



Minutes of a meeting of the full Governing Body held at William Fletcher Primary School on Tuesday 16 May 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Vicky Ball (VB) (Co-opted)
Hannah Battye (HB) (Parent)
Ilona Bennett (IB) (Co-opted)
Cathy Bowden (CB) (Parent)
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)
Helen Yaxley (HY) (Co-opted)

In attendance:

Clare Saunders (CS) (Clerk)

Apologies:

Trish Amesbury (TA) (Co-opted) (Chair)
Karen Chambers (KC) (Staff)
Sharone Parnes (SP) (Co-opted)

The meeting was opened at 6.37 pm by the Vice Chair and was quorate.

1. Welcome

AI welcomed everyone and explained that in **TA's** absence she would be chairing the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from **KC**, **SP** and **TA**. The apologies were accepted.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

VB declared that her husband is undertaking maintenance work at the school. There were no other updates.

4. Urgent Additional Items

None.

5. Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 28 March 2017

Matters Arising:

item 5 (2): The election for a new Parent Governor has not yet taken place. **Action:** **DN** and **TA** to arrange the election.

item 5 (9): Safeguarding will be covered late on the Agenda at item 10.

item 12: VB has spoken to **HB** about governors' training needs. Action completed.

item 13: Action: Chairs of committees to ensure that a Declaration of Pecuniary Interests is made on all committee Minutes and that meetings are arranged to allow sufficient time for the Minutes to be sent to the Clerk at least 7 clear days before the next meeting of the full governing body. This needs to be taken into consideration when setting committee meeting dates for the new academic year. Action ongoing.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2017 were approved and signed.

6. Chair's Items

AI reported that the KS2 SATs had been completed last week – **TA** had asked her to formally acknowledge the huge amount of hard work done by staff over the last few months in preparing the children for the SATs. **AI** commented that a lot of support had been given to all the children by the whole staff and she especially recognised **DN** and Caeron Phillips for their work. A governor asked whether the staff could look at the children's SATs papers when they had been done. **DN** replied that the children's papers are not looked at before being sent off. They are marked electronically and the answers can be seen online. Another governor asked how well the children had coped this time; **DN** answered that they had been remarkably calm, and that the staff had tried to keep everything on the level for them as usual. Some of the children had been a little worried but the staff had done their best to make doing the tests fun and to keep the stress away from the children. A governor commented that it must be difficult to maintain the balance between keeping the tests fun and taking them seriously.

DN remarked that the SATs are becoming increasingly more stressful for children and staff, and that it is a very tough time for the Year 6 teacher even though it is a team effort by all the staff. A governor expressed the view that one job of the governing body was to focus on the children's progress and ask whether enough had been done to help the children achieve their full potential; it was certainly clear that an enormous amount of work had been done by the staff in helping the children prepare for the tests. **DN** told governors that a lot of mock test papers had been done in the run-up to the SATs but that it was always necessary to strike a balance between learning and taking tests. She commented that it is still the early days of the transition to the new style of test. A governor said that there was a responsibility to voice dissatisfaction with the whole testing system if that was the view of the governors.

7. Headteacher's Update

DN recorded her thanks to the whole staff team for their work in preparing the children for the SATs. She said that it had not just been Caeron Phillips and herself who had been involved – other teachers had supported the current Year 6.

DN told governors that there had been an excellent staff meeting earlier that day – two advisory teachers working at the Oxfordshire Museums Service had brought in four boxes of artefacts to show staff what could be taught to the children using these and similar resources. She emphasised that the staff are an excellent team who are enthusiastic about children and their learning; the school does so much more than focus on tests – it is a wonderful community for the children with staff who work tirelessly for the school and who want children to be excited and enthused about learning.

KS1 children are sitting tests this week.

DN has received Amanda Ford's resignation. She had originally been appointed when Sarah Buchanan began her maternity leave. Sarah will return at the end of the summer term, working four days a week.

Claire Pink, the Family Support Worker, has been in post for a fortnight and is already making a big difference to the school.

Sarah O'Neill has been on sick leave but is returning on shorter hours over the next four weeks. **DN** commented that it would be really good to have her back.

DN continues to work in partnership with other schools in the area. There are some primary schools which are intending to join academies. At a Headteachers' briefing which **DN** attended earlier that day, it had been very clear that there is less money available to support schools. She noted that no-one from County had come to visit the school this year – other than Marilyn Trigg for the Headteacher's appraisal. At the meeting, it had been said that monitoring visits for schools assessed as "Good" will stop from 2018-19, so it is clear that Headteachers have to find support for themselves from their Headteacher colleagues, and **DN** is pleased that the partnership is gelling.

DN and **TA** had also learned at the briefing for Headteachers and Chairs that the number of social workers has been reduced and that there is less money available to support children in social care. Although schools are still referring children for support, most of the cases do not meet the threshold test. The Locality Support Service has been set up. If children are referred and do not get social workers, the LSS can get involved, hopefully to prevent issues escalating. **DN** expressed her concern that at the moment it is difficult to see which organisations are going to provide early support. A governor asked whether the Locality Support Service is a charity or whether it is run by the local authority, and **DN** replied that it is part of Oxfordshire County Council. Another governor asked whether the new Family Support Worker would be involved in the process of referring children, and **DN** answered that she would, and might provide some of the early support.

The new building is going to be officially opened on Thursday 15 June at 1.45 pm. All governors are very welcome to attend, and other invitations will be sent out to the PTA, local groups etc. On the same day, the Howard Hillsdon Room will also be officially opened.

8. School Development Plan

A copy of the updated SDP had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and **DN** invited questions from governors.

A governor recorded the thanks of the governing body to **DN** for the clarity and comprehensiveness of the document. **DN** highlighted the final page (dealing with academies), and expressed her view that it was time to start discussing the issue. She commented that she had been to a couple of meetings about multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the past but nothing had happened since then, and suggested that a working party of governors be established now – as has already happened at other primary schools – to invite people from MATs to speak to governors and to explore the possibilities. Governors were reminded that, at the November FGB meeting, the membership of the working party had been agreed, and that at that time **TA** was going to send out a date for a meeting in January.

It was agreed that in September **VB** would talk to governors about the academies training she attended, and that people from a range of interested organisations should be invited to meet with governors eg River Learning Trust (the MAT of Cherwell School), the church, the local authority. Governors agreed that, in view of the importance of the issue, all of them should be involved in the discussion and decision-making. **Action: TA** and **DN** to arrange a governors' meeting about academies in September, at which **VB** will be able to share information from the training she attended.

9. Safeguarding

The Locality Support Service had been discussed earlier at item 7.

AI clarified which governors still need to undertake safeguarding training – **HB, DH, SP**. **Action: EM** to print out a copy of his certificate for **DN**. **VB** reminded governors that the OSCB needs the dates of governors' training and that the details have to be put on the school's single central register.

DN and **TA** meet termly to discuss safeguarding issues. **DN** reported that this term's meeting took place last week. They had looked at the register and the folder, which are up to date.

10. Health and Safety

CR will be doing a health and safety walk with **DN** next week.

The annual audit will take place on 12 June.

A governor asked whether the bins had been moved yet, as these could pose a health and safety issue; **DN** replied that they have not and that Abdul has been away but will be back at work next week. She hopes that he will then address the outstanding issues from the building work.

11. Governor Training

VB reported that there are teething problems with the NGA's new online training resource but that it apparently works well with Google Chrome.

IB attended Governor Induction training in April.

12. Headteacher Appraisal Training

CB and **CR** recently attended Headteacher Appraisal training and **CB** asked whether a mid-term review is usually carried out. **DN** replied that it is always done and that a date needs to be arranged for this year's review. **Action: DN** and **TA** to arrange a date for the mid-term review. **DN** also confirmed that the support staff have appraisals with Caeron Phillips.

13. Committee Membership

AI informed governors that the membership of each committee needs to be finalised at the next meeting, so that the new committees take effect from the next academic year. She commented that the new governors had had the chance to try out the different committees and could now make a decision as to their membership of a committee. **Action: all governors** to decide which committee they wish to join so that the membership of each committee can be firmed up at the next meeting of the full governing body.

AI emphasised that each committee must have a Chair and Vice Chair, and reminded governors that Minutes from the committee meetings should be with the Clerk at least 7 days before the next meeting of the full governing body.

14. Resources Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2017 had been circulated in advance.

VB reported that there are still some issues from the new build, for example the roof, which need be resolved with Abdul.

It looks as if the numbers for Foundation Stage in September will be low although there may be a few more added in June. **DN** explained that one possibility open to the school would be to ask for a temporary cap of 30 for September, and then to discuss whether to move to one form entry in future years. Governors were concerned to ensure that places should be available for all children in the village. It was agreed that if the number stays at 30 or below in June, the school will ask for a temporary cap at 30 and review the situation for 2018-19. A governor commented that there is a shortage of nursery places in the area, so it could be that demand for places in a couple of years' time will be higher.

The Resources committee are going to produce a wish list in case the budget increases – this will focus on staffing as detailed in a paper produced by **DN** for the committee.

After school care is going ahead with EnergyKidz. It was agreed that this should be mentioned in the village newsletter so that prospective families are aware of the provision.

15. Performance and Standards Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2017 had been circulated in advance.

EM explained that the committee had looked at the Spring data and he handed out copies to governors. He said that the majority of children are working at the expected

level and that he had been talking to staff about how their progress is tracked through the school. He told governors that the children whose progress has dipped get interventions three times a week.

AL reminded governors that the school had just moved to 3½ classes and with this size there is a danger that the staff do not know every child, but in fact the staff spend a lot of time talking about children's progress and do know each child individually. He also clarified how the school's reading assessment system links to the reading cards which are sent home.

EM commented that the work which the staff put into teaching and supporting the children is a massive strength of the school, although there are inevitably times when it is not reflected by the data.

EM reported that he had spent a morning in the Early Years class, meeting the children, talking to the staff about their planning, and looking at the data. He said that the children came into the school with widely differing experiences and understanding, and that the work done with them by the Early Years staff is hugely impressive as by Christmas most of the children have moved to the expected level. He recommended all governors to spend time in a classroom in order to understand for themselves how the school works.

A governor asked whether the increased use of technology by children is having an adverse effect on reading skills. **DN** answered that there are some apps which can be useful for children learning to read but that the school had seen an increase in the number of children being allowed tablets or smart phones in their room at night. This affects their sleep, which can lead to poor concentration and behaviour in class. It can also affect their ability to focus on one thing at a time.

16. Parents and Community Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2017 had been circulated in advance.

CB reported that she had been involved in organising Walk to School Week. There had been a good turnout that morning, including people who do not usually walk. She recorded her thanks to parents and staff for their support of the initiative.

CB will be writing a piece in half term for the next village newsletter.

17. Any Other Business

There is one more Learning Walk in this academic year – 19 June at 9.00 am. **AI, DH, CR** and **IB** expressed their intention to attend. **TA** will also be attending.

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 20 June 2017 at 6.30 pm

The meeting will begin with a presentation by the anti-bullying ambassadors. Items for inclusion on the agenda should be emailed to the Clerk a fortnight before the meeting. Governors agreed that a start time of 6.30 pm for future meetings would be convenient. **AI** told governors that there would be an informal social gathering at the Turnpike after the next meeting and asked them to let **TA** know whether they could attend.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Signed

Dated

6/6