



**Minutes of the Governing Body (GB) meeting
of Archbishop Runcie First School**

Held on Wednesday 23rd March 2023, at 5.30 pm in the school.

Present:

Paul Baker, Jonathan Booth, Greg Farrell, Katie Hogg, Sarah MacRae, Kate Massey (Headteacher), Cecilia Pacitti, Sarah Pickett (Chair), Lonie Sebagh, Andrew Shipton.

The meeting was quorate.

In Attendance:

Bob Wilson – Governor Services

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence.

The Chair invited Rev Paul Baker to open the meeting with a prayer.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ted Thomas and Andrew McCabe.

2. Declaration of interests.

- There were no declarations of interest in relation to the business of the meeting.

3. Identify any additional / urgent items not on the agenda.

- The Chair spoke about the recent appointment of Jonathan Booth as the new Headteacher at NCEA Warkworth Primary School. She expressed delight about his appointment and thanked Jonathan for his time at Archbishop Runcie First School and for the exceptional dedication and effort he has devoted to his post as Deputy Head. She also thanked him for his very kind and well worded letter of resignation which showed great warmth and appreciation of the school. Jonathan briefly spoke about his time at Archbishop Runcie and gave thanks to the Headteacher for her guidance throughout his time here. Governors congratulated Jonathan and wished him well in his new appointment.
- With Jonathan leaving at the end of the current term the recruitment process was now in hand to appoint a new deputy with a view to the appointee taking up post at the start of the autumn term. At this point, twelve candidates had been to look around the school with more to visit in the week following this meeting. The next stage would be for the Headteacher to see the candidates teaching in their current schools. From this, a shortlist would be drawn up on 18th April, with interviews then taking place over a period of two days.
- The Chair advised Governors that a lot of thought had gone into the need to employ a direct replacement for the vacancy of Deputy Head or if any other staffing

configuration would be more suitable. In the circumstances it was decided that a replacement was the best course of action. The Headteacher advised that she would need to move staff around over the summer term to cover the time gap between Jonathan leaving a replacement taking up post.

4. GB appointments / membership update.

- There still remained a vacancy for a Foundation Governor and in addition there was a possibility of another Governor vacancy occurring in the near future. To deal with this, the Rev Shipton reported that he had approached a number of people to see if they had any interest in becoming a Governor. The current position was that there had initially been some interest but nothing positive had come of this. The time commitment plus the lasting impact of covid seemed to be the major concerns expressed. His search would continue.

Action: Andrew Shipton to continue the search for a Foundation Governor.

- Sarah MacRae reminded Governors that her term of office as a Parent Governor was due to end in December 2023 and that by this date she would no longer have a child at the school. If a vacancy occurred for another type of Governor she would be prepared to put herself forward for this when the time arose.
- The Chair reminded Governors that at the Governing Body meeting to be held in the summer term there would be elections held for the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and of the Committees. Governors were encouraged to put themselves forward for these posts. If any person felt that they were not quite ready to take on the responsibilities at this stage they could shadow an existing post holder for a year. Any expressions of interest by Governors should be emailed to the Chair.

Action: Governors to email the Chair with any queries concerning the various posts to be voted on at the summer meeting.

- Governors were asked if they had any changes to their contact details to report. No changes were reported.

5. Governance documentation and requirements – for agreement and confirmation.

- **Governing Body Handbook** – A Governor reported that she would be meeting with Ruth Corless from Governor Services on 18th April to review and complete the Governing Body Handbook. This document would be presented for approval at the next Governing Body meeting.

Action: Governor to meet with Ruth Corless from Governor Services to develop the Governing Body Handbook. This document would then be presented for approval to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

6. Draft minutes of the previous GB meeting held on 30th November 2022.

The draft minutes of the Governing Body that had been held on 30th November had been circulated to Governors. These minutes were considered and agreed as a true record of the meeting.

The matters arising from the minutes were dealt with as follows:

Item 3: Chair to set up a WhatsApp communication link with Governors: This had now been done – with the exception of one Governor. This was now in hand and this Governor was in the process of joining the group.

Item 4: Chair to resend the Skills Audit message to Governors. This item remained outstanding. The Chair agreed to ensure that this was done.

Action: Chair to resend Skills Audit message to Governors.

Item 6: A Governor had agreed to organise the initial meeting of the MAT Focus Group. – Governors were informed that this meeting had been postponed in the light of the recent Government White Paper which had advised that conversion to academy status by 2030 was not now mandatory.

Item 13: Governor to email the Headteacher about the fire brigade carrying out a safety audit re: parking on Christon Road. It was reported that some initial enquires had been carried out but not fully followed through. This item remained outstanding.

Action: Governor to continue to investigate the possibility of the Fire Brigade carrying out a safety audit re: parking on Christon Road.

7. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher delivered her report, copies of which had been circulated.

It should be noted that this report more closely followed the Ofsted framework than was the case with previous reports. Governors were encouraged to respond to the revised format and advise if it would be suitable to remove any sections or keep as it is now. A Governor expressed the view that it would be good to have an extensive report delivered at the first Governing Body Meeting held in an academic year with subsequent reports then more streamlined so that there was little or no repetition.

Action: Governors to comment on the format of the Headteacher's report.

The Headteacher highlighted the following points included in her report:

- Looking at staffing – there were a lot of supply staff currently in school and some vacant posts were difficult to fill. This applied in particular to staff needed for one to one high needs children. A Governor asked why it was difficult to fill posts – the Headteacher replied that this was a City wide issue and that with support staff the wages were not attractive - with higher amounts commonly being offered outside of the education sector. Added to this, the number of High Needs children had suddenly increased rapidly both in the school and across the City thereby increasing the demand for staff. Another Governor asked about SEN children entering the school at the lower end and how they were provided for as they moved up the school. The Headteacher advised that staff would usually move through the school along with the pupils to provide a level of continuity. She added that this arrangement doesn't work with supply staff hence the need to appoint staff to permanent positions.
- The Admissions table showed that the school had 96 applications for September 2023 – but only 17 of these were 1st Preference. The Headteacher advised that

she was looking into this and had requested historical data from the Local Authority.

Action: Headteacher to investigate the low level of 1st Preference Applications for Autumn 2023.

- Looking at the Pupil Data – Year 2 was showing a high percentage as being well below in Writing together with a high percentage as being just below in Maths. The Headteacher expressed confidence that this ground would be made up. A Parent Governor (not in attendance at the meeting) had provided written comments from a visit he had made to Year 2 and from a conversation with the teacher it was revealed that Writing was a real focus in the class as evidenced by observation around the classroom and that this would lead to real progress.
- The indicative budget for 2023/24 was showing SEN/High Needs Funding as being £139k. This would be insufficient to cover spending in these areas by around £34k. This shortfall would be to be made good from elsewhere in the budget.
- Attendance was showing as being around the 95% level. This was not too bad in the context of the City but for this school this was considered as a very low level of attendance. It was revealing that some poor attendance could be attributed to a number of specific families. The Chair asked why this was the case. The Headteacher advised that some parents had little value of education. This, together with some parents working patterns - e.g. on night shifts, meant that getting a number of children to school was difficult. There was also a trend that with families with more than one child in the school that if a single child was absent through illness or strike action, then the other children would also stay away. Because of this, it was now at the point of fines having to be levied on some parents. As a further measure, the school website would be altered to show in the section where term time absence could be requested, this would contain a warning message that term time holidays would not be approved. In addition, it is the intention to increase the hours of the attendance officer from September 2023. A range of other measures were also in place to encourage good attendance with class rewards being awarded each week, good attendance certificates being awarded each half term etc.
- The Behaviour Log on page 11 of the report showed that two Racial Incidents and one Alleged Bullying incident had occurred. The Headteacher explained that the racial incidents were quite low level in nature but were being addressed by the school. The alleged bullying incident had now been withdrawn by the parent of the child who had made the allegation.
- There was a vacancy for a Governor to join the Worship Council. Two Governors advised that they may be interested but queried the commitment. The Headteacher asked that they email her with their queries and their availability. Another Governor expressed an interest in taking on a role in Science Week.
Action: Governors to email Headteacher with queries and availability in connection with the Worship Council vacancy.

- In connection with the premises – one boiler was not working meaning that the school was currently fully reliant on the second boiler. This was in the process of being corrected. The recent tree report had advised that work needed to be carried out on the trees across the site. This work has now been completed. There had been a number of fire drills carried out recently – with the most recent taking almost twice as long to complete due to the decision to carry out the drill with the children spread across the school in their phonics groups rather than in their usual class groups. This drill had identified a number of issues to be addressed and would be repeated in the near future. Looking at Capital Funding – the bids via the Diocese are as shown in the report. It is very unlikely that all bids will be supported. The priority bid was to fund the increase in the number of parking bays. Governors should note that all bids are to do with Health and Safety/DDA issues. A Governor had advised in his written report that all Health and Safety files were held in the school office and were available for inspection.
- It is very pleasing to advise Governors that the SIP had recently inspected EYFS and was very impressed at the considerable improvement that she had witnessed.
- The SIP Report and SEF Review were both included in the pack of papers that had been circulated to Governors.

This concluded the Headteacher's Report and Governors were asked if they had any further questions to ask. There were no further questions at this point.

8. Policy Review.

The following policies had been circulated to Governors for approval:

- Admissions Policy 2024/25 (Already approved by the Admission's Committee).
- SEND
- Health and Safety
- Complaints.

These policies were all approved by Governors as presented.

9. Financial Items.

The Annex D and Financial Headlines Report were presented and approved by Governors. The Headlines Report showed that the school's three year budget forecast to be in the 'keep under review' category which indicated that the LEA had no immediate concerns about the budget. The Chair agreed to sign off the Annex D report prior to submission to the LEA.

Action: Chair to sign the Annex D Report prior to submission to the LA by 31st March 2023.

10. Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

New Government Guidance is now available under the title of 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' and is shown on the Government website. The Chair advised Governors that they should read and take note of the document when talking about and querying attendance in school.

11. Trust – update.

The minutes of the Gosforth Schools Trust meeting held on the 13th October 2022 had been circulated. (Although a subsequent meeting had taken place the minutes from that meeting were not yet available).

Points of note were:

- Sarah MacRae had been appointed as a Director for a period of four years with effect of October 2022.
- The Headteachers from the Trust had agreed to spread out the Trust Subject Meetings over a number of evenings to allow greater participation by subject leaders from ARFS.
- The next meeting of the Trust was scheduled to take place on 20th April 2023.

12. Newcastle Promise Board Update

The various Promise Board documents as included in the meeting papers were accepted for information.

13. Reports from Governing Body Committees

The following reports were accepted by Governors for information:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee 18th January 2023
- ARFS Admissions Committee 14th February 2023
- FSP Spring Term Committee 15th February 2023

14. Governor Monitoring

- The Health and Safety Governor had reviewed Health and Safety within the school – the report from which had been circulated to Governors. A number of actions had been identified which had now been completed. The report was accepted for information.
- The Chair agreed that she would arrange a visit to school to monitor Writing.
Action: Chair to arrange to carry out review of Writing.
- Ofsted Training (in the form of a Mock Ofsted) was scheduled to take place on 10th May 2023 at 1pm. This training would be delivered by the SIP. The committee chairs agreed to attend for this training.
Actions: Committee Chairs to attend Ofsted Training.

15. Governor Training

- The Chair advised that she was including all Governor training into the impact statement.
- A Governor reported that she had undertaken impact training with Governor Services. This had covered a range of topics including thinking behind the history of schools and their purpose of preparing citizens of the future. Also, the understanding that teaching is a calling and why people want to work within this context.
- Two Governors were in the process of planning for the Vision Day. An agenda and a short historical context would be prepared for this. The Headteacher advised that it is important to look into where the school wants to be in the three to five year time frame and not to be tied into concentrating on the next Ofsted/SIAMS inspections.
Action: Preparation of documents by nominated Governors for consideration during the Vision Day.

16. Agree staff training dates 2023/24

The proposed staff training dates of 4th Sept 2023, 27th October 2023 and 3rd June 2024 were approved by Governors.

17. Agree school term dates 2023/24

The proposed term dates for 2023/24 as indicated in the circulated calendar were approved by Governors.

18. Governance Items

The following were accepted for information:

- Newcastle Governor Services – Selection of new guidance and recent publications Spring Term 2023.
- Governews Issue 73.
- Priorities for Governors – Spring Term 2023.

19. Governor Impact

A number of items were identified as evidence of the Governing Body making an impact on the school as follows:

- The Chair reported that she and another Governor had spent time with the Headteacher to consider the most appropriate way of dealing with the upcoming vacant post of Deputy Head. The question asked was around should this be a direct replacement or was the post needed in its current format. This had been a beneficial exercise.
- As reported earlier in these minutes, a Governor had recently been appointed as a Director of the Gosforth Schools Trust.
- As noted below, Governors would soon be holding a Vision Day to plan the way ahead for the school.
- The Chair reported that she felt that there was a very good relationship existing in school between staff and Governors.

20. Confirmation of future meeting dates:

Next Governing Body Meeting:

Wednesday 28th June 2023 at 5.30pm.

Vision Day:

Monday 17th April 2023 1pm – 4pm. (All Saints Church to provide the facilities / location for this meeting).

The meeting ended at this point (7.30pm). The Chair thanked Governors for their attendance and for their input to the meeting.

Item	Action
4	Andrew Shipton to continue the search for a Foundation Governor.
4	Governors to email Chair with any queries concerning the various Governing Body and Committee posts to be voted on at the summer meeting.
5	A Governor to meet with Ruth Corless from Governor Services to develop the Governing Body Handbook. This document would then be presented to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

6	Chair to resend Skills Audit message to Governors.
6	Governor to continue to investigate the possibility of the Fire Brigade carrying out a safety audit re: parking on Christon Road.
7	Governors to comment on the format of the Headteacher's report.
7	Headteacher to investigate the low level of 1 st Preference Applications for Autumn 2023.
7	Governors to email Headteacher with queries and availability in connection with the Worship Council vacancy.
9	Chair to sign the Annex D Report prior to submission to the LEA by 31 st March 2023.
14	Chair to arrange to carry out review of Writing. Also, the Committee Chairs to attend Ofsted Training.
15	Preparation of documents by nominated Governors for consideration on the Vision Day.

Signed: **Date:**

Chair of Governors