

Hazeldown School Governing Body

Full Governing Body Committee Meeting – Part 1 Minutes					
Date/Time	18 October 2023				
Location	Hazeldown Primary School				
Chaired by	Dave Dawson				
Attendees		Role	Attendees	Init	Role
Dave Dawson	DD	LA Chair	Jasmine Banning	JB	Staff
Ruth Walters	RW	Co-opted	Paul Hamilton	PH	Parent
Stuart Ludford	SL	Headteacher	Kirsty Prentice	KP	Parent
Kelly Harnett	KHtt	Co-opted	Kevin Gough	KG	Parent
Ruth Doughty	RD	Co-opted			

Apologies	Initials	Role	Absent without apology	Initials	Role
Samantha Atkinson	SA	Co-opted			
Lee Goodenough	LG	Associate Member			

In Attendance	Initials	Role
Tim Syngé	TS	Clerk
Kit Hardee	KHee	Associate Member

Minutes to
Attendees
School website

	Agenda	Led by
1	Apologies	Clerk
2	Declarations of interest	Clerk
3a	Agree minutes of last meeting: 19 July 2023	Clerk
3b	Agree minutes of last meeting: 13 September 2023	Clerk
4	Matters arising from previous meeting: 13 September 2023	Clerk
5	Review terms of office	Clerk
6	Headteacher's Report	SL
7	Portfolio Report: Finance	PH
8	Portfolio Report: Safeguarding	RD
9	Portfolio Report: Personnel	-
10	Portfolio report: Premises and Health & Safety	-
11	Portfolio report: Community & Parent Links	KP
12	Ofsted preparation	SL
13	Policies for review and approval	Various
14	Governor Training	Various
15	Safeguarding Training	-
16	School Improvement Plan 2023/24	DD
17	Impact from this meeting	DD
18	Next meeting	Clerk
19	AOB	Clerk

Item	Details of discussion
1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were apologies from SA and from LG. DD chaired the meeting.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>PH declared that his employer had a trading relationship with Goosemoor, a company which was under consideration for the award of a contract in connection with the operation of the new school kitchen (see item 6 below). PH had no personal involvement in this trading relationship under which Goosemoor was a customer of his employer with annual business to a value of several hundred pounds. The Chair and Clerk discussed this and judged that, in view of the lack of a personal involvement or interest in this contract, there was no need for PH to be excluded from discussion of the relevant agenda item.</p> <p>Other than this, no Governor had any interests to declare in the business of the meeting.</p>
3	<p>Agree minutes of last meeting: 19 July 2023 and 13 September 2023</p> <p>The minutes of the previous FGB meetings held on 19 July 2023 and 13 September 2023 were agreed as a fair record of each of those meetings and were signed by the Chairman.</p>

4	Matters arising from previous minutes: 13 September 2023		
FGB 22/26	PH to work with SBM to prepare a reforecast for Extended Schools in September with a view to recommending a fee increase in January or April 2024.	Carry forward	
FGB 22/27	Staff survey to be undertaken in the Autumn Term 2024.	SL reported that planning for this is underway and that it will be done after half term using School Spider.	
FGB 23/01	DD to forward completed LA Governor application form to the Clerk for onward transmission to Devon Education Services.	Done and approval given by DCC.	
FGB 23/02	SL to work on a presentation for FGB on budget opportunities and constraints including a look at future staffing structures and resourcing.	This will be tabled at the meeting on 29 November, the vacant Autumn Term 2 SIC meeting slot.	
FGB 23/03	SL to draft a schedule of proposed curriculum visits in conjunction with work on the School Improvement Plan 2023/24.	Done at SIC on 4 Oct.	
FGB 23/04	DD, KG and the Clerk to meet to review the Terms of Reference for the Health & Safety portfolio and decide how best to cover these catering and nutrition areas.	KG will make some suggestions and annotations on the existing document and forward these to SL for discussion, following which they will come back to FGB for approval.	
5	<p>Review terms of office</p> <p>The current constitution provides for an FGB with eleven members.</p> <p>Approval from the Local Authority for DD to continue as LA Governor has been received and his reappointment will be proposed at FGB in December (the current term expires then).</p> <p>KP is now a “former” Hazeldown parent and has expressed a willingness to step down in order to create a vacancy for a current parent. She has also expressed a willingness, given her role as SENDCo, to continue to support the work of the Governing Body and this could be done through the role of Associate Member. A proposal to this effect will be brought to FGB in December.</p> <p>Following these changes, there will be two vacancies for parent governors. DD has been in communication with two parents, both of whom have relevant skills and experience, over recent months and the pre-appointment process will continue with both. A third parent has expressed an interest this term and will be told that they will be notified should a vacancy arise.</p>		

Headteacher's Report

DD thanked SL for an excellent and informative Headteacher's Report. The forthcoming session would focus largely on the kitchen project, but in the meantime were there any other aspects which SL wished to highlight?

SL drew attention to the Intensive Training and Practice ("ITAP") report. This had been prepared by KHee, who has done some excellent work with the Exeter Consortium Schools Alliance. Hazeldown's involvement in this scheme was working very well and the School had received some excellent feedback from trainee teachers. Hosting the visits had led all staff to focus on what they do and why. KHee added his view that this had been a very positive experience and wondered how the School could share this with parents. **RD noted that the schools Facebook page appears to be targeted primarily at current parents; perhaps there was an opportunity to include information about forthcoming opportunities for prospective parents, for example in relation to school tours?** KHee's view was that teachers' contributions to social media were very positive but that there was also an opportunity for outreach. **RD wondered whether the website links to key documents such as the in-year admissions form could be given greater prominence.** SL agreed to look at this. **PH suggested also improving the information about the free hours entitlement at Foundation Stage.** The way the School managed the transition from Foundation stage to Reception was excellent and received good feedback from the parent body.

SL briefed Governors on attendance. The School's year-to-date record was better than the national average, but there was scope for improvement. Guidance from the DfE and from DCC was not always consistent. The School's practice included phoning parents and speaking to them, however there was a limit to how much could be achieved. Sometimes the class teacher or the TA was best placed to hold a conversation with parents. **PH asked whether holidays in term time contributed to the issue.** SL confirmed this and said that he was putting nine cases forward for fines. Devon's latest guidance suggested that a second offence would lead to a court appearance although it was not clear whether this policy was yet in force. It was apparent that the fines system did not always act as a deterrent, especially when compared to the savings which could be achieved from making holiday bookings in term time.

In relation to the Initial Teacher Training ("ITT") students referred to in the report, RD had asked "Are the ITT students salaried as if they are then they must be added to the SCR." SL replied that they were not.

DD introduced the topic of the kitchen project. He started by thanking those involved, particularly SL, the SBM and the site manager for their work in achieving completion of this project before the start of term. He noted also the favourable variance against budget for the project. A decision was now required regarding operation of the kitchen facility and the Headteacher's Report included details of the three options together with a recommendation.

Headteacher's Report (continued)

SL summarised his report. It was too early for the School to consider running the kitchen operation in house from the outset, as there was a lack of experience and there were many risks. The traditional approach of contracting out had been considered and two possible providers assessed. One of these was known to have performance issues locally and soundings taken from a number of schools were not positive. The other was a large national provider and Hazeldown would be a very small customer with no effective leverage should the contract not go well.

The third option was for a hybrid approach. The only company offering this was Goosemoor, a Devon-based company which had developed a strong reputation for its services in a short period of time. Unfortunately it was impossible to find the three required computing quotes for the kind of service that they offered. Governors would have to acknowledge this should this recommendation be approved.

A wide-ranging discussion ensued. Benefits of the Goosemoor approach included the fact that staff would be employed by the School and would be part of the whole School team; this would bring organisational and cultural benefits. The management fee charged was low and services provided within the fee were good. The main risk was that Goosemoor might grow too fast and be unable to keep their service levels up. **Both KG and DD queried this and wondered how the company was able to provide such a service for the low cost.** It was concluded that they had a tried and tested model and would recoup their costs in subsequent periods. As for contingency planning, if a contract proved unsuccessful in the first year or two, the School would go to a large national provider; if it proved unsuccessful later on, the School would also have the option of taking provision in house.

SL suggested that the key to success was the appointment of a good kitchen manager at the top of D grade or E depending on experience. Chefs could be employed on a termtime-only basis which should be attractive to some applicants. KG suggested that the School might initially sign up for a 12-month period to demonstrate its commitment and to give time to get the menus right. **RD asked who was responsible for training.** SL confirmed that Goosemoor would do this and that their cover arrangements were also good. It was likely that the School would require a kitchen manager and two additional posts. Some of the schools MTAs had already expressed an interest in moving across; serving and dishwashing would form a part of the new structure. This would have a beneficial impact on the School's existing staff budgets.

SL run through some costings based on the present number of pupils having lunch (approx. 220) and on a prospective figure of 280. He reviewed food costs, which fell with increased volumes, and total costs. Income would be received from Universal Infant Free School Meals ("UIFSM") and from paying parents. On present numbers the School might attain a surplus of around £5k from the kitchen and on the higher numbers this figure could be in the region of £10k to £15k. SL drew attention to the principal unknowns in these figures. He also highlighted the benefits including the good nutrition of children and the likelihood of some parental interest and support. In summary, the school could cover its costs.

6	<p>Headteacher’s Report (continued)</p> <p><i>RW said that it was possible to see this offer as “too good to be true”. How could the service be verified?</i> SL confirmed that the SBM had spoken to a number of other schools. Feedback was positive and most schools had experienced an increase in the number of pupils wanting lunch .</p> <p>DD asked whether Governors were content to approve this model given that there was only a single provider and that no competing quotes could be obtained. Governors confirmed that they were content and they were satisfied that suitable due diligence had been carried out. DD proposed approval of a contract with Goosemoor, this was seconded by KG and the decision was approved by FGB.</p> <p><i>Decision: the School is authorised to enter into a catering support contract with Goosemoor for an initial period of three terms, starting in January 2024, at an initial fee of £500 per term, and to make appropriate arrangements in relation to employment and food procurement contracts as are necessary to commence the provision of school meals from that date.</i></p> <p>DD thanked SL for an informative and comprehensive report and thanked all Governors for their contribution to the discussions and decision regarding future mealtime catering at the School.</p>
7	<p>Portfolio Report: Finance</p> <p>DD introduced the report, noting that this continued to be a tough year. He drew attention to two questions that he had asked and acknowledged that one of these was due to a misunderstanding. For the record, the questions were as follows:</p> <p><i>Supply costs — the notes seem to suggest the supply costs are running a high level. I think that we understand the reasons supply costs would be higher last term, in part due to the issues surrounding foundation stage, but can you give some detail as to why supply costs continue to be high this term?</i> LG responded: “Our supply budget was significantly impacted right at the start of the financial year due to the need for supply in both FS and Y5 as a result of challenging performance with two teachers. Although we tried to cover as much of this as was possible internally, FS required supply teachers throughout the Spring and Summer terms. Y5 required supply teachers from February-April.</p> <p>The budget was also further impacted by teacher industrial action days. In order to keep the school open, we required at least three supply teachers on each of the days. In the current academic year, we have been hit very hard by staff absence thus far this term. Some of this has been general illness but we have also had a number of other unplanned and unforeseen events that have required cover, for example a TA undergoing an operation which required four days of TA supply cover and a child accidentally opening a door into a teacher’s head, leading to them suffering concussion and requiring four days of supply (at an approximate cost of £700). Our cover teacher has also had five days of illness: where possible, we have rearranged cover at no cost - where this wasn’t an option, it has led to supply use.</p> <p>We have also had to invest time in phonics / literacy subject release to enable effective implementation of the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised scheme. We are in a difficult position where we are having to make challenging decisions: do we: a) provide the cover to enable activities that benefit teaching and learning, but further increase the overspend; b) attempt to lessen the impact on the overspend by not providing cover or cancelling SLT time / CPD activities, diluting the quality of T&L when doing so.”</p>

Portfolio Report: Finance (continued)

Little Wandle - notes suggest that this package was not budgeted for, why was this? Did we look at any alternative packages and consider a cost / benefit analysis? I seem to recall, although having read last year's finance policy I can't find any detail, that any unbudgeted spend over a certain figure needed to be signed off by Governors, although I think that Stuart had delegated authority up to a certain level. Am I correct or does this relate to some other specific spending? SL responded: "This was an unbudgeted spend and a decision made partly due to timing. Once we had heard confirmation that the previous phonics leader, who had been on long-term absence, had taken the decision to resign, this, along with an increasing lack of confidence in our self-written scheme due in part to the outcomes from Inspection reports which we keep a watchful eye on (particularly with regard to reading). This was after the budget had been set. We had been looking at DfE approved schemes previously but felt that, with OFSTED on the horizon, making the move to a 'badged', researched and 'off the shelf' scheme was the best move. Doing this in time to begin the new academic year became imperative, rather than postponing the decision. The aim was to move quickly to start and then re-organise the cost by cutting down in other areas moving forwards. We have not bought into two maths resources, recouping about £1500.

We looked at alternatives, primarily Read, Write Inc. But Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised was easier to implement, closer to our previous way of working and the early reading books which we had previously purchased to resource our own scheme were the same ones that Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised uses. It was also cheaper overall.

We have met with the English Hub, in the hope of them being able to provide funding up to £6,000 to offset the cost.

Changing the phonics scheme was 'loosely discussed' with Governors, but not formally, or as a minuted discussion. I can't find a direct reference to an amount in the finance policy either but this might be something to look into either including it, or clarifying wording if it is there. I apologise if I have gone ahead against policy direction – once we have clarified this, I will ensure it is at the forefront of any future mid-year decision making

In relation to this latter question and response, DD acknowledged that the reference to Governors signing off unbudgeted spend was taken from a previous finance policy. The wording included in this previous policy had not been transferred to and included in the latest adopted finance policy, so the query as to whether policy had been followed was invalid. DD apologised for the suggestion.

DD asked PH whether he wished to add to the written report. PH summarised his report by confirming that this was indeed a tough year. However, in spite of the challenges, Hazeldown continued to offer a very positive range of opportunities for children, there was a good buzz at the School, and staff were continually trying to find the best way of keeping Hazeldown in the best possible place. SL and his team continued to search for cost saving opportunities and to scan for good ideas and initiatives from other schools.

PH drew attention to the section of his report on Extended Schools. His objective was for these operations to break even so that a recharge could be made by the School in respect of rent and overheads, thereby obtaining a positive impact for whole school finance. He provided an update from the Breakfast and After-School Club Leader.

Breakfast club was still 25% down on pre-COVID numbers and this could be attributed to a number of factors including a greater prevalence of working from home and possibly some more relaxed attitudes in some parts to formal timetables and structures. By contrast, after-school club numbers were around 25% up on pre-COVID numbers. PH intended to review the figures further with the SBM later this term so that an informed recommendation could be considered regarding April 2024 price increases.

	DD thanked PH for his report.
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7	<p>Portfolio Report: Finance (continued)</p> <p>SL added some comment regarding school finance. The two major uncertainties were in relation to pupil numbers and expected income per pupil. In 2023, the School had been named as first choice by 60 families and this would have led to full classes, however starters numbered 53 (six families had moved away from the area prior to the start of term and one family had revised their choice). The messaging from Devon County Council made future planning very difficult and there was conflicting information about likely numbers in the context of a falling demographic in this age range. SL was due to attend a county finance session with the SBM and DD in November and he hoped that this would provide some useful information and insight which could be used for planning purposes. This would be followed by the FGB finance session towards the end of the month.</p>
8	<p>Portfolio Report: Safeguarding portfolio</p> <p>DD thanked RD for a comprehensive and informative portfolio report. RD summarised the report by saying that safeguarding was evidently a high priority at the School and that there were lots of positives arising from her visit. There were a couple of minor matters to attend to on the Single Central Register and the School was acting on these.</p>
9	<p>Portfolio Report: Personnel portfolio</p> <p>No report was due and KHtt confirmed that there were no matters to be brought to the attention of FGB at this time.</p>
10	<p>Portfolio Report: Premises and Health & Safety</p> <p>No report was due and KG confirmed that there were no matters to be brought to the attention of FGB at this time.</p>
11	<p>Portfolio Report: Community & Parent Links</p> <p>DD thanked KP for her report which will be considered at FGB2.</p>
12	<p>Ofsted preparation</p> <p>This item will be taken at FGB2 later in the term.</p>
13	<p>Policies for approval</p> <p>Governors considered the policies which were due for approval at this meeting. All had been made available on OneDrive for the previous two weeks.</p> <p>RD reported that she had agreed some small changes to the Safeguarding Policy with SL and that these were reflected in the version tabled for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Safeguarding Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p>

13	<p>Policies for approval (continued)</p> <p>PH reported that DD had proposed some minor changes to the Teachers' Pay Policy and that, following this, he recommended it for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Teachers' Pay Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>PH recommended the Charging and Remissions Policy for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Charging and Remissions Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>KP recommended the Pre-School Admissions Policy (including Charging and Remissions) for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Pre-School Admissions Policy (including Charging and Remissions) (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>DD described a proposed amendment to the Complaints Policy which clarified the complaints committee process in deciding the format of a Stage 2 meeting. Governors approved this.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Complaints Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>SL explained that the PSHE and RSHE policies had been merged. It was the latter which required approval from a regulatory point of view.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the RSHE Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>JB recommended the Governor Visits Policy and Protocol for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Governor Visits Policy and Protocol (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>JB recommended the Curriculum Policy for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Curriculum Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>RW recommended the Attendance Policy for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Attendance Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>Decision: As there were no changes to the Teaching and Learning Policy and the More Able and Talented Policy, last year's approval of these was rolled forward without review (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p>
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13	<p>Policies for approval (continued)</p> <p>In respect of the Admissions Policy, DD noted that an amendment was required to the narrative on Early Years provision. There was also scope to re-word the strategy to better reflect the School's adherence to North Star.</p> <p>Decision: Subject to these agreed amendments, FGB approved the Admissions Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).</p> <p>KHee reported that SLT had approved various subject policies together with the Mobile Phone Policy, the Smoking Policy, the Worship Policy and the Education of Children in Care Policy and Governors noted this.</p>
14	<p>Governor Training</p> <p>None to report.</p>
15	<p>Safeguarding Training</p> <p>SL ran a session which (1) described the key changes to KCSIE September 2023 and (2) reminded FGB members of the School's key processes.</p> <p>On KCSIE, he ran through the focus on filtering and monitoring, explaining how the School managed this, the categories of "Children Missing Education" and "Children Absent from Education" and the February 2023 change in the law regarding forced marriage.</p> <p>On School processes, he summarised the work and importance of the safeguarding team, CPOMS, training and the wider culture.</p>
16	<p>School Improvement Plan 2023/24</p> <p>Item carried forward to FGB2.</p>
17	<p>Impact from this meeting</p> <p>DD noted the important discussions held and decision made over the operation of the new kitchen. This would have far-reaching and positive impacts on the School's pupils, for example in relation to nutrition, physical wellbeing and also, hopefully, the School's finances.</p> <p>Governors had been made aware of the financial challenges facing the School (in common with all Devon schools) and were reassured by the importance placed on this challenge by SLT.</p> <p>Informative and insightful portfolio reports had been received in relation to finance and safeguarding and some useful policy updates had been agreed. Actions to promote the School and encourage applications had been discussed.</p>

18	<p>Next Meeting(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FGB Finance briefing and review - 29 Nov 2023 ● FGB Wednesday - 13 Dec 2023 <p><i>Spring Term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SIC: 24 January 2024 ● FGB: 7 February 2024 ● <i>tb</i>: 13 March 2024 ● FGB: 27 March 2024
19	<p>AOB</p> <p>Regarding the Pay Committee, DD noted that the present members were DD, PH and SA. It would be desirable to hold a meeting within the first week after half term and he would arrange this.</p>
	<p>The meeting ended at 8:35pm.</p>

Summary of decisions and proposed actions		
<i>Actions</i>		
FGB 22/26	PH to work with SBM to prepare a reforecast for Extended Schools in September with a view to recommending a fee increase in January or April 2024.	Carry forward
FGB 23/04	DD, KG and the Clerk to meet to review the Terms of Reference for the Health & Safety portfolio and decide how best to cover these catering and nutrition areas.	KG will make some suggestions and annotations on the existing document and forward these to SL for discussion, following which they will come back to FGB for approval.
FGB 23/05	Clerk to carry forward: 11 Community and Parent Links portfolio report 12 Ofsted preparation item 16 School Improvement Plan 2023/24 – Governance section (see also Matter Arising from 4 October SIC meeting).	Clerk

Summary of decisions and proposed actions (continued)		
<i>Decisions</i>		
13	FGB approved the Safeguarding Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Teachers' Pay Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Charging and Remissions Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Pre-School Admissions Policy (including Charging and Remissions) (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Complaints Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the RSHE Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Governor Visits Policy and Protocol (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Curriculum Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	FGB approved the Attendance Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	As there were no changes to the Teaching and Learning Policy and the More Able and Talented Policy, last year's approval of these was rolled forward without review (approval date: 18 October 2023).	
13	Subject to agreed amendments, FGB approved the Admissions Policy (approval date: 18 October 2023).	

These minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.	
Signed (Chair of Committee)	Date