

**MINUTES OF FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
9TH FEBRUARY 2015
4.30 P.M. AT MAIN BASE**

Present

Claire Marshall (Chair), John Bradshaw (Acting Principal), Mark Harvey, James Brown, Ben Bury, Kristina Murphy, Kacper Saar, Mark Yorke

Non Governors in attendance

Jenny Smith Sue Heath-Gardiner (Clerk)

1 Introduction of new governor

Claire introduced Jenny Smith who completed the website form to join the GB. After having a conversation, Jenny visited the school to discuss potentially joining. Jenny was invited to introduce herself.

Jenny explained that she is a parent of grown-up children, family and friends are Teachers, she has experience as a governor at a secondary school in Redditch, and is a charity solicitor for Anthony Collins, with an interest in SEN; arts and provision for SEN.

2 Apologies/Declarations of Interest; Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

2.1 Apologies - proposed Mark, seconded: Ben. All in approval to accept apologies

Clive Reeves Alison Teague

2.2.1 Non attendance

None.

2.3 Declaration of interest

None to declare.

James Brown explained that if we are talking about staffing – he has an interest to declare as married to a member of staff.

2.4 Minutes of the last meeting/Matters arising

Tim/Tom – should read Tom.

Pg 8: large bullet point, 3 lines down – accept for items that are high impact and high likelihood should come to the GB.

Pg 8: real risks ... This was referring to terrorism in Birmingham City Centre.

Pg 2: Mark H – Finance – didn't discuss the ER contract. John: someone working in the office on SLA's – analysis, contracts etc...

ER: More complicated, next finance meeting – 16 March. Copy to send to the chair of the committee.

Signed: Chair/Vice-chair Date

2.5 Actions

Pg 4, previous minutes: 12 January – additional meeting – notes circulated.

Pg 5, previous minutes: Governor Skills audit – see under development.

Item 6, previous minutes: Mark Harvey asked have we heard any more about Channel 4?

John: Met with director/producer. They would be sensitive with the material used. Not heard anything further.

Mark H: What is the reason for the programme?

Claire: Channel 4 have visited the children's hospital to look at children and illness.

John: This is filmed over a period of time.

Mark Y: They'll fit cameras; interview staff.

John: Are we confident that Teaching in the hospital is good – parents are happy

Mark H: Anxious in case we have any complaints.

Claire: Action – to clarify what is happening.

John: spoken with Hardip and comfortable with what is being shown.

Mark H: Safeguarding is paramount and that the programme doesn't reflect James Brindley in the wrong light.

Kristina: Any re-questioning of taking part since Ofsted?

Claire: They follow the medical staff around, it's not about the school.

Mark Y: They are likely to rarely mention James Brindley.

James: it is more about the hospital than the school.

James: It could be positive for the school.

Action: to email or speak with Hardip asking to be kept up-to-date about the documentary.

Policies update:

Krisitna – emailed the policies that the trust has in place – attending training at the end of this month.

Finance training:

DRB can provide a 2 hour training session around finance – this can be tailor made to our requirements. Cost: £275 for up to 10 Governors.

Oral report due from audit – Wednesday 11 February 2015.

Minutes of the last meeting: 12 January 2015

The notes have been typed up as minutes. The minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed: Mark Harvey, Seconded: Ben Bury. All present in approval.

3 Ofsted Report Update and next steps

Claire: we need to look at what the action plan needs to include. How we move forward with a conversation with staff.

John: Give an overview.

Claire: Leadership and management and governance: written to Pank Patel, Regional commissioner for academies to ask for a meeting, nothing as yet.

John: Robert Scott from the DFE has been in touch about sending an Educational advisor to discuss with us what we are doing and the way forward.

James: is there a timescale?

John explained that he has received a telephone call from Tony Dunn to arrange a DfE visit for after half-term. It is normal to have a visit after 4/5 terms. They will be in school for a day to look at education outcomes. Tony Dunn has also spoken with the EFA.

John: It is suggested that the EFA visit the school at the same time as the DfE – possible date Friday 27 February 2015. No further details on this. They are aware of the situation at James Brindley. They will put together a report.

Claire: We need a strong action plan prior to the visit after half-term.

Mark H: we could find ourselves taken over if we don't put this in place.

Claire: Other trusted people have seen the report including Governor Support – they agree that there's clear guidance on what we need to do to put things right at school.

Mark H: clear indicator of the problem. Now have an opportunity to move forward – if we don't change it, someone else will!

Claire: have received advice from solicitor. Part of DfE visit we believe – will look at what we need to do.

John: The plan Governors have to take needs to have strong measures.

Ben: Staff generally feel that they are not aware of the Ofsted outcome; staff morale is low/flat, because they don't know what is happening; where we stand with Ofsted and Nicky (with her absence); monitoring taking place has increased since Ofsted; don't feel the outcome is positive.

John: Draft key issues for improvement identified in the January 2015 Ofsted inspection. 4 key issues/priorities. These will drive the action plan:

Key Issue/priority 1- Safeguarding: these need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

New guidance document was introduced for Ofsted inspectors dated January 2015.

Key Issue/priority 2 - quality of leadership and management

Key Issue/priority 3 - improve pupils attendance

Key Issue/priority 4 - Improve quality of Teaching and thereby the outcomes for the children.

Looking at collating more information

Need to look at how we timetable English and Maths– block this in a different way in the future; currently using an exam board which doesn't really suit our pupils. Welsh Board – only have 2 x 1 hour exams.

Putting in motion reviews – generate discussion and ideas which may be implemented.

Also looking at staffing around maths.

Ben: staff are picking up on things - there is continuous book monitoring; learning walks; observations - more than normal

I'm hearing that staff are feeling unwell

Trying to re-assure staff that John, Claire and Mark (H) are working for the best outcome.

There is a lot of negativity flowing 'down' – monitoring from a higher level.

John B: At the meeting with the Leadership Team (which includes the 7 sector leaders) John asked for feedback around staff morale.

There is a sense that staff are confused; bemused; they are doing everything they have been asked to do; they are focussed on teaching and learning. Some staff have received positive feedback from Ofsted. The majority of the Teachers want to do their best for the children; they are working hard; following procedures that are in place.

Mark H: We have received a complaint from a parent. Staff have carried out what they were told to do but what they've been following is not sufficient or appropriate.

- Ben: There needs to be some pragmatism. Some staff are saying that we must be in special measures. The longer we leave it to meet with staff the more chance there is of staff morale dipping.
- John: is some of the things being pushed to staff around safeguarding?
- Ben: Four learning walks/book scrutinies in 2 weeks is a lot.
- John: There is a regular programme of monitoring – it sounds as though managers/leaders are trying to find fault, very responsive.
- Ben: Teachers accept monitoring. However, there seems to be more now – over and above the normal monitoring.
- John: We have requested 'live data' of the registers. It was found that we couldn't account for some of the children who were in school, which isn't good enough.
- Mark H: Staff are being inspected/observed in a way that's not helpful. We have asked one question – around live data of the registers. Question raised for me: Is it that Teachers are focusing too hard on achieving outstanding which means that they are focusing on a small part of their role. When staff are down and feel let down – they are not in a good place but we still need to keep children safe. Can't lose sight of that.
- John: Have found that staff don't always take the register as they are busy in briefings or managing children. TA's are not allowed to take the registers.
- Jenny asked: what is a morning briefing that keeps staff from registration?
- JB: Staff get together to share useful information or talk about what is happening during the day. It shouldn't run over. TA's are capable of taking the register – however, they don't have the access. There's also the issue that once the report is out it won't raise morale – we will need to increase monitoring.
- Jenny: If expecting the children to be on time and encouraging them to respect time as Adults we should be setting an example.
- Ben: It may be that a TA is dealing with a student in a separate room and the Teacher is not aware that the student is in – hence he/she is marked absent.
- Mark H: The absence coding is complicated. Need to ensure that the students are accounted for.
- Kristina: The SLT had become very distracted around the value of the school, the ethos of the school and the students of the school, which they ran.
- James: It was believed that the SLT were managing the school effectively and we were given the impression that the school was in a great place. It is the direction we have been led to believe. We need to re-focus.
- Claire: All staff should now be focused in the right direction. Claire explained that she had a session with Iain Johnson to talk about pupil premium and how it is reported to Governors; measuring progress. Have been looking at how it works and how to measure progress and the direction of the school. Staff have attended training days and they still are not aware of the basic principles of measuring the progress of students. Really concerned by the conversation and how far behind the school is with current education thinking around progress and closing the gap.
- Mark H: It is clear that the school is moving forward with a new principal. The Leadership Team – there are still things not being reported to JB if there is an issue/problem.
- John: we will need support and information from staff to help to move us forward. Ofsted look at what the children achieve at the end of KS2 then their achievement in their GCSE's. These are compared against national. We have a baseline assessment when they start James Brindley. Teachers are not receiving the data to compare against however or understand what to do with it. Discussion took place about the importance of aspirational progress/targets.
- Kristina: The school is receiving additional money and we need to ask ourselves so why are the students not achieving?
- Claire: Do the SLT understand what they have to do?
- Kacper Saar: We have a number of good Teachers – this has come as a shock – we could lose good staff.

Claire: We need to get the message out that we want them to stay as part of the team.

Mark H: Teachers want to know what the SLT are doing.

Mark Y: No reason why the data cannot be put onto the computer as part of a lesson. There's software that can be used to help.

With staff morale – are we talking around the issues? We need to talk about the actions.

Claire: We cannot make certain decisions because of the investigation and following process. Need to be aware of what John needs to enable him to take the school forward and ensure things happen. We need to create a post Ofsted budget: to spend on things that we need now e.g. software; staffing.

Mark H: The available funds are not as big as they have been in previous years. There is the potential that there will be a reduced budget. We need to 'invest/spend' the money correctly. We need a post Ofsted budget; make adaptations to the environment.

John: Moving forward – there is likely to be less income, not more. There needs to be re-structuring. We need to focus on safeguarding.

James: Pastoral managers – short term – are a good idea.

Ben: Need support from Governors. Need the SLT to work with John to support the school moving forward. Staff need to be part of the team to move the school forward. John needs to be supported and staff and Governors need to be supporting.

Kacper: expressed a concern that good staff will leave.

Claire: We have already seen 20 'leavers' per term on average if anything it has slowed down. Staff can leave we want of course to make sure this is not the reason.

Mark H: The loyal staff have left. If staff see a change in what James Brindley stands for there is a chance that they will stay. The Heads of Sector can play a part in this.

Jenny: Do we have a head of HR?

John B: Not currently

Claire: We have tried to find out why staff have left. We have not seen any exit interviews.

John: In theory exit interviews take place. We do have some good quality staff who are currently looking for another job. This is for career progression and not because of Ofsted.

Claire: We need to look at next steps and suggest the following:

To set up a monitoring group, post Ofsted; the group to monitor the action plan; monthly meeting to review; it doesn't have to have all the Governors on this group plus have external people on it.

Finance committee to look at resources – finance; check the budget and costings

Staffing meeting to look at staff resources

Governance review to take place with Governing Body action plan

Break 6.20pm-6.40pm.

Mark Y: showed a short presentation around technology in the school.

Mark was thanked for his presentation.

Claire asked if anyone had any questions further on Ofsted.

Ben: Need to have a whole school meeting as soon as possible.

Claire: need to look at the timing of the meeting. John (as acting principal) and Claire (as Chair) to meet and put together a 'note' for staff.

Mark H: Governing Body have met twice; need to share information with the school staff and how we are going to move forward.

Claire: Thanked everyone for their continued support and we will meet with staff after half-term.

Decision making: following the EFA and DFE visit do you want to meet or do you want to delegate to the chair decisions about SLT.

Mark Y asked John if he could prepare a new proposed structure?

John: Asked the Governors to think about what they want to achieve with the structure.

Signed: Chair/Vice-chair Date

For example: sector leaders – greater accountability.

Claire: Currently John is leading on everything and need to address this. The Pay & Staffing meeting on Wednesday is to look at posts and capacity.

John: Currently there are a number of staff who are acting or in temporary posts as well as new capacity to look at.

Mark H: Need to look at how we manage safeguarding in school; what does the current structure look like? Is the current structure fit for purpose? Can it be delivered on a budget less than we currently receive? Suggested that a couple of Governors support John with this.

John B: We will need other monitoring to take place.

Agreed: James English and Maths. Mark: Safeguarding. Kristina: Attendance.

John: Will need a Governor to look at pupil premium money. This is currently Claire.

James: Finance Governors could look at Finance.

Jenny: What is the Governance Review?

Claire: The Governance review is where a National Leaders of Governance visits the school and looks at development and training requirements.

Jenny Smith volunteered to work with Claire on GB development.

Claire: also have vacancies on sub-committees.

Mark Yorke to join staffing and pay sub-committee.

Ben Bury to join Finance sub-committee (currently no staff Governor). However, this meeting is held in the day therefore may not be able to have release time.

Jenny Smith: pay & staffing sub-committee.

Need to look at the potential staffing structure.

Mark, Kristina, John to look at this.

Mark Y asked: Is there a possibility for conference call/skype for meetings?

Kacper: We are looking into this

Kacper Saar to take a lead on the Attendance.

John: The monthly monitoring group – to look at the Ofsted Action Plan. This is a small core group (other Governors are welcome). May be best not to include staff.

Claire: Will need to set the dates.

Mark Y: would prefer the end of the day.

Jenny: would prefer the beginning of the day.

James: able to make the beginning of the day.

Members: Claire, John, LA Rep, the school SIP, Jenny, James and Mark

4 Principals Operational Report - John Bradshaw

In addition to post Ofsted activity there's been regular business of the school to look at.

We have advertised for a School Business Manager (a senior non-teaching post), there has been a fair amount of interest. Two people visiting the school for pre-application meeting. Interviews will take place during the second/third week of March.

Need to decide who will be on the interview board (appointment panel). It was suggested that Mark H is as the chair of finance, maybe Ben with students showing candidates round; possibly Claire; also asked member of staff from DRB (Lee Schofield).

Signed: Chair/Vice-chair Date

Kristina asked: if the pupils are to be involved
Yes.

Action: Governors to let John Bradshaw know if they would like to be on the panel. By when: ASAP.

5 Finance update – Mark Harvey

DRB are looking at SLA’s on our behalf.

John Bradshaw is looking at savings – recurring costs; one off costs; agency staff.

Accounts and Value for Money statement have not been published – this is ongoing.

Operationally – slightly overspent.

Claire asked: are you vireing money out of reserves?

James: we will be.

Claire: we need to spend time looking at the accounts and value for money statement as a governing body and we’ll be able to when the investigation is closed which is soon.

Action – report on finance at next full GB meeting.

Claire: NHAT have put in a freedom of information request – have asked for the details around what has been spent on the investigation and leagal costs. The EFA have already been sent this information including the reasons why and the impact this has had.

James: Will we have a report back from DRB at the next meeting?

Mark H: Yes.

Claire raised: Review of our ER package from BCC must happen – originally had gold package. No longer use BCC for our legal services but included in the cost.

Mark H: Not discussed in finance

John: complex as the package include HR portal and payroll and can’t split the package. Staff don’t want to change from what they know.

Claire: it’s due for renewal 31 March 2105. Do we extend for 6/12 months while finance look at this? Other LA’s offer a similar package.

Mark H: payroll is important but we’re paying for things we don’t need.

John: we may want to look at this when then new business manager is employed. Also need to look at CMIS/SIMS as what is the right package for us going forward.

Claire: can finance be ready to review services at next meeting.

MH: Mike to filter this.

Item 6 Governing Body Briefing Report

Circulated in advance. Chair’s element covered under previous agenda items.

Kacper: Attended Critical Governance Course which looked at a new Framework for Governance. Governing bodies are becoming more professional. They are now known as ‘Governing Body Board’ – now even more accountable.

Tabled and circulated at the meeting: A Framework for Governance, A flexible Guide to Strategic Planning – January 2015.

Kristina: SEN Training – some of the mandatory report supposed to have full Governing Body Approval before being published on the website.

Action: Kristina to forward the information to Mark Harvey.

7 Governing Body Development

Kacper has been looking at the website pages for governors and presented this on the whiteboard.

Areas looking at:

Becoming a Governor

Training opportunities

Calendar

Meeting minutes

Governor Team – about us including photograph

Governor structure

Mark Y: Would you like us to write something about ourselves.

Kacper: Yes.

James: Is this part of Ofsted?

Kacper: Yes. It is part of the legal requirements.

James asked: if there is initial interest to join the Governing Body is it clear who to contact and how to get in touch?

Claire: Yes, the initial interest is easy to use and been on there for a while

Mark H: Will you be able to tell us how many hits we have had?

Kacper: yes.

Kacper was thanked for his presentation.

Skills audit circulated for completion.

8 Policies update

John: unable to deal with this item at this meeting – the policies are being revised. Have met with Birmingham Safeguarding Lead and looked at the Safeguarding policy and process. We need this re-writing and made more appropriate for the school. Need to review all the schools policies.

9 Any other urgent business

9.1 Keeping children safe document.

Action: John Bradshaw - to circulate to all Governors the Ofsted document on safeguarding.

Action: All Governors to read Keeping Children safe in education document, then sign.

9.2 School Action Plan

Action: Organise updated training around safeguarding for the whole governing body.

Childcare disqualification regulations update.

Action: All Governors - there is a form for Governors to sign and return. By when: ASAP.

Claire asked Jenny if she wished to join as Governor.

Jenny: yes.

Proposed: Claire, Seconded: Mark Harvey. All present in approval.

Mark H: Welcomed Jenny to the Governing Body.

Date of the next meeting: Monday 23 March 2015, 4.30pm.

Meeting closed: 7.45pm.

Signed: Chair/Vice-chair Date