

Approved Minutes

Meeting of the Governing Body (GB) of

ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CE (AIDED) FIRST SCHOOL

Monday 29 January 2018

Present:

Mrs S Hawkins (Chair),
Mrs D Cranston, Mrs D Henry (Headteacher), Mr A McCabe, Mrs H Miller,
Mrs B Scott-Harden, Mrs J Senior, Rev Canon A Shipton, Dr C Tompkins

Governors in post - 14; quorum – 7; governors present – 9

The meeting was quorate

In attendance:

Mr N Sanders ~ Governor Services

1. Opening Prayer / Welcome

The meeting opened at 6.20pm with a prayer. Everyone was welcomed.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were **accepted** from Carol Bainbridge, Rev Canon Philip Cunningham, Craig Dallison, Kate Massey and Sarah Pickett.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared in the business of this meeting.

4. GB Appointments / Membership Update

Governors were reminded that the Chair's term of office as a Parent Governor (PG) was due to expire on 31 March 2018. It was also noted that C Tompkins' term as a PG was due to expire in December 2019 and she indicated that was unlikely to look at putting herself forward for re-election. It was **agreed** that the school would circulate a letter to parents asking for nominations for the position expiring in March 2018 (the Chair would also be putting herself forward for re-election); it was further **agreed** that the letter would also indicate there would be a further opportunity for parents to put themselves forward next year for the position that was due to expire in December 2019.

Action: School to seek nominations from parents as above

5. Identification of Any Urgent / Additional Items

It was **agreed** to discuss two additional items:

- The possibility of buying in extra support from the Headteacher of another school to assist the leadership team. There was some discussion of this idea, the arrangements and how it might potentially be funded; the main points of the discussion were as follows:
 - A Shipton explained that it would be possible to draw on a fund (the Gosforth CE Charity) of which he (as All Saints incumbent) and the Church Wardens were Trustees. The terms were that this funding could be used to

pay for items the LA could not pay for. Whilst he felt the Trustees would be happy to provide a grant towards the above support arrangements, it would be necessary for the GB to make a request for this money. It was noted that the amount needed would be around £5,000.

- The purpose of the support was discussed. It was felt that, in view of all of the changes in and around the school, it would be important to provide additional assistance during this transitional period to be able to ensure consistency and 'business as usual', and to help support the leadership team and staff to address current challenges effectively.
- The Headteacher had discussed the situation with the Diocese at length and had met with a Headteacher from within Newcastle LA who might potentially be able to take on this role and would bring particular strengths (Debi Bailey, CEO of the NEAT MAT, which included a number of schools in the East of the City, one of which was a CE Primary). The intention was that the school / GB would map out what they wanted her to do, she would work with the school for an initial period, following which there would be a review of the impact. The Headteacher confirmed that she was comfortable with this idea. It was also emphasised that it would be important for the GB to be able to see evidence of challenge and impact.
- Governors **agreed** to make a request for the necessary funding for additional support as discussed above. It was further **agreed** that governors keep this discussion confidential until such time as a plan had been formalised and the staff could then be informed.

Action: GB to make request for funding as above

- It was noted that the Assistant Diocesan Director of Education would also continue to support the school. In addition, through the Gosforth Schools Trust (GST), arrangements had been made for Dinnington First School's Business Manager, Gillian Purvis, to support Sarah McCloud.
- Discussion of the vision, mission and ethos of the school. A Shipton took everyone through a tabled paper which he had drawn up and which included thoughts about the school's vision, mission, ethos, values and aims, taking into account work done with governors, staff and pupils. The main points of the ensuing discussion, and questions, were as follows:
 - **How the new school rules, which had only recently been agreed, reflected this work and vice-versa to ensure there was consistency.**
 - **How this differed from the former ethos / mission statement.**
 - **The importance of this process being 'bottom up' rather than 'top down'.**
 - **It was agreed that the paper would be sent out as a draft to parents / staff to ask for feedback: it would go to the staff first and A Shipton would come into school to talk to them at that point; a copy would then be sent to C Tompkins to put on the school website with a consultation deadline to be included.**

Action: Consultation paper to be circulated as above

6. Minutes of the Previous GB Meeting

The draft minutes of the GB meeting held on 22 November 2017 had been circulated and were **approved**. There were no confidential items identified.

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7. Matters Arising

An action list had been attached to the minutes to highlight all of the action points from the meeting. All of the actions had been dealt with apart from those indicated on the action list in red. The completed actions were **accepted** and other items were dealt with as follows:

Mission Statement (page 2)

Discussion had taken place earlier in the meeting.

Breakfast / After School Clubs (page 2)

Further investigations were ongoing to establish how the clubs might be implemented.

Action: FSP Committee

Staffing Structure (page 3)

The staffing structure would be reviewed this term by the FSP Committee.

Action: FSP Committee

Budget Summary (page 6/7)

The FSP Committee was to have produced a budget summary and undertaken a financial benchmarking exercise. This had not been possible to date as the LA's school business manager who worked with the school, Olwyn Graves, had been off on sick leave; it would therefore be picked up at the next FSP meeting.

Action: FSP Committee

Meeting with Cllr Nora Casey (page 7)

Cllr Nora Casey was due to meet with the GB and SLT on 1 March.

Action: Meeting with Cllr N Casey (1 March)

Marketing Strategy (page 7)

The FSP Committee would be considering a marketing strategy at its next meeting.

Action: FSP Committee

Premises / Health and Safety (page 8)

There had been reference at the previous GB meeting to a concern raised elsewhere in the country to do with the risk posed by school gates (to pupils' fingers); it had been noted that the school gates / fence were to be looked at. The Headteacher reported that the school had now received a quote for this work (£1,600). There was some discussion about the potential for funding this cost and it was suggested that the PTFA might be approached for a donation, and there might also be the possibility of using some of the school's PE / Sports Premium towards the work (to enable the school to use the outdoor area safely). The Headteacher would look into these suggestions further.

Action: Headteacher

External Review of Governance (ERG) (page 8)

The ERG was carried out on 6 December. There would be further discussion later in the meeting.

8. Any Reports from Committees / Individual and Link Governors / Governor Visits / Governor Development and Training

Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Committee – 15 January 2018

C Tompkins presented the draft minutes of the above meeting, which had been tabled; the main points were as follows:

- It was noted that all questions / challenges were highlighted in the minutes and actions were also included in bold.
- The committee had spent some time discussing specific policy updates, which had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting for approval. The policies had been dealt with thoroughly and there had been no issues raised as such. The TLA Policy had not been ready for review so would be considered at the TLA Committee meeting next half-term.

Action: TLA Committee (Spring 2 meeting)

- The committee's discussion of the 'governors' statement of behaviour principles' was noted. C Tompkins was to review and update this for the website to ensure it was in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. She would also try and ensure the GB code of conduct fitted appropriately with this information.

Action: C Tompkins

- Reference was also made to the committee's discussion of data, including the school's areas for development and strengths, and to a query raised at the meeting about what was being done to mitigate against gaps in information-sharing as a result of key members of staff being absent. It was noted that the Teaching and Learning Team were being trained up on the school's data package.
- It was noted that the school was implementing a new assessment system, which was still to become embedded.
- The Headteacher reported that the current data set was improved and hopefully was more accurate than had been the case in the past. The current data was ready for analysis and would be brought to the next TLA Committee meeting; this would also be followed up with the chair of the committee, S Pickett

Action: TLA Committee (Spring 2 meeting)

- The Headteacher reported that the school's half-termly pupil progress meetings were proving useful, and had involved the use of a very helpful Diocesan paper on 'expected' progress. Staff were now more confident in this area generally but were not so confident in moving pupils from 'below expected' to 'expected'. It was also noted that the Headteacher / M Stokes were looking into the low number of pupils moving to 'above expected'. Overall, the current data was presenting a positive picture.

Action: Headteacher / M Stokes

- The committee had briefly discussed engagement with parents. It had been noted that the Headteacher was working on the idea of targeted homework across all year groups and the committee was supportive of her responding to feedback from parents about this.

Action: Headteacher

- There was a general invitation extended to all governors to attend the school's celebration assemblies on Friday afternoons. B Scott-Harden noted that she had been attending.

- C Tompkins had undertaken an audit of the school website against the Ofsted checklist and felt that the site was mostly compliant. She and the Headteacher planned to add a parental information page and to bring the website more in line with that of some other schools and to make it more child and learning centred.

Action: C Tompkins / Headteacher

- A sheet was tabled (which had been taken to the recent TLA Committee) giving an update on the Reception / Early Years data, context, strengths, areas for development. Governors were reminded that the Teaching and Learning Team had been established to look at data / pupil progress in more detail (this team included the Headteacher).
- It was noted that the Headteacher would be meeting with the Deputy Head later in the week to talk about her return from sick leave.

Ethos Committee (EC) – 14 December 2017

A Shipton presented the above draft minutes, which had been circulated. The main points were as follows:

- The review of ethos / vision / mission / aims had already been dealt with earlier in the meeting.
- A Shipton felt the GB / school was still to 'get to grips' fully with the involvement of pupils / classes in collective worship. The idea had been put forward for each class to take it in turns to put together their own class worship session (to reflect on a faith-related theme).
- **Reference was also made to the new RE curriculum, and it was queried how this was operating in school and how staff were responding to it.** The Headteacher pointed out that the school as a whole had not looked at this as yet and she felt it would necessitate some whole staff training; however, she added that she had undergone the training and had used the new curriculum in Y2 and felt it was excellent. Timescales were discussed, and governors acknowledged that it would be good for staff to have the necessary training. The importance of the RE curriculum being presented in an exciting and meaningful way was emphasised. However, it was also felt that, although it would fit in well with the notion of 'challenge in depth', there was a concern about bringing in something else new for the staff at this point, although it was felt that it would be possible to look at the worship aspect mentioned above. There was some discussion of the possibility of the school being able to work with other CE schools on the RE curriculum and/or looking to borrow resources / materials.

Finance, Staffing and Premises (FSP) Committee

There were no recent minutes to consider as the next meeting was not due to take place until 7 February. A recent financial headlines report (as at 19 January 2018) was tabled and the main points were highlighted.

- With reference to the intake of 'rising 3s', it was noted that an extra five children had been admitted and there was a waiting list to take in more in April.
- There had been some additional income from Nursery lunches; although this was not a lot of additional funding, it was felt that the offer of longer days was making the Nursery a more attractive option for parents. UIFSM had also brought in some useful income.

- The Headteacher was to try and ensure that there was a 100% response rate in respect of Nursery / Reception parents' details to fully capitalise on additional income.

Action: Headteacher

- The financial headlines report was **received**.

9. **Headteacher's Update**

The Headteacher summarised a report the LA's Head of School Effectiveness, Ian Dawson, had produced from two recent visits he had made to the school. He had felt that school leaders were taking effective action but there was still work to be done, particularly in embedding new teaching, learning and accountability systems. **In response to a query, the Headteacher highlighted the areas for improvement in the report.** It was noted that this report dated from the end of November 2017; I Dawson would continue to check from the LA's perspective that progress was being made, but otherwise support arrangements would pass to D Bailey.

There was some discussion of / update on the school action plan, including the following areas: attendance; teaching and learning; monitoring and assessment; book scrutiny.

There were queries raised to do with the use of the SIMS system in relation to monitoring of attendance, and also the use of a cashless system in school. It was felt that it would be useful to ask Gillian Purvis about the systems used at Dinnington First School.

Action: Query about systems at Dinnington First School

The Headteacher again made reference to the work of the school's Teaching and Learning Team. She felt the school's planning agenda would need 'unpicking' (why / what was being done and the impact). She also emphasised the importance of having a reflective and challenging culture in school, although noting that this would, initially, create more work for the staff.

There were queries, and discussion, of the best way for the GB to look at how changed policies were impacting / working in action in school, and also whether / how / which of the policies should come through the full GB. It was noted that impact would be reviewed at the next TLA Committee meeting.

Action: TLA Committee

A contextual overview paper was tabled for information; this summarised the whole school and the individual classes in terms of: numbers on roll, male/female pupils, EAL, FSM, BME, SEND, Pupil Premium and term of birth.

The Headteacher referred to recent changes to the Ofsted inspection framework.

A safeguarding walk was to be arranged with the Safeguarding Link Governor (A Shipton).

Action: A Shipton / Headteacher

It was noted that it was important for Link Governors to continue to carry out regular monitoring visits.

Action: Link Governors

10. Chair of Governors' Update

Both the Chair and Headteacher had chased up the LA (Deb Tyler) about expansion feasibility; there was nothing further to report at this point and further information was awaited from the LA.

Action: Information awaited from LA

It was suggested that there needed to be a working group or a regular discussion item at a GB committee meeting to focus on the school's long term sustainability. Reference was made to previous discussions around the notions of 'thinking outside the box' and being imaginative / ambitious.

The Chair referred to a recent she had attended, which had been arranged by the Chair of the GST to update the GST Foundation Trust Governors. A large section of the meeting had been to do with admissions / expansion; she reminded governors that other Gosforth first schools were increasing in size / capacity.

The Chair also made reference to the ERG which had taken place towards the end of last term; the report / action plan arising from the review had been circulated to everyone. She would be revisiting these documents and contacting governors accordingly.

Action: Chair

The Chair reported that, following a questionnaire and some one-to-one meetings, she and the Headteacher would be looking at opportunities to work through some of the issues identified with the staff.

Action: Chair / Headteacher

Governors were referred to this term's GoverNews newsletter from Governor Services, and particularly to the governor training sessions on offer this and next term.

11. Any Budget / Financial Monitoring Items

Budget / financial items would be discussed in detail at the FSP Committee meeting on 7 February, and the outcome of the discussion would be brought back to the next GB meeting in March.

Action: FSP Committee / GB

12. Approval of Staff Training Days / School Terms and Holidays

The following staff training days were **agreed**:

3 September 2018; 26 October 2018; 3 June 2019

Governors also **agreed** that the school terms and holidays for the same period (2018/19) would be as per the LA's published calendar.

13. Gosforth Schools Trust (GST) Items

The main items of discussion at the most recent GST Board meeting (19 December) were outlined.

The Headteacher outlined the positive aspects / benefits for the school of working within the GST. However, it was not clear whether there were any particular financial savings as a result of the school's membership. She referred to a twilight session (Maths across the curriculum) which was taking place soon, and also a GST data day the following week, which she felt should be particularly interesting.

Action: GST staff training

14. LA Reports – Spring Term 2018

A pack of LA reports had been circulated and the reports were **noted**, subject to the following comments being made:

- Governors **agreed** the school's admissions policy / arrangements for 2019/20.
- It was noted that the school's exclusion arrangements were covered in the Behaviour Policy.
- It was noted that the Headteacher was the Designated Teacher for LAC and S Pickett was the LAC Link Governor.
- **There were queries and discussion about the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR);** all organisations would need to be compliant by the due date in May 2018. It was suggested that the school might speak to GCMS about what they were doing in this respect.

Action: GDPR

15. Any Other Business

The Headteacher was to circulate a data dashboard summary to governors.

Action: Headteacher

There was a query about the school friendship group (arrangements, how it was working) and about the possibility of receiving an update.

Action: Friendship group update

It was reported that the caretaker would be leaving the school at half-term to take up a post at another school elsewhere. A collection was being organised in school. **There was a query, and some discussion, about the arrangements in place to appoint a replacement.**

Action: Replacement of school caretaker

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

Sarah Miller
20/3/2018.