

**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**

**28 June 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, Rev. Chris Grasske CG

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

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

1. **Welcome**
JM welcomed all to this, the final Governors’ Board meeting of 2021-22, and thanked them all for their hard work and commitment throughout a tough and challenging year. She confirmed that next year there would be a renewed focus in meetings on the school’s vision and “what it means to us”.
2. **Apologies**
Amanda Montague AM
3. **Minutes of the last FGB**
The minutes of the 5 April 2022 FGB were agreed as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising and Action Plan**
5. *All Governors to consider ways to promote the school and increase pupil numbers*: ***Q/C: Governors asked what the anticipated Number on Roll was for September 2022***. LG replied that six new pupils were expected, and the Number on Roll was expected to be 61.

Governors discussed various ways to promote the school. They agreed that the *Flourishing 360* approach, whereby the children would share and present their hobbies – e.g. ponies; swimming; cricket – had the potential to generate good publicity with the local press; a pony in the playground would make good copy. The same was true of ‘Careers Days’, with parents coming into school to talk about their jobs, which could help inspire the children about what they could achieve in the future. A school presence and publicity materials at playgroups was also suggested, as these were fora where options for primary schools were widely discussed. LG and JM agreed to take these ideas forward and report back to FGB in September. **ACTION: LG/JM**

1. *LG and JM to discuss White Paper LA MAT proposals with Collaboration/ Consider joint Governors’ meetings with the Collaboration*: This was on the agenda for the 15 July Collaboration meeting, with a view to possibly restarting joint Governors’ meetings in September.
2. *JA to circulate SEND Green Paper/ all Governors to send comments to ER/ ER to compile joint response:* Some Governors had sent comments to ER, and she was currently working her way through the 22 quite complex questions on the consultation in time for the deadline of 22-7-22. She would circulate the response to Governors prior to submission. **ACTION: ER**
3. *LG to maintain written record of SLO/ DSLO meetings:* COMPLETED. Notes were updated each half term. LG would also check how the process was conducted at other schools in order to ensure best practice.
4. *LG to complete full review of SDP for Governors to read prior to June FGB*: COMPLETED. This would be discussed under Item 10: Headteacher’s Report.
5. *JM to consider options for Governor E&D training:* JM had identified two key EDI courses which she had completed, and had asked all Governors to follow suit. Some had already done so. The remainder were asked to do the training before the next FGB and inform JA so that the Governor training record could be updated. **ACTION: Remaining Governors**
6. JA to circulate link to Prevent training/ All remaining Governors to do Prevent training: Most Governors had done the Prevent training. The remainder were asked to do the training before the next FGB and inform JA so that the Governor training record could be updated. **ACTION: Remaining Governors**
7. **Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business**
There would be an item regarding a PE report on the school website. This would be considered at Item 14.
8. **Declaration of Interests**
None
9. **Correspondence**
JM reported that a letter had been received from a couple who had purchased an old painting commemorating the opening of the school in 1850. Governors were shown this attractive and fascinating artwork, which the couple had donated to the school. Governors expressed their warmest thanks to the couple for this kind and generous act.
10. **Staff Wellbeing Survey and Action Plan**

JM reported on the Staff Wellbeing Survey, which had been discussed by Curriculum and Wellbeing Committee on 14-6-22. Overall the results were positive and showed a staff group that felt supported, valued and appreciated. However, some had commented that monitoring visits, while necessary and required by Ofsted, were time consuming and quite stressful for staff, with significant preparation required. CWC had agreed the following Action Plan in response to the survey’s findings:

* Take care to map out the timing of monitoring visits through the year, avoiding the busiest periods;
* Make more use of Governors’ Days, for which teachers did not have to prepare, and where things like the Behaviour Policy could be monitored in a more *ad hoc*, ‘warts and all’ way. It was suggested that these could be increased to two per year;
* Ensure that wherever possible, the budget continued to prioritise investing in people. The presence of high quality TAs freed up time for subject leaders to focus on extra-curricular activity such as monitoring visits.
1. **Chair’s Notices:**

**Dorset Council Chair’s Briefing 14-6-22**

JM reported back from the Dorset Council Chair’s Briefing and focused on the following:

*Multi Academy Trusts:* Dorset Council’s Virtual School Head Lisa Linscott had encouraged schools not to hurry into joining a MAT as there were still eight years before this might become a statutory duty. Joining a MAT was a complex, expensive and challenging process, and it was important for Governing bodies to take time to carefully assess the options. Dorset Council was considering taking part in a nationwide pilot to look at the newly-sanctioned possibility of forming a Local Authority MAT. ***Q/C: Governors asked if there was a big Variety of types of MAT.*** JM confirmed this, giving as examples local, national and diocese MATs.

*Dorset NEXUS:* this web portal for schools would be fully replaced by July 2023, as the current version was widely perceived as not fit for purpose.

*Inclusion hubs:* Schools were being encouraged to build Inclusion Hubs – bespoke buildings on the school estate to support children with SEND so they could receive specialist support and also access mainstream education, remaining on the school roll. The aim was to reduce the need for some SEND children to travel long distances for educational provision, to the detriment of their learning and at considerable expense. The council hoped to launch between six and ten hubs by September 2023 and they would be financing the build. There would be funding for a two-to-one ratio with one specialist teacher and a number of TAs in each hub, but the funding levels were still unclear, and also the age range challenges for secondary schools in particular. This had led to a number of questions at the briefing.

*Dorset Steps Programme:* This training programme continued to be offered to schools. It focused on managing challenging behaviour through de-escalation, harm reduction and building resilience and self-control. However, it consisted of six days of training, which at Powerstock would fall to LG as the lead in this area, which was very difficult to fit around her main responsibilities.

JM had also taken part in a Chairs’ webinar with Ofsted inspectors. They had clarified that the emphasis of inspections would be heavily on the curriculum, with ‘Deep Dives’ into reading, early reading, maths and two other foundation subjects. They would take school’s input into account when deciding on the foci of inspections, and the Headteacher could steer them in specific directions during a telephone call the day before. As preparation for the Deep Dives, The school had accepted the offer from SDBE of a facilitated Deep Dive into Art. Linda Rowley had carried out the mock inspection, and as the Art subject leader, AS had been at the forefront of the visit. She had been very satisfied with the approach of the subject leader and her grip on the subject, and the visit had been very successful. JM thanked AS and LG for their hard work in preparing for and managing the visit.

Finally, JM announced that there would be a leavers’ service on the last day of term, in church. There would also be a leavers’ play, at 1:30pm on 19 July and 6pm on 20 July. Governors were invited to both events, and tickets for the play would shortly be on sale.

1. **Headteacher’s Written Report**

LG’s written report was in the pack and Governors asked:

***Q/C: what take up had there been on the school’s offer of wraparound care from Sept 2022?*** LG replied that 14 pupils had signed up for September and details of clubs were also being finalised.

***Q/C: how much impact had Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings had with the Reception pupil who was not at Good Level of Development (GLD)?*** LG replied that since the TAF decision to move the child into Child Protection measures, attendance had improved to 80% - 100% (i.e. one day of absence per week at the most).

***Q/C: Governors asked how many children had TAFs in place, how onerous the process was, whether it was manageable, and whether LG saw it as effective.*** LG replied that they had three children with TAFs. The meetings were half termly where child protection measures had been assigned, and less frequent for Children in Need (CiN). The process was very time-consuming but very worthwhile, leading to effective action and genuine improvement, so it was very much worth the investment of time.

***Q/C: since the child who had been absent due to bulling had returned to school, how had his/ her behaviour been?*** LG replied that the issue had now largely been resolved, and the children had written him kind letters offering reassurance. AS said that his behaviour and attitude that day had been exemplary.

***Q/C: what could be done to encourage parents to apply for Pupil Premium status – e.g. displays on what Pupil Premium funding had delivered?*** LG replied that the school Finance Officer had had some ideas, e.g. initial application form sections to include, a notice board, and information showcasing what the school could offer with Pupil Premium funding. These ideas would be set out in an Action Plan. **ACTION: LG**

Also in the pack was a summary of the annual review of the School Development Plan (SDP). For *Key Priority 1: Quality of Education/ Behaviour and Attitudes –* progress had been made in reading, writing and spelling and assessments were currently being collected. The same was true of maths, with additional support and resources from the Collaboration Maths Hub. All assessment results would be reported in Autumn 2022.

With regard to the priority to *Extend able writers,* these children had been given extra opportunities, including writing for *Eggardon View*, writing visit reports, workshops such as the *Bank of Dreams and Nightmares*, quality text stimuli for writing, and opportunities to present, e.g. at School Council. ***Q/C: Governors asked if book tokens purchased from the Governors’ Fund should be awarded to these students.*** LG responded that this would need to be an inclusive process, as all the children had made an effort. A class award might be more appropriate. LG would give this further consideration. **ACTION: LG.**

***Q/C: Governors asked if LG felt the SDP had been successful in guiding the school’s priorities.*** LG said that it had; monitoring had improved and they had made better use of their assessment systems. This was also true of attendance monitoring. As evidence of this, LG presented a spreadsheet which showed absence by reason for absence in meticulous detail. This showed the challenges the school faced, with a big range of viruses and ailments, as well as Covid and some more serious and long term conditions. Attendance from September 2021 to June 2022 stood at 91.8%, although when the two pupils with chronic conditions and significant absence were removed from the analysis the figure rose to 93.2%. While this meant the school was broadly in line with the national primary school average at 92.4%, it was still a disappointingly low figure and LG remained concerned. ***Q/C: Governors asked if children had been taking holidays in term time, and if the school had issued any Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).*** LG confirmed that there had been four instances of this, some of them for two weeks or more. This had led to significant issues, both educationally and socially, in dealing with what the children had missed. FPNs had been issued for all unauthorised absences of two weeks or longer.

Finally, the pack also included a progress update on the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant process, which focused on mental wellbeing support for specific children. LG reported that ELSA had been highly effective, with the improved resilience of the children involved often seeming quite magical, and with huge knock-on benefits for the rest of the class. The programme was delivered by a trained and highly skilled HLTA, and the benefits of this work to the children, the staff, and the school needed to be at the forefront of thinking when setting the budget. ***Q/C: Governors asked If parents were present at ELSA sessions; if the programme was for a specific time period; and if Year 6 pupils receiving ELSA support were given onward help with the transition to secondary education.*** LG replied that parents were not present; that the programme was six to 12 sessions, one per week; and ongoing support for the Year 6 pupil involved was arranged using help from the Dorset Family Trust.

1. **Committees – Reports from the Chairs**

**Curriculum and Wellbeing Committee 14-6-22**

TC as Chair of the Committee said that a major point for the year was how strongly children, especially in Year 3, had recovered from the impact of Covid – socially and emotionally, if less so educationally.

The Committee had discussed the visit by Steve Cowdery, SDBE’s School Improvement Advisor, on 17-5-22 to help the school prepare for the forthcoming SIAMS inspection. The visit had been very worthwhile and productive. Time had been spent exploring the school vision, which he described as “deeply Christian, coherent and relevant”. He had given advice on priority areas before the inspection, which included “collating the evidence of vision-led flourishing”.

The Committee had discussed the staff wellbeing survey in detail and formulated the Action Plan outlined at Item 8 above. JM noted that at the Governors’ Day on 22 June there hadn’t been the opportunity to discuss the survey with the staff as a group. LG suggested that this should now happen at the Wellbeing Day on the inset day of 2-9-22.

**ACTION: LG**

Finally, the Committee had considered the Literacy monitoring report, which had observed real progress in this area, in part thanks to the effectiveness and impact of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme for children in Reception. The Committee had agreed agreed to have a further analysis of NELI at the end of the Autumn term once the programme had been in place for a year.

**Finance, Environment and Premises Committee 21-6-22**

*Environment and Premises:* DJ as Chair noted that his main observation during a recent informal inspection of the school premises was how much maintenance work had been done over the last year. Only minor, inexpensive remedial work was currently required.

*Finance:* The Committee had discussed the June Outturn figures and signed them off for submission to Dorset Council by 30 June. Key points were that the Number on Roll was declining over the next two years and was predicted to fall below 60 in 2023-24, which would have a major impact on income. A particular issue was that the current Year 5 was a large cohort, and when those 12 pupils left there were currently only eight joining. He re-emphasised the importance of finding ways to promote the school and attract more families to send their children to it, as the importance of the school being able to continue to deliver on its priorities and invest in people, such as the hugely valuable TAs, was dependent on per-pupil income. On a more optimistic note, extra SEND funding of up to £12.5k might be forthcoming from Dorset Council, who had requested further details in support of the application.

Other pressures on the budget derived from increased energy costs, and the energy budget had been increased to *c.* £14k by releasing *c.* £2k from the reserve fund. Fuel price increases were almost certain to lead to a concomitant increase in the cost of the school bus service, but the extent of this was currently unknown.

Other adjustments to the budget included altering the balance between PE funding and TA funding, to ensure transparency, even though the HLTA was delivering PE in a targeted way to support a high number of SEND children. A PE Premium spend report was being placed on the school website, as the school needed to be clear how the £16.5k PE premium was allocated. For 2021-22 there was £24.5k in the budget as £8k had been carried forward from a 2020-21 underspend. An important consideration was Year 6 swimming outcomes. 100% of Year 6 this year had achieved the required national standard, which was an excellent result, but this was not currently expected for the children now in Year 5. In response to this, some extra funding had been set aside for private swimming lessons. The PE spending plan now included £4k for the HLTA’s SEND PE input, £4k for Forest School, and funding to bring in tuition for archery, football and cricket after-school clubs.

***Q/C: Governors asked whether, if the NoR fell to 57, the school would still be able to afford its TAs.*** DJ replied that this was certainly questionable. LG added that while it was important to be cautious, there remained many unknown factors making forecasts unpredictable. Mobility rates – parents transferring their children between schools – were at a high level recently. Also, turbulent events internationally, such as the war in Ukraine, meant that the school might need to accommodate refugee children at some stage.

***Q/C***: ***Governors asked LG why she thought mobility rates were so high.*** She replied that it was about parental mindset – they seemed to have become more reactive and ready to take their children out of one school and send them to another – and all schools needed to emphasise the importance to parents of consistency and continuity, and therefore of keeping their children at their current school and addressing problems up front.

***Q/C***: ***Governors asked if any Covid Catch-up funding would have to be returned.*** LG confirmed this, but reassured Governors that this was a minimal amount.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Outturn was unanimously agreed by the Governing Body.

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.

* Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy (GB and ER)
* Code of Conduct for Staff (JM and WM)
* Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy (DJ and AS)
* Financial Procedures Policy (reviewed by FEPC on 21-6-22).

In addition, Governors proposed that the school’s strapline of *Learning together to be the best that we can be* should be added to every policy. This was agreed. **ACTION: JA**

1. **Governance issues**

*Pupil and Parent Voice:* A draft of the Parent Survey was in the pack. Governors were asked for their comments and suggestions**. Q/C: Governors asked if the survey could be completed online; if the survey was optional; and if responses were anonymous.** LG replied in the affirmative to all three questions, and added that the questions in the survey were standardised Ofsted questions. JM suggested the survey should be sent to parents from the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors jointly. This was agreed. The survey would be sent to parents the following week.

*Governors’ Day:* JM asked Governors for their thoughts and reflections on the 6 June Governors’ day. They replied with the following:

* *The day was excellent – a real joy to be in school. We saw Forest School, NELI, the School Council, and all the classes. Relationships between staff and children were warm and friendly, and children were often seen helping each other. Behaviour, and behaviour management, were excellent.*
* *Everyone was very busy – it was very noisy! I was overwhelmed by the logistics of it all, keeping the children moving around. The teachers work so hard.*
* *It was a very pleasurable experience – things have changed a lot since the old days! It was good to see how calmly tricky behaviour was dealt with.*
* *I just observed the Key Stage 1 class. I was amazed at how well three age groups were managed together. I also saw the School Council. I was so impressed with them socially, with their relationships with each other – and with their vocabulary. It was very promising for the future. All Governors should do this.*

LG and AS added that the teachers had enjoyed the day, and liked meeting the Governors. All agreed to repeat the exercise in the Autumn Term. **ACTION: JM/ LG**

*Governor Training:* JM reinforced how important it was for all Governors to complete the online Equality and Diversity Training to which she had sent links. It was a statutory obligation for Governors to understand their duties under the Equality Act 2010, and to be able to evidence how the school complied with these duties. These were specified by the Public Sector Equality Duty, which required all public bodies to:

1. have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
2. advance equality of opportunity, and:
3. foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

Public bodies also needed to be mindful of the Specific Duties under the Act, which were to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics as defined by the act were: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex.

Governors needed to be able to think of examples where the school complied with these duties, or at least how it might be required to do so. For example, when ‘having due regard to eliminating discrimination’, schools had a legal requirement to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for children or staff with a disability. This could be by ensuring access for people with restricted mobility, or providing texts in braille. There was currently a child in Year 4, for example, who had limited mobility and would soon be moving to the upstairs classroom. She would need to be supported appropriately. An example of ‘advancing equality of opportunity’ might be giving boys additional support with writing, since boys were known to fall behind girls in this area. ‘Fostering good relations’ might happen through PSHE, or in the act of the children writing letters to the child who had been absent from school after some bullying (detailed in Item 10 above). ***Q/C: Governors asked how reasonable adjustments were funded, if they incurred significant expense.*** JM replied that this was a matter for negotiation and cooperation between the school and the Council. The Council was legally obliged to provide every child with schooling, and could potentially assist with funding. They could also potentially secure a school place for a child elsewhere.

In conclusion, JM said that the school’s legal responsibilities for safeguarding and equalities were paramount, and all Governors needed to fully understand those responsibilities. **ACTION: All remaining Governors to complete the two NGA Equality and Diversity courses, and notify JA when they had done so.**

*Governor Monitoring:* ER’s report on EYFS was in the pack. She said that it had been a very encouraging visit, and she had also learnt a lot about her responsibilities as a Link Governor.

*Succession Planning:* JM reminded Governors that there would be Chair and Vice Chair elections at the September FGB, and if they wanted to stand they should notify JA over the Summer. **ACTION: All Governors.** GB notified FGB that she would be standing down as Foundation Governor in May 2023. AM’s current term also ended in May 2023. CG agreed to give some thought to possible candidates for Foundation Governor. **ACTION: CG**

*Vision and Ethos:*JM reported that there would be renewed focus on the Vision in September, in particular the SWOT, strategic priorities and how they linked to the school’s Vision and Ethos.

*2022-23 Calendar of meetings*: JA had drafted a schedule and a copy was in the pack. JM and DJ requested that the March 2023 FEPC meetings be held consecutively on the same day, 28-3-23, to allow sufficient time for budget setting. **ACTION: JA**

1. **Any Other Business:**

*PE report on the school website:* This had already been covered under Item 11.

1. **FGB Forward Plan**

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

1. **Clerk’s Notices**

JA had attended the Dorset Council Clerk’s Briefing on 14-6-22. The focus of the Briefing was: the Clerk’s role in managing exclusions; and the clerk’s role in ensuring Governors keep up-to-date with training. He would add the slides to Sharepoint. **ACTION: JA**

1. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:**
20 September 2022 at 4:30pm.

The meeting closed at 6:30pm.

| Item no. | Action | Owner | By when |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4(i) | Further consider the ideas for promotion of the school as detailed | LG/JM | Next FGB |
| 4(iii) | Circulate draft response to SEND Green Paper | ER | Mid July |
| 4(vi) and 13 | Complete both EDI training courses (via NGA) and notify JA | All remaining Governors | Next FGB |
| 4 (vii) | Complete PREVENT online training (via Gov.UK) and notify JA | All remaining Governors | Next FGB |
| 10 | Set out Action Plan for encouraging parents to apply for Pupil Premium status | LG | Next FGB |
| 10 | Consider appropriate award for Year 6 writing achievement  | LG | Next FGB |
| 11 | Talk to staff about the Wellbeing survey results at the Wellbeing Day | LG/ JM | 2-9-22 |
| 12 | Add school strapline to future policies as they are approved | JA | Ongoing |
| 13 | Plan a Governors’ Day in the Autumn Term | JM/ LG | End of Summer Term |
| 13 | Notify JA over the summer if you intend to stand as Chair or Vice Chair | All Governors | Next FGB |
| 13 | Think about possible Foundation Governor candidates | CG | Next FGB |
| 13 | Amend Calendar of meetings as detailed | JA/ LG | Next FGB |
| 15 | Add Clerk’s Briefing slides to Sharepoint | JA | Next FGB |