



Full Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 26th March 2014, 5.45pm

Attending: Alan Velecky (Chair), Annie Schulte, Liz Kaye, Sarah Brydon, Jeremy Bamber, Ian Rothery, Stewart Hunt, Sue Warren, John Stockdale, Daniel Horan, Scott O'Brien, Jo O'Donoghue and Rosalyn St. Pierre

Minutes: David Rogers (Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Matt Kent.

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. Approval of Minutes of the last FGB meeting

Several alterations were proposed to the minutes. Approval was deferred to the next meeting.

- **The Clerk was instructed to prompt MK to investigate OVESCO.**

4. Learning from Ofsted Inspector Training

JO recounted Ofsted training of which she has undertaken the first phase. The training has given her a more positive view of the Ofsted inspection process than the perception which many teachers have that it is too narrowly focused on data. Although analysis of the school RAISEonline data is the starting point and is key to inspection judgments, the framework incorporates a broader focus on children's learning and whether they have a positive attitude to it – judged by attendance, engagement in class, what children say about their learning and what is in books. JO felt that the framework is consistent with her and the staff's vision for the school, and that the Ofsted 'Outstanding' grade is where South Malling needs to be.

In the latest version of the Ofsted framework, the Governors role has changed, in that inadequate governance means that the school will be evaluated as inadequate in relation to leadership and management. Governing Bodies need to show evidence of challenge, support and impact. How well do Governors understand and contribute to the school's strengths, contribute to self-evaluation of performance, monitor the impact of teaching throughout the school and decide on salary progression? JO emphasised the importance of 'so what?' questions.

◆ A Governor asked if Staff had been briefed on these ideas.

JO reported that she has brought the subject to Governors first because of meeting timescales. However, AS said that recent lesson observations had been changed based on learning from the Ofsted training.

RS said that recent Safeguarding training is peppered with ideas of support and challenge and that this should give Governors confidence to ask to see evidence. JO said that questioning must come from a knowledge-base and background

AV said that a change of mind-set to a more professional role was necessary. Governors are held to account by government and should be using similar methods to Ofsted between outside inspections. The visits and research projects Governors undertake must add value to the school.

JO said that the role of Governors has become more important than ever, and that this is positive in terms of it governors feeling that they are performing a worthwhile role.

Governors discussed how inter-committee communication could be improved to demonstrate challenge.



5. South Malling GB – the case for change to our operating model

JB outlined the case for change in the South Malling governance model. Pressure is on all East Sussex schools to recognise and adopt new frameworks. The idea of 'Total Governance' was discussed. Each Governor would take individual responsibility for some part of the total Governing Body duties, particularly making use of individual expertise.

Governors will need to make use of questioning frameworks from Ofsted or TEN Governor. A central data repository such as the Data Dashboard on the VLE would be constructed around Ofsted inspection headings and used to record actions, frame meetings and facilitate communication - thus reducing committee meeting time expenditure and duplication of effort. Governors discussed the ramifications of this model. The danger of specialization and losing sight of the big picture was highlighted. SMART targets were suggested as a way of dealing with lag between task assignment and completion.

Governors discussed how committee Action Points could be used as an audit trail of evidence for the impact of governance. Likewise Governor actions, directly fed into the SEF, would be evidentiary.

6. What we as governors need to know about our school

LK showed a presentation 'Knowing our School' (q.v.) outlining what Governors should know about their school from the starting point of Ofsted expectations as of the 2013 handbook.

The presentation asked 'What questions should we be asking?'

AV said that documents with answers to these questions and links to evidence should be available as live documents e.g. on the VLE.

JO said that the SEF is presently authored by the Head and should become a document of continuous change with input from the SLT and Governors.

JB suggested that each committee could be responsible for a part of the SEF.

LK said that the personal experience of visiting the school had been the most valuable learning method. LK distributed a checklist document from 'TEN Governor' for Governors to test their knowledge of the school.

AV emphasised the importance of governors having easy access via the VLE to pre-prepared answers to expected questions in the event of an Ofsted inspection.

7. Policies – update on process and procedures

IR updated Governors on the Policy review process: Policies exist to guide staff who are responsible for implementing them, and so Governors should be asking whether the policies are known and used by the intended users. IR commented that some policies are becoming longer and more complicated than is necessary.

To initiate the new process, Committee Chairs were asked to get their members to take responsibility for policy content and implementation.

AV said it would be part of the shift to 'total governance' to have individual Governors taking control of each policy. This should enable clear accountability and save meeting time.

Governors discussed the 'house style' of policies: some policies originate from the Local Authority and most curriculum policies are created in-house. It was agreed that wherever possible we should use generic Local Authority policies rather than 'reinvent the wheel'.

Governors considered the addition of an information tick box on the front of policy documents as designed by MK to act as an audit trail for updates to each policy.

- ✓ **Governors decided this amendment would be made to policies to include the name of the subcommittee responsible.**

8. Link Governor roles

JO explained the format of a Link meeting and the process and role of Link Governors for the benefit of new Governors

LK said link visits should be scheduled as soon as possible as Subject Leaders are in the process of producing plans for new curriculum.

- ✓ **DH undertook to be Link Governor for SEN**
- ✓ **SB undertook to be Link Governor for Humanities and PSHE**
- ✓ **SO undertook to be Link Governor for Maths and ICT**
- ✓ **JS undertook to be Link Governor for Literacy**



JO informed Link Governors of their Subject Leader's name. Subject Leaders would contact their respective Link Governor.

- **JO undertook to give each Subject Leader contact details for their Link Governor.**

LK petitioned Governors to volunteer for INSET days, parents' forums and newsletters.

- **SO undertook to write for the newsletter on 17th April.**
- **JB undertook to write for the newsletter on 16th May.**
- **IR undertook to write for the newsletter at the end of Term 6.**
- **AV undertook to write the first newsletter of next year.**
- **SB undertook to regularly attend the Parents' Forum.**

JS left the meeting at 19:20.

9. Next Steps

AV said that these had already been covered in previous agenda items.

10. Governor Training and Development policy

Governors considered the Training Policy developed by MK.

AV said that there should be some element of performance review of Governors and this could be done using peer support and using the coaching model. He suggested that two Full Governing Body meetings per year could have time allocated to paired discussion of individual governor development using Appendix 1 of the document as a self-evaluation tool. He also proposed that the Chair should also have a performance review using the framework in Appendix 5.

◆ A Governor asked about whole Governing Body training in this policy.

AV said that it was not specifically referenced in the policy.

LK suggested that the Partnership should be used in this respect.

- ✓ **It was decided to trial the governor self-assessment / development process at the last Full Governing Body meeting of the year and to decide whether to accept the policy on the basis of this trialling.**

11. Statutory Approvals and AOB

SW report the SFVS has been signed and submitted to the Local Authority.

JB suggested that it should be uploaded to the VLE.

- **SW undertook to send the SFVS document to the Clerk.**

12. Any Other Business

RS reported that East Sussex had undergone an Ofsted inspection. The overall determination was 'Good' with Adoption & Permanence given 'Outstanding' – the only Local Authority to be so graded.

RS reported that Council Officers had met with MK to discuss the parking situation - without informing RS. It was expected that bad parkers would be merely asked to move on (possibly by volunteer parents).

JO said that County have agreed to the funding of a drop-off point and that a parent has taken the lead on this.

RS said that two issues concerned the positive social contact aspect of dropping off and the suggestion that the Police HQ might move elsewhere if pressured.

DH shared an idea he had seen elsewhere of a database of personal preferences being created for appropriate thank-you gifts and leaving presents.

13. Meeting closed at 7.45



Appendix 1 – Action Points

- 1) The Clerk to prompt MK to investigate OVESCO.
- 2) JO to give each Subject Leader contact details for their Link Governor.
- 3) SW to send the SFVS document to the Clerk.
- 4) JB to write for the newsletter on 16th May.
- 5) IR to write for the newsletter at the end of Term 6.
- 6) AV to write for the first newsletter of next year.
- 7) SB to regularly attend the Parents' Forum.
- 8) SO to write for the newsletter on 17th April.

Appendix 2 – Key

- Action
- ✓ Resolution
- ◆ Governor Question