

Approved Minutes

Meeting of the Governing Body (GB) of

ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CE (AIDED) FIRST SCHOOL

Wednesday 28 June 2017

Present:

Mrs S Hawkins (Chair),
Mrs D Cranston, Rev Canon P Cunningham, Mrs K Massey (Deputy Head),
Mr A McCabe, Mrs H Miller, Mr P Moorin, Dr S Pickett,
Canon J Robson (Headteacher), Mrs B Scott-Harden, Mrs J Senior, Dr C Tompkins

Governors in post - 14; quorum – 7; governors present – 12

The meeting was quorate

In attendance:

Mr N Sanders ~ Governor Services

1. Welcome / Opening Prayer

The meeting opened at 6.25pm with a prayer.

As this was Julie Robson's last GB meeting before retiring as Headteacher, governors recorded their thanks to her for the invaluable contribution she had made to the school during her tenure. As this was also Phil Moorin's last GB meeting before stepping down from the GB, governors also recorded their thanks to him for the contribution he had made to the school over many years as a member of the GB and chair. The Chair was also to send a card to Dominic Raymont on behalf of the GB; he had stood down from the GB recently after several years as a governor at the school.

Action: Chair

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were **accepted** from Carol Bainbridge and Andrew Shipton.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared in the business of this meeting and no changes made to the annual register.

4. GB Appointments / Membership Update

It was understood that Andrew Shipton had a potential candidate in mind to nominate as a Foundation Governor in place of Phil Moorin.

5. Identification of Any Additional / Urgent Items

There were no items identified.

6. Gosforth Schools Trust (GST) Items

The Chair gave a summary of the discussion at the recent GST meeting (14 June), referring in particular to a presentation on how the GST schools were working

together, and the potential re-location of Broadway East First School (BEFS). The Chair recalled that there had been some reference made, during the latter discussion to a particularly 'tricky' aspect and she was to try and clarify what this had been. It was understood that the GST schools were supportive generally of the proposed re-location.

Reference was also made to the previous discussions about the proposal from the C of E Diocese to establish a free school in North Gosforth. The Chair reported that she had attended a presentation by the Diocese the previous evening, which had been poorly attended. Headteachers from two of the GST schools had been there.

One of the governors queried the likelihood of the LA not supporting the C of E proposal. The Chair understood that, if the BEFS move did not go ahead, the LA would be supportive of the C of E proposal. **There were some queries and discussion of this proposal (and whether or not the LA had changed its views since) and of the BEFS proposal and any objections made so far to this proposal (the consultation was due to end on 7 July).**

There was also discussion about the proposal, if BEFS did re-locate, for Gosforth Park First School (which currently shared the site with BEFS) to expand to two-form entry. There was also some reference, as this expansion would not fill the whole of the vacant area, as to whether St Oswald's Catholic Primary (which was sited on the same campus as BEFS and GPFS) might want to expand into the remaining space.

Governors discussed the potential dilemma in that expanding first school provision would also entail expansion of the middle school system, and also the concern that, whatever type of school was established in the Great Park area would not necessarily fill up with children from the Great Park area.

It was queried whether it might be worthwhile putting forward the suggestion that, rather than the Diocese establishing a new C of E school, an extension of Archbishop Runcie First could be created, with the whole establishment being managed by an Executive Head. It was suggested that it would be a courtesy to speak to the local clergy as well (Great Park / St Aidan's).

There was some discussion about the position of Archbishop Runcie and its future wellbeing. There were concerns raised that, if decisions were not made in the next few months, the school might well be pushed into a situation where its survival was in question. It was suggested that it might be worthwhile for the Chair, on behalf of the GB, to seek a conversation with local MP, Catherine McKinnell, as a means of raising the issue and helping to draw together the right people to make decisions. The Chair was to follow this up.

Action: Chair

One governor expressed concern that the GB was being placed in an impossible decision in having the responsibility for making decisions about the future of the school without the necessary information / power. There were queries and discussion about the length of time needed for the LA to transfer the land around the school and the planning of any build, and how robustly the LA might support this process.

7. Draft Minutes of the Previous GB Meeting

The draft minutes of the GB meeting held on 11 May 2017 had been circulated and were **approved** with no confidential items identified.

8. Matters Arising

GB Membership / Appointments (pages 1/2)

The Chair would be sending a card to Dominic Raymont, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Chair confirmed that she had contacted Carol Bainbridge and she would be delighted to take up the post of LA Governor. She had contributed to the GB's most recent skills audit.

SEF (page 2)

It was reported that the Head and Deputy Head were in the process of updating the SEF.

There was a query and some discussion about the AP arrangements for next year. It was understood that the current AP, Deborah Ashcroft, might continue but the Headteacher was to ask the LA about the new AP arrangements going forward.

Action: Headteacher

Advertising / Sponsorship (page 3)

The Chair gave an update: the Addistone Group had been in touch with her about the possibility of sponsoring the school crossing patrol. She had responded positively, indicating the likely cost. **There was a query and some discussion about where this might leave the adjoining middle school and whether they would be able to share this facility.** It was understood that Addistone had been in touch with both schools.

There was some discussion about the possibility of this facility being in place by September and, if not, the temporary arrangements that could be made. It was suggested that it might be an idea, even though the arrangements might not be in place by September, if the school / GB was able to inform parents of the arrangements in advance once they were confirmed.

Dawn Cranston knew of a parent who she understood was interested in sponsoring the school's football kit.

Clothes Recycling Bin (page 3)

The Headteacher had confirmed that the school was interested in having a clothes recycling bin on site; the bin was still to arrive.

Associate Member (page 4)

It was noted that the School Administrative / Finance Officer, Sarah McCloud, had contributed to the GB skills audit, although it had not been decided, as yet, under what arrangements she might join the GB (associate member or observer). This decision would be deferred for the time being.

Action: The above decision deferred

GST Items (page 4)

It was confirmed that the minutes of the March 2017 GST meeting had been circulated to the governors.

Safeguarding Walk (page 4)

It was confirmed that the report produced following the Safeguarding Walk carried out by the Chair and Andrew Shipton had been circulated.

Admissions (page 4)

It had been decided not to send out the letter referred to previously.

Staffing / Budget (page 5)

This would be discussed later in the meeting.

Ethos, Curriculum and Performance Committee (page 5)

The 'Worship Council' group was still to be established. A provisional list of roles and responsibilities had been drawn up and it was planned to start at the beginning of the new academic year. GB link governorships would also be considered again at that point.

There was a question from Caroline Tompkins about cover for the Spanish teacher who was leaving. The cover arrangements were outlined. *Caroline Tompkins gave her apologies and left the meeting at this point (7.20pm).*

STEM Week (page 5)

It was confirmed that the questions from governors within the reports they had drawn up following their visits during STEM Week had been taken to the staff as agreed.

Skipping (page 6)

The Headteacher confirmed that the positive feedback from the skipping coach about pupils' behaviour, participation and listening skills following the skipping workshop had been put in a letter to parents.

Piano Tuning (page 8)

The Headteacher confirmed that the amount in the budget for piano tuning had been checked and subsequently amended (as there had been a coding error).

Monitoring School Finances (page 8)

It was confirmed that this LA report had been referred to the Finance and Staffing (FS) Committee to discuss, as noted in the most recent FS minutes.

10. Governor Skills Audit

A colour-coded skills audit survey collated from the individual audit forms completed by the members of the GB was tabled and discussed. Governors were pleased, overall, with the range / level of skills represented and were to use this information to inform decision making around committee membership, link roles, future governor appointments etc.

Action: Skills audit to be used as above

11. Reports from Committees/ Link Governors/ Governor Development & Training

Ethos and Curriculum (ECC) Committee – 5 June 2017

The minutes of this meeting had been circulated and hard copies were tabled. The main items were highlighted as follows:

- It was noted that the Worship Council group would be ready to start in September; however, the idea of the RE Ambassadors had been put on hold until the Worship Council was underway and then a decision would be made as to whether there was a need for both groups.
- Governors were referred to the section in the minutes dealing with ethos discussion and how this would be focused and made even more apparent in future meetings and agendas (including GB committees other than the ECC Committee), policies etc.
- The committee had received a thorough explanation of Foundation Stage data from Mel Stokes, including a comparison of current Reception data against last year's data. The overall picture had looked positive. Angela Harrison had also explained the Y2 data; this was better than last year's data.
- Pupil Voice Planning: In future, Book Scrutiny and Pupil Voice would take place together, and not in ECC meetings.
- Website Compliance / School Prospectus: There had been discussion about compliance. In addition, it had been decided that the website would now work like a prospectus and a separate school prospectus would not be needed.
- Home / school agreements would be circulated to ensure governors were happy with them before they went out to parents in September.

Action: Headteacher

- Dates for next year's ECC meetings had been set.
- Complaints policy amendments were to be completed. There had been some discussion about how best to minimise the workload in relation to the policy review programme.
- There had been discussion of staffing in the Early Years. **The questions raised by governors in this discussion had been recorded in the minutes and were highlighted, in particular, some questions / concerns around the planning / temporary arrangements for covering for the Reception teacher position / maternity leave.**
- It was noted that 16 applications had been received for admission to the Nursery for September; it was also noted that this number usually increased. It was understood that the incoming Headteacher, Denise Henry, was quite keen to expand provision this coming year for 'rising 3 year olds'.

Finance and Staffing (FS) Committee – 19 June 2017

The minutes of this meeting had been circulated and hard copies were tabled. The main items were highlighted as follows:

- The variances in budget spend (underspend / overspend) included in the minutes were highlighted (this included rationale in each case). The overall budget was showing a projected year end variance of £42,310.
- **There was a query and some discussion about the funding the school received for Pupil Premium (PP) children.** It was explained that there were only seven pupils for whom the school was receiving this funding at present. It was understood that there were some eligible families with children in

Reception, Y1 and Y2 who had not applied as they received free school meals anyway; it was noted that all of these parents had received the necessary form and had been encouraged to complete it. **There was some discussion about revisiting how the school might look creatively at increasing uptake.**

- Governors noted that a new procedure had been introduced by the LA in that the condensed expenditure reports should be reviewed by the FS Committee and GB each term and submitted to the LA to evidence that school finances were being scrutinised appropriately. It was confirmed that the latest expenditure report had been reviewed by the FS Committee and, for the benefit of the GB, an outline was given of what had been included in the committee's discussion of the expenditure report; governors **agreed** the report on this basis for submission to the LA by the Headteacher.

Action: Headteacher

It was also suggested that, in future, more of the detail of the committee's discussion of the expenditure reports was included in the narrative of the FS minutes to make this clear to the GB.

- It was noted that future FS Committee meeting dates had been set provisionally for next academic year. They would be confirmed in due course once they had been confirmed by the committee chair, Carol Bainbridge.

Action: Committee dates to be confirmed

11. Headteacher's Report / School Improvement Priorities

The Headteacher's report had been circulated electronically to governors and hard copies were tabled. The following areas were highlighted and governors raised any questions / comments during the presentation of the report:

Safeguarding

It was noted that one case had been referred to Children's Social Care and an assessment was likely to be carried out. The school was providing support to the family concerned and the Parent Support Adviser (PSA) was involved.

Staffing and Organisation

It was noted that Hilary Douglas, who was teaching Modern Foreign Languages part time in KS2, was leaving at the end of term to take up a post elsewhere. Jenny Burns would be taking on this role. This would constitute a budget saving for the school.

Helen Miller gave her apologies and left the meeting at this point (7.50pm).

Admissions

It was noted that it would be necessary to inform prospective Nursery families of the places that were still available in the school's Nursery.

School Meals

There had been an increase in the overall total uptake of school meals.

School Improvement

The GST was planning a joint training day in May 2018 (on behaviour management). It was also seeking to arrange further joint moderation meetings.

School Achievement Partner (AP)

Deborah Ashcroft, AP, was due to visit the school again on 13 July. The Headteacher had asked her to remain as AP next year and was awaiting confirmation of the arrangements.

Progress

The Early Years data, which was to be submitted to the LA, showed improvements in terms of more children achieving 'exceeding' in the Prime areas, and in the increased performance for vulnerable groups. More of the Y1 children had passed the Phonic screen this year than last year. Y2 teacher assessments were reported to the LA this week and showed an improving picture this year.

Health and Safety

The Headteacher referred to a query which had been raised about school IT security. She had received an email from the LA about the security measures the LA had in place, which she would forward to governors.

Action: Headteacher

Following a bough breaking off one of the trees at the back of the school during the recent half-term holiday, all of the trees on the site had been inspected and three trees removed (at a cost of £250).

There was a query and some discussion around the advice received in relation to the health risks related to a water feature.

The Headteacher was thanked for her report.

13. Financial Items / Budget Monitoring

This item had been covered earlier in the meeting via the discussion of the FS Committee minutes.

14. Safeguarding / Health and Safety / Risk Management Items

There were no items raised.

15. Reminder of Chair / Vice-Chair Election Arrangements – Autumn 2017

The Chair indicated that she would be happy to stand again for this position. There was also some discussion of the co vice-chairing arrangement which had been in place this academic year; it was felt that it would be useful to continue with this arrangement next academic year if the current vice-chairs were willing to stand again.

16. Summary of GB Meeting Dates for 2017/18

The dates below were listed on the agenda and were confirmed (all at 6.15pm):

Autumn: 20 September; 22 November;

Spring: 29 January; 20 March;

Summer: 10 May; 12 July

17. Any Other Business

There was no further business; the Chair thanked everyone for attending and thanked the staff and governors for their work over the year, and on behalf of the GB, expressed particular thanks to the Headteacher for the contribution she had made to the school during her tenure.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Pauline Mrs.
02/11/2017