

FERN HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL
Richmond Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT2 5PE

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body (“FGB”) meeting
held virtually on Zoom on Tuesday 12th January 2021 at 6.30pm.**

Constitution, Membership and Attendance – (Bold=absent)

| LA - 1 | PARENTS - 2 | CO-OPTED – 6 | ASSOCIATE MEMBER- 3 | STAFF – 2 |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Claire Strong (CS) | Rob Terry (RT) | Susan Dean (SD) CHAIR | Rachael Crook (RC) | Sarah Khan (SK) |
| | Alan Waterman (AW) | Hugh Kincaid (HK) | Diane Hutchence (DH) | Adam Scott (AS) |
| | | Dean Morley (DM) | Sam Stephenson (SS) | |
| | | Saphina Sharif (Crocker) (SSC) | | |
| | | Marcus Stanton (MS) | | |
| | | Jo Tatum (JT) | | |

Apologies: As above, in bold
Absent without apologies: None
Also attended: Assistant Head, Anna Davies (AD)
Assistant Head, Lorraine Figueiredo (LF)
Clerk, Francesca Lee (FL)

| | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Welcome and Introductions: SD welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6.33p.m. via Zoom. Apologies for absence: none | ACTIONS |
| 2 | Declaration of Business Interests in Agenda Items: None | |
| 3 | Committee Terms of Reference Committee Terms of Reference, which had been approved by Committees and circulated as pre-read for this meeting, were ratified for both TLC and FRP. | |
| 4 | Minutes of previous meetings held on 24th September 2020 and Matters Arising The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated prior to the meeting today, were accepted and signed as a true record. With regard to matters arising from the minutes, all points were as per the information given on today’s agenda in the “update” column and were either completed or on the agenda for this meeting. SD explained that some items that would have been on the agenda for tonight’s meeting had been pushed back to the TLC meeting scheduled for 9 th February in light of the current pressures on SLT caused by Lockdown 3. | |

5

COVID 19 Update

The SLT provided a verbal update on the school's current provision including informing governors of the number and categories of children attending school, an overview of the staffing position, and the school's approach to, and implementation of, its remote learning provision.

On-site provision: The number of children currently attending school stands at 102 over the last week, in comparison to the figure of 20 pupils who attended in the first lockdown last March. The numbers vary daily, with the school offering part-time places to enable greater staffing flexibility.

Bubble numbers have been capped according to government guidelines with 15 per bubble. There are currently 7 bubbles. EYFS is a mixed class of Nursery and Reception, while all other year groups have their own discrete bubble.

DM joins 6.48pm

Years 1 and 3 are oversubscribed, with 2 children on a waiting list for Year 3. They may be put into a bubble with year 4 if required.

45 vulnerable and SEND children were invited back into school, of which 36 took up their place. Only 3 of those families at home are currently unable to access remote learning - SLT is aware of the reasons why and are working to address them.

LF noted that as well as pupil numbers, it is also specific pupil need that is putting strain on staff.

AS confirmed that (under current guidelines in place) Nursery is to open next week to all children, following government guidelines. Previously, Head Teachers had been told to use their discretion as to whether to open to all pupils or just to vulnerable/key worker families. AS explained that SLT have carried out a risk assessment and believe that the Nursery provision is safe, however, in order to protect the integrity of bubbles, the proposal is that morning and full-time nursery children would form one bubble, with the afternoon children forming another. 4 staff members would be required for this provision.

A survey had gone to Nursery parents and there had been 100% response. 9 morning pupils, 9 full-time and 9 afternoon pupils wish to access the provision, which re-opens on 18th January. The staffing structure will be confirmed tomorrow.

SLT noted the frustration with the government's ever-changing messages and guidance and explained the main challenge faced was regarding the numbers of children in school, their needs and the number of staff members required because of this. The school needed to balance its footfall and its support of the needs of the children. 21 support staff had been required this week and even using a rota to reduce footfall, the number of staff, including office staff, members of the premises and financial teams, stood at 28 on site at one time, with 90 children also on one day.

AS informed governors that there is a two-week rota system, rota A and rota B, for support staff. They work in school one week and then support individual children with remote learning and plan remote learning the other week.

In discussing challenges regarding staff, AS noted that staff anxiety had changed to fear in some cases. One member of staff is clinically extremely vulnerable and a few are classified as clinically vulnerable (one of whom had chosen not to work

despite additional measures put in place. His case is now under review by HR). Many staff fear contracting COVID and also the impact on their own families.

Remote provision: Governors asked whether one member of SLT was directly responsible for online learning, and AS replied that he was ultimately responsible for all areas of the school as Head. He acknowledged that while last lockdown, FH had been ahead of the curve in its online remote learning provision, this time, there was a lack of consistency across year groups and that achieving a high standard across the school was still a work in progress.

The remote learning protocol had been updated on the website, as required by guidelines, and SLT and Phase Leads had met last week and a new proposal of changes to home learning would be suggested to all staff tomorrow.

AS maintained that learning styles and strategy were paramount rather than offering live lessons. Recorded lessons and offering audio explanations to the children was seen as important, and this was already evident in some year groups.

Governors challenged SLT on how quickly they could provide changes to lessons as outlined in the new protocol. AS did not wish to put pressure on staff members by forcing them to work in this manner by, say, the end of next week, but this was regarded as the way forward over time. SLT were aware of staff who required further support and acknowledged that even experienced teachers may struggle to use the available technology without further training.

The current daily offer to all pupils includes:

Maths - fluency, mental

English – spelling, grammar, handwriting, reading

Phonics – daily for EYFS

Foundation subjects – one per day

More lessons will be recorded and modelling of maths or phonics, for example, was regarded as imperative. Art and DT lessons had also been recorded.

To enhance engagement between teachers and children, the plan is to set up the facility for a small group of children to chat to a teacher online to feedback on which lessons they had or had not enjoyed that week. Governors asked how often children might meet their teacher online for these group sessions. They suggested once every half term would be good, but SLT hoped for more sessions of, for example, ten children, meeting for ten minutes a time. In some year groups, children already had the opportunity to talk together, with the teacher present, at the end of certain lessons online.

Governors asked about incorporating BBC Bitesize into lessons, as this has recently received much press publicity. Staff governor, and teacher, SK, informed governors that using appropriate Bitesize links was promoted but that they would be in addition to the main lesson rather than the focus of it.

A recorded lesson personalised to FH children would always be preferable clearly.

Governors questioned how much interaction with the teacher the children would have if they were watching pre-recorded lessons. It was said that teachers could return uploaded work to children with comments and have a meaningful dialogue in this manner. However, with the current workload, understandably, not all work would be marked in this way. The DfE guidance itself made reference to how feedback on work should remain “motivating” yet “manageable”.

7.08pm : All present end Zoom and restart on the call again

AS noted there had been inconsistency in slides posted on online learning, in that some had been for parents to read and then “teach” the children, whereas others were more child-friendly. Recorded lessons would enable teachers to instruct the children in a suitable manner to clarify expectations of the work presented.

Governors enquired as to whether teachers who were teaching remotely and recording lessons were also working in school.

It was noted that they were supervising bubbles and overseeing aspects of the learning. They spoke frequently to support staff in school, particularly on matters such as differentiation.

LF informed governors that the SEND department had received requests for children to have one-to-one support, as they had had in school previously, but that owing to certain issues, including Safeguarding matters, this was unmanageable online. However, the SEND team were making specific resources available to individuals by posting them online in the EAL box and guiding parents towards relevant materials. Pupils in school were receiving differentiated work as required.

The new Protocol would appear on the school website after tomorrow once it had been shared with staff.

Governors mentioned that DfE guidance suggests trying to replicate the structure of the school day for children. They asked whether assembly or registration online might be implemented in this vein. It was suggested that this would be more motivational for children at the beginning of each day.

SLT stated that a pre-recorded greeting could begin each day but that everyone starting online and meeting at the same time would be difficult as many staff members also had their own families at home to support. Also, the lack of devices within a family with several children had to be taken into consideration, and it could be hard to all get online at, say, 9am.

Governors enquired about parent consultations which had been due at the end of January. They would take place the week beginning 8th February and ways of offering parents either a video call or phone call were currently under investigation.

Governors questioned whether the financial impact of this lockdown and its additional costs was yet known.

The SBM had undertaken a revised forecast with AS but acknowledged that it was difficult to make predictions as it was unknown yet whether school would resume after the February half-term break.

FH forecast incurring an additional loss of £26K owing to the current closure this quarter. One contributing factor was pre-paid hot lunches requiring refunds. In an attempt to offset this loss, some staff members were already being furloughed, possibly with more to follow from the admin, Treetops and the catering team.

However, it was anticipated that the loss could be clawed back, and money that had been intended for the new curriculum resources (£15K) could be rolled forward to next year, and £10K could be gained from furloughing staff members. Owing to the closure, the resources for the new curriculum would not currently be utilised in any case.

Revised figures showing the impact of lockdown 3 would be reviewed at FRP March 2021. However, DH stressed that no indication for the next budget had yet been given.

FRP
March
agenda –
revised
figures
showing
impact of
lockdown
3 to be
reviewed
-clerk

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| <p>6</p> | <p>Chair's update A Chair's Update had been circulated prior to the meeting with Committee activities since last FGB meeting noted. Governors ratified the school's 2020/21 Equality Statement. SSC had queried whether the Statement and Objectives needed to be contained within one document or whether they could be separate and JT confirmed that they needed to be together. SSC had also queried when the data on diversity would be published and it was agreed that this would be covered at the next TLC meeting. SD noted the importance of Governors being conscious of their statutory duties with regard to equality, referring to the document that had been circulated as pre-read for this meeting and which summarised the key aspects of this duty. JT referred to the online training she had undertaken and recommended it to other governors.</p> <p>The following policies, which had been approved by Committees, were now ratified :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection & Safeguarding • Capability Procedure for Teaching Staff <p>Both were subject to very minor wording changes that governors had noted prior to the meeting and these would be passed on to the Communications Officer to alter on the documents.</p> <p>Governors had raised more substantive points on the Grievance Policy and thus it was agreed that AS would amend the policy and email it to governors on completion.</p> <p>Governors noted that Ofsted would not be resuming routine inspections this term in the light of the COVID situation.</p> <p>It was also noted that the FRP Committee had today approved the SFVS return, which had been circulated prior to this meeting and on which Governors had already passed comment. DH will now submit the return.</p> | <p>Clerk to send policies ratified to Comms Officer for website, and to place on Google-drive for GB</p> <p>AS to amend Grievance policy and email to governors</p> <p>TLC Feb 2021 agenda – areas linked to Equalities Statement : link to SDP; analysis of school population</p> |
| <p>7</p> | <p>CONFIDENTIAL ITEM</p> | |
| <p>8</p> | <p>Any Other Business Governors were reminded of the online training opportunities available. The AfC CPD schedule had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the forthcoming TLC meeting scheduled for 9th February 2021 will now take place at 6.30pm and will include a discussion on school improvement items (which would ordinarily have on the agenda for tonight's meeting). All Governors are invited to attend.</p> <p>Governors confirmed the next FGB meeting would be held on 27th April 2021 at 6.30pm.</p> <p>The SLT and Governors were thanked for all their work at this challenging time.</p> | |

The meeting ended at **7.49p.m.**

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____

Summary of Actions

| Item number | Action | Responsible person |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 5 | FRP March agenda – revised figures showing impact of lockdown 3 to be reviewed | Clerk |
| 6.1 | Clerk to send policies ratified to Comms Officer for website, and to place on Googledrive for GB | Clerk |
| 6.2 | AS to amend Grievance policy and email to governors for Ratification | AS/ Clerk |
| 6.3 | TLC Feb 2021 agenda – areas linked to Equalities Statement: link to SDP; analysis of school population - clerk | Clerk/JT |
| 7 | Confidential | |