

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD
OF THE FEDERATION OF HEAVERS FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL AND SELSDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
HELD ON TUESDAY 16TH MARCH 2021 AT 6.15PM VIA ZOOM**

Present

Nina Ballo	Staff Governor
Moses Bukenya	Partnership Governor
Graham Cluer	Partnership Governor, Chair
Nigel Collins	Co-opted Governor
Tanya Dennis	LA Appointed Governor
Susan Papas	Executive Head teacher (Present until item 12)
Jo Read	Associate Member
Johnny Tang	Co-opted Governor
Hilary Smith	Associate Member
Alan Tigg	Co-opted Governor
Rebecca Tomasiewicz	Parent Governor
Robert Ward	Co-opted Governor

Also In Attendance

Robert Askey (HoS, Heavers Farm)	Observer
Liz Parry	Governance Manager

Absent

Everton Stuart	Co-opted Governor
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1.	<p><u>Welcome & Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies for absence had been received from Everton Stuart due to a family commitment which were accepted by the Governing Board.</p>
2.	<p><u>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests in the Current agenda</u></p> <p>No potential conflicts of interest were declared.</p>
3.	<p><u>Quorum</u></p> <p>It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p>
4.	<p><u>Update on Membership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Staff Governor election (to be a Co-opted governor on the Board) • Update on Parent Governor election, Selston <p>There had not been an opportunity to pursue the elections due to the lockdown and recent return to school. The EHT confirmed that the elections would go ahead as soon as practicable.</p>

ACTION: Update on new appointees to be reported as soon as elections have been concluded.

5. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 10th December 2021: Checking of accuracy and signing by the Chair

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate account. The Chair would sign a copy for the school file as soon as it was permissible to come into school again.

6. Matters arising from the previous meeting not included on the current agenda

Racist behaviour from a small minority of parents: At the previous meeting there had been discussion about a concerns around this issue following the resignation of a teacher. The EHT said that there has not been the opportunity to address any strategies to prevent this happening in the future. It was agreed that all issues of equality and racism should be kept on the agenda and brought back for discussion.

Films of both schools: In light of the pandemic the Federation had commissioned the making of films about each school featuring children and staff talking about the values, ethos and experience of the schools. Both are available on each school's website:

<https://heaversfarm.com/virtual-open-day/>

<https://selsdonprimary.com/virtual-open-day/>

School Development Plan: There will be an update and discussion on priorities at the next meeting of the Quality of Education Committee.

7. Update on how the return to full re-opening of both schools has been going, and wellbeing of the children and staff.

Susan said that the full return to both schools had been going well from the point of view of children settling down well and being happy and comfortable in school.

Attendance for the first week at Heavers Farm had been 94.1% and attendance at Selsdon had been 97.9%. The national average during the pandemic has been 89%. At Heavers Farm there a number of children not attending as it is believed their families have moved away, and this is being followed up to ensure that the children are not missing in education and can then be taken off the school roll.

Currently at Heavers Farm there was one member of staff off with Long Covid, four members of staff were shielding and one member of staff was on long term sick leave.

At Selsdon two members of staff were shielding and nine were off with long term sickness.

Q: How is morale among staff generally?

A: Susan reported that staff are happy to be back in school and working with the children in person, albeit with some continued levels of anxiety about the risks of Covid.

Q: Have there been any problems at the gate bearing in mind there have been some issues previously?

A: There were three difficult episodes at Selsdon the previous week. A parent was banned because of

behaviour. A child reported being followed by a man with a knife and the school has been concerned about the police response to this. A parent had a mental health episode in the playground and required medical attention.

During discussion governors acknowledged that incidents of the kind described were very stressful for everyone involved and stress levels were already compounded because of the pandemic.

Q: There is increasing awareness that mental health problems among children and adults are likely to be magnified and increased because of the pressures of lockdown and multiple stresses of the pandemic. Is there any indication about the impact on any of our children/families as yet?

A: A lot of work has been done in school to track the known vulnerable children and families and keep a close eye on their welfare, so there are no immediate issues. They may take longer to emerge. Many children are happy to be back in the school environment and if they have a dysfunctional or difficult home life it can be a relief to be with peers in school.

Nina commented that she was aware that the children in her class have settled back into school very well. Overall there was a sense that re-integration had been quicker and calmer than after the first lockdown as children were now familiar with expectations.

Q: Did the schools make regular phone contact with families throughout the period of lockdown?

A: During the first lockdown there was a policy of ringing families regularly. During the second lockdown the Federation provided a very high level of online teaching, with 4 Zoom lessons a day. This meant that teachers were seeing children every day and were able to gauge the children's level of interaction and wellbeing, and if there were any concerns these were followed up.

The Chair commented that he was very aware that the level of the online teaching provided by the Federation was far superior to the majority of schools and governors were very grateful for the level of provision given to the children in both schools during the lockdown period, recognising the extraordinary level of hard work of staff.

8. Committee Items:

8.1 Resources Committee: Meeting held on 8th March 2021

➤ **Ratification of Fire Safety Policy, Fire Safety Strategy and updated Fire Risk Action Plans.**

The Governing Board formally ratified the reviewed policies with thanks for the work done on them.

It was noted that Alan Tigg was making efforts to meet with Scott Greenwood to talk through in detail the work and planning against the Fire Safety Strategy. Alan will be reporting back at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

ACTION: Alan to set up a Zoom or Microsoft Teams meeting with Scott as soon as possible.

➤ **Audit report, Selsdon**

The Governing Board noted the successful outcome following the recent audit with only a very few action points arising. The school had responded to all these items but was awaiting confirmation of the Governors Financial Skills audit.

- **Requirement for all governors to complete the SFVS Financial skills audit** Jonny confirmed that he was still awaiting a number of responses from governors. Johnny said that he will be re-circulating the Audit and governors committed to returning the audit with their completed evaluation as soon as possible.

ACTION: Johnny to re-circulate the Finance skills audit with a request that all governors return the completed audit as a matter of urgency.

- **To note recent premises issues at both schools as recorded in the minutes**

The issues were noted. Susan highlighted that the replacement of 300 light fittings at Heavers Farm had begun yesterday, funded by Croydon. The Fire doors are due to be replaced over Easter. With regard to works at Selsdon relating to the Fire Safety Audit which Croydon had previously agreed to fund, there was currently a lack of clarity over the state of play, and this is one of the issues which Alan will be following up on in a meeting with Scott.

- **To note review of Benchmarking reports and encouragement for all governors to look at benchmarking metrics <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/>**

Johnny urged all governors to look at the above government link and choose a metric which they are interested in to compare Selsdon and Heavers with other like schools. Johnny said that he would co-ordinate a strategy for undertaking and recording the results of this.

ACTION: Johnny to liaise with governors to provide a strategy for comparing a chosen metric against other like schools. Report at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

- **Current financial position and formal ratification of Q3 for both schools**

It was noted that at the end of Q3 Heavers Farm was on track for recovery of a sizeable part of its deficit having also lost £180,000 in income due to the effects of the pandemic. Selsdon was on track to recover well from the deficit, with a projected carry forward of £10,000 at year end.

A query was raised as to why Selsdon relatively had not been hit as badly with loss of income as Heavers Farm. Johnny said that he would be happy to explore this issue in more detail and report back at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

ACTION: Johnny to liaise with Susan and investigate possible reasons as to why Selsdon has not suffered such a severe loss of income. Update at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

The Governing Board formally ratified Q3 for both schools.

8.2 Carried over from Resources Committee meeting held on 8th October 2020

Plans for automatic receipt of an increment on pay to be ratified by the full Governing Board at the next meeting. It was noted that there had been an oversight at the last meeting of the Governing Board when this item should have been on the agenda for formal ratification, following discussion at the previous meeting of the Resources Committee. **The Governing Board formally ratified the increment on pay with unanimous agreement.**

8.3	<p><u>Quality of Education Committee: Meeting held on 2nd March 2021</u></p> <p>The Governing Board noted the discussions which had taken place at the meeting of Quality of Education Committee as recorded in the minutes of that meeting. Susan said there were no further updates at the current time.</p>
9.	<p><u>Staffing Structure: review and ratify current staffing structure</u></p> <p>Governors were in receipt of the Staffing Structure for review, noting that this has not been formally reviewed during the last year and is an audit requirement. It was noted that governors have a responsibility to ensure that the organisation of the school's staffing structure best meets the needs of each school within the framework of the budget provision.</p> <p>Q: How can we benchmark our structure against other schools?</p> <p>A: The government's benchmarking site detailed under item 8.1 will allow comparisons with other like schools on such areas as expenditure on SLT.</p> <p>The Governing Board noted that there were no changes and formally approved the structure.</p>
10.	<p><u>Determined Admission Arrangements 2022/23 for Selsdon Primary: review and ratify</u></p> <p>It was noted that Selsdon has the responsibility for setting its own admission arrangements. The Federation has always followed the same model used in Croydon's schools but modified the language so it is clear that it is the school and not Croydon which is the admission authority. The school has its own application form for an in-year primary school place under the medical criteria, again based on the Croydon model.</p> <p>The Governing Board formally approved the Admissions Arrangements for 2022/23 noting that admission arrangements are published on the school's website.</p>
11.	<p><u>Staff Survey: update on rollout and collation of results: What do they tell us and what action needs to be taken?</u></p> <p>Governors were in receipt of the collated results of the recent Staff Survey. There had been 74 respondents across the two schools, with a higher percentage at Heavers Farm. It was recognised that the survey was carried out during the pandemic and lockdown, inevitably a time when people were under a lot of stress and isolation at home, and that the survey was not an in depth forensic analysis nor did it represent views from all staff. It was agreed that there were a number of potential issues arising which it would be helpful to explore with a view to better understanding the concerns and perceptions and identifying ways of working towards any possible improvements.</p> <p>To this end it was agreed that there will be a working party of governors who will meet with the senior leadership team to look at the issues and try and identify ways in which governors can better help to support and enable the leadership team to address those areas which emerged as of potential concern within the survey results.</p> <p>The following governors were appointed as members of the Working Party: Nigel , Rebecca, Tanya and Moses.</p> <p>ACTION: Working Party and Susan to liaise and arrange a suitable time to have an initial meeting .</p>

12.	<p><u>Headteacher's Report</u></p> <p>Governors noted the large number of very positive comments and messages the schools had received in recent weeks and months and were grateful that these were shared at the start of the Headteacher's Report. This was reflective of the effort and work of staff above and beyond during the last year, and the concern for the children at all times. Governors commented that it was very positive to hear how well so many parents felt supported during the periods of lockdown, and the clarity of information provided by the schools was recognised for having helped to reduce anxiety.</p> <p>Staff Absence: The reporting of the number of cases of staff absence was noted and the application of staff sickness procedures. This represented a lot of hard work in ensuring that the procedures are followed appropriately and in a timely manner.</p> <p>Exclusions: Q: With regard to the permanent exclusion last term has there been any specific feedback on the child's progress in the new setting? A: Not recently. We do try and follow up where possible.</p> <p>Governors noted the full reporting on efforts to address complaints and the work on attendance, particularly with the support provided to address issues of persistent absence.</p>
13.	<p><u>Safeguarding:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of checking of the Single Central Registers this term • Any other Safeguarding updates <p>It has not been possible for external governor checking of the SCRs due to the lockdown and non admittance of adults in to the schools at the current time. Graham confirmed that he would undertake checks as soon as it is permitted for governors to come into school.</p> <p>There were no other safeguarding updates to report.</p>
14.	<p><u>Chair's Items/correspondence</u></p> <p>The Chair raised an issue as to whether there could be any scope within the complaints procedure to fast track responses in situations which are time limited /time sensitive. This would need to be an exception clause.</p> <p>In general there was a recognition that it was important to have different stages of the complaint process to enable resolution within school, and to allow time to pass so that the initial emotion from a situation dissipates.</p>
15.	<p><u>Governors' Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on training attended since the last meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nina reported that she had attended training on an Introduction to finance ➤ Robert W reported that he had attended training on recognising when children have been having severe difficulties and how to respond appropriately. ➤ Graham reported that he had attended this term's Chair's Briefing with the Director

16.	Confidential Items None
17.	Dates of Next Meetings: See below

The Chair ended the meeting with a tremendous vote of thanks to everyone in the Federation for all they have been doing. Governors recognised that this last year has been an extremely difficult and stressful period like no other, and this has impacted everyone. The Governing Board is committed to working together with the schools.

Governing Board Schedule of Meetings

Spring Term 2021	
Thursday 29th April 6.15pm	Budget Ratification Governing Board
Summer Term 2021	
Tues 18th May 6.15pm	Quality of Education Committee
Tues 22nd June 6.15pm	Resources Committee
Tuesday 13th July 6.15pm	Full Governing Board

Signed.....Chair of Governing Board

Date.....