



**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting for Pulford Lower School, held on 7th February 2024
6pm, school hall**

1.	Registration, Apologies and Prayer	Action
	<p>Present: Rev 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), Ms J Bradley (JB), Mrs M Akin-Esho (MA-E), Mr G Huskisson (GH)</p> <p>Mrs J Gudgeon (Clerk)</p> <p>Apologies: Mr B Webb, Mrs N Barnett</p> <p>DH opened the meeting in prayer.</p>	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests	
	No new pecuniary interests were declared by board members.	
3.	Matters arising from the last meeting's minutes	
	<p>APa queried the position regarding governor training. She has provided a list of training courses she is interested in attending. EP confirmed that these can be booked. She is particularly keen to attend Safer Recruitment training.</p> <p>Parentview responses were looked at with OFSTED's visit last term so no need to revisit this meeting.</p> <p>ES confirmed that the Board Effectiveness Review Action plan is in the process of being produced.</p> <p>BM confirmed that the Chair's Review she committed to undertaking will happen soon.</p> <p>EP has started to reach out to other governing bodies, in particular the Chair of Governors at St Leonards Lower School and has found it a very positive exercise.</p> <p>Follow up from the Staff Survey is ongoing. EP has met with staff regarding the results and comments made. He felt the meetings were productive and staff spoke very openly about concerns. The meetings also gave an opportunity to feedback to staff the reasoning behind some of the concerns, eg. comments made regarding availability of the Senior Leadership Team - by illustrating the impact increasing their availability would have on other areas.</p> <p>DH agreed that this is still a work in progress, together with behaviour issues and the associated policies also mentioned in the survey. He highlighted the recognition the school gives to the source of poor child behaviour – often related to additional needs or difficulties outside school. The whole staff body is looking at the best ways to manage this behaviour, including how the school environment can be restructured to minimise triggers, and how to calm a child during a period of de-regulation, when reason is lost. There is good engagement with this from staff and it is being worked on as a team.</p> <p>DH recognised through this process that areas of communication which would have been considered standard prior to COVID have been lost and they are looking to ensure the communication lines are rebuilt.</p> <p>The budgets allocated to the targets within the SIP are still being generated.</p>	
4.	Agree and sign last meeting's minutes	
	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.	DH
5.	Chairs Report	

	<p>EP confirmed that no emergency actions have been undertaken since the last meeting.</p> <p>He urged governors to maintain focus following the OFSTED and SIAMS inspections. The responsibility to the school remains the same.</p> <p>He returned thanks to the governors for their active relationship with the school and encouraged governors to continue to do regular visits.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, governors were advised to look at the training schedules circulated via email and select any courses which they would find interesting/of use to them in their governing role. EP recalled doing the 'Support & Challenge' training course which not only contained interesting content but put him in contact with other governors attending the course.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Headteachers Report</p>	
	<p>Governors received the relevant statistics with the agenda for the meeting. Attendance has improved and appreciation was shown for this. It is higher than many other schools, but still not at pre COVID levels. DH believes the relationship with parents is a driving force for the improvement. Year 2 have lowest level of attendance but there is a medical reason for this, which is unavoidable.</p> <p>There continues to be a few families taking unauthorised holidays within term time, although these are only in single figures.</p> <p>Applications received during the recent recruitment drive were very positive, with three strong candidates applying. This reflects well on the school that good teachers are keen to work there. The TA recruitment has also been very successful.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>OFSTED & SIAMs Review</p>	
	<p>EP offered congratulations to the school for both results and the attached reports. He also highlighted that OFSTED commented on the substantially higher than average engagement by the school governors.</p> <p>A letter was received by the school from the Local Authority acknowledging the very positive result to the OFSTED inspection.</p> <p><u>OFSTED</u></p> <p>The one action point from OFSTED regarding the consistency of specific language used within subjects has been acknowledged by school. Staff are fine tuning progression maps to ensure they are consistent, however DH pointed out that the OFSTED framework is Secondary school based, where teachers only teach one subject. In a lower school they teach a wide variety of subjects, therefore expecting them to retain detailed information for each is unreasonable. The OFSTED framework is also likely to change very soon.</p> <p>BM queried how governors show go about evaluating this point in visits without adding pressure to staff. The curriculums for each subject are available on the school website and DH suggested familiarising themselves with that prior to the visits and using that to ask questions.</p> <p>AP added that the government website shows key language for each school year for each subject. Governors could look to see if that is contained within lesson plans, as this would be a key place for teachers to refamiliarize themselves without having to retain all the information.</p> <p>DH is now part of a group of all the local lower school Heads, since he previous community of the 27 local schools no longer exists. They are looking at ways to share plans & curriculums to cut down on individual workloads.</p> <p>DH highlighted the success of regular Self Evaluation prior to OFSTED. The school recognised that if excessive pressure was placed on staff the school is likely to lose them.</p> <p><u>SIAMs</u></p> <p>3 action points were contained within the SIAMs reports, as required. The school is actively working on all three.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversity is being looked at through the reaction the school has to different behaviours, acknowledging the diverse way in which children's brains work. The school is working to ensure appropriate language is being used. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking pupils' progress in RE. The new curriculum is in place and Mrs Borelli (RE lead) has been and continues to be working very hard on this. The first trials of the new assessment are due to take place the day after the meeting. It is a preset National assessment. Empowering children to become agents for change: EP attended the School Council meeting and was very impressed by the ideas and the response. He relayed one example brought forward by a child, who after recognising the lack of colour and greenery in the new Estates, suggested providing each household with a pack of seeds. The school is helping him with this idea. <p>The children are also organising an 'Eco summit' in Summer. DH has reached out to other Headteachers, and some councillors have agreed to attend. The MP has also been contacted.</p> <p>The accessible roundabout, to enable a disabled child at the school to have access to play equipment, has also been driven by the school council and DH was pleased to confirm it has now been ordered following a donation from a local charity. It will hopefully be installed at Easter.</p> <p>AP queried whether there was an opportunity for a 'feel good' social media post following the installation, acknowledging the generosity of donations, but caution needs to be taken as some wish to remain anonymous.</p>	
8.	School Improvement Plan (SIP)	
	<p>This continues to be worked on and APe, BM and EP are due to meet soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parent communications meeting occurred. No major headlines came from it, but it was reassuring that there were some positives, and the system is not completely broken. It highlighted that there are many channels of communication, which makes it harder to keep communication simple and effective. The new IT provider is currently looking at the Google suite and trying to find a way to access traffic figures so the school can see how much engagement there is with this. It was queried whether other schools use this, and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to reach out to other local schools to see if they have found anything that works particularly well for them. Writing: heavy focus continues to be given to improving writing standards and resilience, with lots of work going on in the background. RH attended additional training which provided lots of practical ideas to use in the classroom, which was then fed back to staff. A follow up meeting showed there has been a particularly proactive approach taken by the KS1 team which is encouraging. There are now lots of ideas which are being tried out in the classroom. A barrier identified in year 3 writing was the use of full stops and capital letters. Additional work is now being undertaken in KS1 on this to ensure that children are 'working at' age related level by year 3. Wellbeing: Everyone acknowledges that work/life balance is an issue. Everyone appreciates the issue, but it is difficult to find the areas to reduce in order to improve. SLT are closely reviewing time spent to ensure it is as efficient as possible, in areas such as time spent on Google classroom pages, the timing and effectiveness of staff meetings. A lot of additional time is spent on areas beyond the school's control – SEN, safeguarding and pastoral care required, which simply cannot be ignored or reduced. <p>There are growing instances of aggressive emails being received. This not only takes time and additional consideration to respond to but has a big impact on mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>ES queried whether the school could use the newsletter to have a section on mental health and touch on the mental health of staff to make parents more aware.</p> <p>DH and Alison Quick accessed Mental Health Lead training after a grant was highlighted by NB last FGB. They were pleased that there was little new information on the training and Pulford is already considerate and active on most of the items raised. There are points, including a newsletter point, going to be actioned.</p>	

	<p>ES also queried if there is anything governors can do to assist with staff mental health and wellbeing. Those that are also parents or are involved with the school can help by offering the school's point of view/raising awareness of the impact on staff to other parents when they hear complaints outside of school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engagement with reading: there has been some improvement in parental engagement, but recent feedback is that it has dipped again in some years. It is a cultural change and hard to contend with. Over the years there has been a significant increase in the expectation placed on schools by parents. ● The SIAMS report confirmed that the school vision is well embedded within the school 	
9.	Safeguarding Report	
	<p>There are no major safeguarding concerns to report. The main action point is that the safeguarding governors are looking at additional training which would benefit them in their roles. Following discussion at the committee meetings they have concluded that they will split the role into two sections – one safeguarding, which SH will take the lead on, and APa will take on Health & Safety.</p>	
10.	<p>Committee & Subject Link Update</p> <p>The Appeals and Admissions committee has not met.</p> <p>The Admissions criteria has not been changed and was ratified by the board.</p> <p>The Discipline Committee has not met.</p> <p><u>Resources Committee</u></p> <p>APe reported that there were no key points to bring to the board from the recent meeting, the minutes of which were circulated to the board with the agenda.</p> <p>A query was raised regarding whether there is sufficient budget for improving the standard of wifi within the school. APa reported that during a recent subject link visit for computing, poor wifi posed a significant problem to the class. DH will look into this and report back to the Resources committee next meeting.</p> <p>DH reported that the Pulford Trust have agreed to funding the flat roof and paintwork required. The Governing Board agreed to support the request to the Pulford Trust for these works.</p> <p>The finance manual is due to be approved by the board, but BW, who is responsible for making changes, is currently unable to do so, so this has been deferred to the next FGB meeting.</p> <p><u>Curriculums & Standards Committee</u></p> <p>The attainment data shows students to be roughly in line with where they would be expected to, in the first term of the school year. Y2 are doing particularly well in reading. Whilst acknowledging that it could be cohort based, it is encouraging that the first year group to have been using the new phonics scheme throughout KS1 have got good results so far. Page 2 of the report references KS2 SATs and should read year 2.</p> <p><u>SEND Report</u></p> <p>ES attended a SEND Governor training course which was very useful. There was one item raised which she will pick up next term. It also put her in contact with the SEND governor for Mary Bassett school which is useful.</p> <p><u>Subject Links</u></p> <p>French: JB queried if half an hour a week is sufficient. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient time in the school day to add more. She acknowledged the creative methods of learning, such as using French in the KS2 nativity.</p> <p>Science: ES acknowledged the imagination and enthusiasm shown coming up with creative experiments. The STEM ½ term club looks exciting. Has any consideration been given to trying to reuse any of the content in school afterwards? It is the first time it has been done so it will be interesting to see how it goes. The primary drive was to raise funds for the school so any other benefits would be a bonus. Being able to accept childcare vouchers to make the club more widely available is something the providers are working on.</p>	

<p>11.</p>	<p>Policy Updates</p> <p><u>Pulford Whistleblowing Policy</u></p> <p>APa noted that her name is misspelt. She also requested relevant emails be added to the document to enable discreet contact. This was agreed and the policy was approved.</p> <p><u>Statement of Procedure for Dealing With Allegations of Abuse Against Staff</u></p> <p>Point 9, it was queried whether the term ‘reasonable force’ could be clarified, however there is no such definition available. APa queried whether document links could be embedded or shortened and will assist with doing so. She also requested ‘sexuality’ be added to the point near the end regarding diversity. These updates were agreed, and the policy was approved.</p> <p><u>Learning Support Policy</u></p> <p>A couple of typing error and grammatical changes were brought up, and it was agreed that these can be resolved privately by email. The policy was approved.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Board confirmed that they are happy for APe and DH to meet to sign off the Schools Financial Value Standard.</p> <p>MA-E has a visit report in progress, and this will be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>APa and BM would like to be included on Resources Committee emails going forward with a view to attending meetings when available.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Meeting Dates for this Academic Year</p>	
	<p>Resources – 17/04/24</p> <p>Curriculum & Standards – 30/04/24</p> <p>FGB – 22/05/24</p> <p>All meetings start at 6.00pm.</p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>DH led the Grace to close the meeting</p>	