

**DOWNS INFANT SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BODY**

Minutes

Tuesday 30 March 2021 6pm – 8pm



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)
Sarah Digon (SD)
Gaynor Newnham (GN) Senior Clerk

No.	Item
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies HQ welcomed governors to the meeting, especially Sarah Digon, the newly elected parent governor. SD explained that she has a child in Y1, with SEND. Her professional experience is in further education for international students, as well as speech therapy and inclusive communication, she is also on the board of the charity, Changing Narratives.</p> <p>No apologies had been received; Ian Ayres did not attend the meeting</p>
2.	<p>Register of Business Interests No changes were reported.</p>
3.	<p>Previous Meeting Minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 9th February 2021 The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting 2. Review of actions from the previous meetings All actions were reported to be complete, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance training – VJ still needs to complete the course and will do so as soon as possible. • Governor Briefing rota – TF explained that the numbers allowed have increased, meaning that a rota is not needed • There was no separate meeting with the staff governor before the Governor Day. • HQ and HM will cover the H&S monitoring visit • Outstanding governor paperwork will be followed up by the chair <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete finance training (VJ) • Complete H&S Monitoring
4.	<p>Headteacher's Report The Headteacher's report was reviewed and the following discussions took place:</p> <p>A governor asked if there has been an improvement in attendance and persistent absence (PA). It was explained that one persistently absent child is now attending school, and another child is also making small improvements. These children were PA before lockdown, and existing barriers were exacerbated. No new children have joined the PA group. Staff have attended training aimed to address this, and fixed penalties have been threatened, which worked in one case.</p>

It was asked if one child is skewing the data. The HT explained that there is one child with 0% attendance and a few with low attendance, who are being supported by external agencies. Progress had been made, but lockdown caused some regression. It was agreed to be good that all other groups exceed 95% (PP/EAL/SEND).

Attainment and assessment were discussed. A governor asked what form of assessment is being completed in the local area. It was reported that reading has been assessed, as the assessment that will inform planning, such as for phonics, is a priority. The staff governor explained that essential and desirable criteria for moving to the next year have been RAG-rated against teaching; ambers and reds have been timetabled to ensure all essential criteria has been covered. The next cohort will cover the desirable aspects. This has been completed for each cohort of children.

It was reported that reading initiatives have been generally well received, though one parent has expressed concern about incentivising reading.

It was reported that 30% of children are receiving intervention support for reading. Governors asked what the normal level would be, which was confirmed to be 10-15%, meaning that 50% more pupils than usual are being targeted for support. It was explained that there would normally be intervention groups but, as the needs of the children are so different, groups are not possible. Nurture groupings are in place, but learning is in smaller groups. Speech and language is being taught with phonics and interventions have been streamlined to use the same resources as in the classroom.

Staff wellbeing was discussed; the LA completed a survey, and the previous NEU survey may be repeated at the end of the year, with the addition of some other questions. A governor asked how the survey will be responded to, and it was explained that there will be an effort to improve staff spaces, social times, etc. though the risk assessment does not support this. It will be attempted to encourage working with different colleagues, and observe talks and CPD in other areas, which will support the SDP (School Development Plan) and allow relationships to build.

It was reported that four employees are shielding, across teaching and support staff. The rules were queried, and it was explained that extremely clinically vulnerable staff should have been vaccinated but are still advised to shield. The cover teacher will complete the term and there will be a form of handover. All staff are expected to return to school after easter. Individual risk assessments will be completed, and needs will be determined. The risk has reduced due to introduction of tests and vaccines, but mental health may have been affected by spending so much time out of school.

Governors asked what would be done if staff were to refuse to return to work. It was made clear that staff will be expected to attend, and there should be reasonable adjustments so that they feel comfortable. Disciplinary action would be taken, if needed.

5. Budget

Finance committee Minutes.

Governors noted that Finance committee Minutes. The board thanked LD for leading the committee well.

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

It was reported that the SFVS has been scrutinised by the finance committee.

The SFVS was approved and signed.

It was confirmed that the previous year's actions have been mainly completed. Cash use has been reduced, though some school trip and charity collection money need to be attended to; the Business Manager is following up on this. Financial systems were agreed to be robust.

Budget

LD explained that the budget share has increased to £1,487,934, due to the receipt of the teacher pension grant, COVID funding etc. As in previous years, the school meals refund has been received. There will be funding available for the work to the school reception area, which governors agreed will benefit safeguarding. Staffing costs have been amended to reflect the new staffing structure, as discussed at the last meeting, and there will be a balanced budget by the end of next year. Governors were informed that there will be some changes to the budget, once the new Reception cohort has joined the school and any SEND requirements, which will impact on staffing and curriculum adjustments, are known.

It was reported that £4,000 funding has been received to support the needs of a particular child and is already showing impact.

	<p>In response to a question, it was explained that the Sports Grant was spent on gym equipment, which will increase risk taking in a managed way, and on physical development playground resources across all year groups. Dance will also be introduced. It was asked if the grant has been completely spent, and it was explained that there is a small carry over, some of which is ringfenced for the wall bars. All that had to be spent has been spent and if it is not spent it will not impact on the budget.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>PAN consultation - Update</p> <p>It was reported that the Schools Adjudicator received the school's case and responded to say that the school response could not be considered. However, due to minor deficiencies in county wide procedures within Brighton and Hove, the entire admissions system will be scrutinised.</p> <p>In response to a question, the staff governor explained that the staff are generally coming to terms with the PAN reduction and seeing silver linings, though the staffing restructure is causing anxiety.</p> <p>HM reported that she has joined a group for schools affected by the reduction. There is no financial support available to assist the process. The staff redeployment pool can be established but schools are not obliged to use it when recruiting staff.</p> <p>In response to a question, it was explained that it is not known whether any other schools have objected to the PAN reduction, as it may be advantageous to schools where pupil numbers fluctuate, whereas Downs has always benefited from being full.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Staffing structure</p> <p>As requested by the new parent governor, the proposed changes were summarised as removing year group leadership TLR's and creating an extended leadership team, expanding the most senior level with a SEND AHT and a curriculum AHT. Governors had previously reviewed and approved this.</p> <p>It was reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed changes have been presented to staff • some staff are upset by the timing of the restructure, due to the amount of change being experienced at present • there are concerns that there will be no external applicants for the leadership posts • there has been a wide range of responses, both negative and positive • some staff have submitted specific questions in writing, related to clarification of subject teams, workload, and whether the Assistant HT posts could be part time <p>Governors noted that the change, and staff anxiety, are being managed well; the HT and FGB are clear that this is the best thing for the school and for children.</p> <p>In response to a question, it was confirmed that there does not appear to be group opposition to the planned changes.</p> <p>Following comments from governors about the decision to advertise the posts internally, it was explained that there are no teaching staff vacancies to be filled at the present time. The interview process will be fair and robust, and the interview panel will be key. HM hopes that several people apply as this will reveal undiscovered talents and a powerful resource. If an appointment cannot be made, the post would remain vacant until there is a space on the teaching staff. The Unions and the LA HR department have been consulted.</p> <p>The interview panel was discussed, and members were agreed as: VJ, AB, JK, SD, AC, GH, TF, LD. The interviews will be in the last week of Term 5. SM explained that she would also like to participate, even if only acting as a sounding board out of the school day.</p> <p>Interview activities were discussed, and it was confirmed that the posts will be advertised from the 26th April. HM and HQ will liaise on the structure of the day and AB has sample paperwork.</p> <p>AB explained that full commitment is needed with start to finish involvement, due to employment law. Shortlisting, interviews, and deliberation should be completed by the same people.</p> <p>The need for panel members to have attended safer recruitment training was discussed and it was confirmed that at least 1 member of the panel should have attended this course. It was agreed to offer safer recruitment training to all governors, as this would be good practice.</p>

	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All governors to have the opportunity to take safer recruitment training.
8.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>The safeguarding link governors reported that they had a productive meeting with the DSL; termly meetings will continue, and reports will be provided to the FGB.</p>
9.	<p>Governor monitoring arrangements</p> <p>Feedback on the Governor Day and any recent visit reports</p> <p>It was reported that the feedback reports were submitted to HQ and will be collated for circulation.</p> <p>In response to a question, it was explained that staff had been honest with the governors and felt supported by the FGB's support and critical friendship. The relationship between staff and governors has greatly improved since the HT has been in post but could improve further. Governors had the opportunity to understand and support the school's work and context.</p> <p>Planning for the next governor day, on the 24th June, was discussed and it was agreed that there should be repeat visits to follow up on any issues that were raised. It was also agreed that the governors should be more proactively involved in planning the day, so that monitoring is guided by governors, not the staff. A different member of staff will be invited to co-ordinate the day.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governor day feedback reports will be circulated to the board <p>Self-Evaluation</p> <p>It was reported that the Governor Self-Evaluation tool has been RAG-rated and should be updated annually. The following outstanding actions were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governance section of the school website is not compliant – HM will liaise with AC on this • Induction of new governors requires improvement; TF has prepared a document on training requirements and HQ will mentor the new parent governor. • Communication between the board and staff and parents needs to be improved; this was discussed and it was agreed that some measures will need to wait until the school is properly open but, in the short term, the Chair's Termly Newsletter could be reinstated and photographs of governors could be added to the website. Governors also requested that they should all receive the school newsletter, and school council pupil voice reports as soon as possible after it occurs. • The requirement for governors to have attended Safer Recruitment training was covered under agenda item 7. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Governance section of the school website to ensure it is compliant, and add governor photographs to accompany pen portraits • Reinstate the Chair's termly newsletter • Send school newsletters to governors • Send pupil voice reports to governors <p>It was suggested that governor impact on pupil outcomes could be reflected upon at each meeting, with 5 minutes of self-reflection at each meeting. It was agreed to add 'Review of Governor Impact' as a standing agenda item.</p> <p>It was agreed that GH will update the document and there should be ongoing review.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Governor Self-Evaluation tool now and on an ongoing basis <p>Governor Impact was discussed, and it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feedback on the restructure has been useful, and it has been agreed to encourage all staff to apply

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions of the budget will ensure the school is ensuring the best provision for the children. • The decision for all governors to complete safer recruitment training will make the school safer • The FGB has been strengthened by the addition of the new parent governor, who has a wealth of expertise
9.	<p>Governance Governor Recruitment An LA Governor is still needed; the LA has been approached and confirmed there are no governors available, but Downs is on the list.</p> <p>The Parent Governor election outcome was covered under agenda item 1.</p>
10.	<p>Any other business None</p>

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 18 May 2021 6pm – 8pm

The meeting closed at 20.00

Actions from previous meeting

No	Action	By	Status
	Remaining governors to submit their impact evaluations forms	SM	Chair to follow up
	Declaration of Business Interests to be completed and returned by SM	SM	Chair to follow up
	All governors will complete online finance training by the next meeting.	VJ	
	Arrange Premises monitoring visit	HM / HQ	
	All governors to have the opportunity to take safer recruitment training	FGB	
	The governor day feedback reports will be circulated to the board	HQ	
	Update Governance section of the school website to ensure it is compliant, and add governor photographs to accompany pen portraits	HM/AC	Governors to supply photos?
	Reinstate the Chair's termly newsletter	HQ	
	Send school newsletters to governors	HM	
	Send pupil voice reports to governors	HM	
	add 'Review of Governor Impact' as a standing agenda item.	GN	
	Update Governor Self-Evaluation tool now and on an ongoing basis		