



SHIRLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PRE-SCHOOL
Minutes of a Virtual the Meeting of the Standards Committee
held at 4pm on Tuesday, 3 November 2020

Governors Present: Louisa Meynell (LM) (Chair)
 Iman Ibn Tahaikt (IIT)
 Ian Glover (IG) (Vice-chair)
 John Cattermole (JC) (Headteacher)
 Jenn Abecina (JA)

Also Present: Suzanne Wernham (SW) (Deputy Headteacher)
 Diane Mitchell (DM) (Deputy Headteacher)
 Andrew Pulham (CK) (Clerk)

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Rhiannon Evans-Ali, Jennifer Thomas and Mark Broadbent and these were recorded as authorised.

Governors noted that this would have been Jennifer Thomas' final committee before her retirement as a Parent Governor. They asked to be placed on record their thanks for her significant contribution to the governance of the school over her four year term.

2. Declarations of interests

None declared.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-chair

CK confirmed that LM had self-nominated to serve as Chair of Standards for a further year. No other nomination having been received, LM then withdrew from the meeting.

Governors agreed on a unanimous basis that LM be elected as Chair of Standards for 2020/21. LM then re-joined the meeting.

CK reminded Governors the current Vice-chair, Jennifer Thomas, would be retiring following this meeting and that it was necessary to elect a new Vice-chair.

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IG confirmed his willingness to serve as Vice-chair of Standards for the coming year. No other nomination having been received IG then withdrew from the meeting.

Governors agreed on a unanimous basis that IG be elected as Vice-chair of Standards for 2020/21. IG then re-joined the meeting.

4. Notification of urgent business

The Chair agreed that JC would raise the matter of Governor attendance at virtual meetings for prospective parents of the 2021 EYFS intake, under agenda item 11.

5. Minutes of the meeting on 16 June 2020

These were agreed without amendment.

6. Matters arising not on current agenda

There were no matter arising.

7. Monitoring of standards

i) Attendance report

JC took Governors through his report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. He reminded Governors of the process the school must follow when dealing with attendance issues, including the sending of letters as required.

Governors were pleased to note the whole school attendance rate of 91.1% compared to the national average of 90%.

Governors noted also the number of pupils currently being electively home educated. In response to a question from Governors JC confirmed that unless there are any safeguarding concerns, it is a parent's absolute right to withdraw their child on this basis. Whereas they used to receive a letter from Cambs CC and a visit, parents now receive a single telephone call to confirm their decision and after that there is no further contact, again unless safeguarding concerns arise.

In response to a question from Governors, JC confirmed that the school was able to monitor and report on the attendance of pupils by ethnic background, although most do not present a concern. By far the most significant cohort was that addressed within his report.

JC confirmed that Covid-19 had affected attendance rates, although parental concerns appeared to be abating. Six pupils were absent from school on 3 November for Covid-19 related reasons, primarily because families were self-isolating and/or awaiting a test result.

Governors were pleased to note the high and improving levels of punctuality of pupils at the school and expressed their support for the current and proposed actions the school is taking to promote pupil attendance.

ii) Data report and targets

DM and JC took Governors through this report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Governors noted the positive position in respect of Reception and agreed the outlook was encouraging – especially in respect of the fresh emphasis on phonics. Governors asked that

their thanks to the Friends of Shirley School for its funding of the phonics initiative be recorded in the minutes.

Governors asked the following question:

Q. How can we support parents to encourage their children to read at home?

A. (DM) We are aware of this challenge and we have developed a plan for this which is about to be launched. It involves sending books in a Covid-19 secure way and it will be augmented by the setting of some homework using the school website as the platform.

Governors noted the continued emphasis on the use of phonics for pupils in Year 1.

In respect of Year 2, JC confirmed that screening is being undertaken at the request of Government. The results of the baseline assessments were discussed together with the steps the school is taking to address areas for improvement.

Governors asked the following questions:

Q. How can teachers teach successfully across such a wide ability range at the same time – from 'significantly below' to 'expected standard'?

A. (DM) This is an undoubted challenge. The expectation is that every child should progress and be challenged accordingly. It is a function of the skills and abilities of the teacher, their knowledge of individual pupils and the deployment of TAs to best effect.

Q. Are there sufficient TAs in Year 6 to meet the challenge?

A. (SW) Yes, we have sufficient TAs and this is a situation where the use of PiXL as a diagnostic tool really comes into its own.

Governors expressed their support for the activities outlined in the report. They asked that a future edition of this report also give an indication of the situation in respect of Years 3, 4 & 5.

Action: Next report to also include data in respect of Years 3, 4 & 5.

iii) Recovery curriculum

DM took Governors through this report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

DM confirmed that children and staff had spoken very positively of the modified curriculum currently in operation at the school. She explained how the transition back towards a more 'traditional' curriculum will be managed at the appropriate time.

Governors expressed a wish that some of the recent initiatives such as the emphasis on outdoor learning might be carried forward into future arrangements.

Governors commended the staff for the significant amount of work that had clearly been done to develop and deliver this amended curriculum.

iv) Pupil, staff and parent questionnaires

a. Staff Questionnaire

JC summarised the main findings of the staff questionnaire which had been set up to gauge thoughts and feelings around lockdown and its impact on staff and pupils and advised how these would be used as a basis for developments within the school. Governors expressed their strong support for the use of staff surveys and asked for their support and thanks for the continued hard work of staff to be minuted.

b. Pupil Questionnaire

DM drew Governors' attention to the largely positive views expressed by pupils and suggested the adaptability this signified was particularly noteworthy.

The development opportunities that had been identified through analysis of the questionnaire were discussed and these were acknowledged and supported by the Governors.

Governors asked the following question:

Q. How can 'non-core' activities such as music be accommodated within the current curriculum arrangements?

A. (JC) We continue to deliver a 'broad and balanced' curriculum. In respect of music, whilst singing cannot be allowed in large settings (e.g. assemblies) it is possible and is being enjoyed in small group settings.

c. Parent Questionnaire

DM confirmed that 110 parents had responded to this questionnaire. Key findings along with opportunities for improvement were then discussed. DM confirmed that some of the issues raised in the survey would be addressed through the introduction of homework and discussions with parents during the forthcoming parents' evenings

In summary, Governors recognised the importance of regular surveys of staff, pupils and parents and supported their continued use. They thanked all staff involved for ensuring these surveys were able to be completed this year.

v) Homework and remote learning plans

DM took Governors through this report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The importance of the school having this plan, particularly should another full lockdown be imposed, was agreed.

DM confirmed that 'MS Teams' will increasingly be used as the platform to deliver home learning, including the downloading and uploading of homework for Year 6 pupils and this approach was supported by Governors.

Governors asked the following question:

Q. Is any central support/sharing of experiences taking place in respect of delivering teaching on platforms such as 'MS Teams'?

A. (JC) Whilst there is little in the way of central support or advice, the 'CB4 cluster' of which Shirley is a member is sharing knowledge and experiences on a regular basis.

vi) Inclusion

SW took Governors through this report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Governors noted the position in respect of SEND pupils, which is significantly higher than the national figures. Possible reasons for this and the school's strategy for addressing the issue were discussed. SW confirmed that the recently appointed Family Inclusion Officer role had contributed significantly to the Inclusion team's ability to cover the ground in labour intensive areas such as the preparation and submission of EHCPs.

Governors were advised that there had been a significant uplift in the requirement for pupil mental health support across the county. They noted that the additional mental health support for pupils documented in SW's report would be in addition to that currently available under the 'Blue Smile' service already operational at the school.

Governors were pleased to note that support in these areas is being provided and expressed their encouragement and support for the initiatives outlined in SW's report.

Governors asked the following question:

Q. How can we as Governors communicate the existence of initiatives such as these to parents and, more widely, let them know of the many other initiatives and actions in place at the school?

A. (JC and LM) There is clearly an opportunity here and it would be good to develop a communications strategy.

Action: A Governor group to be set up to work on a communications strategy, perhaps using 'MS Sway' as the platform. Initial membership proposed as LM, IIT, MB and JC, with CK supporting/facilitating as required.

8. Policy reviews

i) Remote Learning Policy

This was adopted without amendment. Proposed LM, seconded JC, agreed unanimously.

ii) Governor Visits Policy

In respect of the process to be followed following a Governor visit and as outlined at the foot of page three of the policy, Governors agreed that should they have significant concerns as a result of a visit they would have the option of notifying the Headteacher direct, without first having to check their report for accuracy or indeed for any other reason with the member of staff concerned. On the basis of that understanding it was agreed that a further modification to the policy as proposed was not required.

JC reminded Governors of the need for all linked Governors to arrange a regular series of monitoring visits and it was agreed that for 2020/21 Governors should each aim to undertake no fewer than two such visits. In a full school year, three visits (one per term) would be an appropriate frequency.

Actions:

- **JC to notify staff to begin arranging monitoring visits with linked Governor(s).**
- **SLT to update Appendix C to the policy, setting out the staff and Governor leads for each subject area.**

With the above actions agreed, adoption of the Governor Visits Policy as amended was proposed by LM, seconded by IG and agreed unanimously.

9. Governor visits

This was addressed under agenda item 8.

10. Updates from CCC

CK confirmed that all recent updates from CCC, including the 2020/21 training programme, had been circulated among Governors.

11. Urgent business accepted under agenda item 4

JC confirmed the date and times of the forthcoming virtual meetings with prospective EYFS parents as follows:

- 12 November at 10am
- 18 November at 1.30pm
- 26 November at 6pm

Each meeting/tour would last approximately one hour.

It was agreed that one Governor would be sought per session, to welcome those 'attending', to give a Governor's view of the school and to explain the work of the Governing Body.

Action: CK to email Governors with a request for volunteers. Governors to notify CK if they can assist.

12. Date and time of next meeting

This was confirmed as Tuesday, 26 January 2021 at 4pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 6:10pm

I confirm that at a meeting of _____ held on _____ these minutes were approved and agreed as being a true and correct record.

Signed _____

Position _____

Date _____

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Summary of Actions (not part of minutes)

Agenda Item	Action	Lead
7	Data and targets report to Standards Committee on 16/01/21 to include data for years 3, 4 & 5	SLT
7	Governor group to be set up to work on a communications strategy, perhaps using 'MS Sway' as the platform. Initial membership proposed as LM, IIT, MB and JC, with CK supporting/facilitating as required.	CK
8	JC to notify staff to begin arranging monitoring visits with linked Governor(s).	JC
8	SLT to update Appendix C to the policy, setting out the staff and Governor leads for each subject area	JC
11	CK to email Governors with a request for volunteers to 'attend' virtual meetings for prospective EYFS parents. Governors to notify CK if they can assist	CK