



**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting for Pulford Lower School, held on 21st October 2025
6pm, 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), Mrs S Haines (SH), Mrs R Horsfield (RH), Preb D MacGeoch, Mr G Huskisson (GH), Mrs B Morley (BM)</p> <p>Mrs J Gudgeon (JG - Clerk)</p> <p>Apologies: Ms A Parish (APa), Mr S King (SK), Ms N Kingston (NK)</p> <p>DM opened the meeting in prayer. Prior to this he returned his thanks for the governors afternoon which took place prior to the meeting. He much enjoyed seeing the school and the warm welcome received from staff and students alike. He requested that his thanks be fed back to the teachers.</p> <p>EP advised the board that NK will be pausing her governor duties due to recent difficulties within her family and the board expressed their support for NK.</p>	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests	
	No new pecuniary interests were declared.	
3.	Matters arising from the last meeting's minutes	
	<p>The requests for governors to seek parents who may be willing to help with the school website will be covered later in the meeting.</p> <p>JB's questions for SK from the last meeting will be discussed via email as he was again unable to respond.</p> <p>JB queried whether the reception entrance noticeboard is likely to be added soon, DH advised that it was still on the list of outstanding but other jobs have unfortunately taken priority.</p> <p>EP has drafted a note showing appreciation for the improvement in parent communications. This included a note regarding seeking help with the school website. Following discussion with Alison Quick, he would like more clarity on what is required on the website, to see if it could be managed internally.</p> <p>EP and BM have met with DH for his evaluation and to discuss the progress made against last year's objectives and the contents of the new SIP. Some things continue to be a priority going forwards.</p> <p>Wellbeing: some beneficial new initiatives have been undertaken but it must continue to be a focus.</p> <p>Writing: the new scheme is now embedded and will continue to be monitored for success.</p> <p>Reading: the target has been met and increased engagement with parents continues to be seen.</p> <p>Music: the new scheme has now been fully embedded and is going well. Another fundraiser is currently being planned.</p> <p>School Expansion Plan: this was covered at the recent Extraordinary Board Meeting.</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.	Governor Appointments and Resignations in the Past 12 months	
	<p>Resignation: Emma Smith</p> <p>Appointment: Nicola Kingston</p> <p>The election of committee chairs:</p> <p>Resources Committee Chair: Alan Perrott</p> <p>Curriculums & Standards Chair: Beci Morley</p>	
6.	Annual Reviews	
	<p>Instrument of Governance:</p> <p>This was approved by the board</p> <p>EP took this opportunity to mention that since Bil Webb's retirement, he is no longer on the board as a co-opted governor. He proposed invited Alison Quick to join and this was welcomed by the board.</p> <p>Governor Subject Links:</p> <p>EP highlighted the subject link spreadsheet which was circulated with the agenda and the subjects for which recent visits have not been reported.</p> <p>RE & PHSE visits have been undertaken by NK which haven't been entered. If NK feels unable to continue with this in her current circumstances DM expressed a willingness to take over, but as the visits are currently up to date, she has time to consider.</p> <p>The subject lead for Geography should be Ellie Gorthrop, who has returned from maternity leave. A Science visit is due but SK was absent so unable to confirm if one is scheduled.</p> <p>APa is listed as EYFS lead but expressed a concern regarding workload when taking this on. If she feels unable to continue BM offered to pick this up. EP will liaise.</p>	EP
7.	Governance Policy	
	<p><u>Curriculums & Standards Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>Reference to 'consider the Local Authority's curriculum etc' is outdated and should be updated to 'consider school's curriculum policy'. It was queried whether a more updated outline is available for these terms of reference.</p> <p>The Disciplinary Committee should specify that this refers to staff disciplinary matters. Dates of review and committee memberships require updating.</p> <p>DM queried whether there should be a Disciplinary Appeals committee and associated terms of reference within the governance policy. It was agreed that this does exist. Membership would not be specified as a committee would be called based on availability and having no prior knowledge of the issue.</p> <p>These matters will be looked into and the Policy will be reviewed again at the next FGB.</p>	EP/JG
8.	Finance Manual	
	<p>The scheme of delegation, names and dates have been updated by APe.</p> <p>The inventory is being updated and resources committee should review this once complete to ensure they are happy with the scope of the inclusions. EP has done a spot check of the inventory and these should be should be completed regularly going forward.</p>	
9.	Chair's Report	
	EP confirmed that no emergency action has been undertaken.	

	<p>EP urged governors to complete their subject link visits - ideally two visits per year, one at the beginning and one at the end to review progress. If governors are unable to fit visits in, please contact EP or JG as soon as possible so these can be covered by someone else.</p> <p>Additional spot checks are needed to ensure the board is fulfilling its monitoring role and in line with policies. For example, health and safety, safeguarding and payroll.</p> <p>EP will add these to the subject link spreadsheet and governors are encouraged to undertake spot checks if able whenever they are due, and to note these on the spreadsheet or let JG know.</p> <p>The Central Beds training package has been purchased so governors are encouraged to book on to any training they would like to.</p> <p>AP agreed to complete a skills audit to identify any areas of weakness/gaps in training.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Headteachers Report</p>	
	<p>A full financial audit took place last week. There were gaps in the system identified which governors could potentially have identified so the board was encouraged to be integrated with the school.</p> <p>Attendance remains good, but holidays in term time remain an emotive area and some parents are getting agitated about this. It is always a firm 'no'. There is a common misconception that it is OK for SEN children and this isn't the case. It is a matter of law. DH also encouraged honesty – parents telling children to lie and claim they were unwell is a problematic safeguarding issue that leaves children in a difficult position.</p> <p>Bill Webb, Sue Marchant have both retired at the end of last school year. Carol Scanlan also left. Gilda Robinson, who was a long-standing member of staff and supporter of the school, sadly passed away in the summer.</p> <p>Uptake of school meals remains very high.</p> <p>No exclusions have been made.</p> <p>School roll is full and visits have been booked for next year so continued high demand for places is anticipated.</p> <p>GH queried whether a scheduled two-week half term would be beneficial in October or May. DH is not opposed to this and felt that shortening the Summer holiday to facilitate this could have a positive effect on children as they often struggle to settle back in after the long break. It wouldn't be beneficial for parents in terms of prices as if it were widespread it would result in prices being raised for that week too and couldn't be done as a standalone policy. With many parents having siblings in other schools, it would cause too much of a childcare problem for them and may become a deterrent to new parents considering Pulfords. It is being trialled elsewhere and DH would be open to it if it were taken up across the local area. It was trialled in Somerset but only for one year and then they went back to single week half terms.</p> <p>JB pointed out that the numbers on roll are not matched between the headteachers and the SEN report. This is most likely because they were taken from a different date but TR will review.</p> <p>Appreciation was shown for the fact that the school has not made any exclusions for many years – this is unusual and is a reflection of the staff dedication to pastoral care.</p>	<p>TR</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>School Improvement Plan</p>	
	<p>This is a working document and there are nuances which will be updated.</p> <p>Objective 1: EP, DH and BM attended a workshop but there have been no further communications regarding next steps or timescales. DH has met with other heads to discuss how to make the school's voices heard and there is frustration with the uncertainty. It is necessary to keep this on the SIP and ensure that staff are reassured that a plan has been made for a variety of different scenarios and they will not be subjected to sudden change or instability.</p> <p>Objective 2: The change to the Arbor system is underway. This has been prompted by external reviews and the need to streamline/electronically record data. Finance is already completed on the system. Moving other systems will simplify the collation of other information, particularly regarding safeguarding, as everything will be held in one place. It also offers a system for</p>	

	<p>communication with parents as part of the software. It is hoped it will also be simpler to navigate than existing systems.</p> <p>Objective 3: It was felt that effective uptake of training by governors should be included within this. In order to specify a success criterion, a baseline target of 1 additional training course each per year was agreed.</p> <p>Objective 4: The new RE curriculum is already in place and was witnessed by several governors this afternoon. Several commented on the depth of the work seen – the new curriculum offers a much deeper look than the old curriculum.</p> <p>The reference to music is a typo and should be corrected to read RE.</p> <p>The SIP was agreed by governors.</p>	
12.	Safeguarding Update	
	<p>DM met with AQ for a review. At the time a new member of staff was in the process of being DBS checked but that has now been completed and all checks were in order.</p> <p>A query was raised as to whether governors should have DBS checks redone after a certain time period. The policy is only on appointment or if there is substantive change. It would be costly to redo everyone's checks and the recent safeguarding audit didn't express concerns with the policy.</p> <p>DM advised the best thing to do would be concentrate on keeping training up to date. If DBS checks are done by other organisations, passing on a copy of the certificate for the records would be helpful.</p>	
13.	SEN Report	
	<p>JB questioned the criteria for children to be identified as EAL (English as an additional language) as the number is high. It is an externally set criteria. She was concerned that it was reported as a problem, or additional challenge, but school are expected to report on this by the government. It is not considered an issue by the school.</p> <p>The number of children with medical needs is also high. The number was confirmed correct. There is nothing school can do about this but be mindful of the additional draw on staff caused by needs.</p> <p>Neither if these items are considered a problem but do represent the inclusivity of the school.</p> <p>SK's conclusion to the SEN report was read aloud as it was added after the SEN report was circulated to governors.</p> <p>TR added that the local authority are being particularly slow at returning EHCPs. There is one child in year 3 who has not had one since year R despite regular chasing. This is not an isolated case.</p> <p>Governors were encouraged to continue to make their voice heard where possible regarding the urgent need for update to the SEN system. EP will share his emails to and from the MP regarding this.</p> <p>The report states that the safeguarding governor will report on specific cases but DM advised that this is outside the scope of the safeguarding governor and this will be removed from the report.</p>	EP
14.	Committee and Subject Link Updates	
	<p>Resources Committee</p> <p>The annual deficit has increased but is still within the allowable 1% and can't be helped. Additional maintenance costs are the main cause of this, which are unavoidable.</p> <p>Curriculums & Standards Committee</p> <p>The key takeaway was that most year groups are doing well. The results for the current year 4s are most concerning but this has been identified and is being monitored closely. Interventions are already in place and staff are working hard to get children to where they need to be.</p>	

	There is an ongoing discussion regarding the reporting of the data for SEN children and this is not yet resolved.	
15.	Policy Reviews	
	<p>TR advised that these have been updated in line with the updates to KPSCIE. There has been significant change but not particularly affecting policies.</p> <p>Child on child abuse: approved</p> <p>Safeguarding and Child Protection: approved</p> <p>Staff Code of Conduct: approved</p>	
16.	Website	
	<p>JG reminded governors to either complete or update their profile for the website.</p> <p>EP advised that following meeting with Alison Quick he would like to know what the priority areas for the website update are.</p> <p>The key areas for concern were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobile phone optimisation – some links are inaccessible in mobile phone format. Is this something the IT provider could fix? ● Making the desktop page easier to navigate. ● Making payments easier. Could this be moved to the new Arbor system? <p>Overall the concerns were primarily design based rather than content. DH advised of difficulty with rearranging too much as there are always differing opinions on priority items. Some items have also been placed based on requirements set out in external reviews, such as the safeguarding review.</p>	
17.	Board Effectiveness Review	
	<p>EP ran through a few items from the last board effectiveness review:</p> <p>Governors Clerk training: JG is happy to take on additional training but has struggled to find training that meets the needs. Termly update training has been attended but the majority of this is often not relevant to this board. More intense training would be very costly.</p> <p>EP queried whether an associate governor with relevant expertise would be considered beneficial in the Resources committee. There is not felt to be a need for this at present, the only concern regarding membership is remaining quorate at each meeting, as overall membership of the committee is quite low.</p> <p>EP is continuing to look at collaboration with other Lower schools. He recently attended a Chairs networking event within the diocese, which was interesting, but a lot of those he met are in very different circumstances. He will continue to reach out to other lower schools.</p> <p>The training from Bex Howe on ‘Vision, risk and strategy’ is something that would still be beneficial to the board at some point. EP proposed that with the strategic uncertainty currently being faced it would be better to postpone this to a point when decisions are being made and it can be the most effective. The board were in agreement with this but also expressed a need to be mindful that they can’t just sit still with no strategy. The new OFSTED framework was also referenced which brings Governance into focus more, and failure to meet expectations on one bullet point can bring the rating of the whole school down. DH has done some training on this, as has NB in her own role, and they agreed that they will put together an update for staff. This point will be revisited at next FGB.</p> <p>Chair 360 Appraisal. All agreed it would be appropriate for BM to complete another appraisal and she will email questions to board members.</p>	JG

	The responses to the Parentview questionnaire have been good so far, parent governors are urged to encourage other parents to complete this.	
18.	<p>Meeting Dates for Next Academic Year</p> <p>Resources – 14/01/26, 29/04/26</p> <p>Curriculum & Standards – 20/01/26, 06/05/26</p> <p>FGB – 11/02/26, 19/05/26</p> <p>All meetings start at 6.00pm.</p> <p>Safeguarding training for governors will take place at 9:30am on 5th January 2026.</p>	
	DM led the Grace to close the meeting	