



Powerstock CE VA Primary School

Learning together to be the best that we can be

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held in school at 4:30pm on 26 March 2024

Present: David Jones DJ (Chair), Wendy Morris WM (Vice Chair), Nick Harris NH (Headteacher), Elizabeth Rutherford ER, Sam Van Zyl SV, David Bligh DB, Laura Scarlett LS.

In Attendance: John Alexander JA (Clerk), Barbara Poole BP (prospective foundation governor).

Q/C = Question/ Challenge.

1. Welcome and Prayer

DJ welcomed all to the meeting, in particular BP, and LS gave the opening prayer.

2. Apologies

Baffy Turner BT, Rev. Chris Grasske CG.

3. Minutes of 20 February 2024 FGB

These were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising and Action Plan

- i) *NH to contact Dorset Council's Highways Service to make further enquiries and representations about road safety markings outside the school:* COMPLETED. Zig-zag markings would soon be added.
- ii) *NH to update the First Aid Policy appendix showing the First Aid training current staff had completed:* COMPLETED.
- iii) *All governors to speak to DJ outside of the meeting, or in confidence to JA, if they had concerns about the future leadership of the Board.* COMPLETED. No concerns had been raised.
- iv) *DJ/ NH to discuss governor roles and visit protocols.* COMPLETED. To be discussed at Item 13.

5. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business and Declaration of Interests

None.

6. Correspondence

None.

7. Introduction from the Chair

DJ said that most of his input would be reserved for Item 13. However, he did report that as well as BP, another prospective Foundation Governor was expected in September, and Parent Governor elections were currently underway.

8. Headteacher's Report

NH's written report was included in the pack, and a number of questions had been raised prior to the meeting, along with some supplementary questions during the meeting itself. At the meeting, these were responded to as follows:

Q/C: Governors noted that while Burton class had 96.7% attendance and Cogden class had 94.7%, Seatown was somewhat lower at 90.6%, with more than three times the level of unauthorised absence than the other two classes. They asked for an explanation of this. NH replied that the Seatown figures were disproportionately skewed by two persistent absentees. Some of these absences were due to sickness and some due to 'refusal' to come to school – the school had been told this was because the child was 'too tired' to attend. There were no obvious or consistent triggers for this absence. Individual pupils' attendance was closely monitored and support offered where needed. There were currently very few cases of parents taking their children out of school for holidays.

Q/C: Governors noted that a weekly attendance award had been introduced, whereby the class with the highest percentage across the week got 15 minutes extra play the following week, or 30 minutes for 100% attendance. They asked for reassurance that these awards would not negatively affect SEND pupils and pupils with medical needs. NH replied that the awards were about celebrating team achievements rather than focusing on individuals. The impact of the awards would be closely monitored.

Q/C: Governors noted that SVZ had agreed to take on the PE Subject Leader role and would receive Subject Leader time each week to enable her to develop the PE curriculum and co-ordinate more sporting events. They asked if PE Premium funding would fit with this work, and also whether the funding could be used for Forest School activities. NH replied that the PE Premium was an excellent fit with SVZ's work, which had a focus on developing leadership through sports and linked to the Bronze Ambassador programme which sought to develop young leaders by giving them the responsibility of being an ambassador for PE and school sport. Forest School also fitted well with these priorities and PE Premium could be used to contribute to Forest School activity.

Q/C: Governors noted that Pupil Premium (PP) children were now identified on the Pupils Support Grids (PSGs) so that their progress in core subjects could be closely monitored. They would also receive 20 minutes of 1-1 or 1-2 extra adult time in core subjects each week beyond that of other pupils. This would be indicated in their books using a 'PP' mark, on the PSGs, and they would be identified on all planning. Governors asked how NH would ensure that this process was happening during the Summer Term. They also noted that there had been a complaint about the PP notification in a pupil's book, expressing the concern that it identified and potentially stigmatised the pupil as being of this status. NH replied that Subject Leaders would check all the pupils' books to ensure the protocol was being adhered to. No stigma was implied; it just recorded that the support had been provided.

Q/C: Governors noted the SIAMS report from Steve Cowdery following his meeting with NH on 8-3-24. They suggested that the Good Shepherd vision needed refining as it was difficult for young children to identify as a shepherd (or, for that matter, a sheep). NH agreed that the vision needed work, although he also circulated some good work by pupils in which they articulated the qualities of a good shepherd. Overall, he suggested that focused work on SIAMS could be a key role for an RE Link Governor. The next SIAMS inspection was expected in the Summer Term.

Governors also discussed recent staffing developments. Jess Allsop, Cogden's TA who also provided ELSA support across the school, had recently left. Katy Hutchings (Admin Officer) and Sarah Gibson (Lunchtime Assistant) were also leaving. Adverts and interview dates had already been actioned for a new Admin Officer and Lunchtime Assistant, but it was proposed that the TA vacancy would not be filled due to budgetary pressures. Also, in Burton class, it had been planned to recruit a TA for 10.5 hours per week, starting at Easter. However, it was not now proposed to go ahead with this recruitment, also due to budgetary pressures. With regard to the now vacant ELSA role, the ELSA programme would now be discontinued, and instead all TAs

would be trained in the Hamish and Milo programme, which had been created to support children's mental health through a range of emotional themes. These programmes ran for a ten week period, and were comprised of weekly sessions covering areas such as anxiety, friendship, self-esteem, sadness and anger. Implementation of the programme would deliver a saving to the school of £13k pa. **Q/C: Governors asked if many other schools used the Hamish and Milo approach.** NH replied that many did, and the experience of other schools was that the feedback from support staff children and parents about the quality of the training and the impact of the work had been very positive. Support staff would be given supervision and impacts would be monitored and reported.

9. Safeguarding

There were no safeguarding issues to report at this meeting.

10. Report of Committees from the Chairs:

Finance Environment and Premises Committee 26-3-24: DB gave verbal feedback from the meeting earlier that afternoon. The Committee had recommended the 2024-25 budget to FGB, details of which were in the pack. The main pressure on the budget remained relatively low pupil numbers. For the Reception class in September 2024 the school currently only had four known first preferences. One pupil in Year 1 had left at Christmas 2023, and eight Year 6 pupils would be leaving in July 2024. With one possible addition into Year 4, an NoR of 54 was anticipated. Data from Dorset Business Intelligence suggested that future years would show a steady decline in pupil numbers and the consequent reduction in main delegated funding. Public Relations (PR) work was therefore critical as the school needed to attract more pupils. Possibilities discussed included a more visible presence for the school, with its branding on show on buses and at sporting events and school visits, and a greater presence in local media. A revamped website was also discussed. LS agreed to supply NH with information about how to contribute to Eggarston News. **ACTION: LS.** Governors also discussed if the new admin officer could have PR initiatives included in her role. NH agreed that this should be considered.

ACTION: NH.

FGB accepted the Committee's recommendation. The budget would now be submitted to Dorset Council by 31-4-24.

11. Report from Policies Sub-Group 27-2-24

The Policies Sub-Group approved the following policies on behalf of the Governing Body.

- Complaints Policy 2024-25
- Data Protection Policy 2024-25
- Exclusions Policy 2024-26
- Teacher Appraisal and Capability Policy 2024-27

As requested by the sub-group, JA had confirmed with LS that she was content to be named as the Data Protection officer for that policy.

12. Policy Review

The following policies were reviewed by Governors and were approved:

- Early Careers Teachers Policy 2024-25
- Grievance Resolution Procedure 2024-25
- SEND Policy 2024-25

The EYFS Policy 2024-25 had been recently approved by ER on behalf of the Governing Body.

13. Governance Issues

Revised Governor Link Roles: DJ circulated a document proposing revised link roles and protocols for governors. Proposals included having a single link governor for each teacher, covering all those subjects for which that teacher was Subject Leader. This was agreed.

Q/C: Governors said that there should be a link governor for Forest School. This was agreed.

Q/C: Governors discussed whether there should be a link governor for support staff. NH agreed to consider this. **ACTION: NH.**

Q/C: Governors asked why SIAMS had been identified as a priority area for visits. NH replied that this was because it was the school's duty, as a church school, to ensure a Christian ethos permeates every aspect of the school.

A revised template for governor visit reports was circulated, and governors were asked to submit any comments on this by the end of April. **ACTION: All governors.**

Various revisions and additions to link roles were discussed and agreed, and DJ agreed to summarise these by the end of April and circulate them to governors. **ACTION: DJ.** Governors agreed that everyone needed to complete a visit in the Summer Term. All reports should be submitted to NH immediately on completion for actioning. **ACTION: All Governors.**

NGA Skills Audit: A template for governors to complete for the NGA Skills Audit 2024 was included in the pack. Governors were asked to complete this and send it to JA by the end of May. **ACTION: All Governors.**

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

25 June 2024, 4:30pm.

At the close of the meeting, DJ paid tribute to the many years of hard work, expertise and dedication to the school of former Chair of Governors Jo Moss, who had now stepped down as Associate Governor. Her contributions to the school would be greatly missed.

The meeting closed at 6:30pm.

Item no.	Action	Owner	By when
10	Supply NH with information about how to contribute to Eggardon News.	LS	Next FGB
10	Consider if the new admin officer could have PR initiatives included in her role	NH	Next FGB
13	A revised template for governor visit reports was circulated, and governors were asked to submit any comments on this	All governors	Next FGB
13	Various revisions and additions to link roles were discussed and agreed, and DJ agreed to summarise these by the end of April and circulate them to governors.	DJ	End April
13	All reports should be submitted to NH immediately on completion for actioning.	All governors	Ongoing

Item no.	Summary of Governor Questions & Challenges
8	Governors noted that while Burton class had 96.7% attendance and Cogden class had 94.7%, Seatown was somewhat lower at 90.6%, with more than three times the level of unauthorised absence than the other two classes. They asked for an explanation of this.
8	Governors noted that a weekly attendance award had been introduced, whereby the class with the highest percentage across the week got 15 minutes extra play the following week, or 30 minutes for 100% attendance. They asked for reassurance that these awards would not negatively affect SEND pupils and pupils with medical needs.
8	Governors noted that SVZ had agreed to take on the PE Subject Leader role and would receive Subject Leader time each week to enable her to develop the PE curriculum and co-ordinate more sporting events. They asked if PE Premium funding would fit with this work, and also whether the funding could be used for Forest School activities.
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