**Powerstock CE VA Primary School**

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held in school at 4:30pm on**

**5 April 2022**

**Present**: Joanna Moss JM (Chair), David Jones DJ (Vice Chair), Louise Greenham LG (Headteacher), Anna Seal AS, Wendy Morris WM, Elizabeth Rutherford ER, Gill Butler GB, Baffy Turner BT

**In Attendance**: Tim Connor TC (Associate Governor), John Alexander JA (Clerk)

Q/C = Question/ Challenge.

1. **Welcome**
JM welcomed all to the meeting, in particular the new Foundation Governor BT, who had agreed to be Link Governor for Pupil Premium and to sit on the Finance, Environment and Pay Committee (FEPC). She also announced that future FGB meetings would start with a standing item on *The School’s Vision.*
2. **Apologies**
Rev. Chris Grasske CG, Amanda Montague AM who was self-isolating and attempted to join the meeting remotely but was unable to do so for technical reasons.
3. **Minutes of the last FGB**
The minutes of the 15 February 2022 FGB were agreed as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising and Action Plan not covered elsewhere on this agenda**
5. *LG to circulate parent newsletters to Governors*: **COMPLETED**
6. *WM to attend online pre-SIAMS inspection seminar alongside JM:* **COMPLETED**
7. *JA to determine if terms of IoG can be varied in order to reduce size of FGB:* **COMPLETED**. The Governing Body could not be reduced in number, because the quotas for the different Governor categories were non-negotiable.
8. *JA to Circulate SFVS, Governors to Approve SFVS:* **COMPLETED**
9. **Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business**
None
10. **Declaration of Interests**
None
11. **Correspondence**
None
12. **Budget 2022-23**

DJ and JM presented the budget, which had been discussed and challenged at FEPC earlier that day, before being recommended to FGB for approval. They reminded Governors that while the 2022-23 budget was based on 59 pupils on roll, forecasts for 2024-25 and beyond were less encouraging. As previously noted, this was the single biggest factor in determining the school’s income. They challenged all Governors to think of imaginative ways to promote the school and encourage intake. **ACTION: ALL**

They focused on the following:

*Energy*: It was widely acknowledged that energy costs were like to increase steeply due to factors beyond the school’s control. The budget therefore included year-on-year increases for this, but the situation was volatile and it was impossible to predict how severe the increases would be.

**Q/C:** *Governors asked what assumptions had been made in the budget about the increasing energy costs.* DJ replied the forecast budget increased by 25% from April 2022 and a further 40% from October 2022, increasing the forecast budget to £12,000 compared to £6,500 in the current year.

*School bus*: The bus was forecast to become more expensive by September due to rising fuel costs. For the time being, the school was holding the prices charged to parents at the current level, but the need to ensure that all the seats, or as many as possible, were occupied, was emphasised. There was, however, a difficult balance between covering the cost of the bus and discouraging parents from outside the catchment from sending their children to the school and instead sending them to a nearer school. The biggest factor in the school’s budget, as previously noted, was the number of pupils on roll, and a single pupil lost had a significant impact. Governors agreed to return to this issue in the Autumn Term when more would be known about any increase to the cost of the bus.

*Support Staff:* **Q/C**: *Governors noted the proposal in the budget to make the HLTA permanent and to extend the contract of another TA for a further year at 30 hours per week. They questioned whether this was affordable, given a constrained budget.*  LG replied that the presence of these support staff reduced the requirement, and therefore the budget, for supply teachers, since they had proven very capable at covering for staff absence, giving the school greater resilience and consistency. Furthermore, their performance and flexibility had had a major impact on the school. They were delivering the ELSA programme, and the school had invested significant time and money in their training and development. Part of the PE budget would be used to help cover the cost of the HLTA, as she would have a strong focus on working with and supporting children who were often, for various reasons, reluctant to participate in PE classes, in line with her central role of working with children in receipt of Pupil Premium.

**Q/C:** *Governors asked what the £85 line in the budget for “Bishop Worsworth” was for*. DJ replied that this was insurance cover for staff taking part in outside events.

DJ recommended the budget to FGB on behalf of FEPC. In conclusion, he said that it was a prudent and sensible budget, with funds held in contingency should unforeseen expenses arise. An in-year 2021-22 deficit of £4,779 was forecast, with a surplus from the previous year of £4,328, giving a cumulative deficit of less than £500.

The budget was approved unanimously. Governors expressed their thanks to the School Finance Officer, Natalie Newcombe, for her hard work on the budget, and recognised how challenging the work was.

1. **Chair’s Notices:**

**Dorset Council Chair’s Briefing 14-3-22**

JM had attended the Dorset Council Chair’s Briefing on 14-03-22. There had been further guidance on Covid measures, with it being confirmed that children should still come to school if they had a close contact testing positive, if they themselves were negative. Pupils testing positive could return to school after three days. However, schools could deny entry to the school to anyone deemed to be at risk of spreading infection. Different levels of School Improvement Offer had been outlined: Core; Core Plus; and Traded Services. The Council had been challenged over the lack of resources for Governor Services and Governor training, which was now only one person with no budget. There was further challenge about the issue that National Tutoring Programme funding could be recovered from schools if it had been unused. While schools welcomed the shift in the NTP programme which now allowed them to deliver their own catch-up tutoring, the stipulation that this had to be in addition to the contracted hours of teachers and support staff still prevented schools from tailoring the support to their own circumstances and needs. The Council’s *Five to Thrive* online training was promoted. Set in the context of the current pandemic, this initiative recognised that teachers and others working with children were likely to be under unusual stress. The *Five to Thrive* model was aimed at supporting staff with preventing trauma and promoting recovery from toxic stress.

**Education White Paper**

JM gave the following summary of the White Paper released by the Government on 28 March:

* By 2030, the government wants 90% of all primary age schoolchildren to reach Age Related Expectations (compared to 65% in 2019). This includes SEND children.
* There will be a new National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for Leading Literacy.
* 500,000 teacher training / CPD places by 2024.
* High-speed broadband for all schools by 2025.
* Dorset is one of the 55 areas identified within the Education Investment Areas where a budget of £86m has been set aside to drive school improvement.
* Creation of an arms-length curriculum body.
* Attendance to be improved via a national register, annual surveys and data analysis.
* Broader use of Pupil Premium.
* Tutoring to be one of the core elements of how to use Pupil Premium funding.
* Parent Pledge, under which children who fall behind in English and Maths will be provided with targeted support through a range of methods such as small group tuition, and parents will be kept informed about their child's progress.
* All schools to either be in a MAT or in the process of joining one by 2030.
* Local Authorities can create their own MATs (although the government wants the LAs to focus on ‘championing all children in their area’ by co-ordinating all services in their Local Authority).

JM reported that Emma Knights, CEO of the NGA, had welcomed some aspects of the White Paper, but had said that it left many questions unanswered. The NGA contested the view of the Secretary of State that there was sufficient funding in the system to deliver what had been set out. The NGA was also very concerned that there was a risk that Pupil Premium funding would be diluted and that the Parent Pledge was too vague. The NGA did not accept that the case for MATs had been proven and many schools would remain unconvinced about the prospect of joining one.

**Q/C:** *Governors suggested that the option of Local Authority run MATs should be discussed by the Collaboration, since the White Paper had raised the possibility of currently successful groups of schools that presently work together forming a hub and remaining under the auspices of the Local Authority. This would at least have the benefit of the schools continuing to access support from the Local Authority in areas such as Pupil Premium and SEND, in addition to the statutory functions such as transport, admissions and pay. In addition, it was suggested that Governors from the Collaboration schools should start meeting periodically, either all together or at Chair level (or both), so that developments could be monitored and discussed at Governance level as well as at School Leader level.* JM and LG agreed to consider this and LG would talk to other headteachers at the next Collaboration meeting. **ACTION: JM/ LG**

**SEND Green Paper**

SEND Link Governor ER had reviewed the Green Paper, released 29 March for full public consultation, on behalf of FGB. It contained proposals intended to improve accountability and boost earlier intervention to ensure that children’s needs were better met in local settings, and to deliver reforms to bring financial sustainability to the SEND system. She made the following initial observations:

* The Green Paper acknowledged the difficulty many people had with navigating the complex and bureaucratic SEND system
* It noted that social and educational outcomes were generally worse for SEND children than others
* It proposed new local SEND partnerships
* It supported more parental choice over SEND placements
* It proposed to standardise and digitise the EHCP process, which had been criticised for being overly adversarial.

ER expressed some concern that the proposals in the Green Paper could lead to more hurdles and loopholes than it succeeded in eliminating. Also, many of the developments were scheduled to take place towards the end of the current parliament, raising the risk that they would collide with the electoral process.

**Q/C:** *Governors thanked ER and discussed what she had said. They suggested that ER circulated her thoughts to FGB, and they would read the Green Paper and send their own thoughts to her to compile an FGB response. This was agreed.* **ACTIONS: JA to circulate Green Paper; ER to circulate her response; all Governors to add their own thoughts and send them to ER.**

**Q/C:** *Governors asked if LG would be responding to the consultation as Headteacher.* She said she would, and would encourage teachers to do the same.

**SIAMS**

JM, LG and WM had attended a session organised by the Salisbury Diocese Board of Education (SDBE) entitled *SIAMS and your SEF*[[1]](#footnote-1) on 23-3-22. They had found the training useful preparation for the anticipated SIAMS inspection. There had been a focus on the *11 before 11* initiative, whereby children were helped to gain 11 extra-curricular experiences (e.g. developing film; sleeping outside; growing food; horse riding) before the age of 11. The aim was to help children develop the character traits that would help them thrive as they transition to secondary education. JM had also taken part in a leadership training session called *How Deeply Christian is your School* and had taken away some clear actions that would be followed up as part of SIAMS planning with LG. On 17 May the Diocese would be visiting the school in an advisory capacity. It was emphasised that this was supportive, and not an inspection. The Diocese’s School Improvement Consultant Linda Rowley would also be visiting the school in June to conduct a ‘deep dive’ on Art. **Q/C:** *Governors asked if Foundation Governors needed to be available for these two visits.*  JM replied that Governors would not need to attend the session on 17 May, as JM would attend on behalf of FGB. They may need to be there for the June visit. JM would check with Linda Rowley and confirm. **ACTION: JM**

JM, LG, CG and Jo Cleden had met to discuss ‘how we tell our story’ as part of SIAMS. The Foundation Governors now needed to come to a separate workshop to complete further work on SIAMS. JM would liaise with LG on a suitable Weds afternoon for this in May. Foundation Governors were asked to confirm their availability on receipt of this notification, by email, to JM and JA. **ACTION: JM/ LG/ All Foundation Governors**

1. **Headteacher’s Written Report**

LG presented her written report and the discussion focused on the following:

*Attendance:* This was currently 92.3% - lower than the 95% target, but higher than the Dorset and National Primary School averages. **Q/C:** *Governors asked if parents were taking children out of schools for holiday, and if there was a tension between the school’s emphasis on ‘ensuring children want to be in’ and the more punitive approach of fines for unauthorised absence.* LG replied that only odd days for family events and celebrations were being missed. Overall, the school’s approach to encouraging good attendance was effective.

*SEND:* The proportion of SEND pupils at the school remained high, at 21%. A new SEND pupil had joined Year 2 in January with previous significant medical needs and was doing very well and had settled in. One child with an EHCP was working well and enjoying school and had been voted on to the School Council. ER had carried out a monitoring visit, and her report was included in the meeting pack.

*Safeguarding:* WM and GB had carried out a Safeguarding visit to the school and scrutinised case studies. **Q/C:** *Governors asked if the Single Central Record (SCR) of safeguarding incidents was up-to-date.* This was confirmed**. Q/C:** *JM reminded LG that a written record needed to be maintained of safeguarding meetings between the Safeguarding Lead and her Deputy where cases were reviewed.* **ACTION: LG**

*Sex and Relationships Education (SRE):* LG reported that the statutory guidance introduced by the DfE in September 2021 had informed and improved the school’s approach, as well as its own policy development. The Governors who were part of the working party on this had discussed and agreed with LG that puberty lessons should be taught to the whole class rather than boys and girls separately. LG agreed that this had worked well in class and reflected that the working party on this part of the curriculum had been very helpful.

*School Development Plan (SDP):* There would be a greater focus on this at the June FGB meeting. This would include a full review as preparation for pre-reading for the FGB. This item at June FGB would therefore take the form of a question and answer session. LG drew Governors’ attention to the Evidence column, as this was key in measuring the impact of the Plan’s priority activities. **ACTION: LG**

1. **SIAMS Review**

This had been covered in Item 9: Chair’s Notices.

1. **Policy Review**

The following policies were approved by FGB. The initials in brackets after each policy show who reviewed the policy on behalf of the Board.

* SEND Policy (GB and ER)
* Sex and Relationships Education Policy (JM and AM)
* Internet Safety Policy (DJ and WM)
1. **Governance issues**

*Governor Monitoring:* Governors noted the monitoring reports for SEND, Safeguarding, and Collective Worship. SEND Link Governor ER said the visit had been very positive. The effects of lockdown, intervention, workload, and the HLTA’s impact had all been discussed at length. **Q/C:** *Governors asked if the proposed SEND parent support groups was up and running.* ER replied that this had not yet happened, but it remained an important aspiration.

*Recruitment and Succession Planning Update:* The were currently two Governor vacancies. An improved advert for applications for Parent Governor had been designed and would be sent out soon.

*Governors’ Day:* JM announced that there would be a Governors’ Day at the school on 22 June, observing lessons, having lunch with the children, meeting the School Council, and other activities. LG would draft an agenda for the day, and Governors were asked to inform JM and JA of their planned attendance at the event. **ACTION: LG/ All Governors**

*NGA Skills Audit:* All Governors had completed this, and JA presented an analysis which was included in the pack. The Skills Audit suggested strong and consistent skills across FGB. In those areas where Governors have expressed a desire to learn more, further training should be considered. Guidance on Risk Management and Equalities were included in the meeting pack. **Q/C:** *JM emphasised that Governors needed to ensure they were confident about their knowledge and awareness of Equality and Diversity.* JA and JM agreed to look into running a training update for all Governors. **ACTION: JA/ JM**

JM said that the Skills Audit was annual, and would be repeated in Summer 2023.

*Governor Training: Feedback and Record:* Governors noted the updated Training Record which was included in the pack. JM asked all Governors who had not yet completed *Prevent* training to do so as soon as possible and inform JA so that records could be updated. **ACTION: JA/ All Governors**

1. **FGB Forward Plan**

Governors noted the FGB Forward Plan, which was included in the pack.

1. **Clerk’s Notices**

JA had joined the virtual Clerk’s Briefing at Dorset Council on 10-3-22. The Briefing had focused on procedures and protocols for the joint chairing of Governing Bodies, and on Governor and Clerk responsibilities with regard to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

1. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:**
28 June 2022 at 4:30pm.

The meeting closed at 6:30pm.

| Item no. | Action | Owner | By when |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8 | Consider ways to promote the school and increase pupil numbers | All Governors | Next FGB |
| 9 | Discuss White Paper LA MAT proposals with Collaboration/ Consider joint Governors’ meetings with the Collaboration | LG/ JM | Next FGB |
| 9 | Circulate SEND Green Paper/ send comments to ER/ Compile joint response | JA/ All Governors/ ER | Next FGB |
| 9 | Check with Linda Rowley if Governors needed to be in attendance for her June visit | JM | End April |
| 9 | Inform JM/ JA of intention to participate in SIAMS workshop | All Foundation Governors | End April |
| 10 | Maintain written record of SLO/ DSLO meetings | LG | Next FGB |
| 10 | Complete full review of SDP for Governors to read prior to June FGB | LG | Mid June |
| 13 | Draft an agenda for the 22 June Governors’ Day | LG | End May |
| 13 | Inform JM/ JA of intention to participate in Governors’ Day on 22 June | All Governors | End May |
| 13 | Consider options for Governor E&D training | JA/ JM | Next FGB |
| 14 | Circulate link to *Prevent* training/ do *Prevent* training | JA/ All Governors | Next FGB |

1. SEF: School Self Evaluation Form. This is the school's evaluation of how it is performing in the following areas: effectiveness of leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; and outcomes for children and other learners. Ofsted and SDBE use the school SEF to review each school’s thoughts on their own strengths, training requirements and areas for improvement as one of their areas for evaluation during inspections. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)