
School: Sparken Hill Academy
Meeting title: Spring term meeting of the governing body
Date and time: Thursday 4 March 2021 at 4.00pm
Location: Virtual

Membership
'A' denotes absence

A Mrs M Cutts
Mrs C Middleton (vice-chair)
Ms D Carter
Mrs L Holmes
Mrs L Hazelhurst
Mrs S Sparks
Mr P Gawthorpe (chair)
Councillor J Shephard
Mrs U Flower
Mrs E Rodgers
Co-opted vacancy
Mr R Lilley (Principal)

In attendance Mr C A Richardson (clerk to the governors)
Mrs V Dashper

GB/01/21 Apologies for absence Action

No apologies for absence were received. However, Mr Lilley highlighted that he had received an email from Mrs Holmes by the end of the meeting stating that she was having trouble logging on. Mr Lilley apologised that he had not picked this up earlier.

It was

resolved

that the governing body consent to this absence.

GB/02/21 Declaration of interest

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

GB/03/21 Review of membership

The clerk highlighted the following vacancy on the governing body:

There is a vacancy for a co-opted governor.

Mr Lilley reported that the articles and committee structure need to be looked at in the light of the recommendations made by Streets Accountants in their audit report of November 2020.

Mr Lilley had met in a preliminary manner with two staff governors and Mrs Dashper to discuss the overall potential decisions that would be required. A formal proposal would be put to the board in the future so that it could be implemented in September 2021.

GB/04/21 Approval of minutes of autumn term meeting and any additional special governing body meetings

The minutes of the autumn term meeting held on Thursday 10 December 2020 having been previously circulated were confirmed, following a proposal by Mr Lilley which was seconded by Mrs Middleton.

As a result of school closures due to Covid-19 the governors' meeting was held virtually and therefore these minutes will be signed by the chair at a later date.

Review of actions

GB/43/20 Pupil targets were not brought to SI committee as the children were not in school throughout a large portion of the year.

GB/49/20 It was confirmed that there are to be no public sector pay rises

GB/50/20 There has been nothing since due to lockdown.

Governor question: What happens if there is a fire alarm during these times? Will socially distancing still be possible?

Mr Lilley explained that bubble integrity would be attempted. However, in the event of a fire, the risk presented by the potential fire outweighs the potential risk of breaching a 2m ruling and getting the children out safely is far more important. SEND children who may have mobility issues have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) and these are risk assessed so their needs will be met.

Governor question: Are we operating as normal from March 8th?

Mr Lilley explained that the restrictions within school have actually tightened; the risk to existing members of staff are actually much the same as before lockdown. Each class will be a single bubble with one teacher, one TA and one midday and they will not interact with any other class. They eat separately (usually in the case of KS2 children in their own classroom). If the midday is off, the teacher and the TA will cover the lunchtime.

GB/05/21 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

SDP Committee

These minutes were brought to the meeting.

Review of actions

There are no matters arising.

As a result of school closures due to Covid-19 the governors' meeting was held virtually and therefore these minutes will be signed by the chair at a later date.

Approval of Pay Policy

Mr Gawthorpe proposed, and Mrs Sparks seconded that they approve this policy, all governors who were in attendance agreed.

Mr Lilley had previously circulated his report, there had been no questions submitted prior to the meeting and he highlighted the following,

- Numbers on roll were 552 at census day in January. It has increased to 557 subsequent to the census return. The LA have suspended in year admissions due to Covid-19 and hopefully this will increase when this restriction is lifted.
- Migration report: 4 leavers and 8 new arrivals not including F1s.
- Cleaning: All areas of the academy are fogged every week and post lockdown is currently under a deep clean rota. Fogging is very time intensive so will not remain a weekly occurrence after Covid restrictions are lifted. However, it will remain on a termly routine and also be implemented for instance, following an isolated outbreak e.g. sickness in the particular area.
- Lateral Flow Tests- 91% of the staff are undertaking them and 9% are not doing them. Reasons for not undertaking the tests have not been elicited but staff are encouraged to consider opting in at a future date if they change their minds. This has occurred with some members of staff.
- Numbers in school during lockdown and number of places offered were highlighted.
- Staff Insurance has paid out for most absences during the pandemic.
- The school is working on a strategy of "Keep Up - Not Catch Up"
- 156no iPads have been purchased. A further 84no have been received from the DfE and subsequent to this allocation a further 23no have been delivered – also from the DfE. F&P committee approved the purchase of 30no more so that every child in KS2 will have a brand new iPad during this term. The last 30 purchased from the same company and that company have honoured the original price. Staff are aware that they are to reinforce Google Classroom approach whilst children are in class in order that children become familiar with this platform. Should we need to lockdown again, these devices will be taken home by all pupils and the predominant method of delivery will be Google Classroom. In addition, Mr Lilley will identify staff members to offer catch up revision clubs run by some members of staff aimed at targeted children. These will take their device home with them and undertake live lessons *after* school by members of staff who are confident in this manner of delivery. This will form part of our catch up regime.
- Staff have been split into roles during the latest lockdown to reduce workload: Direct teaching roles, Remote Education /ICT roles and Work pack construction and marking roles. Even so, it has still been very difficult.
- From a staff wellbeing point of view, staff isolation is the one thing that is being observed as having a detrimental impact. Even though the academy has the majority of staff in the building, these are separated from each other due to the covid control measures and this is having a detrimental impact on some members of staff. Mrs Gardiner continues to zoom call any staff members who are working from home to ensure that they still feel involved.
- 100% attendees (FS and KS1) were celebrated

- Covid Data Analysis figures were shared. These had previously been discussed in detail at SI committee.
- SIP targets were reviewed
- Funding for Maths Mastery has been secured and the order placed for Pearson Power Maths. This should be rolled out over the next 6 months with a full adoption being planned from September 2021.
- Safeguarding synopsis was shared
- SEND/EAL
- RTL informed Governors that the Academy had been asked to trial an Anti-Racist Toolkit for the LA. This will be dovetailed into the PSHE work which at present is being significantly reviewed.
- RHSE will be focused on in the Summer Term and the New RE agreed Notts Syllabus will be rolled out to staff in September 2021. Mrs Middleton offered any help from her staff as they are undertaking this work this term. . The offer was greatly appreciated.
- FSM numbers are 206, higher in KS2 than FS /KS1 due to UIFSM.

A governor commended the academy for its investment in ICT infrastructure including the commitment to 1-1 iPads and it was felt that these devices would be a real asset post Covid-19. Staff are being skilled up in different areas and that will be a benefit as well. Governors requested that a 'cost benefit' exercise is undertaken into this investment.

Mr Lilley explained that the staff had been told to make the children's return for the 4 weeks up until Easter as relaxed as possible and focus on behaviours for learning and enjoyment rather than focussing on gaps in learning. He explained that for catch up work there is a plan in school and when the children are identified, then the plan for these children will be put in place.

Mr Gawthorpe thanked Mr Lilley for his informative report.

GB/07/21 Determination of admission arrangements

Mr Lilley explained that as per the 7 year rule, the admissions arrangements for 2022-23 had gone out to consultation between October to December 2020. Two head teachers had returned the consultation with no comments.

Governors acknowledged the outcome of the consultation on admission arrangements for 2022-23 and, as there were no proposed changes to the criteria, AGREED to adopt the Admissions Arrangements for 2022-23.

Mr Lilley then spoke about F1 children who had been in school during the pandemic. Nine families had requested full time (30 hour) placements to avoid wraparound care and pupils being exposed to multiple bubbles. The Academy had been able to grant these requests (no funding changes had been implemented due to the emergency status of these requests). Mr Lilley pointed out that this 'trial' demonstrated that the 30 hour provision was probably feasible and requested permission to consult on a proposed change to offer 30-hour provision. The staff in school were very enthusiastic and there would be minimal extra costs incurred or minimal increase in staffing (lunch times would have to be carefully assessed).

All governors in attendance agreed to this request.

GB/08/21 Update on appraisal process for Headteacher and staff

Staff mid-year reviews are taking place.

The headteacher's is with the external adviser ready to be sent to the appraisal governors.

GB/09/21 Confirm arrangements to review Child Protection and Safeguarding recording and reporting systems

Mrs Middleton will set a date for this term to come and audit the pupil records.

GB/10/21 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action

Blended Learning

Blended learning combines classroom learning with remote learning (which is any learning which takes place off the school site).

The DfE requires that from September 2020, all schools will have drawn up and be working to an agreed contingency plan which secures remote learning for children when needed. The DfE have also set out requirements for remote learning when planning your remote learning curriculum and teaching remotely

A Blended Learning Hub of resources, training videos, planning and case studies is available through the East Midlands Education Support website: www.em-edsupport.org.uk/blendedlearning.

There are two main strands to blended learning.

- **Continuous learning**, which draws on a range of technologies and platforms to provide the children with online resources and supports feedback and communication between adults and children;
- **The establishment of a virtual classroom** bringing all resources and communication together through one platform – (usually google classroom or Microsoft 365). There is funding and support for digital platforms from the Department for Education

Action for governors

Governors play a key role in supporting the implementation of a blended learning strategy in school. To do this they should ensure that:

- The school has a plan in place for the continuity of learning of pupils who are not able to attend school due to restrictions of Covid-19.
- Blended learning is a key priority on the school improvement plan with actions being taken to meet the DfE expectations and legal requirements.
- Policies linked to remote learning and the use of technology are reviewed and approved.

Considering Everyone's Wellbeing in Schools: An Update

The Wellbeing for Education Return (W4ER) project is a grant funded joint initiative by the Department for Education and the Department of Health & Social Care. There are different elements to the project.

- a training package delivered to the Mental Health Leads in all state-funded schools through two webinars
- the development of a *Wellbeing Local Offer* website

- the establishment and further development of networks of support for the Mental Health Leads in schools

Two webinars and many useful resources that can be found on NCC's Wellbeing for Education Return Project website.

A key message which has emerged from the W4ER project is that whilst everyone's wellbeing matters, the unique role of the headteacher is such that their wellbeing is particularly vulnerable given the responsibilities they carry.

The Educational Psychology Service has been running daily Headteacher wellbeing peer support sessions hosted by an educational psychologist, has a maximum number of four headteachers in each session, and is confidential. Each session is free to book [on Eventbrite](#) for Headteachers in the Local Authority's maintained schools,

There is also range of help from the HR team available in the *Employee wellbeing support* page of the Schools' Portal.

Two webinars have taken place and been recorded for governors to access via the NCC YouTube channel the first run on 6th October 2020 a wellbeing webinar was presented by Sally Rundell and the second on the 11th December 2020, on how to support headteacher wellbeing and the wellbeing of their staff by Dr Orlaith Green

Action for governors

- Familiarise themselves with the content of the 11th December 2020 webinar,
- Visit the NCC's Wellbeing for Education Return Project website.
- Consider with school leaders how these and other useful resources can be used to ensure that everyone's emotional health and wellbeing (including that of governors) are given a high profile and included in the school's recovery plan at this time.

Children Missing Education Strategy

Children and young people not accessing their full educational entitlement could be as a result of:

- failing to secure a school place,
- facing permanent exclusion from school,
- refusing or being prevented from attending their school place,
- on a school roll but accessing less than their full educational entitlement,
- those unable to access full time education due to their mental or physical health needs, those who are in unsuitable elective home education,
- as well as any child or young person known to other Local Authority services without a school place or refusing to attend school.

A relatively small number of parents choosing to electively home educate (EHE) their children.

Nottinghamshire County Council has processes in place to identify and address cases where children and young people may be described as:

- children and young people known to be missing from education (CME)
- children and young people who are on roll but are believed to be

inappropriately prevented from accessing their full entitlement to education, identified by Ofsted (November 2013) as 'pupils missing from education' (PME).

Schools are responsible for keeping children and young people safe during the school day and have the knowledge, expertise and resources to ensure that children and young people access their educational entitlement to fulfil their potential within the aspirational contexts of school. Governors should be aware of the need to ensure that children do not become children missing from education and ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard against this.

NCC's Children Missing Education (CME) Strategy and Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy have been revised to reflect national updates and were agreed in February 2020 (links are provided in the Relevant Documents section below).

Action for governors

Questions Governors will want to ask:

- Are robust systems and support mechanisms in place to promote good attendance and to reduce absence, including persistent absence? Schools should follow the NCC attendance flowchart and attendance concerns should be referred to Nottinghamshire County Council's Family Service in a timely manner.
- In cases where academies choose to manage their own admission process, is the Local Authority notified promptly of all applications received and the subsequent outcome of those applications? This is to ensure that no child or young person is left in Nottinghamshire without a school place and unknown to the Local Authority.
- Do all pupils have access to full time education unless they are unable to access full time learning as a consequence of their own physical or mental health needs? Where pupils are accessing part-time and alternative education provision timetables it must be evidenced that this is appropriate, that pupils are attending and making progress, that pupils are safeguarded and that pupils are returned to full time provision as soon as they are able. Schools and academies should promptly and accurately complete the data collection to the Local Authority about pupils on part time timetables and those accessing learning from alternative education providers.
- Are clear processes in place so that in cases where children could be identified as CME or PME they are referred to Nottinghamshire County Council's Fair Access Team?
- Where parents/carers notify their school or academy of their intention to Electively Home Educate (EHE) their child, is correct information offered in relation to their rights and obligations in making this decision and correct and timely reporting processes followed to notify the Local Authority EHE team?
- Is there liaison with and referral to Nottinghamshire County Council's Health Related Education Team in cases where children are absent from their school or academy for a period of time, or likely to be absent for a period of time, due to an evidenced medical condition that prevents their attendance at school?
- Is their school or academy liaising with the Local Authority CME Officer in cases where they are considering removing a child from the school roll to ensure that children's whereabouts are known and recorded in order to prevent children becoming CME?
- Additionally, Governors are recommended to monitor carefully the use of fixed term exclusions to try to reduce days lost to learning and ensure that pupils are not placed in vulnerable situations.

Mrs Sparks commented that her team are picking those children who are red rated, there are not many, schools are doing a fantastic job staying in touch with families during this pandemic.

Mr Lilley reported that they were looking into purchasing an app as part of the risk assessment for staff doing home visits.

GB/11/21 Communication

From chair

Mr Gawthorpe read a letter from a parent expressing her gratitude following a request for support, highlighting the compassion and professionalism of the staff. Mr Gawthorpe requested Mr Lilley to pass on the contents of the letter to the staff. Mr Gawthorpe will pass the letter to Mr Lilley.

From headteacher

Mr Lilley highlighted the school holiday pattern consultation for 2023 – 2027 and informed and encouraged governors to respond individually and the choices were either option A or B.

From clerk - Governor Newsletter

From clerk – Spring Term Governor Newsletters

The clerk highlighted the following articles:

- School Governance Update
- Ofsted inspections
- Government Guidance to schools' update
- Safeguarding
- NSPCC Stay Safe online Programme
- New headteacher Standards and HR updates
- School admissions
- Recording of Governors Meetings
- Tackling Emerging threats resources

GB/12/21 Report from training co-ordinator including review of governor training requirements for 2021

Mrs Sparks had attended the following training:

- Making an Impact through Effective Governance

GB/13/21 General Data Protection Regulations

Review and confirm the appointment of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and Senior Information and Risk Owner (SIRO)/ Report from the DPO and Information Governance Governor

Mrs Dashper highlighted that (mostly as a result of the UK leaving the EU), policy adaptation would need to be implemented. This was to reflect the move from “EU GDPR” to “UK GDPR”.

It was noted that the academy was missing accept and reject cookies, so they have contacted a local school who do this, for advice. This has now been rectified.

Sapphire have proposed to do an on-site review in September. However the cost for this was quoted to be £2400 for a full audit. Mrs Dashper is to query this as we already have had a detailed report and staff training. This would not represent value for money.

**Mrs
Dashper**

GB/14/21 Governor monitoring visits

None to report.

A governor suggested that governors may be invited to a virtual staff meeting which would support their monitoring of the school.

GB/15/21 Premises update

Mrs Dashper updated the governing body about the SALIX funding regarding the installation of LED lights. The DfE have confirmed the funding is still available as long as the academy keeps them informed. However, if the quote comes in greater than the original one, it will have to go back for ratification.

Mr Lilley reported on accident to a staff member in the playground whilst playing a game of tig with the children. The staff member went to hospital and has a broken wrist and two broken fingers. It was an accident that warranted RIDDOR reporting. This is being actioned.

The Chair of Governors on behalf of the board asked Mr Lilley to pass on a big thank you to all the staff for everything they have done in the pandemic and for what they will continue to do, it is very much appreciated by the governors.

GB/16/21 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account

Governors held school leaders to account regarding the opening and closing of the school as a result of Covid-19 pandemic, they were also very supportive. They used a balance of support and challenge.

They challenged regarding staff well-being and what they can do to support the SLT.

Governors questioned and challenged parts of the principal's report.

They challenged the Financial state of the academy.

All strategic decisions are challenged ensuring the pupils are at the centre of any decision.

GB/16/21 Confirmation of dates for 2021-2022

The governing body

agreed

Summer term 2021

Thursday 17 June 2021 at 4.00pm Finance and Personnel followed by audit

Thursday 10 June 2021 at 4.00pm School Improvement

Tuesday 24 June 2021 at 4.00pm Full Governing Body

Autumn term 2021 – * 2021 at *pm TBC

Spring term 2022 – * 2022 at *pm TBC

Summer term 2022 – * 2022 at *pm TBC

GB/17/21 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

that all papers and reports be made available as necessary.

The meeting closed at 5.23pm.

Signed (chair) Date

