



**Minutes of the Avenue Junior School**  
**Full Governing Board Virtual Meeting**  
**on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 6pm**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:** Nania Poulson, Mike Grimble, Debbie Dismore (EHT)  
Lisa Crossman, Ally Ireson, Sam Rowbury, Rachel Paley, Mike Hooper (H of S) - Associate Member, Baiba Zivtins, Jo Thompson, Sian Jones, Graham Moss.

**Clerk: Sheila Lewis-Smith**

			Action Log	
Date / Item	Item	Details	By Whom	When
22/2/21	7	Action Point 1: To discuss the format of GB meetings from September 2021 – Summer 2 FGB meeting agenda item.	Clerk	12/7/21
	7c	Action Point 2: Anti-Racism Policy to be amended as suggested.	DD	ASAP
	9a	Action Point 3: Margaret Bird's initials need replacing with AI in the Matrix.	JT	ASAP

No	Item
1	<b>Welcome and Apologies / Consent for Absences</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No absences</li> <li>• MG was Chair.</li> <li>• The meeting was quorate.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Declaration of Business/Pecuniary Interests or Conflict of Interest</b> <b>2a. Any new declarations</b> <b>2b. For items on this agenda.</b>  2a. None declared. 2b. None declared.
3	<b>Minutes of meeting on 7th December 2020 – approval</b> a. <b>Approval of Minutes from 7th December 2020</b> b. <b>Approval of Confidential Minutes from 7th December 2020</b> (To be taken after Item 11)

	<p>a. Approval of Minutes from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021. <b>Approved by FGB.</b> To be signed off by NP.</p> <p>b. Approval of Confidential Minutes from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021. <b>Approved by FGB.</b> To be signed off by NP.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the previous meeting (not on agenda)</b></p> <p>12/10/20</p> <p>Action Point 2: DD to consider the position of co-opting another member of staff to the governing board. <b>Completed.</b></p> <p>7/12/20</p> <p>Action Point 1: Clerk to add Data Headlines to FGB meeting agenda for 22nd February 2021.<b>Completed</b></p> <p>Action Point 2: Clerk to add PP report on TLP Committee agendas as a standing item. <b>Competed.</b></p> <p><i>NP joined the meeting.</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Headteacher's report and questions. To include DfE Analyse School Performance – implications for AJS - "Coronavirus (COVID-19): school and college accountability 2020 to 2021"</b></p> <p>Following the government briefing stating that schools will open to all pupils on 8<sup>th</sup> March, DD confirmed that the school were well prepared. A few Risk Assessments need to be added – covid testing for teachers, which will be available for governors to review by next week.</p> <p><b>Q: Have unions provided their views and advice on re-opening?</b> A: They have sent a joint letter to the government and are asking for vaccinations for staff and medical evidence of the safety of re-opening in this way.</p> <p><b>Q: Do teachers feel that being in school is substantively different from the first re-opening and do they have any reservations?</b> A: Staff are encouraged to speak to the Senior Leadership team to voice any concerns. They will be consulted over the Risk Assessment. It has been known for some time that 8<sup>th</sup> March was likely to be the date of a full return of pupils.</p> <p><b>Q: How do DD and MH feel about the full opening?</b> A: Excited but the responsibility to do it safely weighs heavily. The staff are used to working in the bubbles. Staff are conducting 2 lateral flow tests a week and a number have also been vaccinated. By mid-April, more staff will be eligible for the vaccine as they fall into the target categories. The main aim would be to get the children socialising again, as a priority.</p> <p><b>Q: The school is not considering a phased return?</b> A: No, the directive is to open on 8<sup>th</sup> March but there may be a union response to this.</p> <p><b>Q: Will the Remote learning offer and on-line teaching remain in place?</b> A: Yes, it has to remain but there will be less live teaching.</p> <p><b>Q: What has been the attendance in recent weeks?</b> A: An average of 158 pupils, but not all of them are in for all of the days. Some bubbles are full and others have spaces.</p>

	<p><b>Q: Any exclusions?</b> A: Not since before Christmas.</p> <p>There has been a focus on children deemed to be vulnerable. Three children with a Social Worker all attend regularly, which is reported to the LA on a weekly basis. The school also looks at the next tier of vulnerable children such as those with Early Help, Family Support worker etc. The school is working with two families to encourage the children to attend school.</p> <p><b>Q: What percentage of parents do you think will hold their children back from returning to school for whatever reason on 8<sup>th</sup> March?</b></p> <p>A: Last time one family were reluctant to return. There may be some families who will want to assess the situation for a couple of weeks. We will work with families in an understanding and sympathetic manner. Attendance was good before Christmas; one child struggled to return but the school engaged professional support to assist.</p> <p><b>Q: Hard-to-reach families have obviously benefitted from the current measures – is this something that could be maintained?</b></p> <p>A: There are children who have benefitted from the smaller groups with increased contact with their teachers. The use of DoJo from September has been a vehicle for increased communication. Governors agreed this had been successful and a lifeline. DD said that the take-up of Yoga on-line showed that activities did not have to be physically run at school to engage children and families. A Rubik's Cube club and watercolour clubs had been similarly successful.</p> <p><b>Q: We have a “no homework” policy; is this something we should revisit if children are engaging so well with remote learning?</b></p> <p>A: The school did not wish to issue homework but might look at home learning as a way of supporting or extending learning. MH would prefer to provide family sessions e.g. art. SJ observed that the Zoom Parent – Teacher meetings had been very successful.</p> <p><b>Q: How is staff wellbeing being supported?</b></p> <p>A: We have provided Mindfulness meditation and on-line Yoga which helps with any sense of isolation. Midday Supervisory staff have been particularly keen to take part in anything that is offered. DD has received emails of gratitude. There has been some take-up of individual counselling. The next step is to train Mental Health First Aiders.</p>
<b>6</b>	<b>SEF – Update / information</b>
	<p>Governors considered that the school had judged itself harshly but appreciated that the school had little hard evidence due to the pandemic. DD said there had been good progress in the actions highlighted by the last review of the SEF in spite of the pandemic – the writing improvements in a year had been phenomenal thanks to the English Lead teachers. Curriculum development had continued and everything was going in the right direction. NP suggested that the word “developing” be changed to “embedding” to reflect how much progress had been made. Governors agreed the SEF was an accurate snapshot.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Committee action points and recommendations including policy reviews</b></p> <p>a. <b>Resources:</b> <b>Budget Revision 3</b></p> <p>Spending is in line with priorities. Subject Leads have been asked for requests to ensure subjects are fully resourced. Grounds maintenance costs and some work identified during a playground inspection will increase costs. The surplus is over the permitted 8% but the LA are</p>

	<p>having a degree of tolerance over the surplus figure this year. By Year 3, the school should have an increase in funding. The Teachers' Pay grant will be included in the formula. Budget share information is due to be received by the end of the week, with a budget setting meeting due to be held in two weeks' time.</p> <p>Line E30 - £20K to be altered to £25K as this is the amount transferred to Capital budget to support proposed remodelling project. It was not possible transfer this money back, so a careful decision had been made.</p> <p>It has not been possible to spend all the Pupil Premium and Sports Premium funding but it was noted that this is only allowed to be carried over for one year, and then it needs to be spent.</p> <p><b>Q: How critical is the decreasing funding due to lower pupil numbers going to be over the three years?</b></p> <p>A: Year 3 cohorts have been low for 3 years. Year 2 of the budget is calculated on 462 pupils, which is 18 under the capacity of 480. Recreation Road Infant School is not sending up all 120 of its cohort, as some parents choose other schools and some go into Special Education provision.</p> <p><b>Q: When will this become an issue?</b></p> <p>A: When we can no longer afford 16 teachers. The school remains committed to ensuring class numbers remain at no more than 30 per class. The surplus could support temporary funding issues.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b></p> <p>A Staffing Structure for September had been agreed by the Resources Committee.</p> <p><b>Premises issues</b></p> <p>The school are looking into the possibility of remodelling an area to create more space in the school for group work.</p> <p><b>SFVS</b></p> <p>This is a dashboard format that provides benchmarking information. Any areas not coded as "green" should be examined. Most of the spends are in line with others. The in-year balance as a percentage of the total income is coded amber. This is monitored as part of the budgeting process. Pupil to adult ratio is in highest 20% of schools although other staffing ratios are in line. This is the DfE's approach to benchmarking but there is a lag, as the school's data is current but the DfE are comparing it to data that is 18 months to 2 years old. MG advised that all governors needed to be aware of this document.</p> <p><b>Policies</b></p> <p><b>Governors' Expenses Policy -Statutory Approved</b></p> <p>The policy remains the same.</p> <p><b>Q: Thinking about being an inclusive governing board, should we include providing access to technology if this held back people from applying to be a governor?</b></p> <p>A: This would help the board become more diverse. The school has laptops available but some families struggle to get internet connection at home.</p> <p>Governors discussed the future of Governing Board meetings and considered whether there should be a balance of virtual and physical meetings. A blended approach would make it easier for new governors to join in and contribute. MG noted that turnout for virtual meetings was greater when they were held on-line. The complexities of becoming a governor</p>
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	<p>and understanding the role was raised, especially when meetings were only virtual. JT said that the board should consider how they present themselves and the virtual platforms gave this opportunity.</p> <p><b>Action Point 1: To discuss the format of GB meetings from September 2021 – Summer 2 FGB meeting agenda item.</b></p> <p><b>Lettings Policy – non-statutory Approved.</b></p> <p><b>Q: Is there an intent to make a profit from lettings or is it altruistic at £20 an hour?</b></p> <p>A: No, it is really to support the community. There is only one let to a Yoga class, in normal circumstances. It creates a sense of inclusion.</p> <p><b>Q: How are lettings advertised?</b></p> <p>A: In newsletters. Given the current restrictions and additional costs to lettings, nothing will be considered for the remainder of the school year.</p> <p>JT said that there would be Access Sports funding available in due course. This can also be used for cleaning and sanitising costs.</p> <p><b>b. Teaching, Learning and Pupil Well-being:</b></p> <p><b>Data Headlines (Action Point from previous FGB meeting)</b></p> <p>The committee had received a full and detailed data analysis from MH, which is included in the minutes of the meeting. The data was from the Autumn term. There had been disruption to learning due to self-isolating for both Year 3 and Year 5. There is no progress data for Year 3, as there were no SATs for them at the end of Year 2.</p> <p>Maths has held up, possibly due to the previous improvements made in the past few years. Writing has gone down, which was anticipated. There is to be a drive to push up standards in the middle years, with support from VNET.</p> <p>There are impressive and detailed plans to address the issues raised.</p> <p>DD said that there was a need to get to grips with the vulnerable children and how they had fallen behind. Some children who have been in school have received support but with others the gap is widening. NP said it was obvious that the non-disadvantaged were holding their own at present.</p> <p>BZ and Elliot Thorne, English Subject leaders, were praised and thanked for the excellent work they had done to raise standards in writing during the last year.</p> <p><b>c. Policies (For FGB information only)</b></p> <p><b>Wellbeing Policy – Information, non-statutory</b></p> <p><b>Anti-Racism – for stakeholder/governor consultation, non-statutory.</b></p> <p>DD said that the next stage was to consult with the community on this policy.</p> <p>It was suggested that the reference to Red Card on page 2 should be made clear that this is an external charity. Also, job titles on page 3 do not reflect current titles in school. It was also suggested that the Resource suggestions should be added to the website under both "About Us" and "Parents" tabs.</p> <p><b>Action Point 2: Anti-Racism Policy to be amended as suggested.</b></p> <p>Governors briefly asked how the website was updated; this is done by Creative Corner for a fee. Staff contribute to the content.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Governor Membership / Matters</b></p> <p>a. <b>Vacancies – 1 x Parent Governor, 1 x LA Governor, 2-3 x Co-opted. Update.</b></p> <p>b. <b>To consider Appointment of a governor</b></p>

	<p>a. It was agreed not to pursue the appointment of a Parent governor and LA governor at this time.</p> <p>b. Governors approved the appointment of staff member Farah Rehman (Teaching Assistant) as a Co-Opted governor. Proposed by NP and seconded by MG. It was noted that Farah Rehman would take on the governor lead for Anti-Racism. Governors approved the appointment of Nick Thornton (teacher) as an Associate Member to serve on Resources Committee.</p> <p>It was suggested that Induction training via Governor Hub should be a condition of appointment.</p>
9	<p><b>Governor monitoring, Development and Training</b></p> <p>a. Governor Monitoring Matrix – update on any monitoring activities.</p> <p>b. Training – update on Educator Solutions training packages undertaken.</p>
	<p>a. JT had uploaded a new Monitoring Matrix. Actions are mostly on track with a few areas delayed due to the covid restrictions. Governors discussed what it was possible to monitor remotely. It was mooted that governors could join in with on-line learning. However, this would involve safeguarding issues if governors were included in DoJo groups. It was agreed that it would be possible to be sent links for governors to look at examples of work and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Action Point 3: Margaret Bird's initials need replacing with AI in the Matrix. It was noted that AI is holding the role of SEND governor on a temporary basis.</p> <p>b. Headteacher Performance Management Part 1 – NP. Supporting Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health - Governors for Schools – LC and SLS Finance training – RP Effective Monitoring – RP DfE Benchmarking and Integrated Curriculum &amp; Financial Planning training – DD and MG.</p> <p>NP is due to undertake Safeguarding training via a webcast on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Finance training modules will be available on Governor Hub from April.</p>
10	<p><b>Correspondence - Ofsted</b></p> <p>The school had received a call from Ofsted, in response to a complaint regarding the Remote Learning offer, that had been made directly to them. MH had spoken to Ofsted and requested that the parent should contact the school to raise their concerns, so they could be addressed; governors noted that no such approach has been received.</p> <p>All aspects of the Remote Learning offer were seen by Ofsted to be in place and confirmed that it is for schools to decide the proportion of live teaching.</p> <p>The written response from Ofsted had been made available to governors on Governor Hub. MG noted that this exercise had provided a triangulation of judgements regarding the quality of the Remote Learning offer and it was good that Ofsted were satisfied.</p>
11	<p><b>Any Other Business – to be notified to the Chair at least 24 hours before the meeting.</b></p> <p>Sports Hall – A grant means that this is still financially viable. It cannot open if there is no one to manage and open it. Meetings continue to be held.</p>
12	<p><b>Confidential Item</b></p> <p>Confidential Minutes were produced for this item.</p>
13	<p><b>Date of the next meeting: 6.00pm 26th April 2021 – Focus on Budget approval.</b></p>

Full meeting including Confidential item closed at 20.05

<b>Signed as a true and accurate record.</b>		<b>Date</b>
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