

Full Governing Board Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14th December 2022
at 6:00pm at the Sherwood Hill Campus and via Google Meet



Fran Boto (FB)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Eileen Bone (EB)	Foundation Governor (Vice-Chair)		Absent
Penelope Bradbury (PB)	Parent Governor	Present	
Gemma Davies (GD)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Robin Dear (RD)	Foundation Governor	Present	
Matthew Grew (MG)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Claire Hadcocks (CH)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Brian Ikin (BI)	Co-opted Governor (Chair)		Absent
David Murden (DM)	Ex-Officio Governor / Headteacher	Present	
Harriet Nicholson (HN)	Staff Governor	Present	
Chris Williams (CW)	Local Authority Governor		Absent
Vajeha Haq (VH)	Parent Governor	Present	
Natalie Taylor (NT)	Associate Member (AM)		Absent
Rosemary Viggiani (RV)	Clerk	Present	
Beth Brooks (BB)	Assistant Head	Present	

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Welcome; Apologies for absence and quorum (6)</p> <p>CH opened the meeting at 6pm and welcomed all to the Sherwood Hill Campus. The two new Governors – HN and PB were welcomed and introductions were made. Apologies were received and accepted from EB, CW and BI for personal reasons. NT was absent without apologies. Barry Walder sent his apologies.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th October 2022 (Part A and Part B)</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July as a true and complete record of the meeting (Part A and B)</p> <p>Matters arising (see action list below)</p> <p>The actions outstanding are noted in the table below.</p>	
3.	<p>Governing Board Business</p> <p><u>To review Committee Membership and Link Governors</u></p> <p>It was noted that new governors are invited to attend all committees before committing to joining one or more; they will be invited to make an informed choice in due course.</p>	
4.	<p>FINANCE</p> <p><u>Update from the Finance Committee (Meeting of 23rd November 2022)</u></p> <p>The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The key points arising during the committee discussions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the school are in deficit with a Deficit Recovery Plan agreed with the Local Authority; – over the summer this plan was on track but recent unfunded pay rises above those budgeted plus the soaring costs of utility bills now mean that the school finance are nowhere near the planned position; – the school met with the LA in November to discuss the financial situation; – the LA recognise that resources have been cut to the bone and that further cuts will have potential implications around the offer and needs that the school can cater for; 	

Item	Action
<p>– The disproportionate effect on special schools was also noted as the £10,000 high needs block has not been uplifted for some time.</p> <p>The other current issues impacting on finances include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – interim support for the finance department which is due to end in March; – arrangement with Carshalton Boys who are supporting the school in clearing the backlog of work in the finance department. <p>The outcome from the Pay Committee had been discussed and it was noted that the process for reviewing performance and determining pay increases is robust.</p> <p>The situation with FOSPS had been discussed and it had been agreed to push for an AGM to clarify the position moving forwards.</p> <p>Risk management had been discussed and the key risks noted with regards to finance, recruitment and safeguarding; potential industrial action was also noted as a risk.</p> <p>It was noted that RD is willing to work with the school on the Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>As regards policies: the Finance policy is not yet ready for approval in the light of the expected changes early in the new year; the Committee had approved the Pay and Appraisal policies for referral to FGB.</p> <p><u>Management Accounts to end of November 2022 (M8)</u></p> <p><i>The BMR and associated papers had been circulated prior to the meeting</i></p> <p>As Barry Walder (BW) could not attend, DM provided an update.</p> <p>DM noted that it had been a stressful period and that, since the last BMR the financial position has worsened considerably.</p> <p>Where the Deficit Recovery Plan (DRP) meant that the school were looking to achieve an in-year surplus of £50k the November forecast is for a full year deficit of £314k giving a cumulative deficit of £763k by the end of this financial year. This is a worsening of c£154k from the previous BMR forecast</p> <p><i>Governors asked what were the main contributory causes of these significant movements? They also asked about other options available for cover and the potential impact on the service the school provides.</i></p> <p>DM responded that a large part of the problem was the number of staff on long term sick leave.</p> <p>Whilst the expenditure on agency spend for short term sickness cover is now under control and within budget, the cost of cover for long term sickness is exceeding plan. Whilst long term sickness has not been a problem in the past it is now a significant issue; 15 staff are on long term sickness at the current time - four on the Hill campus and 11 at the Park.</p> <p>The cover support also includes additional resourcing for the senior leadership team (Sylvia) and also cover for absent support staff in operations and finance. It had been hoped that the operations and finance absences would be resolved by now but the cover has had to be extended into the next term.</p> <p>Whilst the issues previously had been largely resolved by the improved management of cover, it was noted that this cannot be so easily resolved. Without the cover some classes would have to close. There is also little time to have any significant budget impact before the year-end in March.</p> <p><i>Governors asked how far adrift of the budget the school would be were it not for the unfunded pay rises and energy costs?</i></p> <p>It was noted that the forecast deficit was partially due to these unplanned costs and this had already been flagged to the Local Authority but the long term sickness is a significant factor which had not been identified previously. Governors asked for a detailed analysis of the reasons for the increase in expenditure to be produced and circulated.</p> <p>It was noted that BW is now meeting with the heads of each campus and is getting weekly absence reports. It is highly unusual to get this number off on long term sick leave.</p>	

Item	Action
<p><i>Governors asked about the reasons for the long-term sickness, whether the pattern is being seen elsewhere and whether it can be benchmarked?</i></p> <p>DM advised that in his view the majority of the long term sickness was related to ill health and in some cases recovery from operations – he does not believe it is stress related;</p> <p>What has become apparent is that, in negotiating the costs of provision in the high needs block review we did not factor in this level of long term sickness or any buffer to cover unexpected expenditure.</p> <p>We have tightened our belts so much there is nothing left to take out to cover these unexpected absences. If we have to reduce costs then we have to take it out of staffing - but there is no room for manoeuvre without significant changes to the way the school operates. .</p> <p>It was also noted that the scale point for TA's had been agreed as Point 9 whereas our TA's are on Point 13 or 14 due to the increased skills and experience required. If this were addressed then the income would be substantially more.</p> <p>ACTION: To find out why the scale point for the TAs in the budget was agreed to be Point 9 and whether this can be amended moving forwards.</p> <p>It was recognised that the current model of provision is not working within the budget available. The well-being provision originally budgeted is not being provided with just one person currently at the Hill as opposed to the three originally specified.</p> <p>Sylvia, Anna and Barry are currently reviewing the situation and considering different models for the provision to propose to the LA. For instance, this could include moving to using Friday Afternoons for training with the school being closed for half a day. Whilst this would not help with the budget for 2022-23 this could help reduce costs in the future.</p> <p>DM also informed the Board that the school are being pressurised to take higher needs autistic pupils – and the school is pushing back to say we can't meet their needs. However, this is not being received well by the LA. The school have reached out to the legal team in the LA as there are safeguarding aspects to these proposals which might result in a breach of our policies.</p> <p>Finance could be improved by increasing out of Borough invoicing which is at least to some extent within the school's discretion. Out of Borough children are more expensive to educate as there are additional admin expenses and greater calls on staff time due to a lack of familiarity with other Borough's staff and protocols. Work is being undertaken to establish exactly what the cost of a place at both campuses is; this work will inform what Sutton should be providing in funds as well as the cost to other Boroughs. . Comparisons between this and fees from other provisions such as Tadworth Court will help with negotiations with the LA.</p> <p>DM also noted that the school has been looking at the pricing of the curriculum noting that the high needs funding was set looking at KS1 – 4 and did not look at early years and post 16. Post 16 is more expensive – and consideration needs to be given as to whether the school continues to provide Post 16 support – in which case it needs to be funded appropriately. At the moment there is a blanket fee for all key stages.</p> <p>As regards options for future years it was agreed that a number of options should be worked up with the pros and cons identified and ranked in terms of preference. It was agreed that it is important for the school to be more predictable financially. The risk of the unexpected £300k deficit is that it will erode the LA confidence in the school and it creates a very significant challenge in terms of repaying the deficit. Future options need to be reviewed at the next Finance Committee to test the assumptions used. The school also need to establish what, if any, additional funding is available to them in this financial year.</p> <p>Financial reports also need to be more timely with sufficient detail to allow them to be scrutinised each month with early warning of problems that can then be mitigated in advance.</p> <p>There needs to be sufficient contingency in the budget alongside sensitivity analysis around the assumptions which can then be set out for discussion with Governors and the LA. It is clear that to make anything like the savings required will require some very hard choices around teaching and the level of need that we can manage in the school.</p>	<p>71</p>

	Item	Action
	<p>Moving forwards we must be clear that any growth or change in needs can be delivered within the agreed budget. It is also important that the LA is also more joined up and not asking the school to cut costs whilst asking it to also do more and take children with greater needs.</p> <p>Whilst these plans will largely be looking forwards it was also recognised that we need to think quickly and carefully about what we can do this year given that we will be significantly adrift from the planned deficit repayment of £50k and we must do what we can to reduce expenditure this year. We need to keep talking to the LA about how to cover this.</p> <p><i>Governors also asked whether the school has the cash in the bank to manage the cashflow over Christmas?</i></p> <p>DM confirmed that there was the cash in the bank to cover the Christmas period. Money has been received from other Boroughs and £90k has also been received from Sutton for the bulge class. Sutton have also not yet asked for the previous advances to be repaid.</p> <p>ACTION: Barry Walder to circulate analysis setting out the increases in costs from the previous BMR asap. BW to bring updated forecasts for the current year to the next Finance Meeting (25th January) indicating how much of the deficit is due to the unfunded pay rises and energy cost increases; proposals as to how to recover the position moving forwards should also be provided including updated information regarding the cost of the provision allowing the different assumptions and scenarios to be tested by the Committee.</p> <p>Post meeting note – DM to provide a business case setting for the extension of Sylvia’s contract asap.</p> <p><u>To note update re Risk Management and the SFVS action plan</u></p> <p><i>The SFVS Action Plan was circulated prior to the meeting with an update provided.</i></p> <p>It was agreed that a plan is required to agree how this might be reviewed and updated in a more timely manner for submission by 31st March.</p> <p>Regarding Action 3 on the SFVS Action Plan it was noted that the Deficit Recovery Plan, whilst agreed with the LA, is now not being met due to a number of factors including unfunded pay rises; increasing energy costs and long term sickness.</p> <p>ACTION: RV and CH to develop a plan for updating the SFVS prior to the March FGB. The plan should include more comparisons between SPS and other schools using external data including the DfE benchmarking website.</p>	<p>72</p> <p>73</p>
5.	<p>Update from other Committees</p> <p><u>Staffing and Curriculum Committee (Meeting of 16th November 2022)</u></p> <p><i>The Minutes of the meeting of 16th November had been circulated prior to the meeting.</i></p> <p>This meeting had included a presentation re Target Setting and the PMLD Cohort (Action 64) and a summary of this was noted. A presentation was also made regarding Literacy and Communication noting that this will be the subject of a deep dive by Ofsted.</p> <p>FB highlighted some of the key points arising from these presentation noting that the school provides a curriculum that is exciting and ambitious. The underlying ethos is that every child has the capacity for literacy and the school therefore needs to find how to support this for every child.</p> <p><i>Governors questioned the target setting approach and whether the improvements in performance were as a result of the targets being made easier?</i></p> <p>It was noted that the target setting approach has changed and now recognises that learning is not sequential for our children; the target setting therefore now embraces component learning as opposed to being based on step learning – it no longer requires that learning takes place in a predetermined order. This allows learning to be recognised as it occurs and the improved performance is as a result of this change; it is a result of the target setting being made more appropriate and not ‘easier’.</p> <p>The policies reviewed were noted and brought to FGB in the Item 8 below where necessary.</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p><u>Pay Committee</u> (Meeting of 16th October 2022)</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting of 16th October had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>MG outlined how the Committee had reviewed and moderated the pay review process.</p> <p>In doing so they were content with the robustness of the process which is fact based and objective, allowing the school to reward performance whilst creating a climate where people can make mistakes and be supported. It was noted that a further meeting had been held to correct an error in transcribing the paperwork for the committee which did not call the broader process into question.</p> <p>Information with regards to equality was also discussed looking not only at gender and ethnicity but also with regards to neurodivergence – a development which is very positive.</p>	
6.	<p>Headteacher’s Report; SEF; SDP</p> <p>The Headteacher’s report was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the Headteacher’s report had already been scrutinised at the FGB in October and in the S&C Curriculum Meeting.</p> <p>SDP:</p> <p>The SDP was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that some changes had been made to the version reviewed in September; these changes were largely with regards to the format.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the School Development Plan.</p> <p>SEF:</p> <p>The SEF was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Governors asked about the evidence that the school might be asked to provide with regards to its strengths? Do we have to have an appendix justifying the assessments?</p> <p>BB said that the SEF links to other documents which provide much of this evidence. These could be included in the SEF as hyperlinks.</p> <p>ACTION: BB and DM to include hyperlinks to other documents that provide evidence in support of the SEF gradings.</p> <p>Governors also noted that it would be helpful to have case studies and stories to bring the SEF to life and these could perhaps be provided to future meetings / visit days.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the SEF.</p> <p>Standing items: Safeguarding; Health & Safety; GDPR</p> <p>There were no breaches to report.</p>	74
7.	<p>Other Updates</p> <p>BB provided an update with regards to the provision of therapies and Cognus (Action 69)</p> <p>It was noted that, whilst some vacancies still exist the situation has improved somewhat. It had become apparent that Cognus had put a recruitment freeze on because of their budget but they can’t do that where a child has a specific requirement set out in their ECHP and the freeze has been lifted for SPS.</p>	
8.	<p>Policies for approval</p> <p>Policies and related documents had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors approved the Designated Leads for Looked After Children: SPC is Luka Koczon and SHC is Beth Brookes</p> <p>DECISION: Governors approved the following Policies – subject to consultation if required*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Appraisal Policy (from Finance and S&C Committees) Pay Policy (from Finance and S&C Committees) 	

	Item	Action
	<p>Medical Needs: Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School (from S&C) Educational Visits Policy (from S&C)</p> <p>The Capability Procedure was not yet ready for approval and was deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p><i>* Post meeting note: DM has taken advice and no consultation is required as the changes to the policy are not seen to be substantive.</i></p> <p><u>Policies to note</u> – approved by the Headteacher in line with the Scheme of Delegation:</p> <p>It was noted that the Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed and approved by the Head early in the new year.</p>	
9.	<p>Governor Visits and Training</p> <p><u>Update re Training:</u></p> <p>Governors reported back on the training they had undertaken praising the training provided by Sutton Governor Services. MG had attended the Introduction to Governance and Finance courses.</p> <p><u>Feedback re Governor Hub:</u></p> <p>The Clerk had set the Board up on Governor Hub prior to the meeting and all were asked for feedback.</p> <p>All were asked to complete their declarations of interest and other confirmations online as well as logging all training on line moving forwards.</p>	
10.	<p>Correspondence to the Chair / Chair's Actions</p> <p>There was nothing to report.</p>	
11.	<p>Confidential items</p> <p>Governors agreed that there was no need for Part B Minutes.</p>	
12	<p>Any other business / Dates of future meetings</p> <p><u>FOSPS</u></p> <p>It was noted that the FOSPS AGM had been held and new Trustees elected. There are now Co-Chairs: Penelope Bradbury (The Hill) and Stacey Manning (The Park).</p> <p>Following the successful Christmas Fairs on each campus new events are being planned to mark Easter and the King's Coronation in May.</p> <p><u>Forthcoming Meetings:</u></p> <p>FGB: 29th March 2023 Finance: 25th January 2023; 8th March PHS: 8th February 2023 Curriculum & Staffing: 22nd February 2023</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 8:00pm</p>	

Signed: CEHADCOOL Print Name: CEHADCOOL
Chair Date: 29/3/23

Appendix A: Sherwood Park School Committee Membership 2022-23

Name of Governor		Type of Governor	Committees and sub-committees				
			S&C	Finance	Pay	PHS	HTPM
Fran	Boto	Co-opted	V-C			X	
Penelope	Bradbury	Parent					
Gemma	Davies	Co-opted	X	X	X		
Robin	Dear	Foundation		V-C			X
Brian	Ikin	Co-opted		Chair	X	X	
Matthew	Grew	Co-opted		X	Chair		
Claire	Hadcocks	Co-opted (Chair)	X	X		X	X
Vajeha	Haq	Parent	X	X			
Eileen	Bone	Foundation (Vice-Chair)	Chair		X	X	
David	Murden	Headteacher (ex-officio)	X	X	(X)	X	
Harriet	Nicholson	Staff	X				
Chris	Williams	Local Authority		X		Chair	X
Natalie	Taylor	Associate to the Board					
Barry	Walder			X			
Simon	Gale		X				
Jessica	Baldwin		X				

Link Governor Summary

Link Role	Link Governor
Safeguarding / Child Protection	Eileen Bone / Fran Boto
Early Years	Fran Boto
Health & Safety	Chris Williams (<i>as Chair of PHS</i>)
Well-being and Mental Health	Gemma Davies / Vajeha Haq
Equality	Robin Dear
Attendance	Matthew Grew
SEND	Gemma Davies
Careers and Destinations	Brian Ikin
Pupil Premium; LAC and Disadvantaged Children	Chris Williams
Governor induction and personal development	Claire Hadcocks / Eileen Bone

Action list

Item	Action point	Who	By when	Update
Actions arising from the Meeting of the 20 th July 2022				
47	EB and FB to work with the school (Jess, Simon, Karen) to review the monitoring needs of the Board in relation to audit and advice re Safeguarding around Ofsted and the schedule for review both at Committee and Full Board level.	EB	Sept 22	FB has attended the whole school safeguarding meeting; she was impressed with the robust systems; there is no complacency. FB reviewed the SCR and needs to speak with Karen. See also Action 51.
48	RV to review the website over the summer holidays. DM to consider the options for refreshing the website (note VH may have a contact who can provide a more competitive quote)	RV/DM	Sept 22	Action remains open
51	EB to visit to review the SCR early in the Autumn Term and to liaise with CH, DM and RV with regards to a regular SCR Audit Committee.	EB/CH/DM/RV	Sept 22	This action has been transferred to FB.
54	DM to re-present the Pay Policy to FGB in the Autumn Term.	DM	Sept 22	On the agenda. Action closed
Actions arising from the Meeting of the 5 th October 2022				
56	RV to make amendments to the SDP to embolden the words underpinning the values and adjust the One-Year aims with input from DM.	RV/DM	Oct 22	Changes made. Action closed
57	AR/RV to liaise to ensure that the ethos and values are visible in all classrooms and on the website.	AR/RV	Oct 22	In hand, email sent 1/12/22. RV to send email to Steve and Simon. (Sent 18/12/22) Action on-going
58	CH and other governors to attend a staff briefing after half-term to introduce and discuss the vision, values and ethos.	CH ++	Dec 22	Governors did attend – Action closed
59	DM to circulate the SEF asap for discussion in December	DM	Oct 22	SEF Circulated; action closed
60	RV proceed with the staff and parent elections and speak to NT to see if she wishes to apply for the parent governor role.	RV	Dec 22	Elections held; action closed.
61	RV to ask Governor Services how the Instrument of Government can be changed if desired.	RV	Oct 22	Email sent 1/12/22 and response received – action closed

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62	DM to explore how the monies can be transferred from the School Fund account to the main school account.	DM	Oct 22	DM is making progress in getting new signatories approved for the account. Rose and Sue can now withdraw up to £10k per transaction. Action ongoing.
63	AR to find and circulate the work she had recently undertaken that would help governors with an overview of the school – the “School on a page”. (Note: it may have been prepared to support a Tribunal)	AR	Nov 22	Reminder sent 1/12/22 Anna is working on it. Action ongoing.
64	RV to diarise a presentation for the FGB in December regarding target setting for the PMLD cohort.	RV	Dec 22	This presentation was made to S&C in November; action closed.
65	DM to include data broken down by cohort in the headteacher’s report to allow governors to understand the outcomes and be able to explain the context.	DM	Dec 22	It was noted that this will be ongoing in the Headteacher’s report; action closed.
66	The numbers re PP funding on p4 of the HT report and on the website do not seem to add up. RV to ask Beth and Luca to correct.	RV	Oct 22	Beth confirmed that she is liaising with Ian and waiting on Barry for new numbers. Action ongoing.
67	DM to follow up re PP funding for children who fall into the category mid-year.	DM	Dec 22	Email sent to BW 9/10. A website search seems to indicate that funding is based on the October Census and does not follow a child mid-year. Action closed.
68	AR to send a copy of the CPD Report to Governors	AR	Oct 22	Circulated to Governors on 10 th October. Action closed.
69	RV to diarise an update in December on provision of therapies and Cognus	RV	Dec 22	On the agenda – action closed
70	DM / AR to move and rephrase Para 6.1 of the SRE Policy to sit under the Safeguarding Section 7 and to confirm this back with MG.	DM/AR	Oct 22	Action completed – action closed
Actions arising from the Meeting of the 14 th December 2022				
71	To find out why the scale point for the TAs in the budget was agreed to be Point 9 and whether this can be amended moving forwards.	DM/BW	March FGB	



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72	Barry Walder to circulate analysis setting out the increases in costs from the previous BMR asap. BW to bring updated forecasts for the current year to the next Finance Meeting (25 th January) indicating how much of the deficit is due to the unfunded pay rises and energy cost increases; proposals as to how to recover the position moving forwards should also be provided including updated information regarding the cost of the provision allowing the different assumptions and scenarios to be tested by the Committee.	DM/BW	Jan 23	
73	RV and CH to develop a plan for updating the SFVS prior to the March FGB. The plan should include more comparisons between SPS and other schools using the DfE benchmarking website.	RV/CH	Jan 23	
74	BB and DM to include hyperlinks to other documents that provide evidence in support of the SEF gradings.	BB/DM	C&S Feb 23	