

Five Spires Academy

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board held in the Academy on Monday 23 September, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mrs. Winson (Chair), Mrs. Raftery (Headteacher), Mr. Agates, Mr. Murray, Mrs. Motorny, Mrs. Downie

In attendance: Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)
Mr. Bhoola (Deputy Director of Education)

1 Opening Remarks:

Governors were welcomed to the first meeting of the new academic year. A special welcome was extended to Mrs. Raftery who has recently joined the Academy as its new Executive Headteacher and Mr. Bhoola who was looking to share with Governors REAch2's plans for evolving governance at a local level.

2 Apologies:

Resolved: That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mrs. Van Dreumel and Mrs. Davies.

Resolved: That an apology not be received and therefore not accepted from Mr. Chambers.

Governors are reminded that any Governor who does not participate in full Governing Board meetings for more than six months without their apologies being accepted by the Governing Board are automatically disqualified.

3 Governance Update:

Mr. Bhoola shared with Governors the plans REAch2 has for evolving governance at a local academy level. To align the practice of governance with the growth of the Trust, a cluster-based model is going to be deployed over the coming months to streamline activities and ensure the current expansion activities of the Trust can be sustained in the medium-long term.

Governors were informed that there will be 10 clusters in total with Five Spires Academy forming Cluster 2 with three other schools. Mr. Bhoola explained some of the immediate benefits that will naturally flow from this cluster-based model including re-invigorating governance and risk management, facilitating meaningful and practical collaboration between schools at a local level, building capacity within the Trust to potentially bring new schools into the different cluster groupings and using the strengths from each school to challenge and drive each Academy towards Outstanding practice.

Board members were informed that each cluster will have its own Cluster Board, sitting in the hierarchical structure between the local Governing Board and the Trust Board. Membership of this Cluster Board will include the appointment of non-executives, inclusion of the Chairs of Governors from each member school, a Headteacher representative and an appointed Clerk to capture the strategic discussions and challenge that will be delivered within this forum. As a sub-committee of the Trust Board, the primary objectives of the

Cluster Board will be to review and monitor educational performance across the family of schools, to review the Cluster Risk Register which will be a key, strategic document in the future and to make representations to the Trust Board where a particular collective issue has been identified that needs further consideration at a higher level.

Board members understood the rationale provided by Mr. Bhoola and why a change to the current governance model is required. It was clear that at a local level Board members will be required to complete a range of documentation that will support the work of the Cluster Board, particularly as one of the expected outputs from this Board will be to generate a Cluster SEF and Cluster Development Plan. The drafting and updating of this information will in time enable the Trust Board to get a robust feel for how clusters are performing against specific KPI's and therefore enrich the two-way dialogue between the Trust Board and its sub-committees.

As well as the cluster model which will facilitate collaboration between schools, Mr. Bhoola reassured Governors that the Academy will still have access to wider Trust support that is available. At a local level, Governors will have the opportunity to see how their Academy is performing against other schools in the cluster. This in itself will prove an effective catalyst to generate challenge at a local governance level and Board members will also be able to escalate issues up to the Cluster Board if they feel an issue affecting all schools within a particular cluster needs to be addressed.

It is anticipated that another function of the Cluster Board will be to consider the needs of each of its schools (evidenced through the Risk Register) and make recommendations to the Trust where it is felt an investment of resource is needed – whether that be a financial outlay or the sharing of staff resources between schools, for example.

As with any new initiative, Governors look forward to seeing how the cluster model evolves in the coming months. Overall, Board members could understand the rationale behind this governance development and anticipate that the cluster model will facilitate meaningful collaboration between schools and ensure priorities within the cluster can be directly addressed.

Resolved: That Mr. Bhoola be thanked for his informative and insightful update.

Mr Bhoola left the meeting and Governors returned to standard governance matters.

4 Election of Chair:

The Autumn Term is the point in the academic year when a new Chair to Governors is elected. Nominations were sought and a nomination was put forward for Mrs. Winson, a role she was happy to take on for at least the next 12 months.

Resolved: That Mrs. Winson be appointed as Chair of the Governing Board up until the first meeting of the Autumn Term, 2020.

5 Election of Vice-Chair:

The Autumn Term is the point in the academic year when a new Vice-Chair to Governors is elected.

Mrs. Davies, the previous Vice-Chair, was not present at tonight's meeting. As a result, it was agreed that the Chair will follow up this matter with Mrs. Davies outside of tonight's meeting to establish whether she wishes to be considered once again for this role. A decision on the Vice-Chair will therefore be taken at the Spring Term meeting.

Resolved: That Mrs. Winson follow up this matter with Mrs. Davies. This issue will need to be added to the Spring Term agenda.

6 Governing Board Matters:

a) Membership

The following membership updates were shared with members:

1.1

It was confirmed that Mrs. Van Dreumel's term of office will expire on 18.11.19. As a result, the SLT needs to instigate a Parent Governor election to fill this outstanding vacancy.

Resolved: That Mrs. Van Dreumel be thanked for her service as Governor to Five Spires Academy. There is no doubt her work as Safeguarding Link Governor and effective challenge she delivered in meetings will be missed.

1.2

The Clerk confirmed that the Governor information, currently available online needs to be updated. There was also some clarification sought around terms of office and the procedure that needs to be followed when reappointing Governors.

Resolved: That the Clerk contact Mrs. Chester to clarify a number of constitution-related issues.

Once any missing information is received, the intention will be to update Governor Hub with an accurate membership listing in advance of the Spring Term meeting. Provision will also need to be made for updating the online record.

Resolved: That the Clerk/School Business Manager progress these actions subject to accurate and up-to-date information being received.

b) Confidentiality

Governors were reminded that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting.

c) Register of Business Interests

Governors were reminded of the requirement to update the register of business interests on an annual basis, and are aware that this must be kept in the Academy and should be included on the Academy website.

As some Governors were not present at tonight's meeting, the School Business Manager will need to ensure absent Governors are chased up for their annual return. Governors who were present completed their return in the meeting.

Resolved: That the School Business Manager progress this action, ensuring a full audit return is in place and the online information has been updated.

d) Declaration of Interest Business and Pecuniary

No declarations of interest were made by Governors in respect of any items appearing on the agenda.

e) Code of Conduct

Governors were advised that they should have a Code of Conduct in place that all serving Governors agree to and understand and that arrangements are in place to ensure that all new Governors are made aware of the Code when joining the Governing Board.

As no Code was tabled on the evening of the meeting, the Clerk will email the new Headteacher a copy of the Entrust Code of Conduct. The Headteacher can then determine whether the Governing Board adopts the Entrust version or a REAch2 equivalent. Either way, Governors will need to sign a pro-forma in the Spring Term to confirm their compliance with the protocols listed in the chosen document.

Resolved: That the Clerk email the Headteacher a copy of the Entrust Code of Conduct.

7 Finance Update:

It was confirmed that a financial update will be supplied in full at the Spring Term meeting. The Academy has only recently appointed new School Business Managers following the departure of Mrs. Dixon and their energies at the current time are very much directed towards the financial year end. The Headteacher's Report confirmed that financial audits have all taken place and there was also additional information for Governors around Pupil Premium funding, specifically the funding allocation and its impact across the pupil cohort – more on this later...

Governors noted this update and look forward to the scheduled financial update in the Spring Term.

8 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the full Governing Board meeting held on Wednesday 8 May, 2019 (including Confidential Appendix) be approved.

Resolved: That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection.

9 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting:

As per standard practice, the Clerk completes an action matrix to the minutes. The following update can be reported:

Minute	Update
3A	The Clerk continues to take steps to establish an accurate membership listing for the Governing Board.
4	The January minutes have been made available as a public record.
6A	With a number of Governors to be recruited and members being absent from tonight's meeting, it was agreed to revisit the Link Governor membership in the Spring Term. That said, with Mrs. Van Dreumel

	coming off the Governing Board as the designated Safeguarding Link Governor, it was agreed the Chair would pick up this role on an interim basis.
8	It was agreed that presentations from the English/Maths Leads will take place at a future meeting (Chair/Headteacher to determine approach here).
8	Mrs. Van Dreumel was not present at tonight's meeting to comment on this action. The action is therefore considered closed.
10	The agenda was reviewed and amended in advance of tonight's meeting.
11B	With the new Headteacher having only recently taken up post, a self-evaluation strategy for the Board will need to be agreed in the coming months.
Conf.	The various actions listed in the Confidential Appendix have been addressed.

Resolved: That Governors be thanked for closing down actions between meetings.

10 Review of Committee Structure/Scheme of Delegation:

a) Committees/Nominated Governors

The Governing Board does not use a committee framework to conduct its business. At present, there are three meetings a year which in time will be supplemented by the work of the Cluster Board. There was therefore no further action to take in relation to this agenda item.

As previously minuted, Link Governor responsibilities will be revisited in the Spring Term. That said,

Governor Challenge – Mr. Agates challenged which area of academy life it would be beneficial for him to get involved with as Link Governor.

It was felt with the changing Ofsted framework one crucial area for the SLT in the future and an area that might benefit from greater Governor scrutiny is the curriculum, specifically the extent to which a broad and balanced offer is being delivered. The Headteacher confirmed once the SEF and priorities were set, she would welcome a meeting with Mr. Agates to discuss how he can engage the Academy in this area as Link Governor. Whilst Mr. Agates does not come from an educational professional background, Governors did not feel this was a barrier to the role. In fact, it was felt this approach could facilitate more objective challenge.

11 Reports:

a) Chair's and Vice-Chair's Actions

The Chair reported that she had not undertaken any actions on behalf of the Governing Board since the last full Governing Board meeting.

b) Committees

There were no committee minutes to ratify at tonight's meeting.

c) **Nominated/Link Governors**

Mr. Murray confirmed he had a SEND report to write up following a meeting in his capacity as SEND Link Governor with Mrs. Motorny. It was also confirmed that a meeting has been arranged for 09.10.19 around a similar theme. At this point, Mr. Murray raised a sensitive matter with Governors which it was agreed would be recorded in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes – **see Confidential Appendix**.

There were no other Link Governor updates at this point in the meeting.

12 **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher's Report had been shared with Governors in advance of tonight's meeting. This was the first Report produced by the new Executive Headteacher and Governors welcomed both the format of the Report and the way in which the update was delivered. Various items were highlighted in the Report for further discussion and a summary of these discussions can be reported as follows:

1.1

Governor Challenge – There was a Governor challenge as to the reasons behind the 13.8% persistent absence figure for Year 2 in 2018-19.
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The SLT provided some context to account for this disproportionate high figure citing cohort specific reasons and trips being taken abroad as directly contributing to this percentage hike.

The SLT reassured Governors that this statistic did not represent an overarching, worrying trend as can be seen in the remaining attendance data which puts the whole School attendance figure above national expectations and shows that when it comes to persistent absence in other year groups and unauthorised absence the SLT has been relatively successful in the strategies it has deployed.

There was a brief discussion about whether the fining system around unauthorised absence should be implemented, the circumstances under which the Headteacher would authorise term time absence and how the recruitment of a Learning Support Mentor should offer further support to the SLT in this area. On the subject of fining, Governors felt the implementation of such an initiative would be counterproductive. The money from the fines does not come to the Academy and it was felt taking this stance would lead to a deterioration in relationship between the Academy and one of its key stakeholder groups – not a prospect Governors were prepared to entertain. To reassure Governors further, the Headteacher explained there are key checks and balances in the system so if a pupil's attendance does start to decline, it will trigger a series of interventions with the child and family to hopefully get attendance back on track.

1.2

Pupil premium is an important ring-fenced funding stream that is primarily aimed at decreasing the attainment gap for the most disadvantaged children, whether that be by income or by family upheaval. Governors were supplied with the Five Spires Pupil Premium Strategy Statement for 2019-20 which outlined amongst other things current attainment level, barriers to future attainment, desired outcomes, planned expenditure and the anticipated impact of each funding area. There was also a review of the Strategy for 2018-19 at the back of the document. This Statement will be published online and Governors will be able to monitor the success of this statement over the course of the next 12 months.

Governors welcomed the transparency of this document and will digest it more fully at their leisure.

1.3

A data summary was shared with Governors.

Governor Challenge – There was some challenge around the reasons why there was a statistical decline in some of the KS1 percentage figures between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The SLT confirmed that any decline could be explained by cohort specific reasons and did not exemplify any overarching trend. Equally, a low number of candidates can cause a skewing effect in the data which Governors also need to take into account when looking to identify trends in the data set.

1.4

Governors welcomed the SLT focus on reducing workload pressures and improving the well-being of staff. Board members queried whether the SLT could benefit further from engaging the wider community on this matter. As one Governor explained, there is likely to be lots of excellent practice going on in other professions that could be brought to bear on the practice implemented at Five Spires. The SLT will take this feedback on board when planning future parent engagement activities.

1.5

Governor Challenge – Listed in the SDP priorities, Governors challenged over the types of developments that will need to be embedded in the curriculum in the next 12 months and whether middle leaders will be equipped with the skills to take this challenge on.

The Headteacher explained that the new curriculum offer will be broad and balanced, it will look to develop the concept of the holistic child and it will ensure blocks of learning are appropriately sequenced so that it will be explicit, for example, how the knowledge, understanding and skills develop between a Year 1 and Year 5 Geographer. Whilst all of this will take time middle leaders will be instrumental in ensuring both the provision mapping is effective and the curriculum offer is transparent to any external third party. The Headteacher felt with the right accountability culture and appropriate CPD package in place, middle leaders will thrive in Five Spires teaching and learning environment – important as the Academy grows and additional staff are recruited.

1.6

Governor Challenge – Governors challenged whether the pupils suffer in any way as a result of a lack of a playing field and grassed outdoor space.

The SLT could understand why Governors might ask this question and reassured them that the SLT is always looking at how provision can be extended/improved. The use of other local schools for particular events, the opportunity for inter-house/school sports competitions as the Academy expands, the way the lunchtime experience is managed, the use of off-site activities and swimming provision are all ways that the SLT can ensure they can affect this issue directly. There is the wider community that could also be consulted for further ideas and the SLT was keen to stress that the Academy is ensuring Sports Premium funding is being used to embed practice in this area before this ring-fenced funding is withdrawn by central government.

1.7

Governor Challenge – There was some challenge around the need to generate a Governor Development Plan.

The Headteacher confirmed that this activity should be scheduled once the SEF and associated priorities have been drafted. This way any priorities agreed by Governors can directly align with the School's own focused priorities. There will be further discussion around this issue at the Spring Term meeting.

Resolved: That Governors revisit the Governor Development Plan in the Spring Term.

Resolved: That the Headteacher be thanked for her informative and detailed update.

13 INSET Dates:

Governors received an information sheet which contained academy term dates for 2019/20. INSET dates were listed on this document. This information is available online and there was no further action required at tonight's meeting.

14 Safeguarding Check:

Safeguarding is an important compliance issue and the Headteacher's Report documents the current ways that Five Spires is meeting its statutory responsibilities in this area. This included a CPD update, confirmation that all staff have read and are comfortable with the latest KCSIE guidance and finally that the procedures and practice in place around Safeguarding have been validated through internal Trust Audits. For their part, Governors also need to be aware of the latest KCSIE guidance and confirmation that this has happened will be captured between now and the Spring Term meeting.

Resolved: That the School Business Manager ensure Governors have confirmed they have read and are familiar with the latest KCSIE guidance.

Worth noting is that Five Spires also has a Safeguarding Policy available online which Governors can reflect on at their leisure.

There were no separate compliance issues that needed to be raised within tonight's forum.

15 Six Features of Effective Governance:

The remainder of the agenda focused on the six features of effective governance which in themselves were documented within the Governor Information Pack. The Governing Board will need to determine the best way to analyse the information in the Governor Information Pack and act on it as they consider appropriate.

Resolved: That the Chair/Headteacher discuss the best way to facilitate this process.

16 Any Other Business:

There were a number of items of additional business that were shared with Governors at this point in the meeting.

1.1

<p>Governor Challenge – A Governor challenged the transition of pupils from Five Spires to high schools, specifically what provision is in place to support pupils on their educational journey.</p>

The Headteacher cited some research that suggested that pupils from small schools fare relatively well in the transition process, better than some may think, with pupils being quite resilient in this period of change. To reassure Governors the Headteacher outlined the provision that is in place for Five Spires pupils but did comment that the practice from high schools can be quite variable in terms of the current amount of time they devote to the transition process.

1.2

Some time was spent discussing the Risk Register which dovetailed quite nicely with the presentation delivered by Mr. Bhoola at the start of the meeting – specifically how risk should be viewed alongside a school's SEF and priorities. The Risk Register is broken down into eight categories and will be a key document considered at all levels of the governance framework, whether that be at a local, cluster or board level.

Mrs. Motorny had kindly populated the Risk Register for Five Spires and other than clarify one or two aspects of terminology, Governors were comfortable with the level of risk that had been documented. Of course, the Risk Register is a fluid document that will be updated on a regular basis and Governors were pleased to hear that the current RED RAG linked to inadequate cladding is already being dealt with.

Governors recognised that the Risk Register needs to be completed as accurately and honestly as possible to ensure as and when funding is linked to priority needs, Five Spires does not lose out. Governors can expect the Risk Register to appear as a standing item at meetings going forward.

1.3

Governor Challenge – Governors asked whether the Headteacher was concerned about the forthcoming lack of a Deputy and how this may impact the SLT.

The Headteacher thanked Governors for their concern but stressed that she will always maintain an open and honest dialogue with the Trust on this issue. By being part of REAch2 and a forthcoming cluster, there are always Trust resources that could be accessed/discussed should the Headteacher feel additional capacity is needed. This matter will be kept under review.

1.4

L1 Safeguarding training for Governors was discussed. A CPD opportunity had been made available but not all Governors could attend. One Governor confirmed he had completed L1 Safeguarding training at another school and will bring in his certificate. For other Governors, online training or training at another school will be explored to ensure everyone has received this important form of CPD.

Resolved: That the Headteacher/Chair determine the best way to progress this matter.

1.5

Governors have been asked to complete bios for the website. Absent Governors will need to be chased up for these bios following tonight's meeting.

Resolved: That Mrs. Motorny progress this action.

1.6

Governor Challenge – A Governor challenged what can be done about parents leaving their engines running for 15-20 minutes at the start/end of the day.

The Headteacher confirmed a reminder would be sent out in a future newsletter and the matter will also be passed over to the Eco-Council so pupils themselves can hold parents to account over this climate-based issue.

17 Confidential Items:

Governors were asked to identify if there were any items/materials which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Governors were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

Resolved: That the following item be identified as needing to be included in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minute 11C.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

18 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:

A recommendation of a date for the Spring Term meeting was put forward as 11.02.20 at 5.30 p.m.

Unfortunately, on checking his schedule, the Clerk cannot accommodate this date.

Resolved: That the Clerk contact the Chair/Headteacher to establish whether a different date can be agreed for the Spring Term. Governors will be informed once a date has been finalised.

Governors were at this point thanked for their attendance at tonight's meeting and it was brought to a close by the Chair.

Chair

Date

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Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
5	Mrs. Winson	Follow up on Vice-Chair issue. Decision to be made in Spring Term.	
6A	Clerk/SBM	Progress membership issues as listed in minutes.	
6C	SBM	Ensure full return of pecuniary/business interests is in place.	
6E	Clerk	Email HT Entrust Code of Conduct. Signatures to be captured at Spring Term meeting.	
8	HT	Publish May minutes.	
9	Chair	Check all outstanding actions have been progressed.	
12	Governors	Revisit need for Governor Development Plan at Spring Term meeting.	
14	SBM	Ensure Governors have confirmed they have read and are comfortable with the latest KCSIE guidance.	
15	Chair/HT	Discuss the best way to get the most out of the Governor Information Pack.	
16	Chair/HT	Determine the best way to deliver any outstanding L1 Safeguarding CPD to Governors.	
16	Mrs. Motorny	Chase up Governor bios.	
18	Clerk	Arrange a revised date for the Spring Term meeting.	
CA	As listed.	Progress action as listed.	

Date of next meeting: TBC

Absent Governors to be informed.

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Mrs. Motorny, Mrs. Downie

In attendance: Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)
Mr. Bhoola (Deputy Director of Education)

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

MINUTE 11C – Link Governor Update:

Mr. Murray explained he had received an email from a Year 4 parent regarding an unsuccessful EHCP application for their child. Whilst Mr. Murray declared an interest in relation to the parent contact, he reported that the email he received did not contain any supporting narrative, only the EHCP and a privately taken out consultant report. Mr. Murray had immediately brought this matter to the attention of the SLT and as there was no supporting text in the email this matter is not currently being treated as a complaint.

Despite this, the SLT has carried out a review of the provision for the child in question and the parent is aware that there is an appeals process that can be enacted (although this is not likely to be successful).

There was a discussion around future parent liaison engagement opportunities for parents of SEND children and Mr. Murray was invited in his capacity as Link Governor to a coffee morning on 07.10.19 to develop and support the parent community in this area. Mr. Murray requested an official invitation to the event so he can establish whether he can get time off school to participate in this engagement activity.

Resolved: That the SLT provide this letter.

For now, the SLT will not take any further action unless there is further correspondence on this issue. Mr Murray may go back to the parent in question to clarify the current position.

Chair

Date