



'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

## Full Governing Body Meeting Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.00pm

### Minutes

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

**Present**

M. Norbury (Headteacher), C. Kirk (Chair), C. Armstrong, G. Jessop, R. Duncan, A. Pickstone, D. Quinn and K. Hart

**Also Present**

J. Harris (Clerk)

No	Agenda Item
1	<b>Opening Prayer</b> An opening prayer was led by the Chair.
2	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including new foundation governor G. Jessop, and introductions were made. There were no apologies as all governors were present. The Chair advised that staff governor, L. Kohlschmidt had resigned as a governor.
3	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.
4	<b>Small School Action Plan</b> The Headteacher had shared information relating to the Local Authority's strategy for small schools, those with less than 210 pupils, prior to the meeting. The main areas of discussion included the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small schools needed to consider things that put them at risk. It was felt that risks for Folksworth were outside the school's control. For example outcomes, which were impacted by pupils with special educational needs, and pupils within a small cohort equating to a higher percentage. <b>A governor asked about the capacity of the school</b> and was told that the published admission number was 105 pupils but the building had the capacity for 120. However, it was not advisable to increase to this number as it would have implications for class structures, particularly in Key Stage 1 due to the maximum class size of 30 pupils.</li> <li>• The Local Authority wanted to meet with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Resources Committee Chair in the spring term to</li> </ul>

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Chair of Governors

Agreed at Full Governing Body Meeting 08.02.24

	<p>explore ways in which they could offer support to Folksworth as a small school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A governor asked about the other small schools which had joined the meeting with the Local Authority. The Headteacher thought that there were 6 or 7 other schools.</li> <li>• The School Improvement Advisor had suggested that Folksworth needed a unique selling point, it was felt that this could be its digital strategy.</li> <li>• A governor asked if multi-academy trusts closed small schools. The Headteacher explained that they may close a small school if it was not viable.</li> <li>• It was suggested that the school could explore academisation and federating with another school or group of schools.</li> <li>• A governor asked about linking with the preschool. The Headteacher suggested that a proposal could be put together. Wrap around care could be a unique selling point, but most schools offered this</li> <li>• It was agreed that the school needed to 'market' itself more. The recent Open Morning for prospective parents had been a success.</li> <li>• It was suggested that this item be a standing agenda item for future meetings.</li> <li>• A governor asked when the Local Authority was next going to meet with small schools. The Headteacher felt that this was likely to be done annually.</li> <li>• Governors thanked the Headteacher for sharing the information so that they could be mindful of this.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Agree Minutes of the last meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2023</b>  A copy of the minutes had been shared prior to the meeting. The minutes, including confidential, were agreed as a true record, subject to the Clerk changing the wording under item 5 from 'low numbers on the governing body' to 'smaller size governing body'.</p>
6	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A. Pickstone had completed and shared a report for the Harvest Festival service she had attended.</li> <li>• The Clerk had forwarded a copy of the minutes, showing governor approval of reconstitution, to the Local Authority and a new instrument of government had been approved and a copy shared prior to the meeting.</li> <li>• The Chair had spoken to the Local Authority regarding the service level agreement being updated to reflect changes to the number of meetings.</li> <li>• A. Pickstone had updated the Governor Guidelines for School Visits.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair advised that Canon Andrew Read had stepped down as Director of Education, Mission and Ministry, with Ely Diocese. His role was being covered by Sarah Conant in the interim. She was not free to come and speak about the future of small Church schools but had advised that a virtual session relating to this was being held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January from 7.00pm till 9.00pm. Details for this session were to be shared with all governors once confirmed.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair advised that Jonathan Lewis, Director of Education, was to leave Cambridgeshire County Council in February.</li> <li>• Governors were made aware that Reverend Diane Leslie Kutar would be taking over as Incumbent after Easter.</li> <li>• A letter of concern had been dealt with by the Headteacher.</li> <li>• The Chair had received a formal complaint and was investigating this.</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>Chair's Action</b> The Chair had approved a pay increase for support staff, which was backdated to April, as a Chair's action so that they could be implemented promptly. The school had budgeted for these increases.</p> <p><b>Focus for Meetings</b> The Chair explained that the service level agreement for governor training and clerking with the Local Authority had been reduced. Committees would no longer meet separately but Committee Chairs would pick up related agenda items within full governing body meetings. The governance planner, and focus for each meeting, had been updated to reflect this. The Clerk was asked to send draft agendas to the Committee Chairs as well as the Headteacher and Chair. Items relating to Resources and Standards and Ethos would be alternated at each meeting.</p> <p><b>Headteacher's Appraisal Review</b> It was confirmed that the annual review had been completed.</p> <p><b>Instrument of Government</b> A copy of the new instrument had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Link Roles</b> It was agreed that G. Jessop would join the Standards Committee and Ethos Group and would be the link governor for Christian Distinctiveness. Governor link roles would be reviewed at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Pay Review Committee</b> It was confirmed that the pay review committee had met</p> <p><b>Training</b> The Chair advised that she was still completing SIAMS training.</p> <p><b>Vacancies</b> There were vacancies for a staff governor and a parent governor. The Headteacher expressed concern about no staff members expressing an interest in the staff governor role. The Clerk was asked to provide paperwork for elections to be held in January.</p> <p><b>Monitoring Visits</b> Visit reports had been shared prior to the meeting. A. Pickstone had met with Worship Leaders. R. Duncan had completed a health and safety survey and a website audit. C. Armstrong had looked at Writing. She advised that challenge still remained for pupils with higher learning potential. There was a robust action plan but the teachers needed to ensure that pupils with higher learning potential had feedback on how to progress. Things had moved forwards but it was recognised that there was still work to do.</p>
9	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b> 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>• There were 4 pupils on the waiting list for a place at the school and these were due to start in January. The school had lost 3 pupils but was gaining 3 so the total number of pupils on roll would be 95. <b>A</b></li> </ul>

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	<p>governor asked if the Headteacher had been aware that the 3 pupils would be leaving and this was confirmed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visit had been completed by the Ely Diocese Regional Advisor. They had discussed Dr Simon Hughes’ SIAMS supportive visit.</li> <li>• The Headteacher advised that the school had a new approach to feedback and marking. A governor asked if this had been introduced in September. The Headteacher explained that the approach was being trialled and had been reviewed at a staff meeting recently to see what was working and what was not. It would be reviewed again in January and then there would be a new policy. A governor asked if the approach was less labour intensive and this was confirmed.</li> <li>• A governor asked how the school would manage a class size of 34 in 2024/25 and was assured that the class room could accommodate this number of pupils.</li> <li>• Pupil progress meetings had been held. A governor asked if provision would get pupils back on track or if targets would be changed. The Headteacher advised that additional provision was in place to support pupils to make accelerated progress.</li> <li>• A governor asked for an update on catering now that this had reverted back to the school. The Headteacher advised that the Cook was now supporting her with ordering and development of the spring term menu.</li> <li>• The Headteacher advised that the member of staff who was a teacher 4 days a week and the SENCO 1 day a week had accepted a SENCO role at another school. She would continue with the SENCO role one day a week at Folksworth but would work at another school on the other four days. A letter had been sent out to parents to inform them. A governor asked if the new teacher would have responsibility for leading a subject and this was confirmed. The Headteacher was exploring different options regarding recruitment. A governor asked what happened with SEN on the days that the SENCO was not in school. The Headteacher explained that this was the responsibility of teachers. The SENCO role was to advise, complete Early Help Assessments, make referrals and meet with parents.</li> </ul> <p><b>Budget Updates</b></p> <p>A budget report had been shared prior to the meeting. There were concerns regarding a deficit on the staffing line, as pay increases had not been fully allowed for. The Headteacher explained the issues with the new system, which did not show the working budget. Governors expressed dissatisfaction with the budget reporting because it did not seem to give a correct and accurate picture of the budget position. A governor asked for a forecast and was told that a £3000 carry forward was forecast and all of the capital would have been spent. The school might be able to make savings on staffing due to some changes. A governor asked about catch up funding and was advised that it was likely that the following year would be the last year that schools would receive this funding. It was explained that if this was not spent it was clawed back. A governor asked how many more pupils the school needed in order to afford an additional teacher to replace the fulltime SENCO and the Headteacher agreed to explore this.</p>
10	<p><b>Safeguarding Updates</b></p> <p><b>Report from Link Governor</b></p> <p>K. Hart had completed a visit in November and a copy of her report had been shared prior to the meeting. She was aware that safeguarding was every</p>

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	<p>one's responsibility and had considered how this should be tested. For example, were teaching and mid-day supervisors confident in challenging strangers in school? The Headteacher explained that visitors were not allowed in school until checked.</p>
11	<p><b>SIAMS</b>  A. Pickstone, as Chair for the Standards Committee and Ethos Group, took over the Chairing for this agenda item.  <b>Note of Visit from Dr Simon Hughes</b>  A report had been shared prior to the meeting. A governor asked how the Headteacher had felt the visit went. The Headteacher advised that it had been a very positive visit. She had realised that the school did lots of things that supported the ethos and values, which were so embedded they had not been thought about including in the SEF. He had made some recommendations to support the SIAMS Self-Evaluation Form. A governor asked about his comment relating to gathering 'treasure' in an easily accessible form. The Headteacher explained that he was referring to things like photographs, quotes and comments. The Headteacher had kept thank you notes so these could be used as evidence. A governor asked the next step and it was explained that the SEF would be reviewed and then brought back to governors.  <b>Parish School Covenant</b>  The deadline for completing the covenant and returning it to the Diocese was June. The school may need to start drafting the covenant, as the new incumbent would not be in post until April. The Chair agreed to request more information about the covenant for sharing with governors. Governors were also encouraged to seek more information about this on the Ely Diocese website. <a href="https://www.elydiocese.org/schools/being-a-church-school/parish-school-covenant/">https://www.elydiocese.org/schools/being-a-church-school/parish-school-covenant/</a></p>
12	<p><b>Pupil Progress</b>  A pupil progress and attainment overview had been shared prior to the meeting. This had been discussed at pupil progress meetings. The Headteacher felt that some teachers may have been conservative with their judgements. Pupils had completed NFER (National Foundation for Education Research) tests. Some pupils needed interventions to support them to keep on track for expected progress. Additional support for some pupils who were struggling had also been discussed as well as different interventions. There was not enough evidence for greater depth pupils. The current Year 6 cohort were not expected to have the same outcomes as the previous year's cohort. This cohort had tracked as a lower ability cohort all through school.  A governor asked what the main points were, which had been picked up from the last SATs results or progress meetings, and was advised that it was to teach fractions earlier in the year, particularly with pupils in Year 5 and 6. The format of pupil progress meetings had changed. A governor asked when these meetings would be held next and was advised that it would be after February half term. A governor asked if there would be a focus on pupils who were below or just at the expected level and this was confirmed. A governor asked if there were any concerns relating to Key Stage 1 classes. The Headteacher explained that the current Year 3 cohort had been impacted by the pandemic and had missed much of the Reception class but this seemed to be a national picture.</p>
13	<p><b>Document/Policy Review</b>  Copies of all documents/policies had been shared prior to the meeting.  <b>Governor Guidelines for Visits</b>  The guidelines had been updated and governors were happy to approve the guidelines.</p>

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	<p>Prevent Action Plan A governor asked if this was new and this was confirmed. <b>Governors were happy to approve the action plan.</b></p> <p>Spirituality Governors suggested some small changes which were made by the Headteacher at the meeting. <b>Governors were happy to approve the policy.</b></p>
14	<p><b>Resources Committee Update</b> The committee had met on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October and a copy of the draft minutes had been shared prior to the meeting.</p>
15	<p><b>Standards Committee Update</b> There were no updates.</p>
16	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> The Headteacher had been asked by the Local Authority to complete a survey detailing the costs of uniform for Folksworth Primary. An update would be shared at a future meeting.</p>
17	<p><b>Consider Governing Body Impact</b> The governing body had held the Headteacher to account by asking questions. The governing body had agreed changes to link roles which would support monitoring. Governors had approved documents/policies to ensure that the school was compliant. Governors had reviewed the budget and gained a better understanding, so were better able to support the school in prioritising expenditure and recognising future challenges. The governance planner and focus for each meeting had been reviewed to ensure that meetings would be effective.</p>
18	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 at 7.00pm</li> </ul> <p>The meeting ended at 9.15pm.</p>

## Summary of Actions

Agenda Item	Action
5	The Clerk was to change the wording under item 5 from 'low numbers on the governing body' to 'smaller size governing body'.
7	Full details for the session on the 8 <sup>th</sup> of January were to be shared with all governors once confirmed.
8	Governor link roles would be reviewed at the next meeting.
	The Clerk was to provide paperwork for elections to be held in January.
9	The Headteacher was to explore how many more pupils the school needed in order to afford an additional teacher.
11	The Chair agreed to request more information about the parish school covenant for sharing with governors.

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