

MINUTES OF MEETING



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Academy: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Spring (2) term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Tuesday 28th March 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)
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
Mrs M Norton Allen
Mrs M Paton
Mrs K Phoenix
Mrs S Sparks
Mrs S Wichmann

In attendance

Miss J Littlewood (clerk to the governors)
Mrs V Dashper (school business manager – SBM)
Cllr N Turner (prospective community governor)

FGB/16/23 Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs V Brookes (personal)

It was

resolved

that governors accepted and consented to this absence

FGB/17/23 Declaration of interest

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

FGB/18/23 Review of membership and terms of office ending in the next 12 months

The clerk highlighted the following vacancies on the governing body:

- 1 x partnership governor;
- 1 x community governor.

The chair **INTRODUCED** Cllr N Turner and advised governors that an expression of interest in the community governor vacancy had been received from Cllr Turner.

Cllr Turner left the meeting at 4.07pm

The chair and principal outlined the skills and expertise of Cllr Turner and the experience he was able to bring to the governing body.

- FAD 2023 = 84 applications including 55 first preferences – this meant that FS2 for 2023 remained at 2 classes;
- levels of pupil mobility fluctuated however the only spaces available currently were in FS2 and Y3;
- EAL (English as an additional language) – there were 20 distinct first languages in school;
- achievement:
 - writing was a focus and individual interventions were being increased to ensure a better writing evidence base;
 - participation in the 'FFT Lightning Squad' tutoring had continued;
 - separate after school groups with staff members had been arranged;
- special educational needs (SEN);
 - the Ofsted experience had been positive;
 - there were currently 147 pupils on the SEND list;
 - SEND support = 87 pupils;
 - School support = 72 pupils;
 - EHCPs – 7 across the school;
- attendance was on trend with other schools nationally;
- behaviour and safety – **see confidential item**;
- staffing – **see confidential item**

Q. Governors asked if pupils were on track with SATs?

A. The principal confirmed that the Y6 were on track and reminded governors of the distinct qualities of the cohort which meant that anticipated outcomes were slightly more predictable.

Q. Governors enquired about the quality of the EHCP reports?

A. The principal advised that the reports were much better than previously though the quality varied depending on the local authority.

Q. Governors queried whether the budget was able to sustain the costs of the commitment to improve attendance and provide incentives?

A. The principal reminded governors that an amount of money had been included in the budget over a number of years and expenditure had been closely monitored – the aspiration was to maintain the high profile of attendance incentives.

Governors **DISCUSSED** thresholds for awards and the effect that short unexpected absences had on pupil motivation – the principal reassured governors that this issue was being explored with the attendance lead.

FGB/23/23 Monitoring and Overseeing Financial Performance – financial reporting

The SBM notified governors of the following:

a After-school club update

- a document re projections based on current income and expenditure had been uploaded to Governor Hub:
 - the salary information was based on pre-April 2023 pay award (unconfirmed); and
 - also calculated the annual salary over 38 weeks when the ASC was in operation.

Q. Governors questioned what else could the FGB do to promote the after-school club?

A. The principal alerted governors to the loss of access to the provision 'Think Children' despite the offer of help from the school – this had provided an opportunity to bolster numbers by using pupil premium (PP) funding and offering places on less popular days to children who had accessed 'Think Children'.

Q. Governors asked if any after school places were offered to pupil premium children at the moment?

A. The principal verified no after school places were accessed by PP pupils unless they attended the usual after school sport/activity clubs.

Q. Governors enquired whether opening the after-school club to other schools had been considered?

A. The SBM explained that this possibility had been raised and she reminded governors that if this idea was to go ahead then the club became a trading activity and required slightly different monitoring, reporting and accounting systems.

Governors **DISCUSSED** the potential options to bolster numbers at the after-school club to ensure viability and longevity.

The principal reassured governors that the plan was to run the after-school club until the end of the year.

b Budget

- the 2022/23 budget review commenced on 19 April 2023;
- the 2023/24 budget setting commenced 25 April 2023;
- the 2023/24 General Annual Grant (GAG) statement had been received:
 - the school had slightly received more money this year than last;
 - the amount was less than expected due to pupil mobility at calculation times;
- **see confidential item.**

FGB/24/23 Update on appraisal process for principal and staff including an update on the wellbeing of the headteacher and staff

The principal's appraisal governors **CONFIRMED** that the mid-year review was due.

PG/CM

FGB/25/23 Communication

a From principal

The principal advised governors of:

- the receipt of resignation letters (see **confidential item FGB/22/23**);
- dialogue with the auditors about the running of a 'Food Hub' – the outcome was, that this was not possible within the academy's articles;
- the offer of support to keep the Food Hub going and the events which led to the decision to close the facility;
- a letter from the Rotary Club requesting use of the minibus during the summer holidays (20th July 2023 – 6th August 2023) to transport DA pupils to a residential centre in Castleton for a week's holiday.

Q. Governors queried insurance?

A. The principal assured governors that all the relevant checks, forms and permissions would be requested for submission to the academy prior to use and

as with rented vehicles, the expectation would be for the minibuses to leave and return with full tanks of petrol - the SBM confirmed the academy purchased insurance that included community use.

Governors **APPROVED** the request from the Rotary Club for the use of the school minibus (free of charge) during the summer holidays subject to all the usual regulations and checks.

b From clerk – Governor Newsletter

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

- an update regarding the Governor Services Offer and best wishes to Jane Mansell who was stepping down as the chair of NAGs;
- school admission information;
- safeguarding updates;
- an article about the 'Kinship Support Service' in Nottinghamshire;
- HR updates which included advice regarding:
 - staffing reductions;
 - industrial action;
 - additional bank holidays; and
 - HR training opportunities;
- national updates/articles with news from the DfE:
 - the governing board responsibilities for the provision of school food;
 - responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance;
 - new research on Flexible Working in Schools;
 - education recovery in schools in England report – National Audit Office
- Ofsted Annual report 2021-2022;
- an article about the governor termly briefings;
- a message from the chair of NAGS, Jane Mansell;
- information from Governor Services;
- clerk to governors – vacancies;
- governor recruitment – support for boards from the NGA (national governance association), Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools
- governor learning and development updates - Spring Term 2023.

FGB/26/23 Report from training co-ordinator including a skills audit and review of governor training requirements (including safeguarding) for 2022/23

Governors **CONFIRMED** the appointment of Mrs M Paton as training coordinator.

FGB/27/23 Review of governor monitoring visit reports – key actions for governing body

Governors **AGREED** the following monitoring visits had taken place:

- Ofsted – Mr Gawthorpe, Mrs Middleton, Mrs Sparks, Mrs S Wichmann, Revd D Gough;
- phonics – Mrs Sparks.

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

FGB/28/23 Policies

Governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **RATIFIED** the following policies approved at committees:

- all GDPR related policies;
- gifts and hospitality policy;
- lettings policy
- staff ICT user agreement/policy;
- volunteer policy

In addition, governors **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **APPROVED** the following policies:

- after school club policy;
- attendance policy;
- breakfast club;
- disaster recovery/emergency plan;
- e-safety (updated in line with 2022 KCSiE);
- health & safety (updated).

Q. Governors questioned the notice period for price changes for breakfast club/after-school club?

A. The SBM confirmed this was 4 weeks.

FGB/29/23 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 monitoring visits and training;
- discussion and questions relating to financial and budgetary considerations specifically maintaining high-quality provision through staff movement;
- increased awareness and understanding through questions and discussion in relation to wrap-around care provision including:
 - the financial implications and the mitigation required to ensure success;
 - availability to disadvantaged pupils;
 - promotion, marketing and development of the provision;
- consideration and review of policies and the spring term (2) governor newsletter;
- questions and challenge around attendance and the finance available to maintain/support attendance incentives;
- consideration and discussion in relation to:
 - staffing matters and appraisal;
 - pupil numbers and the impact of pupil mobility;
 - achievement, SEN and behaviour.

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

FGB/30/23 Confirmation of dates for 2022/23

The governing body
agreed

- Summer (1) Term 2023 – Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 4.00pm
- Summer (2) Term 2023 – Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 4.00pm.

FGB/31/23 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

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

- spring (1) term FGB minutes;
- committee minutes;
- finance report and all associated financial documentation;
- principal's report and any 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 5.25pm



Signed:

(chair)

Date: **23rd May 2023**