



GREENFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
Ellesborough Close, South Oxhey, Watford WD19 6QH

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting of Greenfields Primary School
Wednesday 2nd February 2022 at 5.00pm

Attendance:

HEADTEACHER

Kate Day

CO-OPTED GOVERNORS (4):

Mark Skinner (virtual)

Debbie Hartley

Zoe Baines

Ric Salzedo

LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR (1):

David Ray, *Chair*

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (3):

Jose Tamayo

Marsha Myers

Sneha Patel

PARENT GOVERNORS (3):

Katie Tarrant

Emma Mulholland

Amanda Dumont

OBSERVERS:

Joanne Evans, Deputy Headteacher

STAFF GOVERNOR (1):

Kim May

CLERK:

Karen Walton

1 Welcome – To consider and approve absences

Apologies for absence were received and accepted for Marsha and Jose.

2 Declaration by governors of interests, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of items on the agenda

There were no declarations.

3 Membership of the Governing Board

Proposal for Sneha Patel to join as an Associate Member. Proposed by the Head, seconded by the Chair. All present approved.

4 Curriculum presentation: computing (James Wilkinson)

James (year 4 teacher) delivered the curriculum presentation on Computing.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate the presentation

Purple Mash is an invaluable resource.

Q: Can this be accessed at home?

A: Yes, every child has a unique access that they can use at home or school. It has an internal email, which made it a great way to give the children their homework during lockdown. There is also a blog so children can share the work they are proud of.

Q: Is it being used cross curricula?

A: Yes, they use it for music, storyboards for English, D&T crafts, maths and science. It contains lots of useful material.

Keeping safe whilst using technology is a key topic. It goes beyond knowing that a password is safe and explores different aspects of safety – how to know what a genuine email is, where your posts go and who can see them, what to look for in a genuine website etc. Each pupil also signs an annual e-safety form. We also educate parents as often children know more than their parents.

Q: Does the school still have an e-safety week?

A: Yes, we raise awareness of it, but it's not so focused just during that week. We talk about e-safety all the time.

James has been very pro-active in finding ways to support staff, particularly with SEN children. The Chrome books are being used to help with writing. We've also started using dictation.

Children are leaving knowing that computing supports their life and are now realise how much 'coding' is involved with everyday objects. E.g., Opening the fridge, the light comes on.

Q: Have we got enough Chrome Books and other hardware?

A: There is always more we could update. Technology goes out of date so quickly. However, the Chrome Books are good because they are low on battery use. Nothing is saved directly on the Chrome book; it's saved on the cloud so there is no storage issue. Two trolleys of Chrome books are very useful.

Q: How much do we budget each year for IT kit?

A: Around £5K for teaching kit – resources and updates and then another £10K for new equipment. This second pot covers licenses and training. Normally £15k goes in the budget for ICT and licenses.

Q: How much is Purple Mash?

A: To buy was £1,200. The annual fee is less than this. It's well worth the money – it's flexible, good lesson plans, a great teacher support, you can send pupils feedback and awards.

Q: Can parents access it to see how their child is doing?

A: Yes, each parent has a code and can see how their child is doing.

Q: Do we have a sense of how many parents do this?

A: Unfortunately, not.

Q: Is the Computer Club continuing?

A: We used to do this after school, but it stopped during lockdown and has not yet restarted.

We are talking to a contact about getting a 3D printer. We have been able to get involved with a 5week trial project which Y4 will be running and then we will have plans to see how well it is used in school. We have written skills-based curriculum links to use technology like this in years 2,4 and 6.

Q: Robotics is featuring more and more in the news. Does this fit with what the school is aiming to do? Would an after-school robotics club be considered?

Q: Is robotics more to do with design and technology?

A: There would be a mixture of D&T and coding involved. It would be worth exploring.

Q: You mentioned 3 aspects of computing – digital literacy, information technology and computer science – none of these are in the National Curriculum?

A: This is the way that Purple Mash divides the topics. Teachers assess through Purple Mash and so it's easier to use the Purple Mash terminology. The National Curriculum topics are covered within each of these areas.

Q: Does every class have the same amount of computer time a week?

A: Year 1-2 is half an hour a week, from year 3 it is an hour a week.

Q: How long will the Chrome Books last? Do we need to plan for continual replacement?

A: Most technology lasts approximately 4 years. Budget is always a constraint but something we are aware of.

Q: Should we consider a rolling replacement programme?

A: We bought 30 and then another 30 so it may be difficult to roll the change incrementally.

Q: How much do 30 Chrome Books cost?

A: Approximately £15K

Q: So, we need to accrue £5K a year to be able to replace them?

A: Yes, it is difficult to budget for this at the moment, especially considering the other IT requirements like the rolling replacement of white boards and other technology.

Q: How did we select Purple Mash and how long have we had it?

A: Lots of research and recommendation. We've had it approximately 3 years. It is a set price for the size of the school. An initial outlay and now an annual subscription.

Q: We clearly have an internet problem today, is it a general problem?

A: A squirrel has eaten the cable to this particular outbuilding. The main building is fine. Co-Ed are aware and will resolve the issue.

Ric offered to support the Computing club should it restart.

The governors thanked James for his presentation.

5 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2021 (document circulated)

No further comments were made. The Chair signed the minutes as an accurate and valid record of the meeting held on 1st December 2021.

6 Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2021

Paving around the Nurture building – has been installed and allows access to the different parts of the building independently.

Internal Health & Safety Walkabout to be arranged in January 2022 (CHAIR) – outstanding due to Covid

All Governors to sign into Modern Governor as they receive details and check / complete their training profiles
Governors were reminded to do this

ACTION: Internal H&S walk around audit to be arranged (HT / Chair)

ACTION: All Governors to create an account with Modern Governor if not done already

7 Head Teacher's Written Report

Q: Attendance numbers – Year 1 and 5 are low – why is this?

A: Year 1 has a child who is medically vulnerable and there was a health issue within the family and so the child was kept at home.

A: Year 5 struggle with attendance generally. The teacher is encouraging regular attendance. Anxiety is an issue for a couple of pupils and some families do not engage with the school as much as we would like.

Nationally attendance is around 87% and Greenfields is above 90%, some weeks 94-96%. There are some persistent absentees who the school is aware of and are supporting to improve their attendance.

Q: What triggers the referral to the Family Support team? (There has been 1 referral)

A: Staff were concerned that things were not right at home. A Christmas hamper was delivered and there was concern about the home arrangement. The referral was made after talking to the parent who agreed that support was required.

Q: What is 'Brain Buddy'?

A: A Mental Health support programme that helps children with their resilience, social interaction, and their ability to respect and monitor their social interactions. Year 4 will take part in the Brain Buddy programme – hour PSHE lesson a week. They have a booklet to work through with a specific therapist.

Q: Looked after children – is there an update?

A: We have one child who will be moving schools in September.

Q: How is the EHCP application process going with County?

A: One application was submitted one last week and responded to 5 days later. One was not approved but is going through mediation. We may have 12 children that we have identified need applying for but there is a 20week turnaround so the financial benefit may not be available until the autumn.

Q: Is there still concern over the process and lack of response?

A: The Head's complaint has been noted and when we've made further contact it has been responded to. National average of EHCP is 3.7%, Greenfields have 4% which could rise to 8% in September

Q: Is this similar to other schools in the consortium?

A: Yes, schools in the area have this issue. Lots of early years children are arriving without having a health check and so issues have been missed.

Q: There is a 6week plan and then you put in an application for funding, could the health check be privately funded rather than through the council?

A: We do not have the budget, but the council are helping us get the funding and get this arranged.

Q: Usually there are 30 children per class, but there are 31 in Year 3 due to a 'lawful exception'. What does this mean?

A: There was an emergency placement of a family nearby. One child had significant SEN needs and had been taken on by Colnbrook. Another sibling needed a school place. The emergency placement was agreed and then county were informed. The emergency arrangement for temporary housing should only be for one year.

St Helen's School offer a SEN respite club every Friday late afternoon / evening and a week holiday at Merchant Taylors. It may be worth exploring and letting suitable families know.

Q: Who participates in learning walks?

A: The Head and Deputy. Teachers receive a list of what is being looked for in each classroom.

Q: The HIP delivering 2 CPD sessions to teachers – have these happened?

A: Yes, they were informative and helped teachers understand how to improve monitoring as subject leaders.

Q: The budget for Reception next year is for 20 children. This is low – does everyone understand why?

A: This is due to the low birth rate for this year. All schools are struggling with low Nursery and Reception numbers.

Q: When it says 46 applications for Reception – do we know which choice we are?

A: No we don't know if we are first, second or third choice. We could have had 18 children apply from our Nursery for Reception: however, 1 is moving to another school, 1 would like to remain in Nursery another year, but the other 16 have applied. We are doing well in this area as a school of choice, but the budgeting will be tight for the next 2-3 years due to low birth rates.

Q: Parental Survey – Looking at parental comments on how we can improve – are there any further comments?

A: We can tell what year groups the comments have come from, but not specifically who. There were lots of lovely comments. A couple of times people mentioned homework and after-schools' clubs.

There are a lot of lunch clubs. After-school clubs are maximum £4.50 as the costs need to be covered, but the uptake is not there. Comments were just general, there were no specific recommendations. Art club is very popular and although the cost has increased the fee has been split into two payments and uptake has increased. Netball was free but nobody came.

The homework comment related to wanting more homework and teaching the 11+ requirements. It is against the consortium rules to teach the 11+. It is not National Curriculum either, so we cannot cover this.

There was also a comment about providing more support and advice about ECHP suitable settings. The school are unable to make recommendations and each family requirement is different. We cannot recommend schools, just recommend that parents visit them and speak to the secondary school staff regarding particular needs.

The governors congratulated the Head and staff for the generally very positive feedback from the parental survey.

Q: How many responses were received?

A: 66 responses, 44% of families. This is much higher than the last survey

Q: Pupil premium is at 25% how is this against the national average?

A: This is high. We actually have 53 pupils, but one family joined just after the submission cut-off date so this term we'll get payment for 49.

Q: Some pupils are benefitting from table tennis whilst others are swimming – why are they having table tennis at the leisure centre?

A: We don't have a table tennis table. Classes Year 5 and 6 go to the leisure centre some swim and the rest use the hall. Last term they did badminton, this term they are doing table tennis. We may be able to use the junior gym next term. This is a great way to show the children what is available at the local leisure centre and do different activities that we don't have facilities for at school. This is about instilling a life-long enjoyment of sport and fitness in the children.

Q: What was the sports premium spent on?

A: Now the bike safe course has been a success we are buying a bike rack to encourage cycling to school. Sam is leaving Greenfields, but we hire her company to for the Forest School. We are still paying into Sports Partnership so also benefit from their resources.

Q: The rear pedestrian gate improvement will cost around £6K. One third is due immediately on placement of the order, the final amount after installation in the next financial year. Does everyone approve this expenditure?

A: All governors present approved the expenditure

ACTION: Head to place order on GDL

Q: Parental Engagement – If there are concerns, why are the meetings not planned until March?

A: The timing is due to staff availability. Year 5 and 6 meetings will coincide with Parents' Evening.

Q: Can we have book buddies to support reading?

A: Yes, now that covid restrictions are lifting we are looking to pair older children with younger children to support reading. This will be planned for the summer term when they can have space and weather to read outside

Q: Are St Helen's girls coming in again to listen to children read?

A: Yes, one week 3 come in, the next week there are 5.

Ric and Emma are also able to volunteer to hear readers.

8 Update on Finance

All the paperwork from Janet our accountant has been circulated.

Carry forward is still around £33K.

Q: How will the ECHP finance help?

A: The most we will get is £6,370 per pupil. Hertfordshire is the 4th lowest funded council for funding. The school will need to find a further £6K to provide full time individual support. Some pupils also require lunch support which is an additional financial burden and EHCPs hardly ever cover.

9 Update on Premises (Head / Chair)

Energy costs will be significantly increasing. We don't yet have the details or the timing. The Chair will discuss with the Caretaker what can be done to save costs. The heating system, insulation and lighting are new which will help.

Q: What are our energy costs?

A: All energy costs – gas, water, electricity, sewage etc are accounted for and detailed in the budget sheet.

Q: Can we get a grant for solar panels?

A: The Chair has explored this option. The best place would be on the roof, and this would require a structural survey. There may be other areas at ground level where the children don't go. There are also schemes where third parties pay and then the income from power generation to the grid is shared. There is a big capital up front cost with around a 10 year payback. The school is also a listed building so that also poses problems with planning approvals. We will keep reviewing the situation: at this time it is not a feasible option but that may change as energy costs increase.

ACTION: Chair and Caretaker to meet to discuss options for energy savings

The emergency lights in the main building are old and don't work very well or at all. Now that the school has evening lettings the emergency lighting, at least for the critical locations, needs to be fixed.

ACTION: Chair to arrange the critical emergency lighting to be fixed

10 Safeguarding / Health & Safety (Chair)

Covid numbers have reduced rapidly. No children reported Covid today.

Internal walkabout to be arranged (action noted above)

11 Policies for review and adoption

All policies were circulated. The Head is starting Mental Health training. The Mental Health Policy needs approval. All governors present approved the Mental Health Policy.

12 Governors

Governors were reminded that whenever they visit the school they should check in and out using the Inventry visitor system.

Governors were also reminded to log all training on Modern Governor.

13 Any other business

All staff have been asked to update their Prevent training and Governors are required to do the same.

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

ACTION: All governors to update their online Prevent training

The dates for this academic year are on the school website. Dates for the 2022-23 were presented for ratification. All governors approved the given dates.

Q: Is it correct that all terms start on a Monday?

A: Yes

It would be helpful to have a few Governor Day dates confirmed in advance, as this helps those who work to plan with their employer. It may be good to have an afternoon that leads into a Governing Body Meeting.

The next Governor afternoon will be May 25th 1pm. Governor tea after school with the Governors Meeting at 5pm.

Debra and Katie send apologies for the March meeting.

Agreed as an accurate record of the on-line meeting held on 2nd February 2022.

Signed:

Name	Role	Information
Ric Salzedo	Co-opted Governor	
Debbie Hartley	Co-opted Governor	
Mark Skinner	Co-opted Governor	
Zoe Baines	Co-opted Governor	
David Ray	LEA Governor	Chair of Governors
Katie Tarrant	Parent Governor	
Emma Mulholland	Parent Governor	
Amanda Dumont	Parent Governor	
Kate Day	Staff Governor (Ex-officio)	Headteacher
Kim May	Staff Governor	
Marsha Myers	Associate Member	
Jose Tamayo	Associate Member	Data Protection Officer
Sneha Patel	Associate Member	
Karen Walton	Clerk to the Governing Board	
Joanne Evans	Observer	Deputy Headteacher

GB Meeting Dates for Remainder of the School Year

2022: March: 23rd

May: 25th (Budget presentation)

July: 13th