



NORTH KIDLINGTON SCHOOL

Head Teacher: Ms Emilie Fidler

Chair of Governors: Ms Christabel Ashby

Nurturing potential, growing success

MINUTES

Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting held on Tuesday 25th April 2023 at 7pm at school

Present

Christabel Ashby – Chair
Carol Carter
Keri Dallimore-Gray
Kapil Divecha
Emilie Fidler
James Philpott
Rebecca Pyrah
Alex Reip – Vice-chair
Charlotte Srenock
Brenda Williams

Co-Opted
Co-Opted
Co-Opted
Parent
Head Teacher
Parent
Parent
Parent
Co-Opted
LA

In attendance – Bryony Thomas, clerk, attending via Teams

Apologies – Jo Hunt (Staff)

Absent – Alastair Hosier (Co-Opted)

Confirmation of quorum – quorum was met

No.	ITEM
1	Welcome and apologies for absence Christabel welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Jo Hunt.
2	Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest.
3	Notification of any urgent business None was raised.
4	Approval and signing of the minutes from the previous meeting (held 14th March 2023)* Section 11 was amended and the minutes were then approved as a true record of the meeting.
5	Matters arising from the minutes not arising elsewhere AP1 – Christabel has made no further progress with work on the proposal for a new Apple classroom, but is clear on what needs to be done. Alex has received two quotes for the new classroom of approximately £300-450,000, and will ask the two companies to complete a survey to allow full quotes for all work required. Christabel and Alex to meet once the full quotes have been received. AP1

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	AP2 – Alex has contacted the Botley West Solar Farm and they are interested in using the school roof for solar panels as part of their liaison with the local community. Several local residents are also interested in the farm using their roofs. Alex to pursue this matter further. AP2 AP3 – Governors had been asked to continue to look for potential governors from the wider community for the current vacancies. This matter is addressed under item 15.1. AP4 – Emilie resent her email about the serious state of the Chestnut/Cedar classroom to her contact at the council, and there has been a site visit. The news is not promising, and this classroom may need to be the next project after addressing the apple classroom needs. The short-term fix of improving the cladding will help with the insulation and aesthetics. AP5 – The staff survey, prepared by the personnel and pay (P&P) committee, has been sent to staff and is in progress. AP6 – Emilie has consulted parents about footwear for the new uniform policy, and has received 135 responses. Charlotte was thanked for her help with collation of the results. These were not as expected, and are also confusing, with parents’ first choice indoor shoe being the plimsoll, but their top concern is support of their children’s feet. Governors discussed the different responses. Although the policy is proposing two pairs of shoes rather than three, cost could still be a concern for parents, and the school may simply need to get better at sending home plimsolls in a poor state. Emilie to consider the issue further and develop a proposal for a way forward. AP3
6	Discussion and approval of the 3-year budget: 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26* A balanced budget over 3 years has been drafted, despite rising costs in all areas. The Burrow is doing well this year and has generated a profit of approximately £8500. School expenditure exceeds income, but the situation is not as bad as first expected though still very tight. At a meeting of the heads of the Kidlington partnership, it was clear that all schools are struggling financially and at North Kidlington the reserves are being eroded. The school has not chosen to reduce the number of support staff within the school because there is a high level of pupils with special educational needs requiring support. Recorder lessons will also continue for another year. Electricity and gas prices will need to be carefully monitored. Governors discussed possible ways to save money. Exercise books could be shared between subjects or used in the next academic year if not finished rather than be replaced. Stationery costs overall are manageable, and the school compares well with other schools when its spending levels are benchmarked. Provisional Reception class numbers for next year are very low, and governors questioned whether the school can market itself better. This year has been challenging, and there was not the time to publicise the school. There is no desire to compete with other schools but there will be a major push this autumn, including on social media, to ensure the school has a visible presence in the community, with its strong and clear values. Governors volunteered to attend the open days in the autumn. Years 2-6 are full, with a recent influx of refugee children and children moving from other schools because parents have heard good things about the school. The budget was unanimously approved and Nina was thanked for her outstanding work on preparing the budget under such challenging circumstances.
7	Receive update on attainment and progress data

	The spring whole school data for Years 1-6 was presented to governors. It is hoped that children are either shown as yellow (developing) or green (on track). Orange indicates pupils who can access the school's curriculum but are one step behind where they should be. Pupils indicated as red are not able to work at the same level as their year group and require a high level of support. Data for reading shows an even picture across the school. Years 5 and 6, particularly affected by Covid, have made very good progress. Writing is a more subjective subject to assess. Generally, there is a lag as pupils join Key Stage 2, which picks up by Year 6. The lag is the result of a huge jump in the number of skills required between Years 2 and 3, and it is hoped the Twinkl phonics scheme will help with this. Years 3 and 4 were very disrupted in their Reception and Year 1 schooling due to Covid. However, looking at the data for 2018-2019, preCovid, a similar pattern is seen in the results. In fact, overall the school is doing better with writing than historically, following the focus on the subject after the pandemic. What is still proving challenging is making writing fun and exciting. The requirements for what is covered and the many skills that have to be taught make it difficult to include the creativity. Boys in particular seem to struggle with writing at primary school level. Maths is a strong subject at North Kidlington, and there are fewer pupils significantly below where they should be. The data also compares well with that of 2018-2019. The spring data will be reviewed in more detail at the next Curriculum committee meeting.
8	Receive update on staffing The reception teacher Miss Pelly left just before Easter and her place has been filled with Miss Britton, who has worked at the school in Apple class as a 1:1 teaching assistant, and will start fulltime training as a teacher in September. She has proved to be excellent, and within the open plan classroom will be supported by Jo Hunt and mentored by Zoë Claxton. The Early Years team has approved the temporary appointment and there is a risk assessment in place. A further member of teaching staff is on long-term sick leave following a serious car accident. A consistent supply teacher is in place. Governors expressed their concern for the staff member and recommended that she seek advice from her union about the sickness absence monitoring process.
9	Receive update on breakfast and after-school clubs The clubs are making a profit of approximately £8500, which is a useful small income stream. Numbers are high, and governors were delighted at the success of the project.
10	Approve committee reports
10.1	P&P – 1st March 2023* Carol is the new chair of this committee. The staff wellbeing survey was sent out last Tuesday to 48 members of staff and there have been 15 responses to date. The deadline is this coming Friday, though this could be extended if required. The office will give staff a nudge to complete the survey, which does not take long to do. The date of the next meeting has been brought forward (27th June) so that the results of the survey can be presented at the July FGB meeting.
10.2	Strategy – 7th March 2023

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	The minutes are not currently available, having been circulated to committee members earlier today, but the meeting had discussed the member of staff on long-term sick leave as well as a previously confidential matter that is now resolved. A member of support staff, working 1:1 with a child, was very active with Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil. Human Resources were consulted and it was made clear to the member of staff that he must not bring his views into school or bring the school into disrepute. The activities escalated and he was featured in the national media. After a significant arrest, the staff member was suspended and after conviction (no prison sentence awarded), his contract was terminated with a no prejudice offer. The whole matter took a great deal of Emilie's time over a prolonged period and involved some difficult meetings with the unions. Governors thanked Emilie for her patient and skilled handling of the issue. The strategy meeting also discussed Ofsted. Teachers are already at capacity with the new schemes introduced and no more changes are planned.
10.3	Finance and premises – 29th March 2023* The finances have already been discussed. Emilie and Kapil met with Mr Macdonald of Oxford University, following Kapil's attempt to contact Professor Irene Tracey, former pupil at Gosford and Thomas Moore. Mr MacDonald came but there are no funding possibilities, though there may be opportunities for outreach. Nothing more has been heard. Kapil may push further, but volunteers need to be DBS checked so must be regular and useful to warrant the time and cost involved. The minutes were approved.
11	Preparation for Ofsted* A list of questions from the Governor Services training session 'Preparing for Ofsted' had been circulated. It was suggested that governors reflect on how they may answer the questions before the next meeting, and if July's FGB agenda allows, go through them then.
12	Approve the public sector equality duty statement* The statement was based on a model one from The Key for School Leaders and is at the top of all school policies. The statement was approved. There is a new stress at work policy available from the local authority.
13	Safeguarding update The school is still busy with safeguarding concerns, but things are a little calmer. Sarah Müldür is running safeguarding soundbite training sessions at each staff meeting, primarily focusing on neglect as this has been identified from Serious Case Reviews as an area of need for Oxfordshire.
14	Health and safety update, including staff welfare The summer term is a challenging one for staff welfare, with SATS and the multiplication and phonics tests. There are strikes this week, but the school will remain open. If members of the NASUWT vote to strike, the school will have to close. The annual health and safety audit is due and James will visit the school to do another site check. If more money is made available, it is hoped to repair the Cedar and Chestnut roof by September.
15	Governance updates
15.1	Governor appointments

	There are three co-opted governor vacancies. Two parents are interested, but at the moment the board needs governors who can take on roles, such as safeguarding governor and joining the P&P committee, that are not suitable for parent or staff governors. Becoming a governor can help people develop useful transferable skills. Alex will prepare a brief advert for the vacancies for LinkedIn, which he will circulate. Emilie will send this to the Parish Newsletter. AP4 Kapil will contact Alasdair MacDonald proposing the University of Oxford Champion consider becoming a governor. AP5
15.2	Governor visits Brenda, Alex and James have all visited the school. Visit sheets should be completed to create a paper trail, but where the visit is as a parent volunteer there is no obligation to do so. Any proposed visits to the school in this first half of the term should be checked with Emilie first.
15.3	Governor training completed No training has been completed. Governors were asked to check the courses available for anything that might interest them if they have the time.
16	Any other business It was confirmed that there are no meetings now until July, except for the P&P meeting that has been brought forward.
	Meeting closed at: 8.50pm
ACTION POINTS AP1 – Christabel and Alex to continue to work on a proposal for a new Apple classroom. AP2 – Alex to further pursue the possibility of the Botley West Solar Farm using the school roof for solar panels. AP3 – Emilie to consider the parent responses following her consultation about footwear and develop a proposal for a way forward. AP4 – Alex to prepare a brief advert for new governors for LinkedIn, which he will circulate. Emilie will send this to the Parish Newsletter. AP5 – Kapil to email Alasdair MacDonald regarding the governor vacancy.	

*Indicates paperwork circulated for this item

NB: All policies must be reviewed with reference to the approved equality duty statement

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