



Minutes of a meeting of the full Governing Body held at William Fletcher Primary School on Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Trish Amesbury (TA) (Parent) (Chair)
Vicky Ball (VB) (Parent)
Cathy Bowden (CB) (Parent) (arrived at 7.22 pm)
Karen Chambers (KC) (Staff)
David Hinde (DH) (Parent)
Anna Isles (AI) (LA Governor) (Vice Chair)
Andrew Lister (AL) (Co-opted)
Ed Murray (EM) (Co-opted)
Deborah Nind (DN) (Headteacher)
Charlotte Rayner (CR) (Co-opted)
Matthew Robson (MR) (Co-opted)
Katie Traxton (KT) (Co-opted)
Helen Yaxley (HY) (Co-opted)

In attendance:

Clare Saunders (CS) (Clerk)

Apologies:

Sharone Parnes (SP) (Parent)

The meeting was opened at 7.08 pm by the Chair and was quorate.

1. Welcome

TA welcomed governors to the meeting, introduced David Hinde, who had been elected as Parent Governor earlier this month and thanked him for being willing to serve on the governing body.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received **SP**. These were accepted. **CB** had sent a message that she would be late.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

There were no updates. The Clerk has still not received a form from **SP**. **Action: SP** to complete his form and email it to the Clerk.

4. Urgent Additional Items

None.

5. Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 10 May 2016
Matters Arising:

item 6 (5): Action ongoing – covered at item 3 above.

item 6 (7): Action ongoing. **Action: SP** and **VB** to arrange to meet their Subject Co-ordinators.

item 6 (11): The capital reserve was discussed at the Resources committee meeting – action completed.

item 8: The Clerk has updated the information held by Governor Services and the Parent Governor election was held – action completed.

item 9: On the Agenda at item 7.

item 12: On the Agenda at item 10.

item 15: The Learning Walks have taken place. AI sent the document to governors. Both actions completed.

item 13: A meeting of the Parents and Community committee was held on 28 April – action completed.

item 19: AI is in discussion with the Parish Council about the flashing lights. KT has met with Emma Brown. Both actions completed.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2016 were approved and signed.

6. Chair's Items

Dates for meetings of the full governing body in the academic year 2016-17 were agreed as follows:

- 4 October 2016
- 29 November 2016
- 7 February 2017
- 28 March 2017
- 16 May 2017
- 20 June 2017

All meetings will be held in school and – with the exception of the meeting on 4 October – will begin at 7.00 pm. The meeting on 4 October will begin at 6.30 pm as children from the BLP group will be giving a presentation.

Action: Chairs of sub-committees to email their committee members and set dates for their 2016-17 meetings.

7. Governors' Gold Awards

TA attended a staff meeting to explain the Gold Awards and seek the views of the staff as to the most effective way to run the Awards. By Monday 4 July, each teacher will have nominated two children from their class to receive an Award. Badges and certificates will be given to the recipients of the Awards.

(7.22 pm – **CB** arrived.)

There will be time next year to discuss whether changes need to be made to the decision process for the awards.

8. **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher's written report had been circulated in advance.

Referring to pupil numbers and mobility, a governor asked whether the figure for children leaving the school was in line with the norm. **DN** replied that there did seem to be more movement this year than in previous years and that she would look at the figures for other years and send them to the governors. A governor asked whether **DN** knew the reasons given for leaving the school mid-year; **DN** answered that these were all children who had moved house and left the area. **Action: DN** to let governors have pupil mobility figures for previous years.

There will be 32 children starting Foundation Stage in September – this is a very low figure for the school. **DN** recommended that, if the numbers remain low, the issue should be discussed early in the year and a request be made to the local authority for the school's intake figure to be reduced.

DN told governors that this is the end of the first year of the school assessment system, and the senior leadership team have been reviewing the system. The annual parents' questionnaire this year focussed on the learning cards, and 82% of parents who returned the questionnaire found the learning cards helpful in supporting their child's learning at home. Next year, the senior leadership team will be looking at the learning cards for writing and reviewing whether they adhere to the national curriculum objectives.

Years 2 and 6 have taken the new statutory tests. These have been much more difficult than the previous SATs and media coverage has led to a degree of anxiety among staff and parents. **AL** commented that the school has introduced SPAG tests lower down the school to give the children practice at taking the tests before they reach Year 6. The children could find the tests intimidating if they hadn't been able to practise them. **DN** said that she had found a company which is able to supply sample tests for the younger children.

DN thanked the five Governors who took part in Learning Walks this term for their very interesting and valuable feedback. A governor thanked **DN** for organising the Learning Walks and asked that they be repeated next year.

The Rights Respecting School assessor from Unicef will be in school this week. **DN** told governors that she is hoping that the school will be given Level 1 of the RRS Award, and that she wished to thank Amanda Ford for all her hard work on this initiative.

There will be some staffing changes in the autumn and one of the new teachers, Amy Underhill, came to visit the school today. She will be teaching Years 3 and 4 from September.

Governors were referred to the written report for updates to the School Development Plan.

DN commented that it is to the credit of the school staff that they have remained positive in the face of numerous changes and upheavals this year, and that they are to be congratulated for the way in which they have coped with all the challenges. A governor concurred, saying that the staff have not passed on to the children any anxiety or worry about the changes. **Action: KC** to feed back to the rest of the staff the thanks of the governors for their incredibly hard work, commitment and enthusiasm throughout what has been a very difficult year.

A governor asked **DN** what the school's position is on after-school clubs. **DN** explained that the school currently provides a Breakfast Club but that it cannot currently offer an after-school club because there is insufficient space. It is something which is being considered for the future. Magpies in Kidlington currently provide after-school care and do collect children from the school. They had been looking for a local base but the pre-school had turned them down. The school needs to get its new building in place before it can consider offering after-school care. A governor asked whether the school was legally obliged to offer after-school care and **DN** replied that the school does not have to provide it but can signpost parents to other providers, eg Magpies.

Governors discussed the results of the survey about learning cards, and a governor asked whether they should be concerned that approximately 1 in every 7 parents who answered the survey did not think that they were helpful. **DN** replied that a very high percentage of parents who answered the survey did agree that the cards were useful and that, before the learning cards, it was more difficult for parents to know what their children were learning at school. She told governors that the staff would be using the responses from the survey to review the content of the cards.

Governors discussed the relatively low rate of return of the questionnaires – 44 replies were received although there are 250 children in the school. A governor commented that there are fewer than 250 families as many have more than one child at the school, but **DN** remarked that more than one reply was received from some families, so fewer than 44 families actually replied.

A governor asked how much information to parents goes out via email as it may be more likely to be read than if it comes out on paper and is in the child's book bag. **DN** replied that the office always ask if people would prefer to receive correspondence via email.

A governor commented that it was important for parents to know that they can speak to the teachers at any time if they are worried about their child's progress – they should not wait until Parents' Evening to raise problems. The teaching staff are visible at the beginning and end of each school day, and happy to be approached by parents. The

governors agreed it was important to ensure that parents know they have the opportunity to contact teachers – whether in person, on the phone or by email. **Action:** **AL** to send the learning cards to **KT** and **DH**.

A governor commented that the newsletter goes out via email, and is also put on the website. A governor suggested that there could be a way of incentivising the completion of the questionnaires eg by getting the children to encourage their parents to return them. **DN** told governors that the learning cards are still a work in progress and that they would be reviewed in the light of the questionnaire responses she had received.

9. **School Expansion**

DN referred to her written report which provides the up to date situation with the building works. She informed governors that the whole process has been extremely long and difficult, and that information from Capita/Carillion has not been forthcoming despite repeated requests from both herself and **TA**. Contrary to what was originally planned, traditional building methods are now being used in the construction. **DN** has now received a schedule of works which shows a completion date of 16 December, and she is seeking advice from the local authority as to whether this is actually realistic as she needs to know whether to plan for the work to take longer.

10. **Pre-school Expansion**

The pre-school building has been completed and the school has been given a date of 31 July for handover of the building to them. As this would give an extremely tight schedule for the necessary improvement works to be done to the old building before the school could use it at the start of September, **DN** has been pressing for an earlier handover date. **EM** reported that he had visited the pre-school and learned that they are finishing their term on 14 July, with a party taking place the next day. He had suggested that their move to the new building could take place on 20 July, and that he could find volunteers to help them move if that would expedite the process. The pre-school staff will have packed up all the equipment and toys, but will need help moving tables, boxes etc to the new building. He suggested that, if governors and/or parents from the school could help with the pre-school move, the school would be able to take over the old building earlier, allowing more time for the improvement work to be done.

A governor asked whether the pre-school had confirmed their agreement to this course of action, and **EM** replied that they had sent confirmation by email.

EM commented that he felt there would be significant benefits for the school – particularly Foundation Stage – if a closer working relationship could be forged. The pre-school is run as a charity and the staff are managed by a committee who are volunteers. **EM** told governors that there has been a lot of change within the committee and that he feels the pre-school would benefit from receiving practical support from the school. In other places, the pre-school is often integrated into the school, which seems to work much better.

After discussion, it was agreed that assistance with the pre-school's move would be given. **Action:** **EM** to arrange help for the move. **EM** asked whether governors would agree to approach the pre-school committee to discuss how the pre-school's future

could be secured. A governor commented that she had talked to the pre-school about how other pre-schools are organised and that they are open to suggestions for change. It was agreed that the school does not have the capacity to take any substantial action at this time until the building work is completed but that it would good to have a closer working relationship. **Action: DN** and **TA** to write to the pre-school committee and staff to indicate that the school would be interested in forging closer links with them.

11. **Safeguarding**

DN reported that she had requested a Safeguarding audit because she had been keen to have someone check that the Safeguarding practices at the school are fit for purpose. A member of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Team spent a morning in school and, although the written report has not yet been received, **DN** was told that the strategies are robust. A governor asked whether the school pays for the audit, and **DN** replied that it is free of charge and extremely useful.

DN had also attended a Safeguarding briefing that day at which it was emphasised that the governors needs to have a very clear idea of what the school is doing to safeguard its pupils. There is a list of questions which came out last summer, which the governors can ask the school. There are many Safeguarding issues for any school eg some schools have failed their Ofsted inspections because of inadequate site security. The recommendation is that governors should be able to challenge the school on safeguarding issues and hold the school to account. **Action: the Clerk** to obtain the list of questions and circulate to all governors.

DN told governors that the document “Keeping Children Safe in Education”, which came out last summer, has been reviewed and updated. From September 2016, she has to check that the staff have read the document and that they fully understand it.

12. **Health and Safety**

The external audit took place last week. The assessor was very pleased with the school’s processes and procedures, but the report has not yet been received. **DN** will share it with the Resources Committee when she has it.

13. **Governor Training**

VB asked governors whether they had signed up for the new training system – she has tried to log in but the system has not yet gone live. One improvement on the old system will be that, if a course that a governor wishes to attend is full, an email will be sent when the same course becomes available on a different date.

Action: All governors to sign up for the new system using the link which VB sent.

14. **Resources Committee**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2016 had been circulated in advance.

VB explained that the school should only carry over 8% but that last year the carry-over had been 11%, although this could be justified because of the shortfall created by low numbers in Foundation Stage.

CR had suggested at the meeting that there might be an insurance scheme for the building maintenance which the school could pay into, as 8% did not seem to be sufficient to cover any necessary repairs. Sandra Morris had said that she would look into this possibility.

The issue of cleaners had been discussed – the decision whether to renew the contract with Carillion in December will need to be taken. The committee had acknowledged the difficulty of getting permanent cleaners.

15. Performance and Standards Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2016 had been circulated in advance.

EM commented that this has been a really busy year for the school and that excellent work has been done across all year groups. He had visited the Foundation Stage and observed a superb Phonics session taking place. He reported that there was some really positive work being done in this busy environment. He wished to record his appreciation to the FS team for the way in which they had embraced the challenges and changes this year, and would be writing to thank them.

16. Parents and Community Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2016 had been circulated in advance.

CB will be preparing Terms of Reference for the committee by September. She reported that the committee had looked at the website to see which pages need updating.

She has also spoken to Mrs Brown to discuss ways in which people could be encouraged to walk to school, and Mrs Brown will discuss this with the Eco Committee in September.

CB has also been in contact with Fiona Mawson of the Parish Council about the possibility of a walking bus and needs to establish whether there would be any interest in this.

TA explained the three sub-committees to **DH** and asked that he consider which he would like to join in the autumn. **KT** offered to join the Performance and Standards committee.

17. Any Other Business

TA recorded her thanks to **DN**, the senior leadership team and the rest of the staff – both teaching and support – for their incredibly hard work throughout the year, and to the rest of the governors and the Clerk for their commitment and support.

18. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 4 October 2016 at 6.30 pm.

Items for inclusion on the agenda should be emailed to the Clerk a fortnight before the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm