



'A cord of three strands is not easily broken.' Ecclesiastes 4:12  
 Inspiring a love of learning through the bonds of **family, faith and friendship.**

## Folksworth Church of England Primary School

### Virtual Full Governing Body Meeting Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 7.00pm

## Minutes

**KEY:** **Governor Challenge** **Governor Approval**

**Present**

M. Norbury (Headteacher), C. Kirk (Chair), R. Duncan, G. Jessop, C. Armstrong, A. Pickstone and J. Walters.

**Also Present**

D. Quinn (Invited Guest) and J. Harris (Clerk)

No	Agenda Item
1	<b>Opening Prayer</b> An opening prayer, relating to the school community, values and ethos, was led by the Chair.
2	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made for the benefit of new parent governor J. Walters Apologies were received and accepted from K. Hart.
3	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.
4	<b>Agree Minutes of the last meeting</b> The minutes from the meeting held on the 17 <sup>th</sup> of October, including confidential, had been shared prior to the meeting. <b>Governors were happy to approve the minutes as a true record.</b>
5	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A governor asked about the appraisal and capability of support staff.</b> The Headteacher explained that support staff had never had performance related pay and remained within the band appropriate for their post.</li> <li><b>A governor asked about a paragraph within the appraisal and capability policy, which related to early career teachers.</b> The Headteacher explained that although the school did not have any early career teachers it was felt that the paragraph should be retained.</li> <li>The Headteacher's Appraisal Review had been completed.</li> <li><b>A governor asked if there was still a shortfall of funding for a pupil with special educational needs.</b> The Headteacher advised that the matter had been resolved with the Local Authority and funding had been back paid.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K. Hart had completed a safeguarding visit.</li> <li>• R. Duncan had completed a health and safety walk around.</li> <li>• The Headteacher had drafted a follow up to the parent survey and this had now been shared.</li> <li>• A governor asked about responsibility for supporting pupils with medical conditions. The Headteacher advised that this was overseen by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).</li> <li>• The Parish School Covenant had been submitted to Ely Diocese. The Headteacher was expecting a copy to be returned for display purposes.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that there had not been any correspondence since the last meeting. However, she had been working with the Headteacher to secure a new broadband provider for the school, following receipt of an email advising that current provision would be ceasing.</p>
7	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>Headteacher's Appraisal Review</b></p> <p>As confirmed under matters arising, the Headteacher's Appraisal Review had been completed. Appraisals for teaching staff had been completed prior to this.</p> <p><b>Exploring Academisation Updates</b></p> <p>There were no updates but this item would be put on the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>The governing body had vacancies for 1 staff governor and 1 parent governor. D. Quinn's term of office as a parent governor had ended on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December. A parent governor election was underway. The Department for Education database was to be updated to reflect recent governor changes.</p> <p><b>Monitoring Visits</b></p> <p>A report from K. Hart, for a safeguarding monitoring visit, had been shared prior to the meeting, there had been no concerns. A governor asked for more information about an improvement in behaviour due to a cohort. The Headteacher explained that the dynamics of classes had changed and additional support was in place for some pupils.</p> <p>Reports from R. Duncan, for a health and safety walk around and website audit had been shared prior to the meeting. Governors acknowledged the impact of budget restraints on plans when planning for the future.</p> <p>C. Armstrong advised that she had completed monitoring visits for Science, Writing and Mathematics and would complete reports for these. Science had been very positive, the subject lead was aware of action points and there was a focus on analytical thinking and more practical experiments. Mathematics had been good, timetabled arithmetic lessons had a positive impact and enabled lots of conversations around Mathematics. Writing had some challenges but the subject lead was clear about what needed to be done and there was a focus on early hand writing, spellings and long writing in class. Governors considered monitoring visits relating to the School Improvement Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour Curriculum - K. Hart (during safeguarding visits)</li> <li>• Courageous Advocacy and Spirituality – G. Jessop</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that short focussed visits were working well for governors, the Headteacher and staff.</p> <p><b>Training Feedback</b></p> <p>The Chair had joined two training sessions arranged by the Local Authority, the governor role in health and safety and the school's financial value standard. (SFVS was to be put on the agenda for the next meeting).</p>

	<p>The Chair and G. Jessop had joined a training session, arranged by the Diocese, relating to the responsibilities and expectations of a voluntary controlled and voluntary aided full governing body.</p> <p>The Chair was to join a training session, arranged by the Diocese, relating to Religious Education in School.</p> <p>J. Walters was to join a governor induction training session, arranged by the Local Authority, in March.</p> <p>R. Duncan was to explore refresher training relating to the budget and finance.</p> <p>All governors were encouraged to explore training opportunities either through the Diocese or the Local Authority.</p>
8	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>A report from the Headteacher had been shared prior to the meeting. The main areas of discussion included the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Headteacher had recently attended a conference relating to 'courageous advocacy', which had been arranged by the Diocese. The National Younger Leadership Group programme had been discussed. The programme allowed children to connect with other young people across the country, share ideas, and learn from each other. The programme was part of the Church of England's vision to "grow younger" and emphasised the importance of engaging with children and young people. Four year 6 pupils were to join half termly zoom meetings and would be given 'takeaway tasks'. Currently their voice was enabling the Church to get the views of pupils. G. Jessop had been into school to support with some questions around faith. A governor asked if there would be an opportunity for the pupils to feedback to governors at the end of the programme and the Headteacher agreed to arrange this.</li> <li>• A governor asked why the A1 Headteacher's Cluster Meeting had been held at the school. The Headteacher explained that schools took it in turns to host meetings and lots of Headteachers had attended.</li> <li>• A governor asked about 'Dojo' points and if this had a positive impact on punctuality. The Headteacher explained that some pupils were still arriving late as they had to travel from out of area. Initially there had been a positive impact but this was now waning. Home learning was being encouraged and more pupils were completing 'Accelerated Reader' quizzes, which was positive.</li> <li>• A governor asked if there had been any feedback at the new parent morning and was advised that there had not, although many parents seemed positive about the school during their visits.</li> <li>• Cambridgeshire Local Authority's admissions portal doesn't show applications from Peterborough at this point, so it was hard to gauge numbers. It was possible that there were some Reception class applications from parents in the Peterborough area, for September 2025. Information about the school had been shared through the SCAN (Stilton Community Association Newsletter) and Yaxley Gazette. It was thought that a new school, which was due to open in September 2025, would be taking Reception pupils. A governor asked if there were any children in the preschool who might be joining the Reception Class and was advised that there were very few. The Headteacher was aware that there were not many siblings of current pupils expected to join the school in September either. A governor asked if the Headteacher had spoken to other local Headteachers about pupil numbers for 2025/26. The Headteacher confirmed that</li> </ul>

	<p>this had been discussed and other schools were in a similar situation. A governor asked about the deadline for September 2025 and was advised that it was after Christmas. Governors were made aware that the school would be losing 20 year 6 pupils in the summer so would need to try and recoup these pupil numbers. Lots of work had been put into the open morning and there had been positive feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Head Boy and Girl had attended an Armistice Day Service and had represented the school really well and everyone had been proud of them. Governors thanked the Headteacher for arranging this opportunity for them. Governors were made aware that someone from the British Legion had been into school to lead the silence.</li> <li>A governor asked how the impact of outdoor learning was recorded. The Headteacher explained that plans were made for each term, which included clear objectives. Pupil voice and photos would be taken as a record.</li> </ul> <p><b>School Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>A copy of the plan had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher advised that this now included autumn term data relating to age related expectations. A governor asked if an area in red was a concern. The Headteacher explained that data was low due to the time of the year. There were some concerns relating to regression over the summer break but this was being addressed through re-teaching. Pupil progress meetings had been held and all pupils discussed. A joint approach was to be used for interventions, for example Reception and Year 1 pupils. A governor asked about greater depth Mathematics in Year 6. The Headteacher explained that no pupils were working at greater depth yet. Year 6 pupils had completed mock Key Stage 2 SATs for the first time but not everything had been taught yet. The Headteacher was confident that some Year 6 pupils would achieve greater depth. A governor asked about pupils in Years 4 and 5 who had made lots of progress. The Headteacher explained that huge progress had been made due to consistency and she was pleased with this. A governor asked if targets would be revised for these pupils. The Headteacher explained that pupils were on track for the time of year and targets would be considered at the next cycle of pupil progress meetings. A governor asked about an area in orange and asked if interventions were in place. The Headteacher explained that there had been some gaps so there had been a focus on filling these but this was not a concern.</p>
9	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Vice Chair R. Duncan took over Chair for agenda item 9.</p> <p><b>Budget Report</b></p> <p>Two reports for the period including November had been shared prior to the meeting. A governor asked if the Local Authority had sorted issues with the finance system used by maintained schools. The Headteacher advised that they had not and the newest update meant the system was now using Excel to produce reports, which was complicating things. A governor asked if the Finance Advisor who had retired had been replaced and was advised that someone would be starting in January. A governor noted that the forecast deficit was higher than previously. They asked if there were plans to address this and if there were any areas where savings could be made. The Headteacher explained that she was being careful but there were some spends that were beyond her control that were necessary, for example safeguarding training and pay increases for teachers and support staff. The school had received some funding towards pay increases but she had not yet had an opportunity to discuss the impact of the increases with the Finance Advisor. There had been no unnecessary spends and she was working on reducing the deficit. The budget was very tight and some other local schools</p>

were already in a deficit position. The Local Authority was aware of the challenges with budgets. There were issues with funding for pupils with special educational needs and this was being delayed and schools were having to pay for support from their own budget. A governor asked why the agreed budget and forecast budget differed. The governor asked if there were any capital spends that could be recorded and the Headteacher was to explore this. A governor asked if the school had received all of the funding to cover pay increases and was told not yet as further information was needed from the Financial Advisor. The Headteacher had no confidence in the finance system so a spreadsheet was being used to support management of the budget. Some costs had only been advised that day so adjustments were to be made for these. Headteachers all agreed that the finance system was not fit for purpose. A governor asked how governors could support the school with this. The Headteacher advised that Headteachers had asked the Local Authority to send a letter to governors explaining about the issues with the software but this had not yet been done. Governors asked for their thanks to be passed on to the Finance Manager and also thanked the Headteacher for work on the budget.

#### **Health and Safety Monitoring**

This item had already been discussed under agenda item 7.4.

#### **Lettings**

The Headteacher advised that the school was still being used for Brownies and a dance class.

#### **Premises Development Plan Update**

There were no plans for any projects, just essential work which included electrical testing and repairing the boiler.

#### **Internet Provision**

Details of quotes had been shared prior to the meeting. It was explained that the Local Authority would no longer be providing a service from April 2025. The school had been given 30 days to sort alternative provision. The school needed to make sure that it met the requirement of Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, was sustainable within the school budget and had an appropriate internet speed. The school had chosen the quote which included a one off set up fee but then was a fixed cost for 5 years. Governors thanked the Headteacher for sorting out the arrangements at short notice. The school had benchmarked and was ahead of similar schools with its digital strategy.

#### **School Meals**

Details of kitchen costs had been shared prior to the meeting. A governor asked about challenges. The Headteacher advised that numbers were good and the biggest cost was staffing. There was a deficit mainly due to school holidays across the year. A governor asked about August and it was explained that a salary needed to be added for this month. A governor asked if parents were able to use childcare vouchers to pay for school meals and it was explained that this was not allowed. Governors were made aware that some Key Stage 2 pupils preferred to bring a packed lunch to school. Having taster sessions each time there was a menu change had been considered and a taster session was to be arranged for January.

#### **Staffing**

Updates on staffing had been included in the Headteacher report.

#### **Breakfast/Stay and Play**

The Headteacher explained that provision was not paying for itself so charges were to increase from January. Early Birds was more popular, with up to 14 pupils joining each session. Stay and Play usually had around 8 pupils as there was no longer the need as there had been previously. A governor asked if the school was able to apply for wrap around care funding from the Local Authority. The Headteacher was not sure if the school qualified so was to explore this further.

	<p><b>Document/Policy Review</b> Copies of all policies had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal Financial Procedures</li> <li>2. Disciplinary Procedures Relating to Misconduct</li> <li>3. Disciplinary Rules for All Employees</li> <li>4. Grievance Procedure</li> <li>5. Pay</li> <li>6. Policies and Procedures for the Management of Sickness Absence</li> <li>7. Recruitment and Selection</li> <li>8. Staff and Volunteer Induction</li> <li>9. Statement of Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse</li> <li>10. Discretionary Leave of Absence</li> </ol> <p>Governors were happy to approve all 10 policies.</p>
10	<p><b>Standards and Ethos</b> Vice Chair A. Pickstone took over as Chair for agenda item 10.</p> <p><b>Pupil Progress</b> This item had been discussed under agenda item 8, school improvement plan.</p> <p><b>Christian Distinctiveness/Collective Worship</b> The Headteacher had already spoken about the National Younger Leadership Groups programme under agenda item 8. Pupils had participated in an Armistice Service, Advent Collective Worship, the Nativity and Christingle. A governor asked about Tuesday assemblies with the local incumbent and were told that they were going really well, pupils were engaged and lots of visual aids were used.</p> <p><b>Spirituality Policy Update</b> The Headteacher explained that the policy was not due for review but she had recently completed spirituality training with the Religious Education Lead. The training had been shared with staff and consistent language and displays had been agreed. Spirituality in school was moving in the right direction and progress was being made. The agreed vocabulary was to be shared with governors and the subject lead was to provide a report for governors.</p> <p><b>Behaviour Curriculum Update</b> A copy of the behaviour curriculum had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher advised that this had been shared with parents and was now being implemented. A governor asked if there had been any feedback from parents. The Headteacher advised that a parent had said that it fit in with their values. Teachers had a focus each week and this was to be communicated to parents. So far the changes had been well received by pupils.</p> <p><b>Autumn Term Events</b> Information about events had been included in the Headteacher's report.</p>
11	<p><b>Policy Review</b> Copies of policies had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critical Incident</li> <li>2. Equality Duty Statement</li> <li>3. Intimate Care</li> <li>4. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</li> </ol> <p>Governors were happy to approve all 4 policies subject to an agreed change to the critical incident policy.</p>
12	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> Governors thanked the Headteacher and staff for their work on 'Born in a Barn'. It was agreed that pupil's singing at recent services had been excellent.</p>
13	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.00pm (virtual)</p>

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

<b>Summary of Actions</b>	
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
7	Exploring Academisation Updates was to be an agenda item for the next meeting.
	The Department for Education database was to be updated to reflect recent governor changes.
	C. Armstrong was to complete report for Science, Writing and Mathematics monitoring visits.
	The school's financial value standard was to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
8	The Headteacher was to arrange for pupils taking part in the National Younger Leadership Groups programme to feedback to governors at the end of the programme.
9	The Headteacher was to explore capital spends.
	Governor thanks were to be passed on to the Finance Manager for work on the budget.
	A kitchen staff salary needed to be added to the costings spreadsheet for August.
	A school meals taster session was to be arranged for January.
	The Headteacher was to explore eligibility for wrap around care funding further.
10	The agreed vocabulary for spirituality was to be shared with governors and the subject lead was to provide a report for governors.