



Minutes of the Governing Body (GB) meeting of Archbishop Runcie First School held on 24th November 2021 in school

Present:

Sarah Hawkins (Chair), Jonathan Booth, Marian Coulson-Cave, Craig Dallison, Sarah MacRae, Kate Massey, Sarah Pickett, Andrew Shipton, Ted Thomas

The meeting was quorate

In attendance

Ruth Corless- Clerk

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all and the meeting opened with a prayer. The new governor Ted Thomas was welcomed and introduced himself. A round of introductions took place.

Apologies for absence were received and **accepted** from Andy McCabe and Cecilia Pacitti

The clerk confirmed with Ted the need to initiate the DBS process as soon as possible and ensure all paperwork was in place.

Action: Rae Lowe

Sarah Macrae was confirmed as SEND link governor. Ted was invited to attend committees and determine which would best suit his skills and interest.

Action: TT

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were declared.

Governors were asked to send their forms by the end of term to ensure statutory information could be uploaded.

3. Identify any Additional / Urgent Items not on the Agenda

Governors presented an issue discussed at Finance, Staffing & Premises Committee relating to a request to accommodate an older child (current pupil moving to GCMS in September) at breakfast club. This was discussed in some detail by governors and concerns and benefits considered. Following a robust discussion, which included health and safety / loco parentis considerations, governors **agreed** unanimously that this request could not be supported.

- SIAMS update

Governors were given a SIAMS update via PowerPoint. This was also highlighted in the Headteacher's report. Governors were asked to familiarise themselves with the update.

A SIAMS inspection was expected to be delayed and this would now be potentially 2023-2024. The last SIAMS inspection was 2017. One week's notice would be given.

A governor noted the changes within the framework. Updates were provided via Church House which the Chair of Governors received and could forward to governors. All were advised to view the revised schedule via the website to understand the summary of changes.

Action: All

Governors were linked to the following SIAMS strands:

- 1) Vision and leadership – All governors, led by Craig Dallison
- 2) Wisdom and Knowledge – Sarah Hawkins
- 3) Character development - Sarah MacRea (including links with School council)
- 4) Community- Ted Thomas
- 5) Dignity and Respect- Marianne Coulson-Cave
- 6) Collective Worship (including links with Worship Council) – Sarah Pickett
- 7) RE – Andrew Shipton and Cecilia Pacitti

The Chair agreed to work with committees on the delegation of SIAMS strands.

Action: Chair

4. Accessing papers – overview

Governors requested paper packs to be posted prior to each meeting to all governors.

Action: Clerk

5. GB Appointments / Membership Update

- Staff governor – Jonathan Booth
- 1 Foundation vacancy (St Nicholas' Ex officio)
- 1 Co-opted vacancy
- 1 Parent Gov vacancy (pending)

Vacancies were discussed. In consideration of recent elections and a pending governor vacancy it was agreed that Greg Farrell would be invited to join the governing body as Parent Governor.

The clerk agreed to obtain contact details and contact Mr. Farrell.

Action: Clerk

The following was noted:

Andrew McCabe's term had been renewed- a new DBS would be required.

Action: SBM

Governors agreed to look at the completed skills audit and identify gaps and, in turn, suitable candidates for the vacancies which remained.

Action: Chair/ All

The clerk advised that Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools promoted vacancies in schools. It was also suggested that a link between the Parents, Teachers, Friends Association (PFTA) could also be a possible consideration. The Ex-officio post for St Nicholas' would take time to resolve. The Headteacher explained that other schools within Gosforth Schools Trust (GST) had fellow GST Headteachers on their governing body, so this option could also be considered in the future.

Action: All

The clerk agreed to liaise with the School Business Manager (SBM) to ensure DBS checks were in place for all serving governors.

Action: Clerk

6. Draft Minutes of Previous GB Meeting 22nd September 2021

The minutes were **approved** without amendment.

The changes to the Admissions Policy were ongoing. The new policy was currently with Liane Aitken awaiting approval before consultation with stakeholders.

Action: Chair

Actions were noted as follows:

The website had been updated with committees' details and link governor roles.

Safeguarding related questions remained a standing item on the committee agendas.

Ted Thomas agreed to undertake the Safeguarding Governor training.

Action: TT

The Headteacher agreed to circulate the questions from the Clennell website to governors.

Action: Headteacher

Committees would remain as they were, and Craig Dallison and Sarah Pickett would chair these. The Chair advised more members were required on Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) committee. Terms of reference would be confirmed at the next meetings. The Chair of TLA confirmed that RE was part of the remit for this committee and would check terms of reference reflected this.

Action: SP

The chairs of each committee agreed to ensure the committee dates were forwarded to the clerk for reference.

Action: Chairs / Agenda

The Headteacher agreed to resend the Governor Visit Policy and proforma to governors.

Action: Headteacher

The Pupil Premium Strategy would be reviewed by the School Improvement Partner. It was **delegated** to the Finance Committee for review and ratification.

Governor visits would be linked to the school development priorities and discussed at spring term committee meetings.

Action: Committee agendas

The following roles were confirmed:

Writing – Sarah Pickett

Middle leaders' development - Craig Dallison

SIAMS – named link governors (above)

Andrew Shipton had visited school prior to lockdown and undertaken a RE focused visit.

All visits would have a report produced based on the proforma in school. This would be presented at the following FGB meeting.

Action: All

Craig Dallison (CD) agreed to organise an induction session for new governors. This would be prior to a future meeting and arranged by CD. It was agreed any new governor should have a point of contact to support them in their role. **Action: CD**

The Pay and Conditions Policy had been **approved** at Finance, Staffing and Premises Committee.

The clerk confirmed some Keeping Children Safe confirmation reading was still outstanding. This would be followed up.

Action: Clerk

It was agreed the SBM would attend the earlier part of future meetings. All actions assigned to the SBM would be forwarded.

Action: SBM

The Headteacher requested an upgrade of the Governance SLA to include training.

Action: Clerk

7. Governance documentation and requirements

- Skills Audit responses were mostly complete. All governors were asked to forward responses to the clerk by the end of week ending 10th December.
- KCSIE responses had been received. All outstanding confirmation would be followed up by the clerk.
- Pecuniary Interest forms were still being completed.
- The GB Handbook would be completed by the Chair.

Governors confirmed any updates for pen portraits would be forwarded to the SBM. New governors were required to forward them ASAP.

Action: TT/ CH

8. Governor monitoring

- Policy on Governor visits
- Link governor role (H&S/Safeguarding/GDPR) plans and dates

The Governor visits policy had been discussed earlier and actioned. The Link governor list had been circulated and confirmed.

Governors would be advised of visit dates where applicable.

Action: Chair / Headteacher

9. Governor training

- Programme
- Plans
- Feedback on attendance

The programme was circulated. The Headteacher confirmed that the SBM had attended Schools Financial Value System training. No other records for training were submitted at this time.

Governors were encouraged to attend LA training wherever possible.

10. Headteacher's Report

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for her report which had been a very informative summary.

Increased staff absence was noted for the last week and the helpful support of all staff in covering absence was noted.

A governor asked how wraparound was managed if there was staff absence? Staff would cover such times and would receive overtime payments for this. This would not be a large amount of work and the commitment from the team to ensure school ran well was appreciated.

Updates to applications to school were noted:

- 17 children were on the waiting list for Year 1.
- All vacancies in Year 3 had been filled.

Expanding the Pupil Admissions Number (PAN) in Nursery had been agreed by the Admissions Committee following 7 sibling applications for January. This would require an additional member of staff and was very encouraging. Many years had been spent trying to increase Nursery numbers. Taking Rising 3's was proving to be having impact.

Attendance was reported as currently being high. **A governor asked if covid absences were taken into account?** They were not.

Persistent Absence (PA) was also high for last year which was noted to be higher than other GST schools. The PA was higher as places were offered to critical workers, but had not all been taken up. Dan Tolan had investigated this thoroughly.

A governor noted how impressed they were that CPOMS recorded so much detail. The Headteacher advised this was important to ensure that observations across the school could be threaded together. This allowed a picture of behaviour and concerns to be drawn together for the safeguarding of children.

A governor asked if all behaviour was recorded? Not all behaviour was recorded but the majority of very positive or very negative behavior was, especially if uncharacteristic for the child, and once a child transferred to another school this record could also be transferred.

A governor asked whether both positive and negative behaviour was recorded? Examples were given of the types of entry made. If a child had done something particularly kind, this would be noted. Some children, e.g. children with SEND, had a daily log on the system. This allowed the picture to be built up of where/if improvements were happening, as well as noting concerns.

A governor asked whether this would be a key performance indicator that you would expect to see reduced? The Headteacher explained that some records e.g. 20 incidents of bullying, only related to 4 children. This would result in action being taken and issues being addressed. Any child raising a concern would result in action being taken. Leadership did not want to see recording being reduced by staff since this remained an important record.

A governor asked how the system had been quality assured? Staff had received training from the Headteacher in September. Dan Tolan from Clenell Education Services (CES) undertook an audit to ensure the level of recording. Examples and categories of recording were discussed.

The safeguarding table was discussed. No points or concerns were raised.

Governors discussed school priorities at this time.

A governor asked about the inclusion of middle leaders in the school development plan. The Headteacher explained that many teachers were at the start of their career. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) currently completed the development plans and then passed these over to staff to support the work. The Deputy Headteacher explained his involvement in this process and his working alongside staff to develop their skills and strengths. Plans were in place to join with Gosforth Central Middle school and develop staff skills in art for spring term.

Pedagogy development, as well as skills and strengths in particular subjects, were discussed. The Deputy Headteacher being outside of the classroom allowed for further staff development and support to be put in place. Teachers were very busy and did not have the capacity to consider the Ofsted research currently. The release of the Deputy Headteacher from class teaching allowed this to be done within the SLT.

A governor noted that the curriculum development was a rolling cycle. Expectations for children were raised in line with the new Ofsted framework and the school had a 'hugely ambitious' curriculum for children. Children enjoyed the challenge and were able to take this on board.

- Finance and expenditure

Pupil Premium funding spending plan were discussed. The Deputy Headteacher was currently released from his class teaching role to carry out CPD and support for PP children. Additionally the recovery premium was being used to release class teachers to carry out school led tutoring in line with guidance. Children would receive 15 sessions to support their "catchup" in writing. There were currently 23 children eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

SEND funding had been used to support the Deputy Headteacher's time outside of the classroom. This allowed a 'quality first teaching' focus in school and had the greatest impact for SEND children which in turn would benefit all children.

Music-grant funded drumming lessons had been observed to be going well. **The Chair noted the link between maths and music development.**

Premises items were discussed including:

- Completion of the Front Entrance
- The park area behind school which was seeing an increase in the amount of anti-social activity which impacted on the school grounds, especially over weekends. Police had been involved. Governors discussed ways in which the community and school could be engaged to improve this area and reduce impact.

A governor asked whether health considerations had been considered following the rubbish that was being discarded on school grounds over weekends? The community police support officer had increased her presence to tackle the issue. The Site Manager had been very proactive in dealing with discarded items before children arrived in school. Sports England and Urban Green had been contacted in relation to development of the area. No outcome was confirmed.

Governors supported the proposal to engage children in the development of the area and acknowledged this would have a vested interest for children looking after the area in the future.

Refurbishment plans for the car park area had been considered in order to create a safe parking area for staff. Quotes requests were in place.

A governor asked if bike racks had been considered? The Headteacher advised that very few staff lived close enough to cycle to work.

A consultation had taken place about the extension of the After School Club times. There was not a significant interest noted from responses received. Impact to staff costs to do this would need to be justified for any increase in extension of time. The Finance, Staffing and Premises committee would consider whether this was viable.

Action: Finance, Staffing Committee

A governor asked what expenditure had occurred on Read Write Inc? This was a programme to strengthen phonics and reading books and significant investment had been required. Existing stock was fed into the system where possible, however £3,000 had been required to introduce the new system. The introduction was going well, and formal training would take place in June at further cost to the school.

A governor asked how the effectiveness would be measured? The Deputy Headteacher noted that this system change had been required by the Department for Education. All programmes had been approved and were supported by research. The impact over time was expected to be significant and would address the writing targets, and spelling issues that existed in school. A more formal programme had been needed and benefits would be expected and would be reported on in future meetings.

Lettings were discussed with disappointment and concerns raised as a result of Grass Roots using the school over the summer holidays. The school had not been respectful of the school site and the income did not justify the challenges presented. Few children in school had taken up places on the summer programme. The feedback between other schools in the trust had supported the difficult experience. **Governors agreed lettings would not be supported in the future.**

A governor asked about the £20,000 spent on extra staff and whether they were still in post? This funding had now been spent. One person had been kept on but not as an "extra" member of staff.

A governor asked if there was currently any strong link with St Nicholas's church? It was agreed further work was needed on this. The Headteacher acknowledged Rev Andrew Shipton's (All Saints') continued support and visits to school.

The Chair noted the physical interaction with churches and cited the annual carol services that usually took place at St Nicholas'.

A governor asked for further details on the Daft as a Brush visit. This was GSTs nominated charity. Activities to support the work of the charity had been discussed during a recent visit, including the possibility of singing at Freeman Hospital and planting bulbs.

A governor asked about the cost of covering staff absence. The supply budget had been increased significantly in the previous two terms. There had been a change in this situation. Only one supply teacher was used for three days. There was more flexibility within the current staff structure to cover short term absence without the need for supply.

The Headteacher reported that no parents had attended the recent workshop despite 17 participants signing up. **A governor asked if it would be possible to consider other was of booking/advertising in future.**

One incident of alleged bullying and sexualized behaviour was reported. This had been followed up, dealt with appropriately and parents informed.

Parent's evening phone calls had been very successful and would be repeated in the future.

One GDPR incident was reported. This had been the result of an error and information being shared with a family relative. Apologies had been sent, the relative would have known the information that had been shared, however the error had been rectified and issued information was now being double-checked. The use of a SIMS App should eradicate this in the future.

The Chair suggested the Arbor system was useful as parents updated their own information.

External Monitoring

A governor asked if a report from the RE scrutiny by Caz Weir could be made available? The Headteacher agreed to share this when she received it. The SIP visit SEND report would also be circulated.

Action: Headteacher

11. Trust Update / Diocesan updates S Hawkins

Trust updates had formed part of the Headteacher's report.

The Chair agreed to circulate minutes from trust meetings.

Action: Chair

12. Reports

The Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) committee provided a verbal summary of the meeting.

- The terms of reference had been agreed
- The baseline data had been reviewed and gaps were being targeted
- Annual policies had been reviewed and approved

The Finance committee minutes would be circulated post meeting, when agreed.

Action: CD

A verbal update was given: The budget had been scrutinized and the Chair confirmed the following:

- Period 7- contingency budget was estimated at £22,530 the period 7 estimate was £38860.
- There would be a balanced 3year budget within the 8% threshold.
- The budget was healthy, and school was doing significantly better than previously.
- This would be kept under review.

Key issues were noted and highlighted to governors. These would be included in the report to governors.

The Out of School club was expected to make a profit of around £1,000 each month. This would be reinvested in school. It was not ring fenced.

A governor asked about the school's surplus. The threshold was explained, and the governor was informed that the school had previously been in deficit in 3rd year of forecast.

A governor asked what do you think had brought the change? Staffing costs had reduced as staff appointed were on lower pay scales. Long term teacher previously incurred higher salary costs.

Governors discussed staff turnover noting that ambitious people gave a lot to the school and went on to take on leadership positions.

A governor advised that school would appoint people based on experience rather than on cost to the school. It was noted that there was a large representation of new teachers on the staff currently. The school sought to foster ambitions for both staff and pupils.

A governor asked if the incremental pay increase was automatic? These were and would be included in budget planning.

13. Policy Review

No policies were presented for approval at this time.

The Admissions Policy consultation would take place before Christmas.

Action: Chair

14. Any Governance Guidance Reports – Autumn Term 2021

The clerk highlighted the following reports to governors.

Education and Skills Annual Report

[2021 Education and Skills Annual Report | Services to Schools](#)

Ofsted Report on Sexual Abuse in Schools

Ofsted was asked by the government to carry out a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. This report summarises the findings and recommendations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

15. Impact – what difference are governors making to outcomes for pupils?

- Governors were attentive to safeguarding in school
- Scrutinizing the budget and holding the Headteacher to account, supporting expenditure and reviewing resources.
- Committee membership support curriculum development and finance and premises management
- Governors regularly supported admissions reviews.
- Governors remained aspirational for the school and supported senior leadership in this.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 19:55pm

16. Confirmation of Meeting Dates 2021/2022

30/03/22 13/07/22