



Harlow Fields School and College
Full Governing Board Meeting
20th September 2023 at 05:30pm

Minutes

Present:	Paula Violet (PV) (Chair)	Local Authority
	Simon Dewhurst (SD)	Co-opted
	Penny Sutton (PS)	Co-opted
	Linda Williams (LW) (Vice Chair)	Co-opted
In Attendance:	Kathleen Faherty (KF)	(Headteacher)
	Tracey Kiddell (TK)	(Deputy Headteacher)
	Annie Thompson (AT)	(Head of Sixth Form)
	John Holland (JH)	(School Business Manager)
	Shevanah Burdett (SB) <i>remote</i>	(Governance Professional, Juniper Education)

1.	Welcome and Apologies
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Catherine Beckett (Co-opted Governor) due to illness and Nick Young (Co-opted Governor) due to bereavement. Governors passed on well wishes to both Governors.
2.	Notification of any Other Business
	There was no notification of any other business received.
3.	Declarations of Business Interests
	There was no notification of any business interests received.
4.	Minutes of last meeting
	The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 28 th June 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
5.	Matters Arising
	The Chair informed Governors that a third Governor is required to join the Headteacher for a Performance Manager Review (PMR). It was explained that two Governors were confirmed to be partaking in this process, that being Simon Dewhurst, Co-opted

	<p>Governor and Linda Williams, Vice Chair. Governors were made aware that the next Performance Management meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 01:00pm. It was confirmed that on this occasion, Governor, Penny Sutton would be joining the meeting as the third person.</p> <p>The Chair turned Governors attentions to committee meetings. It was explained that there were vacancies in the committees which require filling. It was said that Catherine Beckett expressed an interest in joining the finance committee.</p> <p>The Chair turned Governors attention to safeguarding. ACTION: Linda Williams to complete safeguarding training and review safeguarding matters.</p>
6.	Membership and Governance Matters of Governing Body
	<p>The following were elected:</p> <p>Governing Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair – Paula Violet • Vice Chair – Linda Williams <p>Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair – To be appointed at the next meeting. • Vice Chair – to be appointed at the next meeting. <p>Curriculum and Pupil Related Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair – to be appointed. • Vice Chair – to be appointed at the next meeting. <p>The following were elected to be on these committees:</p> <p>Curriculum & Pupil Related Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paula Violet • Nick Young • Staff Governor to be appointed at the next meeting. <p>Finance, Premises & Personnel Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine Beckett • Simon Dewhurst • Penny Sutton • Paula Violet • Linda Williams <p>Pay Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penny Sutton • Simon Dewhurst • Paula Violet <p>Head Teacher Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Williams • Simon Dewhurst • Penny Sutton

It was **AGREED** by all Governors to delegate to each of the committees the appointment of their Chairs for academic year 2023/24. It was also **AGREED** by all Governors that Governors would confirm if they would like to join the Appeal Committee at the next meeting because there are three vacancies (**ACTION; All Governors**). It was further **AGREED** by all Governors that at the next meeting there would be an allocation of link roles.

Recruitment & Resignations

The Chair informed Governors that there were no existing term of office approaching expiration and they had received a resignation in August 2023 from Co-opted Governor, Hiran Rana. The Chair commented that the Governor was sent a Thank You card for the work she had done as a Governor. Governors were informed that there were vacancies for Parent and Staff Governors to be filled and the Chair confirmed that they will continue to try and recruit to fill the vacancies (**ACTION; Chair**). The Chair expressed gratitude to Kathleen Faherty for trying to recruit a Parent Governor for the school and Staff Governors. Governors attentions were turned to standing orders. The Chair confirmed that there were no standing orders to report.

Policies

Governors attentions were then turned towards the Terms of Reference. All Governors approved the Terms of Reference for the Appeal Committee, Pay Committee and Health & Safety Working Party. It was explained that the Terms of Reference for the two main committees will be submitted to the first meeting of each committee for confirmation (**ACTION; Headteacher**). The Chair turned Governors attentions to the Code of Conduct for Governors, noting that this was to be considered for adoption. All Governors approved the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Governors. The Chair turned Governors attentions to the Governor’s Handbook, noting that this was to be reviewed and re-circulated on Governor Hub (**ACTION; All Governors and Headteacher Respectively**). Chair noted that the Governor Handbook and Code of Conduct for Governors would have to be carried over to the next meeting as a result.

8. Headteacher Report

Staff Feedback

The Headteacher informed Governors that there had been useful feedback from staff. It was explained that the main feedback was regarding safeguarding. Governors were made aware that there was now five trained members of staff on the safeguarding team and they are working on processes to further strength this within the team. It was also noted that 20 families were represented and their feedback and comments were very good and they gave clear actions for the school to look at, including communication for the Senior Leadership Team.

Governor Vacancies

The Headteacher informed Governors that parents have been contacted because the school has Parent Governor vacancies on the Governing Body. It was further noted that parents had been invited to set up a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and 6 parents had an interest in starting this week commencing Monday 25th September 2023. It was also noted that there were 3 members of staff that had expressed an interest in joining the Governing Body. It was explained that policies had been updated

to reflect the new updates in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The Chair explained there is a section in KCSIE updated and relevant to Governors and all Governors should have read this update. It was made clear to Governors that there were members of staff that have been promoted and in support of staff further development, there was a voluntary leadership programme being offered and 9 people had expressed an interest. It was explained that this was for individuals that were interested in going into leadership roles in the next three years. It was explained that the school recently had two Councillors visit the school, including Tony Edwards, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Chair of Scrutiny Committee. It was explained that he was happy with the current position of the school and was keen to help in any capacity required. It was also explained that Councillor, Chris Vince, Leader of the Opposition had attended the school sixth form area and, was very impressed and commented that he would be happy to help, support and potentially be a Co-opted Governor.

Staffing Vacancies

The Headteacher turned Governors attentions to school staffing vacancies. It was said that the school was looking for one Teacher and three Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). It was said that the school was considering making recruitment plans for the next three years and as a result have a sturdy recruitment process to match.

Curriculum

The Head of Sixth Form informed Governors that form tutors had worked hard to make their classes as curriculum based as possible and explained that there are plans for orders to be placed for the purchase of equipment. It was also noted that there is a New Topic area which has been well received by students and they enjoyed the companies that have come in and carried out projects. It was made clear that everyone is welcome to visit the new sixth form building at 5:30pm on the 29th September 2023.

The Chair expressed gratitude to John Holland, School Business manager and the team for how they handled the work to rectify the issues that arose in the building works of the new sixth form building.

Governor Questions

A Governor challenged if Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was essential for Staff and how are early closures being received by Parents? A comment was made that it is good that pupils are being provided with lunch, but asked how will parents cope with the early closure and will there be provision for pupils who cannot go home early?

The Headteacher informed that this has been shared with parents, they have been asked for questions/concerns families have. It was also explained that she had met them over the summer term of 2022/23 and they said they understood medical, safeguarding but they were not getting very much input on teaching and learning. However, it was said that in the main, they felt quite supported. The Headteacher explained that she did expect comments to be a little more resistant. The Headteacher also made known that at the coffee morning she explained that the children come to school to learn and the school cater for additional needs and it is good that the children were being provided with lunch but how will they cope with the early closure is

imperative. The Headteacher explained that she will be having a meeting with Ralph Holloway, Head of Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Innovation (at Essex County Council) to see how the school can support families better. The Headteacher would like to obtain funding to provide future days.

A Governor challenged if looking at the responsibilities of staff, if there was a difference between the expectations of the roles of Annie Thompson, Head of Sixth Form (part of the Senior Leadership Team) Kiely Tomlin, Head of Lower School and Craig Bailey-Whyte, Head of Upper School (Middle Leaders). The Governor asked if the middle leaders have the same workload?

The Headteacher explained to Governors that middle leaders are middle leaders but, Annie Thompson is part of the Senior Leadership Team and she attends Governors meetings. It was said that there are times when Annie takes on additional duties depending on what the school is doing and Annie is in charge of the sixth form building which is an enormous responsibility. It was further explained that Annie role models to middle leaders and she has been invited to support to them by meeting informally with them. It was also explained that Annie is based in the sixth form building but she is seen in the main building also, meaning she visible on both sites.

A Governor commented that the School Improvement Plan is really detailed, expressed gratitude to the Headteacher for producing it and noted that it has good summary. The Governor asked if staff contributed in any way?

The Headteacher explained that the Senior Leadership Team and middle leaders were invited in the summer term 2022/23 to provide feedback and they were also given feedback.

A Governor commented that in the June 2023 Full Governors Board meeting Governors discussed updating the Recruitment Policy to state that 'all unqualified teachers must have at least a grade C or equivalent in English and Maths and those that did not would be supported over a two-year timeframe to achieve this.' The Headteacher was asked to confirm this is reflected in the updated Recruitment Policy?
The Headteacher explained that this was explored with human resources and it was decided that this would be added to the Pay Policy instead from the advice received.

A Governor queried if there would be a Headteacher's Report in advance like the previous Headteachers used to or will she just present the update verbally at the meeting?

The Headteacher informed that she will provide Governors with a report in advance of meetings in future.

A Governor commented that they can see from the Leadership Roles and Responsibilities sheet that the Headteacher is going to take responsibility for Pupil Premium. The Governor noted that they understood this was previously a role looked after by the Deputy Headteacher and asked if this was the case and if so what was the reasoning behind the Headteacher taking responsibility? It was further asked if there had been any changes to the roles and what is the secondment opportunity in Spring Term 2023/24 that was referred to?

The Headteacher informed that curriculum requires attention. It was said that due to capacity and additional responsibilities it is felt that Tracey Kiddell, Deputy Headteacher was not in a position to continue to take responsibility for Pupil Premium. The Headteacher noted that secondment probably meant succession planning instead and explained that staff that have an appetite for leadership would be offered a secondment opportunity which is unpaid but gives people a chance to explore a different or more suited career venture.

A Governor expressed gratitude to the Headteacher for providing the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF). They further showed appreciation for the SIP checklist summary produced which they said could be used as a marker over time. The Governor noted that there are a couple of references highlighted to Rosenshein's Principles and asked the Headteacher to explain what these are and why they are so important to her?

The Headteacher informed that many schools are using the principles and explained that it is really linked to teaching and learning and putting it into practice, which are all things that staff at the school are asked to do. The Headteacher explained that she felt really passionately about the fact that the teaching and learning in the classroom was fantastic. The Headteacher further explained that some of the children do have additional needs but noted that the children that leave the school should be ready for adult life.

A Governor expressed appreciation to the Headteacher for presenting the 2023/24 SIP, 3 Year Plan and an outline of SEF. The Governor asked if they have been shared with all staff and if not will they be following the meeting?

The Headteacher explained that they had been shared with the staff and they have embarked on embedding them into the school.

A Governor commented that given that there were 6 proposed sessions, asked the Headteacher if she will ensure that pupils and young people teaching hours are fulfilled and also asked if Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) were included in the training and if not asked if there was there a programme for this group?

The Headteacher explained that by September 2024 all mainstream schools were expected to provide 32.5 hours of teaching but not for Special Educational Needs children. It was said that LSAs were included in the programme and more practical sessions were being introduced.

A Governor queried if termly milestones would be added to the more detailed plan and progress evaluated against these milestones on a termly basis?

The Headteacher confirmed that the plan is in future there would be termly checks with a focus on curriculum and safeguarding.

A Governor queried that given that the SIP is a core strategic document, asked how the Headteacher would report this progress to Governors?

The Headteacher informed that she will continue with the strategic document and keep updating it. It was also explained that a professional would be attending the school to support the Phonics (a method for teaching people how to read and write an alphabetic language) Leader.

	<p><i>A Governor asked the Headteacher how visual support for Assessment for Learning (AfL) will be approached for pupils that require or need visual prompts? An example of Metacognition (which is related to AfL in terms of understanding thinking) was provided and it was asked how this will be approached and differentiated according to learning needs?</i></p> <p>The Headteacher explained that staff will be given different tasks after each session and throughout the year they will be building on their practise.</p> <p><i>A Governor asked the Headteacher if she has core Teachers who can model good teaching of reading at all levels? It was further commented that given the range of communication needs in the school (an example was provided of reading potentially being seen as a part of a communication continuum) it was asked, how will a developmental programme of teaching early language skills and higher order reading skills be made available and when would it be ready to be shared with Governors?</i></p> <p>The Headteacher explained that Phonics and the Twinkl Phonics Scheme (a scheme based on letters and sounds) would be used.</p> <p><i>A Governor asked the Headteacher if all staff will be trained in effective AfL strategies in a special school? They further asked what resources are available for pupils who are non-verbal but developing their early language and reading skills?</i></p> <p>The Headteacher explained that LSAs will be required to recognise their roles in the strategies used in classrooms. It was explained that the school has two Teachers with training.</p> <p><i>A Governor asked the Headteacher if there will be an audit of reading materials across the school to ensure the best quality teaching and making sure that there are materials to engage and; promote a love of reading and stories? It was further asked if there were suitably experienced curriculum leaders for the teaching of early and higher order reading skills and/or will this be a staff team?</i></p> <p>The Headteacher explained that an individual would be attending the school on Thursday 21st September 2023 to support with this.</p> <p><i>A Governor asked the Headteacher how well will zones of regulation sit alongside Steps Literacy Programme (a research-based literacy software programme for leaders of all ages) and how will the two be dovetailed?</i></p> <p>The Headteacher informed that they work in collaboration.</p>
9.	Finance
	<p>Financial Position</p> <p>The School Business Manager informed Governors that the school is starting to make financial progress. The School Business Manager explained that the staff recently recruited are within budget and he will be going through the budget in more detail in a meeting on Thursday 21st September 2023 and get it signed off for approval. It was also explained that there will be a five year financial plan going forward. It was noted that the more pupils the school has the more money the school receives. It was made clear that the staff structure will need to be reviewed for the future.</p> <p>Local Authority</p>

The School Business Manager informed Governors that the school raised the concern that section 8 of the Funding Agreement stated the school were responsible for the PAN (the maximum number of pupils that the admission authority will admit to each year group). The Local Authority (LA) have agreed to reword the Funding Agreement to state the LA are responsible. The LA said in accordance with Section 8 - the Council acknowledges that the School is the Admission Authority as defined in section 88 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and is therefore responsible for determining any change to the PAN in accordance with the terms of the School Admissions Code 2014. It was agreed that the Governors would meet together to review it (**ACTION; ALL Governors**).

Refurbishment

It was explained that the school will be embarking on a refurbishment programme which is scheduled to be signed off for approval. It was also stated that there were plans to fix the doorframes as soon as possible and works are required for the roof. The School Business Manager informed Governors that Claire Hayden, Project Sponsor Infrastructure Delivery asked in relation to section 3.1 stating £550k, where this figure was generated from because she recalls the school informing that it was from one quotation. She asked for the school to confirm if this is correct and what quotation, as this is not the figure she thought was being discussed for the whole school refurbishment.

The School Business Manager made Governors aware that the £550k figure had been generated from an assessment of works that may need to be carried out, based on discussions with her and on the draft information that she had shared with the school. It was said to her that an assessment had to be made as the school had not been provided with any quotes, other than for the works completed over the summer half term of 2022/23 and the school needed take an outline business case to board in August 2023 and ensure the correct governance was in place for these works to be carried out and also to approve the funding that was made available for the scheme. The School Business Manager provided an estimated breakdown below but noted that the funding that was to be provided was for the school to manage:

1. Phase 1 2023/24- Initial Estimates

- A – PMLD – Internal Refurb £65K (complete)
- B - PMLD – External Refurb £85K

2. Phase 2 2023/24 – Initial Estimates

- A – Refurb External Early Years - £40K
- B – Refurb Lower School Internals - £85K

3. Phase 3 2024/25 - Initial Estimates`

- A- Upper School – Internal refurb £100k
- B- Lower School – External refurb £175K

It was also stated that Claire Hayden said that Section 4.2 and Schedule 2 payment profile had not been set out and she requested for a copy of the schools' business plan to enable the payment profile to be completed because she needs to know when the

	school intends to carry out the works (ACTION; School Business Manager).
10.	<p>Safeguarding & On-line Safety</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education The Deputy Headteacher informed Governors that all staff received safeguarding training in September 2023. It was also said that the school made sure systems are well kept and staff are confident with using the safeguarding system. It was noted that Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) had been updated the relevant school policies had been updated accordingly. ACTION; The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will be completing training on filtering and monitoring in October 2023.</p> <p>Governors were made aware that it is good practise that candidates know that the school will be conducting an online search when doing recruitment checks. In relation to handling allegations against staff, it was stated that this includes people that use the school premises now and if there is an incident then the school needs to look into it.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the word ‘<i>sanction</i>’ has now been changed to ‘<i>discipline</i>’ for children and this is to be reflected in the school policy. In relation to the Prevent Duty, Governors were informed that there is a change that children may be ‘<i>susceptible</i>’ to radicalisation and not ‘<i>vulnerable</i>’ now. It was made clear that forced marriage is now a crime, it is seen as coercion.</p> <p>It was mentioned that the school have an all staff training booklet now which contains guidance on different courses and a safeguarding guide at the back. It was further said that there are 21 topics that it lists which includes a section on children being anxious.</p> <p>Attendance It was further stated that there is a focus on online safety and who is doing what, when and where which links into the child protection policy. It was noted that children absent from education is a warning sign to check up on safeguarding. It was mentioned that in relation to the Attendance Policy, there was a drive to have a firmer approach and linking mental health to attendance. An example was given that if parents have a Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and they want to educate their child at home, the school have to work closely with them to support them. It was made clear that the school is working closely with the Attendance Officer. Governors were informed that attendance last academic year 2022/23 was 86.5%.</p>
11.	<p>School Improvement Plan / Self Evaluation Form (SEF) The SIP and SEF was covered above in section 8 in the in the answers the Headteacher provided to the questions received from Governors.</p>
12.	<p>Policies There was no notification of any updates regarding policies received.</p>
14.	<p>Any Other Business The School Business Manager informed Governors that it was discovered that there were over 10,000 emails in. It was noted that IT created a sub folder to put these in and Governors gave permission for the emails to be placed in them.</p>

	The Chair expressed a wish to obtain access to the mailbox of the retired Head Teacher in order for the new Headteacher to be able to use Headteacher email.
15.	Date of Next FGB Meeting
	Wednesday 22 nd November 2023, 5:30pm to be held at the school.

The meeting closed at 07:27pm.

Staff Governors left the meeting at 07:27pm

.....signed (Chair)Date