

**Minutes from the Full Governing Body Meeting**  
**Held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 at 6pm**  
**at The ACE Centre Nursery School**

Present	Catherine Hayward (CH) – LA Governor & Chair Sally Pursell (SP) – Co-opted Governor and Vice-chair ( <i>via Teams</i> ) Rob Horsfall (RH) – Co-opted Governor Lynn Jenkins (LJ) – Headteacher Zoe Wakefield (ZW) – Staff Governor Rachel Caseby (RC) – Governor Services Officer, OCC
Apologies:	Phoebe O'Donnel (POD) – Parent Governor
Absent:	Sophie Elliot (SE) – Co-opted Governor
In attendance	Hazel Sheridan (HS) – Governance Professional

The meeting started at time 6:01pm and was quorate.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Phoebe O'Donnell. Sophie Elliot did not attend the meeting.

**2. Notification of any urgent business**

- 2.1. Appointment of Sarah O'Leary as Co-opted Governor: Sarah O'Leary's (SOL) pen portrait is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. CH informed Governors that SOL is a strong nursery school Headteacher with a good knowledge of strategic and statutory matters, has been a successful Governor at another school, and would bring safeguarding and HR skills that are currently missing to FGB.

**Q1.** Are you (LJ) comfortable with another Headteacher being a member of the Governing Body?

**A1.** LJ confirmed that although it may change the dynamics of Headteacher meetings, SOL as a Co-opted Governor will add strength to the Governing Board. CH stated that she has asked SOL the same question and SOL confirmed that she would be comfortable and views this appointment as an opportunity for her to learn more about strategic governance. CH added that her skills would also enable governance monitoring responsibilities to be shared more equally.

**Decision: Sarah O'Leary to be appointed as a Co-opted Governor.**

**ACTION: CH to confirm appointment to SOL. HS to add SOL to Governor Hub and send her links to appropriate documents.**

**3. Declarations of pecuniary interests and updates for 2024-25**

- 3.1. There were no declarations of interest for this meeting. Governors were reminded to update their declarations for 2024-25.

Signed (by Chair): Catherine Hayward ..... Date.....

**ACTION: All Governors to update their Declarations of Interest for 2024-25 via Governor Hub (compliance tab in personal profile section).**

**4. Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and matters arising**

4.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**ACTION: HS to send approved minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to CH for signature and uploading to the website. HS to send copy of approved minutes to LJ for school records.**

Previous actions were:

4.2. Item 4.6 HS to note actions that need to be carried forward – SE DBS check, Section 128 check and induction – SP confirmed that a DBS information request was sent to SE on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Despite emails sent to SE’s governor and personal email addresses and texts, there has been no response. As SE has not responded to the DBS check requirements within the necessary 21 days FGB has no option but to disqualify her from office.

**ACTION: HS to remove SE from Governor Hub. CH to removed SE’s details from the school website.**

4.3. Item 4.11 HS to note ACE Vision as agenda item for FGB meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 – on agenda, item 5.

4.4. Item 5.2 ZW to send information to POD to include on the nursery school Facebook page. POD to create Facebook page and circulate to Governors. SP to find out what toddler groups are in the area – Facebook page created and published but needs more photos. SP has found contact details for 12 toddler groups in the area.

**ACTION: ZW to message local network about available spaces at the ACE Centre Nursery School and send text used to SP for her to use when contacting toddler groups (to ensure the message is consistent).**

**ACTION: ZW to take photos for uploading to the Facebook page (bearing in mind protocols of children in photos).**

4.5. Item 6.3 ZW to find out if Thrive can return in the next academic year and to target vulnerable children – ZW confirmed that Thrive is willing to return to the nursery school and a number of sessions will be arranged with them to suit the nursery school’s needs.

4.6. Item 7.2.1 LJ to find parent and staff survey templates and share with Governors – A decision was taken collectively by CH, SP and LJ to conduct a parent survey before the end of the summer term 2024. The collated results are filed on Governor Hub and were shared with Governors prior to the meeting. **Governors commented** that they were pleased to see the positive results with only a small percentage giving a neutral response.

**ACTION: Governors to compare survey questions with those asked by Ofsted to see if they were included in the survey. HS to note for Governors to discuss the next survey in April/May 2025.**

4.7. Item 7.3 LJ to circulate completed SEF on Governor Hub for Governors to comment – on agenda, item 10.3.

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- 4.8. Item 8.2 RH to do monitoring H&S visit by the end of October. HS to amend Governor Hub to show RH as H&S Link Governor – Governor Hub amendment completed. RH H&S visit noted to be completed by 24<sup>th</sup> October. (Please refer to item 13.1 below.)
- 4.9. Item 9.1 CH to conduct safeguarding paperwork monitoring visit and report back to Governors at the next FGB meeting. HS to note as agenda item for FGB on 3rd September – on agenda, item 6.1.
- 4.10. Item 9.2 Governors who have not completed Safeguarding Level 2 course to complete online course via Knowledge on Governor Hub – no confirmation of Safeguarding online course completed.

**ACTION: HS to follow up with POD to complete required training.**

- 4.11. Item 9.2 All Governors to inform HS when they have completed any training - updates from RH received and HS is regularly checking the report of completed and booked training.
- 4.12. Item 10.1 LJ/ZW to circulate Pupil Premium Funding Review 2023-24 to Governors for approval and publish on the school website – on agenda, item 7.3.
- 4.13. Item 10.2 LJ to review PSED and submit to FGB for the next meeting. HS to note as FGB agenda item for 3rd September – CH circulated update via Governor Hub for approval and on agenda, item 7.2.
- 4.14. Item 10.3 HS to note Behaviour Principles Written Statement for FGB meeting in September 2024 – on agenda, item 7.3.
- 4.15. Item 10.4 ZW to send updated SEND Information Report to CH. HS to note as FGB agenda item for 3rd September 2024 – on agenda, item 7.1.
- 4.16. Item 12.1 SP to appoint two or three Governors and an external advisor to the Review Panel and arrange date for the Headteacher’s appraisal to take place by 31st December 2024. – action carried forward.

**ACTION: SP to arrange Headteacher Appraisal Panel with two Governors and one external advisor. SP to inform HS of Panel members and appraisal date so Standing Orders document can be updated.**

- 4.17. Item 13 HS to note Link Governor reports for curriculum, safeguarding, disadvantaged pupils and finance as FGB agenda items for 3rd September 2024 – on agenda, item 6.
- 4.18. Item 13.5 HS to update Governor Hub with RH as Link Governor for H&S, website and filtering and monitoring - completed.
- 4.19. Item 14.1 HS to add summary of items with associated links from Clerks’ Briefing in May 2024 to Governor Hub and circulate to Governors - completed.
- 4.20. Item 14.3 HS to note publications of Board diversity data as future agenda item - noted.
- 4.21. Item 15.1 LJ to follow up regarding the Admissions Policy from September 2024 and circulate to Governors – up-to-date policy on website, action completed.
- 4.22. Item 15.3 HS to note Charging and Remissions Policy as FGB agenda item for September 2024 –on agenda, item 7.5.
- 4.23. Item 15.8 RH to look at H&S Policy Part 4 to see if any repetition can be removed – Nicky Jones happy with policy at H&S audit, action completed.
- 4.24. Item 15 HS to amend typos and formatting and send all approved policies to CH for signature, file on Governor Hub and the school’s Google drive and update the policy

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register – Anti-bullying, Harassment and Discrimination policy, Data Protection Policy, Stress at Work Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Freedom of Information Policy - completed.

- 4.25. Item 15.9 HS to send amended policies to CH and LJ for response to queries and final approval. Approved policies to be sent to CH for signature, filed on Governor Hub and school's Google drive and the policy register updated – CCTV Policy, H&S parts 1-3, Premises Hire, School Visitors and Lone Working – completed.

## 5. ACE Vision

- 5.1. The Vision is fundamental to the work of the nursery school and the manner in which it is conducted. A vision statement and values have been drafted and checked to ensure alignment. The draft vision is “working together to give the very best early childhood education for all our children” which gives the whole context for the school.
- 5.2. There are also three values of respect, ambition and joy, each of which has three bullet point statements which CH read out to Governors. There were originally five values, some of which would only have been applicable internally. However it was agreed that only three values were necessary and these will be applicable to all stakeholders, e.g., parents, staff, governors and children. Decisions made by the school will be in accordance with these values. The vision and the values will be published on the website when approved by Governors.

### Q2. How will this information be shared with parents and other people?

A2. LJ replied that the values will be used in staff meetings and with the children. Parents could be informed via the school newsletter. **Governors suggested** that the vision and values need to be projected and the words of respect, ambition and joy could be displayed around the school. The values could also be included in the footer of any communications.

- 5.3. A possible change of logo was also discussed and it was decided to keep the three hands with the addition of the three value words.

**ACTION: LJ to send a Word version of the logo to CH for amendment.**

**ACTION: LJ to upload draft vision and values document to Governor Hub for FGB approval.**

## 6. Link Governor Reports

- 6.1. Safeguarding paperwork review: RC and CH met with LJ to have a strategic look at the safeguarding paperwork and system for keeping files secure. RC and CH did not have access to individual files and asked LJ questions about the contents and processes, e.g., checked the cupboard containing the files was locked and that the key was kept safe. Questions were answered to their satisfaction about the paperwork included in the files, that it was kept in chronological order with the most recent documents first, and that the dates that issues were raised and completed were noted. LJ confirmed that all staff safeguarding training is up to date and it is discussed at weekly meetings with scenarios and quizzes to facilitate learning.

### Q3. Are the safeguarding files paper based or electronic?

A3. Files are currently paper based, however the school will be transferring to the electronic CPOMS system. The SBM will sign up for CPOMS however only the Safeguarding Lead will have access to information. RT (SBM) has been given a deadline for completion of this work and **Governors stressed** the importance of ensuring this deadline was adhered to.

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- 6.1.1. **Governors suggested** that Rebecca Lawson at ESAT is consulted about the timescales for document retention.
- 6.1.2. The Single Central Record (SCR) was also discussed at the meeting and this is checked three times per year. A few gaps were identified on the SCR and RT is investigating this. The current SCR can be difficult to read and negotiate and **Governors suggested** that Rebecca Lawson is contacted about using the ESAT model.

**ACTION: CH to follow up with RT about using ESAT SCR model.**

- 6.1.3. CH will be asking SOL to take on the safeguarding governor role. CH added that LJ was very confident in speaking to them about safeguarding and the SCR; RT was less confident.
- 6.2. Curriculum: A curriculum monitoring visit was due to take place before the end of the summer term. However, due to SP helping the nursery school with other matters, the pressure on staff and time constraints it was decided that it would not be appropriate. As SP is currently limited to working from home, CH stated that she would conduct a monitoring visit next term and ensure it is in line with items on the SDP. LJ, ZW and RT will populate the SDP with dates and RAG-rate items before monitoring visits take place. CH agreed with Governors that she will plan a schedule of monitoring visits.

**ACTION: CH to draft a monitoring visit schedule and file on Governor Hub for circulation to Governors.**

- 6.3. Disadvantaged pupils: CH's report is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. Governors noted the report and one question was asked as follows:

**Q4. Do you feel that staff could give robust evidence on what was being done to help disadvantaged pupils?**

**A4.** CH replied, yes, staff gave good examples about 'big experiences' (e.g., theatre and library trips). There was evidence of the impact these had had on parents, e.g. one parent has now signed her child up to the library, which they didn't think they could do before. There was clear numerical data from the WELLCOMM system about the progress children have made. All the evidence was well triangulated to ensure it was correct and accurate.

- 6.4. Finance: POD met with RT during the summer term and gave verbal feedback to LJ. The written report was not available for this meeting.

**ACTION: HS to follow up with POD for finance monitoring visit report.**

## 7. Documents for approval

All documents were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub.

- 7.1. SEND Information Report: Governors noted the SEND Information Report and suggested that:
- links to documents are checked to ensure they go to the most up to date version;
  - the acronym SEMH is written in full so parents and anyone viewing the document on the website will know what this stands for; and
  - SEND and the number of SEND pupils is included in discussions at weekly meetings.

**Q4. Is the term 'protective behaviour principles' still used?**

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**A4.** LJ confirmed the term is still used.

**Q5. Are all staff knowledgeable about the principles?**

**A5.** LJ stated that some staff would be and others will receive training.

**ACTION: ZW to amend the SEND Information Report as stated above and send to HS. HS to circulate for Governor approval before it is published on the website.**

7.2. Public Sector Equality Duty Statement (PSED): **Governors approved** the PSED for publication on the website.

**ACTION: CH to published PSED on the school website.**

7.3. Behaviour Principles Written Statement: **Governors approved** the Behaviour Principles Written Statement for publication on the website. **Governors suggested** that this is checked against the school vision when the vision is approved.

**ACTION: CH to publish Statement on school website. HS to note check against school vision as future action.**

7.4. Early Years Pupil Premium Statement: **Governors approved** this statement.

7.5. Charging and Remissions Policy: **Governors approved** the Charging and Remissions Policy.

**ACTION: HS to send to POD for signature and update policy register.**

7.6. Complaints Policy: CH explained that this is a new policy based on the DfE model and includes sections on serial and unreasonable complaints. Following a complaint panel meeting that was held in the summer term, it was recognised that a more structured process was needed.

7.6.1. The revised policy gives the opportunity for a complaint to be reviewed by an individual after stage 1. The individual can be a Governor, however that Governor cannot then be part of a complaint panel meeting if it is progressed to that stage. The complainant can still request a complaint panel meeting after this review if wish.

7.6.2. A discussion was held and is noted in the confidential Part 2 section of the minutes. Governors thanked CH and LJ for all their efforts and time that has had to be spent on dealing with the complaint.

7.6.3. **Governors approved** the complaints policy.

**ACTION: HS to send approved complaints policy to CH for signature and update the policy register.**

## 8. Governance 2024-25

All documents were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting and are filed on Governor Hub.

8.1. Terms of Reference: The purpose of the FGB has been updated to reflect the text in the Maintained Schools Governance Guide. The membership has been amended following the change to the Instrument of Governance in 2023-24 and it has been noted that FGB minutes are also available on request from the school office as well as being published on the school website.

**Decision: Governors approved the Terms of Reference for 2024-25.**

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- 8.2. Standing Orders: The Chair of Governors' term of office expiry date has been amended, together with the number of Governors and quorum number. The members of the Headteacher Appraisal Panel are still to be included.

**Decision: Governors approved the Standing Orders 2024-25 with the inclusion of Headteacher Appraisal Panel names.**

**ACTION: SP to inform the HS of the Headteacher Appraisal Panel members and date.**

- 8.3. Scheme of Delegation: Governors noted that Safeguarding functions section contained items relating to SEND. It was suggested and **agreed** to adopt the NGA Scheme of Delegation.

**ACTION: HS to check NGA template against authority levels in the current document and then circulate to Governors for approval.**

- 8.4. Code of Conduct: The link to the Maintained Schools Governance Guide has been updated.

**Decision: Governors approved the Code of Conduct 2024-25.**

- 8.5. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024: Governors were reminded that they are expected to read the full document and confirm they have done so via the compliance tab in their personal profile on Governor Hub.

**ACTION: Governors to read KCSiE 2024 and confirm via Governor Hub.**

- 8.6. Annual Schedule of Business: Governors were reminded to look at the Annual Schedule of Business as this shows the work that needs to be done by Governors throughout the academic year.

- 8.7. Governor Services Training Schedule Autumn 2024: Governors were informed that the autumn training schedule is now available and to book themselves onto any appropriate training. RH and LJ volunteered to complete the cyber security training.

- 8.7.1. A discussion took place about RH being the DPO and to have a Governor as DPO is not best practice. The SBM could be the DPO, however with RT leaving on 24<sup>th</sup> October this was not feasible. LJ stated that someone at Koala (IT provider) could be the nominated DPO, however they would charge the school £1,000 for this.

**Q6. Could the DPO role be covered with another school?**

**A6.** LJ answered that she could raise this at the next Headteachers partnership meeting.

- 8.7.2. **Governors suggested** that Koala could be asked to stand in as DPO until a new SBM is recruited. Filtering and monitoring arrangements also need to be confirmed with Koala for 2024-25.

**ACTION: LJ to ask Koala about stepping in as DPO until a new SBM is recruited, associated costs and to confirm filtering and monitoring processes.**

- 8.8. Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Training: Safeguarding Level 2 training needs to be completed every three years and Safer Recruitment every five years. It was noted that POD is yet to complete her Safeguarding and Prevent Duty training.

**ACTION: HS to follow up with POD about training requirements.**

- 8.9. Split of business at future FGB meetings: CH and HS met to discuss a plan for the management of FGB business this year, as there were often too many agenda items to be discussed and meetings overran. It was suggested to split FGB business into two

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tranches: 1) SEF, SDP, HT written report, and HR matters; 2) Finance, Link Governor reports, HT verbal update, health and safety and policies. Safeguarding and Risk would be on every agenda.

**Decision: Governors approved the split of business as above for future meetings.**

**ACTION: HS to note for future agenda setting.**

## 9. Headteacher's report

9.1. The Headteacher's report is filed on Governor Hub and was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. **Governors asked** a series of questions that were answered to their satisfaction.

**Q7. You mention that the expectations of the Local Authority (LA) and primary schools are unrealistic. What is unrealistic?**

**A7.** There is pressure on the school to complete the EHCNA and funding applications so everything is in place when the child transfers to primary school. However, the nursery school is small, has limited resources and the applications can take approximately 10 hours each to complete; this had to be explained to primary schools. The ACE Nursery School will do all it can to complete these applications and will start them in January with a view to them being approved by June in preparation for transition to primary school. Primary schools are also saying the nursery school should complete six-monthly EHCP reviews. LJ explained that with the limited capacity this is something that is not being done, however it does not impact on the child or the provision of the child's education and it is not statutory.

**Q8. Is there a review at any point?**

**A8.** An annual review is completed, which is not statutory. It would be reviewed if it did not reflect any changes in the child's needs. ZW added that the earlier an EHCP is completed, the easier it is and she has completed three applications so far.

**Q9. Can you confirm that there is no negative impact on the child?**

**A9.** Yes, there is no negative impact on the child if a review is done annually rather than six monthly. With the limited capacity at the school the workload needs to be carefully managed.

**Q10. With the new system of staff signing in electronically, can a record be pulled from the system that records staff absence?**

**A10.** LJ replied that managing staff absence from September 2022 was strong, however it declined in 2023-24 due to the collaboration with Grandpont, and therefore limited time to manage it. For this year, LJ is ensuring that the SBM records staff absence accurately.

**Q11. If staff are signing in with the new system, can't it provide a report?**

**A11.** Although the system can show who is absent, reasons and length of absence still need to be recorded separately.

9.2. **Governors commented** that the School Inclusion Team (OXSiT) visit report was very positive and the progress, improvements and staff engagement were all recognised. Governors congratulated the staff on this good report.

**Q12. When the budget was agreed it was noted there was a drop in future pupil numbers; what are the numbers now?**

**A12.** There are now nine pupils less than was budgeted for and this has been discussed with POD and RT.

**Q13. What will the numbers look like in January 2025?**

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**A13.** LJ replied that it is very difficult to forecast future pupil numbers at the moment and the situation will become clearer later this term.

**Q14. Have staff hours been reduced?**

**A14.** Two staff are part-time. At present there is £3K deficit between the cost of staff hours and the funding received for the number of pupils.

**Q15. If pupil numbers are lower than expected, is recruitment of another teacher necessary?**

**A15.** The costs of another teacher involve not just the salary but the oncosts as well. It is a balancing act between costs and educational provision that the school needs to carefully consider.

**Q16. At what point will you consider recruiting another teacher?**

**A16.** CH, SP and LJ will need to discuss this as soon as possible as LJ and ZW are still under pressure. LJ would like to advance the financial position before recruiting another teacher and said that there are realistic ways to increase revenue, e.g., after-school clubs, however this would also increase the workload. It was suggested that a teacher could be recruited on a temporary contract and that someone with access to the budget is invited to the meeting so the impact of different scenarios and risks can be seen on the budget.

**ACTION: CH to arrange meeting with Andy Flowers, LJ, SP, POD and RH to look at possible options and solutions.**

- 9.3. Governors commented** that private nurseries were full, however they provide a seven day a week service and no school holidays, which is not possible to do at The ACE nursery school. The demand for provision that The ACE can provide should also be considered.

**10. Driving progress at The ACE**

All documents are filed on Governor Hub and were circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

- 10.1. Programme of Support (POS):** The POS is unchanged and a strategy meeting is being held next week. CH and SP have discussed all the different plans the school and Governors are having to deal with and, if the SDP can be aligned with the Ofsted requirements and the POS, it will be suggested that the school has one plan, the SDP, to concentrate on.

**Decision: Governors agreed with the proposal to have one plan, the SDP, to monitor progress at the school.**

- 10.2. Governor Action Plan:** CH reviewed the Governor Action Plan before the last scheduled strategic meeting and there was nothing further to add at that point. CH suggested that some items are amended and dates added for this academic year.

**Decision: Governors agreed that CH amend the Governor Action Plan as above.**

- 10.3. School Evaluation Form (SEF):** **Governors requested** that safeguarding matters are included in the SEF. They added that it was good to see work on the vision moving forward and the curriculum development.

**ACTION: LJ to add safeguarding to the SEF and circulate to Governors.**

- 10.4. School Development Plan (SDP):** There are five main objectives on the SDP with aims and actions listed for each one. **Governors stated** that it needs to show the school is

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getting back on track and where we are with the vision of the school. LJ will update the SDP on a termly basis, adding dates and RAG-rating the items. **Governors added** that it may be possible to merge some of the actions.

## 11. Risk Assessment

11.1. **Governors commented** that the risk relating to lower pupil numbers needs to be reviewed.

**ACTION: CH to review risk register item relating to lower pupil numbers and circulate to Governors.**

## 12. Safeguarding update

12.1. This item is covered in item 6.1 above.

## 13. HR matters

13.1. Resignation: Governors were informed that RT, the SBM, has submitted his resignation and will leave the school on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024. A new SBM will be recruited.

13.2. DBS renewals: ESAT state that there is no time limit on DBS renewals, however the school currently renews DBS checks every three years. Governors had a brief discussion about the DBS renewal timeframe, at which it was suggested that the DBS updating service could be used, however this would involve a cost to the individual.

**Decision: Governors agreed** to maintain DBS renewals every three years.

## 14. Any Other Business

14.1. No items of any other business were raised.

## 15. Next and future meetings

15.1. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 6pm at the school.

15.2. Future meeting dates were proposed as follows:

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025

It was suggested that alternate meetings were held online, however after a brief discussion it was **agreed** to hold hybrid meetings, whereby Governors could attend in person but also virtually online if they wished.

**ACTION: Governors to look at proposed dates and inform HS of any issues.**

The meeting closed at 8:09pm

*Hazel Sheridan*  
9<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Sent to Chair/Head on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and FGB on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024

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