**Powerstock CE VA Primary School**

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held via Microsoft Teams at 4:30pm on**

**15 February 2022**

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

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

Q/C = Question/ Challenge.

1. **Welcome**
JM welcomed all to the meeting.
2. **Apologies**
Rev. Chris Grasske CG
3. **Minutes of the last FGB**
The minutes of the 23 November 2021 FGB were agreed as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising and Action Plan not covered elsewhere on this agenda**
5. *JA to contact two remaining Governors re. NGA Skills Audit:* COMPLETED. All Governors had now returned their Skills Audit forms.
6. *LG to present holistic tracker information to CWC and FGB:* COMPLETED.
7. *Share MATs Action Plan with FGB:* Now moved to the June FGB meeting. ACTION: LG
8. *LG and JA to share parent communications with Governors:* It was agreed that the Newsletter would suffice. **ACTION: LG**
9. *DJ to amend, agree and sign off Pay Policy and Outturn:* COMPLETED.
10. *Ask Collaboration about rental deposit allowances:* This section now removed from the Pay Policy.
11. *JM to write to Vik Verma outlining the issues the school faces to request financial contingency support:* COMPLETED. LG following this up asrequested by VV and Public Health Dorset.
12. *JA to evaluate Outstanding Governance recruitment resource and report back:* COMPLETED. Powerstock now registered on website. Foundation Governor vacancies will be advertised as necessary.
13. **Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business**
None
14. **Declaration of Interests**
None
15. **Correspondence**
None
16. **Chair’s Notices**
JM would be participating in a two hour online pre-SIAMS inspection seminar with Salisbury Diocese in the third week of March. This would be useful for Action Planning in advance of next year’s inspection. WM was also asked to take part. **ACTION: WM.** There would be a Chair’s Briefing in mid-March which JM would attend. She noted with disappointment that there was nothing about school finance on the agenda. JM had been co-opted on to the interim Executive Board of Governors for Portesham School, which would be joining a MAT following an inadequate rating by Ofsted in May 2021. The work was confidential for now, but she would discuss any learnings from the experience with the FGB, particularly with regard to preparing for an Ofsted inspection and the transition to a MAT.
17. **Headteacher’s Report**

LG presented her written report and the discussion focused on attendance. A supplementary attendance report was also included in the pack, using software from Hertfordshire, which gave more granular detail. Overall school attendance was currently 92.35% - the national primary school average was 91.9%. In current circumstances Ofsted were reportedly only concerned if attendance fell below 90%. Most absence was still Covid related, although increasingly children were falling ill to viruses to which their resistance was probably reduced due to Pandemic-related lockdowns and social isolation.

One Year 5 child had an acute medical condition and had missed two months of school. The child could not manage home learning and the school continued to meet with parents to see what support could be offered. Another child had suffered from leukaemia since the age of two but had finished treatment after five courses of chemotherapy. He had just joined the school and was doing well, but had been extensively home schooled as his condition meant that viral infections had to be avoided. Two children with persistent absence were subject to Child Social Care interventions – one was a young carer who had also suffered some illness and whose current attendance was 79%, and another who had a Child Protection Plan whose attendance was 76.1%. The school was doing all it could to offer support, but the school would probably be issuing a penalty notice which may need court involvement.

**Q/C:** Governors asked if overall attendance was acceptable. LG replied that, by and large, it was, with most year groups at over 95%. The trend was for parents to try to get their children into school if at all possible, seemingly influenced by media emphasis on the damage caused to children by having missed so much school over the past two years.

**Q/C:** Governors asked if there was daily contact with the Year 5 child with long term sickness. LG confirmed that contact was maintained, mainly through a sibling at the school.

Governors had also submitted several questions about the Headteacher’s report in advance of the meeting, and the questions were further discussed during the meeting. These questions, LG’s responses, and the subsequent discussions, are summarised below:

[Advice from Public Health Dorset continued to reflect ten days isolation if a teacher who wasn't fully vaccinated and had a close contact with a positive case, and this absence would have to be covered by the school in the absence of insurance cover.] **Q/C***: Can additional funds from Dorset Council be secured as discussed with Vik Verma?* **LG**: Hopefully. I have emailed Vik Verma forwarding the email from Public Health Dorset so we will see what he says or what they were referring to.

**Q/C:** *Can funding direct to school be secured to deliver our own interventions as pillar 3 of the National Tutoring Programme, rather than utilising external tutors? Can the funding be used for other high quality catch-up interventions?* **LG:** No, as the staff we use are already salaried, albeit with fixed term contracts. If schools decide not to use the School-Led Tutoring grant allocated to them, they cannot use it for other interventions and the ESFA will recover the full amount back as an overpayment. The funding can be used to cover the staff costs of delivering catch-up tuition. Where internal staff are delivering tuition, this must be in addition to their contracted hours and duties. Schools may also use the funding to cover the duties of internal staff released for tutoring, rather than the tutoring itself. However, it must not fund the same role twice or be used to fund any current salaried positions.

**Q/C:** *Clearly Covid has had a big impact on attendance this term, but what are the methods deployed to encourage attendance with the children and what levels of lateness are there in school? How is this managed with both children and parents, especially given the news coverage about the DfE considering fining parents for consistent lateness?* **LG:** We are continuing our general approach where children want to be "in" with the others through our curriculum delivery and ethos across the school. Lateness is limited to two children in Autumn term and one child going into Spring term. We use emails and meetings with parents to engage. Advice is always sought from the Inclusion Team and fining is being used as a strategy.

**Q/C:** *What (if any) response do you have when an email is sent to a family?* **LG**: Emails generally get a good response, but the effect following that can be limited.

**Q/C:** *How is the school preparing Year 6 children for SATs in the context of managing the impact of lockdowns whilst still delivering a broad curriculum?*  **LG:** We have been focusing on learning gaps identified during catch up sessions. We don’t do mock tests or out-of-school lessons however, as ‘hot housing’ pupils tends to have limited success. Preparations for SATs will continue as with every other year with quality first teaching.

**Q/C:** *Could the Governors' fund be used to help support a comprehensive trips programme as part of enrichment by paying for transport or is this where the PSA come in? The Governors’ Fund could focus on transport costs, for example, which are expensive.*  **LG:** I think the PSA are on board with any help for broader curriculum opportunities. Extra help from the Governors’ Fund is always welcome. There are three forthcoming school trips: Exeter, Washingpool Farm, and Lyme Regis. Governors agreed to fund this once the school had clarified what was needed.

LG then went on to discuss Holistic Trackers, the SDP, Insight reports, and the Maths Hub.

*Holistic Trackers:* LG presented an example of Holistic Tracker in which a range of developmental factors, behavioural, educational and pastoral, were tracked and represented graphically. These Trackers were used very dynamically in school so that bespoke interventions could be made based on the needs of individual children, and progress could be recorded. **Q/C:** There was a discussion on whether the Trackers should be shared with parents. A range of views were expressed; some felt that it would provide a useful structure for discussing progress and development of children with their parents. Others felt that the Tracker would come to dominate those discussions and it was more helpful for teachers to use the Trackers as preparation for the meetings, to help them focus. It was acknowledged that when the work was shared with Ofsted during a future inspection, it would then be in the public domain. Another suggestion was that the Trackers could perhaps be the subject of a separate, bespoke session with parents. Governors concluded that while the Trackers would not be shared with parents for the time being, they would continue to discuss if and how they could be used to facilitate discussions with parents at the end of this academic year.

*School Development Plan:* Other pressures during the Autumn Term had obstructed the active implementation of SDP actions, but more recently SDP-focused activity had picked up at pace. Governors agreed to look more closely at the SDP at their next meeting. **ACTION: LG**

*Insight Reports:* LG presented the latest Insight Report, which showed attainment information against Age Related Expectations as of December 2021. They showed significant improvement from July 2021, although LG cautioned against reading too much into Year 2 – Year 3 comparisons as this was the transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 and the curriculum was completely different. Progression data from Year 4 to Year 5, and from Year 5 to Year 6, was more meaningful. Attainment levels for Reading in Year 3 were an ongoing cause for concern and there remained a lot of work to do. Q/C: Governors asked what Aged Related Expectations (ARE) represented at the current stage of the academic year. LG explained that ARE was used as a guide for end of year assessment, so if a pupil was already at ARE or indeed above ARE, they were doing exceptionally well. LG and AS also clarified that the DfE had moved away from levels to ARE in 2013, which had made it much easier to assess where a pupil was at any given point during the year taking into account time of year, age within the year and other variables.

*Maths Hub:* AS continued to attend the Collaboration’s Maths Hub workshops. These helped school leaders audit their approach to numeracy with a particular focus on SEND children, and had enabled the school to augment its approach to Maths with new ideas and strategies. There had been two sessions so far, and another was approaching.

1. **Policy Review**
The Data Protection Policy had been previously reviewed by CWC on 1 February and recommended to FGB. The policy was approved.

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

* Complaints Policy (GB and WM)
* Dealing with Allegations Policy (JM and AM)
* Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy (ER and AS)
* Disciplinary Procedure (JM and DJ)
* Grievance Procedure (JM and CG)
* Instrument of Government (Clerk)

**Q/C**: Governors asked if the Instrument of Government could be varied so that fewer Governors were required, as 12 seemed a lot for a school the size of Powerstock. JA agreed to look into this. **ACTION: JA**

1. **Committee Reports**
*Curriculum and Wellbeing Committee 1 February 2022:*  Governors received the minutes. TC highlighted the focus of the Committee on progress with Year 3, who had been most severely impacted by the Pandemic and lockdowns, and who had severely struggled in terms of behaviour and learning at the start of the school year. Thankfully most had progressed significantly and should be meeting Age Related Expectations (ARE) by the end of the academic year. Three children would not, however, and there remailed significant issues with these three.

**Q/C:** Governors asked if this was a national issue. LG confirmed that it was, particularly with regard to behaviour.

*Finance, Environment and Pay Committee 8 February 2022:* Governors received the minutes. DJ reported a forecast in-year deficit of £1,979, mostly caused by supply cover for staff absence not covered by insurance, Education Support Staff and some staff pay rises. While this deficit may reduce by year end, next year was likely to be challenging, with rising energy costs and an expected low number of children on roll. Governors commented that in the context of such a difficult year, the expected deficit of under £2k was small. FEPC had also reviewed the School Financial Value Statement, and would be amended by DJ to take into account feedback from FEPC once any further feedback had been received from the other Governors. The SFVS had inadvertently not been included in the meeting pack and JA would circulate this to Governors for their urgent approval, as the SVFS needed to be submitted to Dorset Council in March. **ACTION: JA/ ALL GOVERNORS**. Finally, The Committee had reviewed the Schools Financial Benchmarking information against other similarly sized local schools. They had noted that while total expenditure in most areas was low compared to other schools, per pupil and per teacher expenditure was high, in line with the school’s strategy to favour experienced staff. The problematic nature of benchmarking information was evidenced by the high amount some schools reported for self-generated funding and for contributions to school visits. In a year dominated by Covid and lockdowns, this was hard to explain. Indeed, LG had investigated the £24,500 contributions for school visits value for Salwayash school and determined that the figure was an error.

1. **Governance issues***Governor Monitoring:* Governors noted the monitoring reports for Whole School, Burton Class, Remote Learning and Swimming, which were included in the pack. Consistent themes were that behaviour was good and the focus on safeguarding was paramount and evident – staff seemed to have a sixth sense for picking up on when behaviour might start to become challenging. Advanced lesson planning was evident and thorough. JM encouraged all Governors to carry out visits associated with their Link roles as soon as possible, using the new templates that had been provided, which helped streamline the process.

*Safeguarding Report:* LG presented the latest Safeguarding report, included in the pack. Attention was drawn to the continued intention to go ahead with the trip to Seatown in April 2022 following the Ofsted restriction placed upon PGL Osmington Bay, but the report from the interim Ofsted visit as of 5-2-22 was still awaited. LG has contacted the centre again and was awaiting that information. **Q/C:** Governors asked if the children were accompanied by a staff member on these trips. LG confirmed that two staff members were always present. Governors also noted that the school was now signed up to *Operation Encompass*, a partnership between police and schools whereby all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with schools immediately using highly secure, GDPR compliant encrypted messages. 96% of schools were signed up to the scheme.

WM and GB, the Safeguarding Link Governors, had reviewed the report and had no further comments. They had also looked at the Child Wellbeing Survey and noted the difficulty children had had with some of the questions in it.

*Recruitment and Succession Planning Update:* The were currently three Governor vacancies, one each of Parent, Foundation, and Local Authority. There was a candidate for Foundation Governor, but the process with SDBE appeared to have stalled. JA was asked to pursue this. **ACTION: JA.** The pre-Christmas advertisement for a Parent Governor had received no applications. There was a discussion about how the role could be made more appealing. Governors were reluctant to move FGB meetings to a later time as the current time was beneficial to the wellbeing of most Governors. They agreed to consider covering childcare costs if necessary. It was also proposed to have a Meet the Governors Tent at the upcoming outdoor Pancake Day event.

**Q/C:** One Governor made the point that the parent body didn’t really know each other, and school gate conversations had been diminished by Covid restrictions. Consideration should be given to initiating new parent communities, e.g. for SEND parents. LG was enthusiastic about this idea.

*Review of Pupil Premium Strategy and Impact, and Pupil Premium Strategy Statement:* LG presented the Strategy Statement, which detailed the school’s use of £8k Pupil Premium (and recovery premium of £2k for the 2021 to 2022 academic year) funding to help improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. It outlined how the funding would be spent in the current academic year and the effect that last year’s spending of Pupil Premium had had. The Strategy focused on activity to deal with five key challenges to achievement identified among disadvantaged pupils:

1. Speech and Language difficulties leading to phonics acquisition delay.
2. Poor attendance
3. Social and emotional/mental health issues. General wellbeing
4. Core Subject low attainment
5. Parental support

FEPC would monitor Pupil Premium finances, and CWC would monitor impact.

*Governor Training: Feedback and Record:* Governors noted the updated Training Record which was included in the pack. JM emphasised the need for Governors to prioritise the core NGA courses, and to inform the Clerk of any additions to the Training Record.

*NGA Skills Audit:* All Governors had now completed this, and JA presented a preliminary analysis which was included in the pack. He would provide a more detailed analysis to the next FGB. **ACTION: JA**

*Governors’ Fund*: FEPC on 8 February had approved £500 from the Fund to refresh reading resources at the school and purchase more age-appropriate book bags for Key Stage 2 children, as recommended by the Curriculum and Wellbeing Committee on 1 February. It was noted that the Fund would be further “topped up” by the forthcoming Harvest Festival.

*Governor Awards*: It was agreed to take these discussion offline and Governors were encouraged to contribute idea by email.

1. **FGB Forward Plan**
Governors noted and welcomed the new FGB Forward Plan, which was included in the pack.
2. **Clerk’s Notices**
None
3. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:**
5 April 2022 at 4:30pm. This would include Budget recommendations and an SDP update. There would be no separate Headteacher report.

The meeting closed at 6:30pm.

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| Item no. | Action | Owner | By when |
| 4 | Circulate parent newsletters to Governors | LG | Ongoing |
| 8 | Attend online pre-SIAMS inspection seminar alongside JM | WM | Mid March |
| 9 | Review SDP at next FGB  | LG | Next FGB |
| 10 | Determine if terms of IoG can be varied in order to reduce size of FGB | JA | Next FGB |
| 11 | Circulate SFVS/ Approve SFVS | JA/ All Governors | ASAP |
| 12 | Investigate status of new Foundation Governor appointment process with SDBE | JA | Half Term |
| 12 | Present NGA Skills Audit analysis to FGB | JA | Next FGB |