

Minutes from the Full Governing Body Meeting
Held on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 7pm
at The ACE Centre Nursery School

Present	Kate Barlow (KB) – Co-opted Governor and Chair Mike Cahill (MC) – Local Authority Governor and Vice-chair Lynn Jenkins (LJ) – Headteacher Monica Ferguson (MF) – Parent Governor Topsy Fletcher (TF) – Co-opted Governor Cat Hemmings (CH) – Co-opted Governor (<i>from 7:32pm</i>) Sally Pursell (SP) – Co-opted Governor
Apologies:	David Quick (DQ) – Associate Governor
In attendance	Isabelle Robinson (IR) – Teaching Assistant (potential Staff Governor) Zoe Wakefield (ZW) – Teacher (potential Staff Governor) Hazel Sheridan (HS) – Clerk Binks Neate-Evans – To observe LJ

The meeting started at 7:05pm and was quorate.

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. SP, IR and ZW were welcomed to the meeting. SP is an ACE Centre Charity Trustee and has agreed to become a Co-opted Governor (please refer to item 18.2 below). IR and ZW were invited to attend the meeting as they are staff members who may be interested in joining the FGB either as a Staff Governor or Associate Governor (please refer to item 9.2.10 below).
- 1.2. Governors agreed to Binks Neate-Evans joining the meeting online for items up to and including item 8 to observe LJ's leadership and influencing skills as part of her Masters degree. The agenda order had been amended accordingly.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from David Quick.

3. Notification of any urgent business


- 3.1. KB informed Governors that a Memorandum of Understanding with regards to possible collaboration with Grandpont will be raised at the end of the meeting. (Please refer to item 18.1 below.)
- 3.2. The appointment of SP as a Co-opted Governor will also need to be discussed (see item 18.2 below).

4. Declarations of pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

5. School Development Plan (SDP) update

- 5.1. LJ issued a copy of the SDP at the meeting; a copy is filed on Governor Hub.

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:


- 5.2. All actions for the autumn term have been completed and are highlighted in green. For the spring term, actions already underway are highlighted in amber and those yet to be started are in red. A glossary of terms and acronyms has been added, as requested by Governors. LJ added that staff initials show who the lead person is for an item, however it is a team effort.
- 5.3. The SDP will help Governors to focus on specific areas of the school, gather evidence of how the school is performing and ask appropriate questions to the staff when doing monitoring visits.
- 5.4. **Governors asked** if there were any areas on the SDP, currently marked in red, that LJ was concerned about. LJ responded that it was too early in the term to say, however if any items were still 'red' at the end of the term then it would be investigated as to why this was so.
- 5.5. LJ welcomed any feedback from Governors about the SDP.

6. School Improvement Partner report

- 6.1. OCC is being very supportive to the school with, for example, further visits, support with the SEF, reporting information and safeguarding aspects, which demonstrates that they want the school to succeed and develop. This has also been echoed in conversations between OCC and KB.
- 6.2. The school now has a written safeguarding script so visitors to the school are given all the relevant information when they arrive. As well as informing them who the safeguarding lead person is on the premises that day, they are told of the fire drill, lockdown drill and where further safeguarding information can be found. A leaflet is also available in the reception area.
- 6.3. **Governors asked** the following questions that were answered to their satisfaction:
- 6.3.1. Is the issuing of safeguarding information meant to happen at all entry points to the building? Yes, it is. If a Governor visits the school they are expected to know the fire and lockdown drills.
- 6.3.2. If the information is in written form, what happens if a visitor cannot read? Could the same information be given as a recorded message to listen to or video to view on an iPad or tablet device? LJ answered that these are important points and will be explored, however they will involve a cost to the school.
- Action: KB to make enquiries about free IT tablets that Microsoft may be giving away free to schools.**
- 6.3.3. Would it be useful to look at how many times reception staff have to welcome visitors? It was pointed out that the visitors signing-in book would give this information to see how many times safeguarding information needs to be given out.
- 6.4. The next School Improvement Partner visit with Catherine Hayward is scheduled to take place on 6th February 2023 and will be in the form of a learning walk. They will also be looking at Development Journals that are used to track the progress of SEND children. The Development Journals have monthly checklists that will help to track sometimes small steps in progress that would not be evident using the 'steps' system.

7. Health & Safety and Premises

- 7.1. OCC agreed to pay for two new boilers for the school, however as part of the initiative for everything to be more environmentally friendly, an air-source heat pump will also have to be installed. The pump is large and can be noisy so it will need to be sited in the car park. This system will reduce the school's carbon emissions though it will probably

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not save on heating costs initially due to the poor level of insulation in the building. OCC appear to be keen in supporting sustainability and LJ has requested funding for the installation of insulation.

- 7.2. It has been noted that there is asbestos around some of the piping which has had to be taken into consideration when planning the work that needs to be done. A good working relationship is being built with the contractors and they are fully aware of the school's needs and priorities. The work will be carried out at weekends and during the half-term holiday so children and staff are not in the building.
- 7.3. Parents have been informed of the necessary work and about the asbestos and a meeting with them is being held on Friday 27th January to address any of their concerns.
- 7.4. **Governors asked** the following questions that were answered to their satisfaction.
- 7.4.1. How will the contractors access the school at weekends and at half-term? The school has a set of keys that are signed out to them so they can gain access. LJ feels reassured that the contractors have listened to what the school has been saying to them.
- 7.4.2. Have the contractors worked at other schools? They have been contracted by OCC who have conducted the necessary checks and the contractors are experienced at working in a school environment.
- 7.4.3. How forthcoming has OCC been? The school has been trying to get new boilers for some time and pressure was put on OCC for the necessary funding. However, more recently OCC is keen to support the sustainability agenda and have stepped things up a gear.


8. Staffing

- 8.1. KB thanked the Governors for being able to meet so quickly prior to Christmas to agree the staffing restructure. There is limited scope for when a restructure can be conducted during the academic year and speed was of the essence to complete this restructure before the end of this financial year.
- 8.2. The restructure is now well under way, LJ has held meetings with the relevant staff and the consultation period comes to an end on Monday 30th January 2023.
- 8.3. OCC and KB have had a conversation where it was suggested that any collaboration with another nursery school is put on hold until the restructure is complete and time given for things to stabilise.
- 8.4. **Governors asked** the following questions that were answered to their satisfaction.
- 8.4.1. Are there any wider repercussions for the staffing at the school? Yes, as the changes will have an impact on them. All staff have had the opportunity to ask questions. The SWOT analysis that was carried out identified the strengths and gaps at the school and the changes will help to fill the gaps.
- 8.4.2. Will LJ be spending more time in the classroom following the restructure? Yes, she will be providing cover where it is needed when staff have other duties to fulfil.
- 8.5. A further conversation took place which is confidential and notes can be seen in the minutes part 2.

9. Minutes of the meeting held on date and matters arising

- 9.1. The minutes of 23rd November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to send approved minutes to KB for signature and filing at the school.

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

9.2. Previous actions were:


- 9.2.1. Item 5.1: Clerk to send approved minutes to KB for signature – completed.
- 9.2.2. Item 5.5: LJ to compile glossary of acronyms and terms and attach to the SDP Progress and Actions document – on agenda, please refer to item 5.1 above.
- 9.2.3. Item 8.3: LJ/LRS to send finalised SFVS to Clerk for circulation and online approval by Governors – on agenda, please refer to item 11.2 below.
- 9.2.4. Item 9.1: LJ to file Safeguarding Audit on Governor Hub and send link to Governors – completed
- 9.2.5. Item 11.2: LJ to look at OCC Absence Policy and circulate to Governors – on agenda, please refer to item 17.7 below.
- 9.2.6. Item 12.4: MC to complete visit form template and send to Clerk for uploading onto Governor Hub and circulation to Governors – MC confirmed he had visited the school on Monday 23rd January 2023 and will provide a written report.
- 9.2.7. Item 12.4: KB / MF to agree a visit template form and send to Clerk for uploading onto Governor Hub and circulation to Governors – completed and filed on Governor Hub. The form will help in recording the purpose of the visit, for the visit to be focused and for staff be prepared for the questions they are likely to be asked.
Governors asked how many visits they are expected to make. Governors are expected to make three visits per academic year (i.e., one per term).
- 9.2.8. Item 13.6: Clerk to send all policies approved by FGB to KB for signature (then forward to LJ) and update policy register – completed.
- 9.2.9. Item 13.7: Clerk to update according to DfE policy list and send to KB and LJ for final approval – completed.
- 9.2.10. Item 14.2: LJ to co-ordinate recruitment of staff governor – two potential candidates.
- 9.2.11. Item 15.3: All Governors to complete and return the skills audit form to the Clerk if they have not already done so – completed.

10. Committee meetings

- 10.1. Finance, Premises and Health & Safety: The minutes and papers of the Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee held on 29th November 2022 were circulated prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub. The Governors had no further comments to add.
- 10.2. Performance, Standards and Curriculum: A date is still to be set for this Committee to meet taking into account everyone's availability.
ACTION: KB to arrange Committee meeting date as soon as possible.
- 10.3. HR and Wellbeing: The last HR and Wellbeing Committee took place on 28th November 2022 to discuss the restructure. The next meeting will be arranged to take place in mid-May 2023.
ACTION: KB to arrange Committee meeting date for mid-May.

11. Finance

- 11.1. Budget and forecast: The budget deficit is now below £200K. The Governors and LJ thanked LRS for his diligence in the way financial papers are prepared and for his work with the Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee. (Please also refer to item 10.1 above.)

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

- 11.2. School Financial Values Standard (SFVS): The SFVS and additional information were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub. The Governors had no questions or comments to add and **approved** the SFVS for submission.

ACTION: KB to approve the SFVS online by 10th February 2023.

12. Safeguarding update

- 12.1. Annual Safeguarding Report 2021-22: The process for the Annual Safeguarding Report 2021-22 was not followed as Governors would have wished and further issues have been identified since its submission.

- 12.2. **Governors voiced concern** about the possibility of visitors or intruders being able to access the school unchallenged via the car park, as the fence is low enough for someone to climb over and the door leading from the playground to the classroom is not a security door. It was suggested that tall plants could be installed to shield the playground (though not of the variety that children could hide among).

ACTION: CH to contact Local Prevention Officer regarding a visit to the school to suggest possible options for screening off the playground area.

- 12.3. **Governors suggested** that brightly coloured lanyards for visitor badges are used so visitors are more visible around the school. A different coloured lanyard could be used for staff identity badges.

- 12.4. **Governors were also concerned** that although an alarm sounds if the door between the classroom and the lobby is opened unexpectedly, staff could become desensitised to it keep going off when parents regularly use it. **Governors queried** if the alarm sound could be changed on a rotational basis (similar to different police sirens) so staff do take notice when it sounds.

- 12.5. **Governors had also experienced** being admitted to the building by a parent rather than a member of staff, which was a concern. LJ reassured the Governors that any unexpected visitors are asked for the purpose of their visit and, if appropriate, for their ID before opening the door to them. LJ also undertook to 'police' the door when pupils are entering or leaving the school.

ACTION: LJ to add all points 12.2 to 12.5 to the safeguarding action plan in preparation for the next safeguarding visit on 6th March 2023.

- 12.6. It was suggested and agreed that safeguarding would be discussed further at a separate meeting.

ACTION: Governors to hold a further meeting to discuss safeguarding; KB to arrange.

13. Quality monitoring

- 13.1. Wellbeing: No visits have been undertaken since the last FGB meeting on 23rd November 2022.


- 13.2. SEN: MC will be providing a written report (please refer to item 9.2.6 above).

- 13.3. Vulnerable children: As item 13.2 above.

- 13.4. Closing the gap: MF's visit report from October 2022 has been uploaded to Governor Hub.

14. Website compliance

- 14.1. HS confirmed that the website is currently compliant with the statutory information that must be published and will keep a watching brief with regards to any necessary changes.

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:



15. Governance updates

- 15.1. Amendment to Scheme of Delegation: **Governors agreed** to the amendment made to the Scheme of Delegation for pay-related items (except Pay Policy) to be delegated to the Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee. An updated copy is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.
- 15.2. Standing Orders: **Governors approved** the Standing Orders document. A copy is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.
- 15.3. Clerks' briefing: A one-page summary of the Clerks' Briefing held on 12th November 2022 is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated prior to the meeting. Reminders were given about keeping GIAS, Governor Hub and the school website up to date. Some slight changes were made by OCC to the Annual Schedule of Business for the spring term. The Energy Bill Discount Scheme will supersede the Energy Bill Relief Scheme as from 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2024. The Schools Bill would not progress in its current form but the Government is committed to the objectives it contained. A fully accredited Level 3 qualification for clerks provided by the National Governance Association is being looked into by Governor Services.

16. Governor Training and Development

- 16.1. Skills Audit Summary: Some Governors indicated that there were unsure or did not know about certain aspects of school governance in the recent skills audit. It was noted that Governors are volunteers and finding the time to complete training or reading may be challenging. Also Governors are not expected to be experts in all aspects of governance; however it is important the FGB as a whole has the right skill set. Governors were informed that lots of useful information can be found via Governor Hub on the 'Knowledge' tab (formerly known as 'The Key'), they can sign up to receive a weekly schools newsletter via email from OCC, and Rachel Caseby has been holding training sessions specifically for nursery schools, however attendance at these in the past has been poor.
- 16.1.1. Governor Services also publish a termly training schedule with sessions taking place in the evening and usually lasting no longer than 1.5 hours. The OCC website for Governors also has bite-size online training that can be undertaken at any time.
- 16.1.2. The following suggestions were made:
- If one Governor attends a training session the presentation slides and notes can be saved on Governor Hub and shared with other Governors;
 - Governors could use the OCC Training Schedule and plan who would attend which sessions; and
 - KB and LJ offered to arrange a short meeting with any interested Governors to signpost them as to where to find the information they would like to know.
- 16.2. Governor Services Training Schedule spring 2023: It was noted that induction sessions are planned for the spring term, together with sessions on holding the school to account and school finance.
- 16.3. Update on training attended and planned: No training sessions have been attended since the previous meeting on 23rd November 2022.

17. Policies

- 17.1. Admission to Local Authority Nursery Schools Policy (OCC Policy): This policy was **approved** by Governors.

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

- 17.2. Pay Policy for Support Staff: This policy was not available for discussion / approval at this meeting.
- 17.3. Pay Policy for Teachers: The school follows the OCC Pay Policy for Teachers and this had not been issued at the time of the meeting.
- 17.4. Behaviour Policy: This policy was **approved** by Governors.
- 17.5. Code of Conduct for staff: This policy was **approved** by Governors.
- 17.6. Staff Capability Policy (OCC policy): This policy was **approved** by Governors.
- 17.7. Absence Policy (OCC policy): This policy was **approved** by Governors.
- 17.8. Grievance Policy (Resolution) Policy: This policy was **approved** by Governors.

ACTION: Clerk to send all approved policies to KB for signature and update policy register.

18. Any other business

- 18.1. Memorandum of Understanding: **Governors approved** a Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing in principle, to the future collaboration with Grandpont Nursery School. It was suggested that a meeting be held with the FGB of Grandpont Nursery School at the appropriate time.
- 18.2. Appointment of SP: A discussion had been held with DQ previously and he had agreed to become an Associate Governor (change from Co-opted Governor). **Governors agreed** to the appointment of SP as a Co-opted Governor.

ACTION: Clerk to amend Governor Hub as above.


19. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 7pm.

- 19.1. Future meeting dates are as follows:
Wednesday 24th May 2023 (please note change of date)
Wednesday 28th June 2023

The meeting closed at 9:23pm

Hazel Sheridan
27th January 2023

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:







ACE Centre FGB minutes 20230125 APPROVED

Final Audit Report

2023-03-27

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