

## SPRING TERM 2024

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held at the school on 14 March 2024 at 7 pm

**PRESENT:**

|                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sri Akunuri                    | Clive Jones           |
| Bob Albery                     | Katherine Mannion     |
| Ann Alderson                   | Eleanor O'Connor      |
| Patricia English               | Hemal Pandya          |
| Alastair Haywood (Headteacher) | Becky Spencer         |
| Lisa Higgin                    | Penny Thomson         |
| Elaine Hoare                   | Russell Turner        |
| Nigel Hobbs                    | Donna Westall (Chair) |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

|            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| Gill Brown | Associate Member |
| Ann Baines | Clerk            |

**ABSENT:** There were no absences

### 1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items of other business were raised.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in items covered at this meeting.

### 3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

#### 3.1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024, having been circulated, were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes were signed by the Chair and handed to the Headteacher to be available in the school.

#### 3.2 MATTERS ARISING

##### 3.2.1 Declarations of interests for publication (Minute 3.2.1)

Governors had been reminded and completed the declaration.

##### 3.2.2 GB collaborations (Minute 3.2.2)

The Clerk had contacted St Mary's Farnham Royal CE School again. There had been no response but the invitation would be left open.

##### 3.2.3 Committee terms of reference (Minute 3.2.3)

Updates had been made and the documents published on Governor Hub.

##### 3.2.4 Request to LA for parking restrictions (Minute 3.2.4)

## ACTION

The request had been passed to a different Council department and a response was awaited. Nothing had come from the meeting with the Parish Councillor. The Parents' Evening survey had led to ten parents offering to become involved.

#### 4 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

##### 4.1 Report of the Headteacher

Governors noted the report of the Headteacher who raised the key points.

**4.1.1 External validation** – due to senior staff being required to meet the needs of challenging pupils, the headline visit by Roz Burch had been postponed to 16 April. The visit would focus on PE and attendance.

**4.1.2 Staff absence** – the cumulative number of days sickness at the Infant school had increased from 58 in November to 132 in March. Governors noted how long term sickness and a phased return had affected the total. The increases in paid (14 days in November to 40.5 now) and compassionate leave (a further 16 days) had also been affected by one personal situation.

At the Junior school, sickness absence had risen from 38.5 in November to 84 in March. Paid leave had risen from 12.5 days in November to 38.5 days in March and unpaid leave stood at 14 days. There were fewer days absence than at the same point last year. The system of staff arranging their own plans to cover leave of absence was proving effective.

***Adverse comments were circulating in the parent body about the reasons a child had left the school. Was the school aware and what had happened?***

*See Part 2 Confidential Minutes*

##### 4.1.3 Playground behaviour

***Had playground behaviour improved at the Infant School?***

*This had been an issue last year and had continued to some degree this year. Staff had given feedback in the Staff Survey. The problem was low level behaviour issues. Part of the problem was that children were not as respectful to staff who were not teachers. There was also a hang over of a lack of learning social skills and not knowing how to play following the Covid period. At the Infant School, equipment had not been treated properly but this had improved when new equipment was provided. SLT were ensuring they were around the playgrounds at lunchtime and new expectations of behaviour were being established across both sites. These playground rules would be introduced after Easter.*

Governors noted that some Year 6 pupils were supporting Years 3 and 4 and had been required to start games other than football and basketball. They understood the difference between Year Groups and it was going well with support from the MDS if needed.

***Had the Sports Council proposals for taking responsibility for equipment been implemented?***

*There were shed monitors and more equipment was being used. The equipment was quite robust but could not be replaced if damaged.*

#### **4.1.4 Curriculum, including progress of the review**

***You say that it has become increasingly apparent that in some subject areas the curriculum has been watered down in favour of topic teaching and links between subjects. What is meant by this?***

*'Watered down' is a phrase from an Ofsted research review on topic teaching. Some subjects can be forced to fit certain topics rather than being included for their own merit. A curriculum review had started last year and it became clear that some parts of the National Curriculum were not being covered. Coverage mainly of Foundation subjects was being reviewed. Some subjects had been fully planned out with topics and were ready but others were not at that stage yet. Specialist input to develop curriculum policy was needed for knowledge and skills in some subjects. Leaders had explored options and talked to other schools. One curriculum provider was recommended by many. This provider, Kapow, set out the development of knowledge and skills and provided lesson plans. By using this provider, the skills and knowledge progression in each subject would be clear and Foundation subjects would move away from the topic basis. There would also be transition topics for Year 6.*

#### ***Would new resources be needed and new trips as well?***

*Kapow is fully resourced with presentations and videos. It might be possible to supplement it with resources used for something that was taught before but plans would have to stay true to the progression. Some of the topics were different and exciting with new trips and perhaps artefacts. The 12 week history topics would be replaced by six weeks of history and six of geography.*

#### ***What would be the cost of Kapow?***

*It would be £1,000 for five subjects per year. It was all on line rather than downloads so updates happened automatically. Staff would be able to draw on the progression documents from a central place and the planning would be used consistently. Teachers would need to plan ahead but would be told what they would need.*

#### ***Has topic had its day?***

*Yes. It had drifted over the years and curriculum now had to be very tight.*

#### ***Would the new Government scheme for ICT mean further change?***

*Plenty of ICT schemes that met the national Curriculum were available to schools and they included schemes of work.*

#### **4.1.5 Parents' Survey**

A verbal report was given of the survey findings. On the whole, positive progress was shown. Some 15% of responses disagreed that expectations were high enough and that they knew what their children were learning. The new Curriculum would help clear communication on what children were learning. On expectations, it was difficult to tell what the issue was because

responses were anonymous. The school always tried to deal with everything as well as possible.

***Did parents agree to be contacted about their concerns?***

*Four did. Two were about spelling and two had misunderstood. The tendency now was for parents to believe what their child said without asking for another side to the story. Confrontation and accusations were the norm rather than enquiries. Whilst this was a national issue, Governors understood it was a struggle for the staff to deal with.*

**4.2 SEF**

Governors noted the self evaluation. The document was an assessment of the school against the Ofsted checklist. Ofsted does not expect a set format for a SEF but expects to see one.

***In the SEF, there are outcomes for pupils in Science at KS1 but not at KS2. Why is this? Isn't Science important?***

*The KS2 outcomes are not usually published and the report had been taken from the data report. They would be added. It is an important subject but the focus on the outcomes for assessing the school itself has dwindled. Science is teacher assessed. If sampling is done, it is by tests which are outside the experience of the pupils so outcomes are not reliable.*

Headteacher

***Outcomes in Writing at KS2 are lower. Is there an issue?***

*The quality of Writing is good but there is a lot still to do about the way that we are assessing spelling. Some six or seven pupils missed the grade due to spelling. An assessment statement is that pupils can spell most of Year 5 and 6 words. 80% is used for assessment but the percentage is arbitrary as the wording is 'most'. In LA moderation, most schools interpret it as 80% of the words that pupils choose to use with the rest generally accurate.*

*This year, spelling tests have been stopped but, in Big Writes, the Year 5 and 6 words are highlighted and, as is allowed in assessment, the list of words is available. Proof reading, using the list, is encouraged. This approach should improve the outcomes. In addition, if spelling interventions have been provided for an individual but there has been no improvement, spelling can be classed as a specific weakness for that pupil.*

*Development weeks have focused on Writing but good writing comes from reading and there are a lot of other factors at play. Moderation of 'independent writing' and discussions with other schools help staff to make judgements.*

Governors noted that pupils from all Years had visited the Library. They had made suggestions for other books and would be informed when they were received. Pupils without library cards had been asked for their surname or address. There was some safety concern that some Junior pupils had not been able to give this information.

**4.3 School Development Plan (SDP)**

The SDP was developed each year by looking at the school in the context of the Ofsted framework and pulling out strands where there could be

improvement. This year, there were two elements from Quality of Education, one from Behaviour and Attitudes and one from Personal Development. The overall context was the Vision and Strategy statement which Governors had discussed.

#### 4.4 **Governors' questions**

***There had been some suspensions this term. Was the behaviour disturbing for staff and pupils?***

*See Part 2 Confidential Minutes*

***Had pupils' attendance improved?***

*Yes. It had improved. The data was in the report.*

***How difficult is it to find cover for staff? Are you using agency staff?***

*Recruitment had been unsuccessful so the agency staff, who were good, would be retained to the end of their contracts at the end of the year. Recruitment had started for next year, including SSAs as seven more children with EHCPs were expected.*

***What was the impact of peer observations for staff?***

*It was really useful for staff to see what happened on the other site and they were learning from each other. Teachers rarely had the opportunity to see others teaching.*

***In the SDP, you mention target tracker. Is it fit for purpose for Foundation subjects?***

*The suitability of target tracker had yet to be considered but Kapow has assessment tasks for every unit which will prove useful.*

## 5 **GOVERNING BOARD VACANCIES**

Governors agreed the reappointment of Nigel Hobbs as Co-opted Governor for a period of four years.

There was a Co-opted vacancy following the resignation of Jessica Svensson. A parent would be welcome for this place. There were two expressions of interest, both from parents. Governors were asked to volunteer to join the Chair to meet the potential Governors.

**All Governors**

## 6 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### 6.1 **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 18 January 2024, having been circulated, were noted.

A survey on Parents' Evening had covered travel to school. There had been 159 responses, 96 from the Infants and 63 from the Juniors. The headline findings were given.

**How do you typically commute to school?**

- Walking– 54% Infant.
- Park and stride 19%, more from Juniors but it wasn't clear that everyone understood what park and stride was.
- Driving – 30% for both schools.

**Why do you not use park and stride?**

- Weather
- Time
- Not aware of it

**How do you rate the experience of travel to and from school?**

Infant school responses were overall happier with more walking and more citing good or excellent for the experience. Governors reflected that the Infant school felt more central, although the Junior school was two minutes walk from the available parking.

**Do you have safety concerns?**

- Infants school – 63% said yes
- Junior school – 41% said yes

**Free comments**

Concerns:

- Too many cars
- Parking on pavements
- Driving wrong way down one way School Lane
- Parents and children walking in the road
- Clashes when the Memorial Hall is being used.
- Cars not stopping at the zebra crossing

Suggestions for the Infant school and generally

- Open the Guide Centre. Governors noted that the Guide Centre objected to parents parking and blocking their entrance.
- Park on Shakmans field
- Stagger start and finish times
- Incentivise children to walk. This had been done some years before with success but it had taken a lot of time.

The survey had been useful and ten people had volunteered to become involved. Some parents who were new to the area thought the arrangements were done well.

In addition, from talking to parents at drop off and pick up, there was a group who were aware of the rules but thought them an inconvenience rather than a safety risk. When the situation was explained, they understood so an education campaign would be worthwhile for some.

The School Travel Plan Working Group would take this up.

**School Travel  
Plan Working  
Group**

**6.2 CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting held on 5 March 2024, having been circulated, were noted. Governors noted the helpful presentation on SEND and the review of policies.

### **6.3 FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Finance Committee meetings held on 7 February and 4 March 2024, having been circulated, were noted. There were two main areas to report.

#### **6.3.1 Nursery**

The implications of changes to Government funding of Nursery places were discussed. Although the current Government funding was insufficient, the Nursery was running at cost neutral at the moment due to private payments for afternoon sessions. Government funded hours changes and increasing costs would challenge this position and a comparison had been made with the charges made by other providers. From September, to cover costs, the charge for afternoon sessions paid privately would increase to £24.

In the longer term, the impact of further changes in funding could mean that the Nursery would no longer be financially viable. Further work was being done on this so that recommendations could be made by Summer. The Nursery was important as a facility for children in the community and also as a feeder for the school. The Committee wanted to find a way to continue but without subsidy.

#### **6.3.2 Budget situation**

The Committee had considered the provisional financial plan for the next three years. The pupil numbers were good. Although margins were fine, the budget looked generally good and infrastructure work could be funded. A budget of £30,000 had been allowed for work at the Infant School next year. The Infrastructure Committee welcomed this possibility.

### **6.4 INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 7 February 2024, having been circulated, were noted.

The intention was to bring in someone to do some smaller maintenance work over Easter. More substantial work had been agreed. The LA would replace the boilers in the Infant School and replace with an air system with ceiling convectors rather than radiators. The work would mean removing all radiators and pipework. There was concern that the system would be noisy. It had been installed successfully at Lee Common so staff would visit to find out more.

Dry rot had been confirmed in the flat roof at the Juniors and was on the LA list for work. No mention had been made of further window replacement.

### **6.5 PERSONNEL/ PAY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 29 January 2024, having been circulated, were noted. Attention was drawn to two matters.

As pastoral needs increased, a proposal to have more support, perhaps a second ELSA, was discussed. It would be important for a new role not to overlap with the current ELSA. This might be achieved by the new role taking on group work or low level concerns. There could be a triage role.

Increases to support staff pay ranges were proposed by the LA. In a questionnaire to Headteachers, 99 had replied out of 260 and 70% of those had been in favour. The increase of a flat rate of £3,000 for a full time position meant an increase of around 14% and would catch up with rates in neighbouring counties. No extra funding would be provided. Governors had agreed an extra £500 this year for support staff and the school may not repeat that. A view would be taken about the position around 100 hours cover for LSAs as the amount done varied.

**6.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GOVERNORS**

The Performance Management Governors would meet the Headteacher next term.

**6.7 HR RELATED PANELS / COMPLAINTS PANELS / PUPIL DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES**

These Committees had not needed to meet.

**7 REPORTS**

**7.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

The Chair had taken no actions under delegated powers.

**7.2 DEVELOPMENT GOVERNOR**

Prevent training had been updated. The suggestion was that all those who come into school and the Personnel Committee should do the updated training. The Headteacher would check whether he could provide the training.

**Governors /  
Personnel  
Cttee**

**Headteacher**

**7.3 REPORT OF THE SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR**

A report of the Safeguarding Governor visit on 17 January had been posted on Governor Hub. Governors attended the safeguarding training for those who came into the school but should also complete training on specific Governor responsibilities. The Headteacher would send a link to a suitable module which was available on The Key.

**Headteacher**

**7.4 REPORT OF THE WELLBEING GOVERNOR**

Governors noted that wellbeing had been discussed in the Personnel Committee. Workload continued to be an issue for staff. The school had provided extra LSA time in the afternoons to help with the needs of a growing numbers of pupils with SEN. A Provision Tracker was now up and running. This on line system enabled staff to log interventions and assess

outcomes easily and effectively. Feedback from panels had been that evidence of the outcomes of interventions was not clear enough. This system would provide that evidence and could also be given to parents.

The Headteacher was undertaking the course on Mental Health First Aid.

Parent Rep meetings had been held with no major issues, although it was clear that expectations around SEN needed to be managed. Information was available about potential entitlement but the reality of the school's ability to access and provide support is different. Expectations from secondary schools could also be unrealistic. SEN support in general was funded from a notional 10% of the budget but this percentage had no regard to the number of children on the SEN Register. SEN meetings did help communication. Governors noted that the wait for a CAMHS assessment was at four years and for private diagnosis, six months.

The number of children with SEN was increasing and provision was stretched. Early Help, the system to provide early interventions to minimise the impacts had capacity only for crises.

#### **7.5 REPORT OF THE EQUALITY GOVERNOR**

The Policy had been discussed and would be agreed in the Summer term with the review of the four year objectives.

#### **7.6 REPORT OF THE SEND GOVERNOR**

The SEND Governor had met Sarah Pierpoint and the visit report was on Governor Hub.

***It was possible that seven more children would have EHCPs. Would this impact on the budget?***

*There would be changes at the end of the year as at least one SEND child would leave. Some of the children gaining EHCPs might already have support provided in the school and the EHCPs would bring some funding to cover support above the £6,000 that the school paid. More support staff might be needed.*

#### **7.7 PUPIL PREMIUM GOVERNOR**

The PP Governor had discussed progress with the PP Lead and the report was on Governor Hub. The focus had moved more widely to children who were disadvantaged.

Training on dyslexia was being arranged for this academic year and funding was available from the project. The Dyslexia Association was, however, overwhelmed and had not yet replied.

#### **7.8 CURRICULUM GOVERNOR VISITS AND REPORTS**

Governors noted the reports on the following:

- Literacy
- Maths

- PE
- Science

Governors noted forthcoming visits on Science at the Infant School and History.

**7.9 SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN**

The Working Group would meet and introduce the parents from both sites who had volunteered to be involved.

Governors noted that the muddy shingle footpath on Bottrells Lane was to be tarmacked once the weather was dry enough to allow it.

**9 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates and times of future meetings were confirmed:

- Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7
- Thursday 4 July 2024 at 7

**10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**8 CONDUCT OF MEETING**

Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions. It was confirmed that all members of the Governing Board would have access to these minutes

The meeting closed at 9 pm.

Signed ..... Date .....  
CHAIR

**Part 2 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**CIRCULATION LIST: ALL GOVERNORS, ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

**CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES** of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held at the School on 14 March 2024 at /7 pm

|  | <b>ACTION</b> |
|--|---------------|
| <p><b>4.1 Headteacher’s report</b></p> <p><b><i>Adverse comments were circulating in the parent body about the reasons a child had left the school. Was the school aware and what had happened?</i></b></p> <p><i>Two children had left. One had moved away from the area and the other had moved to a private school to ensure a place for the future. A further child had left Reception the previous week. The reason given was that the parents believed they could obtain an EHCP more quickly at their previous school in a neighbouring LA area than in Bucks.</i></p>  |               |
| <p><b>4.4 Governors’ questions</b></p> <p><b><i>There had been some suspensions this term. Was the behaviour disturbing for staff?</i></b></p> <p><i>The suspensions were due to a small number of pupils with significant needs. These children had behaviour plans and an appropriate routine. When considering suspension, it was necessary to be sure that the incident was not due to their special needs and that they were supported appropriately. Staff supported them as much as they could. Each had 1:1 support for 32.5 hours and 1:1 staff were never alone with those children to protect them. Other staff would give those 1:1s the opportunity for a break if needed and were available to listen. The LA did not have enough places in alternative provision, special schools and ARPs. Staff from the PRU had visited to advise on what could be done for these children but they would do better in another setting.</i></p> <p><b><i>Was the behaviour disturbing for pupils?</i></b></p> <p><i>The impact on other children was minimised. One child’s needs were so significant that they were taught outside the classroom. The other pupils had grown up alongside these children and showed tolerance and kindness.</i></p> |               |

Signed ..... Date .....  
CHAIR