



Irresistible Learning

Kindness - Respect - Ambition

MINUTES [AGREED 12.12.2024]

Board: **Middle Street – FGB 1**

Trust: Middle Street Governing Body, Brighton

Date: **THURSDAY 17th October 2024**

Time: Start time: **9.30 am** End Time: **11.50 pm**

Venue: At the school

Governing Body Membership

Anna Racher [AR]	Co-Chair of Governors / Parent Governor
Sally Coleman-Lewis [SCL]	Co-Chair of Governors / Parent Governor
Rob Cooper [RC]	Headteacher
Vanessa McGeachin [VM]	Co-Opted Governor
Ray Williams [RW]	Co-Opted Governor
Mark Juba [MJ]	Vice-Chair of Governors / Co-Opted Governor
Rhiannon Maslin-Scott [RMS]	LA Governor
Mary-Anne Smart [MS]	Staff Governor

In attendance:

Lynn Hill [LH]

Vardean School [Finance Support Team Lead]

Governance Professional [Clerk]: **Donal McCarthy** [Judicium Education]

1: Welcome

The Co-Chair [SCL] welcomed all to the FGB 1 of the 2024/25 academic year. Rhiannon Maslin-Scott [LA Governor], Mary-Anne Smart [Staff Governor], and Lynn Hill [Vardean – Finance Support Lead] were welcomed and introductions were made.

2: Standing Items

- 2.1 Apologies for Absence: **Dominic Smart** [DHT].
- 2.2 Declarations of Interest: **no new declarations noted.**
- 2.3 Confirmation of Quorum: 50% of Governing Body – **Quorate**
- 2.4 Keeping Children Safe in Education [KCSiE] 2024 – confirmation – Governors were reminded to have confirmed, on GH, that they have read and understood.
- 2.5 Safeguarding Training 2024/25 for Governors – all Governors confirmed that they had or had plans in place to complete their annual Safeguarding Training for 2024/25.
- 2.6 **AOB** – one item noted – Maximum class sizes.

2.5 Minutes of the FGB 6 – 4th July 2024

The minutes of the last FGB Meeting (FGB 6) on **4th July 2024** were **AGREED**, as an accurate record.

Action Log from Middle Street FGB meeting held on: **4th July 2024**

Agenda Item	Action	Actionee	Date
4	A report to be included, within the HT Report, of parental complaints received during the 2023/24 academic year at the FGB 1 in Autumn 2024.	RC	CLOSED
4	An update report on the 'Mitigating for Success Project' is to be given at FGB1.	RC / DS	CLOSED On Agenda
5.2	EDI is to be discussed at every monitoring group meeting and reported back through the SIP.	Monitoring Groups	Ongoing
7.1	5-year Premises Plan to be prepared, with the Varndean support team, ASAP.	VM / Varndean Team	OPEN
7.1	The Budget Monitoring Group to consider the proposals about the future uses for 'the flat' at their next BMG meeting. No meeting held since the last FGB.	BMG	OPEN
7.2	A written report [prepared by BMG and finance team] on budget monitoring will be prepared for each FGB meeting, having been considered by the BMG before the FGB. The Chair of the BMG is to write the report.	BMG / FGB	CLOSED On Agenda
7.2	One written report is to be prepared, annually, outlining how the future budget is prepared and set. The Chair of the BMG is to write the report.	BMG / Finance Team	Annually at FGB 5/6
8.2	The final Structures and Rhythms document and Terms of Reference are to be uploaded to the FGB 6 folder by OS. The templates for Governor Reports are to include EEDI/EDI.	OS	CLOSED On Agenda
8.3	No decision is to be made by the FGB on the LA Federation proposal at this time and OS is to communicate this to the LA and continue dialogue.	FGM / OS	CLOSED Update on Agenda

Matters Arising: **None noted.**

3 Governance Updates

3.1: Election of Co-Chairs of Middle Street FGB.

The election of Sally Coleman-Lewes and Anna Racher as Co-Chairs of MSS FGB was **confirmed** until FGB 1 in 25/26.

3.2: Confirm the position of Vice-Chair of Middle Street FGB.

The election of Mark Juba as Vice-Chair of MSS FGB was **confirmed** until FGB 1 24/25.

3.3: **Update on Staff Governor role at Middle Street FGB.**

It was noted that Rob Shepherd had resigned as a Parent Governor [and notified in writing] and that Oli Sharpe has now left the FGB.

As a result, there was now a vacancy for a new Parent Governor and one more Co-Opted Governor.

ACTION: Headteacher to action a Parent Governor Election, to be completed by FGB 2 and the elected Parent Governor to have been onboarded and to attend the FGB 2.

Discussion took place on how the Co-Opted Governor role might be filled and the hope to attract a new Governor with financial experience was expressed. It was agreed that all options be explored – through word-of-mouth referrals, social media, local community groups, and governing body vacancy sites.

3.4: **Discussion and confirmation of key Governor Link Roles for 2024/2025**

The following key Governor Link roles were confirmed:

- Safeguarding Lead – **Anna Racher**
- Curriculum Lead – **Mark Juba**
- SEND Lead – **Sally Coleman-Lewis**
- Inclusion & Equality Lead – **Rhiannon Maslin-Scott**
- Children's Wellbeing – **Mary-Anne Smart**
- Staff Wellbeing Lead – **Vanessa McGeachin** [with MJ supporting]
- Stakeholder & Wider Community Engagement Lead - **TBC**

4 4.1: **Headteacher Report / DSL Report**

RC presented his Headteacher/DSL report, which had been pre-loaded and was assumed to have been pre-read.

School Profile data.

No on the roll – 195. Maximum capacity – 210 pupils.
Mobility between FGB 6 and FGB 1 was noted.

Attendance:

Whole School	92.9% (increasing) to 11/10/2024
Persistent absences:	24.7% (decreasing)

All group data was noted.

- Staff changes were noted and explained – the school is fully staffed for September.
- The Safeguarding data was noted. There have been no exclusions or suspensions.
- Parental Complaints were recorded, for 2023/24, in the Complaints Tracker – there were 2 complaints in 2023/24 and one lodged for 24/25.
- The LA appoints the School Partnership Adviser [SPA].

4.2: **SEF 2023/24**

The SEF 2023/24 [SIP paper 4.2] had been uploaded, was noted, and had been RAG-rated. This was validated through the Ofsted Report in 2023/24.

4.3: School Improvement Plan 2024/25

Priorities were discussed for 2024/25, and RC confirmed the following priorities:

- Focus 1 – Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in School [PINS project]
- Focus 2 – Assessment – post Ofsted action.

The SIP for 2024/25 was noted and **AGREED**.

ACTION: The detailed School Improvement Plan 2024/25 is to be considered, as a priority item, in FGB 2.

ACTION: Governors are to be involved in the 'upskilling of school staff' objective.

4.4: Update on 'Mitigating for Success' Project

This item was deferred to FGB 2.

5 Education

5.1: Sports Premium report & evaluation 2023/2024

VM gave a verbal update. The grant for the Sports Premium is £16k + £10 per child registered at the school. A survey has been carried out with the external sports lead and explored both expenditure items and the impact of actions and staff views – no replies received yet. Pupil Voice (and EDI focus) are to be sought. VM has observed lessons. There is a very proactive sports team at MSS. The agreement is to be sought on the Sports Premium report when Dominic Smart returns.

6 Safety and Wellbeing

6.1: Attendance Report [uploaded to GH]

RW gave a brief update. The key focus update on attendance will take place in FGB 3. The changes, from the DfE in August, were noted and were now incorporated in the updated Attendance Policy. The PINs Project links to attendance.

7 Finances & Resources

7.1 Finance Report from Lynn Hill [Varndean School]

This item was discussed first, and Lynn Hill was in attendance.

The new Budget Out-Turn and Finance Report were presented [uploaded] and it was recognised that it was in a very clear format. LH noted the following:

- The LA does not use virement lines in their reporting and the budget out-turn statements are based on the 'real-time' budget procedures.
- Cost centres are to be revised for FGB 2 reporting – to create consistency of reporting.

ACTION: Cost Centre titling will be revised for FGB 2 to create greater consistency and understanding.

- The agreed licensed deficit with LA is £157,060. The projected deficit is now likely to be £232,180 (reasons known and being corrected). The FGB intends to be in surplus within 5 years.
- LA scrutiny has taken place to understand and agree on the school's plans to address the deficit over the next 5 years.

- Pupil numbers and the school organisation are key priorities to managing the deficit position.

MJ commented that the FGB has been very diligent and proactive in addressing the deficit position over the past 5 years yet, year-on-year, the deficit seems to increase. He asked what further could be done to address this issue. LH said she was still understanding the issues at MSS, but the agreed budget is in place and needs to be adhered to, to satisfy LA concerns. She stated the key financial risks for MSS:

1. An ongoing deficit figure of £232k
2. High levels of unpaid debt.
3. Pay increase (unfunded) pressures for both Teachers and Support staff.
4. Uncertainty around pupil numbers.

Better systems and processes need to be and are now in place and the very positive support from the Varndean Finance Support Team [VFST] was recognised. The report from LH offers a strong basis for the MSS Budget Monitoring Group.

The following structure of reporting from VFST to the FGB was agreed:

- FGB 1 – Written Report
- FGB 2 – Verbal Report
- FGB 3 – Written Report
- FGB 4 – Verbal Report
- FGB 5 – Written Report
- FGB 6 – Overview (written) of the 2024/25 financial year.

The following was **noted**:

- In 2024/25, and before March 2025, no more expenditure, outside the agreed school budget, take place, except in exceptional and agreed circumstances.
- The school FGB is now fully aware of the financial issues that have accrued over time.
- FGB has been addressing issues from 23/24 – with VFTS support.
- The FGB takes very seriously that an agreed/clear plan needs to be followed with no further significant expenditure without LA approval.
- The Middle Street Fund is for unrestricted funding.
- The following sums of £51.01 and £15.00 (debts) – were agreed.

ACTION: Headteacher to undertake Finance Monitoring Training.

Q: Could MSS FGB do more with income generation?

- A: It was agreed that all options – grants, increased letting income and other possible income streams be explored. Also, parents are to be advised of the advantages, to the parents and school, if they use specific payment options. The Middle Street Fund is for unrestricted funding and the Friends of Middle Street School have a separate account.

7.2: Census Data Discussion

On Census Day (6th October 2024) the pupil numbers at Middle Street School were confirmed to be 195.

LH was thanked for her very clear finance report and attendance at this meeting.

8 Strategic Leadership / Governance

8.1: Approval of the final version of Structures & Rhythms Documents.

A lengthy discussion took place on the present iteration of the Rhythms and Structures document, agreed in July 2024. Several key actions were discussed and agreed:

- With finance monitoring the following will be followed:
 - FGB 1 – Finance Report to 31.8
 - FGB 2 – Budget Setting focus
 - FGB 3 – Finance report
 - FGB 4 – Budget 2025/26
 - FGB 5 – Finance Report
 - FGB 6 – Budget Review

- Updated Terms of Reference for all groups are required.
ACTION: SCL to liaise with OS and update the Rhythms and Structures Document and publish to FGB.

- Reviews of school policies to be considered when the lead Governor is visiting.
ACTION: RC to prepare a list of which policies fall within each Governor Monitoring Groups.

8.2: FGB Strategic Priorities for 2024/2025.

Following the discussion and a request from SCL, the following priorities were identified:

- Stability & Recruitment of Governors
- FGB visibility in school.
- Future Options considerations.
- Develop better communication protocols and share with FGB.
ACTION: RC is to prepare a communications protocol and include it within his HT Report in FGB 2.

8.3: Community Engagement

Building upon the Ofsted Report and the SEF Review in July 24 the following question was asked" How might further community engagement be achieved within the local area/Brighton?

Discussion took place on what actions can be achieved including leaflet drops within The local area (impacted positively with Reception intake in 24/25, inviting key visitors (e.g. Authors), links with the Arts in Brighton and Brighton & Hove Albion and local businesses into the school. It was agreed to explore all options.

ACTION: AR to start a 'mapping exercise' that explores potential ways to share wider community engagement with the aim of sustainable development – What? / Who? and, When? To be considered at FGB 2 and within all FGB meetings.

8.4: Update on LA Proposal for Brighton & Hove Federation of Schools

OS has sent a reply letter to the LA. The LA is listening to the responses it has received. A brief discussion on the potential for the future – Hubs, Single Academy Status, and being part of a Multi-Academy Trust. The following action was agreed:

ACTION: A meeting of the FGB is to be convened, outside the normal FGB cycle of meetings, to discuss and consider future options for MSS – virtually with invited Heads from the local area and wider to share their thoughts.

9 Polices to Approve / Consent Items

The following policies/consent items were **agreed** upon:

- ❖ Charging & Remissions Policy - **AGREED**
- ❖ Data Protection Policy - **AGREED**
- ❖ Register of Pupil's Admission to School and Attendance - **AGREED**
- ❖ School Information published on the website - **AGREED**
- ❖ Single Central Records of Recruitment & Vetting Checks - **AGREED**
- ❖ Accessibility Plan - **AGREED**
- ❖ Early Years Foundation Stage Policy - **AGREED**
- ❖ Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions - **AGREED**
- ❖ Behaviour in School Policy - **AGREED**
- ❖ Premise Management Documents - **AGREED**

10 AOB

- ❖ Maximum Class Size – It was **agreed** that there should be a cap of 30 pupils in each year group, notwithstanding the impact of the Fair Access Protocol [FAP]. Health & safety issues, arising from admitting a new pupil may be a concern and the school challenges every request from the LA to accept a pupil through the FAP.
- ❖ Staffing – It was **agreed** to fund (rolling approval) an additional TA in Year 1 at a cost of £4,293 until December 2024, due to the increase in pupil additional need. The BMG is to monitor this position.
- ❖ In response to a question it was **noted** that the 'Playground Project' tender took place in July 2024 and it is expected that this innovative project will commence during the 2024/25 academic year.

11: Date of next FGB [FGB 1] Meeting: **Thursday 12th December 2024 at 9.30 am**

The meeting ended at: 11.50 am.

Minutes End



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Action Log from FGB 1 – 17th October 2024

Agenda Item	Action	Actionee	Date
7.1	Cost Centre titling will be revised for FGB 2 to create greater consistency and understanding.	LH	By FGB 2
7.1	Headteacher to undertake Finance Monitoring Training.	RC	ASAP
3.3	Headteacher to action a Parent Governor Election, to be completed by FGB 2 and the elected Parent Governor to have been onboarded and to attend the FGB 2.	RC	By FGB 2
4.3	The detailed School Improvement Plan 2024/25 is to be considered, as a priority item, in FGB 2.	RC	FGB 2
4.3	Governors are to be involved in the 'upskilling of school staff' objective.	FGB	Ongoing
4.4	'Mitigating for Success Project' to be on FGB 2 Agenda.	RC / Clerk	FGB 2 Agenda
8.1	SCL to liaise with OS and update the Rhythms and Structures Document and publish it to FGB.	SCL / OS	ASAP
8.1	RC to prepare a list of which policies fall within each Governor Monitoring Group.	RC	ASAP
8.2	RC to prepare a communications protocol and include it within his HT Report in FGB 2.	RC	HT report in FGB 2
8.3	AR to start a 'mapping exercise' that explores potential ways to share wider community engagement with the aim of sustainable development – What? /Who? and, When? To be considered at FGB 2 and within all FGB meetings.	AR	FGB 2 & other FGB mtgs

8.4	A meeting of the FGB is to be convened, outside the normal FGB cycle of meetings, to discuss and consider future options for MSS – virtually with invited Heads from the local area and wider to share their thoughts and experiences.	AR / SCL / RC	ASAP