



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 23rd April 2024 at 7pm at school

Present

Alex Reip – Vice-chair and chair of meeting
 Carol Carter
 Kapil Divecha
 Emilie Fidler
 Alastair Hosier
 Rebecca Pyrah, via Teams
 Charlotte Screnock
 Brenda Williams, via Teams

Parent
 Co-Opted
 Parent
 Head Teacher
 Co-Opted
 Parent
 Co-Opted
 Local Authority (LA)

In attendance: Bryony Thomas, clerk

Apologies: Christabel Ashby (Co-Opted), Keri Dallimore-Gray (Co-Opted), Jo Hunt (Staff), James Philpott (Parent)

Confirmation of quorum: quorum was met

No.	ITEM
1	Welcome and apologies for absence Alex welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Christabel Ashby, Keri Dallimore-Gray, Jo Hunt and James Philpott.
2	Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest.
3	Notification of any urgent business One piece to be discussed under any other business. It was also suggested that in future the April meeting of the FGB, whenever possible, should just be to discuss and approve the budget with no other items on the agenda.
4	Approval and signing of the minutes from the previous meeting (held 12th March 2024)* The minutes were approved, with no amendments, and signed as a true record of the meeting.
5	Matters arising from the minutes not arising elsewhere AP1 – Alex to continue to investigate possible funding for development of the playground from several external sources. AP1

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	AP2 – Alex still to discuss with SNRG whether there would be enough energy generated by the proposed solar panels to run a heat pump, for future information. AP2 AP3 – James still to meet with 123ICT about the issues that governors have getting online at school. AP3 AP4 – Alex has circulated a list of the members of the working group on academisation. AP5 – The Curriculum and Resources committees are currently planning their dates for the coming academic year, so that the dates of the FGB meetings can be adjusted accordingly and a full meeting schedule can be approved at the July FGB meeting. AP4 AP6 – Charlotte will interview Rebecca about her role for the school website, and possibly write a piece about her role as a governor. AP5
6	Discussion and approval of the 3-year budget: 2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27* The draft 3-year budget has been extremely challenging to prepare this year, with the LA requiring it to balance over the 3 years. Benchmarking against other similar schools shows the school's finances to be generally on par, with expenditure on support staff and energy costs being the two items where North Kidlington spends more than average. Staffing levels will therefore need to be reviewed, but it is hoped to use attrition rather than forced redundancies. The draft budget has also factored in lower energy costs, with the solar panels planned for installation on the school's roofs. The council still needs to sign the contract to lease the school's roof space to Synergy, and Alex will continue to chase the council to do so as a priority, along with confirmation of a new classroom for Apple. AP6 The school has been notified that 38 pupils will start in Reception next year, which impacts the school financially but may change before September. Governors questioned the high energy costs and whether this is due to inefficiencies inherent within the buildings. The benchmarking data uses historic information from before the school's new roofs were installed, and it is hoped that these will reduce the high levels of heat loss. However, the buildings are poorly insulated and Alex will look to see if there is funding available for improving the school's insulation. AP7 Governors queried the accumulated CERA (capital expenditure from the revenue account) money. This is money provided by the government to pay for maintenance needed on work after Carillion, who used to manage larger capital projects for schools, went out of business. The school receives approximately £6000/year which can be carried over to following years as long as the school states what it will be spent on. The Burrow is generating significant income for the school, and all involved in its conception and then running it so successfully were thanked. Governors also thanked Nina Manning for all her hard work on the draft budget. The budget was approved, but governors noted with grave concern the problems arising from such a lack of funding.
7	Discuss progress on the school improvement plan (SIP), including an update on recent progress and attainment data*

	The SIP had been circulated with an update on progress highlighted in green. A major focus of the school is to improve imaginative play during playtimes and lunchtimes. The children's social skills, resilience and problem-solving have been badly affected by the Covid pandemic and the school has therefore joined OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). They provide comprehensive support in developing creative play in schools. A whole staff twilight session was held on 22nd April to start the project off and several governors also attended. The sports premium will be used to fund the cost (with capital funding available to purchase any sheds needed for storage) and the firm will provide the policies, risk assessments and a detailed plan of how and where to introduce the creative play as safely as possible. They will train staff on how to introduce it to the children and will attend a meeting for parents. The initial outlay is £5,500, with purchase of the equipment to be in addition to this. It is likely that one type of equipment will be introduced at a time and the friends of North Kidlington school (FoNKS) may help with its purchase. OPAL can advise on where best to buy the various items of equipment. It may be that local firms, if asked, will donate things for free or at low cost. Governors discussed the concerns that much is being asked of the lunchtime supervisors, and significant training will be required. There will also need to be a decision as to whether to allow football to continue during breaks. Space is limited on the school site. The scheme will be introduced slowly. One of OPAL's recommendations is that the playground is not zoned so that older children can help the younger ones. The outside classroom will be adapted to make a quiet area for chatting. The purpose of loose parts play is to allow pupils to choose their own style of play, not to manage their playtime like the rest of the school day. School leaders will visit St Swithun's school, who have recently achieved a platinum OPAL award, and also St Ebbe's in Oxford who have now introduced the scheme. Emilie is a sports ambassador head, and if the appropriate opportunity arises, will see if Oxford United will contribute towards the introduction of the scheme as part of their community outreach. Governors congratulated the school on their 'spotlight on success' in Schools News this week with regard to their shoe policy and the nomination for the Youth Sport Trust (YST)'s Outstanding Primary Practice award. Governors were thanked for their part in developing the policy.
8	Update on academisation from the working group Terms of reference for the group are being drafted, and a plan on how to start will then be developed.
9	Update on premises, including potential new classrooms and solar panel installation Solar panel installation is the priority, as previously discussed, and a sign-off from the council will continue to be pursued. The revamp of the Cedar and Chestnut classrooms continues, taking 3 weeks longer than expected because of their poor state. The builders have confirmed the children were never at risk, but almost everything is being replaced. The new-look building will not smell as previously and should be more energy-efficient.

	The children are all being taught in the hall, which is a strain for teachers, but the children are behaving well and providing good feedback. The community room is being used for teaching maths and for small group work. There is likely to be 2.5 weeks left of work to do on the building. The firm completing the work is expected to cover the cost of replacing the ProWhite boards damaged during the work, and there are alternative boards that can be used in the meantime. Governors suggested the possibility of a grand opening ceremony when the classrooms are completed, which will be considered.
10	Discuss new parent survey* A lot of work has been done on developing the vision and culture of the school since the first parent vision and culture survey in May 22. The meeting agreed that a second survey would be useful, with an additional 4 questions on play. Parents will be asked their views on the importance of play, the risks of play, play outside school and the clubs and activities their children do outside school. Pupils will be consulted directly on their opinions of play at school at the moment, but parents will be asked to talk about play with their children and rank the importance of what they hear. An Amazon voucher will again be used as a possible prize for completing the survey. Emilie will draft the additional questions and circulate them to governors, for final approval at the July FGB meeting. The survey will then be sent out at the end of the school year. AP8
11	Approve committee reports
11.1	Resources – 26th March 2024* The minutes from the March Resources meeting were briefly reviewed. The increase in revenue from the Burrow of £10,000 was welcomed. School dinner costs are to increase but there have been no complaints to date. It may mean a build-up of debt, which has to be reclaimed through the small claims court. It is hoped the price will not need to be increased again. The terms of reference for the committee are being drafted, ready for September. The problem of litter being thrown into the school's grounds from the local pub has been resolved since the pub was notified of the issue. There is concern that the extension of the pub's outside area with the addition of a pergola adjacent to the school may result in the return of the problem and a comment has been lodged with the consultation on the extension.
12	Safeguarding update Carol, as lead safeguarding governor, is to see Sarah Müldür tomorrow to discuss safeguarding. The situation is not too bad at the moment.
13	Health and safety update, including staff welfare The high levels of staff absence, with two staff off long-term (one is now on a phased return), have knock-on consequences for the rest of the staff. The lengthy NHS waiting lists and lack of flexibility with medical appointments have caused problems for the school. The meeting discussed the workload of Sarah Müldür, special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENCo). With more than 20% of pupils on the SEND register, and external agencies demanding a high level of observations and paperwork just for pupils to be added to their waiting lists, her current workload is unmanageable. It has therefore been agreed that teachers will now run all SEND meetings with parents, except for those pupils with education, health and care plans

	(EHCPs). It is likely that there will be 15-17 pupils in September with EHCPs, and it is important that Sarah is able to complete all of the required paperwork to apply for these plans. She will work at home on Mondays and will still teach 1 day/week. A letter has been drafted to go out to parents explaining the change in focus for Sarah, and governors were glad to approve its distribution. They expressed their huge thanks to Sarah for all her hard work.
14	Governance updates
14.1	Governor appointments The LinkedIn advert has led to a potential candidate visiting the school tomorrow. A further possible candidate will be approached, and the LinkedIn advert will be put up again.
14.2	Governor visits Charlotte has visited the school as attendance governor. Carol has postponed her visit to look at the teaching of French in Years 3 and 4, because of the work being done to their classrooms, but will visit Sarah tomorrow, as previously discussed. Alex has been in to look at IT and will complete his report. Kapil will visit to look at playtimes.
14.3	Governor training completed None has recently been undertaken.
15	Any other business Governors briefly discussed the potential advantages and disadvantages of being graded as outstanding by Ofsted. Christabel has started a fulltime job and will stand down as chair and co-opted governor at the end of the school year. Anyone interested in taking on the role of chair should talk to Christabel. An election could be held in July for the new chair to start at the beginning of September. Governors expressed their thanks to Christabel and their congratulations on her new job.
	Meeting closed at: 8.30pm
ACTION POINTS AP1 – Alex to continue to investigate possible funding for development of the playground from several external sources. AP2 – Alex to discuss with SNRG whether there would be enough energy generated by the proposed solar panels to run a heat pump, for future information. AP3 – James to meet with 123ICT about the issues that the governors are facing getting online at school. AP4 – The Curriculum and Resources committees to plan their dates for the coming academic year, so that the dates of the FGB meetings can be adjusted accordingly and a full meeting schedule can be approved at the July FGB meeting. AP5 – Charlotte to interview Rebecca about her role for the school website, and in addition write a piece about her role as a governor. AP6 – Alex to continue to chase the council to sign-off on the solar panel installation as a priority, along with confirmation of a new classroom for Apple. AP7 – Alex to check if there is funding available for improving the school’s insulation. AP8 – Emilie to draft the additional play questions for the parent survey and circulate them to governors, for final approval at the July FGB meeting. The survey will then be sent out at the end of the school year.	

*Indicates paperwork circulated for this item

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

Signed
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