



Minutes

Autumn Term 2021

Meeting of Greenfield St Mary's CE Primary School Full Governing Board (FGB)

Wednesday 1 December 2021
via Microsoft Teams
at 7.00pm

Present:	Mrs Ruth Broadhurst Mr Ryan Selby Reverend Barbara Christopher Mrs Sarah Roberts Ms Sara Keaney-Duckworth Dr Mark Rahn Dr Letizia Alternò Mr Sam Dainty	Foundation Governor (In the Chair) Acting Headteacher Foundation Governor Foundation Governor Foundation Governor Parent Governor (Chair) Parent Governor Parent Governor
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Also Present:	Miss Maria Unwin	Clerk to the Governing Board
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Absent:	Mrs Suzanne Hall Mr Graham McGuffie Mrs Debbie Dorobat Mr Courtney Reece Mrs Rachel Swanwick	Headteacher Foundation Governor Foundation Governor Foundation Governor Foundation Governor
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Prior to the start of the meeting, the Clerk informed governors that the meeting was not quorate, and it was agreed that the meeting would go ahead. Governors were reminded that decisions could not be made at the meeting, however, recommendations could be made and approved at the next meeting once quorate.

Dr Mark Rahn had submitted apologies for lateness. It was agreed that in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, Mrs Ruth Broadhurst chaired the meeting.

1 **Welcome/Introductions/Opening Prayer**

The Chair welcomed everyone present and The Reverend Barbara Christopher opened the meeting with a prayer.

It was noted that the Headteacher is currently on sickness leave. In her absence, Mr Ryan Selby is the Acting Headteacher.

2 Governor Appointments and Governor Vacancy Recruitment

The Acting Headteacher advised governors that the Headteacher had not managed to speak to the second candidate before she had gone on sick leave and had asked that the Chair pick up this action. The Acting Headteacher would discuss this with the Chair.

ACTION: Acting Headteacher / Chair

3 Apologies and Consent for Governor Absence

3.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Graham McGuffie and Mrs Suzanne Hall.

During the meeting, further apologies were noted from Mrs Debbie Dorobat and Mr Courtney Reece due to technology issues; they were unable to join the meeting using the link.

3.2 Consent to Absence

The governing board gave consent to those governors who had apologised for their absence.

3.3 Consent Not Given

It was noted that Mrs Rachel Swanwick had not attended the last two meetings, nor sent apologies. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Chair to contact Mrs Swanwick to discuss if there is any support she requires.

ACTION: Chair / Governor Support Service

4 Register of Business, Pecuniary and Personal Interests

Governors were reminded to complete and 'confirm' the declaration section on the governor personal profile on GovernorHub ([GovernorHub Quick User Guides 2021](#)) and list if they have:

- Any business, pecuniary and personal interests relating to companies (goods and services) and/or;
- Personal relationships with pupils, volunteers and members of staff associated with the school where a matter may be discussed at the meeting.
- Details of any other schools where they are governors.

Governors were advised that they must update GovernorHub with any new declarations whenever any of their personal circumstances change.

No further declarations were made at this point in the term.

It was noted that Mrs Rachel Swanwick had not yet completed her declaration on GovernorHub.

ACTION: Mrs Rachel Swanwick

5 Approval of Minutes of Previous FGB Meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 be approved as a correct record and 'marked as signed' on GovernorHub by the Chair.

6 Matters Arising from the Last FGB Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

7 School Update

The Acting Headteacher provided a school update.

Main points referred to:

- 7.1 There are a number of COVID-19 cases in school at the moment; Public Health have advised that this is the beginning on an expected outbreak. Many pupils who are testing positive have been asymptomatic and are only testing as they have been close contacts of other positive cases.
- The Acting Headteacher led through the number of cases in each class.
- 7.2 Years 2 and 3 are currently in bubbles due to the outbreaks within those cohorts. Public Health are less concerned about the lower numbers of positive cases in other classes, as most of those who have tested positive are siblings of pupils in Years 2 and 3.
- 7.3 Years 2 and 3 are currently using a separate area for outside play and are having their lunch at a different time to other pupils. The school day has been staggered slightly to allow Years 2 and 3 to leave the building at a different time. There is also a separate area within Diamonds for these pupils. The school has asked families of Year 2 and 3 pupils not to use Diamonds at this time if it is at all possible.
- 7.4 There is one staff member who has also tested positive who is due to return to school tomorrow.
- 7.5 The school has sourced some home PCR tests from the Honeywell Centre and these have been given to the pupils in Years 2 and 3 who wanted them.
- 7.6 There is a pause on allowing parent helpers and visitors into school to help slow the spread.
- 7.7 The staff from Sports Development are still carrying out sessions, but they are being done outside where possible and masks are worn at all times with social distancing measures in place. It was noted that these sessions are not currently being done with the Year 2 and 3 bubbles.
- 7.8 The Christmas Tree Service had taken place today with Reception class and parents; all wore masks and were seated with social distancing measures in place.

Governor Challenge/Support: A governor noted that parents had really appreciated this opportunity and thought it has been a successful event.

- 7.9 Christmas events are being reviewed. Many have been cancelled, particularly those that involve groups coming together or classes mixing. Activities which are still a couple of weeks away have not been cancelled from the calendar just yet, such as the Year 2 nativity, and these will be reviewed closer to the time.
- 7.10 Public Health have advised that the pantomime itself is not an issue for children to attend, the problem is the coach travel because of the way the vehicle circulates air and it would require classes mixing. A decision will be made on this next week.

(Dr Mark Rahn joined the meeting at this point and the Clerk advised that the meeting was now quorate. Mrs Ruth Broadhurst remained in the Chair for the meeting.)

- 7.11 The PTFA Breakfast and Fair has been cancelled.
- 7.12 Numbers have been rising in school but Public Health remain happy with the arrangements in school. There has been some feedback from parents that it is awkward to have different drop-off and pick-up times for those who have children in multiple year groups, but they have been advised that the children can be held back if needed.
- 7.13 The children are not feeling the impact of these changes; it still feels very normal in school for them.
- 7.14 A staffing update was provided. The Headteacher remains on medical leave following an operation. Her phased return arrangements have not been agreed just yet, but they will be introduced as slowly as possible in order to support the Headteacher.

Dr Letizia Alterno suggested that the governors send the Headteacher some flowers. Dr Alterno agreed to coordinate this.

ACTION: Dr Alterno

- 7.15 Mrs Meadham and Mrs Maloney are in Class 6, backfilling for Mr Selby whilst he is in the position of Acting Headteacher. The children in the class are very settled and have produced some outstanding writing pieces this week.
- 7.16 Both teachers have been on sickness leave from Year 2. This is not COVID-19 related. One teacher is due back into class tomorrow. The class has been covered by Mrs Barlow and Mrs Owen, who have provided outstanding cover in that class. The Acting Headteacher said that they have been exceptional and he has encouraged them to carry out a thorough handover of what has been done with the class so that these actions can continue.
- 7.17 The Acting Headteacher informed governors of the main priorities being worked on in the Headteacher's absence, the first focus being behaviour. He explained that there had been a lack of consistency across the school from adults on how they approached children's behaviour. The Acting Headteacher explained that the school's culture needs to be based on the values on the school. When the children were asked what the school's values are, many could not name them, and some children did not know what they meant.

- 7.18 The Acting Headteacher explained that the most difficult thing in changing the behaviour in school is that it requires a shift in adult behaviour, not child behaviour. The idea is that the adults need to lead by example and model the behaviour that is expected.
- 7.19 The Acting Headteacher explained that the work of Paul Dix has been a good reference point to focus on for how this will be achieved. His model 'when the adults change' is very much based on restorative actions of adults working with children. Staff have been asked to read this book, and it is part of their performance management targets for all of them to read it. There has been some dedicated staff meeting time on this too.
- 7.20 The school has started to put a list together of things it wants to achieve as a school. They want to create a culture of what it means to belong to Greenfield St Mary's CE Primary School and some of the older pupils in school have made a short video on this.
- 7.21 The Acting Headteacher led through the following things which have been implemented in school:
- There is a teacher meet and greet in the morning every day; children will be met by their teacher at the door every day and work will be ready on their table – this has worked very well as those children who may have come into school upset have been met by a smiling teacher at the door. This is having a huge impact. The Acting Headteacher is also out on the yard speaking to parents and children as they come into school and he will continue with this.
 - Every single class was using a different system to get children's attention. This created difficulties when doing collective worship, as the children were not used to responding to the same directive. Across the school, there is now a countdown from five use. This gives children the time to finish conversations or whatever they are engaged in at the time. During the countdown, children are given positive reinforcement, such as "Five... great, you are looking this way. Four... well done, you are sitting nicely". This positive reinforcement helps children get ready to focus once the countdown is complete.
 - The school is using class recognition boards. All classes had different systems and were given recognition for things that should be expected, for example, finishing their work. Therefore, an exercise was carried out looking at the way team points were given out in school. The recognition board has a set target that children are aiming to achieve that day and they will be recognised when that has been achieved. Team points will now be given to those children who have gone above and beyond, and recognition notes will be given to children for this, too.
 - The Acting Headteacher explained that he wants there to be an empathy first approach. Whatever the children's needs are – behaviour or social – ultimately he believes that the adults need to show empathy first to understand the children's needs. Now if a child displays behaviour that needs to be addressed, the adults first response will now be, "What is wrong? Are you okay?" Staff are already seeing that they are getting a very different response from children, as opposed to reprimanding them immediately.

- “Publicly praise and sanction in private” has been implemented. Sanctions are now delivered one-to-one or in a small group, rather than telling children off in class.
- Positive instructions are now given. If a child is tapping a pencil against the desk, for example, the approach expected from the adult is, “Please can we put our stationery away and focus on the task”, rather than “Stop doing that now”.
- Staff are now giving minimal attention to negative behaviour.
- If a child is carrying out a low-level disruption, the teacher will say, “I want you to do this, I know you can do this because you did it yesterday and you were fantastic”, rather than them being reprimanded, and staff are already seeing some positive behaviour changes as a result of this. This will be worked on further in a staff meeting tomorrow.
- It was agreed that there still needs to be a set of stepped consequences and these need then to be immediate where possible. At the moment, the loss of consequences are applied the following day, but there needs to be a way to deliver consequences on the day and deal with behaviour at source.
- Teachers are expected to deal with behaviour in their class. Previously, some would pass this on to a senior member of staff to deal with, but this gave the impression to children that their teacher could not manage their behaviour.
- There is a focus on trying to ensure sanctions are given for the primary behaviour rather than secondary behaviour. For example, if a sanction is given, and the child retaliates with a rude comment, another sanction should not be given. This reduces the risk of the behaviour escalating.
- There will be a slight change to the weekly certificates. The daily scarf award will be replaced with a weekly scarf award, and the rewards will be focussed on the values. The Headteacher’s award will be replaced by teacher’s learning award. It feels much clearer for it to be given from the teacher. To maintain Headteacher interaction, there will be a Headteacher’s special award introduced that will be for one pupil each week, and this will be for a pupil that the Headteacher has witnessed doing something fantastic that week, not based on something witnessed by the teacher like it currently is. At the end of the term, those children who have received the Headteacher’s special award will get a treat as a group, for example, a biscuit and a chat with the Headteacher.

7.22 **Governor Challenge/Support:** A governor thanked the Acting Headteacher for the update. The governor said that there is a lot of work underway and it gives a lot to think about. This will be fundamental to the school. The governor asked if the Headteacher is aware of what has been implemented and if she is on board with this.

The Acting Headteacher confirmed that the Headteacher is aware of the work underway and that there is still regular communication between them both. The Acting Headteacher also said that he had met with the School Improvement Partner, Mrs Eileen Arthur, who was very pleased with this work. He said that the feeling is school is overwhelmingly positive.

- 7.23 **Governor Challenge/Support:** A governor commented that this is a fantastic conversational process. They asked if there is a different approach for those children who have these behaviours engrained.
- The Acting Headteacher said that ultimately, the key approach is the empathy of staff. He gave an example of where this has worked very well. Mrs Owen is part time in the classroom and also works as a Midday Supervisor and she has taken this on board so fantastically. She has worked with some of the more difficult children and her first approach is always to ask how the child is, then once she has listened to them, she explains what she has heard and asks the child what they can do next to resolve the issue. These children have already made significant changes as a result of this approach.
- He explained that whilst there will always be children who do not follow rules, the key is that they know the adults in school understand them and will listen to them. It is not the job of staff to speak down to children. Staff are expected to position themselves under the eye level of the children so that the children do not feel threatened.
- The Acting Headteacher further explained that staff need to understand that they do not know what goes on at home, children may be seeing behaviours modelled to them at home and they may have experienced trauma. It is important for those children to know that the staff care about them. This is about shifting the expectation away from thinking they are the bad children. Previously, if a child did something wrong, sanctions would increasingly get worse and the children would dread coming to school knowing that they were facing sanctions. All adults need to model positive behaviour.
- 7.24 **Governor Challenge/Support:** Another governor commented that this sounds fantastic and that they are really pleased to hear of the restorative approach. She explained that this builds on Early Years' self-regulation. She said that she would encourage parental involvement to ensure that parents are on the same page at home, as having that involvement will help extend this model further into each child's life.
- 7.25 Communication is another key area for improvement. This is the foundation of a lot of small complaints and niggles parents have. Communication will now be based on five principles. There will be an explanation and a reason for things that have been done, and there will be a human touch to the communication. The Acting Headteacher said that the school has masses of personality and amazing values and children and this need to be visible in the communication that is put out there.
- 7.26 Another way to improve communication is to make members of staff more visible. The meeting and greeting at the classroom door is part of this, and the Acting Headteacher explained that he has found his relationships with parents improve dramatically since he has been placing himself out on the school playground each day; these interactions make a huge difference.
- 7.27 The school has increased its activity on social media. In addition to the Twitter account, there is now an Instagram account which is being used to post things that are being celebrated in school.
- 7.28 **Governor Challenge/Support:** The Chair said that he is working on communication with the Chairs of the Dovestones Learning Partnership, around finding out what information and communication people value.

- 7.29 A recent example of the power of social media was shared. The football played recently and old PE kits were used. A photo was posted to social media and a parent had commented to say that it was a fantastic photograph, and if they wanted new kits, they knew somebody who would sponsor the school for it.
- 7.30 Writing has suffered across the whole school as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on learning. The Write Stuff is being used to help improve the writing skills of children. More time will be spent on looking at the children's writing, first of all to celebrate their achievements, but also to look at the strengths and weaknesses in classes.
- 7.31 There is a focus on reading at the moment. Read Write Ink is being used in Key Stage 1 and a new bundle of books have been purchased using a grant that the school received. There are still the old books in school that the children can take home for home reading, too.
- 7.32 Mrs Blackburn is doing a training course on reading for pleasure. It was recognised that the children were reading with a teacher once every two weeks. Now, there is whole class guided reading where children get to read to the teacher and get to read the book themselves in order to discuss it with each other and this happens every day. The aim of this is to get children to enjoy reading.
- 7.33 **Governor Challenge/Support:** A governor commented that they were impressed with the structure given to children to discuss how they enjoyed a book. The governor asked if this practice is being shared across all staff.
- The Acting Headteacher confirmed that it is. There have been staff meetings on this and actions taken as a result, and all staff are following this same process.
- 7.34 The Acting Headteacher and Mrs Blackburn had met with the School Improvement Partner (SIP) for support whilst the Headteacher is absent. They discussed the priorities for the school and next steps. They also discussed performance management for subject leaders and how responsibilities should be built into this.
- 7.35 Overall, there is an extremely positive atmosphere in school. The work ethic of both adults and children has been fantastic. A staff questionnaire was sent out with only one question – if school could do one thing to improve wellbeing, what would that be and why? There had been only two responses which could mean that staff are very happy in school.
- 7.36 There had been a full Health and Safety audit last week which had been very thorough. There are significantly fewer actions for improvement than in previous years, so this was a positive outcome.

RESOLVED: that governors thanked the Acting Headteacher for such a positive, encouraging, and dynamic report.

8 School Improvement Partner Report

It was noted that the Headteacher had met with the School Improvement Partner (SIP), Mrs Sandy Dixie, but the report from this had not yet been received. This visit is on behalf of the Local Authority and is in addition to the work carried out by Mrs Eileen Arthur.

9 Committee Reports/Minutes

Governors reported back and shared the updates of committee meetings that had taken place recently.

9.1 Curriculum, Policy and Standards Committee

The five-point summary of the Curriculum Policy and Standards Committee meeting held on 1 December 2021 were submitted for consideration by the governors.

RESOLVED: that the summary of the meeting be approved and adopted.

9.2 Resources Committee

It was noted that the Resources Committee had not been quorate, and therefore there was no five-point summary included this time around.

10 Governor Reports (Visits/Contacts)

There were no lead governor updates

Governors were reminded that they can access on GovernorHub an example [School Visit Form](#) for governors to complete.

ACTION: All Governors

11 Dovestone Learning Partnership (DLP) Action Plan

This had been shared prior to the meeting for information.

12 Formal Complaint – Confidential Item

Governors were informed of the outcome of a formal complaint.

13 Drills

13.1 Fire Drill

A successful fire drill had taken place on 29 November 2021.

The Acting Headteacher explained that it had been carried out at a different time of day than children have been used to. Children evacuated in 3 minutes and 12 seconds which is slightly slower than previous drills.

It was interesting to note that the behaviour strategy of counting down from five was used and at the end of the five seconds, all children were silent.

13.2 Critical Incident/Lockdown

A successful lockdown drill had taken place on 29 November and no problems were reported.

14 Christmas Events

- 14.1 The updated list of Christmas events had been uploaded to GovernorHub which is colour coded.
- 14.2 The Reception Class will perform their nativity for the Year 6 class.
- 14.3 Christmas dinner for adults is cancelled but children will still have this as normal.
- 14.4 The brass concert is cancelled
- 14.5 The PTFA Church Fair is cancelled
- 14.6 The Reception performance for parents is in yellow for now. If levels remain low, parents will be able to come to watch the performance if they wear a face covering. Public Health have confirmed that this is allowed, providing cases in that cohort remain low.
- 14.7 The nativity dress rehearsal has been cancelled. Nativity options will be explored closer to the time.
- 14.8 The Pantomime is currently yellow; it is increasingly unlikely this will go ahead due to coach travel.
- 14.9 The PTFA breakfast was cancelled.
- 14.10 The Church service cannot go ahead.
- 14.11 Children will still have a class Christmas party on the last day of term.

15 Governor Personal Development and Governor Training Undertaken

Governors and Lead Governors were encouraged to book on all relevant E-learning and training through [GovernorHub Training](#)

ACTION: All Governors

16 Clerk's Report

The Clerk provided the following updates:

16.1 GovernorHub Updates

- Governor Declarations of Interest – Mrs Rachel Swanwick to action
- Keeping Children Safe In Education – Mrs Rachel Swanwick to action
- Governing Board Code of Conduct – Mrs Rachel Swanwick to action

ACTION: Mrs Rachel Swanwick

16.2 General Updates

- **Governor Training**
Governors are advised to book on the following training:

[Trauma & Mental Health -Informed Schools & Communities Training for School Governors](#) – 17 May 2022.

- **Coronavirus – COVID-19**
The [Oldham Council website](#) will be updated with any key developments in the local situation. Governors, clerks staff and parents can sign up for weekly [email alerts](#)

ACTION: All Governors

17 Date and Time of Next Meeting/Future Meeting(s)

RESOLVED: that the next meetings of the governing board should be held on:

Wednesday 2 February 2022 at 7.00pm

Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 7.00pm

Wednesday 11 May 2022 at 7.00pm

Wednesday 13 July 2022 at 7.00pm

ACTION: Headteacher/Governor Support Service

18 Urgent Items at the Discretion of the Chair

There were no urgent items to consider.

19 Confidentiality

There were no items of confidentiality.

20 Closing Prayer

(There being no further business, governors were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was closed with the saying of the Grace at 8.55pm).

Minutes 'Marked as Signed' by the Chair on GovernorHub