

Minutes from the Full Governing Body Meeting
Held on Wednesday 23rd November 2022 at 7pm
at The ACE Centre Nursery School

Present	Kate Barlow (KB) – Co-opted Governor and Chair Lynn Jenkins (LJ) – Headteacher Monica Ferguson (MF) – Parent Governor (<i>via Zoom from 7:29pm</i>) David Quick (DQ) – Co-opted Governor LexyTuckwell (LT) – Staff Governor
Apologies:	Mike Cahill – Local Authority Governor and Vice-chair Topsy Fletcher – Co-opted Governor
Absent:	Cat Hemmings – Co-opted Governor
In attendance	Hazel Sheridan (HS) - Clerk

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Mike Cahill and Topsy Fletcher. Cat Hemmings did not attend the meeting.

2. Notification of any urgent business

There were no items of urgent business raised.

3. Declarations of pecuniary interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

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

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to send approved minutes to KB for signature.

4.2. Previous actions were:

4.2.1. Item 4 - All Governors to update declarations of interest via their personal profile on Governor Hub by 19th October 2022. Clerk to send completed register of declarations to KB and LJ for publication on the website – completed.

4.2.2. Item 5.2 - All Governors to confirm agreement to the Code of Conduct via their personal profile on Governor Hub – completed.

4.2.3. Item 6.2 - All Governors to confirm via Governor Hub that they have read the updated KCSIE Part 1 – completed.

4.2.4. Item 8.2 – LJ and MC to meet prior to MC's meeting with Robert Court MP to discuss the issues that need to be raised – meeting with MP is pending.

4.2.5. Item 9.1 - All Governors to read Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation and let KB and Clerk know of their approval or any changes that need to be made by 19th October – on agenda, item 15.1.

Signed (by Chair):

Date:

- 4.2.6. Item 10.3.2. - LJ to meeting with ACE Centre Trustees about the percentages involved with premises use and the related costs - completed.
- 4.2.7. Item 13.6. - KB to circulate notes to Governors following the briefing on 18th October – completed.
- 4.2.8. Item 14 - LJ will produce a report, with information from SIP, and circulate it to Governors – on agenda, item 5.
- 4.2.9. Item 16.1.3 - KB to arrange a safeguarding visit to the school – visit arranged for 2.12.22.
- 4.2.10. Item 21.4 - LJ to communicate to Governors any useful information following her training – training on 23.11.22. (Please refer to item 14.1 below.)

5. School Development Plan (SDP)

- 5.1. The SDP and related progress and actions table were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub. LJ explained that the actions identified relate to Ofsted criteria and provide the 'road map' of how The ACE Centre Nursery School plans to develop and improve over this academic year. Actions have been colour-coded as follows: green = completed; amber = ongoing and red = not yet started, and staff initials show who is the lead / responsible person for completing them. These documents will inform Governors how actions are progressing and where to find or who to contact if they require further information (e.g., during monitoring visits).
- 5.2. Ofsted is now placing more emphasis on evidence to back-up what they are being told verbally during an inspection and this needs to be triangulated with information from staff, parents and governors, and observations at the school.
- 5.3. For action 4.6, regarding delivery of the SLA contract for The ACE Centre Ltd (charitable trust), it was clarified that ZW has been doing some work with the staff to support their work on the environment in childcare and the time spent is logged and re-charged accordingly. This also helps with joining up staff knowledge and skills.
- 5.4. **Governors have recognised** that at present there are gaps in the evidence that can be provided should an inspection occur in the short term and the SDP will help with ensuring there is sufficient evidence moving forward. Evidence within the school is being built up to improve the school and the outcomes of the children who attend.
- 5.5. **Governors commented** that the documents were clear and they could easily identify what had been completed, what was being actioned at that time and what was yet to be started on the list of required actions. **Governors also requested** that a glossary is compiled of acronyms / terms used in the documents.
ACTION: LJ to compile glossary of acronyms / terms and attach to the SDP Progress and Actions document.
- 5.6. **Governors asked** if there was anything LJ and her staff needed from the Governors to help with progression of the SDP. LJ responded that the most valuable action will be the governing monitoring visits where evidence could be sought and questions asked of staff.
- 5.7. The SDP process for the next academic year will start after Easter (term 4) to clarify the strategic aims. This will feed into the School Evaluation Form (SEF) where areas for development are identified, which in turn feeds into the SDP to show the necessary actions for the areas for development to be progressed.

6. EGM held on 7th November 2022

- 6.1. The minutes of the EGM held on 7th November 2022 were not available at the time of the meeting. KB confirmed that the Governors had unanimously agreed to look further into collaborating with Grandpont, and possibly joining a federation of other nursery schools in Oxfordshire in future, and that this would be a positive step.

7. Committee meetings

- 7.1. Finance, Health & Safety and Premises 11th October 2022: DQ reported back from period 3 figures that the projected year-end carry forward is forecast to be a deficit of £206K, with an underspend of £11,360. Total revenue income is forecast to be £6K greater than the budget. LJ added that the number of staff for SEND support has been streamlined. Overall income from facilities and services is projected to be £3K higher than budget. Total revenue expenditure is expected to be c£516K. General maintenance is currently underspent by £3.5K. Year-end total expenditure is forecast to be £10K and the year-end Capital carry-forward balance will be £7.6K.

- 7.1.1. The health and safety audit, together with an action plan, were discussed. The action plan focusses on risk assessments, training, emergency procedures and hazards. DQ and LRS completed the annual premises inspection on 30th June 2022 and most of the identified issues have now been resolved. The defibrillator has not yet been received and this is being chased.

- 7.2. Performance, Standards and Curriculum: A date for this committee meeting is to be confirmed.

- 7.3. HR and Wellbeing: KB informed Governors that LJ's salary group grade had been changed when she was appointed as Headteacher and this was in breach of the Pay Policy. When the Family Centre closed the Headteacher role should also have been reviewed. KB has been in contact with Michelle Jenkins and the OCC HR team and is waiting for them to respond.

- 7.3.1. The Teaching and Leadership Role (TLR) was discussed. LT's role will be changing and ZW will be taking over the TLR. KB, LJ and LT have discussed this change. **Governors approved** the decision that LT is put on notice for this change of role, which will happen in January or February 2023 and that her salary will be protected for three years.

- 7.4. Strategy Working Party: The Strategy Working Party has not met, however KB gave an update on her meeting with other Chairs of Governors regarding forming a possible federation between four Oxfordshire nursery schools. At the meeting were the Chairs of Grandpont, Wheatley Nursery School and Headington Quarry plus another governor from Wheatley. It is anticipated that LJ will become the acting Headteacher of Grandpont (in line with a Memorandum of Understanding which will run for 12 months), as well as The ACE Nursery School, in April 2023. The advantages and disadvantages of such a joint role were highlighted as:

Advantages: additional CPD, upskilling of staff internally, and learning new processes.

Disadvantages: Up to 12 FGB meetings per year, getting to know all the families of the children who attend (more reliant on staff to keep you informed), possibly two visits from Ofsted and twice the amount of policies.

However none of the schools are yet ready to have more formal conversations about forming a federation.

8. Finance

- 8.1. Budget and forecast: Period 7 figures show that the budgeted income was £433.5K and actual income was just under £446K; this was mainly due to more SEND funding being received due to an uplift and a back-payment. Budgeted expenditure was £521K compared to an actual figure of £513K. The projected year-end carry-forward deficit is

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£197K. The period 7 documents were circulated prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub (where more details are available).

8.2. Use of building and marketing: The Headteacher and SENDCo of Chipping Norton School visited The ACE Centre with a view to possibly using approximately half of the premises. They will need to speak to their superiors at the school and LJ is waiting for them to respond. It is hoped that OCC will provide support for any alterations required to The ACE Centre premises if Chipping Norton School wish to use them. DQ added that he has spoken with the charity trustees to keep them informed of what is going on.

8.2.1. LJ and MF met to discuss the priorities and actions necessary to promote The ACE Centre Nursery School and raise pupil numbers. The signage at the front of the premises needs to be improved as current signs are out of date and not all relate to the school. **Governors agreed** that these should be removed as soon as possible. LJ circulated signage information to the Governors prior to the meeting containing site photos. A deposit of £855 is being held by one organisation following previous attempts to improve the signage. Governors proposed that the signage:

- should be located in the most suitable place, i.e., at the front of the premises, to be effective;
- should advertise that The ACE Nursery School is an OCC educational school with a Headteacher and qualified teaching staff; and
- should include a strapline to encourage parents to send their child to the school.

There are posts already outside the school ready for a signage board to be added. Although this may block the view of the building from the road, it would make the premises look more 'school-like'.

Plastic banners could provide a short-term solution to advertise that there are available places for children until more permanent signage is agreed and sourced.

It was also suggested that parents could be asked if their positive comments / feedback could be used anonymously in promoting The ACE Centre on the website, in the newsletter and in articles in the Chipping News.

MF agreed to oversee and lead the marketing project.

8.3. SFVS: LRS is finalising the SFVS and this will be circulated to Governors for approval as soon as it is available.

ACTION: LJ / LRS to send final SFVS to Clerk for circulation and online approval by Governors.

9. Safeguarding update

9.1. A safeguarding audit has been completed and LJ will file the documents on Governor Hub. LJ fed back that the auditor commented "everything is there but it is sometimes difficult to find or access". There were no major concerns and LT is working through the related action plan.

ACTION: LJ to file safeguarding audit on Governor Hub and send link to Governors.

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Date:

10. Health and safety update

- 10.1. The health and safety monitoring visit for 2022 has been completed and LRS is working through the action plan with timescales for completion. Most items are due to be completed by January / February 2023. (Please also refer to item 7.1.1 above.)

11. Staffing update

- 11.1. One member of ACE Nursery School staff is working in the childcare section (charitable trust) in the mornings and returning to the nursery school in the afternoons. Due to the current low number of pupils, the nursery school is over-staffed and childcare is under-staffed so this is a good use of resources across the site. It is a temporary measure and the time is being recharged to the charitable trust. This is working well for the nursery school, the trust and the member of staff. It is also helping the member of staff to build their knowledge and skills.
- 11.2. The staff absence rate is high and has been for a while. There is currently no absence policy to document how absence will be managed. LJ will also be looking at absence benchmarking. **Governors asked** if return to work (RTW) interviews are conducted. LJ answered that RTWs are not carried out at the moment. During a RTW interview questions can be asked to help discover if the staff member needs any support and also encourage the staff member to reflect on the impact on other staff during an absence. Staff who have been absent are asked to complete a one-page form but this is not always done and if they are, not always to a satisfactory standard. **Governors commented** that it needs to be understood if an absence is due to sickness or a well-being issue. LJ added that to promote well-being, the school has recently agreed to reimburse staff who have a flu vaccination (providing a receipt is provided).

ACTION: LJ to look at OCC Absence Policy and circulate to Governors.

12. Quality monitoring

- 12.1. Wellbeing: A well-being governor visit is scheduled to take place during w/c 5th December.
- 12.2. SEN: A verbal update was not available as MC could not attend the meeting; please refer to item 12.4 below.
- 12.3. Vulnerable children: A verbal update was not available as MC could not attend the meeting; please refer to item 12.4 below.
- 12.4. Closing the gap: MF updated Governors following a recent visit with MC, during which they looked at the welcome programme, tools that the staff use to assess the children, how the team work together to move children up the progress levels and how additional support and funding is sought. They also spoke with staff about safeguarding. A visit form has been partially completed and will be circulated to Governors when it is complete. **Governors agreed** that a visit template form would be useful to standardise the format and which could then be used to support / evidence actions on the SDP.

ACTION: MC to complete visit form template and send to Clerk for uploading onto Governor Hub and circulation to Governors.

ACTION: KB / MF to agree a visit template form and send to Clerk for uploading onto Governor Hub and circulation to Governors.

- 12.5. Curriculum: KB agreed to include the curriculum during her safeguarding visit scheduled to take place on 2nd December.

13. Policies

- 13.1. Complaint policy and procedure: There were no comments or questions and **Governors approved** the policy.
- 13.2. Missing child policy: There were no comments or questions and **Governors approved** the policy.
- 13.3. Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) policy: There were no comments or questions and **Governors approved** the policy.
- 13.4. Whistleblowing policy: There were no comments or questions and **Governors approved** the policy.
- 13.5. Child collection and uncollected child policy: There were no comments or questions and **Governors approved** the policy.
- 13.6. Safer recruitment: There were no comments or questions and **Governors approved** the policy.

ACTION: Clerk to send all above policies to KB for signature (then forward to LJ) and update policy register.

- 13.7. The policy register, which is filed on Governor Hub, needs to be completed by naming the approval committee against each policy.

ACTION: Clerk to update according to DfE policy list and send to KB and LJ for final approval.

14. Governance updates and training

- 14.1. LJ completed her educational visits training and there was nothing of significance to report to Governors.
- 14.2. LT announced that she will be stepping down as staff governor. All staff will be given the opportunity to put their name forward for this role if they wish to do so.

ACTION: LJ to co-ordinate.

15. Governing Body

- 15.1. Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation: **Governors gave final approval** to the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation documents.
- 15.2. Standing Orders: This item was deferred to the next meeting on 25th January 2023.
- 15.3. Skills audit: Governors were reminded that the skills audit needs to be completed to ensure there were no skills gaps across the FGB as a whole and, if there were, that action could be taken for either training or to recruit an appropriate person.

ACTION: All Governors to complete and return the skills audit form to the Clerk if they have not already done so.

16. Any other business

- 16.1. Communication with Governors: It was noted that there have been several follow-up emails sent to chase up actions that have not been completed. It was recognised that Governors may receive many emails which can be overwhelming, so it was **agreed** to include the word 'mandatory' in the subject line for any emails where actions were absolutely necessary.

ACTION: All to note.



17. Next meeting date

17.1. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 7pm.

17.2. Future meeting dates are as follows:

Wednesday 22nd March 2023

Wednesday 17th May 2023

Wednesday 28th June 2023

The meeting closed at 9:12pm

Hazel Sheridan

26th November 2022

APPROVED

Signed (by Chair):

Date: