



**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting for Pulford Lower School, held on 12th February 2025
6.15pm, school hall**

1.	Registration, Apologies and Prayer	Action
	<p>Present: Rev D Heather (DH), Mr E Price (EP - Chair), Mr A Perrott (APe), Mrs B Morley (BM), Mrs T Rees (TR), Ms J Bradley (JB), Mr G Huskisson (GH), Mr B Webb (BW), Mrs S Haines (SH), Mr S King (SK), Preb. David MacGeoch (DM)</p> <p>Mrs J Gudgeon (Clerk)</p> <p>Apologies: Ms A Parish, Mrs R Horsfield</p> <p>DM opened the meeting in prayer.</p>	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests	
	No new pecuniary interests were declared.	
3.	Matters arising from the last meeting's minutes	
	<p>EP ran through some action points from last meeting:</p> <p>Effectiveness tracker: Alpha has created a Google form and EP will circulate this after half term.</p> <p>The additional communication to parents discussed at the last meeting, including communicating some surprising statistics to parents, is being put on hold as there has been noticeable improvement already. EP will include a note of thanks to parents for their response in the school newsletter.</p> <p>Research into effective methods of communication is ongoing, and DH is in the process of arranging a meeting with a fellow headteacher to discuss a potential school communications app.</p> <p>DH confirmed that the noticeboard at the top gate is going to be added during the Easter holidays, when the repair work to the wall is planned.</p>	EP
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 no emergency action has been undertaken since the last meeting.</p> <p>The PCC are in the process of appointing a new governor to fill the vacancy, she was unable to attend this meeting as the appointment must be formally ratified first. Following some confusion two nominees commenced the appointment process. There is a potential for the unsuccessful candidate to join the board as an associate governor with a view to joining as a full board member at a later date.</p> <p>EP took the opportunity to expand on Associate governors: these are individuals who join the board to offer a particular skill or area of expertise but do not have voting rights. EP is looking into making use of this option further.</p> <p>EP thanked the governors for the subject link visits undertaken and reminded the board that ideally these should happen twice a year.</p> <p>Several governors have attended various training webinars and any useful information or slides from these should be added to the Google drive.</p>	
6.	Headteachers Report	

	<p>The number of students on role has increased so the school is now at capacity and oversubscribed for the September intake.</p> <p>Attendance has improved and now stands at 'outstanding' per the old OFSTED ratings.</p> <p>There have been no major staff changes but there is some reshuffling in progress in anticipation of several children with EHCPs leaving at the end of the school year.</p> <p>School meals continue to be popular, and uptake is good.</p> <p>No exclusions have been made.</p>	
7.	<p>School Improvement Plan</p>	
	<p>1. Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health continues to be a key area. Alison Quick is working alongside NHS Practitioners as part of a town group looking at mental health. No concerns have been flagged with how it is being managed at Pulfords.</p> <p>The induction pack for new staff has been updated to include a section on mental health and a wellbeing day is being held for staff on the next training day. There are also support groups covering Mental Health, Safeguarding and Health and Safety.</p> <p>EP queried if there has been any staff feedback so far. DH has not received any specifically but feels that overall staff morale is in a good place. There are still areas requiring downward pressure, but this is inevitable and an ongoing battle. A lower-than-average number of resignations and the positive results to recruitment are an encouraging reflection. The responses to Parentview are also positive.</p> <p>2 & 3. Parental engagement with reading and writing. RH was not present to give an update. DH mentioned that there is a reduced but still present number of children for whom there is no family engagement. The hope is that the trend will continue, and it will reduce further over time. There is appreciation that life is harder for many parents but there is a noticeable negative impact on the child.</p> <p>4. The new music scheme has been introduced with Mrs Borelli as lead, and supported by EP. There has been great engagement from the children. The fundraising concert to raise funds for additional musical instruments to support this initiative with is on 8th March. EP encouraged governors to promote this to parents. It will be free entry with donations encouraged.</p> <p>DM enquired if there had been progress in discussions of how school plan to make use of the Church space offered at the last Board meeting. DH confirmed that it was appreciated and is being considered, but logistics must be considered to ascertain the most effective movement of children and use of the space. He appreciated the Church for providing space for parent consultations taking place within school hours.</p> <p>The mid-year appraisal for DH will take place just after half term and updates may be reflected in the SIP.</p> <p>BM noted that she has recently attended training on Wellbeing and is happy to share the headlines from this with the governing board.</p>	
8.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p>	
	<p>An external audit took place in December 2024. The report contained a lot of errors so is still a work in progress trying to create a document ready to share with governors.</p> <p>The action plan arising from the report was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal of the school shower in the first aid room. This was highlighted as a safeguarding concern and is due to be decommissioned over half term. This was initially installed for a child with specific medical needs and has been used very little since. The plumbing will remain in place in case there is a need for it to be reinstalled at a later date. 2. Record keeping is to become more electronically based. The SLT are looking into possible packages. <p>In addition, they were advised to increase the visibility of safeguarding on the school website. This has been done.</p> <p>More detailed risk assessments are to be undertaken on school play equipment.</p>	

	<p>A member of staff should look through the First Aid log to identify any patterns and review for a cause.</p> <p>The removal of the shower in the first aid room is making way for a Welfare room. This will provide a space for children requiring first aid, or a safe space for children suffering with anxiety or overwhelm.</p> <p>Prevent training is taking place for all staff on 6th May at 4pm in Beech class. Governors are welcomed to join in. It is considered best practise to renew this training every year and it can be done online for those unable to make this session, but it was agreed that up to once every three years is sufficient.</p> <p>The regularity of Safeguarding meetings is being increased to every half term.</p> <p>It was identified that the notification system provided by BT to flag inappropriate use of school IT was ineffective. The cause has been identified, and the system should now be robust.</p> <p>SK queried the reasoning behind the record keeping being required to move to electronic basis. DH has concerns about the reliance on technology, but it will ease the transfer to middle school.</p> <p>SK also queried if the new Welfare room will be communicated to SEN parents. DH advised that it will be available to all children and will be introduced to them in worship.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Committee & Subject Link Updates</p>	
	<p><u>Resources Committee</u></p> <p>There have been minor changes to the budget but overall, the three priority funding areas are now all covered which is good news.</p> <p>It has been highlighted that it would be preferable to have another member as presently the committee is only just quorate. No governors came forward so it will be reconsidered. Associate members wouldn't count, but the new governor may wish to join.</p> <p><u>Curriculums & Standards Committee</u></p> <p>BM pointed out that the highlights are at the top of the report, and that she has tried to highlight how the info relates to the SIP. She also pointed out the comments regarding timetabling adjustments and the impact on staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Rosie Horsfield has been tracking the embedding of learning materials from Herts for Learning and the impact of these, and DH noted that an additional curriculum has been purchased since the C&S committee meeting.</p> <p>He also noted the ongoing discussion in the staff data meetings regarding the presentation of the data – in particular ways to highlight those children where progress has decreased.</p> <p><u>SEN Report</u></p> <p>SK proposed that he reach out to local SEN governors and try to form a network to discuss practices and this was well received.</p> <p><u>Subject Link Reports</u></p> <p>Maths: This was AP's first Maths visit. His report highlights difficulties with timetabling – as Maths is taught in year groups children are required to move classes and this takes valuable time. This also means teachers can't easily recap later in the day. He queried whether the school have concerns over the levels achieved by KS2 or whether this is a cohort specific expectation? DH did not have a major concern but agreed that it is necessary to observe. Appreciation was shown for the Maths open mornings in promoting engagement with parents. SH queried whether there are plans to add additional options for parents unable to make it. As it is the first time doing it, currently the school are just monitoring to see how these mornings go and this will be reviewed.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Policy Reviews</p>	
	<p>Before commencing the reviews, discussion was had regarding how to streamline the process. At the Resources committee meeting governors raised this concern as, without TR present, no one is able to answer questions raised during the discussion, so it is often difficult to move forward.</p>	

	<p>After discussing the difficulties of having discussion over email it was agreed that the policies due for review should be circulated prior to the meetings via Google Docs. This way governors can add questions and comments. A deadline for discussion should be set, and the final document can then be formally ratified at FGB.</p> <p><u>Learning Support Policy for SEND</u></p> <p>TR confirmed that the only changes were updates on links and changes to terminology.</p> <p>The reference to Parental involvement on page 5 should be updated to include additional drop ins, the governor outreach work and the additional parents' evenings which are now in place for SEN parents.</p> <p>References to the school shower should be removed following its removal in February half term.</p> <p>The policy was agreed and should be signed following the shower removal.</p>	
11.	Complaints Panel Report	
	<p>Appreciation was given to the panel for the time spent on this.</p> <p>AP gave a brief overview of the findings, as included in the report, and the recommendations to the board. Following review, the recommendations were agreed in full by the Governing Board.</p> <p>It was also agreed that a letter should be written to the local MP to highlight wider issues beyond the school's control, and a letter should be sent by the governors to local head teachers to encourage support.</p>	
12.	Website Review	
	<p>It has been noted on a few occasions that the school website could do with updating. Access could be improved as well as prioritising what is on the foreground. EP suggested this is an area where associate members could be brought onto the board to help. He asked governors to ask in school WhatsApp groups if any parents have expertise in this area and would be willing to help on a voluntary basis.</p>	
13.	AOB	
	<p>DH noted the number of times time pressures on staff have been mentioned during the meeting. DH put forward a proposal that the school could expand to a two-form entry from September 2026. With the governors' approval BW and DH will look at Budget and site options – as two additional classrooms would be needed as the additional students work their way up the school. It would mean changing to single year classes, which is in line with all the other lower schools in Leighton Buzzard. Economies of scale could help with some pressures on the budget, and it could produce 10 additional hours of SLT time, as the single year classes would mean they are not required to do as much teaching. DH and BW will bring proposals to the resources committee meeting in May, and it is proposed that this is held in person rather than Zoom and all governors are invited.</p> <p>Foundation staff is currently fully staffed so there would be no additional cost there.</p> <p>DH noted that the admissions for the current year cut off under the admissions criteria of being involved with the Church, due to the level of oversubscription. This is detrimental to the diversity of the school and thus has an impact on children's social learning.</p> <p>It would be a staggered change – taking on the additional children only in Foundation stage and allowing the larger year groups to work their way up through the school. This allows the building needs to be staggered and minimises impact on the children currently at the school.</p>	
14.	Meeting Dates for This Academic Year	
	<p>Resources – 23/04/25</p> <p>Curriculum & Standards – 06/04/25</p> <p>FGB – 21/05/25</p> <p>All meetings start at 6.00pm.</p>	

15.	DM led the Grace to close the meeting	
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