



**Minutes of the
Full Governing Board meeting of
Duncombe Primary School
held as an online video conference call
on Thursday 8th July 2021 at 6pm**

Governors present:

Judith Fortune - Co-opted Governor (*Chair of the Governing Board*)

Pete Bacon Darwin - Co-opted Governor

David Carter - Co-opted Governor

Paul Tonkinson - Co-opted Governor

Nese Kesen - Parent Elected 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

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 introduction to school governance and to Duncombe Primary School

Introduction to the Governing Board

1.1 Judith Fortune welcomed everyone to this first meeting of the new School Governing Board of Duncombe Primary School. It was explained that this meeting was a new start for the school as the current Headteacher Helen Ryan had not had an effective school governing board since beginning as Headteacher at the school - the previous school governing board was disbanded in early 2020. An Interim Executive Board was set up by the Department For Education to take over some of the functions of a school governing body. This Interim Executive Board was in place for one calendar year. This meeting is the first meeting of the new school governing board that has now been set up.

1.2 Judith Fortune delivered a presentation to the Governing Board on the school and the role of the school governors. The role of the Governing Board as the strategic leaders of the school was explained and the Chair gave a background to the role of a school governor and the Governing Board. The Department For Education role of the Governing Board and governors was set out: to ensure clarity of vision and ethos; to hold the school's executive leaders to account on educational performance; and to oversee the financial performance of the school. The Chair explained that the most important thing is to ensure the children at the school are safe and get a good education and good options.

1.3 Question: How often will the school governors need to visit the school?

Answer: Each governor will be given a link role at the start of September 2021 and trained on carrying out this role. They will also be given a contact within the school who is the school's lead staff member in that area. Each link governor will have a guide on how to carry out their link governor role when they visit the school so each of those meetings in the school is focused.

1.4 The Governing Board was informed that it is possible the school may be visited by Ofsted during the next academic year 2021-22, although the exact date when this will happen is not yet clear.

1.5 It was explained that the structure of the Governing Board will be 12 governors. These will be the Headteacher (an Exofficio Governor), a local authority governor who is nominated by the local authority, two parent governors elected by the parents of the school, one governor elected by the staff of the school and seven governors who are co-opted by the Governing Board. There are currently five governors on the Governing Board at present. There is one proposed local authority governor and five proposed co-opted governors who will be considered for appointment at this meeting. One further person to be co-opted is proposed for appointment at the meeting in September 2021, which will leave one vacancy remaining for future appointment. The Governing Board has two standing committees - the Achievement, Behaviour and Curriculum Committee (ABC Committee) and the Resources Committee.

Introduction to the school and its context

1.6 The Headteacher then spoke about the profile of the school. 52% of pupils are on free school meals, 56% are from an English as an additional language background, 19% of pupils have special education needs (SEN). The Tollington Council Ward in Islington, where the school is located, has one of the highest deprivation indexes in the country.

1.7 The Headteacher stated that it was important for the school to have high expectations of its pupils because of the challenges of this school profile.

1.8 The Headteacher described the work of the school during the coronavirus Covid-19 lockdowns. The Headteacher stated that this was a hugely challenging time for schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Duncombe Primary School have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. There is a need to bridge the gaps in learning and get the school back on track. Pupils have lost at least 110 days of learning in the last academic year. The Headteacher has shared to the Governing Board a paper for the Sutton Trust that sets out what that last time and 10 days learning means for pupils and schools.

1.9 The Headteacher explained the school's ASPIRE ethos - Ambition, Self-Esteem, Perseverance, Independence, Respect, Enthusiasm - these characteristics are rolled throughout the curriculum and taught to the pupils.

1.10 Question: These characteristics are a good ethos for the school to have. Please explain some of the other strategies, if any, the school has to teach these characteristics to the pupils. Are there any other strategies that school uses to set out this ethos?

Answer: It is about every single stakeholder at Duncombe using these characteristics. This ethos is woven into the training and professional development programme for all our staff so these values are shared by the whole staff team.

1.11 The school's priorities are to improve reading. Behaviour is also a focus so that all pupils can

learn. There is also a focus on reducing poor pupil attendance. Reducing the impact of Covid-19 and deprivation is also a priority, and the school's wellbeing programme. Leadership and management needs to be developed at all levels, this includes the governors. Teaching must be consistently good with a target of a third of the teaching in Duncombe Primary School to be outstanding. A target is for progress to be in line with the national average and that all the staff in the school to feel really supported in their work. The early years division needs to be developed to ensure all pupils have accelerated progress. Parental engagement in early years is also important to improve.

1.12 This ended the introductory training about governance and the school and the formal Governing Board meeting then began.

2. Introductions and apologies for absence

2.1 It was noted that this meeting took place as an online video conference call as a precaution against the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

2.2 The meeting noted that Sophie Bridge, who was to be considered for co-option onto the Governing Board at this meeting, was absent and had sent apologies due to a work commitment. These apologies were accepted. This meeting was quorate.

3. Declaration of interests

3.1 None were reported verbally.

3.2 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 this form to the Clerk.

4. Formal appointment of governors to the Governing Board.

4.1 It was noted that the Governing Board currently has five governors serving on the Governing Board: Headteacher Exofficio Governor Helen Ryan; Elected Staff Governor Monique Roberts; two Elected Parent Governors; the Chair of Governors Judith Fortune who was appointed by the previous Interim Executive Board as required in the IEB procedures.

Three new co-opted governors to be considered for appointment

4.2 The Governing Board considered the appointment of three new co-opted governors:

- Pete Bacon Darwin - Co-opted Governor for a one year term in office;
- David Carter - Co-opted Governor for a one year term in office;
- Paul Tonkinson - Co-opted Governor for a one year term in office.

4.3 The Governing Board considered the co-option of these new members. There was no objections and a vote was taken. The result was Pete Bacon Darwin, David Carter and Paul Tonkinson were all appointed as Co-opted Governors for a one year term in office.

4.4 It was noted that it was not possible to co-opt Sophie Bridge at this stage as she was absent from this meeting. The co-option of Sophie Bridge and also Gavin Williams will be an agenda item of the next Governing Board meeting in September 2021.

ACTION: Co-option of Sophie Bridge and Gavin Williams will be an agenda

item of the next Governing Board meeting in September 2021. FGB agenda item.

Appointment of a Local Authority Governor

4.5 The Governing Board considered the appointment of Richard Watts as the new Local Authority Governor for a one year term in office.

4.6 The Governing Board considered the matter and a vote was taken. The result was Richard Watts was appointed as the Local Authority Governor for a one year term in office.

5. Terms of reference

5.1 A document setting out the terms of reference of the Governing Board committees was received by the Governing Board with the meeting papers that were sent out prior to this meeting. Chair of the Governing Board Judith Fortune stated that these terms of reference were based on the terms of reference that were used by other schools so that they are in line with good practice. The Chair proposed that these committee terms of reference are accepted by the Governing Board for one year in the first instance and will be reviewed after that. Governors considered the matter and the terms of reference for the committees were ratified with no objections.

ACTION: Committee terms of reference ratified. For review in July 2022 - FGB agenda item in July 2022.

5.2 The Chair explained that although many schools have terms of reference for their committees many do not have a terms of reference document for their Full Governing Boards and instead they operate within a code of conduct for governors. The Chair stated that if she comes across a good terms of reference for a full governing board she will share it with governors for discussion, but until then the Governing Board will run using a code of conduct for governors as discussed.

6. Election of a Vice-Chair of the Governing Board

6.1 The Governing Board received a nomination for Governor Pete Bacon Darwin to be the new Vice-Chair of the Governing Board. There were no other nominations received. Governor Bacon Darwin then left the meeting and the Governing Board considered the matter. A vote was taken. The result was Governor Pete Bacon Darwin was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Governing Board for a one year term. Governor Pete Bacon Darwin then returned to the meeting.

ACTION: Governor Pete Bacon Darwin was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Governing Board for a one year term. FGB agenda item in July 2022.

7. Report from the Chair of the Governing Board

7.1 There was no report received, however two items were raised by the Chair of the Governing Board.

Meeting start times

7.2 The Chair drew attention to the schedule of governor meeting dates for the next academic year and drew attention to the 8:30am start time of many of the committee meetings. Governors were asked if the 8:30am start time would be a problem for governors. Governors listed as members of the ABC Committee stated they were able to make the 8:30am start time. Governors listed as members of the Resources Committee were also informed there will be an 8:30am start time to committee meetings. Meetings of the Full Governing Board are scheduled to take place at 6:30pm in the evenings.

7.3 Question: Will these meetings take place in the school premises or online?

Answer: We hope they will be at the premises but this will depend if Covid-19 precautions are still in place or not.

7.4 The Headteacher agreed that this schedule and meeting start times will be tried out to begin with and may be altered if there were found to be problems with it.

Governor training

7.5 The Chair stated that there is training for governors scheduled for September and October 2021. These training meetings are likely to have a duration of longer than one hour each. The Chair suggested these will take place in the evenings. A least one governor stated this may sometimes be a problem depending on the demands of their work.

7.6 Question: How many days a week will this be?

Answer: There are two sessions scheduled - one in September 2021 and one in October 2021. Two evenings in the term in addition to the meeting schedule.

7.7 The Chair informed governors that she will send out the Code Of Conduct document to all governors between now and the meeting in September 2021. All governors are requested to read this document. This will form the first 20 minutes of the training session at the beginning of the next Governing Board meeting.

ACTION: Code of Conduct an agenda item for the next FGB meeting. FGB agenda item September 2021.

8. Membership of the committees

8.1 All governors were informed about which committee they would be a member of. The Governing Board noted this document. The Chair of Governors agreed to send this list to the Clerk to Governors for her records

ACTION: Chair of Governors agree to send the list of committee memberships to the Clerk to Governors for her records.

9. Report from the Headteacher to the FGB

9.1 The Governing Board received a written report from the Headteacher with their meeting papers sent out prior to this meeting.

9.2 The school has been working on a new curriculum since April 2020. This has been scrutinised for introduction but the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant the school has had to limit its curriculum offer while pupils catch up with lost work. Many of the pupils have fallen behind in reading, writing and maths. Therefore there is no modern language being taught and neither is there any computing being taught this academic year 2020-21. The school currently focusing on core skills but is hoping that it will return to a full curriculum from September 2021.

9.3 The key focus of the school development plan this academic year is the development of the school's provision in reading and develop the early reading. There has been a lot of training and development in the teaching of phonics as previously the school had a poor attainment in phonics of only a 50% pass rate. The latest phonics results will be shared with governors in September 2021.

9.4 There has also been a huge push to encourage reading for pleasure. Junior classes have

focused on pupils choosing a high quality text and reflecting on them in their reading journals for half an hour each morning. Governors will receive a presentation from the school's literacy coordinator early in the Autumn term 2021.

9.5 The senior leadership team has developed a teaching quality rubric. This is done in consultation with the teachers and is to develop high quality teaching at the school. The last assessment of teachers in lesson observations at the school showed that 100% of teachers at Duncombe Primary School were teaching at a good level. This was a significant improvement for Duncombe Primary School compared to the past.

9.6 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the school has used Government funding to use the National Tutoring Programme. The school has also only employed teaching assistants who are graduates with a degree - this is to ensure pupils at Duncombe Primary School receive high quality staffing with the best language models who understand the school's curriculum models and add value to classes.

9.7 The school has some pupils who have very high academic ability, but there is a significant tail of pupils who are working well below their age-related expectation. This has led to different groups being introduced in year 5 for high ability, mid ability and low ability pupils. Data shows this has worked well in year 5. Different ability groups have also been introduced in year 2.

9.8 Question: How often are these different ability groups reviewed and how often are pupils moved from one group to the other?

Answer: These different groups were introduced in March 2021. They are reviewed every half term. Two pupils have been moved from their group into the mid group. Mixed ability groups have been found to be very important in the teaching of maths. The low ability group contained pupils who do not like attending school and so there has been a big focus on improving their school attendance. Our monitoring shows their attendance has improved.

9.9 Question: Can we see the data showing these different ability groups have been effective?

Answer: Yes, this will be presented in September 2021.

ACTION: Data on the progress of mixed ability groups agenda item next meeting.

9.10 Question: You mentioned the National Tutoring Programme. Have the Government put restrictions on how this tutoring money can be spent?

Answer: Yes the funding was spent on a company called Action Tutoring as a result of the restrictions that were put in place by the Government. Action Tutoring are an Islington firm and the school has used this company because other Islington schools used them. The school has used funding from pupil premium and the Covid-19 top-up funding to pay for the graduate teaching assistants. Many pupils at the school take a long time to build up trust in adults - it is therefore important that staff who the pupils know and trust are delivering interventions as well as being involved in other activities with the pupils throughout the school day, rather than tutors visiting the school. The Government have not yet made a decision on whether there will be restrictions on the use of the funding next academic year although it has been suggested by the Head of School Improvement at Islington that the school may be allocated a lump sum next academic year to spend time academic mentors instead.

9.11 The progress and outcomes of SEN of pupils at Duncombe has also been a focus for improvement at the school. In the past progress and outcomes of these pupils was below what it

should be. This has been improved this year with staff professional development and training on different learning styles. The school has also introduced greater understanding of autism.

9.12 Question: What was the reason for this low SEN progress and outcomes?

Answer: Teaching did not always adapt to different pupil learning styles in the class and there was also low expectations of SEN pupils.

10. Premises, health and safety

10.1 The School Business Manager Monique Roberts reported that all the works taking place at the school were up to date and complete. A deep clean of the premises and the kitchen will take place during the summer school holiday 2021. A fire drill took place on 17th June 2021 - the whole school was evacuated in their precautionary bubbles in 5 minutes.

10.2 The only maintenance issue outstanding at the school at present is the building roof. This leaks and a lot of damage and disruption is caused when there is rain. The Headteacher and School Business Manager are in discussions with London Borough of Islington to secure funding to get this fixed. It is estimated the cost to fix this will be very high.

10.3 The key stage 2 playground also needs resurfacing.

11. Finance

11.1 The School Business Manager reported on finance.

11.2 The School Budget had been set in April 2020 but by September 2020 there had been a significant overspend of approximately £200,000 on items such as staff settlement agreements, agency staffing and Erasmus spending. There were a number of health and safety concerns that were identified - where it was possible and there was no immediate risk these were delayed due to the lack of funds available. April 2021 the school received its budget funding of £8.9million - this was a significant reduction in funding that left the school in a difficult position. As a result staff were restructured in order to save money - this reduce the cost of the workforce from £2.1million to £1.9million. The school ended financial year 2020-21 with a £201,000 deficit. There have been further restructures this financial year 2021-22 and the Headteacher and School Business Manager have looked for further savings where they can be identified. The school is in a difficult position financially.

11.3 The Chair of Governors stated a significant amount of work has been been devoted to reducing the size of the deficit and stop this increasing. The school does have a set budget but with an approved deficit, but finances are very tight and precarious and the school has very little room for manoeuvre if things go wrong. The deficit of £200,000 is still in place.

11.4 The Chair of Governors informed the meeting that the school does have an asset - the School House and there are ideas on how to utilise this too to improve the finances. One governor offered to communicate with the Council on how to help with using the School House once a new Islington Director of Schools and Young People Services has been recruited.

12. Safeguarding

12.1 The Headteacher reported that there have been 6 referrals to children's social care this half term.

12.2 The Headteacher also reported that there are

- Open cases = 10
- Child Protection cases = 4 children;
- Child in Need = 4;
- Reported bullying incidents = *(the Headteacher will doublecheck this figure on CPOMS)*;
- Allegations made against staff = 0;
- Reported online safety incidents = 4.
- Reported racist incidents = *(look up)*;
- Number of extremist concerns = 0;
- Female Genital Mutilation Concerns = 0.
- Fixed term exclusions = 5 since Easter 2021.

12.3 Question: Is 5 fixed term exclusions a large number for one half term?

Answer: It is higher than normal - the school is having to work on improving behaviour. These incidents are for cyber bullying, physical violence and 1 was for sexual harassment.

12.4 One governor stated that there were children in the school who have struggled to settle after returning to the school after the Covid-19 lockdowns resulting in behaviour incidents. This is a nationwide issue.

13. Policies for ratification

13.1 There were none.

14. Any other business

14.1 Question: Will something like an online Whatsup group be set up for the governors to communicate informally on?

Answer: Yes, the School Business Manager will set this up. However all governors should use their Duncombe Primary School email address for formal communication and safeguarding reasons.

14.2 Question: Will there be a guide to all the abbreviations used by the school in documents and governor meetings?

Answer: Yes, this will be provided in the guide for governors.

15. Date of next meeting

15.1 A list of the dates of the Governing Board and committee meetings was shared with the FGB. The Chair informed governors that the early morning meetings will not take place at 8am, they will take place at 8:30am.

15.2 Governors will next meet for a training session on Ofsted and the Code of Conduct on 8th September 2021.

16. Confidential items

16.1 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.

Summary of Action Points

Action Point No.	Agenda Item No.	Action Required	Responsibility/ Deadline
1	3.2	All members of the Governing Board to complete a Declaration of Pecuniary Interests Form and submit it to the Clerk.	All governors
2.	4.4	Co-option of Sophie Bridge and Gavin Williams will be an agenda item for the next Governing Board meeting in September 2021. FGB agenda item.	FGB agenda item September 2021
3.	5.1	Committee terms of reference ratified. For review in July 2022 - FGB agenda item in July 2022.	FGB agenda item July 2022
4.	6.1	Governor Pete Bacon Darwin was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Governing Board for a one year term. FGB agenda item in July 2022.	FGB agenda item July 2022
5.	7.7	Code of Conduct an agenda item for the next FGB meeting. FGB agenda item September 2021.	FGB agenda item September 2021
6.	8.1	Chair of Governors agree to send the list of committee memberships to the Clerk to Governors for her records.	Chair of FGB
7.	9.9	Data on the progress of mixed ability groups to be an agenda item for next FGB meeting.	FGB agenda item September 2021