

Bevendean Primary School

Heath Hill Avenue

Full Governing Body

Minutes of the Meeting on Thursday 30th March 2017
at 5.00pm.

Present: Mark Back (Chair), Rachal Daniels, Teresa Goble, Sidonie Kenward, Mo Marsh Emily Winslade, Katie Blood, Martyn Giddens (Headteacher), Mark Dally (Associate Member), Alison McManaman (Local Authority HR Advisor), Juliet McCaffery (Guest), Andy Thomas (Clerk).

1. Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present, including Alison McManaman (AM) who had been invited in relation to item 7; and Juliet McCaffery (JM) who was a guest and prospective Governor as per item 21 (she would be asked to leave prior to that item).

The Chair also congratulated KB who had been appointed as the Headteacher at another school.

2. Quoracy of meeting

The required quorum was five Governors. The meeting was therefore quorate.

3. Apologies/ attendance list

An attendance list was circulated and signed by those present. Apologies had been received from Jo Whitmore.

4. Consideration of apologies

Apologies were duly accepted.

5. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

6. Minutes of previous meeting(s)

a) Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body meeting on Thursday 8 December 2016 had been circulated.

b) Approval of minutes

The above minutes were agreed and duly signed by the Chair.

c) Matters arising from above

There were no matters arising.

7. GMB pay dispute – update from Alison McManaman B&H HR

Alison McManaman was asked to update the Governing Body and she and MG reported as follows:

- GMB and Unison had lodged a collective dispute on the matter of pay protection arising from the closure of a previous after school club.
- The matter was now resolved following the withdrawal of the collective dispute by GMB and no further correspondence having been received from Unison. .
- A decision had originally been made to apply 1 year of pay protection, based on advice from the Local Authority. Unfortunately the advice received was not complete and did not include reference to the need for the school to adopt its own pay protection policy.
- The model policies were agreed with the unions and with the benefit of hindsight the proposal to apply 1 year pay protection should have been discussed with them.
- The unions preferred the Local Authority to adopt model policies in full and they had challenged the arrangements made in this case by Bevendean Primary on a point of principle.
- It was to be noted that the staff concerned had indicated that they were content with the pay protection arrangements offered, but there was a wider context.
- The unions had sought the application of 3 years pay protection as per the Local Authority policy. There had been a lack of clarity on whether schools were obliged to adopt that policy.
- Following subsequent discussions the collective dispute was withdrawn and 18 months of pay protection had been applied (1 year at 100%; a further six months at 75%).
- The matter of the advice originally received from the Local Authority had also been discussed and resolved. This area was being kept under review given the increasing trend for schools to adopt their own policies.
- The LA had funded the additional pay protection for the school staff.
- The school had held a meeting with the staff concerned but it appeared that they were unaware of the collective dispute. They had been content with 1 year's pay protection but were pleased with the increased protection of 18 months.
- The school's delegated authority in this area had been unclear and legal advice was being taken by the Local Authority. There was no case law on the issue and it was considered likely that the discretion to either adopt the model policy or an alternative school policy sat with the Governing Body.
- The legal advice would be relayed to the school when received. **ACTION – AM**

The following questions were asked:

- ***Had there been learning on both sides?*** This was confirmed.
- ***Might the adoption of a discrete school policy involve protracted talks with the unions?*** The immediate pay protection issue was now resolved. Minor changes might be relatively uncontentious but there was a need to be conscious of the balance between the benefits of seeking changes and the time and resources involved in doing so. The adoption of model policies was more straightforward. Liaison between the school and the LA would take place as required in relation to policies subject to review.

- **Could additional support have been given throughout the consultation process?** It had been decided that formal minutes of any 1:1 interviews with staff would be taken in the future. A full and proper audit trail would be established. Also there would be a heightened awareness of any issues which may cause contention with the unions.

The Governing Body expressed its thanks to AM for her support during the process. It was noted that the Local Authority had offered to follow up and meet with the school further. The GB welcomed the support received from the Local Authority.

8. Minutes of sub-committees

a) Curriculum, Standards and Welfare – 13 October 2016

The minutes were noted.

b) Finance, Personnel and Premises – 23 November 2016

The minutes were noted.

9. Matters arising from sub-committees

No matters were identified for discussion.

10. Current membership of Governing Body/ vacancy filling

a) Parent Governor vacancies

There were currently 2 Parent Governor vacancies. No responses had been received to a recent newsletter calling for nominations from parents.

It was recommended that EJW be converted from Co-Opted Governor status to a Parent Governor, thus reducing the number of Parent Governor vacancies to one. The Local Authority had advised that this was possible due to the recent closure of a nomination process. This was agreed and the Local Authority would be duly informed. **ACTION - AT**

The following questions were asked:

- **Did parents understand the role of Governors?** Information had gone out to parents. At a recent meeting of GB Chairs and Headteacher, it had been decided to revamp/ simplify the material and re-issue. This approach was endorsed. **ACTION – EJW/ AT**
- **Should Governors engage with parents?** This was agreed. **ACTION – Govs.**
- **Should posters etc be placed in local businesses?** There was sufficient interest in the Co-Opted Governor vacancies and matters were in hand in relation to the remaining Parent Governor vacancy.
- **Were those interested in the Co-Opted Governor vacancies from the local community?** This was confirmed.

b) Staff Governor vacancy

It was noted that the Staff Governor post was vacant. Following a call for nominations there were two candidates and arrangements to conduct a ballot following the Easter break were in hand.

c) Co-opted Governor vacancies

Prior to the meeting there had been 2 Co-Opted Governor vacancies. This number had now risen to 3 as a consequence of the decision to convert EJW to Parent Governor status (see above). A number of expressions of interest had been received and liaison was ongoing.

11. Headteacher's Report

Reference was made to the written report and associated documentation circulated in advance of the meeting. The following key issues were highlighted:

- *Code of conduct for parent meetings:* A code of conduct/ etiquette guide was being produced for meetings with parents. The GB would be kept up-to-date with developments. **ACTION - MG**
- *SEN data:* There was a lot of data available. A meeting with the Local Authority on this matter was pending. There was a shortfall of some £30k in relation to associated staff costs. Any difficulties in supporting SEN pupils were being pursued in terms of adjustments.
- *Budget:* There was a projected shortfall of £117k in the following year. However an expected healthy carry forward would offset some of this. £46k had been lost through a reduction in pupil numbers and other factors. The total core budget would be £1.5M, plus a £56k 'top-up'; £72k EYFS funding; and £216k Pupil Premium funding. This would give a grand total of around £1.8M.
- *SPA report:* The report had been circulated. The SPA had made two visits, looked at all aspects and undertook a Learning Walk. The SPA was impressed and had reported a positive experience. Some suggestions had emerged but there were no key concerns. It was noted that the process may not continue in the same format. Governors agreed to review the report. **ACTION - Govs**
- *Predicated outcomes:* KS1 was at or above floor standards – some minor amendments to the data would be made and circulated. KS2 data was strong and upper school data was good. SATs were due after Easter. **ACTION – MG**
- *Business Manager:* The current incumbent Martin Brown (MoB) had resigned and was due to leave in May. This was disappointing. Recruitment for a replacement was underway but there had been no interest as yet. There may be no Business Manager in post for a period of time.
- *Staffing:* Two staff were on maternity leave – preferences had been indicated and plans underway accordingly. There were also two support staff on long-term sick leave. Maternity absence insurance was in place and had proved worthwhile. A similar arrangement for support staff had been considered but was not cost effective. The Local Authority were also looking into this area and it was possible that something could be bought in. Also measures to encourage staff to return to work (including phased returns) were being considered.
- *Grounds maintenance:* A new school grounds maintenance company (John O'Connor's) had been employed and was producing good results. The grounds were looking good and Governors were invited to tour the school to assess the work undertaken.

- **Security:** A new intercom entry system had been installed. Some SEN pupils had been found exiting the school and the new keypad security mechanism should prevent this. There was a master switch in the main office.

The following questions were asked:

- ***In relation to SEN was the school obliged to implement recommendations from the educational psychologist despite a lack of funding?*** There was no such obligation. Support was likely to be general and curriculum based, and what was possible within existing resources would be taken forward.
- ***Were SPAs under threat?*** Partnership arrangements were being considered and the situation was continuing to be monitored.
- ***Regarding the Business Manager vacancy, could either the previous school bursar or someone from the Unity Partnership be engaged as an interim measure?*** These suggestions were noted, however it was reported that Local Authority could process BACS payments; office staff could raise orders; and staff were putting in extra hours. The situation was manageable.
- ***Re: staff sick absence, for how long did pay continue?*** This was confirmed as 6 months.
- ***What the role of any occupational health provider and did the Local Authority undertake home visits?*** The occupational health service was not 'hands on' and no home visits were undertaken.
- ***In respect of security, how were pupils able to exit the premises?*** Pupils had used various methods to exit and this had now been addressed.
- ***Was the Attendance Officer continuing in post?*** Funding was being sought from the Local Authority – the position had been established initially through Pupil Premium funding. An attendance rate of 95% had been achieved.
- ***The local BeCCA nurse was closing at Easter – did this create an opportunity to widen the age range at the school nursery?*** Discussions on this were ongoing and school adoptions were being looked at.
- ***Could a whole-day nursery be introduced?*** At present there was only funding for half the week. There were limitations as the nursery was running during the first part of the week. In addition, accommodating different age ranges was problematic.

MG was thanked for his report.

12. Finance Update

Covered under item 11.

13. Unity Partnership Collaboration Agreement

A proposed template agreement had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This had gone out to all schools in the Unity Partnership. It was agreed that the key benefits would be pooling resources and sharing panel members etc. It was agreed that the draft should be modified accordingly and a response submitted. **ACTION - MB**

14. Link Governor reports

No reports had been received. It was noted that Mo Marsh (MM) would not be in a position to continue as SEN Link in the event that she was elected Mayor. A replacement would be needed. **ACTION - MB**

15. Governors' Visit

Three reports of the recent Governors' Visit day had been received. The following comments from the authors were made:

- *The school council meeting had been very good*
- *It was apparent that the school was acting on feedback from surveys*
- *There was impressive engagement with pupils*
- *It was impressive that pupils were readily expressing opinions*

The reports were duly noted.

16. Training

Training was available via the Local Authority and was advertised accordingly.

It was noted that there was a requirement for additional Governors to be trained in the area of Headteacher appraisal. SK volunteered for this and Governors undertook to inform the Clerk of interest. **ACTION – Govs.**

The 'Parent Council UK' website was noted. Details were included in the Local Authority newsletter for Governors. The focus was on engagement with parents. An associated training course was scheduled for 24 May. The Local Authority was also due to hold a 'stakeholder' course later in the year.

17. Safeguarding

It had been agreed that this should be standing item on the FGB agenda.

A Link Governor visit had been undertaken and a report was awaited. All lead staff had been trained as required. An update for all staff was due to be undertaken during the next scheduled Inset Day. All requirements were in place and matters were progressing well.

18. Policies

It was noted that a policy covering adverse parent behaviour had been discussed and was being taken forward. It was reported that things had been quiet in this area over recent months. It was also noted that other schools had experienced similar issues from time-to-time. It was agreed that the proposed policy should be adopted and placed on the website. **ACTION - MG**

It was noted that a range of school policies were being reviewed through the Governing Body's Sub-Committees. A number of these had been updated, agreed and placed on the school website. This was noted/ welcomed.

An invitation to parents to review updated policies via the website would be included in a forthcoming newsletter. **ACTION - MG**

19. Chair's correspondence

a) Succession planning

It was reported that this was MB's last term as GB Chair (although he would remain a Governor). There were various options including Co-Chairs and/ or Sub-Committee Chairs acting as Vice Chairs. There were associated courses and guidance available from the Local Authority and National Governors' Association (NGA). Those present agreed to consider the matter further. **ACTION – Govs.**
b) Apprenticeship Levy

It was noted that the school was obliged to contribute £6k to this Government scheme, in line with all organisations employing over a particular number of staff.

The following question was asked:

- **Was there a benefit to the school from this scheme?** There would be opportunities to employ apprentices but their salaries would need to be met by the school. University students could also be engaged. It may be possible to employ apprentice TAs but this may cause practical difficulties. There was no direct and/ or immediate return on the school's 'investment'.

Following discussion it was agreed to approach the Unity Partnership with a view to submitting a formal objection to the compulsory levy. **ACTION - MB**

20. Clerk's matters

a) Governors' website profiles

Four profiles had been received from Governors so far and a request for those outstanding to be submitted was made. A template had been re-issued earlier that day for the attention of Governors. It was agreed that outstanding profiles should be submitted by the Easter break where possible. **ACTION – Govs.**

At this point Juliet McCaffery (JM) left the meeting prior to Item 21 being taken.

21. Co-opted Governor application - J McCaffery

A formal application for Co-Opted Governor had been received from Juliet McCaffery. This had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Following discussion it was agreed/ noted that JM had good qualities; was experienced; had been a Governor elsewhere; had a good skill set; and had a history of hard work and dedication. JM's application was agreed and would be actioned accordingly. **ACTION – AT**

The additional expressions of interest in relation to Co-Opted Governor vacancies were again noted as per the discussion earlier in the meeting.

22. AOB

There were no items of other business.

23. Date of next meeting (budget) – Thursday 25th May 2017 @5.00pm

It was confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 25 May at 5.00pm. It was noted that this was an important meeting as it would be considering the budget for the following year.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

***** Action points from FGB meeting held on 30 March 2017*****

Action	By	Person responsible
1. Relay legal advice on pay agreements to the school	ASAP	AM
2. Inform LA of EJW's conversion to Parent Governor	ASAP	AT
3. Revamp parent governor nomination material and re-issue	In due course	EJW/ AT
4. Governors to engage with parents in relation to parent Governor vacancy	Ongoing	Govs.
5. Update GB on code of conduct for meetings with parents	In due course	MG
6. Review SPA report	In due course	Govs.
7. Circulate revised KS1 data	In due course	MG
8. Take forward Unity Partnership agreement	In due course	MB
9. Replace SEN Link Governor as necessary	As required	MB
10. Consider HT appraisal training	ASAP	Govs.
11. Adopt parent behaviour policy and place on website	In due course	MG
12. Include invitation to view policies on website in parent newsletter	In due course	MG
13. Consider GB succession planning	By next FGB meeting	Govs.
14. Take forward formal objection to compulsory apprenticeship levy	In due course	MB
15. Submit website profiles	By Easter break	Govs.
16. Take forward appointment of new Co-Opted Governor	ASAP	AT