



Aston Rowant C+E Primary School
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Headteacher: Mrs Helen France

Meeting of the Full Governing Body of Aston Rowant CE Primary School
Wednesday 30th April 2025, 6.30 pm

Present:

Jacky Barr (JB) Foundation Governor *ex officio*
 Zoe Batt (ZB) LA Governor
 Helen France (HF) Headteacher *ex officio*
 Tom Sowerby (TS) Foundation Governor **(Chair)**
 Abi Tindall (AT) Parent Governor
 Gill Tyler, (GT) Foundation Governor
 Ben Wilson (BW) Parent Governor

Apology:

Alexi Olsen (AO) Staff Governor

In attendance:

Helen Batten (HB) LA Clerk

*= Document on Governor Hub **GQ = Governor Question**

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome/Quoracy/Opening Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TS welcomed everyone to the meeting and completed introductions. • Quorum was confirmed. • JB led the opening prayer. 	
2.	<p>Apologies/Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An apology was received and accepted from AO. • No substantive items were notified as AOB. There were no declarations relating to items on the agenda. 	
3.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March & matters arising</p> <p>3.1 Approval of minutes*: Governors approved the minutes as an accurate record. It was noted that JB's Foundation Governor role is <i>ex officio</i>, and this will be added to minutes in future.</p> <p>3.2 Matters arising: Due to the short time since the previous meeting, many agreed actions were ongoing. Progress of incomplete actions was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start date of music cornet lessons: HF confirmed this will be during this term, confirmation awaited. • Link governors to review Doodle: In hand, to be reviewed at the end of term. • Governor recruitment: Actions ongoing. There has been no response from SG. • Combine monitoring, FGB plan and schedule: Action ongoing. 	AT/GT/JB TS/GT TS/GT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIAMS training: Completed by all Foundation governors. GT will book induction training for ZB and BW as non-foundation governors. • SIAMS visit 1st May: JB, TS, AT and GT will be in school. • ODBE works: Dates are awaited. Further information included in HT report. • Christian vision: HF reported a useful meeting with JB and GT. The SIAMS visit will confirm how we are doing. • Mid-June Strategy meeting: Arrangements to be discussed in this meeting. • Building relationships with local residents: Actions ongoing. 	<p>GT/ZB/BW</p> <p>TS/ZB</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Governance Matters</p> <p>Governor articulation of GROWTH: Following previous discussion and SIAMS preparation work, GT spoke of the importance of ensuring that all meeting discussion explicitly considers how the matters discussed will help the school to grow according to our Christian Vision, and including these aspects in the minutes. Governors agreed to follow this approach.</p> <p>4.2 Budget approval</p> <p>* The updated budget was noted. TS clarified that following the full discussion at the March FGB, minor changes have been made and some expenditures confirmed, resulting in an increased carry forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GQ: Has anything been included for fascia boards and other premises items? HF: Yes, we have an idea of the costs of various improvements we would like to make, and once the costs of the fencing and roof are confirmed we will know what is available for other things. • GQ: How will sustainability aspects be included in the budget? HF: We will be discussing how we can move forward with some of the things we want to do. • TS confirmed the intention to expand the Finance committee remit to include all resources items, thereby giving the governing body a better overview of premises matters. The committee will then be able to consider spending proposals from other committees. • GQ: Should we be concerned about building teacher pay increases into the budget? HF: It is not yet clear whether this will happen as currently suggested, so we will need to review our plans when further information is available. • GQ: How is approving this budget enabling us to grow? Governors noted that the change to VA (Voluntary Aided) status has allowed funds to be used to enhance opportunities for pupils and staff rather than spending so much on maintaining premises, the introduction of Doodle being an excellent example. There has also been a journey of growth from a deficit budget risk several years ago to the current position of financial stability. School leadership has demonstrated resilience and harmony during this time, and we feel gratitude to now be able to plan strategically for the future. TS observed that with healthier finances, the challenge is now to achieve the right balance between providing for the children currently in school and building up reserves against an uncertain future. • Governors agreed that the planned spending will enable the school to fulfill its Vision and approved the budget by formal vote. 	

4.3	<p>Staff wellbeing: Monitoring has not taken place since the March FGB. HF confirmed that wellbeing is generally good with no specific concerns to report.</p>	
4.4	<p>Governor recruitment & induction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments are currently in progress for two of the four foundation vacancies. Financial expertise is the main gap to be addressed in further recruitment, and it was agreed that the priority will be to recruit the right skills rather than fill vacancies quickly. • The aim of induction will be to build knowledge so that people are able to govern effectively. <u>Action: TS will liaise with ZB, AT and BW to gather some insight on what will be most useful to new governors, and will continue to develop the induction pack.</u> • Governors agreed that outreach has been effective in the quest to find new governors but resilience is also required while the governing body is not at full strength. Trust and harmony will remain essential as we find new ways of working together to benefit the school. The governing body will grow as it learns from experience and makes changes. 	TS
4.5	<p>Admissions appeals: Over 20 applications have been received for 15 places. The admissions policy cannot be changed to the VA version until 2027, but the governing body is now the admissions body and will need to consider any appeals. It was agreed that the appeals panel will comprise JB, ZB and GT.</p>	
4.6	<p>Committee & governor reports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finance & Resources: Previous discussion covered budget approval. b. Health & safety: The *report of the monitoring visit on 31st March was noted. BW will be in school next week to follow progress of ongoing actions. There are no new concerns to note. Governors agreed that being able to make improvements to health and safety aspects is a cause for gratitude, and the safe environment we provide allows everyone to flourish and gives staff and parents confidence. c. Sustainability: HF confirmed the intention to start some work with the children after half-term. The school has achieved the Woodland Trust Bronze award and will be aiming for Gold. The next task will be to cost various ideas and plan how to move forward. It will also be important to document what we are doing, and why. Governors agreed that promoting sustainability will show wonder and gratitude in caring for God’s creation. d. Teaching & Learning: The next committee meeting on 12th May will review data. e. SIAMS: Governors have examined evidence with HF in preparation for the visit. RE progress and attainment is in line with other core subjects, with some children exceeding expectations. The report of the RE Enrichment Day visit on 2nd April is in the hub folder. JT confirmed that the school has created a strong culture of looking after one another and thinking about how this extends outwards to our community and the wider world. The SIAMS SEF 	

	<p>will need to be updated to reflect the change to VA status. Governors agreed that recent work has supported the growth of the governing body, which is now able to focus more on the Christian vision of the school.</p> <p>f. SEND: <u>Action: JB will complete monitoring and report to the July FGB.</u></p>	<p>JB</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Headteacher's verbal update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance: The school looks forward to working with the new OCC officer. • Premises: Planning permission for the fencing has been received. Some groundwork will also be required prior to installation. Confirmation of the scope of the roofing project is awaited from the Diocese. Groundwork will also be required in preparation for the library project. There are therefore a lot of moving parts to be clarified, and discussions are ongoing to devise a plan that will deliver everything in the most efficient and least disruptive way. Governors thanked HF and other staff for all their work in moving these plans forward. It was noted that whilst there are advantages in scheduling work during holiday periods, it will also be beneficial for staff wellbeing if the need to be in school to supervise works at these times can be avoided. It would also be great if term-time works could be linked to some learning opportunities. • Staffing: Some extra admin hours have been agreed, that will be very helpful in managing the upcoming premises projects. Changes to the staff structure are under consideration in response to expected staff movements at the end of the year. • GQ: Will the proposed staff changes improve things for others? HF: Yes, we consider these changes will be helpful for everyone and will provide more flexibility for us to cover what needs to be done. • Pupils: Children are well-prepared for the SATS, Phonics and Multiplication tests. There are some exciting enrichment activities planned this term, including using Sports Premium funding to bring in providers of different activities, and an Arts Week. Governors welcomed these initiatives, and thanked HF and staff for helping children to achieve fullness of life through opportunities that benefit mind, body and soul. 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Safeguarding & attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no new safeguarding concerns to report. HF noted that attendance has improved generally although some ongoing issues remain. • GQ: Do parents understand the impact of term-time holidays? HF: Not really. We do get requests to send work home, but have to refuse them because of the extra work involved and because this is not a satisfactory way for children to learn. Children not in school are also missing a lot of important things outside of lessons and return always causes a level of disruption. Parent governors noted that there are some entrenched attitudes that it will be difficult to change. • GQ: Should we consider fining parents for unauthorised holiday absence? HF: We can consider this, although fining can create some other issues. The LA process itself is rather complex and slow whereas we want to address issues 	

	<p>more quickly, and we would not benefit from any money raised. Governors recognized the inherent difficulties in fining parents and agreed that it risks damaging relationships and is not an effective deterrent because people will still generally save more money by taking holidays in term-time. A change at national level is required to address these problems.</p>	
7.	<p>Monitoring the impact of our Christian Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors agreed that it has been useful to talk about the school Vision throughout the meeting rather than relegating this discussion to a specific section at the end. The governing body is growing through creating opportunities to discuss and record these things and will become better at identifying these points. Considering the ways that FGB discussion enables the school to achieve GROWTH has produced some excellent questions and opportunities for reflection. • It was suggested that ‘wonder’ appears be the most difficult value to identify in the work of the governing body, although this might sometimes be interchangeable with ‘gratitude’. It would be useful to define what each word means in the context of governance, and this process itself is also evidence of the governing body questioning what we do, and growing. 	
8.	<p>Dates of next FGB meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June Strategy Meeting - Either Wednesday 4th or 11th June, to be confirmed according to availability: The meeting will be based around the Pillar document which will feed into the 2025-26 School Development Plan. <u>Action: TS will confirm meeting date when information is received from governors.</u> • July review meeting - Wednesday 16th July: The meeting will comprise a short business section to agree the governing body structure for next year, followed by full SDP review. The framework for the new SDP will also be available. • Skills audit: The skills audit will be repeated, for review in July. It is to be hoped that skills have developed, and we have grown as a governing body, but we also want to give people opportunities to develop skills in new areas and this should be a consideration in recruitment and induction. • GQ: Do we need to adjust meeting dates to fit better with school activities? Whilst meeting dates do need to fit around certain fixed points in the school calendar, in future budget approval can be completed with a single-issue online meeting, so that bigger meetings can be spread out more. Governors agreed that early circulation of meeting dates will be helpful, and HF confirmed that the dates of Enrichment weeks will be known before the June meeting, which can then consider 2025-26 governor meeting dates, to be finalized before July. 	TS
9.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff & governor celebration: <u>Action: HF will consult with staff to find the best timings for summer end of term event. Christmas timings also to be discussed.</u> • School events: Governors were reminded about the VE Day event on 7th May. Details of the summer performance of <i>Wind in the Willows</i> will be circulated in due course. 	HF

	There being no further business, TS thanked everyone for their valuable contributions and closed the meeting at 8:20 pm.	
	H Batten/8 May 2025	

Action points: FGB 30.04.2025

Item	Action	Responsible
3.2	T&L and Maths & English link governors to review Doodle.	AT/GT/JB
3.2	Need to explore recruiting the last 2 governors from Watlington area.	TS/GT
3.2	To make the monitoring plan, FGB plan and schedule into one document and upload onto Governor Hub.	TS/GT
3.2	Book non-foundation specific governor training for ZB, AT, BW.	GT
3.2	Continue building relationships with residents.	TS
4.4	Liaise with ZB, AT and BW to gather some insight on what will be most useful to new governors, and continue to develop governor induction pack.	TS
4.6	Provide SEND monitoring report to July FGB.	JB
8	Confirm June strategy meeting date.	TS
9	Circulate proposed staff/governor celebration date.	HF

Attendance 2024-25

	02/10/2024	10/02/2025	26/03/2025	30/04/2025		
Jacky Barr	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Zoe Batt	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Helen France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Sam Goose	Yes	N/A (Term of office expired)	N/A	N/A		
Abi Tindall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Alexi Olsen	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		
Tom Sowerby	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Steve Taylor	Yes	n/a [Left the GB]	n/a	N/A		
Gill Tyler	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Ben Wilson	n/a (not in post)	Yes	Yes	Yes		