

Approved Minutes

Meeting of the Governing Body (GB) of

ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CE (AIDED) FIRST SCHOOL

Wednesday 22 November 2017

Present:

Mrs S Hawkins (Chair),
Mrs C Bainbridge, Mrs D Cranston, Rev Canon P Cunningham, Mr C Dallison,
Mrs D Henry (Headteacher), Mrs K Massey, Mr A McCabe, Dr S Pickett,
Mrs B Scott-Harden, Mrs J Senior, Rev Canon A Shipton, Dr C Tompkins

Governors in post - 14; quorum – 7; governors present – 13

The meeting was quorate

In attendance:

Mr N Sanders ~ Governor Services

1. a) Opening Prayer / Welcome

b) GB Appointments / Membership Update

The meeting opened at 6.20pm with a prayer from Andrew Shipton. Everyone was welcomed, in particular Craig Dallison (new Foundation Governor) who was attending his first meeting of the full GB. There was a round of introductions.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were **accepted** from Helen Miller.

3. Declaration of Interests

The register of interest was completed and signed by those who had not been present at the previous GB meeting in September. There were no interests declared in the business of this meeting.

4 Identification of Any Urgent / Additional Items

Caroline Tompkins reported that it had come to light, from work being done on the website / policies, that the Freedom of Information section needed updating. Governors **agreed** that Caroline Tompkins would carry out this work and the updated policy would be taken as adopted by the GB subject to any particular comments that might arise.

Action: C Tompkins

The Chair would also raise an additional item at the end of the meeting.

5. Minutes of the Previous GB Meeting / Matters Arising

The draft minutes of the following GB meeting had been circulated and were **approved**: 20 September 2017 (autumn term meeting 1 – scheduled GB meeting)

An action list had also been attached to the minutes to highlight all of the action points from this meeting and the actions taken to address them. This was **accepted**.

6. **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher presented her report, copies of which had been circulated. The following areas were highlighted:

The Headteacher had included contextual information in her report from the school's 2016/17 data. She indicated that she would be looking into further detail in due course (for example, where pupils came from).

She also referred to the sections of her report reflecting the main headings of the Ofsted framework and how the school currently judged itself under each of the headings.

An updated version of a document showing the staff areas of responsibility 2017/18 was tabled (this replaced a version which had been circulated in the supporting papers for this meeting), as was a sheet showing the CPD staff had undertaken this term.

There was a query and some discussion about the mission statement which was included at the beginning of the Head's report. It was noted that the school's mission was currently being reviewed.

The main areas of discussion and challenge were as follows:

- **Admissions:** There was a query about the enquiries from visiting parents of children joining in the September 2018 intake about their need for a Breakfast Club, and also the expressions of interest following a subsequent questionnaire to current parents; the query was to do with whether sufficient parents had expressed an interest to make this a viable proposition, and about any plans the school had for implementation. It was noted that this had been discussed by the Finance, Staffing and Premises Committee and it was being handed over to one of the school's volunteers to investigate viability / sustainability. **In response to a further query, it was confirmed that there had also been a parental enquiry regarding after school club facilities.** The Headteacher had explained what was in place and the parent in question had been satisfied with this. After-school provision had also been included in the above questionnaire, and it was **agreed** that the Headteacher would pursue this with the volunteer who was investigating the question of Breakfast Club viability. There had also been some queries regarding 30 hours Nursery provision.
Action: Headteacher
- **Staffing:** There was a query about the current situation in respect of administrative / office support, and whether the reduction from two members of staff to one was impacting on the running of the school. Governors were reminded that this was part of the long term plan to reduce staffing in this area. It was acknowledged that the task at hand was significant, and the situation had involved changing from having two very experienced colleagues to one relatively new member of staff.
- It was noted that there were also two experienced volunteers in the school office at present.

The Headteacher and Sarah McCloud were to look again at Sarah's timetable now that these volunteers were in place.

Action: Headteacher / S McCloud

- **There was a query and some discussion about the possible option of closing the school office at certain times of day, although there was the strong view put forward by one governors that the school should always be contactable.** The Headteacher was to investigate whether phone calls could default to her if for any reason they were not answered by Sarah McCloud / the school office.

Action: Headteacher

- There was also some discussion about parents coming into school; the Headteacher indicated that she had not previously been in any other school where there was such a number of parents coming in. There was also discussion about the need for reliable systems to enable pupils to be by-passed where certain information needed to be sent home, and there was reference to the current arrangements in use.
- It was noted that, according to the GB / committee annual plan, staffing structure was due to be reviewed in the spring term; it was felt that it would be useful for the Headteacher to bring forward a more detailed view of what was needed at that point, following the discussion she and Sarah McCloud were to have in the meantime.

Action: Headteacher / S McCloud

- Nursery: Reference was made to the banner the school had to advertise the Nursery; GCMS had agreed that it could be installed at the front of their school. The Headteacher was also to send information to Craig Dallison to look at. **There was a query and some discussion about numbers / viability.** It was noted that 17 children were needed for the Nursery to be financially viable and 26 to be full. **In response to a query about 30 hour provision, it was explained that arrangements could begin in January 2018 although the school would need to look at staffing.** There was some discussion about the need to be able to let families know that 'rising 3s' could start from January; it was confirmed that the school would be promoting this in various places, and there was also some discussion about the use of the website and leafleting. Philip Cunningham noted that he would be happy to circulate information through the routes used by St Nicholas' Parish. The Headteacher was to contact the Family Information Service.

Action: Headteacher

- **There were further queries and discussion about Nursery provision: parental interest in 30 hours but also about staying with the current arrangements; there was also discussion about the way in which hours might be offered, and also what the school could charge for over and above the hours parents were entitled to (including lunches).** Reference was made to examples of other local provision.
- CPD: Reference was made to the staff training the school had managed to undertake despite the lack of finances. The Headteacher felt that the training was having an impact. **It was queried / discussed how the school could continue with this given the lack of funding.** The Headteacher explained that, from the monitoring sessions (a monitoring plan for 2017/18 had been circulated), the school was focusing on specific areas / progression. Particular reference was made to the work Liz Bailey, Maths consultant, was doing with

staff on problem solving / challenge (this training had already been paid for). Also arising from the monitoring had been an indication of which other Gosforth schools it would be useful to work with; in addition, support was being received through the Head of Throckley Primary, Julie Stuart (including the Head's performance management), and through some of Throckley's senior leaders working with individual staff / coaching and mentoring (this support was free but there would be a cost for supply to free up the Throckley staff). The school would continue to review its CPD plan, with the caveat that any training would be specifically linked to the monitoring sessions.

- **In response to a query, it was confirmed that there was a practice in school of staff feeding back when they had attended any training; this model would continue and the Headteacher and Deputy Head would ensure it was being followed through.**

Action: Head / Deputy Head

- **There was a query about how the school's progress was being measured. It was explained that this was done to a certain extent through the regular monitoring support sessions, but also with reference to book scrutiny, planning etc.**
- Governors acknowledged the importance of continuing to challenge and question the information being given to them through the Head's reports, and also having access to, and challenging external views of the school's performance; they also noted the way in which ongoing reports from the Headteacher would provide comparative information on how the school was progressing over time.
- Reference was made to an annual plan for the production of Head's reports, GB and committees agendas etc. It was suggested that, going forward, one of the termly GB meetings could be more of a business meeting while the other could be more focused on school related items / priorities.

7. Ethos Committee / Ethos Statement

The draft minutes of the Ethos Committee meeting held on 5 October had been circulated; a sheet showing the school's former Ethos Statement and new/proposed Statement was tabled. The minutes were presented by the committee chair, Andrew Shipton, and the minutes / documents were discussed as follows:

- The vision day on 30 October was discussed, as was the recent SIAMS training AS and BSH had attended; BSH had produced a report and this training, which would be circulated.

Action: Chair

BSH gave an outline of the SIAMS training, which included a key message from the Diocesan Director of Education, Paul Rickeard, about the importance of Collective Worship being at the 'heart of the school' (what should be shared, who should be involved etc). There was some discussion about how the school's current approach, and the role of PC and AS in terms of their being a part of the school. There was also discussion about the notion of developing a 'Worship Council' and the type of discussions pupils should perhaps be having in class anyway about the relationship between Christianity and their own life experiences. It had been suggested to Angela Harrison, RE co-ordinator, that each class might prepare an assembly.

- It was explained that the tabled Ethos Statement was the result of work done recently by the teaching staff. Governors discussed the new / proposed

statement in relation to the school's 'old' statement. The main queries / comments were as follows:

- **The proposed statement was felt to be more 'outward looking' and 'child centred'.**
- **The terminology used in the first paragraph ('a stick of rock') was not felt to be appropriate and would be removed.**
- **Concerns were expressed that there was no reference to 'Jesus' within the statement. It was agreed that this should be rectified.**
- **A reference to 'His' in the second paragraph would be removed.**
- **There was a query about the extent to which the statement reflected the 'deeply Christian' values within the 'Vision for the Church of England' booklet.**
- **Subject to the above comments / queries, governors were supportive of the new / proposed statement.**

8. TLA Committee / Post Ofsted Action Plan

The draft minutes of the TLA (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) Committee meeting held on 6 November had been circulated, along with the committee's agreed terms of reference for 2017/18 and the school's post-Ofsted action plan. The minutes were presented by the committee chair, Sarah Pickett, and the minutes / documents were discussed as follows:

- **TLA Committee:** The majority of the committee meeting had been spent going through the post-Ofsted action plan, and listening to evidence from the Headteacher and Deputy Head about the how teaching and learning was being monitored in school, how book scrutiny and lesson observations were being carried out; from this evidence, the committee felt confident that the process was going well. Clear targets had been set for each staff member.
- It was noted that the committee had agreed to look at data on a half-termly (rather than termly) basis. The school had recently bought into a package which should make it easier to look at data.
- A Learning Walk had been carried out with the Headteacher / Deputy Head and those members of the committee who had taken part (D Cranston / S Pickett) had seen first-hand evidence of what had been discussed in the meeting; the other committee members had had a discussion of data. Notes of visit produced by members of the committee had been circulated; these were handed back and updated versions would be made available.

Action: Updated notes of visit to be circulated

- **Post Ofsted Action Plan (POAP):** The plan was to be updated in due course. The colour coding in the circulated plan was explained. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the latest TLA Committee meeting had been spent discussing the plan, and questioning and challenging.
- **There was a query about particular priority areas / areas of concern within the plan.** It was emphasised that the current grading for Teaching and Learning (Requires Improvement – RI) would need to be moved to at least 'good' and this still needed some work. Reference was also made to the ambitious targets. All of this would be discussed in detail at the next monitoring session (30 November). The work of the staff Teaching and Learning team was highlighted in relation to the development of the subject leaders; this work was going very well and was proving to be exciting, the

team members were working well together and sharing ideas. The Deputy Head, who was part of this team, also felt that being out in other schools had helped move her own practice on and she had also observed this in other staff as well.

- **There was a query about how the school tracked targets / objectives.** The Headteacher explained how the school would be looking to use the POAP to do this, and how actions were colour coded in the plan to reflect progress being made; she pointed out that it was very much a working document, and, as mentioned earlier, was discussed at each monitoring support meeting. **In response to a further query, it was explained how pupil progress was monitored through the pupil progress meetings.** This process was felt to be about creating a culture of continual reflection and monitoring, even after areas had been 'completed'. It was also noted that the Head's reports to the GB would usually include a section to update governors on progress against the SDP / POAP, and this would highlight to governors: where progress had been made; where targets / deadlines had not been met; any particular concerns; where additional support might be needed.
- It was **agreed** that, in future, the full plan / details would be fed back to the TLA Committee and the headlines to the GB.

Action: POAP feedback: full plan to TLA; headlines to GB

9. Finance, Staffing and Premises Committee / Health and Safety Report

The draft minutes of the most recent FSP Committee meeting (14 November) had not yet been circulated so the committee chair, Carol Bainbridge, gave a verbal summary of the main points arising from the meeting:

- It was noted that Andy McCabe was not an official member of this committee but attended when there was any discussion about health and safety.
- The key areas of discussion at the meeting were outlined, which included the need for governors being able to have a proper understanding of the financial information provided – the LA school business manager, Olwyn Graves, had kindly agreed to put together the information in a more 'user friendly' style. Once this had been discussed, the committee would produce a budget update / summary to the next GB meeting. Areas of overspend had also been discussed.

Action: FSP Committee to produce budget summary for GB

- Copies of a recent budget headlines report (as at 18 October), produced by Olwyn Graves, were tabled. It was noted that this report did not show where the overall budget was now and the committee would need information to be able to relate actual funding areas to expenditure in specific areas. The committee would also be looking at the possibility of being more innovative in the way specific 'pots' of funding were used across the school.
- It was noted that there had been disproportionate spend in the summer term this year with regard to CPD; it was noted that some of the areas had already been committed to, but this budget had subsequently been cut significantly.
- It was planned to undertake a financial benchmarking exercise / review in the spring term; the school had access to a DfE benchmarking site and, for example, could use this to help to analyse where it might be spending more than other, similar schools.

Action: Benchmarking exercise

- Reference was made to the three year budget setting process. This financial year (2017/18) would see a small surplus, with deficits projected for years 2 and 3. The

committee would therefore need to carry out a significant review of costs and to look at maximising income-generating opportunities.

- Reference was made to a meeting held the previous week to look at school expansion. In addition, it was noted that the City Council's Cabinet had met on 20 November and had given approval for Broadway East First School to re-locate. The Headteacher confirmed that she did raise expansion issues at network meetings and the Chair raised them through GST whenever she was able to do so. It was noted that the Cabinet Portfolio Member, Cllr Nora Casey, was coming into school to talk about these issues.

Action: Visit by Cllr Casey

- **There was a query about the school's Pupil Premium (PP) provision / allocation of funding for eligible pupils.** It was noted that the school currently received PP funding for six pupils. It was **agreed** that the Headteacher would look into this further as it was felt that the school had more eligible pupils than this.

Action: Headteacher

There was also a query about the extent to which there was still an issue with families on free school meals not claiming for PP. There had been some discussion previously about raising this in the school newsletter to emphasise again the way this would benefit the school.

- **A possible discrepancy in the school's EAL numbers was also queried.**
- It was noted that the school would experience a financial clawback in the coming financial year due to the recent October census figures.
- There was discussion about various premises related issues that would need to be dealt with and options for funding this work. The Headteacher would be asking for ideas about what might be done voluntarily, starting in the school entrance area. A plan would be needed for this. It was suggested that a school marketing plan would also be needed.

Action: Headteacher

- SLAs would be looked at as part of the review of spend to try and maximise the benefit of those services the school bought into, and ensure the school wasn't duplicating provision in any way.
- The TLA Committee's agreed terms of reference had also been circulated; comments were invited.
- Andy McCabe gave a report on the school's health and safety arrangements. He confirmed that, in looking at documentation, the school had the majority of documents in place, although he felt that some of the documentation had taken a while to find; he recommended that the filing system was streamlined and centralised. He highlighted other areas that he felt still needed addressing; the results of a recent audit were still awaited and would need to be taken account of. There was a particular reference to a concern raised elsewhere in the country to do with the risk posed by school gates (to pupils' fingers); it was noted that the school gates were to be looked at.

Action: School gates

There was discussion about the possible arrangements for locking the school gates more often, or only opening one gate in future.

10. Governor Development and Training

It was noted that Carol Bainbridge and Craig Dallison had both undertaken governor induction training.

Sarah Pickett had attended training about SEND / High Needs earlier in the day.

11. External Review of Governance (ERG)

The ERG was scheduled to take place on 6 December. The Chair would send out a reminder notice to governors.

Action: Chair

12. Gosforth Schools Trust (GST) Items

The main items of discussion at the most recent GST Board meeting (2 November) were outlined. The draft minutes of the meeting had been circulated to the Chair. The next meeting (AGM) was due to take place on 19 December.

13. Any Other Business

It was reported that an Admissions meeting had taken place earlier in the week; it was noted that a Reception place had become available and had been offered to a child on the waiting list.

There was no further business; the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.



29/1/2018