

# Ridgeway Primary School

## Minutes of the Meeting of the full Governing Board held in a virtual setting on Tuesday 7 July, 2020 at 5.00 p.m.

**Present:** Mrs. Potter (Chair), Mrs. Jelves (Headteacher), Mr. Bristow, Mrs. Cassell, Mrs. Harris, Mr. Mulvey, Mr. Ecob, Miss. Gray, Mrs. Broadhead, Mrs. Rate, Mrs. Middleton

**In attendance:** Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Governors)

### 1 Opening Remarks:

Governors were welcomed to tonight's Summer Term full Governing Board meeting by the Chair. The meeting was conducted using video conferencing technology and all paperwork that was required for tonight's forum had been shared with Governors well in advance of the meeting. Members, as always, were given ample opportunity to ask questions and seek points of clarification in relation to the listed agenda items and the agenda for tonight's meeting had been suitably tweaked to ensure as far as possible only essential matters of governance were being discussed.

The meeting was quorate.

### 2 Apologies:

**Resolved:** That an apology for absence be received and accepted from Mr. Seager.

*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 Spring Term Full Governing Board Meeting:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of the School on 20.03.20 to the majority of pupils, the Spring Term full Governing Board meeting did not take place. That said, the relevant documentation was shared and a series of email discussions did result between Governors and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure that any key, strategic matters were raised in the absence of a face to face meeting.

As there is a legal requirement to hold a full Governing Board meeting at least three times a year, an overview of the key items that would have been covered off in the Spring Term were shared. These key updates can be confirmed as follows:

#### 1.1

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the full Governing Board meeting (including Confidential Appendix) held on Wednesday 20 November, 2019 be approved as an accurate and true record.

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

## 1.2

No matters arising were raised in relation to the November minutes. A significant time period has elapsed and the SLT has ensured any outstanding matters were either progressed or closed down. There was nothing further to add at this point in the meeting.

## 1.3

Both the Chair and the Vice-Chair confirmed they had not had to exercise their Power to Act between the November meeting and March where there was every intention to hold a Spring Term full Governing Board meeting.

## 1.4

Three sets of committee minutes would have been referred to and reported back on at the Spring Term meeting. These included the Minutes of the Strategy Committee (27.01.20); the Resources Committee (27.02.20) and Teaching and Learning Committee (05.03.20).

**Resolved:** That all sets of committee minutes be ratified with immediate effect. There were no questions from Governors in relation to this minute record and all Governors had access to this documentation in advance of tonight's meeting.

## 1.5

A Link Governor visit had been carried out by Mrs. Bristow on 27.02.20. Her report had been shared with members in advance of tonight's meeting and it was clear her engagement session with Mrs. Banks had been an extremely positive one. Mrs. Bristow's report will now be stored centrally as evidence of Link Governor interaction with staff members on a pre-determined theme – in this case RML.

## 1.6

The Headteacher's Report had been prepared as normal for Governors. It provided updates across all aspects of school life including contextual data; staffing updates; a financial overview; a focus on school improvement and evaluation and a series of additional miscellaneous items. Two specific areas of interest were highlighted at this point – i.e. the ratification of the draft Budget for 2020-21 and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) mid-term evaluation.

The draft Budget for 2020-21 would have been presented to Governors in the Spring Term if the meeting had not been cancelled. Instead, the associated financial documentation was considered remotely by a number of Governors who applied the necessary due diligence to reach a position of consensus that the draft Budget could be ratified and submitted to the Local Authority (LA). For all members benefit, the various financial documents that had been created to support the budget proposal had been made available in advance of tonight's meeting and no Governor raised any issue in relation to this financial overview. To ensure the ratification of the Budget for 2020-21 is formally captured:

**Resolved:** That Governors ratify the 2020-21 Budget, comfortable with the level of due diligence that had been exercised throughout the budget setting process.

Governors also welcomed the mid-term SIP evaluation, accepting that this strategic document has been impacted in recent months by Covid-19 and its associated implications. Governors fully expect some for the priorities in this year's SIP to be rolled into the new academic year to ensure these areas can be effectively tracked and measured. The SLT confirmed this would be very much the case.

As a final point, the Headteacher's Report for this term very much builds on the information contained in the Spring Report.

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

## 1.7

In terms of any other business it was confirmed that the Board is currently carrying four Co-opted Governor vacancies. There were some suggestions as to possible contacts who could be approached to fill these vacancies and also an indication of particular skill sets that need to be filled in any future appointments.

The Clerk will also check with Governor Services about the status of Mrs. Rate as she is still showing as an Associate Member on Governor Hub. If Mrs. Rate has assumed Foundation Governor status, then the requisite paperwork will need to have been received by Governor Services.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk check this Governor status issue with Governor Services and inform the Headteacher accordingly.

This concluded the catch-up from the Spring Term meeting.

### **And now to the main business of tonight's meeting...**

#### **4 Declaration of Interests:**

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

Governors were also reminded that they should declare any new business/pecuniary interests so that the Central Register of Business Interests can be updated.

**Resolved:** That Governors submit any new declarations as necessary.

#### **5 Reports:**

##### **Chair's and Vice Chair's Actions**

The Chair and Vice-Chair confirmed they had not had to exercise their Power to Act since March.

##### **Committees**

There have been two more recent committee meetings that have taken place in mid-May (Pastoral Committee) and mid-June (Resources Committee).

Verbal updates related to these two committee meetings can be reported as follows:

##### **Pastoral Committee – 14.05.20**

The Committee came together via Microsoft Teams as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting was extremely productive with a significant amount of territory covered. Members received a Behaviour Report, there was an overview of any bullying incidents since the start of the Autumn Term and confirmation that there were no exclusions in the Spring Term. The role of the Hub and Learning Mentor was discussed which will continue in a similar vein in 2020-21, there was an update around the SLT's current plans for reopening and a series of policy amendments were approved.

The most significant discussion at the meeting took place around well-being and mental health issues which have most definitely come to the fore in the current pandemic. There is no doubt staff have done an excellent job during shutdown to safeguard the interests of vulnerable

pupils, to support all year groups with high quality home learning provision and to ensure that all necessary advice and guidance has been issued to families to keep pupils safe online. Committee members were reassured by the extensive support package that has been put in place which has continued this term and will roll forward into the Autumn Term as the whole School community returns to a new normal.

For the minute record, the Minutes from the May meeting assume draft status until they are approved at the next committee meeting.

### **Resources Committee – 18.06.20**

Aside from the standard protocols at the start of the meeting, Governors received a Buildings Update Report which was detailed and comprehensive in nature. Members were informed that with a reduced school population on site, the moment has been seized to carry out some much-needed redecorating work in and around the School. A report on servicing and testing was shared with it being reported that only essential testing is taking place at present.

Finance and Personnel reports then followed which again contained a significant level of detail, both in relation to the health of the School finances but also how any staff mobility was being dealt with in preparation for the start of a new academic year. The minutes capture a healthy level of challenge from Governors and it is clear that when it comes to mitigating the impact from Covid-19 on current and future building work, finances and personnel issues, the SLT has been extremely diligent in the thoroughness of its response on all fronts.

For the minute record, the Minutes from the June meeting assume draft status until they are approved at the next committee meeting.

## **6 Headteacher's Report:**

The most significant part of tonight's meeting was the sharing of the Headteacher's Report for the Summer Term with Governors and the ensuing discussions that took place. Members are used to a format when receiving the termly update and at tonight's meeting there was a specific focus on a Covid-19 update; transition activities; the overarching principles of the Recovery Curriculum and clarification of SIP priorities for the new academic year as well as a range of smaller but no less significant miscellaneous items.

When capturing the key points from the termly update, the following summary can be reported:

### **1.1**

Covid-19 has definitely impacted the amount of contextual data that could be shared with Governors at tonight's meeting. Attendance is being reported but only for the small numbers of pupils in school and there were no significant trends emerging for Governors to be concerned about.

### **1.2**

The Headteacher was pleased to report that the SLT has made its final staffing appointments for September. The recruitment process has been interesting from the perspective of having to conduct virtual interviews but the Headteacher is comfortable with the selections that have been made with new appointments no doubt complementing the skills and attributes of the existing workforce. There was also confirmation that the consultation to change the working pattern of Teaching Assistants (TA's) from whole year to term time only has been completed. There have been no appeals that have come through and the new arrangements will come into effect from 01.09.20.

### **1.3**

Some time was spent discussing the SALIX bid that has been submitted to the DfE to replace the School's current lighting with LED fittings. The timetable, estimated annual savings and repayment amounts were shared with Governors to ensure there is complete transparency on this issue. Governors felt what was being suggested was a 'no brainer'. The School does need to take advantage of these types of initiatives when they become available, the loan is interest free and whilst the Headteacher can approve the total cost of the SALIX bid without needing to get approval elsewhere, it was pleasing that Governors fully endorsed the proposal that was being suggested.

Beyond the SALIX loan, the Headteacher added why at the same time it will be necessary to replace the ceilings in Nursery 1 and both of the Year 1 and Reception classrooms at a cost of around £13K. The Headteacher confirmed with Governors how this schedule of work will be funded and also responded to some challenge around any asbestos concerns.

Finally, the Headteacher updated Governors where the School was at in relation to a successful capital bid to erect a new library as a lightweight structure on the current Year 1 playground. Not only will the SLT be able to secure this premises enhancement at a much reduced cost (school is only paying £7K of the £27K to the schedule of works) but the need to resurface the area to mitigate any risk of bumps, trips and spills has now been removed. Governors welcomed the developments in this area and were pleased to see that despite the impact of Covid-19, there has been forward momentum in this area.

### **1.4**

There was an update on the School balances and confirmation that the SFVS was completed and submitted to the LA by the end of March deadline. This latter point is particularly pleasing as there are new requirements with SFVS this year, both in terms of an expanded checklist and the need to analyse a numerical dashboard which shows how a school's data compares to thresholds on a range of statistics identified by the DfE as indicators of good resource management and outcomes.

### **1.5**

The Covid-19 Report that was shared with Governors was extremely detailed and tracked the SLT's response throughout the initial closure period, the wider School reopening from 1 June and, finally, the planned reopening of the whole School in September. There is no doubt that the last few months have been extremely challenging for the SLT with government advice being drip fed through to schools on an almost daily basis and the School having basically 48 hours to put in place a childcare facility for the children of keyworkers/vulnerable pupils and launching a remote learning provision to ensure the vast majority of pupils could continue their studies from home.

The challenges the SLT and staff have faced over this period have been vast in number with some big-ticket items to resolve and well as much smaller issues that still have had a significant impact on members of the local community. Staff have shown resilience, strength and empathy throughout this period and what has been pleasing is the way the School community has come together to navigate what has to all sense and purposes been a national crisis.

Governors welcomed the level of detail in the Headteacher's Report which tracked the SLT's response from the early days of the pandemic right through to the creation and implementation of a new operational plan from 1 June. The operational plan was robust and fluid in nature so the SLT had the opportunity to flex the plan based on what actually transpired when a greater proportion of the School population returned to the School site.

Governors also received details about how the staff have been deployed over this period; what home learning provision has meant for all pupils; how the vulnerable cohort has been

safeguarded throughout the extended lockdown period; how extra provision such as Breakfast Club has been functioning for families and how the protocols around bubble management have been working out in practice to deliver a Covid-19 secure environment for both pupils and staff.

Governors wanted to put on record their thanks to staff for making ‘the complex and seemingly impossible offer’ to pupils work. Members noted how many staff worked through both the Easter and May half-term holidays and have not had an opportunity to recharge since February half-term. Governors also noted the arrangements for the School break (i.e. the School will be closed) and the fact there will be no paid holiday provision.

**Governor Challenge:**

***Governors offered some challenge around the anticipated impact of Covid-19 on the School Budget (particularly the implications of any third-party services being cancelled and the implications of the furlough process on the bottom line). There were also some questions around the cancellation of statutory assessments on the School’s data profile and what the end of term reporting will look like for pupils (in terms of reporting on progress, attainment and extra-curricular activities).***

The Headteacher responded to each of these points and praised those staff members for the work they have completed around furlough – an incredibly complex process.

**Resolved:** That Governors thank the SLT and staff for the level of due diligence they have applied to date in moving the School through a particular turbulent period in its history.

**1.6**

Arrangements for the end of this year (i.e. the departure of Year 6 pupils) were shared. Governors were pleased to see that Year 6 pupils are being invited back into school, albeit on a reduced timetable to ensure they get the send-off they so very much deserve.

**1.7**

The planned reopening of the whole School in September was shared. The SLT has referred to the latest guidance document from central government on this issue which it has been said at times is ambiguous and at other points quite contradictory. Despite this, the SLT needs another operational plan and information was therefore shared with members relating to transition activities at the start of the Autumn Term, staggered start/finish times and lunchtime arrangements to ensure members can see where the SLT is at with its thinking at the present time. Clearly, as more time passes the SLT will add more detail to its approach including undertaking the various forms of scenario planning and generating any risk assessments that need to be completed. For now, Governors were asked to endorse/approve the proposed direction of travel that was being suggested by the SLT.

**Resolved:** That Governors resoundingly support this direction of travel.

**Governor Challenge:**

***There was some challenge around how staff will find time during the School to take a much needed time out and what provision will be made for them; what constitutes a bubble within the latest guidance issued; whether everyone does return or whether the return of Nursery/Reception could be delayed to allow the new systems/procedures to bed in and, finally, confirmation that the childcare facility will be disbanded with pupils returning to their respective year groups.***

The Headteacher thanked Governors for these comments and will accommodate them within the on-going planning discussions that are taking place.

## 1.8

Mrs. Middleton spent some time outlining for Governors the overarching principles that sit behind the Recovery Curriculum which will need to be enacted from the start of the Autumn Term.

Some appreciation of the challenges staff will face when pupils return in September was shared. The reality is that despite a high-quality home learning provision, pupils will have interacted with the learning available to varying degrees with significant gaps in learning as well as other pastoral needs that will need to be addressed.

To directly respond to these needs, Mrs. Middleton outlined for Governors what the School's approach will be both in terms of shaping and implementing a 'reset and recovery curriculum'. There will be a focus on tapping into the research that has become available in this area whilst at the same time contextualising the curriculum to the specific needs of Ridgeway Primary School. Restoration of mental health will be of paramount importance and this will be secured through building positive relationships; supporting pupils manage their feelings and behaviour; ensuring pupils enjoy and achieve and, finally, supporting pupils' physical health and well-being.

When it comes to closing off gaps, Mrs. Middleton explained how staff will need to operate with some skill and flexibility in this area. It is accepted that not all gaps will be closed off immediately. Instead, there will be more of a focus on pre-determined non-negotiables to ensure pupils have a firm grasp of the core requirements with depth and challenge to be added as the learning progresses. Staff will be given a reference document to support them in this area and there will be a focus on low stakes assessments to build confidence at an early stage before a greater level of complexity/challenge is added.

There was some discussion around how curriculums will flex to accommodate the learning potential that has been lost. External resources exist in the Maths area for staff to tap into whereas for English the School is developing more of a local, bespoke programme. Either way, Mrs. Middleton has been happy with the progress made to date and is confident a robust framework will be in place for the start of the Autumn Term.

Governors welcomed all of this detailed information and it was agreed documentation relating to the Recovery Curriculum will be uploaded to SharePoint following tonight's meeting.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Middleton progress this action.

**Resolved:** That Mrs. Middleton be thanked for her informative update.

## 1.9

The final part of the update related to the SIP priorities for the new academic year. As has already been reported in these minutes some priorities will roll forward into next year with others being realised as a direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Governors received a document outlining the central themes before tonight's meeting and it was clear to members that the attention and focus for the SLT for the next 12 months is very much in the right place. Governors will now need to use these priority areas as a context when carrying out their Link Governor engagement visits in the Autumn Term and beyond. It is anticipated that a lot of productive discussions will take place in the identified areas and members can expect regular progress updates against these priority areas over the course of the next 12 months.

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

## **7 Safeguarding Update:**

Safeguarding is an on-going focus for the SLT and in advance of tonight's meeting, members had received a series of related documentation including the Safeguarding Policy September 2019 (with addendum), an Annual Safeguarding Report to the Governing Board, a Safeguarding Statement and a Safeguarding Checklist.

Some time was spent drawing out some salient points from the Annual Safeguarding Report which included an update on CPD; confirmation of policy reviews in this area and any recent actions taken; the number of referrals made by the School to First Response or an existing social worker; an indication of the different meetings attended by the Safeguarding Team and, finally, an indication of the number of pupils that fall into various Safeguarding categories (i.e. pupils on Child Protection Plans, etc.).

Miss. Gray was thanked for compiling this report which along with the other supporting information reassured members that the SLT has all of the necessary checks and balances in place to comply with its statutory responsibilities in this area.

Governors wanted to put on record their thanks to the Safeguarding Team who throughout this challenging period have worked tirelessly to keep children safe, to identify any vulnerabilities in pupils and carry out the necessary risk assessments and, finally, to go that extra mile when carrying out home visits and securing extra technological support for individual pupils (i.e. laptops). The team has been resilient and has always looked to flex the support package it can offer families to help them through the current crisis. There is also a clear audit trail of actions taken so if any third party does wish to scrutinise the level of provision throughout the extended lockdown period, it will find the level of provision has been effective, impactful and robust.

**Resolved:** That Miss. Gray be thanked for her detailed and informative update.

## **8 Governor Information Pack:**

The Clerk outlined the purpose of the Governor Information Pack which signposts lots of excellent resources around key educational matters. Although the focus of tonight's meeting forum was on essential matters of governance, members are reminded that the information in the Information Pack focuses on the six features of effective governance (strategic leadership; accountability; people; structures; compliance and evaluation), much of which is still appropriate within a Covid-19 pandemic environment. Governors will consider the contents of the Information Pack at their leisure and will raise any questions with the SLT as appropriate to clarify/reinforce understanding in particular areas.

**Resolved:** That Governors consider the contents of the Information Pack at their leisure.

## **9 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 it be confirmed that no items needed to be recorded in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

**10 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

Whilst a meeting schedule for 2020-21 will be determined in due course, it was agreed in the short-term that the date for the Autumn Term full Governing Board meeting would be set tonight. Following some discussion, Governors settled on 18.11.20 at 5.00 p.m. A decision will be taken nearer the time as to whether this meeting will take place in a face to face capacity or be conducted online.

**Resolved:** That the Chair/Headteacher determine an overarching meeting schedule for 2020-21 and share it with Governors once finalised.

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

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Ridgeway Primary School

**Minutes of the Meeting of the full Governing Board held in a virtual setting  
on Tuesday 7 July, 2020 at 5.00 p.m.**

### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
3	HT	Publish November minutes.	
3	Clerk	Check Foundation Governor status issue with Governor Services.	
4	Governors	Submit any new declarations (business/pecuniary).	
6	Mrs. Middleton	Upload documentation relating to Recovery Curriculum to SharePoint.	
8	Governors	Consider contents of Governor Information Pack.	
10	Chair/HT	Determine final meeting schedule for 2020-21 and share it with Governors.	

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18 November, 2020 at 5.00 p.m.**

Absent Governors to be informed.