



NORTH KIDLINGTON SCHOOL
Oxfordshire County Council
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Nurturing Potential, Growing Success

Dr Alex Reip – Chair of Governors

Emilie Fidler – Head Teacher

MINUTES

Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting held on Tuesday 25th March 2025 at 7pm at school

Present

Alex Reip – Chair

Carol Carter

Keri Dallimore-Gray, on Teams

Emilie Fidler

Alastair Hosier

James Philpott

Rebecca Pyrah

Charlotte Screnock

Brenda Williams

Alex Waring

Laura Chappell

Lucy Theobald

Parent

Co-Opted

Co-Opted

Head Teacher

Co-Opted

Parent

Parent

Co-Opted

Local Authority (LA)

Co-Opted

Co-Opted

Clerk

In attendance: Natalie (Observer, potential new parent governor)

Apologies: None

Confirmation of quorum: Quorum was met

No.	ITEM
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence AR welcomed Natalie to the meeting. No absences.
2.	Declarations of interest None
3.	Notification of any urgent business None
4.	Approval and signing of the minutes from previous meeting (held 28th January 2025) Minutes approved. Clerk to be added to the minutes as in attendance.
5.	Matters arising from the minutes not arising elsewhere AP1 – AR to sign SVFS – Complete

Signed
FGB 25th March 2025

Date.....
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	AP2 – AR to create and distribute a doodle poll for an alternative full governing board meeting day – no day works for everyone AR to continue to look into this. AP3 – AR to write up his science week visit and add to Governor Hub - Complete AP4 – Brenda to arrange for Laura to attend the next Curriculum committee meeting – Laura attended.
6.	Discuss head's written report, including progress on the school improvement plan (SIP)* Both parents and staff have expressed their happiness with the decision to appoint Zoe Claxton as headteacher, with lots of positive feedback from all parties. Emilie Fidler noted that this has been the calmest term since before COVID-19, and overall, the school is feeling much more settled. There was a brief discussion over the writing scheme of work. The school has decided to adopt a more structured approach to writing, as there is currently too much variety in writing approaches across the school. The final decision on which writing scheme to use will lie with senior staff, although all members of staff will be involved in the discussions around what to use. The book look event went very well. Staff were able to look at workbooks from across the school, with a variety of books displayed of differing age groups and abilities. The idea of the book look is to encourage staff to maintain standards of presentation in workbooks. This event is done as a group to ensure no member of staff feels singled out. This event will be held regularly to ensure standards are maintained. The introduction of joined-up handwriting has coincided with an improvement in presentation. Reception has moved away from using whiteboards on their laps to sitting at tables with lined books. Staff have found writing to be much neater, and children have a much better understanding of letter size. There have been lots of great sporting achievements recently, with the girls' football teams continuously winning tournaments across both KS1 and KS2. The school is continuing to move ahead with OPAL. There will be specific training for play leads in the near future, and the school is continuing to increase their knowledge through reading the book. Risk assessments are now the next step, and this will require lots of planning, so progress may slow a little while this happens. The governors flagged that new students will need to have risk and hazards assemblies, which the current children have had as part of the OPAL programme. Attendance figures were discussed, and overall, the school is doing well compared to national figures. The school is currently working with five families who have persistent absenteeism. One successful approach has been to introduce a 'late book' for parents to sign in how late their child was and why. Since the introduction of this, lateness has significantly reduced. The governing board was reassured that while the school works with families to improve attendance, the main priority is always to ensure the child feels well supported by all staff at school. Unfortunately, the school has had two racist incidents this term. The incidents involved conversations in which a child made an offensive comment regarding the color of another child's skin. The children involved were spoken to very seriously, and staff chose to use this time to educate the children rather than punish them. The families of the children were informed, and the school will continue to monitor behavior. The school has had one case of mumps. This child has not been in school for the duration of their illness and was not born in the UK, so has not followed the UK routine immunization schedule. Staff are not concerned about the wider school community due to the child being out of school. The number of EHCP plans has increased, in part due to the increase in private diagnoses and parents applying privately for EHCPs. If parents choose to do this, Sarah will write a school report; however, the school tries not to get too involved in private referrals as it can involve a big time commitment. If the school thought a child needed an EHCP, they would have applied for one. Disability living allowance also takes up a significant amount of Sarah's time.

	It was agreed that the school will accept the younger sibling of a child who currently has a child protection plan in place. The relationship with the family at the younger sibling's current school has broken down, and both EF and SM are confident the school will be able to support the family, particularly as there is already a sibling at the school. A discussion around where children travel from to get to school was had, and it may be interesting for the governing board to have a visual of where families are traveling from on a map, for example. The task could be taken on by a governor in the future. Regarding the SIP, the school has decided on a new place for the inclusion room in the future. This room would currently only benefit one or two children at this time. The school is looking at creating a sensory room instead, and staff have had some 'May I join you?' training to help support children with additional needs. There is potential for new funding from OCC that might help with a plan moving forward.
7.	Discuss budget and staffing priorities for coming year The school is currently carrying a large deficit, being £45000 over budget. Using the new catering company will help reduce some of the costs moving forward, with an estimated saving of approximately £20000. The Burrow has made £11000 profit, which has significantly helped the school's finances. Historically, lettings haven't brought in much money, but the school is open to requests for lettings. The conversation around the budget ended on a positive note, with the general consensus that although this is a tough financial time for the school, there are many opportunities to explore that may help the budget over time. The school is currently fully staffed in both teaching staff and assistants, with the priority being the implementation of a new writing scheme and continuing progress with OPAL.
8	Note committee reports All noted and Governors have been given the opportunity to review the minutes
9	Note headteacher ratifications and minutes Ratified.
10	Safeguarding update With the change of headship and the new system of people, governors want to be sure that safeguarding systems and responsibilities are stable and that Sarah is supported in her role. Emilie Fidler reassured the board that this has all been managed and planned in the new system of people and encouraged the governors to raise any questions or concerns around safeguarding as they always do.
11	Health and safety including staff welfare The wall outside the apple classroom is still an issue as it is slanting slightly. The school is currently awaiting the council to come back with their report. The council has suggested that it is safe but has recommended that the area be cordoned off in the interim while awaiting the report. James will continue to monitor the situation, and Nina will continue to chase the report. The issue with the ceiling in the cupboard is not urgent and will be reviewed at a later date. The adventure play area is the next area to look at, as the wooden play equipment is failing already and an alternative material needs to

	be used in the future. The ramp providing access to both the Cedar and Chestnut classrooms is also already warped; however, Rita has completed a temporary fix, but this may become a problem in the future. Staff are feeling relieved and positive about the future of the school with the change in headship process now complete. Nina has had a lot of extra work recently due to it being budget time and having another office staff member off work sick. Nicola has had another surgery, and the governing board wishes her well in her recovery.
12	Governance Updates and appointments The governing board currently has two Co-opted governor vacancies. It was agreed by all members of the board that Alex will continue his role as Chair, and governors voted unanimously that he became a Co-opted governor. This means Alex's position of Parent governor is now available to fill 1. The governing board would particularly like a teaching assistant's voice on the committee. An email has been sent out to all staff, encouraging them to apply for the Staff Governor role now that Kerry has taken on the interim Deputy Head Role. AR recently attended the heads and chairs briefing. Two main points of discussion the first being around the consultation for all Oxford County Council teaching staff in the Oxford city area regarding staff paying for parking on school premises. The idea is to use the money raised to help improve sustainable transport, such as electric bikes that staff can use and providing more buses. The scheme, if agreed, is expected to begin in Easter 2028. The second area of discussion was AR raising his concerns around the free breakfast club scheme. The main concern is that the school will end up subsidising this scheme, as grants are applied for many years before, making it difficult for the school to confidently predict the costs. He wanted confirmation that the scheme will be fully funded, but he was not satisfied with the response as no real confirmation was received.
12.1	Governor visits Governors raised how brilliantly the school ran on interview day, the same day the internet went down. KS1 had three assemblies, and all the children were amazing. The Year 1 and 2 British motor museum trip was a success. A governor supported staff on the trip and said the children really enjoyed it, and the museum staff were great, with the tour set up very well. Carol has been into school to see Spanish being bedded in and will be back in July to review progress. Charlott talked to Sarah and did some SEND training and will be coming back next week to see Sarah again.
12.2	Governor training and outstanding roles No training updates. During the meeting, roles highlighted on Governor Hub were discussed. It was agreed by the whole board that the Governor training role was not needed as all training is available on Governor Hub. Similarly, the Maths Governor role was deemed unnecessary since the curriculum committee discusses all subjects and works under a cluster model. However, it was emphasised that it is important to keep the PE governor role to ensure the school retains its sports premium money. The board also already has governors in SEN, Safeguarding, and Attendance governor roles, which will be kept. Charlott agreed to take on the governor role of website compliance.
12.3	Confirmation the website is compliant and GIAS is up to date

	The school was compliant in May, and policies have also been reviewed and updated since then. Emilie Fidler will send Charlott the checklist to review the policies. It was agreed that this will be most useful to complete after the Easter break when the changes to staffing are in place. Whether Zoe will continue to be head or acting head after Easter is currently being looked into by Nina and the Chair. Governors were reminded that the budget setting meeting must be on the right date and cannot be flexible.
13	Any other business Pupil numbers next year are predicted to be very low. The school has space for 45 students, but only 29 have requested the school as their first preference. This is in part likely due to not previously having a nursery on site. There was a discussion around options the school can take to mitigate the financial issues this can cause. The school can officially reduce its pupil numbers; however, this takes a long time, up to 18 months. The school could potentially have just one teacher in the apple class with a maximum of 30 children. Staffing could be managed well as some staff have requested changes to their working hours, which could work with a reduced reception class size. The governing board gave their approval to investigate reducing down to 30. It was highlighted that this could potentially have a big knock-on effect as those children move through the school; however, the trend has been going this way for a while, so it might be the most sensible option. EF will confirm these pupil intake numbers with admissions. Governors discussed if there were other ways to encourage families to apply for a place at the school in the future. Ideas suggested included banners for advertising the school in the Tesco car park, which would make the school more visible to the local community. Political candidates could be invited into the school to raise awareness of the school in local news. Due to the recent girls' football success, professional women's footballers could be invited to speak at the school again, raising the profile and visibility of the school. As this is EF's last full governing board meeting, the governors wanted to extend their thanks for all her hard work during her time at the school and wish her all the best for the future. The governing board gave her a gift as a token of their appreciation.
	Meeting closed at: 20:16
	<u>Action points</u> AP1 – AR to look into potential future FGB dates AP2 – EF/ZC to look into risk and hazards assemblies for future children as part of the OPAL programme. AP3 – EF/ZC to confirm pupil intake numbers.

*Indicates paperwork circulated for this item;