

**Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Board (FGB) of
Richmond Methodist Primary School
held at the school on Monday 7th March 2022 at 5.30 pm.**

Present:

Jan Linsley (Chair), Sharon Stevenson (Headteacher), Nicola Hebb (NH),
Rev Kathleen Wood (KW), John Armitage (JA), Julie Swinbank (JS), Kathleen Bradley (KB) (from 17.46),
Scott Woodhead (SW) and Kate Pepperell (KP).

In attendance:

Richard Crane –CEO Arete Learning Trust and Ofsted Inspector.
Natasha Wood-Deputy Headteacher.
Katrina Coxon- (NYCC Bursar) - from 6.30pm to 7.15pm by Teams.
Zoe Pick- SBL-from 6.30pm-7.15pm by Teams.
Pat Gale (NYCC Clerk to Governors)

Minute No.		Action
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Special Item: OFSTED READINESS FOR GOVERNORS PRESENTATION

GB 18/22	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions:</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made to Richard Crane (RC), the CEO of the Arete Learning Trust and experienced Ofsted Inspector. He explained that the Trust comprised of Northallerton School and Sixth Form College, Richmond School and Sixth Form College and Stokesley School and Sixth Form College; he noted that his additional experience as an Ofsted Inspector greatly benefited the quality improvement and Ofsted readiness of all partner schools.</p> <p>The presentation had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting, RC explained that there were three overarching questions to be considered based on the Governance Handbook, March 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do governors ensure that the schools vision, ethos, and strategic direction support the school in providing a high-quality education for its pupils? • How do governors create robust accountability and oversight for educational and financial performance? • How do governors hold leaders to account for the effective and efficient performance management of staff? <p>An overview of questions based on Leadership and Management (para. 229) was shared and governors were asked if there were any particular questions they might find challenging to respond to; the following were specifically raised:</p> <p>Q: <i>In what ways do governors seek to engage with parents and their community thoughtfully and positively in ways that support pupils' education-and what is the evidence?</i></p> <p><i>A: Our Parental Voice surveys are generally positive, but we do gain an insight into what parents regard as their priorities and concerns, and through an analysis we are able to respond to them in a measured way.</i></p> <p><i>A: As a parent governor I am also involved in the work of the PTA which encourages the involvement of all parents in supporting the reputation and direction of the school.</i></p> <p><i>Q: But as a Governing Body, not as individuals, do we have a positive position and presence in the community do you think?</i></p>	
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A: I think governors were a strong force in supporting the development of the nursery in promoting the quality of learning and increased admissions to the school, and also in the way the school managed the Covid issues very well.

(To note: KB joined the meeting at 5.46 pm)

Q: How do governors check on leaders' actions to take account of staff workload and well-being?

A: I think this is a possible gap, would governors know the detail?

Q: How do Governors assure themselves that CPD for staff is aligned with the curriculum and how would governors develop and strengthen the quality of the workforce, and do we know how effective the training has been for staff?

A: We get reports on what training has been undertaken, but perhaps not the detail of impact and value for money.

Action:

a) The DHT and HT are finalising a 'School on a Page' concise briefing for governors on the school, which would also cover areas that governors felt less confident about.

RC commented that the school would be undertaking a two day section 8 inspection, and the judgement would be unlikely to change from 'Good' previously awarded in 2017.

Q: So is there any incentive to strive to become 'outstanding'?

A: There is always the need to emphasise continuous improvement, and if the evidence is good and embedded across the school, it is unlikely to change, and in particular we don't want it to move downwards. The 'School on a Page' document being finalised will provide governors with all the answers in a very concise way avoiding too much detail, although this can be found in the SEF.

Q: Does the schools 'faith status get in the way of the inspection process?

A: It shouldn't, but the inspectors may ask about impact on the pupils and school.

Q: How many inspectors will be involved?

A: Usually two or three on Day 1 and one or two on Day 2, it does depend on the size of the school, or if there has been a safeguarding issue reported.

Q: Are all governors involved or just the Head and Deputy?

A: If there is a specific theme inspectors wish to interrogate then link governors may be invited to be involved

Q: What if some governors may not be available?

A: Then the 'School on a Page' will provide a script and useful prompts.

Q: For Foundation subject 'Deep Dives' would a link governor be required to be involved?

A: Not necessarily, this usually happens on Day 1, again the 'School on a Page' will provide this useful support.

Q: What is the inspection process?

A: The Headteacher will be contacted mid to late morning prior to the inspection with requests for specific information and a schedule of availability and sequencing of events, this is usually produced by 6pm of that day, so that everyone knows what to expect on Day 1 of the inspection. Day 2 is usually focused on finding additional evidence and triangulating to establish agreed feedback and judgement. The feedback is given at the end of Day 2, which all governors can attend, but they cannot query the feedback at this stage.

RC then asked governors to consider a number of **Covid specific questions** which could be asked of them, for example:

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Q: Can you explain how the school has adapted the curriculum in the light of the pandemic?

A: The remote learning offer and how it was quality assured, case studies and our door step support for pupils and families if concerns raised.

Q: How do you know that the school has supported the needs of the most vulnerable, SEND and disadvantaged children?

A: This is a key issue and the 'School on a Page' document and information from link governors will support these responses.

RC informed governors that there were implications of the Ofsted Peer on Peer Review on the inspection process in terms of the Sexual Abuse Review and asked if they wished to raise any issues, for example:

Q: Has the school curriculum been affected by any local contextual issues such as knife crime, drugs and county lines?

The HT did inform governors that these were not just secondary school pupil issues but did impact on pupils at school, particularly in years, 4, 5 and 6 and is covered in the RSHE curriculum.

Q: How has the curriculum been adapted to reflect tolerance and diversity?

Q: How do governors know how these issues are being addressed, what are the local risk issues?

Q: Have parents and governors been consulted about what is delivered in RSHE?

A: The school was an Early Adopter of the curriculum, and Nicola Scrafton was involved in the process, but we may need to review and update.

Q: How effective is the training for staff?

A: Responses to all these questions will be found on the 'School on a Page', giving a concise overview not too much detail.

RC explained that safeguarding was a key aspect of the inspection framework, which was not designed to investigate individual incidents but more the systems and procedures, and the requirement to make sure that schools are following the guidance from KCSIE, in particular Part 5. Scrutinising behaviour logs and safeguarding records is a significant aspect of the inspection, at least an hour is spent with the DSL on day one and may be followed up on day two. It was emphasised that all governors, not just the safeguarding link should have a good understanding of safeguarding.

Governors were then given a useful reflection on recent Northallerton and Richmond inspections in terms of Governance:

- The importance of having the right level of information about the school....'on a page'.
- Demonstrating support and challenge as appropriate-as a key part of leadership and management, governors should be part of the process of triangulation of the evidence.GB minutes should evidence this.
- The importance of safeguarding, it was noted that the signing in procedure was very good.

In summary Governors need to:

- Know their school well and know strengths (for example safeguarding, indoor and outdoor PE) and areas for development such as computing and developing subject leadership.
- Understand the school strategic vision developed before the Pandemic.

Action:

b) The Headteacher to forward the strategic vision document to all Governors, particularly those new to their role.

	The Chair and Headteacher thanked Richard Crane for a most valuable overview and helpful support for the school. (To note: RC left the meeting at 6.25pm)	HT
PART A- PROCEDURAL		
GB 19/22	<u>Opening Prayer:</u> The Rev.Kathleen Wood opened the business meeting with the following thought about Lent being the start of a journey through to Easter and that Lent was about 'journeying - body, mind and spirit', reflecting on the journeys that Ukrainians were currently undertaking. The journey for school was about staff and pupils working together to take decisions, progress in all the means, ways and places we can as long as ever we can. The Chair thanked the Rev.Kathleen Wood for her thoughtful opening words.	
GB 20/22	<u>Apologies for Absence :</u> Apologies for absence had been received and consented to from Nicola Scrafton but it was noted that apologies had not been received from Caroline Dawson, all Governors hoped that she was well, the Chair would make contact. (Action) .	
GB 21/22	<u>Declarations of business and personal interests, pecuniary or non-pecuniary:</u> None declared.	
GB 22/22	<u>Confidentiality issues:</u> The Chair explained that at the end of the meeting a confidential item would be discussed, which could potentially impact on staff, so she requested that JS should leave the meeting at that point.	
GB 23/22	<u>Notification of urgent other business:</u> This would be covered by the confidential item.	
GB 24/22	<u>To approve the minutes of the last FGB meeting held on the 17th January 2022:</u> It was agreed due to timing that the minutes would be deferred for approval until the next meeting. <u>Resolved:</u> The minutes of the FGB meeting held on the 17th January 2022 should be deferred for approval until the May FGB meeting.	All
GB 25/22	<u>Governance Update:</u> Deferred until the May meeting.	

GB 26/22	<p><u>To confirm the date of the next meeting:</u></p> <p>Date of the next meeting: Monday 9th May 2022 at 5pm for a business meeting start at 5.30pm.</p>	All
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PART 'B'- FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

To note:
At 6.30pm Katrina Coxon (NYCC Bursar) and Zoe Pick were invited to present the finance related items via Teams.

GB 27/22	<p>Governors had been circulated with a number of reports and the Chair invited Katrina Coxon (KC) to present each item supported by ZP:</p> <p>a)The NYCC Financial Benchmarking Report- (autumn 2021): KC noted that the benchmarking report was different from previous reports, in that it included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View My Financial Insights (VMFI)-a new tool from the DfE that provides users with insights into the financial position and performance of their school. It identifies areas with the greatest variance compared to similar schools, providing a useful starting point to investigate further. • Self-Assessment Dashboard-which shows how a school compares to thresholds on a range of key indicators. Completion of the dashboard forms part of the annual Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) statutory assessment. It shows a range of metrics RAG rated against other schools, based upon phase, region, number of pupils and % of pupils eligible for school meals. It shows the submitted data for the school held by the DfE and compares it to the revised budget for 2021/22 agreed by governors in November 2021. <p>KC reported that there were lots of 'green status' ratings against thresholds which gave a very positive picture, in particular, staffing was vastly improved. Amber ratings should also be viewed as positive and showed improvements over the past 12 months. Governors were asked if they wished to raise any issues, but as the report was very clear, it was felt that there was nothing to be explained and KC was thanked for a most useful contextual status report.</p> <p>b)The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS): KC explained that the SFVS helps to provide schools with the assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management, providing assurance that the school is managing its resources effectively.</p> <p>The format of the report had changed in that the dashboard showing data from 2021 is now available on the school financial benchmarking report, as discussed earlier. The SFVS checklist asks a number of questions of governing bodies in six areas of resource management; governance, school strategy, setting the annual budget, staffing, value for money and protecting public money.</p> <p>KC then referred governors to section D of the report on staffing, explaining that there had been a new question 16-'Has the school published on its website the number of employees (if any) whose gross salary exceeded £100k?', it was confirmed that the school does not currently have any staff that exceeds this level, but the school is aware of the need to publish this information if required.</p>	
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Governors were referred to question 25 regarding **outstanding matters from audit reports**, the latest Audit Report had been checked and there were no outstanding issues; a self-evaluation is carried out annually and there were no issues. Question 26 required **'are there adequate arrangements in place to manage related party transactions and has a complete list of these transactions been appended to the checklist document?'**KC confirmed that this had been completed on a termly basis, but only an annual report was required and this had been submitted to the LA which stated there had been no such transactions undertaken by the school.

Q: What is a related party transaction?

A: It is a transaction or a contract that may have close connections with a staff member or governor, which could potentially raise a conflict of interest.

Question 30 asked if **'the school had adequate arrangements for the audit of voluntary funds'**. It was confirmed that the School Fund is audited annually by a qualified accountant, the audited accounts are submitted to the FGB for approval before being submitted to the Charity Commission.

KC was able to report that all aspects were compliant and reflected strong leadership of resources, finally she explained that in discussion with the school, three key actions reflecting the outcome of the SFVS had been proposed as follows:

- Develop nursery provision as agreed with the governing body.
- Continue to maintain a healthy surplus and minimise in-year deficits.
- Continue the marketing plan to increase pupil numbers.

Governors were asked if they agreed with these priority actions.

Resolved:

All Governors agreed that they were key actions and that the SFVS should be approved, signed and dated by the Chair for submission to the local authority.

All

The Chair thanked KC for her support in ensuring the school presented a timely return of the approved SFVS to the local authority.

c)The Start Budget for 2022/23 and three year budget forecast:

Governors had been previously circulated with both a detailed and a summary report for their consideration and approval.

KC gave the following headlines and asked for questions or clarification:

- A predicted carry forward of £177.4k, but this could change and the report does take a worst-case scenario.
- Funding for the 2022/23 year is based on the soft implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF), subsequent years are calculated on the same basis, but could be subject to change if the DfE moves to the full implementation of the NFF.
- A 3% increase for teaching staff from September 2022 and for subsequent years.
- A 3% increase for support staff has been included from April 2022, a further 3% for April 2023 and a further 2% has been included for subsequent years.
- The supply staffing level of £26.2k for 2022/23 reflects the impact of Covid, and hopefully this amount will decrease over future years, for example for the 2023/24 year it is estimated to have reduced to £12k.
- The additional 1.25% increase for National Insurance contributions has been included from April 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are assuming an admission number of 45 pupils but we already have 46 first choice pupils for a September start. Pupil Premium funding of £49k is based on the January census, and could change in future years. Capital financing from revenue is £10k for one year only for the bungalow conversion. <p>Questions raised by governors:</p> <p><i>Q: What are 'other employees costs' referring to and what are 'community focused extended school costs'?</i></p> <p><i>A: Other staff costs such as for MSAs and community staff costs refer to the WAC staff.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Why does the nursery funding look low for 2022/23?</i></p> <p><i>A: It is a worst case scenario, as we can only provide for 16 children, so if we increased the number of children, and we already have applications for nine 3 year olds for the following year, we would need to identify additional space, it is possible we could move some children to Ribblesdale.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Did we increase the costs of school meals, I know we talked about it, what are the charges?</i></p> <p><i>A: Currently the cost is £2.40 a meal, I suggest we have a discussion about this at the next meeting.</i></p> <p>Action:</p> <p>a) To have school meals on the May 9th agenda.</p> <p><i>Q: What assumptions have been made about utility costs?</i></p> <p><i>A: We have signed up to an LA wide contract, it is a lot cheaper for us to do that due to economies of scale, although we understand that energy costs will be rising at a national level, and not something to look forward to.</i></p> <p>Staff Absence Insurance Scheme:</p> <p>Governors were asked if they would consider and agree to staying with the NYCC Staff Absence Insurance scheme or would they wish to consider commercial providers?</p> <p><i>Q: What is the value for money in remaining with the NYCC scheme?</i></p> <p><i>A: Unlike other providers NYCC covers maternity leave, we did look at other schemes, but they were not as flexible as NYCC, so we do recommend that we stay, but always keep under review.</i></p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>Governors agree to the recommendation to remain with the NYCC Staff Absence Insurance Scheme for 2022/23.</p> <p><i>Q: The reserves are relatively high does the LA ask why they are so high?</i></p> <p><i>A: As we have a predicted in year deficit of £21.3k in 2023/24, then the LA will accept that.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Because our reserves are high, can we evidence that we are supporting all children in their learning?</i></p> <p><i>A: We will be increasing resources for pupil learning, particularly for years 2 and 3 pupils, and our data will support this.</i></p> <p>KC asked governors to review the capital financial forecast summary, explaining that the £7.5k income was from the LA as a contribution to the nursery development, matched with the £10k revenue financing from the school budget.</p> <p>Governors thanked KC and ZP for the clarification around capital.</p>	<p>HT/ Clerk</p> <p>All</p>
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	<p><i>Q: Should we also look at other ways of generating income for the school, perhaps by working with parents to see if they can sponsor or support fundraising.</i> <i>A: Laura the SBL carried out a lot of research into grants and we have a number of applications that demonstrate this.</i> <i>A: The PTA has also just drafted a letter to be sent to all parents asking if they had ideas or businesses that could help the school with projects. Historically it has been difficult to get parents involved in this way, although support with discos, concerts and other pupil focused events have generally been well-supported. Fundraising for specific projects might be a good idea, such as developing the memorial garden or enclosing the sanctuary to make it more fit for purpose. We have successfully gained funding from community groups such as the Duck Club and the Meet.</i> <i>Q: Would it be helpful if we let parents know about these successes and opportunities to help, as it could help generate more funding and willingness to get engaged more. Also perhaps more overtly give value back to the donors or sponsors with plaques, opening ceremonies and press coverage.</i> <i>A: All of these ideas are valuable and now we are post-pandemic there should be more opportunities to celebrate successes in this way.</i></p> <p>Action: b)The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher to work with NH and SW on developing ideas for sponsorship and fundraising further.</p> <p>The Chair thanked KC and ZP for their clear and positive reporting on the budget and Proposed that the start budget should be approved.</p> <p>Resolved: All Governors approved the start budget for 2022/23.</p> <p>(To note:KC and ZP left the meeting at 7.22pm)</p>	<p>HT/ DHT/ NH/SW</p> <p>All</p>
<p>GB 28/22</p>	<p><u>Policy Approvals:</u></p> <p>Action: The Chair proposed that due to time constraints the consideration and approval of policies be deferred to the May 9th Meeting.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>PART 'C' – EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE</p>		
<p>GB 29/22</p>	<p><u>Review of the School Improvement Plan-Objective 4:</u></p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher Natasha Wood was welcomed and invited to give a verbal update on Objective 4 of the SIP focusing particularly on writing, it was noted that writing skills had been impacted by covid, so there was a need to catch up and enable children and teachers to regain confidence. One of the earliest priorities was to establish baselines in writing and produce a 'gaps report' which would inform work schedules for each year group.</p> <p>The workplan is very structured for each year group focusing on one type of writing each half term as opposed to the previous approach of five or six different types each term. The emphasis being on remembering and embedding, with two internal writing moderations taking place, supported by photos of pieces of work which are located on SharePoint. Children have real pride in what they are learning, it is definitely 'active learning', supported by visualisers, a valuable approach to take in supporting the high quality use of vocabulary, even with the youngest of children.</p>	

	<p><i>Q: What are visualisers?</i> <i>A: they are little cameras located on each desk which capture hand writing live.</i> As DHT I monitor all the work being undertaken and encourage teachers to upload work and take more notice of presentation. We also carry out external writing moderation with the English Lead at Bedale, and have a session planned for the 9th March; it is a valuable approach sharing expectations and building confidence. We have also introduced a 'free writing' approach, encouraging children to write about what they are motivated to write about, this has been well received and also stimulates their imagination. We will be producing a summative assessment of gaps and hope to involve the link Governor, Caroline Dawson in this process. <i>Q: Will you introduce lots of genres eventually?</i> <i>A: We are wanting to keep it streamlined building on cognitive science, but over time all genres will have been covered.</i> <i>Q: What indication of progress and impact have you noted?</i> <i>A: Story writing and narrative is much stronger, although Year 6 slightly lower than what I had hoped, but the spring assessment has still to be done, so this feedback is based on the autumn data.</i></p> <p>Action: Spring Data 1 for the school will be reported at the May 9th FGB meeting.</p> <p>The Chair on behalf of all governors thanked Natasha Wood for her very interesting and helpful update which closed at 7.35pm.</p>	<p>HT</p>
<p>GB 30/22</p>	<p><u>Governor Visit update:</u> Scott Woodhead reported that he had undertaken a school visit with Joe Larder to discuss the benefits of Forest School and other aspects of indoor and outdoor PE/sports learning. He said he had held a very informative meeting and was inspired by JLs enthusiasm and passion for the subject, they also had a positive discussion on how donors could potentially support this aspect of the curriculum. SW was thanked for his support for this particular strength of the school.</p> <p>The Chair requested that JS, the staff Governor should leave the meeting at this point for a confidential item to be discussed. It was agreed that the DHT could stay for this part of the meeting, as she was aware of the discussion.</p> <p>(JS left the meeting at 7.40pm)</p>	
<p>PART D-OTHER BUSINESS</p>		
<p>GB 31/22</p>	<p><u>To consider additional confidential item:</u> CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE GB 31/22</p>	
	<p>There being no further business, the Chair thanked Governors, the HT,DHT and all staff for their hard work and commitment to the school, and closed the meeting at 8.15pm.</p>	
<p>The date of the next FGB meeting will be held on Monday the 9th May 2022 at 5 pm.</p> <p>Please send apologies to the Clerk Pat Gale:</p>		

Sign: 

Date: 11.5.22

Pat.gale@northyorks.gov.uk;

Or 07793 846 441

Please note: The colour coding above links to the three key roles of governance questioning;
RED for 'setting strategic direction',
BLUE for 'holding Headteacher to account for educational performance'
GREEN for 'ensuring financial health, probity and value for money'.

Sign:



Date: 11.5.22