

**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING OF MONKSDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL  
HELD ON THURSDAY 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2024 AT 2.00PM AT THE SCHOOL**

**PRESENT**

Martin Reynolds – (Chair) Co-Opted Governor  
Jacquie Price – Headteacher  
Maya Diab – Parent Governor  
Joanne Needham – Co-Opted Governor  
Katie Lawrence – Staff Governor

**Also Present**

George Allen – Clerk  
Chloe Russell - AHT

**24/FG01 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were accepted from Sequoia Chapman and Josh Cliff. The Headteacher will contact Michelle McKeown in relation to attendance at Governing Board meetings.

**24/FG02 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. There were no matter arising.

**24/FG03 HEADTEACHERS REPORT**

The spring term Headteacher's Report was distributed to governors prior to the meeting. A range of areas are covered in the report including SEND and EAL updates, attendance, Pupil Premium, termly safeguarding data, staffing, behaviour, and community events.

Sequoia Chapman has indicated that the Report is extensive and that it covers all key areas. If other governors have any comments or queries relating to the detailed Report, they are requested to contact the Headteacher.

All

**24/FG04 MONITOR ATTENDANCE**

The Headteacher provided the monitor attendance report. Arising:

- School attendance at the end of Autumn term 2023 was 95.20%. PA was 12.7%. These figures are better than National averages of 93.7% and 17.4% respectively.
- Detailed and positive work is undertaken to ensure attendance rates remain strong.
- The range of activities of activities to continue to improve attendance are included in the Headteachers report. They list the broad levels of support being provided.
- Much of the credit for this performance is due to the diligent and strong work of Attendance Lead, Gill Stewart. The work has enabled good impacts to be achieved.

Governors welcomed the attendance data for 2023/24 and the positive performance of the school and thanked Gill Stewart for her effective and dedicated work in this area.

**23/FG05 FINANCE**

- a) SFVS

Jo Needham presented the SFVS document for Monksdown School for 2023/24:

- The SFVS is an annual document that concerns the management of financial and school resources and consists of thirty questions that are required to be answered by the school.
- Answers included that school finances are robust and subject to governor challenge.
- There are several changes that have been made to the previously approved SFVS.
- If approved, the SFVS will be submitted to LCC before the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Governors considered each of the responses to the questions contained in the SFVS.

JN

Governors approved the SFVS for 2023/24 and it was signed by the Chair of Governors.

#### b) Finance Audit

The Headteacher and Jo Needham presented the Finance Audit report. Arising:

The audit of school finances was recently undertaken. The accompanying audit findings and recommendations were circulated to governors. A range of areas were highlighted including:

- i. The 15 findings and recommendations included the following sections: Priority, Finding, Risk of non-Implementation, Recommendations and Management Response.
- ii. Priorities were risk ranked and whether they were high/low or essential/strategic.
- iii. The Management Response (of Monksdown School) was detailed next to the findings.
- iv. The audit detailed a series of areas covered in the assessment of school systems.
- v. The 15 recommendations from the financial audit are as follows:
  - I. Governors should receive finance reports and have the opportunity to raise questions or concerns at least six times per year.
  - II. Annual approval of the Scheme of Delegation, Committee Terms of Reference, LCC Financial Regulations and Procedures for Financing schools should be minuted.
  - III. The school should verify whether charitable status is required (this relates to the use of the school voluntary fund) if the budget exceeds
  - IV. Gifts and hospitality register should be reviewed and annually approved by governors.
  - V. Monthly payroll reports should be evidenced as approved by the Headteacher and this can be achieved via email.
  - VI. Credit Card holders to be limited to two staff and expenditure for school children only.
  - VII. A list of all SLAs and leases to be created detailing the cost, supplier names, end dates and services provided. This document to be reviewed annually by the FGB.
  - VIII. The SBM to be taken off the bank mandate as a signatory and replaced with a staff member who is not involved in the ordering and payment process.
  - IX. The HT to sign the monthly petty cash to confirm approval of monthly cash purchases.
  - X. Asset acquisition dates to be added to the Asset Register. It may be beneficial to separate out the staff loans record.
  - XI. The school should work with LCC to reduce its projected deficit in budget Year 3 and aim for a balanced budget.
  - XII. After the May 2024 budget has been approved it should be inputted into SIMS and the updated budgets put into the system. The school should contact the SIL Finance Officer to ensure the figures are correct.
  - XIII. The SDP should cover three years enabling it to be linked to the three-year budget.
  - XIV. School test the SEMP to ensure staff are aware of the steps to take in an emergency.
  - XV. The school should annually discuss the price of school meals and this to be minuted.

Governors discussed the findings and recommendations of the auditor. Governors assessed each of the points covered and the school Management Response to the findings.

The Governing Board response was recorded as follows:

1. Governors have immediate access to reports from the Finance Committee and FGB. FGB meeting on 21/03/24 is to agree to increase Board meetings to 6 times per year.
2. Scheme of Delegation is on FGB agenda on 21/03/24 and its approval to be minuted.
3. Voluntary Fund amounts to                      and exceeds the                      . The Voluntary Fund will be used to fund a leased or bought minibus. Options for the purchase or lease of the minibus was discussed and an approach agreed at the FGB meeting on 21/03/24.
4. Contents of Gifts/Hospitality register was minuted at Resources Committee on 07/03/24.
5. Payroll is always approved or declined by the Headteacher and sent to payroll. From now on the HT will email the SBM to indicate whether costs are approved or not.
6. The gift of flowers was 3 months ago and has not been used since checked by the SLT. J. Price and G. Stewart are credit card holders and J. Needham has been removed.
7. The list and dates of SLAs and leases will be collated in a spreadsheet by the SBM.
8. The SBM has been advised by Lloyds not to be taken off the bank mandate as she will lose access to internet banking and petty cash. It was agreed at the Resources Committee on 07/03/24 that the SBM will remain as a signatory but would not sign cheques.
9. The Headteacher currently signs the monthly petty cash reports.
10. Acquisitions dating back 10 years, including minibus, were not included in Asset Register. But equipment register has long been in place including names of staff who had the item. Any new acquisitions will be added to the Asset Register spreadsheet.
11. Future deficits budgets are being addressed and a staffing review being considered for approval by the FGB on 21/03/24. The review includes potential savings of                      .
12. The issue of the budget approved by governors in May 2023 not matching with the budget in SIMS was raised with the School Finance Officer. But the SIL School Finance Officer on 14/03/24 confirmed that the original budgets inputted by the SMB were correct.
13. The SDP is presented and reviewed annually by the FGB. It can be very difficult to link all costings over the 3-year SDP period. The HT will provide a one-page costings profile in the SDP that estimates spending and covers the 3-year period.
14. SEMP Lockdown practice completed on 19/03/24 and shared with the FGB on 21/03/24.
15. Increases in school meals costs would not align with school values. This was ratified by FGB at the meeting on 21/03/24. The costs of school meals will be reviewed annually.

Relevant actions agreed by the Board will be implemented by designated school staff.

Governors noted the audit findings and recommendations. They also confirmed their agreement with the school management and the Governing Boards response to the recommendations.

## **24/FG06 GOVERNORS SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Scheme of Delegation sets out who will make decisions, carry out functions of the Board and who will be delegated with key responsibilities.

Levels of delegation within the scheme, including those for the Headteacher, are agreed by the Board. The Scheme of Delegation assists with the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

As part of this, governors approved a delegated spending limit of                      to the Headteacher.

Governors approved the Scheme of Delegation for 2023/24.

## **24/FG07 FUTURE GOVERNING BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Headteacher and the Chair of Governors presented the future governance item. Arising:

It is proposed that to ensure the fuller consideration of all aspects of school performance, standards, procedures and policies that Governing Board meetings are increased from three times to six times per year.

The proposed increases in Governing Board meetings also provides synergy with details in the approved school SFVS which outlined that six Board meetings will ensue.

HT

Governors approved that Governing Board meetings will increase to six times per year.

#### **24/FG08 REVIEW RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

The Headteacher reported that governors are undertaking a variety of appropriate training courses. They range from finance and safeguarding to SEND and Introduction for Governors. Recent training courses undertaken include:

- Single Central Register – Jo Needham.
- Safer Recruitment – Jacque Price and Martin Reynolds
- Safeguarding – Gill Stewart and Jacque Price.

#### **24/FG09 CONSIDER DIVERSITY OF GOVERNING BOARD**

The City Council is establishing a Working Party to assess the levels of diversity within school Governing Boards. The aim is to seek increase the diversity of Boards in schools in areas such as ethnicity, age, and gender. The Working Party aims to meet later this year.

Governors agreed that Maya Diab will represent the school on the Diversity Working Party.

#### **24/FG10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business

#### **24/FG11 DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETING**

Governing Board – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 9.15am.

#### **24/FG12 STAFFING REVIEW**

This is a confidential staffing item and the minutes of the item have been extracted.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.00pm