



Huntington Community Primary School
Aldford Road, Huntington, Chester, CH3 6E

The Governing Body of Huntington Community Primary School

**Minutes of a Full Governing Body Meeting held on
 Wednesday 15th March 2023 at 17.30pm.**

Members of the Governing Body

| Name | Category of Governor | End date | Designated Role | Present |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Mr Duncan Rose | Headteacher | | Headteacher | ✓ |
| Mr David Whitehead | Co-opted | 26.11.2023 | | ✓ |
| Ms Louise Gibson | Co-opted | 14.10.2024 | | ✓ |
| Mrs Nicola Harrison Smith | Co-opted (Staff) | 15.03.2026 | | ✓ |
| Mr Andy Wentel | Parent | 15.04.2023 | | ✓ |
| Mrs Caroline Willis | Parent | 15.04.2023 | | ✓ |
| Mrs Claire Callaghan | Parent | 08.06.2025 | | ✓ |
| Mrs Holly James | Parent | 08.06.2025 | | ✓ |
| | | | | |
| Vacancy | Staff | | | |
| Vacancy | LA | | | |
| Vacancy | Co-opted | | | |
| Vacancy | Parent | | | |
| In attendance | | | | |
| Sonja High | | | School Business Manager | |
| Mrs Lisa Nicholson | | | Deputy Headteacher | ✓ |
| Stephen Ewell | | | Clerk | ✓ |

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received in advance of the meeting. All Governors were present.

RESOLVED:

- That the meeting was deemed quorate.



2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED: that there were no additional declarations of pecuniary interest for this meeting.

3. GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The discussions on Governing Board membership were deferred until later in the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The part one minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th December 22 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Part One minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 22 were confirmed to be a true record.

The minutes would be signed in Governor Hub.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

Governors reviewed the previous actions as follows:

| Item | Action | Who | Timescale |
|---------|---|-----------|------------------|
| Item 21 | Governors to meet and agree a parent survey form to be distributed. | Governors | Completed. #1 |

#1 The results of the Parent/Carer Survey March 23 were discussed later in the meeting.

6. UPDATES FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following Committee meetings had taken place during the Spring Term.

- Finance & Personnel Committee 8th February 2023
- Curriculum Committee 1st March 2023
- Premises, Health & Safety Committee 1st March 2023

The minutes from the committee meetings had been circulated in advance of the meeting.



Caroline Willis stated that a proposal from the Curriculum Committee regarding *Thank a Teacher Day* would be detailed in the Part 2 minutes.

RESOLVED: that the update and minutes from the Finance and Personnel Committee, Curriculum Committee and Premises and Health & Safety Committee be received.

7. FINANCE

SFVS

The SFVS was completed and reviewed at the recent Finance & Personnel Committee. The MIFP and Scheme of Delegation will be considered at the Summer Term meeting.

RESOLVED: Governors approved the SFVS submission. The Chair will sign the SFVS on behalf of the FGB.

March 2023 Finance Update

The SBM had produced the latest Finance update which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The SBM updated Governors with the highlights from the report.

The Nursery will be full from Jan 2023, with a waiting list of 40 children, which indicates that the Reception intake in 2024 should be stronger than the last few years. However, a meeting was held recently with CWAC to discuss the latest demographic projections, which indicate a low birth rate in the area for the next few years. The Reception 2023 intake is still low at 41 first choice pupils.

From September to March the school received 30+ new starters, of which nearly half were immigrants. This is an issue as they tend to be more expensive to support, and if joining the school after the October census cut off then they will be unfunded for their first year at school.

Governors reviewed the latest budget and Three-Year Plan as detailed below.

| | Actual 2021-22 | Forecast 2022-23 | Forecast 2023-24 | Forecast 2024-25 |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (A) Balance Brought Forward (previous E) | -76,216 | -34,093 | -70,170 | -108,876 |
| (B) Projected Income (From F) | 2,070,092 | 2,094,265 | 2,122,595 | 2,153,197 |
| (C) Projected Expenditure (from D) | 2,027,969 | 2,130,342 | 2,161,301 | 2,197,822 |
| (D) In year surplus/-deficit (B-C) | 42,123 | -36,077 | -38,706 | -44,625 |
| (E) Projected Carry Forward (A+D) | -34,093 | -70,170 | -108,876 | -153,501 |



The forecast situation remains challenging with a carry forward deficit of £154k at the end of 24/25. Governors reviewed the key factors contributing to the deficit including:

- reduction in children qualifying for Pupil Premium.
- the drop in Reception intake numbers.
- the higher level of SEN children in school.
- staff pay increases.
- increases in energy costs.

A comparison of costs benchmarked against other schools was presented. It was noted that in terms of teaching staff Huntington was in line with other schools, and that Total Teaching and support Staff costs were below the average for comparator schools. There were no costs identified where Huntington was materially in excess of the average for comparator schools.

Governors were presented with seven different options to consider.

There is no help forthcoming from the DfE, and further staff cost increases are currently being negotiated. In addition, CWAC have already stated that there will be no further funding available. All options include in-house cleaning from 24/25 when the current contract ends. This will generate a saving of £10k per annum.

Governors discussed the options in detail. The key variable to consider was remaining at two form entry or moving to mixed form entry either for a two year period or permanently.

Q. *If have mixed form entry for two years will this then flow through the school?*

A. *No, the mixed form year groups in KS1 would revert to single age year groups when entering KS2.*

If the school retains two form entry, and the Reception intake is only at 45 then the carry forward deficit would grow to £387k by 26/27. The SBM stated that the most realistic current option was Reception at 51 and with mixed form entry for two years, the deficit would still grow to £135k by 26/27.

DW noted that it was helpful to think of the deficit as a bank account overdraft, and the school needs to reduce this overdraft position.

Governors continued the discussion, and the following observations were made.

- The bottom three options were all basically the same option but varying the assumption on Reception intake.
- Governors needed to be cautious of making dramatic cost savings in terms of how this would be viewed in a future Ofsted Inspection.



- The Benchmarking exercise had evidenced that there were no areas where the school was significantly overspending compared to other schools.
- If moving to mixed form entry the school will need to communicate this to parents, and some children may leave as a result of this change.
- The school will need to communicate that it is due to the low birth rate in the area.
- The Headteacher stated that mixed form entry is not uncommon in local schools.
- Governors would welcome the opportunity to discuss the financial projections with CWAC and highlight the drivers behind the position.

Q. *Would the school consider a consultation meeting with parents?*

A. *Yes, parents will be interested to understand how it will work in practice.*

Q. *Is the deal to move cleaning in house a done deal?*

A. *Yes, the cleaning will move in house from 24/25.*

Following the discussion, the Headteacher proposed that the school move to mixed form entry for two years in KS1, with a further review to take place in January 24.

Governors approved the proposal, and it was noted that some Governors did so with an element of reluctance.

RESOLVED: Governors approved the decision for the school to move to mixed form entry for two years in KS1, with a further review to take place in January 24.

RESOLVED: Governors received the March 2023 Finance Update.

Local Living Wage.

Governors were informed that CWAC had increased the Local Living Wage to £10.90. This will affect all employees on SCP 1, 2, and 3 which is Admin and Midday staff, 8 in total. The total cost to the school of implementing the Local Living Wage is approximately £250 per annum. The Headteacher was proposing that the school implement the increased Local Living Wage.

RESOLVED: Governors approved the proposal to implement the increase in Local Living Wage.

Governors thanked Sonja High for all her hard work in preparing the budget projections.

Sonja High left the meeting at 18:15pm.

The approval of the MIFP would be tabled on the summer term FGB Agenda.

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Full Governing Board meeting 15th March 2023



8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher's Spring Term Report had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. The report was shared on screen. The Headteacher took Governors through the report and highlighted the following areas:

- The number on roll has increased by 7 pupils since the last report, with 8 arrivals and 1 departure. This academic year the school has gained 33 new pupils, mostly in KS2 and almost half of whom are immigrants to the UK.
- Face to face parent/teacher meetings took place in mid-February, and class email and our digital education platforms (Tapestry and Google Classroom) continue to be used for communication and homework.
- The Headteacher made contact with the local Co-op in February to liaise regarding Fair Trade fortnight, leading to an assembly in school by Co-op staff, and both store and school committed to further work together.
- A major outage of the server centre hosting School Spider data resulted in several days of the website being offline.
- The PTA has commenced activity again, and a very enjoyable PTA Fayre took place before Christmas.
- In English, a Reading Spine is being implemented across the school to improve the quality of the reading stock available to take home, following extensive research by Mrs Nicholson and Mrs Devlin, and book purchases using PTA and school funds.
- A major initiative launched last week is the adoption of *My Happy Mind*, a programme backed by the NHS and designed for schools to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of children. The programme is being funded by CWAC during the first year at a cost of £4,000, and the school will need to review this next year and ascertain whether the school will need to pay. A decision can then be taken on the effectiveness of the programme.
- Sports – The Year 6 netball team, coached by Miss Avery, reached the final of the Chester area tournament at Blacon High, and at the recent Chester Cross Country event, the school squad finished 3rd overall out of 16 participating schools, with individual 3rd place medals for Harriet Buckley (Y5/6 Girls) and Matthew Chadwick (Y5/6 Boys).



Dave Whitehead informed Governors that MBNA had extended their funding scheme for a further three years, and it was noted that funding would be useful for the EY Outdoor Area or a Daily Mile Track at the school.

Q. *Will a bid be submitted?*

A. *Yes, Dave Whitehead or his wife will submit a bid on behalf of the school.*

Q. *The School Bulletin indicated that health and safety funding is available could this be accessed?*

A. *Yes, the requirement is for a spend of £10k. The Headteacher had spoken to Jackson Fire regarding installing lighting at the front of the school where it is very dark, but this would not be as much as £10k. As yet the school has not identified any other opportunities where the funding will be in excess of £10k.*

Attendance 2022/23

Attendance at the school has improved since last year with overall absence at 5.1% against the national average of 6.2%, and persistent absence at 13% against the national average of 18.2%. The school is targeting certain identified pupils to encourage them into school.

Parent/Carer Survey

The Parent/Carer Survey had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The following responses had been highlighted for further discussion due to a higher negative response:

- The school communicates effectively with parents.
- When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly.
- My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Governors discussed the Survey.

Q. *Do other schools offer more extracurricular activities?*

A. *All the school clubs are free of charge, and we feel the school does offer a lot of clubs. It is possible that other schools are insisting that their staff provide the After School Clubs but at Huntington we do not do that as we consider work life balance and staff well-being to be more important. This could be one way to increase the number of After*



School Clubs or otherwise the school would have to pay for providers to run the clubs and this would have an impact on the school budget.

Q. *Are there caps on the numbers attending the clubs?*

A. *There are for some of the clubs. Musical Theatre in particular is a very popular club.*

The Headteacher added that there are less clubs available in KS1, which may have contributed to some of the negative responses, and also the Art Bus has now gone away which was beyond the school's control. The school is always looking for more opportunities to put on After School Clubs.

Governors discussed and noted that the responses may well be down to parent perception, and it would be useful to do some research and highlight how many clubs take place and the fact that at other schools there is a charge for the After School Clubs.

Q. *How would parents feel if there were more clubs, but they had to pay for them?*

A. *Not sure - possibly the school needs to undertake the benchmarking exercise. It is possible that some parents are primarily looking for free after school childcare.*

The Headteacher stated that in terms of the comments regarding communication, the school has recognised that it is possible there is too much communication and also too many channels of communication (especially during the switchover to School Spider, with Teachers2Parents also maintained for a while). The school would look to simplify this.

In summary, the school will review the communication channels and identify ways to simplify communication and make it more effective. It is worth noting that the school did receive 196 replies to the Survey, which is a good response, and there was lots of positive feedback.

In terms of Bullying the Headteacher highlighted that 78% of parents had responded that their child had not been bullied. Of the 22% who had responded yes, almost 2/3rds stated that the issue had been dealt with effectively by the school. This results in only eight parents out of 196 who were dissatisfied with the situation. As the responses were anonymous the school cannot identify what the issue was or what evidence was available for the school to deal with the issue.

The Headteacher added that the school will continue to focus on any issues, and confirm the correct communication channels for reporting incidents.

Q. *What Committee will bullying incidents fall under?*

A. *The Health & Safety Committee.*



The Chair added that a review of Bullying will be tabled on the next Health & Safety Committee Agenda and asked that Governors e-mail their thoughts in advance of the meeting. Governors noted that they were not overly concerned with the responses in this area.

Governors noted that it was very important that Governors now formulate a response to the Survey, and agreed on compiling a one-page infographic which would provide a very visual response to parents. It was also important that the response was seen as a joint response from both the school and Governors, and that there had been no concerns raised by Governors regarding the school. Dave Whitehead said he would compile an initial draft of the infographic.

ACTION: Produce a one-page infographic to the Parent Survey which would provide a very visual response to parents.

Q. In the raw data can we see individual comments?

A. Yes, this can be circulated with the staff names anonymised.

Q. How often does the school undertake the Survey?

A. It is usually done every two years.

RESOLVED: Governors received the Headteacher's Report and Parent/Carer Survey response.

9. SCHOOL STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP)

The Headteacher updated Governors that all the Action Plans were on Governor Hub for review, and that the Action Plans will be updated at the end of this term and then re-circulated. Governors noted that they would need to ensure they referenced the most up to date SIP Action Plan when preparing for their Link Governor meetings.

10. POLICIES FOR REVIEW

The following policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

- Protection of Biometric Information Policy

RESOLVED: Governors approved the Protection of Biometric Information Policy.



11. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

No Link Governor Reports had been circulated since the previous meeting.

The Chair suggested would it be possible to set aside 30 minutes at the end of a staff meeting where Governors would go through the SSIP with the appropriate Subject Lead Teacher. The Headteacher replied that the challenge would be that some teachers are on more than one action plan, and some of the teachers are part time.

Governors discussed the matter further and it was resolved that the Headteacher would raise the proposal at the next staff meeting and canvas the teachers for their view.

Q. How long should the SSIP review take?

A. For one subject it should take about a half hour to review an Action Plan for progress.

Q. Do all staff know who their Link Governor is?

A. Yes, it is detailed on the Action Plan and is also listed in a separate document.

12. SCHOOLS BULLETIN

The latest Schools Bulletin had been circulated to Governors and discussed in the recent Committee Meetings.

Governors noted the following item:

- Standardised school year public consultation. The outcome may be that the school has more control over when to set inset days.

RESOLVED: Governors received the School Bulletin update.

13. COMMUNICATIONS TO CHAIR OF GOVERNORS/CHAIRS ACTIONS

The Chair informed Governors that she had supported the Headteacher in the interviews for the SBM position.

14. DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Governors discussed the current revised meeting start times of 17:00pm and following a discussion Governors agreed that a start time of 17:30pm would be a more suitable solution.



The upcoming meeting schedule is as follows.

Summer Term 2023

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Finance Committee | Wednesday 10th May 2023 |
| Curriculum Committee | Wednesday 24th May 2023 |
| Premises, H&S Committee | Wednesday 14th June 2023 |
| Full Governing Body | Wednesday 28th June 2023 |

15. INSET DAYS

The Headteacher stated that Inset days tend to be more productive when they are scheduled at the start of term, rather than the end of term. There also tends to be a class handover at the end of term. It is also important to have no more than two Inset days consecutively.

The following Inset days for the next Academic Year were proposed as follows.

- September 4/5 2023.
- January 2 2024
- April 15 2024
- June 3 2024

RESOLVED: Governors approved the proposed Inset Days for 23/24.

16. AOB

There were no further non-confidential matters for Governors to consider.

Lisa Nicholson left the meeting at 19:13pm.

Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Huntington Community Primary School

PART ONE ACTION LIST

| Item | Action | Who | Timescale |
|---------------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| 15 MAR 23 Item 8 | Produce a one-page infographic to the Parent Survey which would provide a very visual response to parents. | Governors | |