



**Approved minutes of the Governing Body (GB) meeting
of Archbishop Runcie First School (ARFS)**

Wednesday 27 March 2024

Sarah Pickett
SARAH PICKETT
26/6/24.

Present:

Sarah Pickett (Chair)
Paul Baker, Fatima Begum, Greg Farrell, Diana Lavin, Rae Lowe, Sarah MacRae,
Kate Massey (Headteacher), Cecilia Pacitti, Lonie Sebagh and Andrew Shipton.

Quorum

Governors in post: 12; quorum: 6; governors present: 11

In Attendance:

Julia Blott ~ Clerk, Governor Services

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 5.30pm. Rev Andrew Shipton offered an opening prayer.

An apology for absence received from Katie Hogg was **accepted**.

Paul Baker, Cecilia Pacitti and Andrew Shipton advised that they would need to leave at 6.45pm

2. Declaration of interests.

There were no interests declared in the business of the meeting. The School Business Manager agreed to re-send forms to those governors who had not yet completed them, and would return completed forms to the Clerk.

Action: SBM/Clerk

3. Identification of any additional / urgent items not on the agenda.

None.

4. GB appointments / membership update.

Sarah Hawkins and Ted Thomas had resigned since the last meeting. It was agreed that a skills audit should be completed by current governors prior to recruiting to the vacant positions.

Action: Chair to circulate skills audit. All governors to complete and return audit.

5. Draft minutes of the previous GB meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

Two confidential items were also approved.

Matters arising from the above minutes:

Parking (page 3)

A security camera had been installed at the junction between the Residents Association hut and Christon Road. A proposal to close off Hyde Terrace was also out to consultation.

Admissions Policy (page 6)

The diocese had advised that church applications should not be included in the policy. Governors would consider this and decide in the Summer term whether the Admissions Policy should be amended in the Autumn term for admissions in 2026/27.

Actions

All other actions had either been completed or were ongoing.

6. Headteacher's report / school improvement

Circulated:

- Headteacher's report, Spring term 2024
- School Development Plan 2023 – 2024 v8
- Self Evaluation Form
- Data check 2022/23
- Ofsted Inspection handbook
- Safeguarding audit

a) Headteacher's report

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for a comprehensive report.

Governors asked the following questions:

A governor asked when the school was likely to be inspected by the Diocese and was informed that the school was on the list "likely to be inspected" for some time between September 2024 and July 2025.

A governor asked about the figure of 21% for unauthorised absence and whether 21% was higher than in the past. The headteacher said that unauthorized absence was due to children going on holidays during term time. However, the school's attendance was generally very good compared to other schools in the city. Attendance for Pupil Premium children was a concern and would be discussed in more depth at committee.

A governor asked about the two racist incidents in the Spring term. The headteacher explained that two racist comments had been made by the same child who had EAL and some SEN. The local authority EAL team had been involved and the matter had been discussed with the child's parents. The comments were not

targeted at specific children and the headteacher felt that the child did not understand the seriousness of what he had said due to language issues.

A governor asked about the need to refresh safer recruitment training. The headteacher confirmed that refresher training was recommended every three years.

b) School Development Plan

The headteacher explained that the School Development Plan had been RAG rated. The key priority remained teaching and learning and behaviour for KS2.

A governor asked if the school had accessed support to improve these aspects of KS2. The headteacher explained that a GST School Support risk assessment was completed annually, which was updated after Christmas. Regent Farm First School the offered support and this school would be charged for their time. The Chair suggested that governors should have a discussion at the next meeting about the merits of joining a MAT. This was a small school and it was likely that it would be able to access more support in a number of areas if it were to join a larger MAT.

c) Self Evaluation Form summary

All areas had been assessed as being Good, apart from Early Years which had been assessed as being Good/Outstanding. The local authority had asked if they could showcase this school Early Years provision. Governors agreed that this was an excellent position to be in and asked for their congratulations to be passed to the Early Years team.

The headteacher added that Early Years in neighbouring schools was full whereas it was not at this school because of the former RI rating. Governors agreed that once the RI rating had been removed, the changes made should put the school in a great position to attract more numbers.

d) Data check 2022 – 2023

Governors agreed that it was helpful to compare this school's data with the wider local authority area and nationally. The comparable level of GLD was impressive given the difference in the number of disadvantaged children, compared with the national figure. Governors also noted the difference and change in the number of Pupil Premium children compared with other Gosforth schools. The Chair commented that the school's demographics were very cohort related with no consistent trend. This justified the structure having a leader for each key stage.

Greg Farrell arrived at 6.30pm

e) School Inspection Handbook

This had been circulated to governors for reference.

f) Safeguarding audit

Governors noted that one governor needed to complete the online safeguarding training module. They agreed to complete it later that evening.

7. Financial items

Circulated:

- Budget headlines
- Annex D 1 & 2
- SVFS feedback

The School Business Manager (SBM) explained that the overspend was almost all for supply staff and that this was partly offset by staff vacancies. There was also a gap between SEN funding received and the school's SEN staffing costs. However, the budget issues faced by the school were not out of line with local or national comparisons.

The local authority was in deficit for SEN and were making further cuts to their service, and funding for EHCPs by 10%.

The headteacher and SBM had met with John Fogarty and were awaiting his report before the budget for 2024/25 could be approved.

The headteacher explained that the school could not set a deficit budget so some cuts would need to be made. The Chair commented that this was another area where the school might benefit from being part of a larger MAT.

It was agreed that the Finance and Staffing Committee would look at the budget in detail at its next meeting on 8 May but there would also need to be an extraordinary, one agenda item meeting of all governors to approve the budget. It was agreed that a virtual meeting would take place on **Monday 20 May at 5.30pm**.

The SBM agreed to share the rules for budget setting with Greg Farrell.

Action: SBM

Paul Baker, Cecilia Pacitti and Andrew Shipton left at 6.45pm.

The feedback on the SVFS had been much as expected.

Lonie Sebahg would take over the chair role for the Finance and Staffing Committee from the next meeting in May.

8. Reports and feedback from GB Committees/Governor Monitoring/Governor training

Circulated:

- Teaching Learning & Assessment minutes 23/01/24
- Admissions Committee minutes 15/02/24
- Finance Staffing & Premises minutes 26/02/24
- SEND visit by S MacRae, 16/11/23
- SIAMS training

a) Teaching Learning & Assessment Committee

The impact of issuing fines for unauthorised absence was discussed. Two families had paid the fine and three families were due to pay before the deadline of 24 March 2024. If these were not paid, they would be referred to the court system.

b) Admissions Committee

A decision had been taken to change nursery admissions slightly so that families would no longer be able to buy an occasional one-off session, because that would prevent other families from booking a regular half or whole week. This change did not require consultation and would become effective from September 2024. The headteacher would inform the one family currently affected by the change.

Action: Headteacher

Sarah MacRae (Vice Chair) would join the Admissions Committee and sit on any appeals panels.

c) Finance Staffing & Premises Committee

The minutes were received. Finance matters had been discussed elsewhere in the meeting.

d) SEND visit

Governors received the report. It was acknowledged that it was now out of date as matters had moved on. The school was meeting all statutory requirements. The SEND governor would carry out a visit with the SEND support teacher recommend by the school's SIP and Headteacher in the summer term. The new SENCo takes up post in June so could also be involved.

e) Governor training

Diana Lavin confirmed that she had attended the session on the local authority's priorities for the term.

Fatima Begum would attend governor induction training once she had been in the role for a term or so. In the meantime the SBM would send her the Governors' Handbook and thought would be given to allocating a governor buddy. Fatima agreed to arrange a visit to the school when she brought in her documents.

Lonie Sebagh had attended a training session recently run by Jane Edminson and suggested that it might be helpful for Chairs and Vice Chairs to meet with their counterparts from other schools.

Governors also suggested that it might be helpful for the SBM to meet with another SBM is a similar school. The Vice Chair suggested Balliol School in North Tyneside. The clerk agreed to ask Governor Services if they were aware of any other single form entry schools.

f) SIAMS training

The headteacher had circulated a PowerPoint training programme for any governor who had not been able to attend the training session in person.

9. Gosforth Schools' Trust update

Circulated:

- GST minutes

The Vice Chair provided a summary of issues discussed by the Trust as follows:

- The minutes circulated were for the meeting in October but there had been two more meetings since then on 14 December 2023 and 21 March 2024.
- School to school support was back on the agenda having ceased during the pandemic.
- Transition days to Gosforth Academy were discussed although there were no firm plans in place to date.
- There were too many Year 8 children in feeder schools to be accommodated in their choice of secondary schools so they were being randomly allocated. This was not popular with parents and it was hoped that the new school would open in September 2025. However, this would continue to be an issue for this year. There was a need to review the feeder school system across GST. However, this governing body was not in a position to influence this matter.

10. School term dates and staff training dates 2024-2025

The school term dates and staff training dates had been circulated and were noted and agreed.

11. Governance items for information

Circulated:

- NCC Key guidance
- GoverNews and Governor Priorities Spring 2024

These items were received.

12. Newcastle Promise Board and Schools Forum updates

Circulated;

- NPB minutes & subgroup summaries
- SF minutes

These items were received for information.

13. Impact

Governors demonstrated their impact on the success of the school through the following activities:

- Recruitment of the Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, and KS2 Leader
- Allocating funds for external support
- Review of Health & Safety processes (ongoing)
- Pastoral support for the Headteacher during an HR investigation
- New security gates
- Staff wellbeing (a further visit was due)
- Governors attending school to take part in science week, inspiring the children

14. Confirmation of meeting dates Summer term 2024

- **Extraordinary virtual FGB meeting to approve budget:** Monday 20 May 2024 at 5.30pm
- **Full governing body meeting:** Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 5.30pm
- **Teaching Learning & Assessment Committee:** Wednesday 1 May at 4.30pm on Zoom
- **Finance Staffing & Premises Committee:** Monday 8 May at 4pm in school

The Chair thanked governors for their attendance. There was no further business and the meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Action summary

Item no.	Action	Outcome
2	SBM to issue Declaration of Interests forms to governors who had not completed them, and return them to the clerk	
4	Chair to circulate Skills Audit to all governors. All governors to complete audit as soon as possible	
7	SBM to send budget rules to Greg Farrell	
8b	Headteacher to inform family using occasional sessions in the Nursery of the change in arrangements from September 2024	

Signed Date

Chair of Governors

