



Headteacher: Mrs Carol Dunne

MEETING OF FULL GOVERNING BODY THURSDAY 27TH APRIL 2023, 7:15 PM

Meeting held in school

Present:

Carol Dunne (CD); Adam Millgate (AM – Chair); Clare Willetts (CW); Alan Ford (AF); Hiranthi Herath (HH – Vice Chair); Graham Robinson (GR); Ellie Kaye (EK); Tom Jones (TJ); Phil Cooke (PC); Rachel Wright (RW); Ramon Luengo-Fernandez (RLF)

In attendance:

Rose-Marie Smith (RS – clerk)
Emma Fox (EF – School Business Manager)

Text in blue indicates governor questions/challenge

1. Apologies

Received and accepted from Natalie Sands (NS). Scott Crawford (SC) sent apologies that he would arrive late at the meeting. The meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interest in any agenda item

None declared.
Governors were reminded that a marital or other close relationship with a member of staff should be declared via GovernorHub, and when necessary at meetings.

3. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising

9th February 2023

- **ACTION POINT:** TJ to upload the notes of the staff/governor meeting to GovernorHub TJ
- **ACTION POINT:** agenda item 5 action point to be changed from 'Head' to 'Chair' RS
- **TJ queried the best way to communicate with parents regarding the newly established forum;** it was agreed that he would liaise with AM/CD/EF
- **ACTION POINT:** Plans for Reading, Writing and Maths are yet to be shared with governors – CD to upload to GovernorHub CD

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30th March 2023

- **ACTION POINT:** Agenda item 4 amendment – CW also attended the RE meeting

RS

Subject to any amendments outlined above, both sets of minutes were approved as accurate records of the meetings.

4. Governance at Long Furlong

4.1 Appointment of co-opted governor

AM proposed that, as she is coming to the end of her four-year period of service as a governor, EK be appointed as co-opted governor for a further four years. This was agreed by all present.

4.2.1 Amending the Instrument of Government (IOG)

AF suggested AM summarise the background to this item. AM explained that during strategy meetings with Rachel Caseby (OCC Governor Services) it was identified that 12 or 13 governors would be more practical for a school of Long Furlong's size than the current constitutional 15. It is recommended that the parent governor number be reduced by one and co-opted governor number also be reduced by one. This would necessitate one of the current parent governors becoming a co-opted governor from 1st September 2023 and AM volunteered to do so. **PC asked if there are any technical processes to be observed;** AM replied that there are some administrative tasks to be undertaken and he and RS will carry these out with the Local Authority.

[19.30 SC joined the meeting]

AM invited those present to vote on the proposal that, with effect from 1st September 2023, the Instrument of Government of Long Furlong Primary School be amended to the following:

1. *The name of the school is **Long Furlong Primary School.***
2. *The school is a **Community** school.*
3. *The name of the governing body is "**The governing body of Long Furlong Primary School.**"*
4. *The governing body shall consist of:*
 - a. **Four** parent governors
 - b. **One** LA governor
 - c. **One** staff governor
 - d. **One** Headteacher
 - e. **Six** co-opted governors
5. *Total number of governors **Thirteen***

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The twelve governors in attendance voted in favour of the proposal. AM was thanked for putting together such a clear advisory document.

4.3 Circle model of governance

TJ again thanked AM for his detailed advisory document in this respect. AM advised that the document had been drawn up following discussion with fellow chairs of governors, and with Rachel Caseby from OCC Governor Services. **TJ asked how governors will measure if the proposed change is successful.** AM suggested that it be referred back to the working group and appear as an item on a future agenda of the full governing board. **TJ asked if all governors are prepared for any additional workload that the change produces.** RW suggested that this probably won't be known until after the first year. CD suggested that governors speak to AM privately if they have concerns in this regard. AF suggested that this issue be kept on the agenda until September 2023.

Next steps - a working group to be created to establish details, and plan for the following year. **EK questioned whether there is an option to trial the new arrangement for a year, then make it permanent arrangement.** AM replied that there is no reason why this cannot be done. PC suggested that it be included as a review agenda item in spring 2024. AM advised that the way in which governor meetings are set up is done on a local model; the full governing board can make it what they wish, as long as this is done in line with existing regulations.

CD asked if other chairs of governors have found this model successful.

AM replied that they felt there was more shared knowledge, less repetition, the board is more agile in decision-making and in succession planning. RLF suggested that a reduction in the time period between meetings would result in better knowledge retention.

RW asked if the lead or deputy lead governor would be required at meetings to make it quorate. AM replied that a quorum is 50% plus one of governors but he would hope that views of lead and deputy lead governors would be represented at meetings. EK suggested this could be achieved by sending a briefing to the chair.

RW asked if there were specific days or dates that would be required for meetings. AM replied that this would be dealt with by a working group. In reply to a question from PC about the preference of days of the week for governor meetings, the general feeling was that a rotation of days would be preferable.

RW queried if a proposed time limit of two hours per meeting was realistic and achievable. AM replied that each agenda would be drawn up to reach the ninety-minute/two-hour time limit; it might also be useful to have timings on the agenda. He voiced the expectation that all governors read papers thoroughly prior to meetings. **RW asked if there would be an expectation of questions being submitted beforehand.** AM suggested this be a matter for the working group. **SC queried whether the start time of meetings would be up for negotiation.** Again, AM suggested this be

discussed at the working group, including conversation about different meeting methods – e.g. remote/hybrid/early morning.

EK expressed a concern that there may be a greater time commitment required under the new model. CD expressed her hope that there would be a reduction in duplication of discussion which can take place between current committee meetings and full governing board.

AM suggested that the working group consists of himself, CD, current committee chairs and the clerk.

AF again highlighted a concern that the time commitment of governors might increase unfeasibly; governors agreed but - subject to further discussion at the working group - the circle model of governance will be adopted with effect from the 1st of September 2023 for a period of one year initially.

5. 2023-26 Budget

EF advised that there is additional income expected at I03 (SEN Funding); however, as this is not yet guaranteed, it has not been included in the budget. FOLF has donated £9,000 for new iPads. At E26 (Agency Supply Staff), costs remain high. At E16 (Energy) OCC have advised on the forthcoming energy costs; there is the possibility of additional funding, but this is yet to be confirmed.

With regard to the Capital budget there are plans for a forthcoming project which may result in funds being carried forward for a period of two years to meet expenditure at that point.

RW asked how the budget will look if the teacher pay deal goes through and is unfunded. CD replied that it would be disastrous for the ongoing budget. CW observed this is unlikely to happen; the unions would fight it as it forms part of the current industrial action TJ asked if various models are created to show how funding would be with unanticipated changes. CD replied that this forms part of the budget setting process. EF commented that nursery numbers are decided on a 'worst case' scenario and the budget will be in a better position if numbers rise. SC queried the additional grant funding at I18; CD and EF confirmed that this represents the sports premium funding and the funding for universal infant free school meals (free meals for pupils in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2.)

GR observed that over the three years of the budget, the school is running at an in-year loss. CD replied that this cannot be helped, there are no areas in which money can be saved. TJ asked if there is any way out of the current budget challenges. CD advised that the budget changes throughout the financial year and it is possible that improvements will be made.

EK asked if E01 represents just teacher pay. CD confirmed that this is the case. A brief conversation took part about new income streams being generated.

RLF queried what would happen with any additional SEND funding; EF advised that this must be spent on the specific child with an EHCP.

With regard to expenditure at E11 (Staff Related Insurance) EF advised that this would cover teachers and Higher Level Teaching Assistants. This usefulness of this expenditure is still under investigation. GR asked if energy bills are in line with expectation, EF replied that this is the case. Additional funding for this is anticipated but not confirmed so is not in the budget.

6. Head's Report

AM commented that he has discussed this agenda item with CD and they have agreed that rather than going through the report, governors should raise any queries in the meeting.

TJ asked if there was any update on the Badger Club staffing situation. CD replied that she is hoping for positive news soon, which she will share with governors. EK commented that club numbers are currently at maximum capacity and that she has been advised that many parents are struggling to find care for their children before and after school. CD advised that when a full complement of staff is appointed, capacity should increase. CW highlighted that the Club has to have specific staff:pupil ratios which are also impacted by the number of Early Years (Reception) children attending. RW asked if Badger Club could use more space in school. CD agreed that this is an area for discussion, but options are limited.

PC asked about increasing attendance rates. CD replied that much work has been done in effort to improve the rates; however, increasing numbers of family holidays are being booked. These are rarely authorised unless very specific circumstances. RLF asked if fines are applied by school or the Local Authority. CD advised that the administrative work would be done by the school but the income would go to the Local Authority. At Long Furlong there has been reluctance to introduce a system of fining as it is likely to have a negative impact on the parent/school relationship.

AM suggested that when self-grading the school against Ofsted criteria for the Head's Report, it would be better just to have the judgement without comments.

7. Ofsted Draft Report/Action Plan

7.1.2 Draft report

CD advised governors that the report is written with parents in mind, to aid their decision about school places. EK asked if a complaint about the process or the report has been submitted. CD advised that is has not, but she, AM and CW have sent considered feedback about the process. With regards to the comment in the report about safeguarding records, this

applied to an out-of-date first aid box. There were no concerns about pupil records.

AM observed that there was a comment in the report that “Governors have recently improved their understanding of their roles and responsibilities”. He clarified this has been the case since the last report in 2017, and this could be what is meant by ‘recently’. He advised that he is meeting CD on 28 April to discuss the joint letter to parents which will accompany the final report.

EK queried how governors will know that the report has been released. CD advised that she will notify governors before informing parents.

CD feels that the main messages to convey to parents and other interested parties are that work around areas for development was already in place before the inspection began; it was a tough process; many strengths have been highlighted.

CW suggested that the report and timeline of actions be shared with all staff as soon as possible. TJ added that there was a need to set a date for the parent forum to discuss the report.

7.2 Action Plan – verbal report

CD commented that lots of work around the curriculum has been done since the inspection. She is working with Matt Blyton (MB) to create a new self-improvement form, and an Ofsted-specific action plan will be done with the support of MB. EK commented that it is important that the action plan contains achievable and clear deadlines; CD confirmed that this will be the case. AM observed that, as an executive leader, this document should be produced without a template being provided.

RW asked what the deadline for the action plan is; CD advised that it will be done as soon as possible. RW observed that a number of weeks have passed since the inspection yet, no action plan yet in place. PC asked if there is a hold up from the local authority; CD advised that this is not the case. She commented that some LA strategy areas are being downscaled, for example, early years and governance. CW has created a curriculum action plan **ACTION POINT:** CW to share this via GovernorHub. **ACTION POINT:** SC requested that this be brought to the Teaching, Learning and Pastoral committee meeting in May.

CW

Committee agenda

AM observed that an action plan was requested by governors, not the local authority. TJ commented that it is possible that a monitoring visit could take place within 10 months. RW asked how confident CD is of the school being recognised as ‘Good’ when a monitoring visit takes place. CD commented that, if all falls into place, she is very confident.

8. Staff Survey

AF suggested the survey be carried out via an online forum such as Microsoft Forms, with a reduced number of questions from previous

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surveys. He recommended that it be a full survey concerning pay, culture, leadership, et cetera, but recommended no point in doing so if unable to take action on feedback. AM commented that it is important to avoid survey fatigue. RLF raised a query about staff willingness to respond and be candid with in their responses; EK asked if there is any way of gaining completely anonymous responses. CD replied that this has been done in the past but anonymity makes it difficult to address any issues raised. TJ asked if data can be obtained from the Ofsted staff survey. Carol advised that this is not possible; she knows is that 16 responses were received, all fairly positive. SC made the suggestion of taking feedback from staff appraisals or, alternatively, from ongoing contributions - for example, a suggestion box in the staff room.

AF raised the question of whether this should be a survey 'owned' by governors or senior leadership team. CW responded that she feels there is likely to be a more open response from staff if SLT are removed from the process. PC asked how the members of SLT present feel about being out of the process; CD replied that her own experience is of the survey being run by governors. AM commented that summary data would go to SLT for discussion. EK suggested that it is made clear that the survey is owned by governors, but is fully supported by and fed back to SLT. It was agreed that the survey should be carried out the first week after the June half term.

ACTION POINT: AF will upload suggested survey to governor hub for comment following his review of the questions.

AF

9. Feedback from committee meetings – Spring term

AM suggested that governors access the minutes of the committee meetings on GovernorHub for an overview.

10. Policies/Procedures

10.1 Staff Code of Conduct

EK suggested a change of wording to section 3.2 and this was agreed.

ACTION POINT: EK will provide text to CD.

EK

CW suggested that an additional section be added concerning the use of mobile phones as medical devices; for example, using apps to support the management of medical conditions. This was agreed.

ACTION POINT: CD to add.

CD

EK further suggested a change of wording at point 11 regarding confidentiality (removing the reference to governors). This was agreed.

ACTION POINT: EK will provide text to CD.

EK

11. Standing items

- Safeguarding - EK inquired whether the transfer of paper records onto CPOMS has now been completed; CD advised that this is still a work in process.
- Housing Development – It was agreed that this would be removed from 'standing items'

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- Governor visits – EK (Safeguarding); HH (SEND); AM (meetings with CD); SC (teaching, learning and pastoral)
- FOLF – the committee is arranging a film night for pupils, and the annual Summer Fair. As always, the committee would benefit from more support
- Nursery Admissions - see Head's Report
- Health & Safety - EF advised that the Portable Appliance Testing is to take place in school next week and she is arranging for NS to carry out a health and safety tour of the school and grounds.
- Successes and Celebrations - SC suggested that this item be moved to the top of the agenda for future meetings. This was agreed

12. Any Other Business

RS advised that the DfE recommends that schools publish governor diversity data on their websites. This is not mandatory. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting

EK raised the issue of the impact of strike action on Year 2 pupils; she suggested that perhaps teachers could be changed to different classes to minimise impact in one year group, or perhaps combine classes. TJ commented that he had attended a training session via OCC on how to mitigate the impact of industrial action and they suggested moving teachers at this session.

EK suggested sending a communication to parents of children in affected classes outlining why their class cannot be covered in other ways. AF suggested that this be sent more widely, not just those in affected classes. AM suggested that this be a specific letter, not contained within the weekly newsletter.

ACTION POINT: CD to investigate options and report back to governors via GovernorHub.

CD