

Gresham Village School and Nursery

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Monday 14th July 2025 at 1830

MINUTES

Present

Stephen Balmer-Walters - Chair	SBW	Sarah Rankin – Clerk
Gillian Sampson	GS	
Ali Nahajski - Acting Head	AN	
Rosabelle Batt	RB	
Lauren Taylor-Brown	LTB	
Sophie Neylon	SN	
Alice Vargo	AV	
Georgy Clifton Brown	GCB	

ACTIONS challenges DECISIONS

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS

	ACTIONS
The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting. There were apologies from FH. It was noted that JM has resigned from her governor role. There were no declarations.	

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19th MAY - ACCURACY

	ACTIONS
The minutes of the meeting of 19 th May were approved for accuracy.	

3. MATTERS ARISING

	ACTIONS
<i>Solar panel project:</i> TB gave a full report of the bidding process for the panels and installation following the award of £15K from Sheringham Shoal. Governors were reminded that the school had not been in a position to add funds to the project. Governors were made aware that the original quote with Aspect Services was sourced by TB for the installation of 30 panels for a price of £15K. This was not taken up by the Trust Estates department. It was	

<p>explained that a quote from Impact Services was agreed which resulted in a reduced number of panels (20 – although only 19 were fitted), and therefore a reduced energy output (12KW against 20KW). Governors expressed their disappointment at this weaker deal which TB now must report back on to the funders. TB advised that he has challenged the Trust bidding process via Mark Thorogood of the Estates department, who advised that the decision was made on a previous working relationship and a recommendation. Governors were concerned by this and felt that Trustees should be made aware. TB was thanked for all his considerable efforts securing the funding and supporting the project. Governors recognised his frustration at the outcome noting that he acted in the best interest of the school. TB will now endeavour to source the energy output data from Estates in order to scrutinise the financial benefits of the panels. Governors felt Trustees should be made aware of the bidding process and it was confirmed that the interim CEO and the Chair of Trustees was copied in to the communication from Estates. The Chair felt that a line must now be drawn under it.</p>	
<p><i>School meals:</i> Options going forward were discussed following poor uptake and issues with portion size and quality. A survey was considered after half term with children and parents. It was agreed that the Norse contract should be looked at and experience from other schools sourced. Potential income streams from the kitchen were raised such as breakfast club and after school catering. LTB agreed to lead on this.</p>	<p>LTB</p>
<p><i>Audit of science equipment:</i> AN advised that this has not yet taken place due to time pressure. However it was noted that with the Year 6 classroom becoming a staff work and equipment space, this will be carried out at the beginning of September. AN confirmed that no additional furniture will be needed, just some more plug sockets. Governors were pleased to hear that there will be a better environment for staff for PPA time, meetings and a teaching space for phonics.</p>	
<p><i>Letter from Interim CEO to parents re use of social media:</i> the confusion surrounding this communication was discussed due to different versions received dependent upon whether the message was opened on a laptop computer or a mobile device. The CEO was made aware of this. Parental feedback to the communication was raised. Governors were informed that this was the first communication from the interim CEO to parents, and parents were not aware of who he is or his connection to the school. Given this, Governors questioned whether the CEO was the correct person to have sent a message of this nature, and agreed that it would have been helpful for some context to have been included. Governors felt this was poor PR. The Chair felt that a social media policy was needed potentially as part of the behaviour policy. AN TO DISCUSS WITH THE INCOMING HEAD.</p>	<p>AN</p>

4. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

	ACTIONS
<p><i>Compliments:</i> AN advised that a lovely message had been received from a very happy parent of a child in KS2 thanking staff for putting on a superb sports day, and for everything the staff do. Governors were delighted to hear this, agreeing with AN that to receive messages of this nature boosts staff morale significantly. AN WAS ASKED TO FORWARD THE MESSAGE TO THE CLERK FOR CIRCULATION.</p>	AN/SR
<p><i>Complaints:</i> The Chair advised Governors that a Stage 2 complaint has been received and reviewed at school level. This remained unresolved and is now being processed by the Trust as a Stage 3 complaint. The Chair advised that no detail is able to be shared and discussed given that this complaint is still open. This was accepted but governors felt that an awareness of the number of complaints received by the school could be shared with governors, excluding any detail. SBW suggested that this could be looked at in the future with liaison with the Trust. SBW reported that he has received a significant number of low-level concerns from parents noting it has been hard to get parents to follow the correct process for raising concerns. Governors referred to the Complaints Policy on screen. It was agreed that work on communicating the correct process as per the complaints policy needs to be done as a priority early on in the new academic year. The Chair reassured Governors by observing that complaints should be seen as a way to improve things at the school.</p>	
<p><i>Behaviour management:</i> AN advised that the behaviour policy will be reviewed with FH and the SLT as a priority. It was acknowledged that this will be a significant piece of work which needs to reflect a whole school culture. Governors discussed the number of negative behaviour incidents observing that this has never been an issue in the past, with Ofsted awarding behaviour 'Good'. The reasons for the recent decline in behaviour were discussed. AN indicated that poor behaviour involves a very small cohort of children and that the SLT have had to make some difficult decisions in consultation with the Deputy CEO, Richard Lord. Governors felt it was essential to learn from the last six months and stressed the need to be honest with parents. Governors acknowledged the challenge of the school being without a Head for six months and the uncertainty of the situation for parents. The need to prevent bad PR in the community stressed and an early communication to parents from FH was deemed appropriate to introduce the reviewed behaviour policy and focus on the schools values, which need to be more visible across the school. Governors were reminded that a letter was circulated to parents on 9th June advising that behaviour was being addressed.</p>	

5. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT INC STAFFING 25/26	ACTIONS
<p>In MG's absence AN presented the HT report. The following was discussed:</p> <p>Whole school attendance: Data as follows: Overall school attendance 93.9% Persistent absence (PA): 15.7% SEND: 91.8% FSM (PP): 86.3%</p> <p>AN noted that these figures are lower than the national average of similar schools, however Governor observed that the figures are comparable with last year's data. Governors asked for further detail of the high PA figure. AN advised that this is largely due to one child affecting the data. Governors asked if PA children are being actively managed. This was confirmed.</p> <p>Holiday requests during term time were discussed. AN and Governors reflected on a national trend post Covid for parents to request leave during term time. It was also noted that in Norfolk many families work in seasonal work and hospitality and are therefore restricted on when they are able to take holiday leave.</p>	
<p>Pupil attainment: Data circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Governors were delighted with the results with particular success noted in phonics outcomes. Results have risen from 73% last year to 91.6% this year demonstrating the effectiveness and success of the phonics lead and phonics programme. EYFS results also impressive with overall GLS at 86.7%.</p> <p>KS2 results also good with excellent results in reading and maths. The main area for focus going forward continues to be writing with governors noting that although KS2 writing has improved year on year, there is still significant work to be done. AN felt that improvements will continue now Pathways to Write is embedded.</p> <p>Governors looked forward to seeing comparative data across all the Trust primaries.</p> <p>AN WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE DATA ON THE PERFORMANCE OF OTHER YEAR GROUPS.</p>	AN
<p>Pupil numbers and class structure 25/26:</p> <p>Structure, numbers and teachers confirmed as follows: N1, N2 and R – Numbers TBC. Y1 and Y2 – 22 Eleanor McGibbs Y2 and Y3 – 26 Sophie Neylon Y3 & Y4 – 23 – Ali Nahajski Y4 & Y5 – 27 – Megan Brown Year 6 – 18 – Chris Davies</p> <p>Governors were reminded that the decision to move to classes of mixed year groups was a Trust decision due to a reducing roll and the financial implications thereof.</p>	

<p>Governors asked to be informed of expected intake of Early Years, noting that this can provide a positive message to parents that the school will grow again. The newly established Mini Grasshoppers parent and toddler group was agreed to be a real asset to GVSN as a source of potential new children at the school. Positive feedback on the group has been received from the community and it was agreed that the Trust should be informed about the positive impact of Mini Grasshoppers. It was confirmed that the toddler group was set up with a grant secured by The Friends. Future funding for the group was discussed. GCB to remain in contact with the Friends. It was agreed to discuss the Friends and funding at the next meeting. CLERK TO PUT ON AGENDA.</p>	SR
Finance update, SIDP overview and Risk management deferred to September.	
<p>Redacted: staffing</p> <p>New Head: The leadership transition plan was raised. It was acknowledged that given the tight timeframe following recruitment, a transition with the former Head has not been possible. The challenges facing the school since Easter were recognised. It was noted that FH attended the last LGB meeting and will be fully supported by the Trust and Governors when she starts in September. The Chair noted that FH will have her own vision for the school, but advised that the LGB's 5-year horizon planning document will be shared, of which the school is part-way through.</p>	

6. EYFS REPORT

<p>Induction arrangements for new pupils: EMB's new starters pre-station was shared with the LGB. Governors found this to be an excellent resource for incoming parents and were pleased that the slides have been printed and provided as hard copies to parents.</p> <p>Home visits were discussed and it was noted that these have taken place for families new to the school on 7th and 8th of July. Further transition arrangements were detailed in EMB's report to governors and transition preparation report.</p>	
<p>Provision update: Governors discussed the EYFS space and environment. SN advised that a lot of work has been carried out on improving the environment which is looking significantly better.</p>	

7. SAFEGUARDING

Monitoring reports circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. The following was discussed.	
Reviews:	

NCC safeguarding audit: This Trust engaged external audit took place on 7th July with LTB in attendance for the governor session. Report will be circulated to governors upon receipt. The need for more evidence of supportive challenge around safeguarding in the LGB minutes was flagged as a priority. **Governors felt the monitoring reports and the audits are really useful and will help Governors ask the right questions.**

Safeguarding self-evaluation form: completed and submitted to NCC (every 3 years).

Annual safeguarding report to Governors: draft prepared by MG and will be finalised by EMB and ready for Governors in September.

The following was raised and discussed:

- Safeguarding must always be the key agenda item of the teachers' meetings, along with health and safety.
- Safeguarding discussions and meetings must be minuted with relevant information disseminated to relevant members of staff
- No regular support staff meetings take place currently so no channel for information sharing
- Loss of MG as Head DSL and consequent loss of skill and experience. FH will become lead DSL. KN is part time.
- Governor safeguarding training: all governors must undertake formal safeguarding training annually. LTB advised that attendance at the school training is not enough. The Clerk advised that a new training provider is in place (National College). Details of training to follow.
- New safeguarding Trustee: Susie Waters

Safeguarding priorities:

- Behaviour management – new policy as discussed above.
- Record keeping processes – some training on CPOMS needed to ensure the same approach is used by all staff for recording incidents. Work on recording of general safeguarding info (eg training records) will be worked on by EMB and AN.
- LTB to meet with FH as soon as practicable
- Entrance gate – has not been working for sometime. **Governors raised concern at this stressing it is imperative that it is fixed soonest.** AN to chase up again with Estates and RL.

LTB was thanked for her detailed reports and update.

8. SURVEYS

	ACTIONS
Letter to parents re KS1 and KS2 survey: circulated 29/5	
EYFS parent survey results and letter to parents: reviewed.	
Follow up on staff wellbeing survey: deferred to next meeting.	

Survey on equality and diversity in the curriculum: presented by SN. Aim to examine what is working well and where improvement can be made. Staff voice sought. The following was highlighted:

- SCARF curriculum working well for PHSE. Really good for progression. Plans have been really helpful
- Importance of safe space in classrooms to respect opinions, values and beliefs
- Pathways to Write – not enough real life examples
- Assemblies- fantastic engagement with Little People, Big Dreams books. Assemblies seen as a superb opportunity to invite significant people in science/history etc to talk to the children.
- RWI list of Windows and Mirror book list is an excellent resource.
- Time taken to adapt Cornerstones curriculum can be challenging for teachers.
- Effective planning even more important now teachers are teaching wider age groups going forward.

Governors added that external support is the key to widen message. GVSN was noted as unique in the area for higher percentage of diversity compared to other settings and above the Norfolk average. This needs to be celebrated.

Governors asked how Equality and diversity can be taken forward. SN advised that this will be discussed at staff meeting. Governors thanked SN for her presentation and suggested it should be presented to staff, potentially on an INSET day and become the Equality champion.

Governors asked about the budget for books. SN advised that there is no specific budget but that each teacher tends to build up their own library of resources. An Amazon Wishlist was discussed and Easy fundraising considered.

9. MONITORING

	ACTIONS
<p>PP report:</p> <p>Report circulated in advance of the meeting. GCB met with engaged and aspirational PP children with a love of learning. The need to widen awareness of the eligibility and benefits to PP were discussed. Governors suggested the Early Years pack could contain information on the eligibility of PP.</p> <p>Governors suggested that absence of PP children could be looked at in future along with strategies to improve attendance</p>	
<p>SEND report: The audit and monitoring report were circulated in advance of the meeting. The following was discussed:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant amount of training has taken place across the year. • KN has yet to meet the incoming Head yet. • KN keen to provide transition information for teachers during school time in order for the child to start the year on a positive footing. • KN does not feel that she has been fully supported over the past 18 months, with no CPD. The quantity of administration relating to writing statements and applying for funding was acknowledged. <p>Governors recognised the challenges for the SENDCo, but felt that as SEND is one of FH's specialisms, there will be additional guidance and support from September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust SEND group. <p>Governors agreed that a Trust SEND group would be beneficial for sharing knowledge and expertise. The Chair noted that MG was trying to move to a place where teaches take more responsibility for SEND with KN's role more advisory. It was agreed that administration is not a good use of KN's time.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged that this transition of responsibility has taken time as evidenced in the responses from the SEND survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND cafes have been run but are poorly attended despite times being varied. • Incidents of bullying – figures TBC <p>GCB was thanked for her detailed reports. It was agreed to put SEND higher up the LGB agenda going forward and to make SEND and safeguarding a focus of monitoring for next academic year. Governors agreed that if the school can get SEND right, then its right for every child in the school.</p> <p>The waiting time for a diagnosis of dyslexia was discussed. This was noted to being exceptionally long, leading to some parents choosing the private route.</p> <p>GCB was thanked for her reports.</p>	
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10. GOVERNANCE

	ACTIONS
Governor training: new provider discussed.	
<p>Report from Trust Chairs' meeting 9.7.25: verbal report from GS.</p> <p>The Trust financial position: £1.1 million saved so far. Going forward further savings will focus on procurement. The Trust recognise that staff cannot be trimmed further.</p> <p>The new Trust handbook: this lengthy document clarifies strategic priorities, information flow and reporting to the Trust. A schedule for the year is included with proformas for reports. It was noted that the handbook is still very much in a draft format.</p>	
Governance structure: LGB Membership discussed.	
INSET programme: Dates for the year circulated by the Trust. Programme for September tbc.	

11. RETIRING STAFF

	ACTIONS
Working party being lead by SN and in progress.	

12. POLICIES

	ACTIONS
None.	

13. CORRESPONDENCE FROM AND TO THE TRUST

	ACTIONS
Nothing further.	

14. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS 25/26

	ACTIONS
Next meeting confirmed as Monday 29 th September at 6.30pm. Schedule for the year to be arranged at the first meeting.	

15. A.O.B

	ACTIONS
IT issues: RB and TB reported continuing issues with accessing emails despite multiple attempt to sort out with IT. Clerk to flag with IT and the Trust again.	SR
Newspaper article: AV noted a recently published article regarding the content of a school assembly and asked if the school will be working with Cornerstones regarding their curriculum. It was confirmed that the Trust are looking into this.	
The Chair gave his thanks to AN and EMB and all the staff for their support during this challenging period. Particularly praise was given for the superb set of results. SBW asked that this be passed on to staff and wished every one a restful summer holiday.	

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Date of next meeting Monday 29th September 2025 at 6.30pm