

# SANDFORD ST. MARTIN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

## 4.0 Full Governing Body Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 17:00, via Zoom

**Present:** Mary Appleton (Associate Member, MA);  
Paul Beveridge (Head Teacher, HT/PB);  
Melanie Bolt (Foundation Governor, Chair of Governors, MB);  
Vikki Britt (Local Authority Governor, VB);  
Mick Holloway (Parent Governor; MH);  
Jackie Jeanes (Foundation Governor, JJ);  
Colin Logan (Associate Member, CL).  
Fiona Okai (Foundation Governor, FO);  
Clare Pampin (Deputy Head Teacher, Associate Member, DHT/CP);  
Deborah Smith (Associate Member, DS) (from 18:15);

**Quorate**

**Attending:** David Macbeth (Clerk, DM).

No.	Agenda Item	Tasks
1.	<b>Welcome:</b> The meeting was opened and then led in prayer by the Chair.	
2.	<b>Apologies for Absence:</b> Donna Eite (Foundation Governor, DE); Richard Heard (Parent Governor, RH); Rik Nash (Foundation Governor, RN). Apologies accepted.	
3.	<b>Absences:</b> Peter Gale (Staff Governor, PG). Sadly, PG had now missed several meetings with no apologies sent recently, so MB and DM were requested to contact him to find out his intentions were regards the post.	MB/DM to contact PG about governor role
4.	<b>Declarations of business and/or any other conflicting interests for this meeting:</b> None.	
5.	<b>Minutes of the previous FGB meeting, 3.0, of the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024<sup>1</sup>:</b> These were accepted as true and accurate record of that meeting.	CoG to approve electronically, Clerk to load to website and send copy to DC
6.	<b>Matters arising from minutes of the previous FGB meeting, unless covered below:</b> None.	
7.	<b>Headteacher's Report – Spring Term 2<sup>2</sup>:</b> The HT had posted his report on GVO the previous week. Number on Roll was up four, to 362. Overall attendance for the latest period was 94.7% (National was 94.4%). Persistent Absence remained an issue in certain pockets, but the picture was slowing improving, down to 14% (National was 17%).	

<sup>1</sup> For Minutes of the 3.0 FGB meeting, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | 3.0 FGB Final Minutes 08 02 24 \(accepted 21 03 24\) | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> For HT Report 21 03 24, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | HT report to FGB 210324 | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)

A governor had already asked the HT, via the comments, to expand on how the Senior Leadership Team saw a reduction in class numbers being handled across the school. The HT said it was always a bit of a messy process, as year groups had fewer or greater numbers. If they were doing it for purely financial reasons, they could look at going to twelve classes, but this would then give them very little, if any, room for growth; on the other hand, it was hard to justify an extra teacher to just keep some room to take on more pupils. Although he hadn't got the School Business Manager to run the numbers fully yet, the proposal to get to thirteen classes in September meant they would be approx. £25K better off, so that had cut the deficit they were considering by a third. The governor said he had read an article that morning in "The Times" newspaper talking about the United Kingdom birth rate; it was at its lowest recorded level ever in 2022, and Dorset was the second lowest county in England; this meant the number of children was just not there, going forward. Whilst it was great to see a few joiners, they didn't want to get into trying to poach other school's pupils.

The HT said one thing they could consider was applying to County to reduce their Published Admission Number to single form entry; this took approx. eighteen months to process, whereas, if the picture changed, it only took a week or so to increase the PAN. That way they wouldn't have to scramble around trying to keep their capacity up.

Another governor said it was good to see the attendance figures up again, and still better than the national average. The HT said it was a slightly better picture, but there were still pockets where they didn't have parental buy-in; they were fighting a battle of complacency; one family even planning to take their child out during exam week. A governor asked if this wasn't always a Yr. 6 issue, with parents/carers thinking about getting a holiday in before Secondary school started. The HT replied that the cohort had always had a high persistent absence figure, with approx. a third of the cohort having many days off school. One child had genuine reasons with medical issues, but there were a lot of others with soft absences and general disengagement. The DHT said home working had made it easier for those parents/carers to keep their child home.

A governor asked if PG's absence was delaying finalising the history curriculum. PB said he was considering if he, or another member of the team, shouldn't get on with stitching the information into the curriculum map. Whilst PG held the cards, the work had been done and either he, or PD could get it mapped out.

He then turned to the English feedback that showed the curriculum map boiled down by subject and phases, giving a flavour to governors of the typicality of approach to improving the delivery, allowing them to then refine and iron out issues in line with the School Improvement Action Plan.

A governor wanted to know what the plan was for the leadership of maths, following HM's resignation. PB said that depended on what happened regards the SLT, going into the autumn. He was thinking of drawing together some sort of "curriculum team", utilising more junior staff as well; not just in Maths, but Reading and Writing, so these areas were owned by a team, rather than any individual. That would give them more resilience for the future, especially if they were going to become a smaller school. He was asked if they'd been successful getting a replacement for

	<p>HM. He said they had, although it was not yet confirmed in writing. The teacher would start the week after the Easter break; HM had offered to come in for the day to facilitate a handover, she was so determined for the transition to work. <b>The governor asked who was then going to look after maths in the summer term.</b> PB replied that their main focus at the moment was the trios of teachers learning best practice from one another. Maths was owned by the SLT; money had been spent on Maths Mastery, so they would continue on that for now, then have a new model ready for September. The question for him was their involvement with the Maths Hub, and at what level; it was hard to cover the release time with the supply issues they'd experienced.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Hub update:</b> The HT said, disappointedly, that he had had no replies to his emails to County on this subject. He appreciated the staff had been dealing with a three-week Ofsted inspection of their SEND department. He said the HT at Purbeck had previously said "yes" to County, only to be disappointed in their lack of engagement. He'd only got back on board with the idea because of SSMPs's interest to go forward with the idea. He thought it could be because the department needed to take it to the cabinet for approval first. However, for such a major capital and curriculum commitment, it didn't bode well. The Chair said they'd been told when visiting the other units that they'd have to "go for it on their own" to make it happen.</p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>SEND Annual Report<sup>3</sup>:</b> FO, the new SEND Link Governor, reported that TD had now passed her SENDCo qualification, and was working on dyslexia provision and how to develop this through quality first teaching. The "Peer Pod" was an on-going success, although with quite varying numbers for different meetings, that they were struggling to understand. They were considering an anonymous survey to try to work out what the barriers were, and also, to rebrand the sessions as "Supporting Wellbeing". Two pupil conferences had now been held, with positive reviews from those involved. Lunchtimes, and how behaviours were managed, seemed to be the main area of concern to pupils. <b>A governor said they had heard comments about the lunchtime supervision; could governors see those comments.</b> FO said she'd recorded them in her last SEND visit notes. The DHT said they'd spoken with CH about some relational practice for the Midday Supervisory Assistants to help the situation improve. FO reported parental concerns about pupils needs and requests for referrals; the paperwork mountain was impacting on HC's ability to do other useful work, but they were getting minimal input from County; sadly, this seemed to be a national issue as well. <b>A governor asked if there was any point in referring; was it lack of input from the educational psychologist that was the problem?</b> The HT said they'd never been able to bring the education psychologist into the Educational Health Care Plan process. They got more support using Teaching Assistants and getting advice from the National Autism Society. FO said they had also got help recently from the Down's Syndrome Charity. She said it wasn't just a lack</p>	

<sup>3</sup> For SEND Report 2023-24, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | SEND Annual Report to Gvs 2023-24 | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)

	<p>of SEN support, but also mental health, and there was only the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to turn to, which was also under pressure. TD was trying to put more mental health support into SEN teaching. Whilst technically they could draw on support from County, it was scant; they could pay for a one-day visit from an external specialist; the situation was far from ideal.</p> <p>The Chair thanked FO for her brilliant overview.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy Committee Highlights Report:</b> MB said their last meeting had planned to sit down and talk about nothing but the 5-Year School Strategic Plan<sup>4</sup>, but when it came to it, they only got to discuss the next year or two. PB had taken the scribbled ideas and transcribed them into the beginnings of a plan; they would be working on it again in April. <b>In answer to the Chair of Finance's question already posted on GVO</b>, yes, the idea was for the Strategic Plan to feed into the SIAP to feed into the performance management goals down through the school, which would then inform the Plan for the following years, thus forming a full circle, if it worked as hoped. A discussion ensued about the timetable of the process through the year; partly that was set by teacher's performance management needing to be completed by October every year.</p> <p><b>Marketing</b> – MB said the marketing working group would be meeting after Easter to look at the prospectus, website and social media to promote the school further. She had also written a press release, currently being reviewed by a good friend, and this would be going out shortly. They would keep the Board informed with some minutes.</p>	
<p><b>12.</b> Order of items changed</p>	<p><b>Standards and Assessment Committee Highlights Report<sup>5</sup>:</b> RH had written the report but was absent, so MA presented it. She said that the Middle Leadership Team had all presented a short report to the committee and answered questions on their areas of responsibility. Visitors to the school, for curriculum enrichment, were now included in the HT report (heard earlier). Equality Impact Assessments for policies would be discussed later with the policies. They had had updates from the SLT on the SIAP, on Safeguarding and on the SIAMS process. As usual, they had looked at the Link Governor reports, summarised by CL. They'd also been informed about the School Council and plans to get it up and running again; the HT was optimistic the member of staff would return after Easter on a phased return to work. They had also had an update on the Staff Wellbeing questionnaire that was ready to go out imminently (MB to liaise with CH). Once completed there would be feedback to the Board and then input from governors to a staff meeting.</p> <p>Lastly, the issue of Link Governance roles was brought up, having had several governors retire or resign of late. MB said that she thought she had got all the roles covered already by new volunteers. After discussion it was agreed that only PSHE did not have a Link Governor at present, so if anyone wanted to take up the baton they would be welcome. Part of</p>	

<sup>4</sup> For Governors Strategic Plan, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | Governors Strategic plan 2023-27 SSM | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> For SAC Highlights report, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | SAC Chair Report for FGB following SAC Meeting 7th March 2024 | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)

	that duty was around attending the School Council, but PB pointed out that it didn't need to always be the same governor, it would be good to rotate it. MB said she would try and get someone on board.	MB to allocate PHSE Link Governor role
13.	<b>Ethos Group Report:</b> MB said the group had done a "book look" and felt that material was recorded rather haphazardly with a lot of stuff loose in folders and not pasted into books. They had gone back to the teachers and asked them to straighten that out. They intended to repeat the process at their next meeting to see if that had produced more consistency. PB reported that the SIAMS visit they were expecting, in the next school year, would probably not happen until the following academic year; they still intended to carry on with the planned work. The SIAMS Self-Evaluation Form was still going to form part of their next INSET day, they just had longer now to embed their practices.	
11.	<b>Finance and Resources Committee Highlights Report<sup>6</sup>:</b> <i>At this point in the meeting, DS arrived (18:15).</i> DS delivered the key points of her report. Firstly, that the School Financial Value Standard and Benchmarking submissions, approved by the committee, needed to be ratified by the full board. She said the Outturn figures shown had been drawn up a while ago and the situation had changed since. These had been put into the budget preparation and work towards the school's future structure. The SFVS was a statutory benchmark check against other, similar, schools and a sort of health check. They had fared well in 2022-23 with a healthy carry forward figure. Their spending was in the upper pay range. In the RAG-rated Benchmarking they had scored nearly all greens; the only amber was their supply spend; she expected that would be the same in next year's report, if not red. They were very aware they were overspent. She then asked the meeting to vote to accept the submissions; the vote was unanimously in favour. She then turned to the budget predictions for the following year. Their carry forward figure looked to be between £100K and £120K, but it was still a work in progress. They had also been surprised in previous years by unallocated funding coming in late from County, so that too could happen again. What they couldn't escape was the prediction the Number on Roll would continue to fall and how that would impact their number of classes. They didn't want to make drastic changes they didn't need to, so were not rushing to make any decisions until the true c/f was known. They also planned to have an external review of their position, both from County and their School Evaluation Partner, SA. In the meantime, they needed to keep promoting themselves shamelessly. They had also reviewed the school meals offer, looking at their trading figures. They were currently losing a bit of money on it, but a few more meals sold could see it return a profit. They were promoting the offer, and the kitchen staff themselves had got involved, creating a piece for the newsletter that they wished to contribute to regularly. The committee would discuss it again at their next meeting and make any decisions felt necessary.	

<sup>6</sup> For FRC Highlights report, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | FRC Chairs Report to FGB210324 | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)



	<p>Talking of free school meals prompted <b>a governor to ask whether signing up for FSM was being promoted in their links with the nurseries, and how were those links being maintained at present.</b> The DHT said she was planning to get some of them in after Easter; possibly a sing song, or some other shared activity with the Reception Year. She said she had not yet been out to the nurseries to arrange things.</p> <p>Another governor said whilst the marketing of the school was really important, it was not to do a smash and grab from other schools but to ensure they were getting all the pupils in their catchment attending the school, so Sandford was the parents/carers first choice. They were sitting on a fabulous school and site, but that wasn't being reflected yet in the new website. Yes, they had a large site, but at heart they were still a village school; they needed to get some content on the website to give it that feel. <b>Another governor asked if they could be more in touch with the nurseries, not just Sandford, but the Wareham ones as well.</b> The DHT said they did link with Tops. <b>The governor pressed her, what did "link" actually mean?</b> The DHT said that she had visited them in previous years, but it would be a full-time job to visit them all. She was trying to get over to the current Reception Year parents/carers to spread the word, to build links to invite the nurseries to their events and vice-versa. <b>The governor asked if the marketing working group meeting could look to reach out to all the local nurseries.</b> The CoG said they were all sent information on the Open Days and the Woodlands Day, but had heard from a parent that Tops didn't spread the words to parents. She knew someone there who might be able to help build their relationship.</p> <p><i>At that point in the meeting, PB had to leave (18:37).</i></p>	
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b>Community Update:</b> CP said that next year's Reception parents/carers were invited to come into class the following week to see the classes working. <b>The CoG asked if the DHT was doing home visits with the new intake. They had had a struggling cohort this year, and if they'd done home visits that might have helped identify some issues earlier. If they reduced the timetable, could the teachers do some?</b> The DHT said they had offered visits but only one family had said yes. She said other schools delayed the start of schooling to give them more time to assess the children and get them settled into school; their staggered starts were longer than Sandford's. Every year, they always discussed with the staff whether they should change their approach. To send out staff, two would have to attend. It would only work if they had the whole of September. Staff would also have to use their own vehicles and claim for reimbursement for petrol, plus they would need "business" use on their insurance, so it would incur a cost. The CoG suggested they bite the bullet and try it for a year; if it didn't work they wouldn't repeat the exercise. CP said they couldn't force a parent to host them; also, that the staff used that time to do the baseline assessments of the pupils. The CoG suggested the governors should have a discussion about the issue, and asked the Clerk if he would set up a discussion page on GVO. CP said it would be useful to have some input from the EYFS staff as well. MB suggested CP posted their responses on the discussion page.</p>	

	<p>MA reminded everyone that the Wareham Town Band concert was booked for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> of May. It was always a good laugh and she hoped they would all participate.</p> <p>MB said they were planning a Working Party to help spruce up the school grounds on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> (INSET Day) and it would be great if some governors could help out.</p> <p>Another quiz night was planned for the summer term, no date set yet.</p> <p>School Summer Fayre was booked for Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June, 12-3pm.</p> <p>The school had a float entry in the Wareham Carnival on Sat 21<sup>st</sup> July.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Clerk's Briefing:</b> The Clerk screen-shared the PowerPoint slides from the recent Clerk's Briefing, covering Virtual Governance, Boards considering the impact of Artificial Intelligence in schools, Wellbeing, Attendance Campaign and Ofsted changes.</p> <p>He was asked if he could do a mini-training session each meeting, showing governors how to do things on GVO; he was happy to do so.</p>	
16.	<p><b>Policies for Adoption<sup>7</sup>:</b> The following policies had all been agreed on by their respective committees and were therefore ready for ratification by the FGB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in Care Policy 2024-25 (MA/MS)</li> <li>• Financial Efficiency Policy and Procedure 2024-25 (KK)</li> <li>• PSHE Policy 2024-25 (VM/CP)</li> <li>• Pupils Mobile Phone Policy 2024-25 (CP)</li> <li>• Relationships &amp; Sex Education 2024-25 (VM/CP)</li> <li>• School Uniform Policy 2024-25 (CP/KK)</li> <li>• Social Networking Policy 2024-25 (CP/PB)</li> </ul> <p>MA and DM had added a text box to the end of the Relationships Policy, and a sentence to the GVO page beneath the Approvals button, showing how policies that needed to be considered for Equality Impact Assessment could be reliably covered during reviews, going forward (MA, who used to review them, retiring in the near future). The governors agreed it looked a good system but suggested it should also be run past the HT before being adopted to all the relevant policies.</p> <p>The governors then voted unanimously to adopt the above policies.</p>	
17.	<p><b>Correspondence:</b> None. MA said she had heard complaints whilst they had been running "Bikeability" in the school grounds; taxi drivers in particular where finding it impossible to park. It was agreed that complaints needed to be submitted as emails to generate a paper trail.</p>	
18.	<p><b>Items for the next agenda/Any Other Business:</b> Only items already mentioned earlier.</p> <p><i>There being no further business, the meeting ended at 19:05hrs.</i></p>	

**Date and time of next FGB meeting, 5.0: Thursday 23rd May 2024 at 17:00**

<sup>7</sup> For Policies, see: [Sandford St Martin's GVO | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](https://www.thegvoffice.com)