

SPRING TERM 2023

MINUTES of the second meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held at the Junior School on 16 March 2023 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:	Bob Albery Ann Alderson Patricia English Alastair Haywood (Headteacher) Lisa Higgin Elaine Hoare Nigel Hobbs Clive Jones	Katherine Mannion Eleanor O'Connor Hemal Pandya Becky Spencer Jessica Svensson Penny Thomson Russell Turner Donna Westall (Chair)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Gill Brown Ann Baines	Associate Member Clerk
ABSENT:	Sri Akunuri	(apologies received and accepted)

NB. Governors' questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

		ACTION
1	NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	The following item was raised as Any Other Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Library visits	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	There were no declarations of interest in items covered at this meeting.	
3	WELCOME TO A NEW GOVERNOR	
	Hemal Pandya had been elected as Parent Governor and was welcomed to his first meeting of the GB.	
4	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING	
4.1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023, having been circulated, were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes were signed by the Chair. A signed copy of the Minutes would be made available in school.	Headteacher
4.2	MATTERS ARISING	
4.2.1	Subject Action Plans (minute 3.2.1)	
	Action plans for both schools had been published.	

4.2.2 Inspection Data Summary Report/Analysing School Performance (minute 4.1.3)

The Business Manager had arranged access for the Chair. In practice, the access was most useful once a year when the SATs information was published. Either the Chair would pull off reports or access could be arranged for other Governors.

4.2.3 NEU Strike Action (minute 4.1.4)

Three classes had been closed for the first strike and one for the second, longer strike. More parents had contacted the Headteacher for the second strike period. Some had asked if the closed classes could be rotated but this was not possible as he would need to direct a teacher to cover for a striking colleague. Advice was against doing so. Provision for Key Workers was also requested. No cover for such provision was available and it would have been difficult to define. No more strikes were currently planned. Negotiations were now possible but the Unions could re-ballot.

4.2.4 Provisional Budget Approval (minute 6.1.1)

Governors noted that the provisional budget 2023-24 had been approved for submission by the Finance Committee as delegated.

4.2.5 Termly Monitoring Visits (minute 6.1.2)

The visits had happened. The safeguarding report had been published on Governor Hub.

4.2.6 Energy Efficiency (minute 7.2)

This was covered in the Infrastructure Committee report.

4.2.7 Prevent Duty Self-assessment (minute 7.3)

A self assessment had been published on Governor Hub.

5 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

5.1 REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS

The Headteacher had circulated his report, an EYFS Advisor report, the SEF and the background information on applying for an EHCP for an SEND pupil. Governors had, in confidence, seen a copy of the draft report from the Ofsted Inspection and given comments. The Headteacher gave an update on the following matters and invited questions.

See Part 2 Confidential Minutes

5.2 Questions

Staff absence appeared high, especially at the Infant school this term. Why was this?

There had been some Covid absence particularly at the Infant School.

See Part 2 Confidential Minutes

You are using a 90% threshold as part of tracking pupil attendance. Why 90%?

The DfE used 90% as a threshold for persistent absence in a court case some years ago and it is now used as a standard measure. 62 pupils had been below the 90% threshold. Since sending the formal letter and meeting those parents, 85% of that group now had attendance above the threshold. Case studies were given to the Ofsted Inspector who recognised that the school was doing all it could in this area and noted that referrals were made where they could be of benefit. The pupil premium project included elements on attendance and parent engagement.

Is attendance worse since Covid?

Low attendance is now a national problem. The Fischer Family Trust gave attendance at about 93% or 94% nationally but it had been 97% before Covid. Media coverage had mooted working at home as a reason for lower attendance, particularly on Fridays. There was no evidence of this but the strike may well have had less impact because of home working.

See Part 2 Confidential Minutes

5.3 Parent Evenings and workshops

A Governor fed back that the sessions for parents had been useful. The science of learning session had been remote and some 90 parents had signed up. Only 37 attended but 50 accessed the recording later. The Headteacher explained that some topics were better remote but workshops on, for example, Reading and Maths were better face to face for questions and discussion.

Parent Evenings had been face to face only this year. Was there any feedback? Had any requested remote meetings?

No one had e mailed to ask for an online option. Take up had been normal. Teachers found face to face meetings preferable for greater engagement and parents could see children's books. Governors could also take the opportunity to run a survey. Issues that arose from the Parents Evening were the time available for each appointment and the amount to be covered. Ten minutes was a reasonable amount and teachers could choose to have ten minute breaks when they preferred during the sessions. Ways of managing the length of discussions were to set expectations of what could be covered, offer appointments to discuss other matters and, for Year 6, to send out a letter with FAQs in early March to cover questions on SATs, secondary schools and transition.

There would be a Parents Evening for Nursery parents next year.

5.4 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP) AND SELF EVALUATION FORM (SEF)

Governors noted the SEF and SDP and asked the following questions.

How will you gather feedback from EYFS parents on their view of the

setting and what works well and what could be improved?

The approach was still being discussed and would either be small group or survey. Feedback could be via Class reps.

What will happen to the feedback?

As headteacher, I will talk to the teachers about it and to the Class Reps. There would be a letter or something similar with actions. When I meet Class Reps, I normally report on actions from the last meeting.

There are no red items in your RAG rating. Has everything been actioned?

Everything has been started and is ongoing. The SDP started mid year. The SDP from next September will probably have more actions and could include something for Governors. Previously, Governors might have had a sub-action and this would be discussed.

Chair/
Headteacher**6 GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Hemal Pandya had been elected as Parent Governor. A Co-opted vacancy remained. Governors agreed to leave this open until someone from the community was found.

7 COMMITTEE MINUTES**7.1 COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 7 February 2023, having been circulated, were noted. The following items were updates following the meeting.

7.1.1 Website

The Ofsted Inspector had commented that everything he needed had been found on the website. It had, however, been developed and layered over time so the structure could be updated. A Governor was thanked for her investigation of the way the website was put together and recommendations for improvement. Next steps would be discussed at a meeting with the Headteacher the following week and the Committee would discuss this at their next meeting.

7.1.2 GDPR

The Business Manager had commissioned Turn It On to do a review. The school's score was 80% so there were things to do. One action was for Governors to update their GDPR training.

7.1.3 Parent survey – online safety

There had been 213 responses to the survey at the Parents Evenings. The basic questions had been about children's access to devices, how they were used and how much time was spent on line. Some parents had pointed out that children spent time on tablets but off line.

The headlines were that:

- 40% of Infant children had access to mobile phones and 47% of Junior children.
- Time online grew with age as might be expected. Year 6 pupils were spending one to two hours per day on line.
- The majority of parents used parental controls, more in the Junior than Infant school.
- In use, there was an even split between streaming services and doing schoolwork. 61% of Infant children used a device for schoolwork.
- Social media – nothing for Infant children and a tiny percentage in Junior. Using a device to communicate with others increased in Year 6.
- The number of parents who had discussed social media with their child grew with the age of the child.
- 50% said they would attend an evening session on online safety. They wanted to hear about parental controls from the technical point of view and about how much access they should be controlling. What was the right amount of time to spend online? How to support children to deal with social media for the future, given concerns about bullying?

Children knew what to do about bullying from what they were told in school but Year 6 parents in particular were anxious about social media and it was a steep learning curve for them. One option was to invite a parent into class to hear the discussions but an issue for them was, as their children grew, to find the balance between monitoring their child's phone use and affording them their privacy. There was no escape from negative messages online so it was something for parents to be aware of. Children needed to feel that they could say if something was wrong.

Social media etiquette, privacy of conversations, understanding that anything online will always be online and checking that the person they are chatting to is who they say they are were other issues raised. Sessions about social media were done in Summer term for Year 6 as part of transition and pupils read and signed the Social Media Policy. Some had a phone but other parents weren't happy about opening the online world for their child at that time.

7.2 CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting held on 28 February 2023, having been circulated, were noted. James Holmes had given a presentation on Science in the Curriculum which had been interesting and useful. At the next meeting there would be a presentation on Art and the Equality and Cohesion, Presentation and Science Policies would be reviewed alongside the Home School Agreement.

7.3 FINANCE COMMITTEE

Governors noted the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 1 March 2023 which had been circulated but were subject to the item on the Charitable Fund being amended.

Budget 2023-24 – the carry forward from each school to next year would be in the region of £30,000. The budget for 2023-24 was broadly balanced at this stage and had been approved for submission to the LA.

Support staff salaries – there had been a debate about the LA pay award to support staff of a 2% increase for 2022-23 and 5% proposed pay award for 2023-24. Neighbouring LAs had given an average 10% increase for 2022-23 and are pursuing another pay award for April 2023. Schools were required to follow Bucks pay bands. If the budget allowed, support staff could all be moved to the next pay band but, when explored, this would not be affordable within the budget. Tweaks were not possible.

Governors valued support staff and what they gave to the school as did parents. Both Personnel and Finance Committees were concerned to see what could be done. The Finance Committee had given the Personnel Committee a broad idea of what could be afforded to reward support staff and they would consider options at their next meeting. Staff who were Governors would remain in this discussion.

Why was Bucks LA out of line?

A number of LAs signed up to the NJC, in which the GMB Union was involved, but Bucks did not recognise the NJC. Representations had been made to the Leader of Bucks by the Union to no avail. A formal meeting of Governors had also raised the lack of fairness directly with the Cabinet Member for Education.

The LA said that Headteachers had the power to change the pay band and so pay support staff more but, in reality, this was not feasible within the Budget Shares. The scope was limited. Governors understood that lower pay could be equated to a lack of value and staff absence could be more likely. Personnel Committee would discuss what was possible within Budget constraints.

7.4 Infrastructure Committee

Minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 8 March 2023, having been circulated, were noted.

Repair and maintenance - Following the LA visit in November 2022, windows and doors in two classrooms and the hall had been replaced at the Junior School together with the panels beneath the windows. The work made a great difference to the classrooms. Three more would be done next year. *At the Infant School, the boiler would be replaced, the damp issue in the cottage reviewed and gas pipework would be replaced. The Site Manager did not have time to meet all the repair tasks. An apprentice was being considered for the smaller tasks and external contractors would be sought for the larger jobs.*

Health and safety – the LA had required the school to complete an online H&S audit. The scores for the school were 89% and 86%. Some issues were identified and these would be tightened up.

Sustainability – the Sustainability Policy was approved and action plans were being produced. The DfE had allowed a further £14,000 for energy efficiency. One idea was to fund an energy audit of both schools to have advice on what might be done.

Were the new windows double glazed?

Yes and they had ventilation grilles. The windows were no longer covered in the film which had become opaque. The insulation was better as the panels below the windows had also been replaced.

Are there any plans for the playground at the Junior School? Were trim trails or equipment considered? The comparison with the Infant School had been noticed.

The Infant School playground surface had been getting dangerous and the LA had paid for it to be replaced. The top playground would be left as it is. The lower playground had some markings, although their use dropped off as children became used to them. There was equipment in the shed. The cost of a new piece of equipment would be up to £3,000 and a trim trail around £10,000. The PTA might consider funding but had agreed that the project for this year would be the IT suite. Consideration would be given to using some of the PE and Sport Premium to buy more equipment for the Junior playgrounds instead.

7.5 PERSONNEL/PAY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Committee would meet on 23 March.

7.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GOVERNORS

A date would be set for the mid-year review.

7.7 HR RELATED PANELS / COMPLAINTS PANELS / PUPIL DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES

These Committees had not needed to meet.

8 REPORTS

8.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair had not taken any action under emergency or delegated powers but had been consulted on the closure of classes on strike days.

8.2 DEVELOPMENT GOVERNOR

Following the GDPR audit, Governors considered who needed to complete GDPR training and for whom it would be good practice. Clarification was needed but it would be appropriate for the Communications Committee to do the GDPR module on Modern Governor. Infrastructure Committee members were recommended to do the H&S module.

8.3 SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR

**Comms
Committee
Infrastructure
Committee**

The Safeguarding Governor had met the Headteacher as DSL and posted her report on Governor Hub which included questions on the SCR and training. She was satisfied with safeguarding processes, the SCR and training provision for staff, including DSLs.

The question of risk assessments and DBS checks for volunteers was discussed. A flow chart was needed and DBS renewals would be discussed in the Personnel Committee. The risk management decisions were that parents who volunteered to go on trips should have a DBS unless they were accompanying an occasional trip into the village where they would be in plain sight. A parent without a DBS who volunteered for a first day trip would read and understand a safeguarding leaflet but would not be allowed to be out of the sight of a member of staff.

The Headteacher was thanked for providing a Prevent training session for Governors. New Governors were reminded to complete safeguarding training as part of their induction.

8.4 WELLBEING GOVERNOR

The Personnel Committee had discussed wellbeing.

8.5 EQUALITY GOVERNOR

There was no report on this occasion.

8.6 SEND GOVERNOR

The SEND Governor had met the SENDCo, who was covering the role until September due to a maternity leave. She had posted the report on Governor Hub but many of the key points had been covered in the Headteacher's report. The meeting had been informative but it was clear that it was difficult to do the job in three days a week. The arrangement was under consideration.

8.7 PUPIL PREMIUM GOVERNOR

The PP Leader would meet the PP Governor after the next Liaison Group project training on 15 May, although the PP Governor might well be able to attend the training.

The PP Leads in the Liaison Group met to share practice and could arrange to visit each other's schools. Governors noted that Widmer End school had visited following a recommendation by the Project Leader to observe outstanding practice. Current actions were to find opportunities across the year to invite all parents to Achievement Assemblies as well as PP parents and feedback was positive. Career Assemblies were also planned which would include PP pupils.

8.8 CURRICULUM GOVERNOR VISITS

8.8.1 PE – the report of the visit would be published. Discussion had covered the Sports Partnership, the oversubscription and range of Clubs at the Infant School and a proposed PE survey. Subject Leaders could run surveys but should be aware of the objective.

8.8.2 Art and DT – an introductory visit had been informative and would be followed by class visits next term.

8.8.3 PSHE – the visit had included discussions and a Year 5 lesson.

8.8.4 Governor monitoring visit on safeguarding – the visit had involved Pupil Voice with groups from Year 1 to Year 6 with questions on safeguarding. Governors felt the children all had a good understanding of what being safe meant and that the school was maintaining a safe educational environment. All the children spoken to seemed very happy and talked in positive terms about the school and all of its staff. The report had been published on Governor Hub.

8.8.5 Future visits – there would be visits on IT and Science.

8.9 SCHOOL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Last year the School Sports Partnership had changed their charging structure and would no longer treat Chalfont St Giles as one school. The decision had been taken to purchase School Sports Partnership for the Junior School only and at the Silver level rather than Gold. Silver offered less variety than Gold and Sports Week was not included. There had been some flexibility as the school had been allowed into EY training.

The Partnership seemed to offer less value to the Infant School for the cost. Richard Ballard provided sports opportunities for the Infant School each week.

The prices and provision would be reviewed for next year to see what would be available within the Sports Partnership.

8.10 SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

The group had not met yet. Parking had become worse and was blocking pavements. The PCSO would be asked to come down and talk to parents.

Headteacher

9 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates and times of future meetings were confirmed:

- Thursday 11 May at 7.30 pm
- Thursday 6 July at 7.30 pm

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Library visits

Junior School groups had visited the Library recently. Their behaviour had been excellent and their company delightful. The praise would be passed on in Assembly.

11 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 ended at 9.20 pm.

Signed Date

CHAIR