

LYDGATE JUNIOR SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON 12 JULY 2018

Present: Rosemary Fletcher (Vice-Chair); Julie Farrell; John Hague;
Simon Hamilton; Jacqui Hoole; Stuart Jones (Headteacher);
Carina Kemp; Dan Kirkland; Ann Parker; Rebecca Proctor.

Associates:

In Attendance: John Evans Clerk to governors

Governors' core responsibilities:

1. ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school
2. holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
3. overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

1. To accept or receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Maureen Neill (Chair of Governors), Mark Alexander; Chris Batchelor and Jeremy Bannister.

In Maureen's absence, Rosemary Fletcher chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of any pecuniary interests relevant to this agenda

None were declared.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting and report on matters arising from the minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2018 be approved and signed.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising directly from the minutes that were not being covered in the current agenda.

4. Headteacher's report

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The Headteacher's report has been circulated prior to the meeting and the Headteacher invited questions and comments, and expounded on some items in the report.

4.1 Ofsted

- a. The report has been circulated and discussed in committee. No action plan is needed following the overall judgement that the school is 'good'. Of the four points requiring some attention to move the school towards 'outstanding', the Headteacher feels that point 1, which refers to the progress of disadvantaged pupils, is the hardest to achieve and takes longer than others. The results of the most recent tests show that those achieved by the 16 disadvantaged pupils in Y6 have improved in writing and mathematics. The gap between these pupils and others has narrowed significantly and in writing, Pupil Premium children outperformed their peers. The school has had particular success in mathematics and SPAG where gaps have reduced hugely. The Headteacher feels that these successes validate the school's work. The gap in reading did not reduce and further investigation is needed. The data overall present a strong picture of the school's performance.
- b. The Headteacher explained that only five pupils in Y5 attract Pupil Premium funding, each one therefore representing 20 percent of their group. This means that all five will need to succeed to meet the school's target and work is needed here. The school had set aspirational targets for pupils to achieve results 'at greater depth'. These were not reached but much greater analysis is needed, particularly to establish the progress made by pupils.
- c. In response to a question from governor about actions taken by the school, the Headteacher explained that national research will provide a wider picture.
- d. Governors discussed point 3 of the areas for improvement. It is agreed that the school is positive about welcoming parents, and staff are keen to extend invitations to come in. In response to a question, the Headteacher assured governors that this view is widely shared, however difficulties can arise when one parent wants to go beyond the school's arrangements. Governors suggested that 'good ideas' might be documented. A discussion was held about the tone of the school's newsletters.

4.2 New pupils / pupil numbers / admissions

- a. The incoming year group has 121 pupils; it includes an unusually high proportion of pupils with significant needs. These needs will have to be met and funded through the school's existing budget. The Headteacher explained that liaison with the Infant school has been close and that the range of the pupils' needs is wide. There is no obvious reason for this year group being composed as it is; the Headteacher feels that it is purely coincidental.

- b. Governors questioned whether the children's visits had gone well. They had; and the school had made different arrangements for different children as necessary. Governors enquired what the impact would be on next year's Years 4, 5 and 6. The Headteacher acknowledges that some problems could arise here and reminded governors of the difference between 'minimum' provision which the school is required to supply and 'preferred' provision.

4.3 Behaviour and safety

The Headteacher explained that the school uses a wide range of tools within its safeguarding policy. Particular reference was made to recognising indicators around sexual behaviour. The school's practice is good.

Governors discussed in detail the difficulties faced by the school in combating lateness. Around ten pupils are persistently late, most of whom live outside the catchment area; the school has strategies to tackle the problem, but has little control over the causes. The school experiences problems with some parents but others are pleased to learn that their child is persistently late. Some children are brought to school by older siblings. The Headteacher expressed his frustration with parents whose children join the school when they live some distance away. The school is open to pupils arriving early.

4.4 Racist incidents

The two incidents that have occurred since the last full governing body meeting, both involved deliberate racist name-calling. Thorough investigation of the incidents followed involving pupils and parents.

4.5 Complaints and compliments

The school gets much praise for aspects of its work; complaints are few and are rarely dealt with at a level which involves the school's formal complaints policy.

Governors raised the question about payment for visits. The

Headteacher provided a detailed explanation of the charging policy and the restrictions that it imposes on what can and cannot be charged for. One parent has asked for fuller details about the costs associated with visits. Governors agreed that this might be considered and further information would be sought about how Tipton operated its 'hardship' fund. The Headteacher reported that mobile phones can cause problems, particularly when they are used to take photographs. A governor observed that this is part of the communication issue raised by the Ofsted inspection.

5. Committee minutes and matters arising

Governors approved the minutes. There are no matters arising.

6. To approve the budget spending plan for the financial year 2018-2019

Governors resolved: that the budget spending plan be approved.

7. Annual report on Safeguarding

The annual report is to be completed by 14 September and will be referred to at the next governing body meeting. The Headteacher explained the process to governors and stated that account will be taken of the point raised by Ofsted.

8. SEN/D policy – to approve

Governors resolved to approve the SEN/D policy.

9. Assessment policy – to approve

Julie Farrell gave governors a full explanation about the background to the policy and its development. The new system will be used to identify gaps in learning and give teachers more information about progress and age-related achievement. It offers greater ease of access and more accurate information about the extent to which a pupil has not met ARE. Julie believes it will be necessary to use a reading test to add information about progress. Parents can access the system to see how it works but there is no option for them to log in to information about their own child. As yet, teachers have not been introduced to the system.

Governors recorded their thanks to Julie for the work done on the assessment policy.

Governors resolved to approve the assessment policy.

10. Governor-Parent feedback initiative

A governor had requested that this item be included on the agenda. Discussion centred around the 26 percent of parents who in their response to the Ofsted questionnaire had expressed a view that the school was not well led and managed. Feedback seemed to suggest some undercurrent of dissatisfaction and governors might consider using a further questionnaire later in the year.

Under this agenda item, governors also considered the accessibility of parent governors to the parent community. Various possibilities, including electronic access, were discussed and it was agreed that enquiries could be made to find out what other schools do.

11. Confirm or appoint the reviewers for the Performance Management of the Headteacher and to appoint an external advisor to support the process

The Headteacher feels that the process should be more robust. The school subscribes to a package of support from Learn Sheffield which includes the provision of an advisor for this process.

Governors agreed: that the school should ask that Diane Stokes be invited to act as external advisor for the Performance Management process.

Governors resolved: that Maureen Neill, Dan Kirkland and Rebecca Proctor be appointed as reviewers for the Performance Management of the Headteacher.

Governors proposed a vote of thanks to Liz Tunnard for her work as external advisor.

12. Review of the meeting – how has the governing body fulfilled the three core functions for which it is responsible?

Governors' core responsibilities:

1. ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school

- Approval of the SEN/D and assessment policies
- Completed arrangements for the Headteacher's performance management
- Considered the impact on the school of the new intake to Y3

2. holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the

school and its pupils

- Governors took an initial view of the very recently released test results, taking a particular interest under the Headteacher's guidance of the performance of vulnerable pupils
- Close attention was paid to the difficulties posed by pupils persistently arriving late

3. overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

- Governors gave initial consideration to how the needs of the incoming Year 3 might be met from within the school's budget

13. Future meeting dates

Governors have received a list of future meeting dates.

14. Any other urgent business

Following an observation from a governor that papers for this meeting were not in order, the clerk agreed to raise this matter with the governor support service.

Meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

ACTION