

Hazeldown School Governing Body

School Improvement Committee Meeting (Spring Term) – Part 1 Minutes					
Date/Time	24 January 2024 at 6:30pm				
Location	Hazeldown Primary School				
Chaired by	Samantha Atkinson				
Attendees		Role	Attendees	Init	Role
Samantha Atkinson	SA	Co-opted	Kelly Harnett	KHtt	Parent
Stuart Ludford	SL	Headteacher	Paul Hamilton	PH	Parent
Ruth Doughty	RD	Co-opted			

In Attendance	Initials	Role
Kit Hardee	KHar	Associate Member
Lee Goodenough	LG	Associate Member
Kirsty Prentice	KP	Associate Member
Tim Syngé	TS	Clerk

Minutes to
Attendees
School website

Apologies	Initials	Role	Absent without apology	Initials	Role
Dave Dawson	DD	LA Chair			
Ruth Walters	RW	Co-opted Vice Chair			
Jasmine Banning	JB	Staff Governor			

	Agenda	Led by
1	Apologies	Clerk
2	Declarations of Interest	Chair
3	Minutes of previous meeting: 4 October 2023	Chair
4	Matters arising from previous meeting: 4 October 2023	Chair
5	Headteacher's Report on data drop	SL
6	School Improvement Plan 2023/24	SL
7	Impact from this meeting	Chair
8	SI Committee focus for the next meeting	Chair
9	Next meeting	Clerk
10	AOB	Chair

Item	Details of discussion		
1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were apologies received from DD, RW and JB.</p> <p>SA chaired the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that KG had resigned from the Governing Body (effective date: 17 January 2024). He had written a very positive letter of resignation explaining that current forthcoming work commitments would prevent him from contributing to the work of FGB as fully as he would wish to.</p> <p>Governors expressed their thanks to KG for all his work.</p>		
2	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None declared.</p>		
3	<p>Minutes of previous meeting: 4 October 2023</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 October 2023 were confirmed as a fair record of that meeting. A set was signed by the Chair.</p>		
4	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes: 4 October 2023</p> <p>There were three matters arising from the last meeting.</p>		
	SI 23/01	Following Governor visits, all Governors to provide KHee with a brief snapshot of their visit so that he can post a suitable “newsflash” on appropriate social media channels.	All Governors were reminded of this. (Item to be removed from Matters Arising.)
	SI 23/02	RW and DD to liaise over drafting of the new Governance section for the Plan so that this can be tabled and approved later this term.	This was approved by FGB on 13 Dec 2023
	SI 23/03	Clerk to remind Governors about Summer Term Governor Visits in Spring Term.	This has been added to the foot of all FGB agendas.
5	<p>Headteacher’s Report on the December 2023 data drop</p> <p>SL introduced his report on the December 2023 data drop by summarising that the figures were, in general, lower than the School would have liked. The Senior Leadership Team had looked in great detail at the reasons for the results and had concluded that these were slightly less concerning than they had appeared at first sight. He acknowledged that Y1 was still challenging.</p> <p>He explained that there were, however, some CPD issues in recording data and in the way that some of the judgments were made. For example, many teachers took the approach that, if a result was on a cusp between two bands, they would not put the result in the higher bracket as this generated</p>		

	<p>tougher targets for next time. Some teachers had been over cautious. Some pupils were evidently Greater Depth, but had not been recorded as such.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Headteacher’s Report on the July 2023 data drop (continued)</p> <p>There was currently an exercise in progress working with staff over their approach to assessment. In addition, the continuum of progress between year groups had to an extent been lost. Some pupils had been started in their new Year Group on a lower assessment than that with which they had finished the previous year.</p> <p>Pupil progress meetings this year had been positive. SL had sat in on many of these and teachers were clear on the actions to be followed. SL was expecting improvements as a result of these meetings.</p> <p>SA thanked SL for placing the data in this context. She asked whether therefore this December data represented an anomaly. KHee said that a lot had been put in place to moderate KS1 data to improve its accuracy. RD asked whether moderation was done in-year and SL confirmed that it was. LG gave an example of a child who was rated 115 and who had not been assessed as Greater Depth. A situation like this should cause staff to ask questions about this. SL agreed and said that staff are expected to ask for help if they are unsure about placing children in Greater Depth.</p> <p>SA drew attention to the differences between cohorts in some Year Groups, for example the Bonsai class was shown as consistently outperforming the Monkey Puzzle class. SL responded that some children move between classes and KHee added that there was now more communication between the teachers in a Year Group than at some times previously. He noted that, in Y2, Palm class was reported as outperforming Apple class. The two classes had received differing experiences in the previous year.</p> <p>RD asked about Y1. SL explained that staffing changes had impacted these figures and that there were one or two children who were demanding a significant proportion of staff time. KP noted that the transition from Foundation Stage to Y1 might need further review. LG explained that added TA support had been provided, however two children were receiving “Nurture” provision and arguably should be in specialist settings. It was difficult balancing the needs of individuals and the needs of the cohort with the resources which were available.</p> <p>SL moved on to the IDSR, drawing attention to the fact that this was dated 13 December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School Characteristics</i> set the context stop. It would be clear to inspectors that there were “no excuses”, For example, the school was below average for Free School Meals (FSM) and for SEND. • The <i>Ethnicity</i> profile was typical for Devon. • The main area of interest in <i>SEND Characteristics</i> was Speech, Language and Communication needs. SL described some of the staff and staffing involved in addressing this.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under <i>Staffing</i>, these were 2021/22 figures, however, there were no concerns highlighted by the IDSR report.
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5	<p>Headteacher’s Report on the July 2023 data drop (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Absence</i> was a thorny issue stop. Last week's figures were: Overall: 5.1%; Persistent: 15.3%. He would say more about attendance in the context of the School Improvement Plan (see Item 6). • On <i>Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions</i>, SL noted that one child had received 10 or more suspensions already this year. • Turning to <i>Progress and Attainment</i>, there were one or two areas where the school differed from national figures, however, from Ofsted’s point of view, he expected these not to be significant. He drew attention to Reading, Writing and Mathematics (RWM) at KS2 where the School reported a figure of 55% against a national figure of 59%. This was an area of focus. LG reminded Governors that the School’s strategy, derived from its commitment to North Star principles, was to ensure full curriculum coverage rather than a special focus on data and on SATs. The Senior Leadership Team considered this to be a moral choice. SL agreed and said that, as in other areas, there was a difficult question of balance; the School needed to expose children to the breadth of the curriculum, however, reading, writing, and mathematics were undoubtedly key. <p>In summary, SL reminded Governors of the importance of being aware of the IDSR and also of the accompanying detailed school performance summary report which was also available for review on OneDrive.</p> <p>SA thanked SL for this comprehensive and informative report.</p>
6	<p>School Improvement Plan 2023/24</p> <p>SA referred to the annotated School Improvement Plan 2023/24 which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. He drew the attention of governors to the Curriculum section. The School website was a focus this term. Mathematics was being used as an exemplar for other subjects and he commended this page of the website to Governors for review. He acknowledged that there was still plenty of yellow highlighting (indicating work in progress) on the Plan and confirmed that there was a lot of activity this term.</p> <p>On Attendance, SL confirmed that the School had done a great deal. It had not been straightforward interpreting the DfE’s newly-published requirements and Devon CC’s policies on attendance. Structures and processes for communication with parents had been set up. It was clear that the School was having to deal with changed societal attitudes. The School was receiving lots of holiday requests and lots of excuses. All of this created a huge demand on time for the Deputy Head and for the office team in particular. One option may be to re-rate a member of the office team so that she could take more responsibility in this area, however, this would have budget implications. SL was pleased with progress in terms of the actions achieved in-school, however the situation was extremely frustrating as there was little to report in the way of positive progress in the resulting attendance figures.</p>

School Improvement Plan 2023/24 (continued)

LG gave Governors an insight into the response process, using an example of a caseload of fifteen children and the process for managing these. It was evident that fines had little if any impact. Frustratingly, it was not possible to refer repeat offenders to the court system as laid down, as the officer responsible for this in Devon was on maternity leave and no replacement had been made available.

On **SEND**, the member of staff who was responsible for emotional support and was also School Librarian had indicated a wish to take early retirement. It was likely that her role, which also included some reading support, would be tweaked a little. In the meantime, KHee had taken on the role of SENCO.

SLT were working out how best to deal with an issue relating to children with EHCPs which carried funding for a dedicated TA. The School recognised that one-to-one support was not necessarily ideal, however funding was normally tied to a specific child. This created problems in the drawing up of TA contracts of employment and presented challenges when a child in receipt of such support left the School. Ideally, it would be possible to reallocate the TA in question to other pupils. This was likely to be a topic for discussion at the one-off FGB meeting later this term (see Item 8).

SL noted that there was still some yellow highlighting on the **Teaching and Learning** section. He felt that good progress was being made in relation to Early Years. Helen Stephenson, the Early Years and Childcare Advisor for our area, was due to visit the School tomorrow.

A lot of the planned actions in relation to **Attendance** had been completed and this was reflected in a high proportion of green markings on the annotated SIP.

SL noted that, in addition to the significant new requirements imposed on the school in relation to attendance, there was a lot of new Health & Safety guidance which had been issued recently. This placed demands on the Site Manager and on SL himself, in particular, and there were a lot of courses to be completed.

School Improvement Plan 2023/24 (continued)

SL noted that the **Governance** section of the plan had not been updated before the meeting. Discussion ensued and the following points were made.

Good Governance

Recently, there was less evidence of written questions being tabled in advance on the Headteacher's Report and on portfolio reports. It was not clear why this was the case, However, the Clerk continued to capture Governor questions which were raised orally during meetings.

Communication between Governors in order to ensure that there was no duplication of effort or undue demands on staff time appeared to be working satisfactorily.

Ofsted

Preparation for Ofsted includes the ongoing briefing sessions from SL in FGB meetings. As a part of Ofsted preparation, RD offered to carry out a review of the School website using a checklist to which she had access through her employer. SL noted that School Spider (the designer of the School's website) professed to offer an ongoing compliance check via the design and configuration of the School website, however this offer was appreciated and the proposed review by RD would be welcome.

Action: RD to carry out compliance review of the website.

Governor Visits

These have resumed and are set out on the Agenda.

Governor profile among parents

In terms of the profile of the Governing Body among parents, Parent Forums may be an option. KHee noted that the Accelerated Reader session had been well attended by parents, however, including a formal governor session after such meetings may not be popular.

It was always helpful for Governors to be available during or after School events, wearing a Governor lanyard so that parents could identify them and speak to them.

Action: SL to share links to the following sources of information about School events with Governors:

- **Newsletter**
- **Access by Governors to the School Diary through existing Outlook sign-ins.**
- **Instructions for registering a Governor account with School Spider, which is the main source of information and news for parents.**

SL said that there would be a taster session to give parents an opportunity to see the new kitchen later this term. Governors were welcome to attend this.

Action: Clerk to liaise with DD over incorporation of the above discussion and progress into the School Improvement Plan.

7	<p>Impact from this meeting</p> <p>SA summarised the meeting. Governors had taken taken the opportunity to have a really good look at the data. It was apparent that this did not tell the full story and that the context was important. This context has been clearly conveyed to Governors. Staff confidence about interpretation and input of data has improved.</p> <p>SA thanked the Senior Leadership Team for all their work on the School Improvement Plan and noted in particular the huge amount of work carried out on attendance, even though the desired impact had not yet been obtained. The picture on attendance appeared to be similar across the country and this was a nationwide societal challenge.</p> <p>Governors had been reminded of the clear vision of what Hazeldown stands for. North Star lay behind the School's approach to education. Governors acknowledged that there was often a tough balance in decision making and recognised that the School had clearly evaluated carefully the available options before reaching key decisions. SA expressed the thanks of the Governing Body to all staff.</p>
8	<p>SI Committee focus for the next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting, which will be on 8 May 2024 in the Summer Term, will review and analyse the March 2024 data drop and assess progress against the SIP.</p>
9	<p>Next Meeting(s)</p> <p>The next meeting of the School Improvement Committee will take place on 8 May and RD will chair this.</p> <p>FGB1 is on 7 February 2024 and FGB2 on 27 March 2024.</p> <p>There will be a meeting on 13 March 2024 in the School Improvement slot and this will likely focus on SEND and on management of TA resources and contracts.</p>
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>RD reported that, following a safeguarding meeting with SL earlier in the term, she had updated the portfolio planner. A new pattern for reporting on the safeguarding portfolio through the year was proposed and this was available for review. RD intended to attend a school absence meeting and in addition to sit in on a school assembly covering the topic of internet safety.</p>
	<p>The meeting ended at 08:25pm.</p>

Summary of decisions and proposed actions		
SI 23/04	RD to carry out compliance review of the website.	
SI 23/05	SL to share links to the following sources of information about School events with Governors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter • Access by Governors to the School Diary through existing Outlook sign-ins. • Instructions for registering a Governor account with School Spider, which is the main source of information and news for parents. 	
SI 23/06	Clerk to liaise with DD over incorporation of the above discussion and progress into the School Improvement Plan.	

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