

**Powerstock CE VA Primary School**

*Learning together to be the best that we can*

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

**20 April 2023**

**Present**: David Jones DJ (Chair), Louise Greenham LG (Headteacher), Elizabeth Rutherford ER, David Bligh DB, Sara Turner ST, Chris Grasske CG, Tim Connor TC, Wendy Morris WM, Sam Van Zyl SVZ, Laura Scarlett LS

**In Attendance**: Becky Forrester (Clerk), Sheila O’Donnell, SO’D, Education Challenge Lead, Dorset Council (item 7)

**Q/C = Question/ Challenge.**

1. **Welcome and prayer**
DJ welcomed all to the meeting, and introduced SVZ, the new Staff Governor. All welcomed SVZ and her appointment was confirmed. CG opened with the school prayer.
2. **Apologies**.

Baffy Turner, Amanda Montague, Gill Butler.

1. **Minutes of 22-02-23 FGB**
The minutes were agreed as a true record.
2. **Matters Arising and Action Plan**
3. LG/LS/WM/DB to work together on procurement, including telephony, broadband and cyber security. ONGOING.
4. All Governors to undertake First Steps in EDI NGA course. ONGOING.
5. JM to look into alternatives to the sign-in visitors’ book. COMPLETED.
6. Clerk to use links to key documents on SharePoint in agenda packs (to avoid version control issues). ONGOING.
7. JM, ST and ER to develop some suggestions for marketing and PR. See item 10 below.
8. All Governors to complete all scheduled monitoring visits by Easter. ONGOING
9. All Governors to feed any further thoughts/priorities for budget-building to DJ before 28 March. None received.
10. Clerk to add stakeholder management to the next agenda. See item 13 below.
11. **Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business**
None.
12. **Declaration of Interests**
None.
13. **Headteacher Recruitment**DJ introduced the item by paying tribute to LG and reflecting on her exemplary and tireless leadership. He noted that LG’s leadership had put the school in an excellent position, and she would be greatly missed by the Governors, the children, their families and the community.

He welcomed Sheila O’Donnell to the meeting and thanked her for supporting the school through the recruitment process. Sheila O’Donnell also passed on her thanks and congratulations to LG, before making the following comments about the process and her role within it:

* The Council provided a range of support to maintained schools, including Ofsted and leadership recruitment;
* It was a statutory requirement that the Local Authority was involved in the process. It had no voting rights, but offered support, advice and guidance and had a range of resources, suggested activities and templates that schools could access;
* It was an opportunity for the Governors to reflect on their vision for the school, and whether they wanted to retain the current model or consider alternatives, such as federating with another school or joining a multi-academy trust;
* If Governors decided to retain the current model and recruit a replacement headteacher, the job description, person specification and pay range would all need to be reviewed. The pay range would depend on the size of the school and the council could provide further advice;
* FGB must appoint a selection panel of five or six people and delegate responsibility for the process to them. If a member of the panel had to drop out, they could not be replaced partway through the process. Staff governors were not encouraged. Panel meetings must be minuted, and the panel must take a recommendation for appointment to FGB for approval; and
* Governors’ intention to appoint an interim for the autumn term, and make a substantive appointment from 1 January 2024 was sensible, given the timelines. The panel should aim for an initial interview date in early June. If readvertisement was necessary, that would allow time for a second round of interviews in September.

DJ thanked SO’D and explained that there needed to be a majority of Foundation Governors on the panel. He also wanted a mix of men and women, and a parent governor. For those reasons he proposed WM, for her knowledge of safeguarding, ER as a parent governor and for her knowledge of SEND, and DB and LS for their experience.

**Q/C: Governors asked how the Diocese would be involved.** DJ explained that Steve Cowdery, the School Improvement Adviser for the Diocese would be involved in a similar way to SO’D. Three Foundation Governors would also represent the Diocese, and LS provided an extra link as church warden. Governors agreed the appointment of the panel and delegated responsibility for the process to those identified.

SO’D advised the panel members to reflect on the following issues before they met:

* How to involve children, parents and staff
* Timelines and methods for communicating key messages
* The specific knowledge and skills that LG has, and any gaps she might leave
* Ensuring at least two panel members had Safer Recruitment Training (**ACTION: WM**)
* Advertising, including any costs
* The look and feel of the recruitment pack, including details like one day per week teaching requirement or two?

DJ thanked SO’D for her input and agreed to set up an initial meeting of the panel as soon as possible. **ACTION: DJ to arrange meeting, including a video-link option, and circulate information provided by the Council and Diocese**.

1. **Safeguarding**

WM introduced the item, noting that there were two monitoring reports in the pack because one had been done since the last meeting was rescheduled. She noted that meetings with the headteacher were constructive, open and transparent. She expressed thanks to GB for deputising. LG confirmed the meetings had been useful, particularly establishing a focus for each one. The recent scrutiny of the Single Central Record had been very helpful.

WM noted that she had contacted the NGA recently to ask for advice on safeguarding training for Governors. The Clerk had also produced a summary table of training which showed which modules Governors had undertaken. DJ noted that it was vital that all Governors do Safeguarding training, as was one of the first things Ofsted will look at.

**Q/C: Governors questioned the new sign-in book, noting that while it was improvement in terms of GDPR, people didn’t always appear to be signing out.** WM agreed and said that staff were aware of the problem. A different type of book would be bought next time which would address this problem.

1. **Finance**

DJ gave a verbal report on the earlier FEPC meeting, including information about the interim headteacher who has agreed to cover the autumn term. She was currently the school’s School Evaluation Partner (SEP) and knew the school well. She had experience of acting headships at Charmouth and Greenford schools following 25 years of experience as a Headteacher at Bridport St Mary’s and Salway Ash, and was currently providing support to SEN children at Broadwindsor school.

DJ noted that the interim had made a proposal for costs which would result in a saving of approximately £12,000 on the autumn term. However, due to existing working commitments, she had proposed working 8am-5pm three days per week, and 12.30pm-4.00pm two days per week. She wouldn’t take on LG’s teaching obligations, which would leave additional teaching requirements and a designated Safeguarding lead to be identified when the interim was not on site.

**Q/C: Governors questioned how the teaching time could be made up.** LG noted that discussions were ongoing but the ambition was to use existing staff, to maximise continuity for the children.

**Q/C: Governors noted that the acting head would only be in school on three days and two afternoons, leaving a gap in the legal issue of a responsible person for the two mornings she wasn't there.** LG replied that the question was to be put to a senior teacher to see if she would act up as deputy when the new acting head wasn't there. **ACTION: LG.**

**Q/C: Governors asked who the designated safeguarding lead would be, whether this would be the interim and if so, whether she had had the correct training.** DJ replied that he wouldenquire about new acting head's training compliance and also if she would act as safeguarding lead. **ACTION: DJ.**

DJ provided the following feedback on the FEP meeting:

* The budget reviewed by FEP was cautious. It would be accompanied by a document called the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning workbook which would contain commentary on the school’s position.
* Inflation was high and, on advice from Dorset Council, the school had budgeted 5% for this year and next, though the Office for Budget Responsibility predicted it would fall to 2.9% by December 2023;
* The next two years looked positive, but less so after that. It became very difficult to forecast beyond the next two years, because critical things like birth-rate and staff movement were not known;
* Governors would need to give specific thought to the bus, which was a critical means of getting children to the school but also a significant financial commitment (£1,000 per child per year); and
* The number of children attending the school was critical to its financial sustainability.

**Q/C: Governors questioned whether they were allowed to agree a budget which showed a deficit in four years’ time.** DJ confirmed that they could.

**Q/C: Governors questioned what the assumptions were about the cost of future teaching staff, and whether it was assumed that they would be cheaper.** LG explained that the budget was built on a like-for-like basis, so it was not assumed that they would be cheaper.

Governors agreed the budget 2023-24 and the SFVS.

1. **Marketing, onboarding and promoting the school**

ER introduced the item and explained that ideas had been fed back to LG on the following issues:

* The Forest School Instagram account
* The website
* Pre-school visits
* Open days and mornings
* The local press
* The PSA Facebook page

The following USPs had been identified:

* The Forest School
* The size of the school
* The experience of staff
* The culture of kindness and inclusion
* The extra activities provided by the school and the holistic approach it takes to children
* Its beautiful natural setting and the school bus
* SEND teaching and support
* The positive academic progress of pupils

ER and ST had made the following changes and suggestions:

* Greater use of social media and the creation of an Instagram account (now established)
* Creating a point of contact at the Bridport News
* Developing relationships with the families of prospective parents, and providing introductory packs for them
* Establishing ‘stay and play’ sessions, which had been done

**Q/C: Governors questioned whether a risk assessment had been done about ‘play and stay’.** ER said that it had not and all advice would be welcome**. Action: LG and ER to meet to discuss practicalities of ‘stay and play’.**

Governors added the following to the list:

* Adding a ‘Powerstock School’ sign to the school bus
* Celebrating ceremonies like the Leavers’ Ceremony
* Provision of swimming for KS1
1. **Governance**

The Clerk introduced the Governor-School Contact Log, the governance calendar and the skills audit. **Q/C: Governors asked the Clerk to set up individual templates for the skills audit in SharePoint.** Clerk agreed. **Action: Clerk.**

1. **Policy Review**

LG introduced the policies and provided background. The Equality Policy provided more comprehensive background on:

* Protected characteristics
* British Values
* Links to school vision and values
* Definition of terms
* Expansion of antibullying and links to Code of Conduct/safeguarding in line with KCSiE and CP policy - this includes section on "bystander/witness".

Governors were welcome to add comments and suggestions. WM noted that she had some comments on the Internet Safety Policy, which she would email. **ACTION: WM.** Governors agreed the following policies:

* Equality Policy
* Whistle blowing Policy
* Dealing with Allegations
* Data Protection
* SEND
* Early Careers Teachers Policy
* Internet safety
* Collective Worship Policy
1. **Stakeholder Relationships: Deferred**
2. **Chair’s Report: Ofsted preparation update, new class teacher, recruitment of non-teaching staff**

DJ reported that JM would like to continue as an Associate Member. All agreed. Governors would be interviewing candidates for one day per week finance and five days per week admin next week**.**

1. **Cyber-security: Deferred.**
2. **FGB Forward Plan**This was in the pack and was noted.
3. **Date and time of Next Meeting: 27 June 2023 at 4.30pm.**

| Item no. | Actions | Owner | By when |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4.i | To work together on procurement, including telephony, broadband and cyber security (carried over) | LG/LS/WM | 27-06-23 |
| 4.ii | To undertake First Steps in EDI NGA course (carried over) | ALL | 30-04-23 |
| 7 | To undertake Safer Recruitment Training | WM | 31 May  |
| 7 | To arrange a meeting of the headteacher recruitment panel and share information from the Council and Diocese with members  | DJ | 28 April  |
| 9 | To ask a senior teacher if she would be willing to act as deputy when the new interim Headteacher was not at the school  | LG | 30-04-23 |
| 9 | To enquire about the interim Headteacher's safeguarding training and ask if she would be willing to act as safeguarding lead  | DJ | 30-04-23 |
| 10 | To meet to discuss the practicalities of ‘stay and play’ sessions and undertake a risk assessment  | LG/ER | 27-06-23 |
| 11 | To set up individual templates for the skills audit in SharePoint and Governors to complete | ALL | 30-04-23 |
| 12 | To email comments on Internet Safety Policy to LG | WM | 30-04-23 |

| Item no. | Summary of Governor Questions & Challenge  |
| --- | --- |
| 7 | Governors asked how the Diocese would be represented in the appointment of a new headteacher  |
| 8 | Governors questioned the new sign-in book, noting that while it’s an improvement in terms of GDPR, people don’t always appear to be signing out |
| 9 | Governors questioned how the current headteacher’s teaching obligations would be met if the interim didn’t do them |
| 9 | Governors questioned how safeguarding obligations could be covered, and who would deputise for the interim headteacher when she wasn’t on site |
| 9 | Governors questioned whether they were allowed to agree a budget which was in deficit in years four and five |
| 9 | Governors questioned what the assumptions were about the cost of future teaching staff, and whether it was assumed that they would be cheaper |
| 10 | Governors questioned whether a risk assessment had been done about ‘play and stay’. |
| 11 | Governors asked the Clerk to set up individual templates for the skills audit in SharePoint |