



The Fields Nursery School, Galfrid Road, Cambridge, CB5 8ND

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body
Tuesday 9th February 2021 at 6.30pm

<u>Present:</u>	Mrs Gloria Reed	GR	Chair of Governors
	Mrs Ann Abineri	AA	Local Authority Governor
	Dr Valerie Ashton	VA	Co-opted Governor
	Ms Florence Blagden	FB	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Ruth Holman	RH	Acting Head
	Dr Luisa Pedro	LP	Parent Governor
	Ms Sarah Moynihan	SM	Co-opted Governor
	Mr Simon Sykes	SS	Co-opted Governor
	Ms Carmile Trancoso-Gordon	CTG	Parent Governor
	Rev Dr Roger Williams	RW	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Dawn Willis	DW	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Rebecca Wylie	RWy	Co-opted Governor

In Attendance: Mrs Gwyneth Barton GB Clerk

1. Welcome

GR chaired and welcomed Governors to this virtual meeting of the Governing Body. The meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies

None.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of 14th January 2021

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 14th January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record. All matters arising were covered on the agenda.

5. Acting Head's Report

RH updated Governors on a number of issues:

Heating – Problems with the heating were continuing. The Fields was currently closed, following advice from Health and Safety that it was not safe to open because an adequate temperature could not be maintained. Four people were due to visit the following day and it was hoped to reopen shortly. RH noted that parents had been very understanding about the need to close. Governors



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also noted that the heating for the entire site – The Galfrid and The Fields – was due to be replaced in June and July with ground source heat pumps, meaning that any very expensive solutions to the current problems should be avoided if at all possible. Governors agreed that The Fields should bill the local authority for all costs incurred.

Coronavirus – Four members of staff had tested positive for COVID, two of whom had been very unwell. All were now recovering. In the first episode, two members of staff had tested positive and their bubble had closed. The following week, two more members of staff and two children in the same bubble had tested positive. Two further children had subsequently tested positive and members of the children’s families had also tested positive.

Governors noted Public Health England was providing support. The risk assessment had needed some minor amendments but remained largely unaltered. The two episodes at The Fields were not being formally linked, although it was not possible to prove that there was no connection.

Governors also noted that the bubble’s room had been deep-cleaned and ‘fogged’ with an anti-viral disinfectant treatment. Willow also received a mini-fog every Friday. The cleaning company’s charges remained unaltered, as this additional work was being offset against the need no longer to clean the vacated Cherry rooms.

The week beginning 15th February 2021 would be half-term. The plan was to start the following week to bring more staff and children back to The Fields. This was subject to the Government announcement expected on 22nd February 2021, which could see all schools reopening more fully from 8th March 2021.

Governors noted that all staff attending The Fields were now able to take part in lateral flow testing twice weekly. However, Jon Lewis’s efforts to arrange vaccinations for teachers and teaching assistants in Cambridgeshire had not been successful. Cambridgeshire would now be following the priorities set out in the national vaccination programme. It was not yet known when education staff would be vaccinated.

Finance – Ray Byford of the local authority’s Education Finance team was helping RH and Sam Warren to prepare the 2021/22 budget. This would be shared with Governors shortly. Funding was being based on children on the roll in September 2020 and January 2021, not only those actually in attendance. RH was optimistic that a balanced budget could be achieved.

Cherry rooms – Discussions were taking place with Hazel Belchamber and the local authority’s SEND service about possible SEND use of the vacated Cherry rooms. This could be for early years children with SEND, some of whom might be deferring for a year before starting primary school, in some cases to assess whether they should start at a mainstream or a special school. Governors noted that use of the Cherry rooms for this purpose would mean a financial contribution to The Fields, helping to strengthen the financial position.



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6. Chair's Report

GR reported on the following issues:

Cherry rooms – GR added to RH's update on the Cherry rooms, commenting that the SEND proposal was greatly preferable to the alternative apparently previously considered by the local authority, to use the vacated rooms for the storage of bulky objects. GR reported that Chris Willis Pickup, co-Chair of the Cambridge Nursery Federation, was also fully supportive of the SEND proposal.

Federation – Work was progressing towards the federation of The Fields with the Cambridge Nursery Federation on 1st April 2021. Governors noted that:

- Chris Willis Pickup and the Cambridge Nursery Federation remained committed to federation, accepting that it might take 2-3 years for The Fields to reach a fully sustainable financial position.
- A working party meeting had taken place on 1st February 2021, with local authority attendance including Emma Dean, Rob Lewis and Jo Germain. Jo Germain had a budget for early years and was offering to fund a feasibility study of the nursery as a whole, taking into account the SEND proposal and what physical changes might be needed to implement this. Governors welcomed this positive news.
- Governor Services had been asked to prepare the Instrument of Government for the Federation's new Governing Body. Fields Governors had already been asked if they would like to serve on the new Governing Body. Governors on the existing Federation Governing Body were being asked the same. GR and Chris Willis Pickup would discuss the responses shortly. It was possible that voting on appointments would not be needed. GR confirmed that all three nurseries would be equally represented on the new Governing Body.
- Amanda Bannister had asked to become Executive Head of the new Federation in September 2021. RH confirmed that she was willing to continue as Acting Head from 1st April 2021 to September 2021, working closely with Amanda on the transition and the arrangements for the new Federation. Governors thanked RH and confirmed that she should continue to receive the honorarium previously agreed until September 2021. Governors also noted that RH would continue to be based at The Fields from September 2021, but that the details of her role in the new Federation would be finalised during the summer term.
- The formal staff consultation on federation had started on 4th February 2021, with meetings taking place that day with union representatives and staff. Both meetings had been constructive. Governors noted that the changes for staff would be limited, given that the restructuring had already been implemented. There could be some opportunities, for example to work on different sites, but these would all be voluntary.
- The next federation working party meeting would take place on 1st March 2021. GR would e-mail an update to Governors after this. An additional Governing Body meeting would be called if necessary.



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Appeal hearing – Following the disciplinary hearing in December, an appeal hearing had taken place on 20th January 2021. The appeal had been partially upheld. The member of staff would receive a first written warning and redundancy would be implemented. Staff at The Fields, EPM and the local authority would work together to review processes and identify any learning points for the future. GR thanked all Governors who had participated in the process for their time and contributions.

7. Committee Reports

The minutes of the Safeguarding meeting held on 19th January 2021 were received. Governors welcomed Emma Vardy's attendance as an additional Safeguarding lead. The next meeting had been arranged for 9th March 2021.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Dates of Future Governing Body Meetings

It was noted that the next Governing Body meeting would take place on Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.