challenge and discussion related to: ○ the steps required to address net capacity anomalies; ○ summer term outcomes and actions to be taken; • consideration and discussion in relation to: ○ risk management arrangements and GDPR; ○ pupil numbers, SEND and community engagement; ○ safeguarding and CLA 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/75/24	Confirmation of dates for autumn term 2024/25 The governing body agreed • Thursday 19th September 2024 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting; • 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 (immediately following the FGB).

FGB/76/24 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

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

- summer (1) term FGB minutes;
- committee minutes;
- principal's report and linked documentation;
- staffing matters;
- 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 11.18am



Signed:

(chair)

Date: **19th September 2024**