**TORKINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES**

**SPRING TERM 2025**

Date: 12th March 2025

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: School

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr A Buckler (Headteacher), Mr H Burkitt, Mr A Hirst (Chair), Mr C McFarlane, Ms K Meagher, Ms H Merrick, Miss R Stuart, Mrs A Thompson (Office Manager), Mr C Waugh, Mrs R Weeden.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs D Erten Governor Support Officer (GSO)

Mrs K Fortune Associate Member

The meeting started at 6.31pm

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| 1. | WELCOME AND APOLOGIES |
|  | Governors were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. The meeting achieved quorum with 9/10 governors in attendance.  Mrs D Erten, GSO, and Mrs K Meagher, new Parent Governor, were warmly welcomed and personal introductions were made. There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that Mr H Burkitt would arrive late. |
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| 2. | DECLARATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) |
|  | The Chair invited governors to declare any items for discussion under AOB. No items were declared. |
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| 3. | DECLARATION OF INTERESTS |
| a) | Declaration of Business Interests |
|  | Governors were asked to declare any business, financial or personal interests in any agenda items; the following interests were declared:  Mr A Buckler’s wife is a member of the Music service.  Mrs K Fortune’s husband is a Director at Totally Local Company (TLC).  Mrs R Weeden is employed by Stockport Local Authority (LA). |
| b) | Business Interest Forms |
|  | The Office Manager highlighted that new declarations were needed from governors as only a couple had been received. **ACTION 1** |
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|  | **CORE OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURING CLARITY OF VISION, ETHOS & STRATEGIC DIRECTION** |
| 4. | CORE BUSINESS |
| a) | Previous Governing Board Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising |
|  | It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2025, copies circulated previously, be approved and signed by the Chair and authorised for publication.  Mr H Burkitt in attendance at 6.34pm  *Correction* - Mrs A Thompson is not the School Business Manager but is the Office Manager in school.  The actions from the autumn term minutes were reviewed as follows: |

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| **MINUTE POINT** | **ACTION REQUIRED** | **ACTION FOR** | **UPDATE** |
| 4b | Governors to complete the circulated business interest form and return to the business manager. | FGB | In hand |
| 4c | Mr H Burkitt to carry out his DBS. | Mr H Burkitt and SBM | **ACTION 2** |
| 5d | Link roles to be agreed. | FGB/HT | On the agenda |
| 5e | Policy schedule to be developed and shared with the board | SBM | The schedule was almost complete and would be circulated in due course. Some policies would be allocated to the Resources and Teaching and Learning committees for review. |
| 5f | Personalised policies to be sent to the GSO for governor review prior to the Spring term FGB | SBM/HT | Completed and on GovernorHub |
| 5h | Skills audit to be completed, reviewed and training plan developed for the board | Chair/Development Governor | The Chair had located a skills audit on the National Governors Association (NGA). The intention was to have a group session. Governors were asked to search for the group audit on Learning Link on the NGA. Mrs A Thompson had a copy governors could complete. It was highlighted that only four governors including the Headteacher and Chair were receiving the weekly emails from the NGA. The Chair undertook to take this up with Mrs S Robinson, GSO. **ACTION 3** |
| 8a | Agree the board development plan | Chair/HT | Ongoing |
| 11a | Teaching and Learning meeting to be planned for the Spring term | Chair of T&L/Chair of FGB | **ACTION 4** |

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| b) | Approval of Pay Policy Minutes |
|  | It was noted that the Extraordinary Full Governing Board meeting had approved the Pay policy.  The minutes were approved. |
| c) | Approval of School Policies: |
|  | Governors considered and APPROVED the following policies which had been circulated prior to the meeting:  It was noted that most of the policies were based on Stockport LA’s model policies*.* ***A governor highlighted that some policies appeared to be from 2016-17 and queried whether the refences to the statutory regulations were old.*** Governors were advised that all of the policies were current and had been updated by Stockport LA.  It was noted that the policy schedule was to be updated; the Chair undertook to liaise with Mrs A Thompson regarding this. **ACTION 5**  Asbestos Management – No comments  Governor Allowances Policy – ***In relation to childcare, babysitting allowances and the cost of care arrangements, there is no capped amount. Do we want a maximum cap? Is a benchmarking exercise needed in terms of the number of hours?*** The school had just adopted the new policies. The Chair advised that the mileage was based on Stockport’s rate. ***The policy also states that the Governing Board should be made aware of potential costs before any reimbursable costs are incurred. Could this say the Governing Board must be made aware of the agreement for the governor to spend the money which presumably the school would reimburse?*** The list was not exhaustive. Any claim would be approved on a case by case basis. It was agreed that the policy would remain unchanged.  Governor Visits Policy ***– In relation to effective management from governors, there should be something regarding the courtesy to staff that the visit is announced ahead of time. The policy does not state that governors would notify staff they would be visiting. How does this happen in school?*** Visits were in the diary and staff would know at least a week before. The Chair stated that governors should not turn up ad hoc and that every visit should be agreed in advance. ***It says that any questions are prepared and planned?*** Mrs A Thompson undertook to check the wording. **ACTION 6**  A governor read from the policy and highlighted that there was an agreed governor visit schedule. The Headteacher said that visits needed to be purposeful and developmental.  Attendance – No comments  Charges and Remissions – ***The policy states that the Governing Board reviews levels of fees relating to the Before and After School care. Did we?*** We did. ***A governor queried whether the school had materials, ingredients or resources contributions for Nursery and Reception parents.*** Mrs A Thompson confirmed that the school had these but undertook to check the policy.  **ACTION 7**  Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) – ***A governor advised that the links for Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and multi-agency practice guidelines for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) needed updating.*** Mrs A Thompson undertook to inform Mrs R Weeden. **ACTION 8**  Whistleblowing – It was noted that the external Auditor was now Forbis Mazars LLP.  Shared Parental Leave – No comments.  Pay policy and procedure – No comments.  ER policy and Procedure – No comments  Dignity at Work – No comments  Young Carers – ***Who is the School Lead?*** The Headteacher. ***Do we need to delete lunchtime and after school detentions?*** Mrs A Thompson undertook to remove this. **ACTION 9** |
| d) | Approval of updated LA policies |
|  | There were not any LA policies to be reviewed. |
| e) | Pay Committee Recommendations |
|  | The Chair confirmed that pay recommendations had been received from the Headteacher and considered by the committee. |
| f) | Agreement of the Draft 2025-26 Budget |
|  | Mrs A Thompson reported that a Finance meeting had taken place on 5 March 2025 and had considered budget planning. The meeting had looked at the close down of the existing budget and the potential carry over of around £34k to next year. The school would be able to set a balanced budget with a surplus of around £7k but had eaten into this already this week. The budget would be balanced but was very tight and the following years showed a deficit budget going forward.  The draft budget 2025-26 was AGREED by the Governing Board. |
| g) | Delegation of Draft 2025-26 Budget |
|  | Governors AGREED to the delegation of the draft budget to the Resources committee for further scrutiny and approval prior to submission to the Local Authority by 31 May 2025.  Mrs A Thompson reported that the school had not yet received some Service Level Agreements (SLAs). |
| h) | Note term LA term dates 2025/26 |
|  | The term dates were on the school website. |
| i) | Approval of INSET days 2025/26 |
|  | The INSET days had not yet been discussed. |
| 5. | BOARD/STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT |
| a) | Governing Board Development Plan (Skills Audit, Induction, Training, Succession Plans) |
|  | The Chair noted that this item had been covered earlier in the meeting. Governors would undertake the skills audit individually and these would be compiled.  ***Could we examine the consolidated template at the next FGB meeting?*** Mrs A Thompson offered to compile this. Governors could complete the paper audit or complete this on the NGA website at [www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk) Governors were made aware that emails from the NGA may appear in their junk mail.  The Chair highlighted that the school received two copies of the NGA Governing Matters magazine; this was offered to governors. The Chair had not been receiving this online and undertook to raise this with the GSO. **ACTION 10**  It was suggested that all governors complete the skills audit online by the end of May for discussion at the summer FGB meeting. Mrs A Thompson undertook to circulate the skills audit to all governors. **ACTION 11** |
| b) | End of Term of Office |
|  | There were no terms due to end this term. |
| c) | Board Vacancies |
|  | 1 LA Governor  1 Co-Opted Governor  ***Are there any thoughts on how we can attract two more governors?*** Adverts could be placed in various publications. The Headteacher suggested that this be discussed in the summer following the skills audit where any gaps had been determined. |
| d) | Governor Link roles |
|  | Governors reviewed and agreed the following link roles:  SEND and Disability Governors – Mrs R Weeden and Ms K Meagher  Literacy Governor – Mrs R Weeden  Pupil Premium Champion – Mr H Burkitt |
| e) | Feedback on Governor Visits |
|  | Mrs R Weeden would visit in April in relation to the SEND review.  Mrs A Thompson and Hannah had undertaken a Phonics walk round in relation to how the scheme would be rolled out in all classrooms. This had been much improved when observed again.  The Chair and Zara had undertaken a H&S walk round on 11 March 2025 and there had not been anything of significance. It was highlighted that advice had been given from a Fire Officer that there could not be anything hanging from the ceiling. |
| 6. | BRIEFING PAPERS FROM STOCKPORT LOCAL AUTHORITY |
|  | Governors noted the following papers:   1. Governance update and governor development 2. Governor Portal – Governors were advised that the LA would cease using GovernorHub so all governors would need to use SLA Online. The GSO advised that training would be offered and that all information would be transferred from GovernorHub by the end of March. 3. School Effectiveness Update 4. Business Continuity – The GSO highlighted the need for a robust Business Continuity plan. Mrs A Thompson stated that the school had a Business Continuity plan. It was noted that names in the policy were previous staff of the LA; this would be updated. ***Is there a timescale for reviewing this?*** This would be done if there was an update advised or at the annual review. The Headteacher stated that this was part of the H&S procedures. 5. Schools Finance 6. DfE Updates for schools |
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|  | **CORE OBJECTIVE 2: HOLDING THE HEADTEACHER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS PUPILS** |
| 7. | HEADTEACHER’S TERMLY REPORT AND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN |
|  | The Headteacher’s report had been circulated to the governors prior to the meeting and questions were invited.  Thoughts were invited on the new format of the report. ***A governor commented that there were a lot of numbers and asked what these meant.*** The Headteacher explained that this was an Artificial Intelligence (AI) produced document at this stage. All text based on the numbers/statements would be personalised. This was a work in progress.  ***It would be useful to compare attendance data and other information with performance. Are we getting actual information regarding what is happening in the school?*** The more detail input the more would come out. Attendance was now average for the first time in 14 years. The school was still getting the same numbers and this was the same families.  ***A governor noted that the school was significantly higher for term time holidays. A governor highlighted that since Covid there had been a lot more children absent from school.*** The Headteacher responded that this year there might be one child that took a family holiday during SATs.  ***What happens then?*** The child would not get a grade and the school would lose 3%. The Headteacher spoke of the concerns regarding families taking holidays during term time. Governors discussed fining for non-attendance and it was noted that parents could be prosecuted for a third offence.  The Headteacher suggested a joint letter from the school and governors to parents regarding the number of term time holidays taken and how this disadvantaged children. The issue was discussed.  ***Can it be added that this affects funding for the school which affects everybody?*** This did, as it affected children when they returned, especially younger children.  ***Do you include the number of unauthorised absences in the newsletter?*** No.  ***Does this have any impact?*** This was not known. The Headteacher did not like including this in the newsletter as this was meant to be a celebration. A governor noted that the school was still nearly 5% above the LA for attendance so was not average.  It was agreed that a joint letter would be sent to parents by the Headteacher and governors. **ACTION 12**  A governor said that it would be interesting to see attendance over the whole year.  ***What would be the impact of non-attendance on the child?*** This would affect them as they went into Year 7.  ***How does the child feel about this? Have you had a conversation with the family?*** Yes, they were not concerned. The Headteacher would fine top offenders and highlight their school career.  ***Is this linked to Parents’ Evening?*** Attendance was included on reports and concerning attendance had been highlighted in red over the last couple of years.  ***Are there any other letters the school issue prior to going down this route?*** The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) was employed for children that fell below a certain percentage.  ***Will the report cover all statutory items on the agenda?*** Yes.  ***With regards to the Quality of Education on page 18, will this be live in-year data?*** Yes, from last week.  ***Does this tell us how you are projecting the children to perform?*** Yes.  ***A governor commented with regards to the qualitative aspect of school life and the three terms and said that the old report had done this very well.*** The Headteacher advised that the pastoral information would still be in the report.  A governor said they liked the flavour of what was happening at the current time in the report. The Headteacher stated that there would be a personal box in each section. AI would be used in Callum’s class in relation to narrative building in the three areas.  A governor referred to the development opportunities and highlighted that the report had not mentioned the Mental Health Ambassador programme the school had started.  ***The Chair asked about the School Development Plan (SDP).*** The Headteacher replied that the One Voice report had still not been received.  ***Will governors be invited?*** The Headteacher undertook to share the report with governors and clarified that the meeting had been held before Christmas. |
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| 8. | TEACHING AND LEARNING |
| a) | Committee Minutes |
|  | The committee had not met this term. |
| b) | Ratification of Policies |
|  | There were no policies requiring ratification. |
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|  | **CORE OBJECTIVE 3: OVERSEEING THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL AND MAKING SURE ITS MONEY IS SPENT WELL** |
| 9. | RESOURCES AND BUDGET |
| a) | Committee Minutes |
|  | There had not been any Resources meetings since the previous FGB meeting. A meeting was needed to consider the up to date financial position. The Chair undertook to organise this. **ACTION 13**  It was highlighted that the school audit had suggested that the Chair of Governors should not also be the Chair of Resources. Governors were invited to consider the role of Resources Chair. Mr H Burkitt expressed that he was happy to support the Chair. |
| b) | Ratification of Policies |
|  | There were no policies requiring ratification. |
| c) | Budget Update |
|  | Provided earlier in the meeting. |
| d) | School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) Update |
|  | Mrs A Thompson had shared the SFVS with Mr C McFarlane and the Chair. The SFVS was explained and it was noted this was to be submitted to the LA by 31 March 2025. Mr C McFarlane agreed to respond to Mrs A Thompson on this on 13 March 2025. It was suggested that Mr H Burkitt consider the skills section; Mr C McFarlane undertook to share this with Mr H Burkitt. **ACTION 14**  The Chair highlighted the Statement of Internal Control, which the Chair and Headteacher undertook to sign. Governors agreed the Statement of Internal Control. Mrs A Thompson agreed to share this on GovernorHub. |
| e) | Report on Pupil Premium (PP), Sports Grant and Covid Catch Up Spending |
|  | It was reported that the school did not have a Tutor Led programme.  Sports Grant – Mrs A Thompson advised that the report was on the website; this was an annual report which was updated throughout the year.  PP – This was an annual report which was collated in December. The report was up to date and was on the website. |
| f) | Local Authority Buybacks |
|  | The Headteacher highlighted that not all buybacks had been received.  ***Is there anything you know at this time?*** The school would no longer buy into Stockport Shapes; this had cost £1,400 last year but was £1,700 this year. It was explained that this allowed the school to take part in competitive sports but that the school had got very little out of this. It was heard that the new sports provider was doing much more with the school than Shapes did. The school was considering formalising assessment in relation to the competition element. A lot of traditional fixtures had started to pull out. A governor stated that money was being spent a lot better through the new sports regime.  Mrs A Thompson highlighted that the cost for HR had increased by £60 per head; there were 30 members of staff in school.  ***Do you have to use them?*** The school did not have to but had always done. The Chair suggested that it would be worth asking academies if they used independent providers. The Headteacher said that HR had been good whenever support was needed. |
| g) | Scheme of Delegation |
|  | Governors considered and duly APPROVED the Scheme of Delegation 2025-26.  It was highlighted that the Headteacher’s expenditure was £5k, the Headteacher and Chair was up to £7.5k and Resources was up to £10k.  The Best Value Statement was explained and agreed. This would be added to GovernorHub. |
| h) | Finance Manual |
|  | Mrs A Thompson stated that this was usually reviewed in the summer term. This had been reviewed last April at the time of the audit. Approval of the Finance Manual was deferred to the next FGB meeting. **ACTION 15**  ***Is there input from the LA on this?*** Auditors looked at this. The Headteacher suggested that this be put to the Resources committee. |
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| 10. | PREMISES AND HEALTH AND SAFETY (H&S) |
|  | The Chair informed that a H&S walk had taken place on 11 March 2025 with nothing of significance.  ***Is the roof okay?*** The Headteacher spoke about a sound system and said the school had been offered three choices; the system could be moved for £700, a new one could be bought for £5k or a new one could be purchased for £35k. The system was to be set and reprogrammed.  The Headteacher advised that the toilets were now leak free.  ***Was there a water leak?*** This had been under the annex and had been resolved. The school had received some funds back for exploration costs but this had not been in relation to fixing the leak. The school would be reimbursed for charges for the water bill.  ***Have H&S ever mentioned the fact that the school does not have secure fencing around the school that is lockable like most other schools have in the Borough?*** No, this had been mentioned in the Safeguarding inspection in 2010. The Headteacher said that he did not want to cage the children in. It was noted that the doors were locked from 9am.  Governors were advised that the H&S audit would take place in the first week back after Easter.  ***Has the car park been filled in?*** All potholes had been fixed.  ***A governor asked about driving on the site.*** Governors were advised that this was ongoing, was generally better but was more an issue at the end of the day. The speed of people going up and down the drive was a concern. Concern was expressed regarding some of the children not being seen if they were running under the Headteacher’s window at After School clubs. Information would be included on DoJo.  Governors were advised that the Council was proposing installing pencils on the pavement outside school but this had been opposed by local residents. There was a plan to extend the back of the lay by with additional signage and extra double yellow lines. The Council would contact Councillors again today.  ***What do the children think about this? Is it worth a letter from the children to the Council to ask for their roads to be made safer?*** Yes.  Governors discussed the various parking issues. |
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| 11. | DATES |
| a) | Full Governing Board |
|  | Wednesday 25th June 2025 |
| b) | Committee Meetings |
|  | To be arranged. |
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| 12. | ANY OTHER BUSINESS |
|  | None |
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|  | With no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 8pm. |

**TORKINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**SPRING TERM 2025 GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES**

**MEETING ACTION POINTS**

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| **ACTION NUMBER** | **MINUTE POINT** | **ACTION REQUIRED** | **ACTION FOR** | **DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED** |
| 1 | 3b | Governors to complete declarations of interest forms. | Governors | Asap |
| 2 | 4a | DBS to be undertaken for Mr H Burkitt. | HB & AT | Asap |
| 3 | 4a | The Chair to check the delivery of NGA emails with the GSO. | AH | Post meeting |
| 4 | 4a | Teaching and Learning meeting to be planned for the Spring term. | Chair of T&L & Chair | Post meeting |
| 5 | 4c | The Chair to liaise with Mrs A Thompson regarding updating the policy schedule. | AH | Post meeting |
| 6 | 4c | Mrs A Thompson to check the wording of the Governor Visits policy. | AT | Post meeting |
| 7 | 4c | Mrs A Thompson to check the Charging and Remissions policy. | AT | Post meeting |
| 8 | 4c | Mrs A Thompson to inform Mrs R Weeden regarding the links and FGB information in the PSHE policy. | AT | Post meeting |
| 9 | 4c | Mrs A Thompson to removethe mention of lunchtime and after school detentions in the Young Carers policy. | AT | Post meeting |
| 10 | 5a | The Chair to raise with the GSO that he had not been receiving the online NGA Governing Matters magazine. | AH | Post meeting |
| 11 | 5a | Mrs A Thompson to circulate the skills audit to all governors. | AT | Post meeting |
| 12 | 7 | A joint letter on attendance to be sent to parents by the Headteacher and governors. | AB & AH | Post meeting |
| 13 | 9a | The Chair to organise a Resources meeting. | AH | Post meeting |
| 14 | 9d | Mr C Waugh to share the SFVS with Mr H Burkitt. | CW | Asap |
| 15 | 9h | Approval of the Finance Manual to take place at the next FGB meeting. | FGB/SR | 25th June 2025 |