



Foxton Primary School

The Year Ahead Strategy and Development Information

Open Meetings with Staff and Governors
26 and 30 September 2019

The meetings were repeated to avoid a clash of dates with MVC Open Evening and provide an opportunity for as many parents as possible to attend.

Thursday 26 Sept: 25 participants (including 10 staff and 7 Governors)

Monday 30 Sept: 24 participants (including 9 staff and 9 Governors)



Welcome

This meeting is being held in response to the Parents' Questionnaire (July 2019) and to give information about future school finances and will therefore address the areas in the following agenda:

Agenda



- Welcome – David Chilton, Chair of the Governors
- Your questions – Emma Holder, Parent Governor
- Role of the Governors – Caro Hollway, Vice Chair
- Behaviour – Stephen Atkinson, Senior Teacher, Class 4 Teacher
- School Finance and Use of Resources – David Chilton & Carole Davies, Head
- Friends of Foxton School – Chloe Watkis, retiring Chair of Friends
- Next Steps– Carole Davies
- Review questions – Emma Holder

Questions - Emma Holder



Are there specific questions that you would like responses to?

Thursday question: What is the role of the Friends in supporting the school finances?

Monday question: How will Mr A's PPA time be affected by the new arrangement?

Both questions were discussed – see pages 18 and 15 respectively for answers.

Who are the Governors?



The Governing Body is a group of 10 individuals (including the Headteacher) from a variety of backgrounds, each with a connection to the school and an interest in its well-being.

3 Parent Governors, elected by parents/carers.

Currently these are Laura Finnemore, Emma Holder and Laura Moran.

1 Staff Governor, appointed by the school staff.

This is Deana Vaughan.

1 Local Authority Governor, appointed by the Local Authority.

This is David Griffiths.

4 Co-opted Governors, appointed by the existing Governors.

These are currently David Chilton, Caro Hollway and Jill Buggey, and we have one vacancy.

The Headteacher, Carole Davies.

Jennie Spenceley is employed as **Clerk to the Governors** and is responsible for the Minutes of Full Governing Body (FGB) meetings and statutory compliance of our administration.

Q: What is the role of the Local Authority (LA) Governor?

A: This led on to discussion about the role of (elected/appointed) governors in general – not to ‘represent’ the parents/staff/LA. All Governors are accountable to the LA, especially the Chair and Head.

Q: Are any elected Governors coming up for election?

A: Information about Governor terms is on the school website.

Q: Do we need to have 10 Governors?

A: It’s the way the constitution is set up – seems to work well for this size of school.

Q: Does Carole get to choose who to co-opt?

A: No, it’s a collective FGB decision. Carole is one of ten.

Q: How do we co-opt a new Governor?

A: By advertising for people with the relevant skill sets (currently marketing, finance and personnel).

Who are the Governors?



- The Governors are all **volunteers**, who give their time and skills to benefit the school.
- The variety of individuals who make up the Full Governing Body bring a **range of experience, skill and perspective** to our work.
- Co-opted Governors are appointed for the particular skills they can bring to the school.
- In meetings, views are aired freely and discussions are sometimes robust, but **decisions are made collectively**.
- Each Governor serves for a **4 year term**, which may be renewed (elected members need to be re-elected). Timings of these renewals/re-elections are staggered because of early retirements in the past.



Role of the Governors

Governors help the school to provide the best possible education for its pupils.



Strategy

Establish the **strategic direction** of the school, set its vision and values.
Agree the School Improvement Plan with priorities and targets.
Ensure school meets its statutory duties.
Write and review school policies and procedures.



Creating robust accountability

Act as a **critical friend**, holding school leaders to account.
Share the appointment and performance management of the Headteacher. Share in appointment of staff.
Monitor and evaluate progress towards targets in the School Improvement Plan.
Engage with staff, parents/carers and the local authority.



Financial management

Responsible for **financial probity**.
Set the budget (agreed with local authority).
Monitor spending against the budget and ensure value for money.
Manage risks to the organisation.

Q: What is the frequency of the School Improvement Plan?

A: It is reviewed annually, but also includes a rolling on-going programme, so is constantly being reviewed and updated.

Q: What kind of things feed into it?

A: It is Ofsted-driven, monitoring attainment for national testing (e.g. Year 2/6 SATS, Year 1 Spelling), the bottom line is improving English and Maths, but also behaviour/well-being of the children.

Q: How do we decide on School Policies? How are they reviewed?

A: It depends on the Policy – some are reviewed annually, some bi-annually – time of review is based on a planned programme (e.g. Pay Policy – annual, Health & Safety Policy – up for review now, Behaviour Policy – working on a new one now).

Comment from the floor: Some policies on the website are out of date or have no review date.

Response: The Policies on file in the office are the current ones (include signatures). If the Policy itself does not change then a new one is not uploaded on to the website – the dates may therefore appear out of date on the website. We will address this issue.

Organisation of the Governors



The Full Governing Body meets once every half term.

We also form 2 sub-committees which again meet at least once every half term and which report to the FGB:

- **The Business Committee:**
responsible for the School Budget, Personnel, Premises and Health & Safety.
- **The Strategy Committee:**
responsible for Strategic Planning, Monitoring the Curriculum, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability and Inclusion.

The Minutes of the FGB and the Business and Strategy meetings are available to parents/carers.

This year we have written a new Governors' **Code of Conduct** and a new **Parental Communication and Engagement Policy** with detailed descriptions of procedures in practice. These are on the school website.

Behaviour – Stephen Atkinson



- Therapeutic
- Move from external to internal discipline – we teach positive behaviour
- Majority and additional need
- Pro-social - anti-social behaviours
- Some things are not rewards but rather provision
- Need to nurture some children more
- Hertfordshire Steps programme – well-established and researched
- There are still consequences: educational and protective
- There are still the same expectations in class and around school
- Recording / mapping patterns / differentiated levels of liaison with home
- Prevention – on-going intervention and close work by us all as skilled professionals
- Collaborative: children, parents and staff need to talk
- It's a slow process / a long game

Q: Where did this section on behaviour come from? [Why?]

A: Concerns in parent questionnaire / changes to current policy.

Q: Are there any KPIs to measure/compare levels of behaviour across all schools?

A: It's based on professional judgement and an element of monitoring evidence – so no useful index for comparison.

Q: How is behaviour managed – through experience or training?

A: Both. There is a lot of training for Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs). STEPS training is one of these, currently being used in Foxton School.

Q: Is there a clear trigger point at which parents are notified? A: This depends on individual circumstances, but usually moving a child to another class is a trigger point for this.

Q: Is the new way of dealing with behaviour planned to be extended to all classes/throughout the school? A: Yes, we're already doing it, apart from some paper-work that needs updating, it's an on-going process.

Q: How are we managing with 2 TAs down at the moment? Is that having an impact?

A: Up and down, of course, but all staff are covering for each other, all staff know all the children really well and that's very positive.

Comment from the floor: Some children are fine at school, but anxious at home.

Response: PSHE is taught across school and lots of conversations are had about anxiety / worries. Children are encouraged to talk but don't always want to. If your child is troubled at home, please talk to the class teacher.

Q: Parents discipline their children very differently, so it would be good to have info about the STEPS programme. Is that possible? A: Yes, we will add the link to the website.

Q: Could you give an example of a behaviour issue where the parent would be informed, including the consequences?

A: If a child needs first aid because another child has hurt them, then we would make every attempt to contact both children's parents – we would not, though, talk about the 'other' child. All inappropriate behaviours are dealt with but not always in view of others.

Q: How about when a child experiences unacceptable behaviour by another child but doesn't observe the consequence – they think the other child has 'got away with it'?

A: The children should know that there were some consequences even if they don't know what they were.



Finance

- Income
- Expenditure
- Forecast
- Solutions



Income

- Cambridgeshire formula:
Lump sum £110,000 for any school + £2700 per pupil **basic income**
If full (119 pupils) basic income (£2700 x 119) pupils would be £321,300
- Currently our basic income £2700 x 100 pupils =£270,000
- Numbers at the Census in October affect the budget in April

- Additional Funds:
Pupil Premium, Sports Fund, Capita Fund
- Individual Education Health Care Plan can attract additional funds to contribute to the total costs of meeting the specific needs of the pupil

Q: How does PAN (Published Admission Number) work at Foxton?

A: 17 children per year max, but also depends on class size (max is 32 for mixed-age classes but 30 for KS1). There are certain circumstances where these criteria don't apply (Looked After Child/Parent Appeal/ Education Health Care Plan).



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Premises
- Administration
- Catering
- Cleaning
- Services – Local Authority
- Teaching resources
- Computing

Over time the organisation of the local authorities across the country now mean that schools are required to meet the costs of running the school (not just teaching and learning). The above are examples of these costs.



Forecast

Finance Committee with the Local Authority monitor effective use of funds

Carry Forward (CF) (*in year surplus*)

- Careful spending has maintained a CF for some years
- 2018-19 – CF reduced
- 2019-20 spend is predicted to be more than income
- Leading to a predicted and growing deficit

Q: What is the deficit?

A: It looked as though it was predicted to be £70,000 for April 2020, but it is constantly changing and reviewed every few weeks. Recent measures have considerably reduced the prediction of that time.

Q: If the LA won't let schools have a deficit, how can we agree a budget in future, when this is inevitable and we've used up our Carry Forward?

A: This is an important point. We might be forced to be an Academy. There is a possibility of a formal alliance with our Cluster Schools (see later slide), so we are in a better position to negotiate/collaborate etc. This is already going on with Heads/Chairs of Governors but links may become even closer, and we may even form our own Academy, with our own control within the Cluster.

Comment from the floor: Could we set up a body of people (parents and friends) with expertise in local community finance to work on other solutions.

Response: YES please!



Solutions: Increase Income

- Breakfast club
- Marketing to increase number of children
- Parental Contributions

These are examples of our current considerations – there are other avenues which we are exploring. Ideas welcome please!

Solutions: Decrease spending



Decisions already made:

- Keep 4 classes
- Alter Teaching Assistant (TA) hours
- Use Pupil Premium funding – to contribute more to TA salaries
- Breakfast Club enhanced to attract income
- Links to local schools to make savings
- Staff absence covered in-house
- Class 4 Mondays and reduction to costs of leadership

Q: So on a Monday, the teaching staff is not changing, just juggling the timetable?

A: Yes. From September Mr A has not been in class and Mrs Smith has been the teacher in Class 4 for the morning and in the afternoon the Art/DT provision has moved from Thursday to Monday. From October Mr A will take a Leadership role on Mondays,. It's not cast in stone, we will take it term by term and the arrangement allows for it to be reversed.

Q: Will Mr A's Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time be affected by the new timetable?

A: No, this will still be 10% of contact time as before. In future it will be used for English, Maths and Science. SATS club will continue.

Q: Will Mr A's skill and support for children's SATS be able to continue?

A: Yes (see above).

Q: Is the search for additional funding complete?

A: No – it's an on-going process. Hard to identify what we can 'sell' – mainly space/expertise.

Q: Have Class 4 parents been told about the new timetable? And when does it start?

A: Yes, Mr A told parents at the 'meet the teacher' meeting earlier in September. His timetable is on the website and Class 4 children have been operating the timetable since the beginning of term. We offered this meeting as an opportunity for the wider school to meet face to face and communicate these changes.

Q: Have we identified all the pupils for whom Pupil Premium funding is available?

A: Most, but hard to do fully. May become easier in future, when it will be possible to use NI number to identify low income families.

Comment from the floor: Suggestion that there is more publicity to parents about the Breakfast Club and potential for wrap-around care.

Response: Yes, this is very new and publicity will come soon.



Cluster schools

- Barrington
- Bassingbourn
- Fowlmere
- Foxton
- Guilden Morden
- Harston and Newton
- Hauxton
- Melbourn
- Meldreth
- Petersfield (Orwell)
- Steeple Morden
- Thriplow

We work with these schools for training, collaboration and to bid for services in order to save money as a group.



Long term considerations for possible future saving opportunities

- Pupil Premium (£1200 per pupil) - encourage more parents to apply for funds
- Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) - consider changes to existing provision e.g.
 - Spanish
 - Expert PE
 - HLTAs (Higher Level Teaching Assistants)
 - Reduced timetable
- YMCA
- Breakfast Club and wrap-around care
- Parental contributions to enable wider school experiences

Expert PE: We use some of the sports fund to pay for PE professional development when an expert works alongside the class teacher (different classes each term) to develop skills in teaching and assessment in this subject. We pay for an additional teacher to cover PE each week when teachers have some of their PPA. Both these routes also support competitions.

YMCA is currently used as our counselling service for individual pupils. We also make good use of their more general training to assist with group interventions.

Breakfast club (7:30am – 8:45am) is currently subsidised by some of the sports fund but is not yet meeting the costs (15 children per day are needed). We are working with Fowlmere to provide after school care until 6pm to start after Christmas if enough people express an interest – email coming soon.

Friends of Foxtton School – Chloe Watkis



AGM: Tuesday 5 November 8pm in school

- Summary of the income and expenditure for the last year
- Decisions about the year going forward
- Election of the new committee

Q: How much do the Friends contribute to the school?

A: £6 – £8k is raised per year.

Q: What is the role of the Friends in supporting the school finances?

A: The Friends have supported with purchases for laptops, play equipment, coach travel etc. The AGM November on 5 November 8pm will give more details.

Q: Do the Friends have a constitution which specifies the four roles (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary)?

A: Yes, it actually says that these 4 roles are required, plus 4 more members (so 8 in total), but when a new committee is convened, they can draw up a new constitution and call an Emergency General Meeting to vote it in before going forward. The 'Parent Guide' website gives advice on re-writing a PTA constitution.

Q: What is involved in the committee roles? What is the time commitment?

A: It depends on what is decided in terms of key events and it doesn't have to be the same going forward – the Friends could organise simple, low-key events instead. Please talk to a member of the current committee for more details.

Q: Can you job-share roles?

A: Yes, this would depend on a new constitution being in place.

N.B. Several parents volunteered to support the Friends to enable it to continue. Thank you very much to them.

October Dates and Next Steps



- Share a Class 1st October
- Scarecrow Festival 12th October
- Harvest Festival 16th October
- Maths Information Evening 17th October

- Wider consultations

Some parents indicated their interest in supporting the school in a conversation about the development of the new curriculum for Sex and Relationships Education. If interested please contact the school office: office@foxton.cambs.sch.uk



Review of Questions - Emma Holder

Have we answered the specific questions asked?

Thank you for coming – please keep in touch!

Both meetings ended with a vote of thanks to the Governors and Staff for doing a very good job in difficult times and giving up their time to this.