



**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting for Pulford Lower School, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024  
6pm, school hall**

1.	<b>Registration, Apologies and Prayer</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<p>Present: Rev D Heather (DH), Mr E Price (EP - Chair), Mrs R Horsfield (RH) Mr A Perrott (APe), Mrs B Morley (BM), 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), Mr B Webb (BW), Mrs S Haines (SH), Mr S King (SK), Rev D M (DM)</p> <p>Mrs J Gudgeon (Clerk)</p> <p>Apologies: Mrs N Barnett</p> <p>DH opened the meeting in prayer.</p>	
2.	<b>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests</b>	
	DM declared a pecuniary interest as the Chair of the Pulford Trust and as a result did not vote on any associated topics.	JG
3.	<b>Matters arising from the last meeting's minutes</b>	
	<p>EP briefly ran through action points from the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policies which would benefit from spot checks have been identified and EP has booked in some visits.</li> <li>● EP has tried to make contact with the Chair of Governors at St Leonards Lower School but has been unsuccessful in arranging a meeting.</li> <li>● Updates regarding the FGB effectiveness tracker will be deferred to next term's meeting to allow new governors settle into their roles.</li> <li>● EP has held some individual meetings with governors following the recommendation after his 360 appraisal and has found them informative and useful. He is always happy to hold these meetings should any governors wish.</li> <li>● Consideration of the longer-term strategy of the board is still in mind, EP hopes to hold a specific meeting for this.</li> </ul>	JG
4.	<b>Agree and sign last meeting's minutes</b>	
	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.	<b>Governor Appointments</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EP was re-elected as Chair</li> <li>2. BM was re-elected as Vice-chair.</li> <li>3. SH feels unable to continue as Safeguarding governor. The role was passed to DM.</li> <li>4. ES will shortly be leaving the area and resigning as a governor. The role of SEN Governor was passed to SK and handover is in progress.</li> <li>5. Training &amp; development Governor. AP has agreed to take on the recording and monitoring of training undertaken by governors.</li> <li>6. Governor Resignations in the last 12 months: Mother Cate Irvine and Mabel Akin-Esho Governor appointments in the last 12 months: Rev. David MacGeoch and Simon King</li> </ol>	
6.	<b>Annual Reviews</b>	

	<p><u>Instrument of Governance</u></p> <p>BM queried what is defined as ‘quorate’ for the board. DH confirmed it is 7, and it was agreed that this should be specified in the Instrument of Governance. Subject to this addition, it was approved.</p> <p><u>Governor Subject Links</u></p> <p>Following governor departures Science and EYFS no longer have a governor allocation. SK agreed to take on Science, and APa will take on EYFS temporarily. With some concern regarding workload, it was agreed that this will be revisited. There may be an opportunity to reshuffle when a new governor is appointed following ES departure.</p>	JG
<b>7.</b>	<b>Governance Policy</b>	
	<p>Reference made to October 2023 should be updated to October 2024. AP raised a query prior to the meeting whether policies such as safeguarding should be covered within this document. It was agreed that where other policies cover specific issues, reference should be made to these within the Governance Policy. EP will draft this addition and circulate to governors. The Governance Policy was otherwise approved.</p> <p>Terms of Reference for the Resources and Curriculums &amp; Standards Committees have been reviewed at committee meetings and were agreed.</p> <p>Current memberships need updating to add SK to the C&amp;S committee. Following ES’ departure, DM will replace her as member of the Pay Review Appeals Committee.</p>	EP
<b>8.</b>	<b>Chairs Report</b>	
	<p>No emergency action has been undertaken since the last meeting.</p> <p>EP reminded governors of the importance of subject link visits and encouraged them to book one in the second half of this term.</p> <p>BW has agreed to sign up to the LA training package so governors may now undertake any training on the schedule with no need for approval. A benefit of attending these sessions is discussion with governors from other schools. DM queried how to sign up – there is an email on the schedule governors can use to request a place. Once training is done email JG and APe to confirm, and it would also be good to add any slides to the Useful Information folder on google drive for future reference.</p> <p>The training package will expire at the end of March so this will be revisited at next Summer’s FGB. JG to add training schedule and spreadsheet to Google Drive.</p>	JG
<b>9.</b>	<b>Headteachers Report</b>	
	<p>The statutory information was circulated prior to the meeting and there were no comments or questions to add.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>School Improvement Plan</b>	
	<p>EP opened discussion by highlighting that this is a working document, so can be added to or amended throughout the school year.</p> <p>DM appreciated the clarity of the document, with the objectives clearly displayed on the front page.</p> <p>EP noted that he has tried to add detail to the governor monitoring section. APe queried whether there could be a more streamlined way to track and monitor progress against the objectives of the SIP through the work already done by governors. EP agreed that it would be valuable to have evidence available at meetings. This has been raised previously and a spreadsheet was suggested whereby governors could note any observations made relating to the SIP whilst on other visits. A red-amber-green (RAG) rating system was also suggested. RH highlighted the need for any comments to be approved by staff, as governors only see a small snapshot.</p> <p>It was agreed that adding a section to the top of the Subject Link Report proforma would help governors to be mindful of the SIP when visiting and an easy place to note any observations to bring forward at the next meeting.</p>	

<p>A RAG rating may prove difficult as some objectives aren't easily quantifiable under this.</p> <p>BM noted that two of the SIP objectives are linked to English. She will liaise with RH at their next subject link meeting how staff monitor progress in these so that governors can complement this.</p> <p>DH urged governors to move beyond monitoring to active participation, especially regarding wellbeing. Under the initiative everyone is encouraged to consider 'Is the way I am presenting/acting adding value or stress to those around me?'</p> <p>He highlighted some stats which highlight key issues being faced by the school: 1,000 parent emails are received per week. 10 hours of unnecessary time has been spent on lost property. Late arrivals have cost 1,200 mins of learning time. There is a direct link between attendance and attainment – stats for this were presented in the C&amp;S committee. There were no-shows by parents on Parents Evening, wasting staff time.</p> <p>Part of the Governors monitoring role involves understanding the drivers behind these objectives being included on the school SIP.</p> <p>He asked governors to be proactive in spreading the message.</p> <p>ES suggested getting some communications out including some of the statistics. It was agreed that there should be a document drafted to be shared with the new Home-School Agreement which highlights some of this.</p> <p>Governors who are also parents sharing information in a more informal manner through year group WhatsApps has proved an effective method of communication in the past. EP will draft some wording which will then be shared through parent governors. Rather than sharing a long document it was agreed that sharing several smaller messages over time – e.g. monthly, is more impactful. APa offered to take the wording written by EP and create text images which are more attention grabbing and easily shareable.</p> <p>SH suggested adding the messages to the noticeboard outside reception, she has monitored the use of this and seen parents looking to the board for information. This will be added to the action plan. JB suggested adding a noticeboard at the top gate where reception children enter would be beneficial as many of these parents don't go near the main reception, and DH agreed to implement this.</p> <p>Governors would like to track if there is any impact and DH agreed that the Stats are easily accessible.</p> <p>With regard to the music initiative DM offered the vestry at the Church for school use at any time during school hours at no charge. This could be used for group music lessons or 1:1 and is a quiet, safe, easily accessible space. DH offered express thanks for the offer and the support from the Church.</p> <p>Alongside this EP noted that the School council, visited by governors earlier in the day as part of 'Governors Afternoon', had suggested trying to raise some money to buy instruments for the school. This feeds nicely into the plan to hold a fundraising concert, with musical performances by Pulford students past and present, and others connected with the school. The school council also announced the creation of 'Pulford Poms' cheerleading team to support the school football team.</p> <p>The SIP was approved.</p> <p><u>Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan</u></p> <p>Last year NB signposted some free Mental health training and DH and Alison Quick both took the course. The course resulted in a baseline audit and action plan, which has been generated with lots of staff input. Lots of positive responses were received in the audit, however there is still room to improve outcomes for children by working together.</p> <p>DH briefly ran through the points on the action plan, which was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>APa acknowledged the positive feedback she had received from staff during discussion that afternoon, that although things are universally very difficult for teachers, staff felt listened to and supported.</p> <p>Thanks was offered to the board for the work undertaken which has driven this initiative.</p> <p>The Action Plan was agreed.</p>	<p>EP/AP a</p> <p>DH</p>
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11.	<b>Safeguarding Update</b>	
	<p>There is nothing major to report, other than the change of Safeguarding governor.</p> <p>The whole school update will be on 6<sup>th</sup> January and expected to last just over an hour. Governors are asked to attend this. If anyone is unable to make it a further session will be arranged but this will be arranged later, to meet the needs of as many as possible of those who could not attend.</p> <p>EP thanked SH for her work as Safeguarding governor.</p>	
12.	<b>SIAMS Update</b>	
	<p>This document has been updated following the SIAMS inspection last term. SIAMS is the internal review of the school done by the Church, covering RE and collective worship. As a C of E school these areas are not reviewed by OFSTED.</p> <p>DM would like to make a plan regarding point 2: involving children in worship, and DH will liaise with him on this.</p>	DM/ DH
13.	<b>Committee &amp; Subject Link Updates</b>	
	<p><u>Resources Committee</u></p> <p>APe reported that finance is an ongoing struggle, but the school is managing well under the restraints. The ICT upgrade is a continued priority, and funding should continue to be sought for this.</p> <p>DH updated the board on the projects identified as priority for this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ICT upgrade: estimated cost £25,000</li> <li>● Preschool playground: estimated cost £7,500</li> <li>● Astro: estimated cost £25,000</li> </ul> <p>Despite various attempts to source some, there is no grant funding available for these and the Diocese are unable to assist.</p> <p>The DFC are able to contribute approximately £7,500, and the PTA hope to raise around £10,000. With contingency added in, DH would like to put a bid to the Pulford Trust for £45,000. APa queried the absence of the canopy for the Preschool area which has previously been mentioned, for which she put forward a case for the benefits. This would need to be built in keeping with the existing buildings and would cost in the region of £36,500, so has been deemed not to be of sufficient value. This was suggested to the Trust a couple of years ago but was not met with enthusiasm.</p> <p>DM asked for clarification of the procedure for procuring funds from the Pulford Trust: DH identifies the highest priority items and an estimate of costs and puts them to the Board. Following Board approval, EP and DH complete the relevant paperwork which is then circulated to the trustees who vote at their next meeting.</p> <p>DH confirmed that the quotes are reviewed in further detail following funding approval to ensure the most cost-effective solution.</p> <p>The application to the trust was approved. As Chair of the Pulford Trust DM abstained from voting on the governing board.</p> <p>The budget is incredibly difficult to reconcile in the current climate, and the rumoured increase in Employers national insurance contributions at the budget next week will cause further difficulty if it is not funded by the government. A 1% increase would equate to around £6,000 increase in costs for the school.</p> <p>DH noted that parental contribution to additional activities such as swimming or trips is also low – 30% of parents haven't contributed to the travel costs for swimming this term. Typically it appears that KS2 is the worst for this. Discussion was had regarding how this can be improved – requests for payment legally must be called a 'voluntary contribution' but the school cannot afford to fund them if parents do not pay.</p>	EP

	<p>It was agreed that it should be added to the schedule for communications from EP.</p> <p>Other suggestions to improve parental contributions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing more notice of costs coming up – particularly going into KS2/year 4, where there are most additional costs. The school plans to provide a list of anticipated costs over the next two years when children move up from reception to year 1 and from year 2 to year 3.</li> <li>• Correcting the narrative regarding the Diocese and Pulford Trust contributions – some parents believe that they provide more funding than they do and are unaware of the restrictions on what they can and will fund – they do not contribute to day-to-day running costs.</li> <li>• Reminding parents of the option to pay extra to help those that struggle.</li> <li>• Inviting parents to make voluntary contributions. If made through the PTA Gift Aid can be claimed too.</li> </ul> <p><u>Curriculum &amp; Standards Committee</u></p> <p>The report circulated includes the highlights of the most recent meeting and the stats from DH appraisal. There were no queries, but EP took the opportunity to encourage governors to attend the staff progress review meetings.</p> <p>It was suggested that it would be useful to have a Governor's Calendar on Google which governors can link to their own personal calendar with such dates in. EP/ JG will look into this.</p> <p><u>Health and Safety Report</u></p> <p>APa confirmed that she has carried out the necessary visits and everything is working as it should. Surveyors have been in, but their report has not yet been received.</p> <p>APa raised a query at a committee meeting regarding the governors' commitment to eco-consideration and sustainability and whether this should be added to the terms of reference. She agreed to put together some suggested wording for the next meeting.</p>	<p>EP/JG</p> <p>APa</p>
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b>Policy Reviews</b></p> <p><u>Home School Agreement</u></p> <p>GH queried whether the wording in this should be stronger, with specific emphasis on the issue with aggressive/rude language used by parents. It was agreed that this should be included in the supporting communication.</p> <p>The use of WhatsApp groups was referenced as an effective method of communication – each year group has one, they are all parent run but governors who are also parents could use these to support the school within this community. It was suggested that the school signpost their existence to parents early in school life.</p> <p>The Home School Agreement was approved. <u>Child Protection &amp; safeguarding</u></p> <p>This is quite different to the previous Policy but has been taken from the CBC model policy – despite different wording it covers the same points. The Policy was approved.</p> <p><u>Child on Child</u></p> <p>Policy was approved with no queries. <u>Fire Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>The only query was who Gareth Macready is. He is an officer from the local Fire Service. The Policy was approved.</p>	
<p><b>15.</b></p>	<p><b>Governor Profiles</b></p> <p>These need to be updated. JG to email DM a link to the current governor profiles.</p>	<p>JG</p>

<p><b>16.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>APa requested approval to circulate a short non-compulsory Health &amp; safety Questionnaire to staff. Approved.</p> <p>JB raised a suggestion to assist with Parent Communication which she has come across being used by another school. It is called Parent Hub. This can be revisited next term, but at present there is no staff appetite for launching new methods whilst workloads are so high.</p> <p>Information regarding topics can be found on the website but most parents are unaware so this should be signposted.</p> <p>EP thanked ES for all she has contributed to the governing board, and on behalf of the board wished her all the best for the future.</p>	
<p><b>17.</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting Dates for This Academic Year</b></p> <p>Resources – 15/01/25, 23/04/25 Curriculum &amp; Standards – 21/01/25, 06/05/25 FGB – 12/02/25, 21/05/25</p> <p>All meetings start at 6.00pm.</p>	
<p><b>18.</b></p>	<p><b>DM led the Grace to close the meeting</b></p>	