

# The Governing Body Sefton Park School

## Infants and Juniors

Chair of Governors: Corrie Bell

Headteacher: Dan Simson

Clerk to Governors: Jessica Wewer

### Full Governing Body Meeting Minutes

**Date: Wednesday 17 July 2024**

Sefton Park



Infant and Junior Schools

**Sefton Park School**  
Ashley Down Road  
Bristol  
BS7 9BJ

ITEM	AGENDA ITEM AND NOTES		PAPERS CONSIDERED
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>		
	<p><i>Present:</i> Corrie Bell (CB), Dan Simson (DS), Jane Wheelock (JW), Rachel Wills (RW), Claire Kearney (CK), Carrie Spittlehouse (CS), Helen Martin (HM), Emily Shuker (ES), Amy Lewis (AL), Amy Campbell (ACL), Sally Dore (SD)</p> <p><i>Apologies:</i> Andy Lillie, Ben Crowley, Ben Seal, Shabaana Mitha</p> <p><i>Absent:</i></p> <p><i>Attending:</i> Jessica Wewer (JWR)</p>		
	<i>Present: 11</i>	<i>Quorum met: Yes</i>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Previous minutes/matters arising</b>		
	<p>The previous minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><i>Governors reminded the Clerk re: an agreement to not use initials - Clerk to remove initials in the last minutes</i></p> <p>The actions arising were discussed and the following are carried forward to the next FGB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Format of Staff Absence Data required at F&amp;R to be discussed at next meeting</li> <li>• CB to rework Strategy document, update and share.</li> </ul>		<i>Previous minutes</i>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Clerk's Report</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resignation received from Megan Arnold</li> <li>• No new Declarations of Interest</li> <li>• Training opportunities - Link to The Knowledge Training <a href="#">here</a> which includes Safeguarding.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Meeting dates 2024_25</a></li> </ul> <p>Chair suggested T6 meeting is earlier in the term. Governors agreed to hold T6 FGB on 2nd July.</p>		

	<p>It was agreed that the meetings in T1 and T5 will be extended meetings (6pm-9pm) to allow time for internal board review and strategy respectively. It was confirmed that the daytime meeting will be in T4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The re-election of Governors Amy Lewis and Rachel Wills was <b>approved by governors</b></li> </ul>	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Pupil Voice</b>	
	<p>Headteacher described discussions with 2 pupils who joined the school this year who were classified as 'persistent absentees' and whose parents were anxious about the pupil attending school. Both now have good attendance and spoke about their experience at the school in a positive way.</p> <p>Head was thanked for the report.</p> <p>A signed card &amp; chocolates from the Governors will be left in the staffroom to thank all school staff for their hard work this year.</p>	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>SLT Report</b>	
	<p>The Headteacher thanked the Govenors for their support this year.</p> <p>Updates to the SLT report:</p> <p>Behaviour and development - 1 fixed term exclusion (3 days) at the end of term. The school only does this as a last resort and with reluctance.</p> <p>SATs results: Writing outcomes was discussed at the CCS meeting, the rest of the outcomes are as expected.</p> <p>Head explained that the highlighted challenges in the report will inform the improvement plans for the next academic year, which will come to FGB in Term 1.</p> <p><i>Q - Regarding the fixed exclusion, in the past record keeping was noted as missing despite the school following the correct procedure. How are records kept now?</i></p> <p>A: Everything is recorded on C-POMS. Recorded on the day. C-POMS is a system all schools use which can recognise patterns in incidents and is used as a Safeguarding tool.</p> <p><i>Q - will the Safeguarding letter that goes to parents include the option to appeal the exclusion?</i></p> <p>A - Yes</p> <p>Governors commented that it would have been nice to include learnings from the writing outcomes in the report and to include the great results in Reading and Maths under 'Successes'</p> <p><i>Q - Regarding the behaviour mentioned in the report; what is the impact on safeguarding and learning? And is the Behaviour Policy still fit for purpose?</i></p> <p>A - The school talks about the policy often. The leadership team wants to understand where these behaviours are coming from. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being vigilant to individual behaviours, eg. explosive behaviour</li> <li>reflecting on societal influences</li> <li>look at behaviour across the school.</li> </ul>	<i>SLT Report</i>

	<p>Day to day it's easy to focus on the small number of children who display challenging behaviour. If societal behaviour trends are noticed in the school, this would need to be reflected in the policy. The disruptive incidents are outside of structured lesson time so not affecting learning.</p> <p><i>Q To clarify - the particular misogynistic/tatism trends are in a particular cohort, Y6?</i></p> <p>A: Yes. There is a ripple effect from the eldest pupils to the rest of the age groups. There has not been this level of behaviour throughout the year. The school is keeping in mind that these are children. The school has noticed that children are quick to anger. Which is why the <i>zones of regulation</i> are important.</p> <p>It was noted that learnings from a meeting between governors and the school on the subject of behaviour will come to CCS next term.</p>	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Safeguarding</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Safeguarding - Discussion on what to report to FGB for adequate monitoring</b></li> </ul> <p>Chair explained to Governors that there is a discussion in CCS and then FGB to make sure Governors are getting the information they require to monitor safeguarding.</p> <p>Governors suggested that the Ofsted questions about Safeguarding were a good starting point to consider what Governors should be aware of. <i>The Key</i> also has a useful list of what Governors should monitor.</p> <p>Governors were reassured that If at any point the police were involved in the school, it would be mentioned in the SLT report at the next FGB.</p> <p>It was agreed that there needs to be a section in the FGB on Safeguarding, and in addition it will be looked at in more detail at CCS meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Smart phone Free Childhood – Responding to parent letter</b></li> </ul> <p>The school has received several letters from parents regarding the movement 'Smartphone Free Childhood'.</p> <p>Governors were told about training related to technology and online safety undertaken by a SLT representative. The current advice from child safety charities suggest an outright ban of phones is not advised as it might lead to tech going underground, and instead they recommend supporting communication around messaging and tech use. The school invests a lot in online education to equip pupils with education around phones and technology.</p> <p>Children with phones have to hand their phone in at the beginning of the school day and it is returned to them at home time. The school plans to extend this current policy so that pupils are not allowed to be on their phones on the school premises which is what they often do as they are walking out. There are restrictions and boundaries already in place. The school does not feel they are in a position to advise parents on what sort of phones parents provide their children with and nor do they want to ban phones altogether.</p> <p>The school proposes responding to the parents by sharing in the concerns and outlining the above position.</p> <p>DSL has attended training around the use of technology</p> <p><i>Q - What was the focus of the training? Lots of the focus is around safeguarding and vulnerability. However, the letter from the parents is talking about anxiety and emotions.</i></p>	

The training does include what is good for your body and mind, and this is reflected in PSHE lessons in school; pupils are encouraged to be aware of the effects of technology on their mental health.

Governors commented that the school is basically phone free. The main aim of the campaign is that parents can be united so that children don't feel they are the only one deprived of a smartphone.

Governors suggested that a lot of this issue comes back to parenting, Parents may need support putting boundaries in place.

Governors were given more information about the support offered by the school to families:

- The school has held workshops with the school nurse about anxiety
- The school also signposts to parenting courses run by the government.

*Q - Is there a way the school could support parent's effort to communicate with each other on this issue?*

A - The Smartphone Free Movement creates a whatsapp group for your community, so this already exists.

Governors supported the school's evidence based approach and acknowledged that there are benefits of technology.

*Q - In the communication are you going to address the letters or reply directly to them?*

A - The school will respond to the author of the letter once it has been to Governors.

Governors agreed that the school can only control what they can control. The school is being asked to advise something they are not comfortable with.

Governors commented it would be useful in any communication to separate online safety to mental health as a result of screen time, which are 2 separate things.

Governors supported the school's proposed response.

- **Flexi Schooling – Governor support on developing a strategy**

There is currently 1 pupil with a flexi schooling agreement. It took 6 months to make the agreement as there has to be assurance the rest of the curriculum is being followed at home. There have since been 7 applications so the school has requested Governors look at this from a strategic point of view as there will need to be a policy.

Head: There are benefits and pitfalls of flexi-schooling. It's common in more rural schools. The school wants to have a more policy driven approach. Decisions are hard to make without a policy. Some implications include teacher wellbeing, teaching sequential learning can be difficult, the school days need to be consistent each week. A more structured approach would be good.

*Q: Does this mean children are homeschooled?*

A: Yes. The parents are not ofsted registered. This does not include pupils who attend French school or dyslexia support sessions.

A comment was made that the policy relates to individuals but the effect will impact the entire school so it's difficult to manage.

	The Governing Board is looking for people to form a Working Group to establish a policy, led by the Headteacher. Interested Governors to contact the Head directly.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>F&amp;R Committee</b>	
	<p>A lot of what was discussed was in the SLT report.</p> <p>Points discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outgoings had gone up, the Outrun does not need to be approved now but the figures are in the minute</li> <li>• There is a lot of uncertainty.</li> <li>• There is a hold on recruitment.</li> <li>• H&amp;S report reviewed</li> <li>• The premises; the flood and the multiple works over the summer.</li> <li>• Policies reviewed - 2 were set for us by BCC and one had a small change</li> </ul>	<i>Minutes</i>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>CCS Committee</b>	
	<p>Chair gave a summary: CCS did a deep dive into writing. Plans for writing development had been discussed in March so it was useful to see what's been put in place. We learnt that it's really hard for staff to be objective about pupil's writing skills. It's complex/complicated to assess. The teachers had reflected a lot on why the results are less than expected. The takeaway was that it would be good to monitor next year.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was quite remarkable the standard and consistency required for the Y6 Stats assessment. Although the school has not hit the standard, it does have writers. It was evident from the examples shown that there is a joy in writing. Governors had found it helpful to come into school to look at books and talk to Y6 teachers.</p> <p>Children in Care Policy was discussed and the Governors' comments are going to be incorporated.</p>	<i>Minutes</i>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Policy review</b>	
	<p><u>Reviewed by CCS</u>  - <a href="#">Children In Care Policy</a> - not yet recommended, awaiting changes.  <u>Proposed by F&amp;R</u>  - <a href="#">Disciplinary Procedure</a>, - <a href="#">Debt Management Policy</a>, - <a href="#">Staff Grievance</a> -  <b>Governors Approved the policies recommended by F&amp;R</b></p>	<i>Policies</i>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Governing Body</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Election of Chair &amp; Vice Chair</b>  It was proposed that there are 2 vice chairs for the Governing Board, which can be useful for succession planning. Vice chairs will not necessarily become the Chair. In addition a vice chair for committees could be useful, to build up chairing experience and provide cover if the chair is unavailable.  <b>Governors elected Corrie Bell as Chair and elected Sally Dore and Claire Kearney as Vice Chair for the academic year 2024/25.</b></li> </ul>	

	<p>Chair was thanked for her efforts in Chairing the board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Discussion on workings of GB</b></li> </ul> <p>Chair has adapted the GDS Planner to clarify what we need to address at various parts of the year.</p> <p>Request for chairs of committees and Headteacher to respond to questions in the <a href="#">draft document</a></p> <p>Governors had not all seen the document as it was not linked to the Agenda so it will be circulated by the clerk. The agenda will also be renamed clearly - Action Clerk.</p>	
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Update from Local Educational Landscape Working Group</b>	
	<p>Governors have met to discuss the report on Academies, which was written 4 years ago.</p> <p>Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A lot of the content regarding not being an academy remains the same</li> <li>● The local educational landscape has changed a lot</li> <li>● The definition of an academy has changed. They have got bigger</li> <li>● It is important for Governors to know what academies look like now</li> <li>● It's worth looking at some case studies; an update now that the schools have been part of an academy for 4 years</li> <li>● Advantages of joining a MAT (multi academy trust) and which ones could be considered. They all market themselves in different ways</li> </ul> <p>Head commented that there have been several people in the post of Director for Education at BCC which has resulted in a lack of support for school leadership teams. This is likely to have contributed to schools joining MATs.</p> <p>There will be a brief report to reflect the changes</p> <p>There will be a meeting of Chairs with the Director of Education, please let CB know any questions to take.</p> <p><i>Q - Is this work aimed at Governors preparing to decide about whether to join an academy?</i></p> <p>A - The Governing Body needs to know what the updated facts are since the landscape has changed, so they are equipped to make a decision.</p> <p><i>Q - When will the report come to Governors?</i></p> <p>A - The report can be drafted by Christmas</p> <p>If anyone is interested in joining the Working Group, let Dan know, this is an important topic.</p>	
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Update from Staff Wellbeing Working Group</b>	
	<p>Working group was formed to look at Staff wellbeing.</p> <p>1st Meeting - to discuss what the Group wants to achieve, drafted some objectives and shared principles.</p> <p>Minutes of FGB and CCS meetings were reviewed for mentions of staff wellbeing</p>	

	<p>2nd Meeting was with the headteacher with a set of questions</p> <p>Takeaways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff value knowing that Governors are paying attention to their wellbeing</li> <li>● How could we track it, what would the KPIs be - important to get the localised context and the qualitative information, and also macro trends (ie. what are retention rates like in the wider sector) - looking at both gives a better sense</li> <li>● Discussed staff wellbeing being linked to staff buy-in to the values of the organisations. Not necessarily formally written values but a sense of connection to the organisation and staff wanting to work hard</li> <li>● Clear link between staff wellbeing and pockets of pupils with high needs of support.</li> <li>● Being mindful that being such an inclusive school has an impact on staff</li> </ul> <p>Next step is for the WG to hold another meeting to discuss further.</p> <p>Q - <i>Are you hoping to produce a final report?</i></p> <p>A - Recommendations will come to Governors in T1</p> <p>Q - <i>Should we have a wellbeing Governor?</i></p> <p>A - Yes this will likely be one of the recommendations</p> <p>Some Governors were unable to view the shared principles <a href="#">Document</a> - clerk to upload rather than link to Gov Hub.</p>	
<b>13.0</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>Send Resource Base: The SLA is sitting with the local authority. But they are happy to go ahead with the building work.</p> <p>Chair thanked everyone for attending meetings and turning up with smiles and ready for discussion.</p>	
<b>Meeting closed:</b>	20:58	

<b>Actions Agreed at Meeting</b>																	
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Summary of Documents and Policies Agreed/ Ratified/ Adopted or if sub-committee – to be  
*recommended for adoption by FGB*

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Policy/Document</b>	<b>Action</b>
9.0	Disciplinary Procedure,	Approved
9.0	Debt Management Policy,	Approved
9.0	Staff Grievance	Approved