

# MINUTES OF MEETING



**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

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**School:** Gotham Primary School  
**Meeting title:** Summer term meeting of the governing body  
**Date and time:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 at 6.30pm  
**Location:** Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Membership**

'A' denotes absence

A Miss N Daneylevych  
Mrs G Aldridge  
Mrs L Dale  
Mr A Kerr  
Mr A Higgins  
Mrs E Ault  
Mr A Howard  
Mrs C Payne  
Mrs S Riley  
Mrs J Walker (Chair)  
Miss J Allen (Headteacher)

**In attendance** Mrs S Beasley (clerk to the governors)  
Marta Kenny (Deputy Headteacher)

<b>GB/19/20</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	<b>Action</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from Miss Daneylevych.

It was

**resolved**

that the governing body consent to this absence.

**GB/20/20** **Declaration of interest**

Mrs Walker declared an interest in any matters relating to Playgroup.

**GB/21/20** **Review of membership**

The headteacher made governors aware that Mrs Lomas had resigned from the governing body on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The clerk advised she would inform governor services. **Clerk**

The clerk highlighted the following vacancies on the governing body:

There are 2 co-opted governor vacancies on the governing body. The clerk reminded governors that prospective candidates should fill any gaps in the skills of the existing governing body.

**Governors discussed** their need to fill skills in leadership and accountability.

The clerk brought to the attention of governors the following end of term of office:

Mrs S Riley's term of office as parent governor is due to end on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The headteacher would assess the situation in September to ascertain the possibility of starting the parent governor election process. The clerk informed governors that in light of the coronavirus response some leeway had been granted in the re-election of parent and staff governors.

**Mr Higgins joined the meeting at 6.30pm**

Mr Higgins informed governors of his intention to resign from the governing body at the end of this academic year.

**Governors thanked** Mr Higgins for the contribution he had made to the governing body.

GB/22/20

**Approval of minutes of spring term meeting**

The minutes of the spring term meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 having been previously circulated were confirmed, to be signed by the chair when face to face meetings resume.

*Review of actions*

Mrs Walker had changed her declaration of interest.

Mr Howard had signed to confirm he had read the governors code of conduct.

The strategy committee had re-established link governor roles and shared this information with parents via newsletter.

The finance committee had taken advice and would resolve the contract change requested via email communication.

**Finance**

The finance committee had reviewed and adopted the pay policy.

The finance committee had reviewed the funding of SEND support.

The finance committee considered the staffing spring term staffing arrangements, this action was completed at the strategy meeting.

**HT**

The headteacher had not yet formulated a formal expectation of staff responding to work related emails and relayed to staff. Although informal expectation had been shared.

The headteacher had considered schools communication with TAs so they were fully informed of all necessary information via memos, Parentmail, emails and TA meetings.

Mrs Dale and Mr Howard had visited school to view the concern forms folder and complete the audit for child protection and confidential files.

**HT&LD**

The re-working of the Pupil Premium spending documentation to clearly show the work done and its impact was still in progress.

**AH**

Mr Howard would investigate further funding opportunities for reading resources.

The finance committee had approved the School budget.

The SFVS had been completed and submitted to the Schools finance Team

**EA&CP**

The year end forecast had been reviewed at the finance committee

Services for schools had been reviewed at the finance committee.

Mrs Ault and Mrs Payne had yet to complete their governor induction training.

Mrs Dale and Mr Howard had completed safeguarding and safer recruitment training. Mr Kerr had also completed the safer recruitment training

GB/23/20	<b>Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties</b>
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**The Finance and General Purposes & Personnel committee**

The minutes for the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, were available on GovernorHub. Mr Kerr summarised the meeting and it was agreed it was a true reflection of the events.

**The Strategy committee**

The minutes from the strategy committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020, were available on GovernorHub. Mrs Riley summarised the meeting and it was agreed that it was a true reflection of events

GB/24/20	<b>Financial reporting</b>
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*Approval of school budget (if not already agreed in actions from committees)*

The clerk advised governors that the deadline for submitting the approved school budget to NCC Schools Finance team was originally 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

The school budget for 2020-21 had been approved at Finance committee.

**Governors ratified** the school budget 2020-21 at the meeting tonight. It had been submitted to the Schools Finance Team.

*Governors consistent financial reporting out-turn statement including the intended use of balances (BO2) return*

**The governors confirmed** that the intended use of balances return had been completed.

*Approval of services for schools/review of contracts*

**The governors confirmed** that the services for schools had been reviewed and approved.

GB/25/20	<b>Headteacher's report</b>
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**Pupil numbers**

The headteacher informed governors that during the partial school closures no children were to be taken off roll. There were currently 185 children on roll in school.

**Staffing**

**Governors queried** the unusual staff absence numbers. The headteacher explained that in the spring term these related to instances of self-isolation.

**Governors asked** if the numbers before the covid-19 situation indicated any trend of increasing illness amongst staff. The headteacher stated not, she explained that

there were a small number of longer term illnesses and/or planned procedures that made up the numbers.

### Attendance

The headteacher explained to governors the actions staff had implemented to combat persistent absence and its impact.

**Governors asked** if the more structured approach was working. The headteacher said that, in the main, it was.

### Safeguarding

The headteacher asked if any governors were willing to take on a link to safeguarding alongside Mrs Dale now that Mrs Lomas had resigned. Mr Howard said he was prepared to take on this role.

The headteacher informed governors that governors and staff had reviewed safeguarding measures just before the partial school closure. The headteacher gave a report on the ongoing safeguarding for pupils both in and out of school as the partial closure continues.

**Governors questioned** if the school's response to safeguarding children had been adjusted to match the current situation. The headteacher assured governors that any concerns were constantly monitored and, if necessary outside agencies would be involved.

### School improvement

The headteacher informed governors that Mark Aske, the Educational Improvement Advisor had completed a virtual visit and produced a report with actions for further improvement within school.

**Governors queried** if it had been a useful exercise. The headteacher confirmed the feedback had been positive and reinforced some of the work the headteacher knew needed to be done. The headteacher directed the governors to the report and guidance on GovernorHub.

**Governors asked** if there was anything the headteacher would share with them now. The headteacher explained that, for example the SLT and governing body has discussed promoting Gotham Primary School in the community in a bid to increased pupil numbers. **Governors agreed** they could devise strategy for this.

Finally, the headteacher confirmed that the data provided for this meeting was from February and that although the governors would have had sight of it at the committee meetings there would be no update for this year as pupils had not been in school to be assessed. The headteacher added that she had been informed that the LA would be collating school data for countywide comparison.

**Governors thanked** the headteacher for her report.

GB/26/20

### Update on appraisal process for headteacher and staff

The clerk informed governors that the school teachers' pay and conditions statutory guidance must be adhered to. This includes the requirement that teachers pay progression must link to their performance management. It is advised that schools take a considered approach to appraisal, explaining that the full impact of the school closures are not yet apparent, and targets may be adjusted accordingly.

The appraisal review for the headteacher took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Mrs Riley gave a brief summary of the review.

Action

The appraisal governors were confirmed as Mrs Dale and Mrs Riley.

The external advisor was confirmed as Phil Unsworth.

LD.SR&HT

**Governors agreed** that a further appraisal governor would be recruited in the Autumn term.

The appraisal governors would confirm a summer review date with the headteacher.

The teachers Spring appraisals had been completed. The headteacher was concerned that teachers would have difficulty ensuring pay progression as targets were set before the coronavirus disruption.

Governors discussed the possibility of applications to UPS, and the adjustments that may be required to appraise staff in the current climate.

Chair

**Governors questioned** how staff well-being was. The headteacher stated she was in contact with staff regularly and communication between staff was good. She said that she had had generally positive feedback. She confirmed that she did know of the staff that weren't doing so well and was monitoring the situation. **Governors suggested** that once the school had reopened the Chair of governors should send a message of support to staff.

GB/27/20

#### **Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action**

The clerk informed governors that this guidance was available on GovernorHub.

#### **IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

The County Council's Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All (IEOfA) sets out the County Council's promises, priorities and expected outcomes in relation to improving educational opportunities for all of Nottinghamshire's children and young people with a focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, particularly those children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability, those eligible for free school meals, those children and young people who are looked after as well as care leavers.

This is in recognition that disadvantaged children and young people are less likely to fulfil their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future emotional and financial security. The East Midlands was the country's lowest performing area, and, in Nottinghamshire, six of the seven districts were ranked as cold spots (low social mobility outcomes).

ALL GOVS

**Governors noted** that this tied in with the Culture Capital element of the curriculum change within school.

**Governors suggested** that this be tied in with the Pupil Premium strategy and improvements. The headteacher asked governors to bring in questions to the next Pupil Premium meeting.

#### **Nottinghamshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy (2020-2023)**

The Council's inclusive approach ensures that most children and young people with SEND receive their education in local mainstream settings and access resources without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Policy reflects the changing landscape of SEND following the Children and Families Act (2014) and the key changes. The Policy sets out the vision for

**Action**

Nottinghamshire, as well as our values and principles and the essential outcomes required to achieve them.

The Policy has been through an extensive public consultation with an on-line survey and workshops including one specifically for parents and carers. The feedback was very positive, as well as providing some very useful comments regarding the implementation of the Policy.

The Policy is ambitious for Nottinghamshire and will need all partners to work together to deliver its outcomes. An action plan will be developed to ensure the delivery of the Policy, which will be regularly reviewed and monitored by the Nottinghamshire SEND Accountability Board.

Mrs Riley confirmed she had met with the school SENDCo to review the SEND policy. The SENDCo was about to consult with parents when the covid-19 closures occurred.

**GB/28/20**

**Receive report from the Designated LAC teacher (presented at least once per year)**

The clerk advised governors to view the NCC partnership strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Directors Report Summer Term 2018). In which one of the Actions for Governors stated, "*Ensure that any reports to the governing body from the Designated LAC includes an impact review of the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus for all eligible children*".

The headteacher confirmed that there were no LAC children in school but there were 2 post LAC. These children were identified within the Pupil Premium strategy.

**GB/29/20**

**Communication**

*From chair*

The chair informed governors that she had attended(virtually) the first part of a governance leadership course.

She made governors aware of the Chair of Governors Q&A meeting set up by NCC governors services. The meeting would be to clarify governor's roles in the re-opening of schools from 1<sup>st</sup> June.

She also informed governors of a template agenda for governors to consider for a Special governing body meeting to discuss the re-opening of schools.

*From headteacher*

There was nothing to report from the headteacher.

*From clerk - Governor Newsletter*

Governors newsletter

The clerk explained that there were less events in the Summer edition of the Governors newsletter but more practical information for working in this new way. These included;

- 3 things that governors should be considering during the partial closure
- Top tips shared with Governor services for chairing a virtual meeting.
- Governors whose term of office is coming to an end.
- A piece from Jane Mansell at NAG, incl. nominations for Governor of the year and Governing body of the year.
- Introduction of the Engagement Model, the Rochford review reported on the assessment needs for those working below the standard for curriculum tests in KS1 and KS2. In effect they replace the old P scales 1-4 and will become statutory from September 2020.
- Information regarding the NGA opening their resources to help governors during the coronavirus pandemic.

B/30/20

### Plans for school re-opening after Covid-19 closure.

**Governors discussed** the opportunity to talk through the items on the special meeting agenda shared by the Chair.

- Consider the plans for re-opening

The headteacher informed governors of the plans surrounding the re-opening of school to the Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 classes. The children had been put into groups, known as bubbles, with set staff members. Pupils and staff would remain in the same bubble whilst in school. The headteacher shared her plan for separate learning areas, designated outside space and toilet facilities for each bubble.

**Governors questioned** if there was enough space to accommodate the pupils in their bubbles. The headteacher stated that the hall was to be used for extra learning space and a new 'outside inside' add on to one of the classrooms would give enough extra space to keep children in one class in the same area of school to prevent more disruption.

**Governors asked** how the hall would be separated, the headteacher explained there would be a physical barrier.

To minimise contamination parents would not be allowed on site. Each year group would have drop off and pick up times with socially distanced waiting areas.

The headteacher further explained the children would have their own desk and with tray and materials they would need for learning, these would be labelled. Children would bring their own water bottles. The pupil's property would stay with the child, i.e., lunchboxes in tray, coats on chairs.

**Governors questioned** if school meals would be provided when the school re-opens. The headteacher confirmed there would be school meals cooked and taken to the classrooms at their mealtimes.

Children and staff will wash their hands throughout the day on entering the building as a precaution to minimise and contamination.

Cleaning routines had been established.

The headteacher had compiled information to share with parents to prepare them for the re-opening of school which included photographs to show how the classrooms would look, pick up and drop off systems and social distancing expectations. There was also information about the things the children would need to bring in.

**Governors queried** the impact the return would have on the children. The headteacher informed governors that his would not be fully known yet but she had tried to reduce negative impact by keeping all the classes in their usual classroom areas. The children would be in smaller groups with greater staff ratios. There was a planned focus on well-being for pupils and staff,

**Governors asked** if the Playgroup would be re-opening with the same increased hygiene and social distancing measures. The headteacher confirmed a meeting will take place between school and playgroup to plan for this.

Governors queried the capacity of school if all children were allowed to return. The headteacher admitted this would be a problem. She had considered erecting marquees on the school grounds. This would only be a fair weather solution though. The implication for staffing levels was also a concern if more pupils were in school. If all children were to return school would need to ask TA staff to work more hours. The headteacher was concerned that supply staff would be working in various school and therefore increase contamination risk and that external providers would also pose the same problem,

- Review the risk assessments

Mr Kerr and Mrs Riley visited school to review the risk assessments completed by the headteacher. This was cross referenced with the LA school re-opening checklist. The governors reported back that the risk assessments were very comprehensive. They had issued a governor's report on 12<sup>th</sup> May and were confident all areas had been covered except for the cleaning by the caretaker who was self-isolating. The headteacher informed governors this had now been resolved. The caretaker would attend to clean the unoccupied areas and a cleaning company would come in to clean the other areas in school.

**Governors questioned** who would do the on-going cleaning throughout the day. The headteacher confirmed that the staff would clean as part of maintaining hygiene during the day.

**Governors queried** if this would impact on well-being. The headteacher stated she had not received any negative comments.

- Update on staff and parent consultation

The headteacher informed governors that just over 2/3 of the children invited back into school would be attending.

**Governors asked** if parents had been anxious of the return to school. The headteacher informed governors that there had been one class with very anxious parents. The headteacher had communicated that they were welcome to change their minds and to monitor the re-opening. It was known that they could review their decision at any time.

**Governors queried** how the classes had be organised. The headteacher explained that class teachers had formed bubbles taking into consideration personalities and the needs of the children in each bubble. Some had been grouped in ability and others for well-being support.

- Support for staff well-being

The headteacher informed governors that staff were happy to be switching back from childcare to teaching. The timetabling had been organised to give teachers PPA time to plan lessons which would be delivered in school and to those still home learning.

**Governors asked** what duties the members of staff who were working from home would fulfil. The headteacher explained they would have planning roles and welfare calls to make,

**Governors queried** if the staff had taken time off for the school holidays. The headteacher confirmed they had. The headteacher advised all staff who worked

during the Easter holiday or would be in during half term to manage their time and take time off to compensate. There had been time since closures until now to rota in the time off.

The SLT had decided that over the half term break the staff would not make any of their welfare calls.

#### **Governors adjourned to Clap for Key Workers at 8pm**

**The meeting resumed at 8.05pm**

- Support for SLT well-being

The governing body offered their continuing support for the headteacher and her staff,

The headteacher assured governors she would take some time during the half term to herself.

**Governors asked** if the school was open over the bank holiday. The headteacher confirmed it was not.

**Governors noted** that the headteacher was on the staffing list for re-opening. The headteacher said this was unavoidable. The headteacher informed governors that she was concerned about flexibility amongst staff in the case of staff illness.

**Governors asked** if sick leave was covered by insurance. The headteacher stated that if the absence was due to self-isolation that would not be classed as illness and therefore not covered.

**Governors agreed** to monitor the well-being of the SLT.

- Future monitoring and review by the Governing body

Governors discussed how they could monitor the situation moving forward. It was stated this was a fluid situation that could well change if new guidance was issued or the dynamics in school altered.

**Governors decided** to timetable an extraordinary meeting after the re-opening to assess the contingencies in place and address any new guidance.

The governing body

**agreed**

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 6.30pm.

**Governors requested** the headteacher give a verbal report at the meeting on the progress since re-opening.

**Governors expressed** their thanks to the headteacher and her staff for all the hard work they had put into the re-opening plan for the school and its pupils. They commented that the re-opening plan was well considered and thorough and it inspired confidence,

GB/31/20

#### **Approval of in-service training days**

The headteacher uploaded the proposed inset days on GovernorHub for governors to view prior to the meeting. The headteacher gave explanation to the reasoning behind the dates.

The proposed dates are;

- 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020
- 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020
- 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Action**

- 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Governors discussed** the merits of the proposed dates and training opportunities to staff.

**Governors approved** the inset days proposed.

**GB/32/20 Governor monitoring visits**

**Governors confirmed** monitoring visits had been completed before the school closures for headteacher appraisal, SEND, child protection, early years, health and safety, website, English, Maths, Geography and History, parent feedback. Actions have been delayed, due to the current circumstances, on assessment and target setting, finance, pupil premium. A pupil premium meeting will be organised virtually.

The clerk informed governors that remote monitoring had been adopted by schools. This was especially useful to monitor remote learning provision, safeguarding, SEND and well-being.

**GB/33/20 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account**

The governors had challenged and supported the school and evidence of this is

- In the committee and full governing body meetings organised and attended.
- In the training organised and completed.
- In the questioning of the school's leaders. Questioning of staff absence and child protection referrals. Discussion around pay progression and potential appraisal difficulties.
- In the monitoring visits and reports completed.
- In the questioning during the school partial closure and coronavirus response. Extensive plans for re-opening shows thorough preparation. Governors have visited school to check safety measures.
- In extensive questioning around the re-opening plans for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils.
- New add-on classroom space, that if popular may be permanent.
- Link governors have been assigned to each class.
- Good results from new attendance policy practice.
- Recruitment of experienced staff.

**GB/34/20 Confirmation of dates for 2020 - 2021**

The governing body

**agreed**

Autumn term 2020 – Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 6.15pm

Spring term 2021 – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 6.15pm

Summer term 2021 – Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 6.15pm

GB/35/20      **Determination of confidentiality of business**

It was

**Resolved**

that all papers and reports be made available as necessary.

**The meeting closed at 8.30pm.**



Signed

(chair)      Date 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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