



**Minutes**

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021, at 6.00pm**

**Attended by:**

Tony Fallowfield (TF)  
Gill Hammett (GH)  
Anita Bullock (AB)  
Jalia Kangave (JK)  
Andy Croll (AC)  
Gill Hammett (GH)  
Aisha Hoten (AH)  
Hesione Quinn (HQ) Chair

Hildi Mitchell (HM) Headteacher  
Loren Davies (LD)  
Suzanne Morgan (SM)  
  
Vera Jakimovska (VJ)  
  
Gaynor Newnham (GN) Senior Clerk  
Ann Mitchell (AM) (agenda item 5, only)

No.	Item
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ian Ayres did not attend; no apologies were received.</p>
2.	<p><b>Register of Business Interests</b> There were no changes to the previously published declarations.</p>
3.	<p><b>Previous Meeting Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approval of the minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b> The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Review of actions from the previous meetings</b> The summary of actions was reviewed, and all were noted to be complete, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rota for governor attendance at local briefings – TF will create this</li> <li>○ 4 governors have completed finance training – GN will recirculate the link to those that have not</li> <li>○ Extended provision has closed due to the current lockdown</li> <li>○ The parent governor election is in hand</li> <li>○ Declaration of Business Interests to be completed and returned by SM</li> <li>○ Remaining governor to submit their impact form (SM)</li> <li>○ Attendance was not reported at this meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create a rota for governor attendance at local briefings</b></li> <li>• <b>Circulate the link to the NGA Learning Link training</b></li> <li>• <b>Governors to complete finance training, if they have not already done so</b></li> <li>• <b>Declaration of Business Interests to be completed and returned by SM</b></li> <li>• <b>Remaining governor to submit their impact form (SM)</b></li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b> <b>**This was covered after agenda item 5**</b></p> <p>It was reported that the feedback on remote learning was hugely positive from all groups and will inform actions to improve the home learning offer. The recovery curriculum and school to school support will be discussed at the next meeting of the PIL partnership.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> if there has been parental feedback on the recent video to parents, and it was confirmed that there have been discussions with parents about how to free space in school to support more children.</p> <p>Parents feel the pressure of home learning in this lockdown and need permission to focus on other things. The language of the home learning will be changed to support with that. People are anxious and resilience needs to be built.</p>

	<p>Governors <b>asked</b> how many children are currently attending school full-time. It was reported that the number of full-time children has increased from 13 to 28 children. Other children may be attending for less sessions, depending on their circumstances.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> what happens to the children when they are not in school and stressed that parents must not feel under pressure not to send the children in, or to break COVID rules, to protect their jobs. HM explained that she is confident that this is not the case; there are conversations with people to discuss individual circumstances. In response to further <b>challenge</b>, it was explained that there are between 17-24% of the school population in school each day. It was explained that the bubbles have varying sizes; children may need to be redistributed if the lockdown continues beyond 8<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> about staff wellbeing and the impact of having large numbers of children in school, how often staff are working at home part time and if there is a rota for coming into school. It was explained that everyone who is not vulnerable is on the rota to work in school. The rest of the time they support home learning from home. The Staff Governor explained that she works from home on Mondays, and her activities tend to include two zoom meetings, 'Tapestry' interaction and updating, and other on-screen engagement. Other 'home' activities include making resources, particularly video resources. Teachers can connect with all the children and adults they normally would, while reducing viral load and maintaining social interaction.</p> <p>Governors agreed that their response to staff, following the recent consultation, must be carefully managed.</p> <p>Governor monitoring was discussed; governors were asked to suggest areas to be covered at the next monitoring day, which is scheduled for March 2021. The Chair will draft an initial plan for the day.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create a timetable for the next governor monitoring day.</b></li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Budget</b>  <b>** This was covered after agenda item 3**</b>  <b>This item was presented by AM, the School Business Manager (SBM)</b></p> <p>Governors were asked to consider the draft budget, which will be submitted to the LA by the end of February, for checking. Final approval will take place in May.</p> <p>It was explained that the finance committee has looked at the budget and the SBM is monitoring it rigorously; the current forecast shows an overall deficit of £10,000, and an in-year-deficit of £35,000, an increase from the previous year.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> if the budget assumes the school will be at capacity. It was explained that figures are based on the October census, when there were 353 children on roll (7 below). In response to further <b>questions</b>, it was reported that the school is currently full, and is expected to remain so, based on the applications received for admission in September 2021. The school was ranked first by 130 families, against a PAN of 120.</p> <p>Governors <b>queried</b> the grant income shown in the budget. It was explained that Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) is recorded separately from the budget share, both for income and expenditure. The PPG Report records how the fund was allocated and is tracked through the year. It was reported that PPG costs include £20,800 for support staff; though this is a staffing cost, it is not shown under staffing in the budget.</p> <p>It was explained that spending related to the School Development Plan (SDP) has been paused, due to the pandemic; these items will be rolled over to the next year's budget, alongside the costs of the recovery plan, which will be added to the new SDP.</p> <p>In response to a <b>question</b>, it was confirmed that leadership costs are based on the current structure. Alternative staffing structures will need to be considered alongside the budget.</p> <p>A governor <b>asked</b> if the supply cover for a teacher seconded to another school will be recoupable. It was explained that the costs have been adjusted to show supply cover from April to August and the teacher back in school from September to March.</p>

	<p>The HT explained that the finance committee will look at the budget in detail, particularly related to projects which have been postponed, such as improvements to the school entrance, as previously discussed. These items will be discussed and prioritised.</p> <p>Governors <b>challenged</b> whether there should be a permanent contract through a supply agency for 0.6 PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) cover. HM explained that this arrangement ensures that children have a familiar teacher, and that there would automatically be a replacement, from the agency, should this person be ill. It was also explained that PPA has been covered by part-time teachers this year. The support staff insurance has been increased to address this.</p> <p>It was also explained that the LA insurance scheme will not be available after August; quotes will be obtained to amalgamate teachers with the support staff scheme.</p> <p>Governors <b>noted</b> that the budget does not include income from lettings.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the budget currently appears healthy; there will be a further version, and the 3-year budget plan, for the next FGB meeting.</p> <p>Governors thanked AM for doing a fantastic job.</p> <p><i>AM left at 18.28</i></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>PAN consultation</b>  <b>** This was covered after agenda item 4**</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• <b>“Temperature check” on how staff are feeling about this issue</b>  It was explained that staff have been informed that the GB will try to contact the Schools’ Adjudicator. The staff felt supported in the staff meeting though private conversations revealed anxiety about timelines and job security. It is hoped that the appraisals will provide space for people to say how they see their career progressing and support them accordingly, whether that is staying at Downs or moving elsewhere.</p> <p>The GB agreed there needs to be effort to reduce anxiety and provide certainty. It has been made clear to staff that they will need to manage their expectations.</p> <p>In response to a <b>question</b>, it was explained that HQ will write to the parents to explain the GB’s planned course of action.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> what can be done to manage staff anxiety. HM explained that this is due to be discussed at the next Infant Headteachers’ Meeting.</p> <p>A governor <b>asked</b> if it might be possible to come to an agreement between schools to redeploy displaced staff (surplus pool), though it was suggested that this would contravene equalities guidelines.</p> <p>Governors <b>asked</b> if there has been any input from the unions, and it was explained that there has been none. It was agreed that it will be helpful for staff to have access to the unions’ support.</p> </li> <li> <p>• <b>TO APPROVE – arrangements for prep and submission of Governing body objection to Schools Adjudicator</b>  This was <b>discussed</b>, and it was <b>agreed</b> that LD, AC, JK and TF will form a working party, though the final response will need to be submitted formally by the chair.</p> <p>It was <b>noted</b> that there are 130 preferences for 120 places, without the PAN reduction. This may be able to be used as an argument. Any objection must be on statutory grounds.</p> <p>The deadline for submission was <b>queried</b>, and confirmed to be 15<sup>th</sup> May, after the LA confirms arrangements, which is expected to be by the 28<sup>th</sup> Feb at the latest. <b>It was agreed that it would be preferable to act as soon as possible and inform parents that action has been taken.</b></p> <p><b>It was agreed that the working group will meet during half term.</b></p> </li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p>

- **Working party to meet during half term, to prepare a response to the Schools' Adjudicator, for submission as early as possible after the 28<sup>th</sup> February.**

7.

### **Staffing structure changes**

The staffing structure proposal, which included 4 possible options, had been circulated with the agenda.

HM explained that:

- There is an ongoing in-year deficit to be addressed.
- The PAN reduction will have a detrimental impact on the budget, which will necessitate having the correct structure in place for the future.
- The previous structure had to be adapted due to circumstances at the time and has evolved to that currently in place.
- The Ofsted framework focus is the curriculum and subject leaders' depth of understanding of their subjects. UPS3 teachers must have sustained and substantial whole school impact.
- The current structure enables HM to know and understand each year group but is harder to have a whole school view.
- All the models will require a review of subject leadership, which has not been added at this stage. This should bring better value for money, avoid TLR overlap and future proof the DHT and SENCO roles in the school.
- There was pressure from having one person covering the DHT and SENCO roles.

AB explained the process of discussing the possible options and thinking differently about the needs of the school, which will change if the proposed PAN reduction is implemented.

AB also explained that catch-up may take 5-10 years to address; in infant schools, children will have experienced poverty of pre-school experience. Whatever structure is agreed, needs to be implemented soon, though may not be in place for September.

It was explained that there are currently 3 permanent TLR's at the school, and salary protection would be in place for 3 years. Union negotiation and staff consultation would be needed. It was also pointed out that the current 'acting' positions (DHT and SENCO) should not continue.

A governor **challenged** the sustainability of non-teaching leadership posts. HM explained that the leadership team would need to be involved in planning and organising interventions, as well as providing support and mentorship for less senior staff, which could be funded from catch-up grant. It might be possible to temporarily increase teaching staff, to free up leadership time, though another governor commented that the SLT having at least some teaching commitment provides an opportunity to model good teaching. Staff have also lost experience and expertise in full class teaching, which will mean that additional support will be needed, and interventions will need to be organised, assessed, monitored and quality assured.

Governors further **discussed** the need for pupils to be able to catch-up after the pandemic; current and future pupils have missed a year of life experience and group interaction, either at school, nursery or at home.

Governors **discussed** the timing of the staffing-structure decision and agreed that the structure must be agreed as soon as possible. There has been, and continues to be, a period of anxiety and pressure that needs to be addressed to give a fixed and permanent structure.

HM explained that her preferred option (Option 1) would allow flexibility around numbers and supporting with COVID. The school needs to have skilled people in place who understand teaching and learning, can run quality interventions, and mentor staff to deliver and ensure high impact.

A governor **queried** the difference between an Assistant Headteacher (AHT) and a Deputy Headteacher (DHT). It was explained that a DHT deputises for the HT and automatically becomes the Acting HT in their absence. An AHT is not required to act up and could refuse to do so. A DHT can exclude a pupil and an AHT cannot. If there were to be 2 AHT's, there would need to be agreement about who was acting up when.

The role of teachers on the upper pay spine (UPS3) was **queried**. HM explained that, under her preferred option, these members of staff would lead a core subject and would be expected to make a significant impact on the whole school.

	<p>It was <b>noted</b> that the Local Authority HR team will be able to support the entire process. There will also need to be a restructure of the whole workforce, as the PAN will reduce by 90 children; this will include the office, premises and support staff. Any vacancies that arise in the interim will need to be replaced on a temporary basis.</p> <p><b>Governors approved Option 1</b></p> <p>It was made clear that this is about the long-term vision for the school, based on roles, not people. The expectations will be made clear and may lead to initial resistance, but this will put the school in a stronger position.</p> <p><b>It was agreed to discuss the proposal with the LA HR team, before creating a restructure working group.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact the LA HR department</b></li> <li>• <b>Create a restructure working group</b></li> </ul>																		
7.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>VJ fed back to governors on monitoring arrangements during Covid/lockdown and after the change of Safeguarding Lead in school.</p> <p>It was reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The safety of children and connecting with them all is a priority</li> <li>• The Handover between DSL's was very thorough and well managed</li> <li>• The new DSL feels well supported in discharging his duties</li> </ul> <p>Governors agreed that the report was useful and comprehensive and gave a good oversight of the various groups.</p> <p>Pupil engagement was reported, as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="233 1055 1139 1205"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>%in school</th> <th>% viewed Tapestry</th> <th>% posted Tapestry</th> <th>% of PP not engaged</th> <th>% EAL not engaged</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>WB 11/1</td> <td>26.7</td> <td>93.6</td> <td>84.4</td> <td>26.6</td> <td>30.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WB 18/1</td> <td>27.7</td> <td>94.2</td> <td>87.5</td> <td>22.2</td> <td>18</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It was clarified that there are 44 children eligible for PPG and 39 EAL children.</p> <p>The frequency of monitoring visits was <b>queried</b> and reported to be 3 times per year.</p> <p>A governor <b>asked</b> if the Single Central Record was checked; it was explained that this will be actioned at the next visit.</p> <p>HM reported that she has some examples of recent Ofsted questions related to safeguarding, which she will share with the governors.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circulate the recent Ofsted questions related to safeguarding to governors.</b></li> </ul>		%in school	% viewed Tapestry	% posted Tapestry	% of PP not engaged	% EAL not engaged	WB 11/1	26.7	93.6	84.4	26.6	30.7	WB 18/1	27.7	94.2	87.5	22.2	18
	%in school	% viewed Tapestry	% posted Tapestry	% of PP not engaged	% EAL not engaged														
WB 11/1	26.7	93.6	84.4	26.6	30.7														
WB 18/1	27.7	94.2	87.5	22.2	18														
8.	<p><b>Governor monitoring arrangements</b></p> <p>Governors <b>discussed</b> current monitoring arrangements and considered whether it is still monitoring effectively during what is a difficult time for both the school and the FGB.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding monitoring is effective.</li> <li>• Finance will be monitored via the Finance Committee, which will meet each term and feedback to the GB on any discrepancies. A committee Terms of Reference will be approved. <b>It was agreed that the finance committee should provide the meeting minutes, and the budget outturns, to the FGB.</b></li> <li>• Inclusion monitoring has been interrupted by the pandemic, though the safeguarding report provided an overview on the disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.</li> </ul>																		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premises monitoring was completed at the end of last term. It was agreed to arrange a further remote visit before the full reopening of the school.</li> <li>• Curriculum monitoring should focus on the remote learning provision. This is easier for those who have children in the school. Other governors are relying on the HT reports. This should be addressed on the March monitoring day. <b>It was also agreed that the staff governor will discuss this with other governors, before the monitoring day.</b> It was noted that Parent Voice provided feedback on remote learning. It was agreed to arrange interviews with parents for the monitoring day, to drill down further into the remote learning offer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff governor to arrange to meet governors to discuss the curriculum, including a focus on SEND, PPG, EAL and LAC.</b></li> <li>• <b>Arrange Premises monitoring visit</b></li> <li>• <b>Invite parents to attend the governor monitoring day to discuss remote learning provision</b></li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>Governor Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LA Governor</b> There has been no progress; HM will follow this up with the LA.</li> <li>• <b>Parent Governor</b> It was reported that applications have been invited and a reminder will be sent, and HQ will contact previous enquirers. It was noted that this may not be the ideal time for a parent governor election.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check with the LA about a new LA governor</b></li> <li>• <b>Check whether people who may have previously enquired about governance might be interested in joining the GB</b></li> </ul>
10.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Bereavement Policy</b> <b>The draft Bereavement Policy was approved</b> In response to a question, HM confirmed that the policy has not been prompted by a recent bereavement but is based on updated guidance.</p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.19</p>

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 30 March 2021 6pm – 8pm

**Actions agreed at the meeting**

No	Action	By	Status
1.	Remaining governors to submit their impact evaluations forms	SM	
2.	Declaration of Business Interests to be completed and returned by SM	SM	
3.	Circulate the link to the NGA Learning Link training	GN	
4.	All governors will complete online finance training by the next meeting.	JK/AC/AH/HQ/SM	
5.	Governors Briefing can be attended according to a rota system, devised by TF	TF	
6.	Future attendance reports to include actual numbers as well as percentages.	HM	
7.	Create a timetable for the next governor monitoring day.	HQ	
8.	Working party to meet during half term, to prepare a response to the Schools' Adjudicator, for submission as early as possible after the 28 <sup>th</sup> February.	LD/AC/JK/TF	
9.	Contact the LA HR department	HM	
10.	Create a restructure working group	FGB	

11.	Circulate the recent Ofsted questions related to safeguarding to governors.	HM	
12.	Staff governor to arrange to meet governors to discuss the curriculum, including a focus on SEND, PPG, EAL and LAC.	AH/ AC/ TF (SEND and PPG) / AB (EAL and LAC)	
13.	Arrange Premises monitoring visit	HM / IA	
14.	Invite parents to attend the governor monitoring day to discuss remote learning provision	HM	
15.	Check with the LA about a new LA governor	HM	
16.	Check whether people who may have previously enquired about governance might be interested in joining the GB	HQ	