

Hazeldown School Governing Body

Full Governing Body Committee Meeting – Part 1 Minutes					
Date/Time	7 February 2024				
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			
Ruth Doughty	RD	Co-opted			

Apologies	Initials	Role	Absent without apology	Initials	Role
Samantha Atkinson	SA	Co-opted			

In Attendance	Initials	Role
Tim Syngé	TS	Clerk
Lee Goodenough	LG	Associate Member
Kit Hardee	KHee	Associate Member
Matt Hallett	MH	Governor Designate

Minutes to
Attendees
School website

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

Item	Details of discussion
1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were apologies from SA. DD chaired the meeting.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No Governor had any interests to declare in the business of the meeting.</p>
3	<p>Agree minutes of last meeting: 13 December 2023</p> <p>The minutes of the previous FGB meeting held on 13 December 2023 were agreed as a fair record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.</p>

4	Matters arising from previous minutes: 13 September 2023		
	FGB 23/06	Governors who have not yet completed 2023/24 safeguarding training to do this and forward certificate to KHee.	KHee will follow up with the remaining individual Governors. Item to be dropped from Matters Arising.
5	<p>Review terms of office</p> <p>A proposal for the appointment of Matt Hallett (MH) as a Parent Governor was tabled. <i>MH left the meeting.</i></p> <p>MH's appointment was approved. <i>MH returned to the meeting.</i></p> <p>Following this appointment, there are two vacancies for Parent Governors. DD is continuing in discussion with a parent who last year expressed an interest in becoming a Parent Governor. It is two years since the School last advertised a vacancy to the whole parent body and it was agreed that this will done again this term. A second parent enquired about opportunities at the start of the current school year and DD will advise him that the vacancy will be advertised and invite him to apply by this route.</p>		
6	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>DD thanked SL for an informative Headteacher's Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He congratulated LG on his appointment to headship of a local school from September, noting that this would be a loss to Hazeldown. • He referred to the Staff Survey, which Governors had previously reviewed, and to the Parent Survey, which SL would pick up as part of Ofsted preparation (see item 14). • He observed that progress in relation to the new kitchen was encouraging; there were still risk assessments to be completed and staffing arrangements to finalise. • He noted that some new funding for the school appeared possible; it was not clear whether this would be sufficient for the School's aspirations. <p>SL provided an update on selected items.</p> <p>There would be a school assembly on the new kitchen later in the term. The newly appointed Kitchen Manager had adopted a confident and positive approach to the project. She was already liaising with the chosen contractor Educatering. The kitchen would be operated on a trial basis during the last two days of term so that any issues could be identified and addressed before next term.</p> <p>Succession planning for the role of the School's Emotional Support/Librarian member of staff was under way. Several people had expressed an interest in the Librarian element of the role. The TA and emotional support roles would probably see a move away from 1:1 provision.</p>		

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Headteacher's Report (continued)

KHee reported that following his meeting with Devon CC's SEND Adviser Hannah Chamings, her colleague James had visited the School and had been impressed with the systems and processes in place, for example the Graduated Response tool. He had noted the involvement of classroom teachers in SEND provision and had contrasted this with schools where too much was still the responsibility of the SENCo. He had observed that there were robust systems in place to measure the progress of children with SEND, even where they might well remain below average.

SL observed that LG's departure would leave a big gap at senior leadership level. There were different options including recruiting a replacement in the same role, restructuring to a different model or applying the funds elsewhere, potentially to enable retention of key staff whilst ensuring all the tasks can be completed through different roles being created. It was important that plans were tied in with the School budget and it was frustrating that reliable income projections could not yet be prepared.

SL reported on attendance. Following a weekly cycle for managing this was not feasible and so this was being done half-termly. Justine Williams, Devon CC's Education Welfare Officer, was focusing on schools with lower attendance and did not seem unduly interested in Hazeldown. SL felt that Hazeldown now had a robust system in place, but there were always new children slipping into the zone of concern. **RW asked what the impact of the School's activity in this area was.** LG explained that there was some measurable impact, from both the earlier and later stages of the process, however the attitudes of individual families to this issue varied considerably and so the overall picture was not improving as much as the School would like. It was questionable whether the time and effort being put into the systems was really worthwhile given the demand on senior leadership time and the consequent need to reduce focus on some other areas. The attendance figure was remaining at around 94% (by comparison it had been 97% before COVID-19). DD observed that there appeared to be something of a societal shift in attitudes and that some of this was driven by parental anxieties as much as children's behaviours.

LG reported that a Section 19 referral had been made by the School in respect of one child whose attendance in the current school year was below 5%. This required Devon CC to put educational provision in place and the School would lose its funding for that pupil.

SL thanked RD for carrying out the website compliance review. It was surprising that gaps had been identified, as School Spider professed to offer a compliance check, however the gaps would be attended to and amended as necessary.

SL provided a brief update on the School's security arrangements and its plans to move away from ADT as a provider; he also reported on the UKHSA's new measles guidelines requiring infectious children to be kept away from school and for outbreaks to be reported to the LA's Director of Public Health.

DD thanked SL for an informative and comprehensive report.

7a	<p>Portfolio Report: Finance</p> <p>PH introduced the report, noting that there was some small cause for optimism as updates to the current year figures made it appear more likely that the year three budget would not be in deficit.</p> <p>He reported that the School was continuing to work within its budget constraints and to forecast on this basis; there were no unrealistic assumptions about future income.</p> <p><i>RW asked whether amounts that were budgeted to be carried forward to reduce or eliminate any year three deficit could be clawed back.</i> SL confirmed that this was a possibility for maintained schools which, unlike academies, could be asked to return an end-of-year surplus. This must be an increased risk given the financial crisis at DCC.</p> <p>LG drew the attention of Governors to the consequences of the School's prudent approach for staff on temporary or fixed-term contracts; there was no guarantee that their posts could be funded from September and so there was a risk that they may, for understandable personal reasons, decide to move to another school. This was impacting on morale and on individual staff wellbeing.</p> <p>In some previous years, the budget had included contingency plans involving the Deputy and Assistant Head roles being allocated additional classroom teaching to help offset any deficit; this was not desirable in view of the increasing likelihood that such measures would need to be enacted.</p> <p>DD thanked PH for this report. It was likely that the non-routine FGB meeting in March would include a session on finalisation of the budget.</p>
7b	<p>Schools Financial Value Statement ("SFVS")</p> <p>DD and PH had reviewed the draft SFVS. They recommended this for approval. Governors noted that almost all responses were framed as "Yes". In the School Strategy section, one response was given as "In Part"; this was against the question "Does the school have a realistic, sustainable and flexible financial strategy in place for at least 3 years, based on realistic assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures?" and the reasons for this response were understood and accepted by FGB.</p> <p>Decision: Governors authorised DD to sign off the SFVS and submit it without further amendment or added content.</p>

8	<p>Portfolio Report: Safeguarding portfolio</p> <p>DD thanked RD for a comprehensive and informative portfolio report. RD reported that she had had a positive meeting with the Year 5 and 6 Team Leader, who was also responsible for leading on internet safety in the School, and that she would carry out a further visit to meet with SL on this topic. It was evident from her work that internet safety was woven into the curriculum and this was very positive.</p> <p>SL reported that the Body Happy Org had run a workshop on body image for Year 6 and this had had a positive impact.</p> <p><i>MH asked about the School's activities in relation to fire safety.</i> SL explained that representatives from the Fire & Rescue Service visited at KS1 and KS2.</p> <p><i>MH said that there was a safeguarding team at the Fire & Rescue Service.</i></p> <p>Action: MH agreed to make contact with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Safeguarding team and also their Education Officer to establish a link for the school for future reference. He would update FGB with all the detail.</p>
9	<p>Portfolio Report: Personnel portfolio</p> <p>No report was due. KHtt reported that feedback she had received from staff on the new staff appraisal system was positive. This was more time consuming than the previous system and SL explained that some time had been given back to staff through reductions in staff meeting time.</p>
10	<p>Portfolio Report: Premises and Health & Safety</p> <p>No written report had been prepared following KG's resignation. DD indicated that MH was likely to take on this portfolio. KG had offered to run a handover session later in the term.</p> <p>DD reported that he had discussed with SL the areas covered by this portfolio. The annual premises inspection had been carried out in January and the actions arising from this were not unduly onerous and were being addressed. SL intended to review the Site Manager role to ensure that all areas of legal or regulatory compliance were being managed and checked in a suitable manner; there may be some training or other action necessary to ensure this.</p>
11	<p>Portfolio Report: Community & Parent Links</p> <p>DD reported that he would take on this portfolio pending further Governor appointments.</p>
12	<p>Portfolio Report: Vulnerable Pupils</p> <p>No report was due at this meeting.</p> <p>RW provided an oral briefing on a recent complaint which had been managed under the School's Complaints Policy. This report is recorded in Part II minutes of this meeting and is confidential for members of the Full Governing Body only.</p>

13	<p>Portfolio Report: Curriculum</p> <p>No report due and no matters for the attention of Governors.</p>
14	<p>Ofsted preparation</p> <p>SL reminded Governors that the next Ofsted inspection is expected before July 2025. He drew attention to the Rethinking School Inspection report issued by NAHT which was included in the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>SL turned to the summary of the Parent Survey responses. He expressed frustration that some parents had answered “Don’t Know” to questions such as “My child is happy at this school”.</p> <p>He acknowledged that the School needed to work on aspects of its communication with parents. The question receiving the highest proportion of “Strongly Disagree” responses was “The School makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year”. The website included a huge amount of well-presented information on syllabus content and subject coverage and this was reinforced by newsletters. It was possible that some parents responding to the survey did not read the newsletters. He intended to find out from parents how the School could improve and what information they would like in this area. One option may be the reintroduction of termly year group newsletters.</p> <p>The largest proportion of “Don’t Know” responses was in response to “The School supports my child’s wider personal development”. This was disappointing given the North Star strategy at the heart of all that the School did. It may be that parents did not make the connection between North Star, and related initiatives such as Growth Mindset, and the concept of personal development. Here, too, there may be an opportunity to review communication.</p> <p>In conclusion, SL said that he intended to add a couple of the highlighted areas to the SEF for future review by Governors.</p>
15	<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>KHtt had reviewed the Staff Disciplinary Policy and the Staff Leave and Absence Policy and recommended both for approval by FGB. 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 Staff Disciplinary Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Staff Leave and Absence Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).</p>

15	<p>Policies for approval (continued)</p> <p>PH had reviewed the Governor Allowances and Expenses Policy and recommended this for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Governor Allowances and Expenses Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).</p> <p>PH had reviewed the Lettings Policy. He suggested that the forthcoming rate increase, expected to reflect a 3.5% inflation-linked rise, be included in the Policy. He also suggested that the wording on kitchen hire be amended to reflect the School's assessment that the new kitchen was not suitable for hiring out following a risk assessment of this which recognised the specialist nature of much of the kitchen's equipment and operating procedures.</p> <p>Action: SL to amend Lettings Policy to reflect the matters raised during Governor review.</p> <p>Decision: Subject to the minor amendments put forward and accepted by Governors, the Lettings Policy was approved by FGB (approval date: 7 February 2024).</p> <p>RD and JB had reviewed the Social Media Policy and recommended it for approval.</p> <p>Decision: FGB approved the Social Media Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).</p> <p>RW had reviewed the Equality Policy (and Equality Objectives). RD observed that the Equality Objectives should include details of monitoring activity (including by Governors).</p> <p>Action: SL to draft suggested monitoring activity for the Equality Objectives for RD and DD to review.</p> <p>Decision: Subject to the addition of agree monitoring steps for the Equality Objectives, FGB approved the Equality Policy and Equality Objectives.</p>
16	<p>Governor Training</p> <p>None to report.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to identify and book suitable SEND training for RW.</p>

17	<p>Safeguarding Training</p> <p>SL circulated a safeguarding training scenario for Governors to consider.</p> <p>In discussion, key learning points were identified including: staff not guaranteeing confidentiality to a child in case of the need to consult/report, the usefulness of the TED mnemonic (“Tell, Explain, Describe”), the danger of asking leading questions, the merits of open questions, the role of “professional curiosity”, the need for the School to follow up with parents, the use of the CPOMS system and the place of an individual log in the wider context including review by the Senior Leadership Team.</p>
18	<p>Impact from this meeting</p> <p>DD summarised by saying that Governors continued to be well briefed about the challenges faced by the School, including in relation to financial constraints and the demands of the new DfE approach to managing and tackling pupil absences. FGB were well informed by SL and his team and were satisfied with the School’s actions and progress in difficult times.</p>
19	<p>Next Meeting(s)</p> <p><i>Spring Term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FGB (non-routine) on SEND and related topics (possibly also a budgeting session): 13 March 2024 ● FGB: 27 March 2024 <p><i>Summer Term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SIC: 8 May 2024 ● FGB1: 22 May 2024 ● FGB (non-routine - tbc): 3 July 2024 ● FGB2: 17 July 2024
20	<p>AOB</p> <p>None.</p>
The meeting ended at 8:35pm.	

Summary of decisions and proposed actions		
<i>Actions</i>		
FGB 23/07	MH agreed to make contact with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Safeguarding team and also their Education Officer to establish a link for the school for future reference.	MH
FGB 23/08	SL to amend Lettings Policy to reflect the matters raised during Governor review.	SL
FGB 23/09	SL to draft suggested monitoring activity for the Equality Objectives for RD and DD to review.	SL and RD/DD
FGB 23/10	Clerk to identify and book suitable SEND training for RW.	Clerk

Summary of decisions and proposed actions (continued)
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<i>Decisions</i>		
7b	Governors authorised DD to sign off the SFVS and submit it without further amendment or added content.	
15	FGB approved the Staff Disciplinary Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).	
15	FGB approved the Staff Leave and Absence Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).	
15	FGB approved the Governor Allowances and Expenses Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).	
15	Subject to the minor amendments put forward and accepted by Governors, the Lettings Policy was approved by FGB (approval date: 7 February 2024).	
15	FGB approved the Social Media Policy (approval date: 7 February 2024).	
15	Subject to the addition of agree monitoring steps for the Equality Objectives, FGB approved the Equality Policy and Equality Objectives (approval date: 7 February 2024).	

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

See also Part 2 minute (ref agenda item 12).

Full Governing Body Committee Meeting – Part 2 Minutes	
Date/Time	7 February 2024
<i>All details as for Part 1 minutes. These Part 2 minutes are confidential to the members of FGB and are not to be circulated or published.</i>	

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

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