

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE FERMAIN  
ACADEMY HELD ON 29th MARCH 2018**

**Governors Present:** Stephen Armstrong (SA) Chair  
 Nic Brindle (NB) Principal  
 Robert Halsall (RH)  
 Tim Haselwood (TH)  
 Anthony Smith (TS)

**Also in attendance:** Alison Smith Clerk  
 Lee Cambray (LC) Deputy Principal

**PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

*The following reports and policies were circulated to the Board prior to the meeting:  
 Principal's Report; Finance Manual; Social Media Policy; Investment Policy.*

		Actions
1	<p><b>APOLOGIES &amp; ADDITIONAL AOB ITEMS</b></p> <p><b>AOB</b>            SA as Chair opened the meeting and invited TH to present an overview of the electronic storage system GVO.</p> <p>TH explained that the proposal was to use GVO to enable governors to access relevant documentation for all future meetings; it could also be used to upload reports, for example, governor visit reports. The system was easy to use and would be accessed through a user name and password.</p> <p>SA recorded thanks on behalf of the FGB to TH for the presentation and proposed that, if this was acceptable, TH and the School Business (SBM) would be responsible for managing the new system. The governors present endorsed this proposal.</p> <p><b>Action: TH</b> to set up meeting with SBM (NB and LC also to be present) to install new GVO system, agree protocol and filing hierarchy and communicate with governors once the system is operational.</p> <p><b>Action: TH</b> to circulate his presentation to all governors and upload onto GVO.</p>	

	<p><b>Action: (TH)</b> to arrange GVO question session prior to next FGB meeting.</p> <p>SA advised that apologies for absence had been received from Jane Dyson, Emma Colley, Toby Seth and Martin Howlett and requested that these should be accepted. SA also advised that the Board had received a written resignation from Sarah Murrell.</p> <p>SA advised that he has spoken to Sarah Murrell and asked if the FGB would be agreeable to asking her to be a parent ambassador instead of a governor. This proposal was endorsed by the FGB.</p> <p><b>Action: (SA)</b> to contact Sarah Murrell to propose role of parent ambassador.</p> <p>SA asked for a note of thanks to be recorded to NB and all the staff involved in the successful Axis Academy bid, thanks were also extended by NB to Martin Howlett Vice Chair of Governors who supported the Academy in the bid and attended the interview with NB.</p> <p><b>Question: Are you able to provide any indication of the structure of the governing board, has the role of trustees and the local governing board been defined yet?</b></p> <p><i>Response: (NB) No, this has not been done yet but there will be an emergency meeting hopefully before the May half-term as the new school is due to open in September 2019.</i></p> <p><b>Action: (NB)</b> to arrange an emergency meeting as soon as possible and send invitation to SA.</p>	
2	<p><b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>Governors were asked to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the governing board as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting. The following was declared:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•TH declared that he is the Business Manager at Tytherington School, there is no expected conflict at today's meeting.</li> <li>•TS declared that he is the Chair of Governors at Alderley Edge Community School and interim CEO at the Collaborative Educational Trust of Wilmslow (TCET) there is no expected conflict at today's meeting.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP</b></p> <p>SA confirmed that there were no changes and no terms of office were due to expire.</p>	

4	<p><b>PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>NB noted that in Appendix A TS needed to be added to the Performance Management Panel to agree the Principal's pay award.</p> <p>The part one minutes of the autumn term full governing board meeting on 12th December 2017 were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.</p>	
5	<p><b>CHAIR'S ACTION</b></p> <p>SA confirmed that there were no reports for consideration as there had been no action taken on behalf of the governing board.</p>	
6	<p><b>PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>•<i>Resource and Audit committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018</i></p> <p>TH advised that the main issues from the resource and audit committee are already on the agenda for this meeting. Minutes have been approved.</p> <p>•<i>Standards committee 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018</i></p> <p><b>Question: There still seems to be an issue with 4 or 5 pupils with poor attendance rates?</b>  <i>Response: (NB) 19 of the cohort this term had 100% attendance. (LC) the children that are struggling have exceptional needs and are in need of specialist services. (NB) we are already providing exceptional support to these children and until recently took them to their specialist appointments.</i></p> <p><b>Question: Is there anything else we can do?</b>  <i>Response : (NB). No we have done everything we can, we are awaiting the multi-agency work to come together, these children have some very serious issues in their home life, and one of the children is on the Nurture programme.</i></p> <p><b>Question: Has the current SEF (School Evaluation Form) and SDP (School Development Plan) been circulated to the governors?</b>  <i>Response: (NB) Yes, this has been done.</i></p> <p><b>Action: (TH) to upload SEF and SDP to GVO</b></p> <p>TH reported that he has monthly meetings with the School Business Manager and this has enabled them to keep a good grasp of the financial position. SA suggested that a financial update is a regular agenda item to enable governors to have a good overview of finances.</p> <p>SA recorded the thanks of the FGB to TH for his work with the School Business Manager in preparing the financial reports and accounts.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no recommendations requiring the approval of the FGB.</li> <li>• There were no reports from Link Governors requiring approval.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Staffing structure for 2018-19</i> NB reported that there were no changes in the staffing structure. FGB approval was given.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Curriculum plans</i> NB advised that due to difficulties in finding a food technology teacher they were exploring other options to ensure that this is included in the school curriculum. It may be that it is removed as a curriculum subject but maintained as a life skills subject.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: Have you explored the resource at Macclesfield College ?</b>  <i>Response: (NB) Yes we could go to Macclesfield College; we already do this for Spanish. (LC) It is an expensive subject although we can look at cooking on a budget but in food technology now, we have moved away from practical lessons to theory.</i></p> <p>FGB approval to these plans was given.</p>	
7	<p><b>PART ONE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>SA thanked NB for his report which had been circulated to the FGB and which presented a very positive picture of progress at the school.</p> <p>NB asked for his vote of thanks to be recorded to all the staff at the school whose commitment has enabled substantial progress to be made. The FGB endorsed and approved this.</p>	
8	<p><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS</b></p> <p>TH confirmed that the 2016/17 audited financial statements had been submitted to Companies House and had been published on the school website. TH also confirmed that the auditor's management letter had been submitted and the 2016/17 accounts return. The returns are a requirement under the EFA and included additional data not necessary for Companies House such as staffing including the gender mix and pay structure.</p> <p>TH distributed a summary /2017/18 budget review and forecast and highlighted the following items:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More income and more expenditure. £13,000 was our budget forecast – it is now £58,000.</li> <li>• We have more income than expected and are looking at a different financial model as we now have 56 rather than 40 students.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Question: We are coming to end of the financial year now – what would the wealth of the school look like and what are our reserves?</b>  <i>Response: (NB) There is a reserve of 1- 3 month operating costs of approx £151,000. The number of children has been confirmed as 53 for next year. TH reported that the academy needed a working capital of £140,000.</i></p> <p>NB advised that he has recently purchased second hand PE equipment (with 2 year warranty) to enable the improvement of facilities for exercise and healthy lifestyles. He is also exploring the possibility of a permanent gym on the premises for use by staff and children, funding sources are being investigated.</p> <p><b>Action: TH</b> to prepare summary with School Business Manager for every FGB meeting.  <b>Action: (Clerk)</b> to include financial update from TH as regular agenda item for FGB meetings.</p>	
9	<p><b>STRATEGIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)</b></p> <p>NB reported that there had been no progress to date on the proposal to allocate areas to sub- committees. Progress is reviewed regularly but the area which still needs to be addressed is reading (often and widely), and he has investigated purchasing some online technology to embed this in the system but currently this is too expensive. He is continuing to look at this area and would welcome a discussion in the future on allocating areas to sub-committees.</p>	
10	<p><b>STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE – ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>Jane Lowe, Link Adviser had been approached by NB to act as SIP for the Academy but there was a conflict as the academy has not yet had an OFSTED inspection. However, NB reported that they were going to undertake a mock OFSTED and David Roberts would be spending a day at the school to complete this.</p> <p><b>Question: What will be the cost of the mock OFSTED?</b>  <i>Response: (NB) It will cost £300.</i></p> <p><b>Question: Should we consider appointing another SIP if Jane Lowe is not available?</b>  <i>Response: (NB) I will be meeting with Jane after Easter and will know then whether or not she will be able to be our SIP.</i></p> <p>FGB agreed that other options needed to be explored to identify a SIP</p> <p><b>Action: (NB)</b> to set up a meeting with SA; TS; MH in the first week of May to discuss the SIP. SA suggested that a conference call may be an option</p>	

	on 4 <sup>th</sup> May with a preference for the morning.	
<b>11</b>	<b>CLERKING ARRANGEMENTS</b>  The FGB reported that they were now exploring a number of options for clerking at the Fermain Academy. CEC arrangements in the last two years had not been satisfactory.	
<b>12</b>	<b>TERM DATES AND HOLIDAYS FOR NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-19</b>  NB advised that the term dates for the next academic year have already been published and will mirror school term dates in Macclesfield and hopefully they will also be able to do this with INSET dates as well.	
<b>13</b>	<b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER/EXTERNAL ADVISER/LEADERSHIP PARTNER VISIT</b>  NB advised that there was nothing further to report	
<b>14</b>	<b>DIRECTOR'S REPORT</b>  The Report had been circulated and attention was drawn to the annual Governors Conference which takes place in June. NB reported that the county specific safeguarding training which is delivered at the Governors Conference is useful. It is also a very useful networking opportunity.	
<b>15</b>	<b>GOVERNOR MONITORING, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>  SA reported that the Governor Visits policy needed to approved, there were minor amendments including monitoring and evaluation, and also to the visit report format but the proposal was to move away from governor observation to governor learning walks.  SA also commented that the FGB needed to be more rigorous in collecting the reports after the visits and then reporting back to NB to provide him with the challenge needed to continue to improve the school.  The Policy was approved by the FGB.  <i>Governor Visits</i> The role of governors and the current model of focus weeks was discussed, SA felt that governors needed to be encouraged to pop in to the school. NB commented that he did not want to manage these visits merely to signpost areas where governor inputs would be welcome and he also wanted governors to become recognized and familiar at the school and part of the school culture and environment.	

The FGB agreed that for the time being the focus weeks should continue but it would be helpful for governors to work in pairs and that some signposting from NB would be useful; i.e. what should governors be looking for during their visits.

SA felt that progress was needed in the area of encouraging staff to think of governors as critical friends, governors are not there to do lesson observation. There is world of difference between scrutiny visits and popping in to get a flavor of the school. NB and LC both felt that they needed to ensure the visits did not become disruptive for pupils.

Identifying an area for governors to focus on was discussed and it was suggested that language and literacy would be a useful area to look at, but behavior was also important. It had to be made clear how this related to governance and to the SDP. Governors need to demonstrate how they are supporting and continuing to drive forward the improvement and change at the school.

**Action: (NB)** to arrange catch up call with SA after Easter and identify a topic for the focus week.

#### *Governor Skills Audit*

SA had sent a document (recommended by the NGA) to all governors to complete - governors have to grade their skills under different headings. The purpose of the audit is to identify skills and skills gaps in the FGB.

**Action: (All) Governors** to complete skills audit and return to SA. NB said that the SLT will complete this as well.

#### *Governor Training*

SA circulated the record on governor training, and made the following observations:-

\*Not all governors have completed the governor induction training, it is not online.

\*There is a need for some governors to complete the recruitment training, SA proposed he should complete this and invited other governors to do so as well

\*SA advised that he needed to complete the training on leading a board of governors and was looking at the options available.

NB and LC reinforced the need for all governors to complete the requisite training as this may impact on school governance rating during 'Mocksted'.

**Action: (Clerk)** Check new schedule of training is available and send details to SA.

**Action: TH; RH; TS; MH** to complete governor induction training.

	<p><b>Action: (Clerk)</b> to make enquiries at CEC- TS has recently completed his training but has not received a certificate.</p>	
16	<p><b>GDPR</b></p> <p>NB advised that a company has been employed to ensure compliance with the new GDPR.</p>	
17	<p><b>SCHOOL POLICIES</b></p> <p>TH advised that the Resources and Audit Committee have approved the following policies but they now need FGB approval:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance Manual - TH advised that the Finance Manual now contains an amendment relating to approval of purchases:- consent to purchases is required from two people and also for expenditure of over £5,000 three quotes were now needed. The FGB delegated authority to the Resources and Audit Committee to review the Finance Manual annually.</li> <li>• Investment Policy - TH advised that this would normally be approved by the Resources and Audit Committee but as it is a new policy it was thought to be appropriate for it to be approved initially by FGB but would be reviewed and approved in future years in committee.</li> <li>• Social Media Policy - TH advised that this would normally be approved by the Resources and Audit Committee but as it is a new policy it was thought to be appropriate for it to be approved initially by FGB but it would be reviewed and approved in future years in committee.</li> </ul> <p>The manual and policies were approved by the FGB.</p>	
18	<p><b>PLANNED RESIDENTIAL VISITS</b></p> <p>LC advised that no visits had been planned yet but Emma Colley was the co-ordinator and would notify the link governor when these had been planned. RH was nominated and approved as link governor for residential visits.</p>	
19	<p><b>MEETINGS</b></p> <p><b>FGB</b></p> <p>The next Full Governing Board meeting was agreed as Thursday 5th July 2018 at 4.00pm. TS tendered his apologies for this meeting.</p> <p><b>Resources and Audit Committee</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting date for the Resources and Audit</p>	

	<p>Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June would be moved as TS unable to attend.</p> <p><b>Action: NB/TS</b> to contact governors to agree new date for Resources and Audit meeting.</p> <p><b>Standards Committee</b> The next Standards Committee meeting was agreed as Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 at 4.00 pm.</p>	
<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>No other business to discuss the FGB moved to Part two business.</p>	

.....Chair

.....Dated