



**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting for Pulford Lower School, held on 18th October 2023
6pm, school hall**

1.	Registration, Apologies and Prayer	Action
	<p>Present: Mr D Heather (DH), Mr E Price (EP - Chair), Mrs R Horsfield (RH) Mr A Perrott (APe), Mrs B Morley (BM), Mrs S Haines (SH), Ms A Parish (APa), Mrs E Smith (ES), Mrs T Rees (TR), Mrs N Barnett (NB), Ms J Bradley (JB), Mr B Webb (BW), Mother Kirsty Mrs J Gudgeon (Clerk) Apologies: Mrs M Akin-Esho (MA-E), Mr G Huskisson (GH)</p> <p>Mother Kirsty opened in prayer.</p>	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests	
	<p>No new pecuniary interests were declared by board members. Completed forms were requested from all members to ensure records are kept up to date.</p>	
3.	Matters arising from the last meeting's minutes	
	<p>Governor bios for the website have mostly been received, just two are outstanding. Only some board members have supplied a photograph, the board agreed to try a draft with only some governor photos, and those that aren't comfortable having text only.</p> <p>The Communications Working Group is being introduced to parents at an open event on 1st November. All are welcome and EP proposes to recruit a team from that event to take forward the discussion. Governors who are also parents were urged to encourage attendance amongst their fellow parents. APa queried the possibility of setting up a Zoom link for those who are unable to attend in person, but the consensus was that hybrid meetings tend to be difficult to manage. JB questioned whether parents could submit questions in advance, but the purpose of the evening is to be more of an introduction than a pre-considered discussion.</p> <p>EP wrote to Rob Kettle and enclosed a Costa voucher to show thanks on behalf of the school for the voluntary work he has undertaken.</p> <p>NB held a meeting with GH and BM to guide them on making use of the Governor Drive, and notes from the session are available to all governors.</p> <p>SH has had difficulty opening a document sent using a Google Drive link – EP to check she has appropriate access.</p>	
4.	Agree and sign last meeting's minutes	
	<p>The board agreed that the minutes were a true reflection of the previous meeting. EP signed the hard copy of the minutes and DH will file accordingly.</p>	DH
5.	Governor Appointments	
	<p>The following governors put themselves forward for re-election and were agreed by those present, unanimously:</p> <p>Chair – Ed Price Vice Chair – Beci Morley Safeguarding Governor – Sam Haines & Alpha Parish, jointly. Emma Birtles is continuing to mentor AP and SH, as she has a wealth of knowledge, and it is a key role.</p>	

	<p>SEND Governor – Emma Smith</p> <p>Training & Development Governor – no governor appointed, but JG as Clerk to maintain records on governor training and development.</p> <p>Governor Appointments over the past 12 months were noted: Emma Smith, Alpha Parish, Sam Haines and Jennie Bradley.</p> <p>Governor Resignations in the past 12 months also noted: Lisa Jacobs, Rev Cate Irvine and Emma Birtles</p> <p>BM suggested she would send a note and token of thanks to Emma Birtles in appreciation of all she did as governor. This was supported by the board.</p>																													
6.	Annual Reviews																													
	<p>The Instrument of Governance was approved by the board with no amendments.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the Curriculums & Standards and Resources Committees have been reviewed at their recent meetings. APe presented terms of reference for a new Pay & Personnel committee, as recommended by the resources committee. This will cover areas which currently fall within the Resources Committee terms of reference but are not fully complied with. The new committee was agreed by the board.</p> <p>The Pay & Personnel Committee will meet once a year in November to ratify pay proposals made by the Headteacher. The committee requires 3 non-staff governors. APe, APa and NB put themselves forward for the committee. EP ruled himself out as Chair but should be included on the Pay Appeals Committee. JG to update the Committee grid.</p> <p>Governor Subject Links. Governors confirmed they were happy to continue with their subject links as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="204 1003 660 1592"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Link Governor</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RE</td> <td>Nikki Barnett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Science</td> <td>Emma Smith</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PHSE</td> <td>Nikki Barnett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Geography</td> <td>Geoff Huskisson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>History</td> <td>Geoff Huskisson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EYFS</td> <td>Mabel Akin-Esho</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>Beci Morley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Art/D&T</td> <td>Sam Haines</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Music</td> <td>Edward Price</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PE</td> <td>Edward Price</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Computing</td> <td>Alpha Parish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Numeracy</td> <td>Mabel Akin-Esho</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SEN</td> <td>Emma Smith</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>JB volunteered to take over Modern Foreign Languages from EP. JG to update records.</p>	Subject	Link Governor	RE	Nikki Barnett	Science	Emma Smith	PHSE	Nikki Barnett	Geography	Geoff Huskisson	History	Geoff Huskisson	EYFS	Mabel Akin-Esho	English	Beci Morley	Art/D&T	Sam Haines	Music	Edward Price	PE	Edward Price	Computing	Alpha Parish	Numeracy	Mabel Akin-Esho	SEN	Emma Smith	<p>JG</p> <p>JG</p>
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7.	Chairs Report																													
	<p>EP confirmed that no emergency actions have been undertaken since the last meeting.</p> <p>EP reminded governors that visits to the school are welcomed, both for their subject links and visits can also be undertaken specifically relating to the School Improvement Plan and school vision. He offered his appreciation to DH for allowing the governors an open afternoon on the day of the meeting; those who attended found it enjoyable and informative.</p> <p>EP reminded governors to submit requests for any training courses which interest them, or which they feel would benefit them as a governor. Governors are to report any training undertaken to JG, to keep an accurate record. EP would like to review this at the next FGB, in order to identify any gaps in training.</p>	<p>JG</p>																												

8.	Headteachers Report	
	<p>Governors were provided the statutory information not covered within the committees prior to the meeting. DH summarised as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Numbers of children enrolled continues to be high, with waiting lists for the lower age year groups and a lot of visits from parents interested in applying for their children to join the school. ● Attendance continues to be lower than historical figures, but this is a nationally recognised trend. In comparison to other local schools, Pulford has the second highest attendance in the town. The increase in term time holidays continues, and whilst DH acknowledged the financial drive behind this, it does have a real impact on children’s education. The attendance level for year 1 last year was one of the lowest ever. The school continues to work hard to promote good attendance. ● Staff changes: Mrs M Quick has moved from KS1 to EYFS. Miss P Hicklin has moved from Pre-school to KS1 and commences teacher training, which Pulford will support her through. Her practical experience is showing through and feedback from parents is very positive. Mrs H Brown returns to Oak from maternity leave after half term. There have been problems recruiting suitable TAs, which has caused some angst among staff. One TA is on long-term sick leave. ● School meals: the uptake continues to be good and there has been considerable improvement in the provision. JB queried the decision to cease providing grab bags for the winter term. DH advised they wish to focus on ensuring children have at least one hot meal a day, and that the school make a loss on grab bags. He did encourage any parents with specific issues, such as allergies, to contact Alison Quick. ● There have been no exclusions. 	
9.	School Improvement Plan (SIP)	
	<p>DH briefly ran through how the SIP is created: Middle & Senior leaders meet to review the previous year and set new objectives for the year ahead. This is carried into the Headteacher management review, and the SIP is created. It is then put to the governing board; the curriculums and standards committee can discuss it at more depth, then it needs to be approved by the full board. DH emphasised that the creation of new objectives does not mean the previous year’s objectives have been completed, and these continue to be worked on alongside the new focus.</p> <p>The Objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whole school review into effective communication with parents: this has been discussed above, but DH stressed that it is a whole school initiative and covers all communication between staff, parents and governors. ● Improve outcomes in writing: lack of resilience in writing is a nationally recognised difficulty at present. ● To embed wellbeing practices within the school so that staff achieve a better work life balance. This is discussed in further depth later in the meeting within the staff survey. ● To promote effective parental engagement with reading at home. An anecdotal survey among students suggests parental engagement with reading is at an all-time low. This is also a national trend: the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducted a country-wide survey on years 3 & 4 and highlighted the key challenges facing schools as: Parental engagement, attendance, and PSED – in which year 3 and 4 are still below age-related expected levels. Younger children, who were still in early years when disrupted by COVID, have regained the age-related expected levels of personal and emotional development. ● To further embed the school vision - Faith, Hope and Love. The vision was implemented over the last year, and now needs to be further embedded. 	

	<p>DH confirmed that PSED continues to be worked on, alongside diversity – two objectives from last year’s SIP. He highlighted, however, that the most recent diversity group communications were left to just him and MA-E. Without engagement from others, the committee becomes useless. DH urged governors again to promote involvement, otherwise decisions must be made on behalf of different social groups without any opportunity for consultation.</p> <p>The SIP will be an agenda item at each FGB meeting to monitor progress.</p> <p>ES queried the budget allowance/cost implications for each item, the box for which remains empty. DH advised that the SIP requires approval by the board and then this will be considered. There are, however, considerable difficulties in attributing a cost to these items. Ultimately the school budget for the current year is still not completed as salary increases have not been agreed and the local authority have not advised on the cost of energy, so these items remain estimates. Without these, it is impossible to know what funds are available to be committed to the objectives. It will, however, be considered by DH and completed when possible.</p> <p>Prior to the meeting ES queried by email whether the responses to the two surveys recently undertaken by the governors could be fed into the SIP but the timing meant the SIP was already formulated before results were received. There is, however, some correlation between the objectives, particularly number 3, and the staff survey results, which is encouraging that the SIP has identified appropriate objectives.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Report</p>	
	<p>DH met with SH in Summer, and APa more recently to go through the framework generated by Emma Birtles. This involves reviewing policies and any other statutory requirements.</p> <p>They also looked at any individual safeguarding cases which DH felt should be brought to the attention of a governor. SH and APa then did spot checks on the safeguarding records and looked at Health & Safety. All information is contained within the safeguarding report. APe pointed out that the report names Emma Birtles in point 5. DH to amend.</p> <p>Their discussions highlighted that the bullying/behaviour policies should be reviewed.</p>	<p>DH</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Committee and Subject Link Updates</p>	
	<p>The Appeals & Admissions Committee, and Discipline Committee have not met.</p> <p><u>Resources Committee</u></p> <p>APe had nothing major to report from the resources committee meeting. The budget remains largely unchanged and as mentioned previously, there are still two major unknowns. The committee would benefit from an additional non-staff member in order to remain quorate in the event that another member is unable to make it. JB volunteered to join both the Resources and C&S committee. BM will try to observe the next Resources meeting with a view to joining.</p> <p><u>Curriculums & Standards Committee</u></p> <p>BM had nothing major to report from the meeting. She highlighted from her written report that it is clear from the attainment data why some areas have been included in the SIP.</p> <p>EP highlighted that the leaders and middle leaders hold half termly meetings to review assessment data and identify where intervention is required. Governors are welcome to attend these meetings to obtain a greater understanding of how data is analysed and used. The dates will be circulated to all governors. Governors should inform DH in advance if they hope to attend.</p> <p><u>SEN Report</u></p> <p>This was reported and reviewed in more detail at the C&S meeting. ES didn’t have any points which needed to be highlighted to the board. No queries were raised.</p> <p><u>Subject Link reports</u></p> <p>GH’s report on his History & Geography visit was acknowledged and appreciated.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Policy Reviews</p>	
	<p><u>Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy</u></p> <p>Approved by the board.</p>	

	<p><u>Child on Child Abuse Policy</u> Approved by the board.</p>	
13.	Staff Survey	
	<p>DH reviewed the results. He noted that there were only 20 respondents which equated to about 40% of staff. Staff had added comments, but these were not shared with the board to protect the anonymity of staff.</p> <p>The survey underlined a need to review the behaviour policy, which will be discussed and reviewed.</p> <p>Results regarding the presence of the Senior Leadership Team indicate a discussion needs to be had with staff about expectation. When the school moved to a 45 student intake, it required all staff to be involved in teaching. It may be necessary to review that model to give the SLT more availability.</p> <p>NB queried whether the size of the SLT is small in comparison to other schools. DH advised that it is hard to compare as it is unique to each school, and BW advised that the spend on SLT is comparable.</p> <p>To take these results forward DH and EP will hold a meeting to try and tease out more detail, and the best course of action going forward. Whilst the overall result is encouraging, it is important that those who do not feel positive about the school are heard and the problems are addressed. DH feels that certain results are attributable to specific events that occurred prior to completion of the survey and that a repeat survey would likely read differently.</p> <p>AP proposed a second survey to provide a clearer view and remove the speculation regarding the influence of specific events. The board agreed that a second survey would be beneficial in due course. DH and EP need to discuss the results first and EP will present the results of this discussion to the board. This will allow a further survey to be more focussed.</p> <p>EP will write an email to staff to thank them for their feedback. He will acknowledge that there are things that need to be addressed and aim to reassure staff that the governors are listening and taking action, not just ticking a box with the staff survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify areas for improvement therefore it is important not to shy away from the negatives.</p> <p>It was also proposed that if there are one or two members of staff that are seriously unhappy (as indicated by the relatively consistent level of negative responses across the questionnaire) they should be given the opportunity to sit down with one or two governors to air their complaints. RH clarified that she feels staff are aware of the option to speak to governors and agreed that a prompt response to staff from EP would be beneficial.</p> <p>NB queried whether the school has considered appointing a Mental Health Lead – she understands grants are available to assist with training costs. DH advised that this has not been considered but could be something for the future.</p> <p>None of the SLT were able to understand where criticisms regarding professional training arose from – no course requests have been turned down. TR highlighted a difficulty procuring courses, but this is out of the school’s control.</p> <p>EP offered his thanks to those who spent time putting the survey together and reiterated that it is a valuable tool for the governing board.</p> <p>SH queried whether a question was included regarding staff opinion of the governing board. It wasn’t as there was a long list of questions which had to be narrowed down and prioritised, but it was agreed that should be included in the next survey, when other questions should be more focussed so fewer in number.</p>	
14.	Board Effectiveness Review	
	<p>APa gave an overview of the results of the board effectiveness review.</p> <p>The results indicate that the board feels satisfied that the Governance culture, Governance leadership, Size of board, Delegation of work and accountability are all successfully managed.</p> <p>There are some areas with room for improvement, or possibly warranting a review:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no governance professional in an advisory role at present. JG is considering options regarding seeking further training with the potential to move towards a more advisory role. • The recent skills audit needs to be reviewed and analysed. • Vision and ethos of the board is generated from the top, whereas introduction to governance training suggests that this should be generated as a group. • There isn't a clear and measurable strategic aim for the board, should there be one alongside the SIP? EP feels this would be necessary if there is a significant shift in strategy eg. joining a MAT. An emphasis was placed on making sure the board is considering long term planning, and not just a short-term view of dealing with matters as they arise. • Board understanding of the curriculum and its implementation. EP reasserted the benefit of undertaking subject link visits, and drew attention to the school website, which contains the curriculum for each subject. EP also drew attention to the Subject Link governor report guidance which focuses on 'the three Is': intent, implementation and impact as an effective way to break down and assess the curriculum. <p>APa felt the results highlighted a few key areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping up to date with best practice. EP would like to reach out to the Chair of governors at a local school to consider this. DH will assist in putting him in touch with one. • Evaluation of individual contributions and chair's effectiveness. BM plans to arrange a 360 review of EP as Chair. All governors are also very welcome to meet with EP individually to catch up and review. • External evaluation. APa queried when the board last had an external review. This was in 2017 and was externally commissioned. Another external review could be done but it now comes at a cost and the budget is tight. <p>APa summarised these points in an email prior to the meeting but it was not circulated to all board members. The board felt it would be useful for everyone to see, JG will forward the email following the meeting.</p> <p>JB queried the numerical values shown on the report circulated to governors, APa advised that the percentages and graphs were correct, the 'responses' figure on the first question was a computer error.</p> <p>JB also queried the contradictory answers on what should be factual questions. APa felt it could represent the divide between a number of very experienced governors on the board and quite a few new governors. BM suggested that the contradictory responses regarding the election of the chair could be due to the nature of the election – it is done verbally rather than written and could be perceived to be very informal, and therefore not viewed as an 'election'.</p> <p>ES and APa will work together to create an action plan based on this survey to ensure it is used as a tool for progress.</p>	<p>EP</p> <p>BM</p> <p>ES, APa</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p><u>Parentview Survey</u></p> <p>DH noted that there are now 67 or 68 responses to the Parentview Survey, a significant increase following the drive to promote this at the C&S Committee meeting. The consensus is generally positive: 93% would recommend the school. It was agreed that if there are sufficient responses to consider it viable data, it will be added to the agenda for the next FGB.</p> <p>DH noted that Simon Crosby, the School Improvement Officer, has acknowledged that both the undertaking of the Staff Survey and the number of Parentview responses reflect positively on the school and the governance.</p> <p>EP reminded governors that there is OFSTED training scheduled for the 30th October and the Teams Meeting link has been circulated via email.</p> <p>Mother Kirsty thanked the board for allowing her to join the meeting, with a view to potentially being involved in the future.</p>	

16.	Meeting Dates for this Academic Year	
	Resources – 17/01/24, 17/04/24 Curriculum & Standards – 23/01/24, 30/04/24 FGB – 07/02/24, 22/05/24 All meetings start at 6.00pm.	
17.	Mother Kirsty led the Grace to close the meeting	