



**Minutes of the  
Full Governing Board meeting of  
Duncombe Primary School  
held in the school premises on  
Thursday 29th September 2021 at 6:30pm**

Governors present:

**Judith Fortune** - Co-opted Governor (*Chair of the Governing Board*)  
**Pete Bacon Darwin** - Co-opted Governor  
**Sophie Bridge** - Co-opted Governor  
**David Carter** - Co-opted Governor  
**Paul Tonkinson** - Co-opted Governor  
**Laila Naanaa** - Parent Elected Governor  
**Monique Roberts** - Staff Elected Governor (*and School Business Manager*)  
**Helen Ryan** - Headteacher Exofficio Governor  
**Richard Watts** - Local Authority Governor  
**Gareth Williams** - Co-opted Governor

In attendance:

**Victoria Mitchell** - Clerk to the Governing Board (*London Borough of Islington employee*)

Judith Fortune chaired the meeting and Victoria Mitchell wrote the minutes.

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

1.1 Governor Judith Fortune welcomed everyone to this first Full Governing Board meeting of the 2021-22 academic year. There were no absences.

1.2 Governor Fortune informed the Governing Board that one governor has resigned in writing on 28th September 2021 - Parent Governor Nese Kesen. The Chair has discussed this matter with the local authority governor services about seeking a new parent governor.

1.3 This meeting was quorate.

**2. Governors Code of Conduct**

2.1 Governors received a Code of Conduct document with their meeting papers sent out prior to this meeting. The Chair of Governors asked if all governors had read this document and agreed to abide by it. A vote was taken and the Governing Board voted to abide by the content of this Code of Conduct.

2.2 The Chair of Governors agreed to sign of this document as accepted by the Governing Board.

### **3. Membership of the Governing Board**

3.1 The Governing Board noted that the recent training meeting with all governors had discussed the co-option of Sophie Bridge and Gareth Williams and had taken a vote to co-opt both on to the Governing Board. This was noted at this meeting.

**ACTION: Sophie Bridge and Gareth Williams co-opted onto the Governing Board. Clerk to update GovernorHub.**

### **4. Declaration of interests**

4.1 None were reported verbally.

4.2 The Governing Board were all sent a Declaration of Pecuniary Interests Form with their meeting papers prior to this meeting. The Clerk informed the Governing Board that it was a statutory duty for all members of the Governing Board to complete and submit this form to the Clerk each academic year.

**ACTION: All members of the Governing Board to complete and submit a signed Declaration of Pecuniary Interests Form to the Clerk. The Clerk will check if all have returned a form and if not will contact the individual members requesting them to do so this term.**

### **5. Minutes of the previous Governing Board meeting held on 8th July 2021**

5.1 The FGB read through the minutes of the Full Governing Board meeting held on 8th July 2021. It was noted that these were a first draft of the document and some amendments are required that have not yet been received by the Clerk. The amendments were as follows:

5.2 Item 1 - one governor requested that instead of the minutes in this section describing the presentation to the Governing Board that took place that instead the presentation that was given to governors by Governor Judith Fortune be attached to the minutes. This was agreed.

5.3 Item 2.2 - Sophie Bridge was absent from the meeting on 8th July 2021 due to ill health and not a work commitment. The minutes at item 2.2 will be amended accordingly.

5.4 Item 4.4 - The name Gavin Williams should be amended to read Gareth. The minutes at item 4.4 will be amended accordingly.

5.5 Item 15.1 - It has now been agreed that the early morning committee meetings will begin at 8am and not 8:30am. The minutes are to be amended accordingly.

#### Matters arising

5.6 Item 8.1 - The Clerk has received a list of committee members from the Chair.

5.7 Item 14.1 - The School Business Manager has begun setting up a WhatsUp social network group for governors and details will be sent out to governors by the end of this week.

5.8 All other items have been done or are agenda items.

5.9 The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 8th July 2021 will be amended by the Clerk and then sent to the Chair of Governors.

**ACTION: Minutes of the FGB meeting held on 8th July 2021 to amended and then sent to the Chair of Governors for approval. They will be re-presented to the next FGB meeting for governors approval.**

## **6. Report from the SEND Link Governor meeting**

6.1 Governor Laila Naanaa reported that she had attended a link governor meeting with the SENCO.

6.2 Governor Naanaa reported that the past academic year and this term had been very turbulent due to the Covid-19 lockdown and pandemic, as well as a number of other matters. The SENCO had given a summary of the SEND pupils in each year group. There were year 5 and year 6 SEND pupils who needed support constantly as there is a big gap that has widened between these pupils and other pupils. The school will have to ensure they catch up with lost work.

6.3 The SENCO has applied for EHCPs for ten pupils this term and there will be further EHCP applications next term. The SENCO has also applied for funds for children in need. It is not clear at this stage whether the school will receive the correct level of funding.

6.4 There were no questions from governors.

## **7. Self Evaluation Form (SEF)**

7.1 The Headteacher presented the SEF to the Governing Board. She explained this document is written each academic year and this version of the SEF was written in July 2021.

7.2 Governors noted the SEF had sections on Leadership and management, quality of education in the school, behaviour and attitudes, early years and foundation stage. It set out how the school has evaluated where the school is in each of these sections.

7.3 In the section on leadership and management the Headteacher described how the school had a very long standing Headteacher who retired during academic year 2019-20 and was replaced by Helen Ryan. There were then various unexpected challenges that the new Headteacher had to address. One of these was the previous Governing Board was considered to be not working to support the Headteacher. The previous Governing Board held its last meeting in Spring 2020 before being disbanded by the local authority and replaced by an Interim Executive Board for one academic year.

7.4 The Headteacher contextualizes the school in the first section of the SEF. The SEF then goes on to set out how the school leadership have addressed the context and explained how. Evidence has then been presented showing how this has been evaluated. Evidence that can be provided is the school's outcomes, retention of staff, pupil numbers and if these are increasing or decreasing, and how well the school is delivering the curriculum.

7.5 The Headteacher stated that leadership and management at the school is working well and is moving the school forward, There are systems in place for the leadership to monitor the work of the school.

7.6 Question: Who is the audience of readership for the SEF? Ofsted?

Answer: Ofsted may well read it or refer to it.

7.7 Question: When I read this document I could see that it described what the evidence said but the evidence wasn't in the document. Is the SEF a guide to explain what evidence is

available if people need to see it as opposed to actually containing all the evidence?

Answer: That is correct.

7.8 Question: Would we expect to receive the evidence alongside the SEF at this meeting?

Answer: Not necessarily as this document sets out what was the position in July 2021. The SEF acts as a baseline for the Governing Board. During this academic year evidence will be presented to the Governing Board setting out where the school is in relation to each of these items that is set out in the SEF. Governors can evaluate for themselves where the school is.

7.9 The Headteacher described how the SEF explains how the school managed during the Covid-19 lockdown and pandemic, how the school manages its SEND children, and the duality of running two schools at the same time.

7.10 Question: Two schools?

Answer: Online teaching and in-school teaching during the lockdown.

7.11 The school has spent time adjusting the curriculum and working on a curriculum. The school narrowed its curriculum during the previous academic year as there has been so many pupils who had been out of school for a very long time and have gone backwards (*regressed*) in reading a maths and need time to catch up. Therefore modern foreign languages and computing were taken out of the curriculum at the end of the last academic year and replaced with more teaching of maths.

7.12 The Headteacher stated that if Ofsted were to call next week to inspect the school and wanted to know what academic discipline to inspect other than English and maths, the Headteacher will suggest they inspect humanities at the school as there has been a lot of pupil progress in humanities.

7.13 Question: Do the pupils catch up with lost work quickly?

Answer: Our Data shows that pupils at Duncombe on average have lost two terms of learning.

7.14 Question: How does two terms behind on average compare with other schools?

Answer: The Education Foundation website evidences the high impact of the pandemic on schools with a high number of high needs pupils. Duncombe has a high number of high needs pupils.

7.15 Question: Although some people suggest that parents may find it difficult to deal with their children being taught about some protected characteristics, were there any issues raised by parents when the RSE curriculum was discussed with them?

Answer: No there were no issues raised about the RSE teaching by parents. Although this could be because the school had just come out of lockdown we think it may be because the school was very clear in explaining to parents the teaching materials for their children and what would be explained and what would not in the classes.

7.16 Question: Are parents allowed to withdraw their pupils from certain parts of the RSE lessons? And if so are there many who are withdrawn?

Answer: In year 6 there have been 4 children withdrawn during the RSE lesson. Not many.

7.17 Question: Would you consider surveying parents on their views on the subject rather than

taking their acquiescence as acceptance?

Answer: Not at this time.

7.18 Early years foundation stage is also an important part of the School Improvement Plan. This is because the school has found that many children coming into the early years foundation stage are found to have very low levels of vocabulary and they have also been hit very badly by missing school as result of the pandemic and lockdown.

7.19 Early years in the school is fully staffed and has a very experienced teacher who has brought a wealth of experience to the school. Early years provision has been structured to benefit those pupils as much as possible. Data at key stage 1 shows that the school may be starting to see results from some of those improvements to the early years foundation stage.

7.20 Question: So we have seen this document now as a baseline, will we see it again later in the year to if see how things have played out?

Answer: Yes governors will look at this document later in the academic year and we will use that evaluation to write the SEF for the academic year afterwards.

## **8. School Development Plan (SDP)**

8.1 The Governing Board received the SDP with their meeting papers sent out prior to this meeting. The Headteacher explained that this is a 3-year plan that was written prior to the global pandemic arriving in Britain when the school leadership did not know the school would have periods of lockdown.

8.2 Question: There are lots of mentions and comparisons with Lewisham in this SDP. Is there a reason for this?

Answer: Yes, the school development partner worked in Lewisham so there is a good deal of comparative data and context compared with Lewisham.

8.3 The Headteacher stated that there was an 18-month plan written. This was because there had been a global pandemic and lockdown and also big changes at Duncombe Primary School taking place in staffing and leadership. The school now needs to work hard in order to allow pupils to catch up with their lost learning as result of the previous academic year and since the beginning of the pandemic.

8.4 There are four key areas in this plan. The first priority is to develop and empower effective leadership at all levels. This includes governance. This is to drive and sustain school improvement. Leadership is important in this organisation as is distributing leadership among multiple levels. This was because in the past when the previous headteacher retired the school became an unstable organisation. It is important for leadership to be distributed among several levels in order to make the school structurally strong prevent this instability happening again.

8.5 Second priority is raising academic standards in the school. This is by improving attainment and progress for all different groups of pupils. Special educational needs pupils are one group who need to make rapid progress. Part of this objective is to ensure that as result of having pupils with different needs of complexity it is important that the school's trauma informed practice is an important part of the school's focus on wellbeing and has a whole school approach.

8.6 Question: So will there be teaching assistants and support staff for pupils in every year group?

Answer: No as the school cannot afford it. The school has applied for various funds for this but the school has had to do three staff restructures because of the size of the large financial deficit. SEND is not fully funded nationally.

8.7 The Headteacher explained that due to the shortage of funding this school has tried to use it staff wisely. For example in year 5 there is a huge attainment gap and so senior leadership staff have been teaching these pupils in order to try and narrow that gap. There is also a lot of targeted interventions. The school has also recruited three experienced staff at the start of this academic year 2021-22. ABC Committee can look at how well this is worked during this academic year.

8.8 One governor stated that the school has set very high targets for the pupils in year 6 and this may partly explain the large gap.

8.9 Question: What areas have been most badly hit?

Answer: The Headteacher was concerned about the year 6 pupils when they were in year 5. In key stage 2 there are various gaps in literacy and numeracy skills that should have been addressed in key stage 1 and the foundation stage but were not. The school is now trying to fill these gaps that have been there for that all that time. The school is trying to get these pupils ready to go to secondary school so they will not fall behind in secondary school.

8.10 Question: When it says the aim is for there to be excellence by next December is there a set definition of "excellence"?

Answer: This will be measured through the data. If a pupil is exceeding expectations in year 1 and at the end of key stage 1 then we would expect to see them exceeding expectations at the end of key stage 2 as well.

8.11 Question: Can there be some measurable targets put into this that we can see if they have been achieved?

Answer: Yes this is a good idea.

**ACTION: Headteacher to put measurable targets into the SDP so that governors can see if they have been achieved in the timescales.**

8.12 Question: What is the financial curriculum referred to?

Answer: The school invites various banks to visit the school and teach sessions of the maths curriculum in order to increase the cultural capital of pupils.

8.13 The Headteacher presented projections on the pupil progress and attainment for the school to aim for.

8.14 Question: Are these realistic projections or aspirational projections?

Answer: They are aspirational but they are based on what the school has achieved before. They are also based on national projections. A key measure is pupils who have achieved reading, writing and maths combined at level 3. With this cohort we are aiming for 65% but currently there are only 15%, so there is quite a way to go.

8.15 Question: So are these projections realistic and achievable?

Answer: We think so unless there is another lockdown. They are based on the pupils last June 2021.

8.16 Question: Although 65% of pupils may achieve that standard what about a measurement to show how far behind the pupils who didn't achieve it were?

Answer: Yes that's a good idea we will insert that.

## **9. Data**

9.1 The Governing Board received with their meeting papers sent out prior to this meeting the academic data that was previously reviewed by the ABC Committee on 16th September 2021.

9.2 Question: Is there any comparison data we can look at to benchmark the Duncombe data?

Answer: Yes if you go to the Department for Education website and then look at the school improvement section you can search for the types of comparative data you are looking for. There will be a gap in 2020-21 though as there was no national data in that year.

## **10. Policies for ratification**

10.1 The Chair of Governors explained that the school is updating its policies. It is also ensuring that the initials "IEB" short for interim executive board are replaced with the word full governing board or "FGB" where appropriate.

10.2 Many of the policies that will be received by the Governing Board are Islington model policies. This means that if the school introduces an Islington model policy and something goes wrong as a result of the policy then London Borough of Islington will support the school in any subsequent legal actions that come from this.

### Safeguarding Policy

10.3 The FGB was informed that the Safeguarding Policy had previously been reviewed by the ABC Committee on 16th September 2021. This policy was largely based on the Islington model policy but it did require some significant reformatting which was done by the School Business Manager. The content of the policy has not been substantially changed though.

10.4 The Governing Board took a vote on whether to ratify the Safeguarding Policy presented to this meeting. The votes were counted and the result was the Governing Board voted to ratify this policy.

## **11. Update on Covid-19 catch up**

11.1 The Headteacher gave a verbal report updating the Governing Board on the Covid-19 pupil catch up.

11.2 The school has updated its risk assessment. The school is now running back to normal with full school assemblies taking place and visitors and parents allowed on site. If a child is displaying symptoms of Covid-19 then the school requests the parents obtain a lateral flow test in order to test the child for Covid-19.

## **12. Safeguarding**

12.1 The Headteacher reported that up to the end of the previous week there were:

- Open cases = 8;

- Child Protection cases = 3 children;
- Child Protection referrals = 4;
- Child in Need = 5;
- Reported bullying incidents = 2;
- Allegations made against staff = 0;
- Reported racist incidents = 2;
- Number of extremist concerns = 0;
- Female Genital Mutilation Concerns = 0;
- Reported online safety incidents = 0.

12.2 Question: How do these numbers compare with the previous numbers?

Answer: There have been a large amount of safeguarding incidents since the beginning of the autumn term. This is partly because there is usually an increase in the early autumn term and also because children are now fully back to school as normal after the Covid-19 lockdown of the previous academic year. This has been an observed national trend.

12.3 Question: What sort of referrals have there been increases in particularly?

Answer: Particularly child protection referrals and some very difficult cases here.

### **13. Finance**

13.1 The School Business Manager reported on finance.

13.2 The School Business Manager met with Governor Judith Fortune in the previous week to look at the period 5 budget monitoring report. It was noted that the school had been in an in-year budget deficit position at the start of the school week but had moved into an in-year budget surplus position of £1 in surplus. However the start of budget period six has many costs anticipated such as the staff pay increments. There are also various amounts of money to be received by the school during this time.

13.3 The Chair reminded governors that the school is in a very precarious financial position and if anything goes wrong at the school the budget could tip into deficit very easily as there are few spare funds to use. The school is likely to finish this financial year 2021-22 with a budget deficit.

13.4 One governor advised the Governing Board on the possibility of selling the school house. The Governing Board was informed that the school house is one of approximately 20 school houses in the London Borough of Islington school estate. The borough has accepted that it needs to come up with a policy on what to do with these school houses as many are surplus to the requirements of the individual schools. There is a change of staffing in various directorates of the local authority at present and the governor urged Islington to consider the Duncombe school house at the top of the list for consideration.

### **14. Premises, health and safety**

14.1 The School Business Manager Monique Roberts reported that an incident had occurred during the summer holiday when the roof of the school caved in due to flooding and rain. This meant the summer school had to be postponed.

14.2 The flooding and roof situation has cost the school a lot of money but the school believes London Borough of Islington will pay these costs as this matter has been reported to them for action 18 months previously. The School Business Manager will present the bills for payment to



London Borough of Islington imminently.

14.3 Question: There are no shared costs that the school will have to pay?

Answer: No.

14.4 The School Business Manager reported that there have been two pupils injured in the playground this term so far. Both have been reported to London Borough of Islington as health and safety incidents. Both were recorded as “child injured at play” accidents so there is no need for a RIDDOR report.

14.5 The School Business Manager reported that all maintenance is up to date.

14.6 The health and safety link governor Richard Watts has visited the school to carry out a link governor visit. The health and safety link governor reported that everything appeared to be in good order.

## **15. Governors handbook**

15.1 This document has been written and will be sent out to governors after a few final checks. Governors will receive this soon.

## **16. Committee reports**

### ABC Committee

16.1 The ABC Committee met on 16th September 2021. Due to lack of remaining time at this meeting the Committee Chair has posted a written report on GovernorHub to update the rest of the Governing Board.

## **17. Any other business**

17.1 Governors are each asked to submit a biography for the school website. The parameters will be sent out by the Chair in the next few weeks.

## **18. Date of next meetings**

18.1 The next meetings of the Governing Board and committee meetings are as follows:

- Resources Committee on 4th November 2021 at 8am;
- ABC Committee on 11th November 2021 at 8am;
- Full Governing Board on 9th December 2021 at 6:30pm.

## **19. Confidential item**

19.1 There was one confidential item discussed. This is recorded in the Confidential Minutes of this meeting which are held on file as a separate document.

**Meeting ended at 8:03pm.**

**Summary of Action Points**

<b><u>Action Point No.</u></b>	<b><u>Agenda Item No.</u></b>	<b><u>Action Required</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibility/ Deadline</u></b>
1	3.1	Sophie Bridge and Gareth Williams co-opted onto the Governing Board. Clerk to update GovernorHub.	The Clerk
2.	4.2	All members of the Governing Board to complete and submit a signed Declaration of Pecuniary Interests Form to the Clerk. The Clerk will check if all have returned a form and if not will contact the individual members requesting them to do so this term.	All governors
3.	5.9	Minutes of the FGB meeting held on 8th July 2021 to amended and then sent to the Chair of Governors for approval. They will be re-presented to the next FGB meeting for governors approval.	Clerk / Judith Fortune / Agenda item next FGB meeting
4	8.11	Headteacher to put measurable targets into the SDP so that governors can see if they have been achieved in the timescales.	The Headteacher