

LYDGATE JUNIOR SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 23 MARCH, 2017

Present: Maureen Neill (Chairperson); Jeremy Bannister; Julie Farrell; Rosemary Fletcher; Jodie Foster; John Hague; Stuart Jones; Dan Kirkland; Ann Parker; Rebecca proctor.

Associates: Andrew Sharrock

In Attendance: Russell Johnson (Clerk to the Governors)

ACTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Mark Alexander, Chris Batchelor, Joel Robinson, Carolyn Sleath.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests relevant to this agenda

Governors were asked to declare any pecuniary interests relevant to the agenda. No one declared any interests relevant to this agenda.

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 24 November 2016 be approved and signed, with three minor amendments:

- (i) Page 4 'Attendance Policy' - School Academies' should be 'Academy Schools'.
- (ii) Page 4 Site Related issues. Amend first paragraph to read: 'Children had to contend with some muddy ground during a period of unusually heavy rain'.
- (iii) Page 5 Item 9 Behaviour Policy. Reword first sentence – 'The proposed mandatory minima for sanction thresholds, included in the Policy, were considered by Governors'.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no Matters Arising

4. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report, which had been circulated before the meeting, was received and the following points were discussed:

Stuart Jones took the opportunity to remind Governors of their core

roles, his termly Report being a key prompt for challenge and questioning.

He emphasised the crucial importance of the 'Rights Respecting School' ethos and practice, hence this is the first section of the Report. Stuart Jones described this approach in practical terms: listening to children; building 'polite assertiveness' behaviours and, recently, teaching about campaigns and campaigning.

Admissions

Stuart Jones reported on a LA request that the School admits 5 over the IAN of 120 for September for Y3. This was declined on behalf of the Governing Body because of the effects of excessive numbers on the children and staff, and because the Appeals Panel may well admit further pupils.

Governors discussed reasons for the pressure on school spaces in parts of the City and the responses of other schools.

Stuart Jones reaffirmed his determination to continue to argue for, with the support of the Governing Body, a cap of 120 on each year group.

The Budget

Stuart Jones referred Governors to the detailed section on the budget in his Report.

In summary, the School's income increase will not cover cost pressures, so savings are necessary. However, this can be managed at this stage without redundancies or curriculum restrictions or shortening the school day. The budget proposed will allow current staffing and provision by drawing on previous years' carry-forward monies, though difficult decisions are inevitable.

The currently proposed National Funding Formula would reduce the School's income by 1.7%, about £28.5K. However, the Formula is very likely to change due to political pressure.

Pupils' Achievement

Stuart Jones outlined some of the interventions that are used to raise attainment and maximise progress, and highlighted tracking data headlines. This showed writing continuing to improve across the School, though this will remain a focus for Y3. Y4 is the weakest group and Y5 are on track to meet their targets.

Governor Question

Q How well are Pupil Premium pupils (PP) doing?

A Stuart Jones responded that a full report on this is available, and that for Reading, there is a 10% differential between the PP and the others being on track to reach Age Related Expectation (ARE). For writing and maths, the corresponding figures are 23% and 15% respectively.

Stuart Jones sounded a note of caution with respect to tracking data:

staff are still building their confidence with assessment post-levels, although collaborative moderation is developing this rapidly. Some staff may be too harsh in their judgements of work whilst familiarity with the new standards develops.

Stuart emphasised that Senior Leadership Track (SLT) tracks all children and conducts Progress Meetings with teachers at which they are held to account, including for PP children. Staff are very well aware which children are deemed disadvantaged.

Q What might Ofsted make of current data?

A Ofsted are concerned to see a high level of awareness and effective and monitored interventions which are expected to 'double' progress per unit time for the area of attainment being targeted. We are not expected to entirely eliminate the 'gap'. Also, the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is now more about current pupils – SLT and other staff knowledge about individual learners is vital, as is Governor awareness of areas of success and weaknesses receiving attention.

Q It seems that fewer SEN children are on track to reach Age-Related Expectations (ARE) (all subjects) than non-SEN – is this true?

A This is the case, though SEN pupils are compared with other SEN at this school, not with wider comparative groups. Different children in different subjects are underachieving.

Julie Farrell added that Inspectors may choose to drill down on SEN groups and / or high achievers. A detailed individual narrative is always available.

Quality of Teaching

Stuart reported on recent paired observations of teaching and learning of all teachers. This has been very enjoyable, useful and constructive for all concerned. Rather than apply Ofsted grades, the observations are used to identify development needs and locate areas of excellent practice to share with colleagues.

However, the SLT is confident that all teaching is at least 'Good'. The exercise is costly in staff time, made possible by the presence of competent student teachers.

Q Has taking in student teachers been beneficial to our children, taking everything into account?

A Definitely yes. Lydgate has received and nurtured some very good young student teachers, who are well selected and supported by Sheffield Hallam University.

Safeguarding

Stuart commented that the site, by its nature, is somewhat 'leaky', resulting in the possibility of a determined child leaving the premises without permission. All staff are well aware of this risk and a plan is in

place to mitigate. Occasionally, physical restraint needs to be used, according to guidelines, to keep a child safe.

Q What's happening regarding the sinkhole close to the School – does it increase risk to children?

A This is outside the site and appears to be stable. Highways has been informed.

Q There was an accident on the main road outside the school involving a secondary pupil recently. What, if anything, does this imply for the safety of our children?

A The junction is complex and busy. Road safety awareness is covered with all children at intervals. This includes classwork and assemblies.

The fence at the top of the site has been repaired.

The Site

Q I see that the LA is to carry out work on the fire alarm – that's obviously good, but how effective is the system at the moment?

A It only meets minimum standards and its coverage is not comprehensive. The break-glasses do work, though. Evacuation plans are in place and drills carried out and logged.

The LA funded work will also provide the opportunity to move some facilities to better locations: this is very welcome.

Q Will the modifications disrupt learning?

A This will be kept to a minimum, and the task should be started in July.

Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Stuart described the impressively rich and varied programme of activities available to the learners. These experiences help to make the experience of school appealing for every child.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for his report and comments.

5. Committee minutes

The Chair noted that all Committee Minutes had been circulated.

6. School to School partnership working report

The meeting received a paper: *School to School Partnership Working – a report on current (and possible future) practice.*

Stuart Jones outlined some aspects of successful collaborations, highlighting an arrangement with Google who visited the School to provide an exploration of virtual reality technology. This is set up via a collaboration with colleagues elsewhere. More broadly, collaborations

will increase as Local Authorities continue to be forced to reduce their offer.

7. **Safeguarding Policy – Approval**

The Board was asked to comment on a previously circulated document: *Lydgate Junior School Safeguarding Children Policy 2017*.

Stuart Jones noted that the focus of this Policy is mainly Child Protection: other aspects of Safeguarding are covered in other policies.

Q How and when are cases closed? What happens on school transfer?

A The file is maintained throughout a child's time here, even where agencies are not acting, and information is shared confidentially with receiving schools.

Governors formally approved the Policy, noting the Review Date of March 2018.

8. **Complaints Policy - Approval**

Governors received the previously circulated policy: Complaints Policy March 2017. This is a modified LA document.

This prompted a discussion about how parents often express their concerns, the formal, staged process set out in the Policy and how parents are made aware of the process.

Stuart Jones said that most parents have their issues resolved rapidly without resort to the formal process. Only rarely does a complaint reach 'Stage 3'.

Subject to two amendments:

- (i) 2.2.8 – penultimate line insert 'been' before 'designated'
- (ii) 3.2.3 - update Governor categories,

The Policy was approved.

9. **Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on 22 June 2017 at 7.00 p.m.

10. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other business.

Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.