

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE FERMAIN
ACADEMY HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON 6TH JULY 2016**

Governors Present:	Stephen Armstrong	Acting Chair
	Nic Brindle	Principal
	Emma Colley	
	Mervyn Harding	
	Martin Howlett	
	John Hughes	
	Crawford Prentice	(from Item 4)
Also in attendance:	Joe Carter	Clerk to Governors
	Lee Cambray	Observer (Deputy Principal)
	Alastair Stoddart	Observer
	Chris Heptinstall	Observer (for item 8 to 12)

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting started at 4:00pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Stephen Armstrong had agreed to Chair the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES AND ADDITIONAL AOB

The following apologies for absence were received and accepted:

- Chris Hindley

The following item of AOB was raised:

- Top up funding for SEN.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Governors were asked to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interests with the business to be discussed during the meeting. The following potential conflict was declared:

- Mervyn Harding and Martin Howlett confirmed that they are employed by Youth Federation Limited, however did not foresee any conflicts of interest with the business to be discussed at tonight's meetings.

3. MEMBERSHIP

There have been no changes in the membership of the Governing Board since the last meeting. The Principal provided an update on the two parent governor vacancies. There is a potential parent governor from a current parent of a newer student. The parent is waiting to see if their child remains at school in September before committing to a role.

The Principal confirmed that school have a good link with parents through clasdojo; 92% of parents on Dojo. The Principal had discussed with Jayne Lowe, DfE, that due to the fluidity of the students at school, school could form a termly parental action group who would come together and focus certain topics as raised by the governing board.

The governors agreed that this was an innovative way to gain parental involvement.

Action: Discuss the formation of a termly parental action group and feed back to the GB at the autumn term 2016 meeting (Nic Brindle and Martin Howlett).

Crawford Prentice joined the meeting.

4. PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The part one minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

The action log was reviewed and updated; see the summer term 2016 Fermain Academy action log.

5. CHAIR'S ACTION

The Acting Chair reported that there had been no actions that the Chair or himself as Vice Chair had taken on behalf of the governing board since the last governing board meeting.

6. PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee minutes were received in advance of the meeting and the following key points were highlighted:-

Resource and Audit Committee, 15th June 2016

The Chair of Committee provided the following update:-

- Each term a Responsible Officer Audit is completed; nothing material identified.
- DfE's checklist of "Musts" has been completed; it is reviewed termly or when the Financial Handbook is updated.
- The Budget to be covered in item 8 of the governing board minutes (see below).
- The Governor Expenses Policy was approved.
- Health and Safety was discussed and no issues were raised.

Action: Add Health and Safety as a standing agenda item for future governing board meetings within "Reports from governors with special responsibilities" (Clerk).

Standards Committee, 21st June 2016

The Chair of Committee provided the following update:-

- Key priority was standards in academic achievement and attendance.
- The Committee carried out a full review of the SDP and had challenged data in a progressive manner.
- The Principal had presented the SEF; which is important on leadership judgements.
- From the Easter 2016 data drop on Academic Achievement, Progress and Attendance TFA was 88.99%. Attendance is well above the national average; and compares to 66% attendance at the PRU, Crewe and 64% attendance at Gilbrook School, Birkenhead.
- The Principal had confirmed that the SEF is a live document and changes are recorded on the SEF for reference. There is a meeting with Jayne Lowe (DfE), Stephen Armstrong and Chris Hindley on 11th July 2016 to gain advice on the items within the SEF. The governors were keen that there is a link to things been done at school, the resulting impact and governors questions.

The governing board agreed that they would like see the SDP and the SEF on a termly basis.

Action: Add a standing item to future governing board agendas for feedback/changes to the SDP and the SEF (Clerk).

The Chair thanked the staff and senior leadership team for all their work on student progress, behaviour and attendance.

Reports from Governors with Special Responsibilities

Safeguarding - No incidents to report.

Look After/Cared For Children - No comments.

SEND - No comments.

The governing board discussed whether governors could rotate through special responsibility roles and concluded that due to specialist training requirements and an Ofsted inspection by year 3, that the governors should remain in their current positions at this time to maximise stability.

Action: Add the requirement to discuss roles of governors with special responsibilities to the spring term 2017 meeting agenda (Clerk).

The governors agreed that they should use a masterclass approach internally where governors share their specialist knowledge, e.g. Finance, Safeguarding, to other governors.

Curriculum plans - The Principal confirmed that school have brought the recruitment of a Science Teacher a year earlier than previously planned to provide Science on the curriculum from September 2017.

Published Admission Number (PAN) - The principal advised the governing board that the currently PAN is 28; although there are only 20 students in the building as this is the maximum capacity for Health and Safety.

School were over subscribed for September 2016. The PAN will be 34 FTE; and if students fall below the attendance target they will be reviewed.

School will receive funding from the DfE in September 2016 for 34 students. If TFA increase to 40 there is a risk of insufficient Staff/Teaching resource. If referring schools are willing to pay the place funding then school could offer up to 40.

The governing board discussed the possibility of moving straight to 40 students if school can secure high end placements which provide an additional £10k per student.

Action: Discuss the feasibility and implications of increasing the PAN from 34 to 40 students from September 2016 with Jayne Lowe, DfE (Principal).

7. GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT

The governor visit reports had been circulated; governors liked the format of the reports and the approach of double governor visits.

Governors discussed that specialist governors, e.g. SG governor may need more time in school than once per term in order to be able to drill down. The governors agreed that the focus of the visits was to collect evidence and have discussions with staff to provide in depth knowledge.

The Chair thanked governors who had completed visits and wrote the reports.

The Principal welcomed the focus of the visits, to enable a productive meeting.

Action: Following guidance from Jayne Lowe, DfE on areas to focus on; create a governors visit plan with the focus of the visit for 2016/17 (Stephen Armstrong/Principal).

8. FINANCE

The SBM presented the following updates:

Actual v Budget for the financial year 1st September 2015 to 31st August 2016

Income is forecast slightly higher (around £1.4k) due to higher charges for part-time places and the additions of lettings income.

Staff Expenditure has a £4k underspend as School have not replaced a member of staff who left last month.

Premises Expenditure has a £6k underspend as the budget had included broadband/phone system which is yet to be installed. Also the original rates and utilities budget was higher than actuals.

Supplies and Services Expenditure is £8k down due to the lower cost of lunches.

The projected in year surplus for 2015/16 is £32.5k. The carry forward based on the in year surplus and the balance brought forward is £110.8k

However there is some planned Additional Expenditure (capital expenditure) for areas to improve; school gate automation, website, landscaping/signage, bonus.

After the Additional Expenditure the final carry forward would be £91.7k.

The additional expenditure should be covered by the Principals financial delegated authority.

The governing board discussed if the carry forward of £91.7k is sufficient. The SBM advised that the Accountants had recommended school to hold one to three months of operational expenditure in reserve as set out in Charity Law and Academy Requirements.

Question: What is the definitive reserve level?

Response: Ideally two months of operational expenditure; within the one to three months would be ok. The Reserve Policy outlines why the reserve is held and what the range should be.

The Chair of the Resource and Audit Committee advised that school check which of the Statutory Accounts FRS1 or FRS2 applies to TFA as these define reserves policy and reserves target.

Action: Check if school can use a reserve range or if a specific amount has to be agreed (SBM).

Ratify the 2016/17 budget as agreed by the R&A Committee.

Principal to cover in part 2 minutes.

9. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING

The Principal's report had been issued in advance of the meeting. Part one of the Principal's report contained the following matters:

- Student Summary
- Attendance
- Progress
- Behaviour and Welfare
- The Staff
- The Premises
- SDP/SEF
- DfE Visit

Highlights:

School has seen 44 students through doors since September 2015; anticipate 49 by the end of the current school year.

Around 20 FTE currently; based on H&S requirements of the building.

Anticipate school will receive a number of referrals that school cannot cater for. These referrals will be entered onto a waiting list and the Admissions criteria will be used to allocate places.

Question: Why were 12 students moved into alternative provision from TFA?

Response: Four students moved to SEN provisions, some students were at TFA temporarily, three students did not suit TFA environment.

The Governors feedback was that the report was a good balance of tabular and text.

The Principal confirmed that Jayne Lowe, DfE may complete a 5th and 6th visit free, and recommends that she is appointed the School Improvement Partner (SIP) in Year 3.

10. DIRECTORS REPORT

To receive a report on current matters which the Local Authority wishes to bring to Governors' attention.

- White Paper

Admissions – cover in Part 2.

11. GOVERNOR MONITORING, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Training Liaison Governor (TLG) provided a training update report to the governors.

Skills Matrix - All governors completed the questionnaire and the links to the local community now ok. The TLG was reassured on the skills matrix; however cautioned governors on the diversity of TFA GB. The governing board agreed that they should be reflective of the community in which the school operates in and that if they expand the governing board be conscious of the diversity.

Training - the TLG had attended two courses:

- Governors Induction (also attended by Chairs, Previous Chairs, governors with mixed experiences/diversity). He strongly recommends other governors to attend.
- Strategic Governance (noted that this course is useful if limited strategy experience).

Action: Create a log of courses governors should attend; cross reference hot topics and SG training and link to the courses available (Crawford Prentice and SBM).

Action: Manage a log of courses governors attended (Crawford Prentice and SBM).

The Principal reminded governors to provide evidence of the training that they have completed to the school office.

The governing board agreed that they would log any masterclass sessions as discussed in Item 6.

Question: What does the school pupil population look like?

Response: Once the new building is completed School will add a tree with students and staff, and governors.

Emma Colley advised governors that a great way to “Get to know the students was through the class story on dojo”. She asked governors to review and add their comments.

12. SCHOOL POLICIES

The following policies were approved by the governing board:

- Appraisal & Capability Policy (as reviewed by the Principal)
- Health and Safety Policy (as reviewed by Alastair Stoddart and Mervyn Harding)
- Teachers Pay (Pay Policy) (as reviewed by the Resource and Audit Committee)
- Supporting Children with medical conditions (as reviewed by the SLT)

Chris Heptinstall left the meeting.

13. PLANNED RESIDENTIAL VISITS

Emma Colley updated the governing board with the residential from the 24th May 2016 where six students attended the PGL, Shropshire.

There were a number of planned activities including high ropes and zip wires. The students bonded as a team and school rate this as a successful trip.

The next trip is planned for the final week of school; day trips and an overnight camping trip at Chester Lakes.

The governing board agreed that school must consult with John Hughes, as a critical friend for school residential's.

Question: How were the students received by staff at PGL?

Response: TFA students were allocated a PGL team leader; the individual was great.

Things that school would do differently next time are to book in advance to secure indoor accommodation.

Emma Colley and Lee Cambray shared photographs from the trip with the governing board.

The Chair recommended some pictures of the students would be a great addition to future meetings.

The governing board thanked Emma for running the trip.

14. MEETINGS

It was confirmed that the governing board meetings for the academic year 2016 to 2017 are:

- Thursday 15th December 2016, 4:00-6:00pm (apologises from Stephen for this meeting).
- Thursday 23rd March 2017, 4:00-6:00pm.

- Thursday 6th July 2017, 4:00-6:00pm.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following item of AOB was discussed.

Top up funding for SEN.

The Principal is waiting on final confirmation of the SEN group. The plan is to appoint a TA on a one year contract to increase the staff to student ratio. The Principal is meeting with the County on 13th July 2016 to confirm the situation.

Part 1 finished at 6:05pm.

Emma Colley and Lee Cambray left the meeting.

----- Chair

----- Dated