

Minutes from the Full Governing Body Meeting

Held on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 6pm

at The ACE Centre Nursery School

Present	Catherine Hayward (CHa) – LA Governor and Chair Sally Pursell (SP) – Co-opted Governor and Vice-chair Phoebe O'Donnell (POD) – Parent Governor Lynn Jenkins (LJ) – Headteacher Rachel Caseby (RC) – Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
Apologies:	Zoe Wakefield (ZW) – Associate Member
Absent:	Cat Hemmings (CHe) – Co-opted Governor
In attendance	Hazel Sheridan (HS) - Clerk

The meeting started at 6:07pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Zoe Wakefield. Cat Hemmings did not attend the meeting.

ACTION: LJ to telephone CHe as there has been limited contact from her.

2. Notification of any urgent business

LJ requested that an item regarding thanking Governors who have resigned be discussed at the end of the meeting (please refer to item 15.1 below).

3. Declarations of pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.


4. Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2024 and matters arising

- 4.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting with one amendment to the date of the next meeting (30th April not 14th May).

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

Previous actions were:

- 4.2. Item 2.3 Clerk to send an email to all Governors asking for volunteers for role of Vice-chair and note as agenda item for the next FGB meeting on 12th March 2024 – completed and on agenda item 5.
- 4.3 Item 5.1 Clerk to send approved minutes to SP for signature and filing at the school - completed.
- 4.4 Item 5.4 POD to draft advertisement poster to recruit a parent governor and send to CHa, SP and LJ – completed. (Please refer to item 8.2.3 below.)
- 4.5 Item 6.1.1 LJ to ask the National Network of Maintained Nursery School Headteachers if they have standard measurements for the SBM to use, and if so, what they are and report back to Governors – action carried forward.

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

ACTION: LJ to contact National Network of Maintained Nursery School Headteachers as above. Clerk to note as agenda item for FGB meeting on 30th April 2024.

- 4.6 Item 7.2.1 CHa and SP to scrutinise the Support Programme and Governor Action Plan for differences and confirm to LJ – completed, on agenda items 8.1 and 8.2.
- 4.7 Item 7.3 Clerk to download training list from Governor Hub and add as an agenda item for the next FGB meeting on 12th March 2024 – on agenda item 13.2.
- 4.8 Item 7.3.4 Clerk to note OCC Support Programme and Governor Action Plan as agenda items for future FGB meetings – on agenda items 8.1 and 8.2.
- 4.9 Item 7.4 Clerk to note SDP as agenda item for next FGB meeting – on agenda item 8.3.
- 4.10 Item 8.1 Clerk to email CHe regarding a health and safety visit to the school before the audit – completed, however no response received at the time of the meeting.
- 4.11 Item 9.1 SP to carry out a check on safeguarding paperwork and report back to FGB at the next meeting. Clerk to note as agenda item for 12th March 2024 – on agenda 12.1.
- 4.12. Item 12.1 SP to complete Governor Induction Policy template and submit for next FGB meeting. Clerk to note as agenda item for 12th March 2024 and inform OCC of skills needs for LA Governor – completed and on agenda item 14.7.
- 4.13. Item 13 Clerk to send approved policies to SP for signature and update policy register - completed.
- 4.14 Item 13.1 LJ to complete review of Behaviour Policy when response received from the Early Years Team. Clerk to note as agenda item for next FGB meeting on 12th March 2024 – on agenda item 14.2.
- 4.15 Item 13.3 LJ to locate and add Appendix 1 to the Child Collection and Uncollected Child Policy and resubmit to FGB for approval. Clerk to note as agenda item for next FGB meeting – on agenda item 14.4.
- 4.16 Item 14.2 LJ to ask IT provider to set up school email addresses for Governors - completed. Email addresses have been set up however Governors have encountered problems in accessing the system. LJ has provided contact details for Koala, the school's IT provider, who will be able to assist. SP undertook to contact Koala in the first instance.

ACTION: SP to contact Koala to resolve email set up and access issue and then inform Governors.

5. Election of Vice-chair

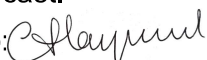
- 5.1. No nominations for the role of Vice-chair were received. It was proposed that CHa becomes the Chair of Governors and SP the Vice-chair. CHa and SP temporarily left the meeting in turn while their respective nominated roles were discussed and voted upon.

Decision: CHa was elected as Chair of Governors and SP as Vice-chair.

ACTION: Clerk to amend Governor Hub to show the change of roles.

6. Finance

- 6.1. Budget and forecast: LJ informed Governors that there had been no further budget monitoring reports from Andy Flowers since the last FGB meeting. There will be an underspend on this year's budget and the deficit is currently showing as £40K below the original forecast.

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

- 6.2. Budget 2024 – 2025: RT is working on the budget for the next academic year, having weekly meetings with LJ and being supported by Andy Flowers (OCC). The number of children who will be coming to the school is currently low for the autumn and spring terms next year so the availability of places will need to be advertised. The 2024–2025 budget will be sent to POD w/c 25th March for comment and then to the Clerk by 23rd April. It will be uploaded to Governor Hub a week prior to the FGB meeting on 30th April so Governors will have the opportunity to read it and prepare any questions or comments in advance.

ACTION: Clerk to note budget 2024-2025 as agenda item for FGB on 30th April 2024.

- 6.3. **Governors asked** the following questions that were answered to their satisfaction.

Q1. Has the number of children coming through to the nursery school been checked with the pre-school?

A1. Yes it has and there are currently only three children that will be new to The ACE.

Q2. Do primary schools in the area have a nursery school?

A2. No they do not. **Governors suggested** that it may be worthwhile advertising in primary schools where parents of older children, and who may have younger children, will see it. SP added that The ACE pre-school has recently changed its opening hours and have many children attending; these children could come through to the nursery school in the future.

Q3. Is this information reflected on the website?

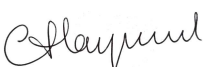
A3. At present there are no staff or Governors who have the IT knowledge /skills to update the school website, which is a concern. **Governors commented** that this ties in with the recruitment of new Governors and filling the IT skills gap on the Governing Board. Updating the website is a priority and LJ has spoken with Sue Brown (Sufficiency and Access Officer, OCC) about this to see if there is any assistance available.

- 6.3.1. **Governors commented** that in the recent Early Years Newsletter schools were reminded about accurate remittances being sent by 22nd March. LJ stated that remittances had already been submitted and she was confident they were accurate.

Excerpt from Early Years Newsletter: “The Early Education Funding payments based on your headcount submissions have now been made. Please check that your remittances are correct and the funding you have received for this Spring term is accurate. Any changes that need to be made should be completed as a Mid-Term-Change within the Establishment Portal by 22 March.”


7. **Headteacher’s report**

- 7.1. LJ gave a verbal update to Governors; this was due to the many changes still being accommodated at The ACE (e.g., end of collaboration on 18th February 2024). Conversations are ongoing with OCC about the future of nursery schools in the county.
- 7.2. Feedback since the end of the collaboration with Grandpont Nursery School indicates that staff at The ACE feel reassured and some of the SBM’s workload pressure has been relieved. With LJ back at The ACE full-time, personnel matters and actions are being dealt with more quickly. LJ is holding regular weekly meetings with the Lead Teacher and SBM and fortnightly meetings with CHa and SP. LJ is also seeing more parents at drop-off and / or pick-up time, which gives the opportunity for quick chats to resolve any potential issues before they may escalate. **Governors commented** that there seems to be a calmer and more cohesive atmosphere since the end of collaboration.

Signed (by Chair): 

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- 7.3. Governors were willing to try the collaboration as a way of helping to ease the financial situation at the school and OCC was very supportive. With the end of the collaboration other financial strategies must now be found. LJ informed Governors that approximately £30K is being spent on the upkeep of space within the building that is no longer being used. LJ, CHa and SP have met with Jenny Seddon (Strategic Liaison Manager, OCC) and Kevin Griffin (School Organisation, OCC) and discussed options for leasing out part of the building. All current provision at The ACE Centre could be housed in one part of the building and the remainder leased out. Although CHa and SP agreed that Jenny can find out if anyone is interested in leasing part of the building, the school can change its mind at any point. An interested party will need to be found before any costs or building work are agreed. LJ stated that more links need to be made with local community as there may be a local organisation that would be interested in renting more space.
- 7.4. **Governors commented** that there is a financial risk to the school if such an arrangement did not go ahead; however, it also limits the capacity for the nursery school to expand in the future. They also stated that having all staff in the same building could help with flexibility in which staff are where.
- 7.5. **Governors asked** the following questions that were answered to their satisfaction.
- Q4. Will OCC cover any costs involved?**
A4. Yes they will. **Governors added** that items like the shared heating system and associated costs would need to be resolved.
- Q5. Will the outdoor space be for the sole use of the nursery school?**
A5. No, the outdoor space will also be shared with pre-school.
- 7.6. LJ informed Governors that expansion of provision for two to five-year-olds is being looked at for the long-term sustainability of the school. LJ will look at the finances in the autumn term together with re-negotiating roles and aligning responsibilities. There will be a digital project to make systems more efficient (e.g., telephone system with different options, including for reporting absence).
- 7.7. By 2025 all schools must be able to show what they are doing about climate sustainability. LJ suggested that the school could look at the installation of solar panels and **Governors suggested** that this would also open up the possibility of renting roof space out for such an installation and generating an income stream for the school.
- 7.8. LJ stated that future Headteacher's reports will be written and include data on attendance and SEND.
- 8. Driving progress at The ACE**
- 8.1. OCC Support Programme: CHa confirmed that the OCC Support Programme actions matched those on the Governor Action Plan. The OCC Support Programme will be finalised at the strategy meeting that will be held on 27th March and then shared with Governors. **Governors agreed** that the following documents should be submitted to the strategy meeting as evidence of how governance at the school is being strengthened and progressed: Governor Action Plan, Governor Training Record, Risk Register, Governor Monitoring Schedule and Induction Pack.
- 8.2. Governor Action Plan: The Governor Action Plan is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The Action Plan has been rated red, amber or green with regards to progress on the necessary actions. Governor training is not moving forward and the core training needs to be completed as quickly as possible. POD added that she will be attending Induction B training on 14th May.
- ACTION: Clerk to update Governor Training Record with POD's training date.**

Signed (by Chair): 

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8.2.1. The Skills Audit Analysis showed two main areas where further training is required: finance and risk management. CHa reported that the bite-size finance training was very useful and requested that all Governors complete this. Also Governors needed to be more aware of what education is provided at the school and it was suggested that LJ could run a short session.

ACTION: All Governors to complete bite-size finance training via the OCC Governor Services website.

ACTION: LJ to arrange a short session with Governors on education provision at the school.

8.2.2. RC has drafted a risk register which will be uploaded to Governor Hub. The risk register shows the risks the school may be subject to and how they can be mitigated. Governors must know the risks to demonstrate their knowledge of the school at a future Ofsted inspection.

ACTION: All Governors to read the risk register and determine if any risks are no longer relevant to the school. Clerk to note as standing item on future FGB agendas.

8.2.3. The school has placed internal advertisements for a staff governor and a parent governor. CHa has investigated the Inspiring Governance website and found a potential candidate for a co-opted governor; CHa and SP will be meeting with the person on Thursday. SP has written to the Chipping Norton Deputy Mayor, Steve Akers, to see if he knows of anyone who may be interested in joining the Governing Board; at the time of the meeting a response had not yet been received. **Governors agreed** for CHa to contact other possible candidates she found via Inspiring Governance. It was noted that the Governing Board needs to broaden the diversity of its members.

8.3. School Development Plan: LJ reported that the SDP as it stands is no longer relevant to how the school is now. New actions are required to fulfil the actions from the Ofsted inspection in October 2023, the Programme of Support, the end of the collaboration and any financial strategies. **Governors added** that partial achievements from this year should also be included in the revised SDP.


ACTION: LJ to revise SDP and Clerk to note as agenda item for meeting on 30th April 2024.

8.4. School Improvement Partner report: The next SIP visit is due on 15th March and LJ confirmed she is working on the priorities from the previous visit. **Governors asked** if LJ will be able to demonstrate the progress made since the previous visit. LJ answered that progress and its impact will be evident, for example, the impact of the 'all-in, all-out' trial.

9. Health and Safety update

9.1. It was noted that CHe, who is Health and Safety Link Governor, had not attended this or the last meeting and the next Health and Safety Audit is scheduled to take place on 6th May. Last year's audit resulted in an action plan with many items to be completed which LJ and RT have been working on. **Governors confirmed** that in CHe's absence, CHa would arrange a Health and Safety monitoring visit for w/c 3rd May (prior to the audit) to ascertain what progress had been made.

9.2. **Governors were concerned** that the current shape of the outdoor area meant that staff in near the entrance to the area could not see children at the end of the area. It was suggested that the forest areas be expanded, fenced off and lessons timetabled, and the sand pit moved. CHa contacted the Woodland Trust and 30 trees are being donated to the school. A working party may need to be established for work to be carried out

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over the summer and parents could also be invited to become involved. **Governors asked** if any local organisations may be able to offer discounted fencing and / or discounted services; POD agreed to contact one organisation.

ACTION: POD to contact fencing organisation as above.

10. Safeguarding update

10.1. It was noted that the Safeguarding Link Governor (currently CHe) needs to make termly visits and provide the Governing Board with an update. LJ added that the school aims to convert to using CPOMS, which is a safer and more robust way of noting and reporting safeguarding concerns. It is also a secure method of transferring information when children move to another school.

10.2. **Governors queried** if LJ was confident in the security of the CPOMS system and LJ replied that she was.

11. HR matters

11.1. There were no HR matters to be discussed.

12. Link Governor reports

12.1. Safeguarding (paperwork check): SP has met with LJ and discussed how the Single Central Record (SCR) will be monitored, how regular monitoring will be recorded and how SP can check the monitoring. A process is being put in place and SP will visit again in approximately one month's time to check that the system is in place and how it is working. LJ added that the school is looking at software for the SCR.

ACTION: SP to complete visit report and file on Governor Hub.

12.2. SEND: The SEND monitoring report was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and is filed on Governor Hub. All of the SEND questions that were going to be asked at the visit were sent to LJ and ZW in advance so that answers could be prepared. The Safeguarding question was not sent in advance. CHa reported that it was a very positive visit. The school has systems in place to monitor the impact of additional support given and we need to make sure these are rigorous. ZW will undertake the SENCO training. During the class observation, apart from one child who has high-level SEND needs, it was not obvious which other children also had SEND needs. It was evident that staff know the children and could talk in detail about how they were being supported and the progress they were making. However, not all staff could confidently talk about how the Developmental Journal had been used for assessment and curriculum planning for children with SEND. **Governors asked a series of questions** that were answered to their satisfaction:


Q6. How are we going to ensure that staff know about the curriculum and linking it to the Development Journals?

A6. Staff are part-way through the process of learning about Development Journals; they are aware of them but not completely familiar with them and more work is being done with the practitioners. They are being asked to link learning targets to the curriculum and adapt the curriculum where necessary.

Q7. You said the SEND children did not stand out in the classroom, why is this important?

A7. This suggests that they access the same rich curriculum as non-SEND children and are supported by enhanced interactions.

Q8. Attendance of SEND children is mentioned in the visit report and that strategies are working. Is this having an impact on the children and how do we know?

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

A8. Children with low attendance were identified and strategies put in place to help increase their attendance. For example, EYPP funds were used so a child could attend on three full days. As a result, their attendance and learning improved. There is a definite link between attendance and learning levels.

Q9. Are we being over cautious in the assessment of SEND children? What is the assessment process?

A9. 52% of the children at The ACE present with some form of additional need, not just SEND. 8% of children have high SEND needs. Inclusion funding has been used to support the remaining 44% of children who need some additional support, but they do not need it all the time and not on an ongoing basis. Needs assessments are conducted every term and the funding is stopped for any child who no longer needs support. LJ added that an assessment was conducted last week and no changes were necessary.

Q10. Children who have high support needs have ECHPs in place; are they included in the 8%?

A10. Children in the 44% are in receipt of Inclusion funding but have lower level SEND.

Governors asked if identification of the threshold regarding whether a child had additional needs of SEND was accurate.

ACTION: In addition to the children with high-level SEND, Lynn to consider the range of needs and identify those children who have lower-level SEND and those that have short-term 'additional' needs rather than SEND. Children with lower-level SEND to be included in the number/percentage data.

12.2.1. CHa undertook to look at how robust the SEND assessment processes are and to report back at the next meeting.

ACTION: CHA to look at SEND processes at the school and report back at the next FGB meeting. Clerk to note as agenda item.

12.3. Finance: The Finance Monitoring Visit report is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. POD and the SBM had their first meeting on 21st February, went through the January budget figures and talked about the historical deficit. POD will be arranging to meet / speak with Andy Flowers to get a better understanding of budget monitoring and how the deficit will be dealt with going forward and report back to FGB. More robust internal systems are needed. SBM is also looking to level out AB's workload. POD found SBM to be very keen and competent. Their next meeting will be on a more strategic level to look at the 2024 – 2025 budget and balancing it over the required three-year period.

12.3.1. **Governors asked** that if SBM is making such a good start, how do we ensure that he continues to work at The ACE and not leave? Are there any strategies in place? LJ replied that she is working with SBM on the priorities, any barriers and what can be done to overcome them. There was no handover from the previous SBM which has made things more challenging. The nursery school pays the SBM salary in full with no contribution from the Childcare charity, although he does do some work for them. The Childcare charity pay 50% of the Administrator's salary through a recharge. A review of current practice is being carried out with the aim of realigning and redistributing workload. SP added that the Trustees of the Childcare and Pre-school sections of The ACE Centre are aware that many admin systems and processes are intertwined with the nursery school. SBM is happy to work on disentangling these, however the nursery school budget for the next academic year is the priority at the moment.

Signed (by Chair): 

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13. Governance

- 13.1. Updates: Governors were made aware that the Governance Handbook and other competency framework documents have been replaced by the DfE's Maintained School Governance Guide. A link to the document was circulated to them prior to the meeting.
- 13.2. Governor training: This item was discussed in item 8.2.1 above.
- 13.3. Governor monitoring schedule: **Governors agreed** the Governor monitoring schedule of visits that need to take place.

ACTION: All Governors to look at the schedule, book their visits for a mutually convenient date and time between them and the relevant staff and update the schedule.


14. Policies

- 14.1. Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy (OCC): **Governors approved** this policy.
- 14.2. Behaviour Policy: LJ has researched other nursery schools' behaviour policies and sought clarification with the OCC Exclusions Team. The policy will be amended to clarify that exclusion is not an option at nursery schools and that support is available internally from the nursery and externally from the LA for children who may struggle with relationships and emotional wellbeing.
- ACTION: LJ to amend Behaviour Policy as above and resubmit to FGB. Clerk to note as agenda item for the meeting on 30th April.**
- 14.3. Capability of Staff: **Governors approved** this policy.
- 14.4. Child Collection and Uncollected Child Policy: **Governors approved** this policy with the amendment that the reference to the OSCB protocol is removed as the document is no longer in use.
- ACTION: LJ to amend the policy as above and send to the Clerk.**
- 14.5. Disciplinary Policy: **Governors approved** this policy with the amendment that the reference to CRB is replaced with DBS.
- ACTION: LJ to amend the policy as above and send to the Clerk.**
- 14.6. Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme: RC clarified that the school was not required to have a Freedom of Information Policy, however staff must know about the timescales involved when requests are received and where information can be found, especially if any Subject Access Requests are received. LJ informed Governors that the previous SBM was the Data Protection Officer and no one has yet been assigned to this role.
- 14.7. Governor Induction Policy: **Governors approved** this policy.
- 14.8. School Exclusions: As nursery schools do not exclude or suspend pupils this policy is not required and any behaviour issues will be dealt with according to the Behaviour Policy. Please refer to item 14.2 above.
- 14.9. Wellbeing Policy: **Governors approved** this policy with the amendment that TF's name was removed.

ACTION: LJ to amend the policy as above and send to the Clerk.

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

15. Any other business

Signed (by Chair): 

Date:

15.1. Thank you to Governors who have resigned: LJ suggested and **Governors agreed** that Thank You cards be sent to Governors who have resigned (Kate Barlow, David Quick, Mike Cahill, Topsy Fletcher and Isabelle Robinson). Governors requested that cards are signed on their behalf rather than individual signatures.

ACTION: LJ to send Thank You cards to the individuals named above.

16. Next meeting date

16.1. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 30th April 2024 at 6pm at the school.

16.2. Future meeting dates are as follows:

Tuesday 25th June 2024

The meeting closed at 8:08pm

Hazel Sheridan

14th March 2024

Sent to Chair/Head on 14th March 2024 and FGB on 27th March 2024

APPROVED

Signed (by Chair) *[Signature]*

Date:

ACE Centre FGB minutes 20240312







APPROVED

Final Audit Report

2024-05-09

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Status:	Signed
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