



Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting: Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 6.30pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Present: Rev Craig Bentley (Rev CB) (Foundation Governor) *(left at 7.51pm)*
Mrs Rachel Hayes (RH) (Staff Governor)
Ms Joanna Ireland (JI) (Parent Governor)
Mrs Helen Loney (HL) (Parent Governor)
Mrs Jules Natlacen (JN) (Foundation Governor)
Mrs Rebecca Shiels (RS) (Co-opted Governor)
Mrs Claire Toone (CoG) (LA Governor) Chair
Mrs Andrea Walker (HT) (Head teacher)
Rev Angela Whittaker (Rev AW) (Foundation Governor) Vice Chair

Clerk: Sarah Williamson (Clerk) (NYCC Clerking Service)

21/1 Welcome, Introductions and Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Rev Craig Bentley, a new foundation governor.

21/2 Apologies

Ms Hadwin, Assistant Headteacher, was invited to attend the meeting but was unable to do so. Rev Bentley gave apologies in advance of leaving the meeting around 8pm.

21/3 Identification of Confidential Items

No confidential items were identified at this stage in the meeting.

21/4 Declarations of Interests

None

21/5 Annual Requirements:

a) Register of Interests

All governors confirmed there are no changes to be made to individual Register of Interest forms, signed last year. Updated copies will be signed at the next face to face meeting. The Rev Bentley confirmed he has no interests to declare. An updated copy of the overview will be published on the school website. **ACTION: Clerk and Headteacher**

b) Disqualification Declaration

A copy of the Declaration of Eligibility was circulated in advance. Governors confirmed there were no reasons why they should be disqualified from serving as governors. Individual copies will be signed at the next face to face meeting. **ACTION: Clerk**

c) Review and ratify the National Governance Association Code of Conduct

Governors noted the amended version of the NGA Model Code of Conduct, circulated in advance of the meeting. Governors unanimously agreed to continue to abide by the code, a copy of which will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity. **ACTION: Clerk and Chair**

d) Review and ratify Standing Orders

A copy of the Standing Orders was circulated in advance of the meeting. Subject to



amendment of the frequency of meetings to 4 per annum, **governors unanimously agreed** to continue to work to these procedures.

A governor asked for clarification regarding the rules for disqualification for non-attendance. The Clerk explained the GB is required to consent or otherwise to any absence. If a governor does not attend for a period of 6 months, apologies are not given or the GB does not consent to an absence, they are automatically disqualified.

e) Register of Gifts & Hospitality

No governor had any gifts or hospitality to declare for 2019/20. The Chair will sign the Register of Hospitality at the next available opportunity, a copy of which will be kept in school. **ACTION: Clerk and Chair**

21/6 Committees and Link responsibilities

a) Membership of committees and delegation of decision-making

Governors agreed membership of the committees for 2020/21 as:

Finance: the Headteacher; Mrs Toone (Chair); Ms Ireland; and Mrs Shiels. Meetings will be minuted by the Clerk.

Health & Safety: the Headteacher; Mrs Loney (Chair); Mrs Natlacen; Rev Whittaker; and the Assistant Headteacher, the school's H&S Co-ordinator. Notes of meetings will be taken by members of the committee on rotation.

Governors noted H&S matters are being addressed but the committee has not had the opportunity to meet. The 3-yearly external H&S review last undertaken in 2017 is now rescheduled from Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021. The committee will meet when it is possible to do so.

A governor asked if it would be possible to co-opt someone with expertise to join this committee. The Clerk explained the role of Associate Members. The HT explained that the services of Kym Allan Health & Safety Consultants are paid for by school to provide support and advice as required; for example, they will undertake a 'health check' prior to the H&S review, with support to improve anything as needed. This was scheduled for Autumn Term but has been postponed to Spring along with the review. The external review is carried out by the CCC LA H&S team.

Financial decision-making is delegated to the Finance Committee. **Governors agreed** delegation of decision-making within committees should be in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

A governor stated communication between those committees and the GB is essential. **Governors agreed** a verbal summary of intervening committee meetings, or copies of minutes if available, should be a standing item on GB meeting agenda. The Chair added the Bursar will continue to be invited to relevant GB meetings to provide all governors with an overview, which all governors agreed has been useful.

b) Terms of Reference for the Committees (ToR)

The Clerk advised governors that formal ToR should be adopted for the Finance and Health & Safety committees. Draft copies were circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair commented the draft Finance ToR appears to cover relevant matters. The HT added the ToR for Health & Safety appears suitable.

A governor asked if matters relating to insurance are relevant to the Finance Committee. The HT responded insurance is relevant in terms of its impact on the budget, but the



detail of requirements is an operational matter for the school.

Governors agreed these draft ToR would be adopted in principle and reviewed by each committee throughout the year to develop definitive ToR for September 2021. **ACTION: Governors and Clerk**

c) Head teacher's Performance Management Committee

Governors noted the half-yearly review for 2019/20 was postponed because of Covid-19. Membership of the committee was confirmed as Mrs Natlacen and Mrs Toone, with the support of an external advisor.

d) Confirmation of designated governors

Ms Ireland and Mrs Shiels confirmed their willingness to continue in the roles agreed last year. The Rev Bentley volunteered to support Mrs Shiels regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection. He has undertaken Child Exploitation Online Protection training in a previous role. Rev Bentley will be required to undertake safeguarding training. **ACTION: Rev Bentley and Head teacher**

Governors were assigned to the following roles:

- **SEND:** Ms Ireland
- **Safeguarding & Child Protection:** Rev Bentley and Mrs Shiels
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Champion Governors:** Rev Bentley and Mrs Shiels

e) SDP link governor roles for new 2020-21 SDP priorities

A summary of the SDP priorities was circulated in advance of the meeting and shared on screen. Governors noted the 2019/20 priorities have not run for a full year. The HT reported these priorities were reviewed at a staff meeting; it was agreed they are all still relevant. Priority 1 and 3 have been amended to reflect the impact of Covid-19.

Governors discussed and agreed each new priority for 2020-21 and identified link governor roles (in brackets):

1. Maintaining/developing the wellbeing, mental and spiritual health of our whole school community, especially due to Covid-19 impacts

Governors agreed this remains a significant priority, particularly at present. (Rev Bentley and Mrs Shiels)

2. Maintain more consistently high achievement by pupils across school at greater depth (GD), especially in Writing, Maths and combined Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM)

There are still aspects of GD the school could work more efficiently towards. Governors noted when teaching really focusses on supporting higher achievers, it has a good impact on all pupils. Writing and Maths are focuses; and combined RWM at GD. (Mrs Natlacen and Mrs Toone)

3. Further improve attainment, progress and provision for identified vulnerable pupils/groups (SEND/pupil premium/monitoring group pupils, including those needing additional catch-up due to Covid-19 impacts)

The school has a high number of children with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP), above the national average. This aspect also includes children not on the SEND register, known as a monitoring group. To this group will be added those children identified as needing to do more work to catch up, or who have been identified as vulnerable, particularly as a result of Covid-19. There will be additional funding



coming into school to support post-Covid catch-up intervention. (Ms Ireland and Mrs Natlacen)

4. Maintain our outstanding effectiveness as a church school through increasing pupils' understanding of diversity (different faiths/cultures), by improvement of RE and by continued focus on our spiritual development (linked to Priority 1)

The next SIAMS inspection is due in 2020/21, this is not likely until Spring 2021. The framework has changed but the hope is to retain the previous outstanding judgement, which under the new framework is now called 'excellent'. (Rev Bentley, Rev Whittaker and Mrs Loney)

5. Revising and refining the curriculum and strengthening distributed leadership

Governors noted normally 4 priorities would be sufficient but last year priority 5 was added in recognition of the work being done towards this key strategic area. Staff have had more time to work on reviewing and developing the curriculum so planning is further ahead than it would have been without the summer lockdown. The HT reported excellent long-term Maths planning is in place and being implemented. The focus is now on English. All other curriculum plans will be in place by the end of term. (Mrs Toone, Mrs Loney and Mrs Shiels)

Governors agreed these are very good priorities, relevant to the school's current circumstances and the future. They are focussed and far-reaching. At least two governors have been assigned to each priority. The Chair and HT have discussed ways of monitoring agreed priorities although governors are unable to do this first-hand at present, see 21/10.

21/7 Approval of Minutes

The public minutes of the GB meeting held on 2 July 2020 were circulated in advance. Rev Whittaker proposed and Mrs Shiels seconded they be accepted as an accurate record.

Governors unanimously agreed.

The confidential minutes of that meeting were also circulated. Mrs Toone proposed, and Rev Whittaker seconded they be accepted as an accurate record. All **governors agreed** and the Chair will sign and date copies of both sets of minutes to be filed in the school at the first available opportunity. **ACTION: Clerk.**

A copy of the public minutes will be posted on the school's website. **ACTION: Head teacher**

21/8 Matters arising not covered elsewhere

a) (20/42a) Update on disabled parking bay

Governors expressed thanks to the School Administrator who painted the bay which is now in use.

b) (20/42a) Extending the bus service

There has been no progress in this matter. Progress is unlikely for the foreseeable future.

c) (20/42a) Boiler update

The boiler is working. The council are working towards more long-term solutions to prevent flooding. The council have carried out an on-site assessment and the work has been added to the council's list of priorities for major works.

The School Administrator continues to work to reclaim the full cost of associated work through an insurance claim. Reimbursement of £300 costs of electric heaters is still being



negotiated. The council will be responsible for these costs.

Has Cumbria CCC given any indication of timescale for implementing a more long-term solution? No. It forms part of their list of school capital project priorities. Will it be fully funded? Yes; however, this may depend on the precise detail of their proposal. There may be some cost to the school for a smaller solution.

Has the County Council indicated what action it would take if there should be flooding before any major work is undertaken? No.

d) (20/42b) Updating the school website

The HT responded updates to the governor section of the website can take place following this meeting. **ACTION: Clerk and Head teacher**

Updating other aspects of the website were put on hold during lockdown but staff have been working on subject and class pages. Some staff have completed this work. The HT and AHT will work with the school's website designer to publish new material.

The Rev Whittaker commented the contact telephone number and church service times are incorrect and require amendment as soon as possible. **ACTION: Head teacher**

Are there any data protection implications related to such information on the website? The HT responded the website is GDPR compliant with regard to pupils. Should personal contact details be made available here? The Rev Whittaker responded these are not personal contact details but contact details for the church and confirmed her agreement for them to be made available on the website.

21/9 Headteacher's Report

The HT gave a verbal report. A full written report will be available in advance of the November meeting.

a) School Data

NOR: 95 children. 14 children joined Reception and have settled well. In addition, 4 other pupils have joined either Y3 or Y4.

b) Attendance

100% attendance was achieved on 28 September. There has been one unauthorized absence for an extended holiday at the start of term; the pupil has now returned.

All other absences have been linked to Covid-19. A record is kept by the School Administrator. Since September, 16 pupils have been affected, either staying at home or being sent home for a test because of potential symptoms. These children have isolated at home with their family, staying at home until the test result is received. All test results have been negative. The school has a text system to make other parents in a bubble aware so they can be alert to symptoms. An "all clear" text following a negative result.

Some absences are due to siblings who were close contacts of others, or siblings in other schools or older children/parent with symptoms. There has been one case of a child shielding for a parent.

c) Staffing update

The HT asked governors if the staff list circulated with papers for the meeting was helpful. Governors thanked the HT for this useful document. This list will be updated alongside the HT's report for the November FGB meeting. **ACTION: Head teacher**



There have been 3 instances of staff absence associated with Covid-19.

Governors noted there is a significant impact on each bubble when a staff member is absent. Recent testing has been more rapid due to a pop-up testing centre in Kendal. Results now take approximately 72 hours but times can vary.

[At 7.51pm Rev Bentley gave his apologies and left the virtual meeting].

How can governors support staff on the ground? Governors discussed their concern for staff and how sustainable the current situation is. The HT responded any absence has a significant impact on smaller staff teams. Staff are unavoidably having to work much longer hours as they are in contact with children all of the time. This includes carrying out lunch and break supervision duties as they are restricted to separate areas to limit contact between groups. Everyone is following these guidelines and keeping separate; this is key to keeping the school open in the longer term. This separation means that should there be a case, only one bubble has to be sent home; the rest of the school can stay open.

Governors noted staff and children have developed very effective sanitising routines.

Is there justification to consider rearranging bubbles, for example by joining Class 3 and 4? The HT explained why this would not be as safe for pupils/families and staff and would be difficult to organise practically. **Would a whole KS2 bubble alleviate some pressure across staff with regard to duties?** The HT believes that keeping them separate has more benefits.

Has the use of supply staff been considered? Current staff are used as far as possible to cover others when out; each bubble has some staff capacity for this. Supply staffing has been used as a last resort on a few occasions in Classes 1, 2 and 4 due to the simultaneous absence of both a teacher and a TA. Good quality, flexible supply staffing has been obtained from a local teaching agency; school aims to continue to make use of the same supply staff when necessary. The HT outlined other potential contingency arrangements. Governors noted potential cost implications, similar to other schools. Governors acknowledged the longer-term inevitability of such costs and **agreed** the need for short-term additional expenditure to support staff wellbeing.

The HT is sending staff to work from home when possible (PPA and subject leader/SENCo time) and staff meetings are being held online on Mondays after school, with staff encouraged to leave school early to attend the meeting from home. These are effective but time/practicality to share documents has been more limited.

Staff are providing home learning for children who are absent, made available on Google classroom. This is an additional pressure for staff to provide alongside face-to-face teaching. The expectation from government is that remote learning should be in place and ready from the end of September; staff are continuing to work on this. The computing leader has been given some extra time to aid implementation.

The staff governor reported the HT is looking after the staff. Staff bubbles are good sources of mutual support; everyone, including children, are becoming more confident with routines. Each day presents new questions, but everyone is identifying solutions.

The HT is impressed with the way children have returned. Some are further ahead than expected. There has been a focus on wellbeing alongside academic learning. Yoga and dance are taking place and every class is participating in the Forest Schools initiative. Meditation and reflection time take place more than once per day. Each class organises their own collective worship.

Some concern exists around children in a few families who are not accessing online homework. Home learning must be online as it is not possible to send materials home.



All families have been asked to let the school know if they have technological issues. The computing leader has produced a very good letter for parents about how to use Google classroom and has offered one to one help.

The school has received a lot of positive feedback from parents and from visiting staff about how the school's systems are working.

The Chair proposed one or more governors should visit the next virtual staff meeting to express thanks to staff for all they are doing. The HT and staff governor agreed this would be appreciated. Arrangements will be made for governor access. **ACTION: Head teacher**

d) Review of updated Risk Assessments (RAs), including review of the first weeks of term in the light of the new RAs.

Updated risk assessments were circulated in advance of the meeting. These were devised following meetings with governors in the summer. School published these in advance of availability of government guidance but RAs have not subsequently required alteration.

There are three main documents:

- Full opening of the school for September 2020
- Premises
- Operations

Governors discussed these documents and how the new organisation/staffing structures/pupils are working so far.

A governor noted some aspects of the RAs are still identified as high risk and asked for clarification. The HT responded the risks associated with the toilet facilities and the lack of a sink in Class 3 are high; they are insufficient facilities for the current circumstances and are being closely monitored. The distance of the toilets from Class 1 is significant and the corridor very busy; an additional toilet block close to Class 1 would be ideal. The Staff Governor reported the situation regarding the toilets has improved since the beginning of term and is now running more smoothly. Cleaning is also identified as high risk, but the new additional cleaning team is excellent and works around the school at midday, which makes everyone feel confident. Use of the Village Hall is also higher risk and so use has been limited to 2 afternoons a week for small group yoga and dance.

Are alternative plans in place for PE in adverse weather? All children have been asked to bring waterproofs. PE slots are scheduled later in the afternoon. All children come to school in PE kit on those days. The PE coach has creatively and successfully planned socially-distanced activities. Coats and wellies are worn for Forest School.

Governors approved the risk assessments.

Are there grounds to lobby for the provision of additional toilets? Health & Safety would determine the school has sufficient provision under normal circumstances. Some schools have added Portaloo's; these are expensive and require cleaning. Space is limited.

Would an additional sink in Class 3 be feasible? Quotations could be obtained. Any surplus funding is currently going into staffing but a clearer financial picture will be available in October. Capital expenditure could be used for a sink; however, capital funds are earmarked for 40 new Chromebooks which are required. The computing leader has obtained quotations for these. **Governors agreed** the HT should obtain a quotation for an additional sink. **ACTION: Head teacher**

e) School Development Plan

For proposals for, and agreement of, new SDP priorities for 2020/21 and allocation of link



governor roles for the new priorities see 21/6e above.

21/10 Governor Monitoring Visits

The Chair and HT reported preliminary discussions regarding effective monitoring in current circumstances. Suggestions include establishing a system of remote meets and discussions between linked governors and staff.

Governors discussed this further:

- Mrs Shiels volunteered to have virtual conversations with staff regarding wellbeing.
- The standard monitoring form with prompts could be used (as in usual monitoring visits) in a virtual meeting with staff. **ACTION: Head teacher prior to monitoring visits**
- Results of assessments and sample pieces of work could be shared virtually.
- A governor room could be established in Google Classroom to facilitate monitoring. **ACTION: Head teacher to liaise with Computing subject leader**

Governors agreed:

- The importance of keeping evidence trails so SIAMS or Ofsted inspectors could see the ongoing monitoring that has taken place.
- The focus in the short-term should be on monitoring wellbeing. The HT will give further consideration to a monitoring schedule for consideration at the November meeting. **ACTION: Head teacher**

21/11 Policies to review

There is no update on a schedule for policy review. Governors discussed a process to review new policies. **Governors agreed:**

- A list of statutory policies that must be approved by the FGB should be produced. **ACTION: Head teacher**
- A virtual governor “room” will be set up to enable the HT to share revised policies for governor consideration. **ACTION: Head teacher**
- Two governors, Mrs Toone and Rev Whittaker, will take a lead in the initial review of policies to be presented to the GB for approval
- The schedule of policies will be used to identify priorities for this standing item on future GB agenda. **ACTION: Clerk**

21/12 Governor Training

a) Confirmation governors have read Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

The HT, Rev Whittaker and Mrs Natlacen confirmed they have read KCSiE (2020). All governors will be asked to sign a written confirmation in November. **ACTION: Governors**

b) Training

The Chair reminded governors of the importance of training. There is a small budget specifically to develop governor skills.

The Rev Bentley as a new governor will find training beneficial. The HT confirmed the school has a partnership agreement with the Diocese enabling governors to access courses at a reduced fee. This service level agreement has been in place for 2 years.

The Rev Whittaker and Rev Bentley will attend the Collective Worship course. The AHT will be attending the RE cluster group meeting.

c) Governor Support training



A hyperlink to Cumbria CC training programme was circulated on the meeting agenda.

d) Diocesan training

A hyperlink to available training courses was circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The HT recommended Diocesan training, much of which is now online and so more accessible. If all governors are up-to-date with church schools training it will support a strong leadership judgment in a SIAMS inspection.

21/13 Governor membership

a) (20/46b) Succession Planning: Election of Co Vice-Chair

The Chair reiterated her intention to step down at the end of the 2020/21 academic year. To maintain the health of the GB the Chair proposed electing a second Vice-Chair to build experience and aid succession planning.

The Chair invited nominations. Mrs Natlacen indicated she was prepared to volunteer for the role of Co-Vice Chair but this would only be for one year.

The Rev Whittaker nominated and Mrs Toone seconded Ms Ireland for the role of Vice-Chair. Governors agreed to vote by show of hands. **Governors unanimously agreed** to appoint Ms Ireland as Co-Vice Chair. Ms Ireland accepted.

b) Governor vacancies (Co-opted governors)

Governors noted the GB is still carrying 3 vacancies for co-opted governors.

21/14 Head teacher & staff well being

a) Staff wellbeing

See 21/9 c above

b) Co-Headship recruitment

In July, to support wellbeing and succession planning, **governors agreed** to initiate a recruitment process for a Co-Head teacher. It has not been possible to progress this matter due to Covid-19.

The HT updated governors:

- The current situation prohibits face-to-face recruitment.
- Schools are being advised not to recruit for headteacher posts unless essential.
- The HT is still undertaking 2 days/week in her advisory role for the LA, plus additional days for new NLE recovery support work.
- A different timescale now needs to be considered.

Governors agreed further discussion of this item should be recorded in a confidential minute not available for public inspection.

Governors agreed the need to work collectively to take this matter forward; it will be an agenda item at the November GB meeting. **ACTION: Clerk**

21/15 Correspondence

None

21/16 Consideration of the Impact of the meeting on the welfare and progress of pupils at the school

Governors:



- Agreed the clear, realigned priorities in the revised SDP
- Approved the very comprehensive risk assessments and reviewed their implementation
- Considered the staff and pupil wellbeing measures in place
- Reviewed the school's financial position in advance of closer analysis at the next Finance committee meeting.
- Established succession planning for the GB by the appointment of an additional Vice-Chair and by identifying training opportunities for the V-C, new governor, and all governors.

21/17 a) Dates of future GB Meetings were confirmed as:

- Finance Committee Meeting – new date **Tuesday 13 October at 9:30**
- FGB Meeting Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 6.30pm

b) Governors agreed the following dates for future GB meetings:

- FGB Meeting Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 6.30pm
- Finance Committee Meeting Tuesday 27 April 2021 at 1pm
- FGB Meeting Tuesday 22 June at 6.30pm

Close The meeting closed at 9.11 pm and the Chair thanked all governors for their contribution. Thanks all round.

Signed

(Chair)

Date:

Clerk Sarah Williamson