

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Summer (2) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 4.00pm
Location: At the academy

Membership

'A' denotes absence

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

In attendance

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

FGB/52/23

Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs C Middleton, Mrs M Paton, Mrs S Sparks (work commitments);
- Cllr N Turner (work commitments);
- Mrs V Brooks, Mrs M Norton-Allen, Mrs S Wichmann (personal).

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to these absences.

Q. Governors asked about the matter of quoracy?

A. The SBM and principal reassured governors that within the Articles of Association, Article 114 stated:

"Subject to Article 116 the quorum for a meeting of the Governors, and any vote on any matter thereat, shall be any three Governors, or, where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Governors holding office at the date of the meeting" (page 43).

Q. Governors enquired about Article 116?

A. The SBM clarified that this related to the appointment of a parent governor, a vote on the removal of governor or a vote on the removal of the chair of governors, when quoracy must be two thirds of those governors entitled to vote on respective matters.

FGB/53/23 Declaration of interest

The school business manager declared an indirect interest in item **FGB/57/23** as she was related to a service provider of the company.

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

FGB/54/23 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.

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

FGB/55/23 Approval of minutes of summer (1) term meetings and any additional special meetings

The minutes of the summer (1) term meeting held on 23rd May 2023 having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true and correct record, therefore it was **AGREED** that the minutes of 23 May 2023 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/36/23 Financial Reporting

The chair of governors **CONFIRMED** that the principal's appraisal meeting was to be held early in the autumn term (September 2023)

**All to note
/Clerk**

FGB/56/23 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

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

- Finance & Personnel (F&P) Committee (8 June 2023);
- Audit Committee (8 June 2023).

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

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **RATIFIED**:

- the 2022-23 budget review approved at F&P committee;
- the 2023-24 budget and 3-year plan approved at the F&P committee.

FGB/57/23 Financial Reporting

a *Reserves – see confidential item*

b *Related party transaction register*

The SBM notified governors that work undertaken by N D Services Grounds included:

- grounds maintenance and pest control;

- additional ad hoc grounds work, and pest control not covered by the contracts but managed under the academy trust handbook and finance policy.

Q. Governors queried whether the ESFA were aware?

A. The SBM verified that everything had been reported to the ESFA and the total spend for this period to date (including grounds maintenance) = £17,939.

Q. Governors questioned the additional costs?

A. The SBM explained that the original grounds maintenance was £9,828 – the extra foundation work commissioned earlier in the year was around £5k, plus other additional small items of work.

c *Management Information System (MIS)*

The SBM informed governors that second demonstrations from the preferred companies (see item **F&P/31/23**) had been held:

- BROMCOM – delivered a face-to-face demonstration for key staff;
- ARBOR – sent a link to a recording.

Q. Governors asked for a reminder of costs?

A. The SBM shared that BROMCOM initial first year costs (including set up) = £8k

The principal added that the response of the companies further reinforced the preferred option of BROMCOM.

Governors **RATIFIED** the approval given at the finance and personnel committee (see **F&P/31/23**) for the academy to purchase of BROMCOM.

Governors **REQUESTED** a demonstration of the new system once it was installed and working – the principal agreed to organise this.

VD/RL

d *Budget forecast return (BFRO)*

The SBM reported that:

- the budget forecast return had been submitted to the ESFA;
- the BFRO had been reflective of the 2023-24 budget approved at the F&P committee meeting (**F&P/28/23**);
- two questions had been raised previously, (both resolved) relating to:
 - the net deficit in the previous year;
 - the action taken to address this;

The SBM reminded governors of the actions taken to address the previous issues raised which included:

- the consultation; and
- outcome of affected staff moving from all year round to TTO (term time only) contracts;
- pay protection until 31 August 2023.

Q. Governors enquired about contact related to this year's submission?

A. The SBM advised that she would be surprised if there was anything arising from the most recent submission.

d *Academy Trust Handbook 2023-24*

The SBM drew governors' attention to the latest version of the academy trust handbook (ATH) and the changes contained therein (page 7) which related to:

- roles and responsibilities;

- main financial requirements;
- delegated authorities;
- the regulator and intervention.

In addition, to the changes highlighted, the SBM also alerted governors to the 'schedule of musts' checklist which had been provided by the ESFA to sit alongside the academies handbook.

Q. Governors queried the purpose of the 'schedule of musts'?

A. The SBM explained it was an optional resource to aid the process for academies to ensure compliance.

Governors **RECOGNISED** the value of the 'schedule of musts' to aid governance.

FGB/58/23 **Staffing update – see confidential item**

FGB/59/23 **Summary of principal's report and governors' questions and challenge**

The principal drew governors' attention to the report uploaded to Governor Hub and invited questions.

Q. Governors questioned ICS in Y2?

A. The principal outlined the decision-making that led to the current position and the steps taken, in agreement with the local authority, to ensure the statutory and legal grounds were adhered to.

Q. Governors asked about the number of pupils on roll?

A. The principal clarified that the current total pupil number = 584 – the number included F1 pupils but not places i.e., the number was not reflective of morning and afternoon pupils as the school now had 21 x 30hrs children who were occupying extra 'places' (though these were only counted once on the pupil number element). Many other statutory year groups next year were nearly full or were at PAN.

The principal highlighted the recent increase in numbers since inspection, particularly for pupil with SEND due to the reputation of the academy for meeting SEND needs.

Governors **ACKNOWLEDGED** the high-profile reputation of the academy for SEND provision but **ADVISED** the value of promoting the superb curriculum offer and delivery as well as the remarkable attainment of all pupils.

Q. Governors enquired about the timescale for the augmenting of the wrap around care provision?

A. The principal provided an update of the plan which included a commissioning exercise to ensure that targeted children were recommended to the team.

Q. Governors queried whether the percentage pupil premium by year group was representative of the last 5 years?

A. The principal shared that 251 (42.98%) was an increase in respect to recent numbers. FSM stood at 42.12%.

Q. Governors questioned the 'change/adjustment' of who was put on the SEN register and if it was aligned to the Local Offer?

A. The principal reassured governors that the change/adjustment was aligned to the Local Offer and had been reflected on the school website.

The principal also provided governors with a summary of the feedback given to inspectors who had visited the school as part of the Ofsted inspection of LA SEND provision.

Q. Governors asked who had managed the staff appraisal process?

A. The principal reported that the whole of the SLT (senior leadership team) had undertaken staff appraisal.

Q. Governors asked about external SAT results?

A. The principal expressed his satisfaction with the FS, KS1 and KS2 SAT outcomes – there had been only 2 appeals (for reading) – SPaG was particularly pleasing with 76% of pupils achieving ARE – with over double FSM percentages, to achieve at broadly national average was excellent.

All to note

Q. Governors enquired about curriculum development particular around PSHE and Rainbow Flag Award

A. The principal highlighted the success of the Rainbow Festival, celebrating inclusion including LGBTQIA+. Pupils reported really enjoying this week, organised by the PSHE coordinator and undertook a host of activities including class-based work and activities out in the playground in order to raise awareness of inclusion and under the heading of 'everybody welcome'.

The principal added that one parental email of concern was received but this had been resolved and feedback through school council was very positive indeed. Taking part in the accreditation had also brought inclusion into focus - an example of this included a website audit amongst the introduction of pupil equality ambassadors.

Q. Governors enquired about attendance?

A. The principal alerted governors to a number of complaints raised by a parent about coding which the principal had explained the school was bound by legally and could not change irrespective of circumstance in the particular case.

The principal advised governors that the attendance policy had been revisited and realigned to abide by the equalities act (see item **FGB/64/23**).

- **see confidential item**

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

FGB/60/23 Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, set by governors

Governors **DISCUSSED** and **CONSIDERED** the vision and ethos of the school which had been reflected in the school improvement plan (SIP).

Furthermore, plans to consider further the knowledge curriculum were confirmed.

FGB/61/23 General data protection regulations – report from the DPO/Information Governance link governor

The SBM highlighted that:

- there had been no data breaches, Fol requests or SARs since the last meeting;
- the GDPR audit was due – this was to be completed during the summer (via an online link provided by the DPO) with the outcome shared at a future meeting.

VD/Clerk

FGB/62/23 **Communication****a** *From principal*

The principal informed governors of the receipt of a letter from the ESFA to accounting officers which included:

- congratulations for strong financial management;
- improvements to the financial oversight framework (based on conversation with accounting officers and the sector bodies which represent/support);
- reference to the publication of the new academy trust handbook (ATH);
- the updates within the new ATH;
- the new optional tool called 'schedule of musts;'
- continuation of established forums which provided opportunities for feedback and suggestions to streamline the financial oversight framework.

b *From clerk – Governor Newsletter*

The clerk drew attention to the content of the second 2023 summer term edition of the Nottinghamshire Governor e-newsletter and highlighted the following items:

- a message from Sinead Allan, team manager governor services;
- school admission information including an FSM update;
- safeguarding updates;
- HR updates which included advice regarding:
 - wellbeing support for school staff;
 - possible further industrial action during the autumn term 2023;
- national updates/articles with news from the DfE:
 - updated school suspensions and permanent exclusions guidance (effective September 2023);
 - free early years child development training;
 - understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees;
- an article about the governor termly briefings;
- a message from the chair of NAGS, Sue Beasley;
- information from Governor Services;
- articles from NCC to support governance:
 - **free** guidance document to support in-school induction of a new governor;
 - a reminder of governors' strategic role – steering not rowing;
 - what checks are governors required to have?
- a short article about:
 - the education library service;
 - Nottinghamshire apprenticeships;
 - wildflower seeds for every primary school in honour of the coronation;
 - new to Governor Hub;
- governor recruitment – support for boards from the NGA (national governance association), Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools
- governor learning and development updates.

FGB/63/23 **Review of delegation and organisation of committees**

Governors **AGREED** to defer this item to the next FGB meeting (21 September 2023).

**All to note
/Clerk**

FGB/64/23 Policies

Governors **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following policies:

- attendance policy;
- lone worker policy;
- menopause policy;
- reserves policy (see item **FGB/57/23 a**).

The SBM agreed to circulate an email message to governors to read and approve the policies online so a post meeting note could be added to the minutes.

VD

*Post meeting
note*

Following circulation of the proposed email, 3 further governors responded before the deadline of the end of term, consequently the policies were **APPROVED**.

Clerk

FGB/65/23 Report from training co-ordinator including a skills audit and review of governor training requirements (including safeguarding) for 2022/23

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

- governor safeguarding training – Mr P Gawthorpe, Mrs D Carter, Mrs S Wichmann;
- governor cyber training – Mr P Gawthorpe, Mrs D Carter, Mrs S Wichmann;
- reading KCSiE 2023 – Mr P Gawthorpe, Mrs D Carter, Mrs S Wichmann.

The principal requested that all governors completed the training section under their profile on Governor Hub.

All to note

On behalf of the training coordinator, the SBM shared that:

- no further governor training had been reported this term;
- everyone had been sent the governor training brochure;
- all governors who had requested training were booked onto courses;
- free training was available through 'The Key,' Em-EdS and National College.

All to note

FGB/66/23 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body

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

- attendance assembly – Mrs S Wichmann;
- swimming gala – Mrs S Wichmann;
- Y3/Y4 sports day – Mrs S Wichmann.

All to note

The chair **REMINDED** governors to complete visit forms.

FGB/67/23 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 and recruitment;
 - governor training;
- discussion and questions relating to wrap around care provision specifically promotion, marketing and development of the provision;
- increased awareness and understanding through questions and discussion in relation to financial and budgetary considerations including:
 - the implication of changes to the ATH;
 - purchase of a new MIS;

- related party transactions;
- communication with and monitoring by the ESFA;
- consideration and review of policies and the summer (2) term governor newsletter;
- questions and challenge around:
 - attendance and rewards;
 - curriculum
 - health and safety and the mitigation of risk;
 - pupil numbers and class organisation;
 - pupil premium and SEND;
- consideration and discussion in relation to:
 - staffing matters and appraisal;
 - GDPR; and
 - ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

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

FGB/68/23 Confirmation of dates for 2023/24

The governing body

agreed

Autumn Term 2023

- Thursday 21st September 2023 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 12th October 2023 (9.30am) – F&P/Audit Committee;
- Thursday 23rd November 2023 (9.30am) – F&P Committee (Streets);
- Thursday 7th December 2023 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting;
- Friday 8th December 2023 (9.30am) – AGM/Members Meeting

All to note

Spring Term 2024

- Thursday 25th January 2024 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 22nd February 2024 (4.00pm) – F&P/Audit Committee;
- Thursday 28th March 2024 (4.00pm) – FGB Meeting

Summer Term 2024

- Thursday 16th May 2024 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting;
- Thursday 6th June 2024 (4.00pm) – F&P/Audit Committee;
- Thursday 18th July 2024 (9.30am) – FGB Meeting

FGB/69/23 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;
- finance report and all associated financial documentation;
- principal's report and linked documentation
- governor monitoring visit reports;

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

The meeting closed at 5.30pm



Signed:

(chair)

Date: 21st September 2023

School Display Copy