

Full Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 6th February 2013, 5.45pm

Attending: Alan Velecky (Chair), Ian Rothery (Vice-Chair), Emma Allen, Julie Harris, Mark Moody, Jo O'Donoghue, Alastair Pickering, Annie Schulte, Rosalyn St.Pierre, Sue Warren, Anne Baker and Sue Govus.

Minutes: David Rogers (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Stewart Hunt. Matt Kent was absent.

2. Declarations of Interest & Confidentiality Reminder

No declarations of business or pecuniary interests were made. Governors were reminded of the confidentiality of some items in this agenda.

3. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

There were no matters arising and no actions.

The minutes were agreed to be a fair record of the last meeting and signed by the Chair.

4. Questions / approval of Committee minutes

i. Strategy Committee 16/1/13

Not all Governors had yet logged in to RAISEonline. There was an Ofsted expectation that all Governors should be familiar with data and be able to question on this subject.

➤ All Governors should obtain the RAISEonline password from JO

A new Policy review process had been mapped out to streamline the practice. There was an update on the Federation/Partnership issue (see item 6).

The School's Christian Distinctiveness could be considered as achieving a 'satisfactory' grade and the target should now be 'good'. IR and JO were moving ahead with an action plan to achieve this.

➤ All Governors must inspect the website for evidence that key documents were present e.g. Equalities & Pupil Premium.

The PCC had formally asked AP, and he had agreed, to stay on until the end of the Academic Year. Governors considered the possibility of extending AP's Governorship.

ii. Learning Committee 23/1/13

Lesson Observations grading teaching had resulted in 7 good; 2 outstanding; 1 requiring improvement; with 1 not yet completed. There had been an update on use of the Pupil Premium from JO

Following feedback from Governors Services, EA had written a draft paper on the Link Governor Process and had researched frameworks for the Policy Review process.

iii. Well-being Committee 28/1/12

JO had made alteration to the staffing structure to obviate the discrepancy of Upper Pay Scale teachers being paid more without concomitant performance. The new Ofsted framework in particular related pay to performance.

5. Headteacher update

MM and JO had been to a meeting on the new Funding Formula. The new system was considered easier and more transparent but not favourable to schools with high SEN numbers. SEN funding will be done on an overall percentage basis and not related to individuals and JO considered that South Malling would be net losers.

➤ It was decided to examine the above issues in an Organisation Committee meeting.

SW said that the school would have to show what impact income was having on the progress of children with SEN. The value-for-money shown by use of Support Staff was relevant in this respect.

RS said that not all SEN 'extras' are included in the personal budget allowances to parents of children with SEN. It was not yet clear how this system would work overall. The allocation would be based on the past six years of end-of-Reception results.

The member of staff on an extended career break had resigned.

AS said that changes in practice included: increased pupil voice and staff observing others' teaching practice.

6. Academy / Federation update

The Academy Group's conclusions from last year had been that the Academy concept caused a shift of focus to business values – away from education. Federations, especially Soft Federation, appeared a better way of combining schools. However, there was a fear that Soft Federation might be the start of a path to Hard Federation, then to Academy.

IR & AS had attended a meeting of local schools to hear from the Cooperative College about Cooperative Trusts and had compiled a report called *Safeguarding Our Future (q.v.)*. The report outlines the pressure towards change; the options available and outlines next steps.

Cooperative Trusts may be a mechanism to prevent the unplanned drift to 'academisation'. Schools in Cooperatives can be Value and Education-driven and share good practice and economies of scale; could stay as Foundation Schools; have no executive Head and retain their own Governors. The Cooperative model emphasises localism and individual responsibility with a common good. It represents a nationwide Group with strong school clusters in the West Country.

Governors discussed the agendas of Priory School, who are also looking at the Cooperative model, other local Secondary Schools and the DfE, who are pushing toward Academies. AS said that the Teaching Unions were generally positive about Cooperatives and that staff could now be brought up to speed. It was decided to continue to monitor and assess the Priory School plan and continue to learn about other forms of partnership. It was felt that a single Governor should be deputed to monitor these issues. AV proposed that IR take on the above role. SW seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

- ✓ **IR agreed to take on the role of monitoring Federation/Partnership developments.**
- ✓ **It was decided that the best time to account to stakeholders would be at the point when a decision is made to move towards the consultation process.**
- **JO was asked to try to make initial contact with schools in the West Country who had created Cooperatives.**

7. FGB Development meeting follow-up / 3 year plan

AV and JO had two meetings to discuss this topic and had produced a draft three-year plan (q.v.). To the five areas discussed at the development meeting they had found it necessary to add a section to delineate the school's Basic Offer.

The plan attempts to define what *Outstanding* looks like without using Ofsted terms and should be driving any discretionary spending.

MM said that section 5 contained nothing about the built environment.

The field for Interim Goals should be decided and populated next. Then the process must be agreed with staff. JO undertook to discuss this in a staff meeting at start of next term

AV suggested a forum to consider the plan. Governors considered splitting the sections by Committee or by individual Governor.

- ✓ **It was decided to replace the next Strategy meeting with a Full Governors' meeting to discuss the Three-year Plan**

8. Role of Governors under new Ofsted framework

AV introduced a report analysing the Implications for Governance in the new Ofsted Framework (q.v.). The report delineates the things that Ofsted look for in the new framework and enumerates actions South Malling Governors should take to ensure compliance.

JO said that in recent school inspections in the County weak Governance had been picked up as a factor in failing schools.

Based on the report Governors decided:

- Documentation should be in a state of readiness for evidentiary purposes.
- Evidence of the independent judgement and monitoring of the school by Governors must be recorded. This would include Minutes; Link Governor Visit reports and the contents of the Website.
- Agenda items could be generated that track Ofsted headings.
- Now that policies were in a satisfactory state it was necessary to monitor their implementation and to document that monitoring for evidence.
- Plans should include methods to test their implementation and verify success.
- There should be a mind-set and culture within the school that transparency, observation and assessment of the quality of teaching and leadership are a positive thing.
- Governors needed a conduit of communication with parents.

- ✓ **It was decided to discuss these points further when considering the three-year plan.**

9. Policy Update Process & Statutory FGB approvals

JO outlined the proposed new policy review and approval process in which all policies would be assigned to a named Governor and a Staff Member.

A policy would be downloaded; changes negotiated between the Governor and the relevant Staff Member; the result sent to the Clerk to be electronically published as 'pending approval'; thence passed to the relevant Committee with a recommendation to approve; finally published as a usable Policy.

Governors discussed some points in the Missing Child Policy.

- **It was decided that EA would liaise with RS to make the alterations to the wording discussed.**
- ✓ **The Missing Child Policy was approved unanimously, subject to the changes discussed.**
- ✓ **Safeguarding policies including the Acceptable Use Agreement; Attendance Policy; E-Safety Policy; Positive Handling Policy; Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; Safer Recruitment Policy; Social Media Policy were approved unanimously.**
- ✓ **The Pay Policy was approved unanimously.**

10. Safeguarding update

The Main gates are now locked during the day.

11. Any Other Business

MM said that Schools Financial Value Statement would be brought to the next Full Governors' meeting. The completion deadline was 31st March.

AV proposed that the Governing Body join the National Governors' Association at a cost of £70.

- ✓ **Governors unanimously approved joining the NGA.**

12. Meeting closed at 7.35

Appendix 1 – Action Points

- 1) All Governors to obtain password for RAISEonline from JO.
- 2) JO to sound out W. Country schools about Partnership options.
- 3) AV to update meeting diary to change Strategy for FGB on 3-year plan.
- 4) EA to liaise with RS on changes to Missing Child policy and pass to Clerk.
- 5) AV to complete NGA membership.