

MINUTES OF THE
Meeting of Black Firs Primary School Local
Governing Board (LGB)
Date: Wednesday 2nd July 2025 at 4:30pm

Governors in attendance: Shazma Mahmood-Shakoor (SM-S) Chair Jonathon Barlow-Bailey (JB-B) [items 1-9 only] Josh Cammiss (JC) Kathryn Fowler (KF) Cheryl Glover (CG) [items 6-21 only] Paul Horrocks (PH) [items 7-21 only] Emma Perriman-Rabone (EP-R) Vice Chair Rob Sigley (RS) [items 1-8 only]	Apologies: None Others in attendance: Anna Jones (AJ) Headteacher Allan Howells (AH) Clerk Adam Millington (AM) Staff observer
--	---

ITEM NO.		ACTION
1.	Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations RN was welcomed to her first meeting. There were no apologies. PH and CG delayed arrivals were noted. There were no declarations of interest.	
2.	Introduction to the School Business Manager The new School Business Manager was unable to attend this meeting. They will attend the next one.	
3.	Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising The minutes from the last LGB meeting on 03.04.25 were approved. The action log was reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chair would work with the HT to build a link visit tracker over the summer. [ACTION SMS/AJ] The link visits for humanities had been undertaken, and for Art & DT was arranged for 3 July. Sourcing external funding opportunities was ongoing and would be taken on by the school business manager. Social media – this action would be taken forward by the school business manager. Admission Appeals- It was confirmed that the school PAN would constrain pupil numbers in EYFS and KS1 and if intake were above PAN, then the school would be liable for additional costs required to maintain the statutory pupil: teacher ratios. Staff absence costs had been raised with the Trust, and a reply was still awaited. Governors asked whether staff absences had reduced, and AJ confirmed that this was the case.	[ACTION SMS/AJ]

4.	<p>Membership update</p> <p>The update on LGB membership was received. Rachael Nuttall was confirmed as an appointed governor.</p> <p>Reappointments of SM-S, JC, and KF for a second term were noted.</p> <p>PH will step down as of 31.08.25. Governors resolved to thank PH for his long service as a governor and as the LGB Chair.</p> <p>The HT and Chair would work with the clerk to secure a replacement. However, Trustees had indicated that the replacement should not be a parent /grandparent of a child in school.</p> <p>[Action Chair/Clerk]</p>	[Action Chair/Clerk]
	Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities	
5.	<p>a) School Improvement Plan (SIP) Review of 24-25 Priorities</p> <p>Governors receive the SIP and the progress made against the priorities in 2024-25. Governors noted that many of the priorities included the SIP were designed to be implemented across a two-year period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy: Introduction of new phonics and handwriting schemes. Significant improvements in phonics results were noted, with provisional data expecting to show that 93% of Year 2 pupils were achieving the expected standard. Year 1 phonics results have improved to 80% , which matches national average (cf 67% last year). Positive impact has been seen in writing at expected level, next year's focus to be on raising attainment at greater depth- this is similar to other schools within the trust and will be a trust focus in 25-26. • Behaviour: Positive impact of restorative practices and adaptive teaching. Zones of regulation and consistent expectations were highlighted as areas needing further development. Enhanced play opportunities and the introduction of play leaders have positively impacted behaviour. • PSHE Curriculum: Comprehensive coverage of health, safety, and positive relationships. The introduction of the "Global Project" for relationships education was noted. New 'relationships without fear' programme from GLOW domestic abuse charity has been trialled in Year 6 with positive results and will meet the changes to RSHE curriculum from September 2025. This programme will be rolled out across school next year from Year 2 (Helping Hands) up to Year 6. • Attendance: Significant improvements, with the school now having one of the highest attendance rates in the authority. The role of the family support worker was emphasized. Persistent Absence rates were low. Cross-Trust working was invaluable, and this work had included sharing best practice and developing resources such as template letters. • Leadership and Management: The head noted that this was still rated "yellow" as further work was needed to support some of the changes to the curriculum delivery model. The introduction of new foundation subject curriculums and adaptive teaching strategies, plus a focus on rigorous monitoring and assessment was highlighted. • EFYS: This remained strong and significant progress had been made against the priorities. The HT reported that Yr1 teachers were teaching some sessions in reception, and this was expected to have a positive impact on transition to KS1. <p>b) SIP priorities for 2025-26.</p> <p>Governors noted and endorsed the draft SIP for 25-25 which included.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Continued focus on the writing curriculum. • Reading Fluency: Emphasis on improving reading fluency. • Maths: Focus on embedding the maths curriculum. • Curriculum Embedding: Ensuring the new curriculum is fully embedded and effectively monitored. <p>AJ would continue to develop the SIP over the summer and bring forward the update SIP at the next meeting [Action AJ].</p> <p>Governors were also updated on the school's involvement in the local authority's RADY project, the aim of which was to support closing the disadvantaged attainment gap.</p>	[Action AJ] .
	Education	
6.	<p>Pupil Numbers and Admissions</p> <p>The Headteacher's report included the current pupil numbers by year group. Preliminary admissions data for Sept 25 was also discussed. Governors noted that the school is at capacity in several year groups, with some waiting lists. It was noted that 44 pupils were expected in September, and the school was waiting to be able to offer a place to another child on the waiting list. Governors confirmed that the school should remain within its PAN, unless directed through the appeals process.</p> <p>Governors also noted the information provided regarding the consultation (and support received from the Local Authority) to extend the school's provision to 2-11 years. The HT would provide future updates on progress; however, the aim was to have 15 additional places from Jan 26. Governors noted the challenges with class size legislation and the impact on sibling admissions that could result from this.</p>	
7.	<p>Attendance</p> <p>The latest attendance data was received. The overall rate of 97% was commended. The HT report highlighted examples of the improvements and ongoing strategies deployed to maintain high attendance rates. The role of the family support worker in addressing attendance issues was emphasized.</p>	
8.	<p>Rewards and Behaviour</p> <p>The school has seen positive behaviour trends with no exclusions or suspensions this term. There have been no physical interventions or racial incidents reported. One child had used racially aggressive language, likely due to a lack of understanding of the implications of their words. The school is working on setting boundaries and providing support to help the pupil understand and change their behaviour.</p> <p>The HT noted that there had been incidents in Yr5 of online bullying particularly through the use of WhatsApp outside school. The school is working with the specific families to ensure children are supported and understand the impact of their online behaviour. Governors recognised that the school was limited with what IT solutions it could implement because of the social media platforms used. Governors asked whether incidents were DSR if the school behaviour procedures were being breached, and the HT confirmed that this was the case.</p> <p>It was reported that pupils are being educated on how to report online bullying and remove themselves from harmful situations.</p> <p>Governors challenged whether the policy needed to be updated. They were reminded that a revised policy was approved earlier in the academic year, and that the changes were continuing to be rolled out. KS2 pupils would be receiving further guidance during the summer term.</p> <p>The HT also reported on the behaviour management strategies that were being implemented. These included implemented restorative practices to address low-level disruptive behaviour; the use of adaptive teaching, in order to match the right teaching</p>	

	<p>assistant with the right child to build strong relationships and provide tailored support; and providing zones of regulation, to help pupils manage their emotions and behaviour.</p> <p>The HT highlighted that the introduction of play leaders and enhanced play opportunities has positively impacted behaviour. However, the removal of lead play equipment has presented challenges, but imaginative play and football have been encouraged to mitigate this.</p> <p>The HT confirmed that she would continue to communicate periodically with parents about behaviour expectations and online safety.</p>	
9.	<p>Progress and Attainment</p> <p>AJ reported that school has made significant strides in improving progress and attainment across various key stages and subjects. There have been notable improvements in phonics, writing, and mathematics, with targeted interventions and new curriculum implementations playing a crucial role.</p> <p>Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Level of Development (GLD): 74% of pupils achieved a good level of development, surpassing the target of 72% and the national average. • Phonics Screening Check: 80% of pupils in Year 1 passed the phonics screening check, showing a significant improvement from previous years. <p>Key Stage 1 (KS1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics Re-screening: 93% of Year 2 pupils passed the phonics re-screening check. • Multiplication Tables Check: 45% of pupils achieved full marks in the multiplication tables check (cf 32% national last yr), a substantial increase from 13% last year. <p>Key Stage 2 (KS2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Teacher assessments indicate that 72% of pupils met the expected standard in writing, up from 63% last year. The focus for next year will be on increasing the number of pupils achieving greater depth. • Mathematics: The school has seen improvements in mathematics, with targeted interventions and the introduction of new resources and teaching methods. • Science: 85% of pupils met the expected standard in science, with ongoing efforts to embed the new curriculum and improve resource availability. <p>The Headteacher updated governors on the changes being made to support the 1.5 form entry class size KS2 teaching next year, utilising the support of both teachers and experienced TAs. Governors queried whether all pupils would have the appropriate amount of access to the qualified teachers, and this was confirmed to be the case. Governors sought reassurance that the model would continue to close the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils. However, Governors noted that recent link visits appeared to confirm that the intended delivery model was working. In addition, the school and trust leadership would continue to maintain ongoing oversight to ensure it was working. Governors would receive the reports from the Schol improvement visits undertaken by the Trust, and these would assist in providing governors with appropriate assurance.</p> <p>The head also highlighted the following changes that have been put in place to support pupil progress and attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Curriculum: The school has implemented a new writing curriculum, which has already shown positive results. The focus is now on embedding this curriculum and providing targeted support to pupils. • Phonics Programme: The introduction of the new phonics programme, "Read Write Inc.," has led to significant improvements in phonics screening results. • Adaptive Teaching: The school has focused on adaptive teaching methods to better support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is working to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This includes targeted interventions and participation in the "Ready" project, which focuses on writing and other key areas. <p>Governors noted, and expressed their thanks, for the good will offered by all staff (teachers, TAs and other support staff) involved with the changes taking place within the school.</p>	
10.	<p>Link Governor Monitoring</p> <p>Reports from link governor monitoring visits were received for Safeguarding and Mathematics. KF reported that she had undertaken a link visit to review science. A written report would follow. KF noted that the science lead was making positive progress with changes to the curriculum, however it would be important that these changes had appropriate resources provided to support the changes. the HT confirmed that £1k had been allocated to each team (EYFS, KS1, LKS2, UKS2) so that they could enhance the resources needed for their curriculum topics. Exercise books, reading books and art materials will be purchased separate to this.</p> <p>The Safeguarding visit confirmed that the SCR was up to date. Staff involvement with the various link visits was commended.</p>	
11.	<p>Pupil Premium</p> <p>The impact of Pupil Premium funding for 2024-25 was reviewed. Governors noted that the number of PP pupils at BFS was low (in percentage point terms), and therefore care had to be taken when interpreting numerical data as small numbers could result in large percentage point swings. The school is part of a focused project (RADY) to address the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils. The need to identify and support pupils who may be eligible for Pupil Premium but are not currently identified was discussed. Governors asked whether all preschool PP pupils have been offered a place in school. This was confirmed to be the case.</p>	
	Welfare	
12.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>An update on the current safeguarding caseload and a summary of the recent SCIES safeguarding audit were provided. The audit was positive, with some actions identified for improvement. The importance of ensuring all staff are aware of and follow safeguarding protocols was emphasized.</p> <p>The Chair noted that best practice from SCIES team would mean that they should relinquish the link governor role for Safeguarding. At Black Firs it was noted that Chair has had a really positive impact in safeguarding link governor role- we would like to continue with this but appoint a deputy safeguarding link governor to work alongside the Chair. CG agreed to take on the link role, initially being supported and mentored by the Chair. [Action SMS/CG]</p>	Action SMS/CG
13.	<p>Welfare and Wellbeing – Students</p> <p>A summary of the CE Inclusion Strategy was received.</p> <p>Governors received an update in the Headteachers report. Governors noted that the family support worker who is also senior DDSL and attendance lead, has been instrumental in providing support to pupils and their families. She works across multiple schools in the Education Community Partnership (eCP) but is based at Black Firs most of the time.</p> <p>The school has recently supported two families who have experienced the loss of a parent. The mental health impact on these families has been significant, and the school has provided extensive support through counselling and other resources.</p> <p>Governors enquired how the Yyr6 - Yr7 transition arrangements were progressing. The HT confirmed that there was positive feedback from pupils and parents for the transition days undertaken with Congelton High School (CHS), which had built on early work undertaken by CHS.</p>	

14.	Welfare and Wellbeing – Staff Staff welfare and wellbeing initiatives were discussed, including the provision of midday supervision and the success of the PPA cover. The appointment of a new Early Years professional/Early Years Teacher apprentice from within the Early Years team was noted following a restructure of SEND TA support. This will enable school to advertise and appoint an Early Years teaching assistant apprentice. The importance of supporting staff through ongoing training and development was emphasised.	
	Local Matters & Stakeholder Engagement	
15.	Local Policy Approval The Home Visits policy was approved. A debt recovery policy had been drafted and had been shared with the Trust seeking feedback and clarity on the approval process. It was understood that the Trust was likely to issue a trust-wide policy on this topic.	
16.	Governor Training Update Governors were reminded to update and record their training on Governorhub. The results from the recent skills audit were shared with the committee. It did not identify any specific gaps with the LGB skill set.	
17.	Stakeholder Engagement – Parents / Carers The HT report was noted.	
18.	Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community The HT report was noted.	
19.	Communication – to Trust Feedback on the Governance Conference was provided to the LGB. The conference was a success and provided an excellent opportunity for governors to network and be updated on governance matters. A session held on school performance data was highlighted as very valuable.	
20.	Communication – from Trust Governors were thanked for their participation in the EDI survey. The report from this work was now available on Governor Hub.	
21.	AOB The Headteacher provided an update on roofing works and other capital development taking place over the summer. Governors queried and the HT confirmed that contingency plans were in place to manage any unforeseen delays to the work being completed. Governors noted that the Headteacher report included an update on the school's sustainability action plan.	
22.	Confidential Staffing Update The headteacher provided governors with a confidential staffing update on staffing changes that have or were taking place for the start of term in September 2025	

Meeting closed 19:22

These minutes were co-created with copilot AI