



Earley St. Peter's C.E. Primary School

GOVERNORS' MEETING

Tuesday 21st June 2016 at 7.30pm in the school

Minutes

Present: A. Barlow, H. Chaudhry, C. Ferris, H. Hobday, J. Ince, J. Newman, J. Peters (Chair), G. Reddie, B. Williams, J. Williams, J-A. Woods, H. Wooller (Head)

In attendance: M. Bisset (Deputy Head), S. Hales (Clerk)

Apologies for absence: A. Powley

		Action
1.	Opening Prayer Given by H. Hobday.	
2.	Apologies for Absence Accepted by the Governing Body.	
3.	Declaration of Business and Personal Interests Nothing new declared.	
4.	Minutes of the Meeting 9th May 2016 The minutes, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were unanimously agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.	
5.	Matters Arising from the Minutes <u>Personnel Committee – Appointment of Governors (page 1)</u> J. Peters confirmed the election of A. Powley as Staff Governor to replace K. Avenell whose term of office terminated in May 2016. <u>Approval of Policies & Governors' Visits (page 9)</u> It was agreed to carry forward the actions for J. Williams relating to third party risk assessments in the Lettings Policy, and A. Barlow's	J. Williams

	revision of the governors' visit report form following Ofsted comments.	A. Barlow
6.	<p>Headteacher's Verbal Update</p> <p>The Head explained the school Site Controller had been signed off on what unfortunately may prove to be long-term sick absence. In his absence the school had employed a security company to lock and unlock the school buildings. Other services would also be hired as needed. Governors conveyed good wishes to the Site Controller and his family.</p> <p>The Head confirmed that KS1 and KS2 SATs tests had been administered correctly and Y1 Phonics testing was ongoing. An LA visit also confirmed all tests had been carried out correctly.</p> <p>The Head shared the first draft of the school's Parliamentary Review article with governors. Governors were given time to read the article. The article emphasised the school's strong church links as well as its fusion of cultures. The challenges faced by the school's leadership and teaching team were highlighted.</p> <p><i>J. Newman arrived at 7.45pm.</i></p> <p>J. Peters felt the article provided a good summary of how far the school had come in a reasonably short space of time and invited governors to comment.</p> <p>Governors expressed their approval.</p> <p>B. Williams asked about the distribution of the Review. The Head confirmed hard copies and electronic copies would be sent to all primary schools across the UK and local feeder pre-schools.</p> <p>J. Peters requested the Review also be shared with the school community. The Head agreed. The Review would be available for distribution in September 2016. Copies would also be distributed to prospective new families.</p> <p>The Head presented photographs illustrating the variety of activities undertaken by the pupils at Earley St Peter's. Including Woodley Sports Week, Queen's 90th birthday celebrations and the Y6 trip to Rhos Y Gwaliau.</p> <p>J. Peters highlighted the benefit of having digital signage to share these images with parents.</p>	The Head

<p>Thanks were given to all members of staff attending the Y6 trip, led by Mr Hume. Thanks were also given to the SBM who had been involved with a great deal of the administrative support. The Head emphasised how the trip had challenged the children and how resilient they had been.</p> <p>The Head confirmed staff planning for 2016/2017 was complete with the full teaching team in place.</p> <p>The Head explained the new layout for report writing would be used for reports at the end of 2015/2016 academic year.</p> <p>Governors heard that transition packs had been created for vulnerable children who would also visit their new classrooms during the next four weeks.</p> <p>The Head confirmed discussions and briefings had taken place with the LA and Diocese relating to Academy conversion.</p> <p>J. Williams asked for clarification about who attended these meetings. In response, the Head confirmed that alongside herself, J. Peters, G.Reddie, M. Bisset (Deputy Head) and the SBM had all been involved. These meetings had provided a clear picture of what was happening at both a local and national level.</p> <p>J. Peters thanked the Head for providing a comprehensive overview.</p>	
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<p>7.</p>	<p>Academy Conversion - Update</p> <p>Prior to the meeting all governors had received, as requested, literature detailing the process of academy conversion and an example of the prescribed legal structure of a multi academy trust (MAT).</p> <p>J. Peters asked G. Reddie to provide an update.</p> <p>G. Reddie reiterated that at the last meeting Governors had given approval to investigating the possibility of converting to an academy and forming a MAT. Given the uncertainty around compulsory conversion, the prospect of diminishing support from the Local Authority and the desire to avoid being forced to join a large impersonal MAT, pursuing voluntary conversion on appropriate terms remained the prudent course. The most attractive option appeared to be the formation of a MAT comprising VA (possibly VC) primary schools. There remained other possibilities but this offered a clear path to preserving the identity and ethos of the school. In order to make a MAT financially viable the recommended number of pupils was 1000 to 1200. There were no geographical boundaries in the process but realistically there should be a reasonable distance between schools. The next step would be to identify some schools to speak with, on an informal basis. It would be important to ensure discretion initially to minimise unhelpful rumours, which could be very damaging. It was essential to bear in mind that not only schools but governing bodies would have to be like minded and inevitably some discussions could prove unproductive. As had been discussed previously, the school was in a strong position but other schools were already actively pursuing academy conversion and it was important not to miss opportunities. Governors were therefore being asked to agree to conversion in principle, to making contact with the DfE at the appropriate time and to opening discussions with some suitable schools. Nothing would be set in stone at this stage and maximum flexibility could be preserved. Negotiations needed to be handled carefully to clarify that the partnership suited all schools involved. The earliest realistic date for conversion would be September 2017 although a July conversion might be expedient to fit in better with the school year. Much discussion and consultation would be necessary, but it was necessary to take initial steps to evolve some firm recommendations upon which to base the formal consultation process.</p> <p>A. Barlow and H. Hobday asked about the timescales involved and whether there was a time limit to the process.</p> <p>In response, G. Reddie confirmed the timescale for conversion should be 6 months from formal commencement but was dependent on issues brought to light during discussions and consultation.</p> <p>J. Peters emphasised governing bodies of all potential partners would have to hold discussions as part of the process and stressed that</p>	
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	<p>governors should approach discussions as leaders.</p> <p>A. Barlow asked about documenting objectives for partnership discussions.</p> <p>In response the Head confirmed a list of non-negotiables needed to be created which would not be compromised on.</p> <p>J. Peters suggested the Headteacher recruitment document be used as a starting point. This embraced the school ethos and had helped to hone the governing body's values.</p> <p>B. Williams sought confirmation whether consideration should be given only to partnering with primary schools.</p> <p>In response the Head suggested the initial focus should fall within the primary range but could comprise separate infant and junior schools.</p> <p>At the request of Governors the Head presented examples of potential benefits to be gained for pupils from academy conversion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early conversion would help support the school's move towards an Ofsted ranking of Outstanding and improve pupils' educational outcomes. • Academy status provided schools with a freedom to innovate. For example, with gifted and talented workshops across MATs; schools within a MAT managing different subject areas i.e. writing, music, arts and sports. • Economies of scale may be achieved in provision of support for Pupil Premium and SEN (LA support for this group is diminishing already), and with a large team of staff SENCOs, specialism of their efforts i.e. pastoral and special needs support. • Cross fertilisation of ideas amongst a new/larger team of staff. • Benefit could be gained from joining with schools located in different environments – nature reserve/playing fields. • Staff specialisms were possible as part of a MAT: CPD, moderation, quality assurance. • NQTs could find more opportunities to develop throughout the schools joined in a MAT. <p>J. Peters thanked the Head, G. Reddie and M. Bisset for gathering information and confirmed governors would be kept up to date with progress of discussions.</p> <p>Following wide ranging discussions Governors confirmed their wish to convert to an academy, to register an interest with the DfE at the appropriate time, and to open discussions with potentially suitable schools with a view to leading a MAT.</p>	<p>All governors</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Admission Policy</p> <p>G.Reddie explained that the policy needed to be reviewed and determined annually and was also due for periodic statutory consultation. In addition the Diocese had expressed concerns and several times had asked for review of aspects of the current oversubscription criteria, which affected the allocation of places if</p>	

<p>more applications were received than there were places available. A paper had therefore been circulated to all Governors outlining areas which needed to be considered for the 2018-2019 admission policy and seeking Governors' views. The Personnel Committee had considered the large number of detailed and helpful responses received from Governors and had formulated recommended changes to the oversubscription criteria, which had been distributed for the meeting.</p> <p>Children of staff It was stressed that applications from members of staff for their children to attend the school were of course welcome. It was also now legitimate for schools to give some priority to children of staff who had been employed at the school for least 2 years, or staff recruited for vacant posts for which there were demonstrable skill shortages. Some schools adopted this approach but it could cause ill feeling amongst parents whose children did not gain a place and felt they had been disadvantaged, a point which may also be raised at and complicate appeals. In the absence of recruitment and retention problems Governors felt there was no need for an oversubscription criterion specifically for children of staff.</p> <p>Exceptional medical or social circumstances Local Authorities commonly made provision for their schools to give priority to applications from families with exceptional medical or social needs which made it essential that their child attended one particular school rather than any other. Nevertheless not all schools had such an admission criterion and some which did placed it low down in the list of priorities, so may be rendered of little relevance. Governors entirely appreciated the rationale for such a criterion and were not in any way opposed to it. However it was felt that spurious cases could inhibit the ability of governors to deal with other applications quickly, particularly in year applications. In addition it was felt that legitimate cases would be exceptionally rare and it was unlikely that the school would not be able to admit for other reasons, such as an EHCP naming the school for instance.</p> <p>Siblings Currently high priority was given to all siblings, irrespective of how far away they lived. This helped families keep children together at one school but this approach had been criticized in principle by the Schools Adjudicator and by the Diocese. If the school became increasingly oversubscribed there would be a danger that children without a sibling at school but living within the catchment area would not gain entry. Such children would generally not live within the catchment area of another school and therefore would be disadvantaged in gaining a place elsewhere locally, possibly having to travel considerable distances to a school. To address this situation many schools had split</p>	<p>All governors</p>
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<p>the sibling category so that greater priority was given to siblings living in catchment. This was the approach preferred by the Schools Adjudicator and recommended by the Diocese. Governors recognised the value of keeping siblings together whenever possible but nevertheless felt there were strong arguments for adopting this approach to protect children living in catchment.</p> <p>Church attendance</p> <p>Historically Church of England schools had given high priority to children, one of whose parents attended the Parish Church on a regular basis, typically at least once per month for the previous 1 or 2 years. Church of England schools were now being encouraged to dispense with this approach and the Diocese had continued to ask the school to consider this. To date Governors had decided to retain church attendance as a priority category, not only because of the unique links between the school and the parish church but also because the school and church were right on the edge of the catchment area. This enabled places to be offered to those families attending the parish church and otherwise precluded even though living perhaps on the opposite side of the road. Governors felt this remained a reasonable line to take, especially within the context that the numbers admitted in this way were low (low single figures) and so no great distortion of the intake was anticipated.</p> <p>Other schools had retained priority for church attendance, although many schools had dropped church attendance as a category or, as with exceptional medical/social circumstances, had given it such a low priority that in practice it was likely to be of considerably reduced relevance.</p> <p>However, the school had ended up with some rather unusual provisions in terms of church attendance. For those who had moved into an area recently, it was customary to give credit for the time attending a previous church, yet the school had not done this, giving lower priority in such circumstances. The Diocese had questioned this approach, which appeared anomalous. It was therefore agreed that credit should be given for time spent attending a previous Anglican church.</p> <p>In addition the school currently gave priority to some 10 churches, some of which were quite distant and well outside catchment. This appeared to be based on the churches which happened to fall with the historic parish boundary at a particular point in time. Consideration was therefore also given to updating the list of local churches to include others in the area. However this would have required the establishment of an appropriate current geographical area and a means by which to determine those churches to be included. Some schools used membership of Churches Together in Britain, but that organization specifically points out that it is not an appropriate arbiter and requests that it is not referred to for this purpose in school admission policies. Governors certainly wished to preserve links and</p>	<p>All governors</p>
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	<p>good relations between the school and local churches. In terms of its admission policy however, Governors felt the need to be mindful of Diocesan advice to kerb religious affiliation in the admission criteria. They also sought to avoid complaints to the Schools Adjudicator that giving priority to a large number of churches with congregations perhaps considerable distances outside catchment, could be detrimental to and potentially disenfranchise families living within catchment. This could also be raised against the school in appeal proceedings. For all these reasons Governors felt that only the Parish church should continue to feature in the oversubscription criteria. It was stressed that it was important to flag up changes both in terms of families with a potential interest and the local churches and it was agreed that this should be done at the same time as the statutory consultation. It also needed to be borne in mind that these changes related to the oversubscription criteria. The school had currently been able to offer places to all those requiring a place in the main admission round for September. Only if the school were to be oversubscribed for or after September 2018 would the changes have an effect.</p> <p>Governors therefore agreed that the approval of the Diocese should be sought and subsequently statutory consultation should be undertaken upon an admission policy for 2018-2019 based on the following oversubscription criteria. The opportunity should also be taken to tidy drafting and to bring definitions more closely into line with Diocesan guidance.</p> <p>Category 1 Looked after or previously looked after children.</p> <p>Category 2 Children, one of whose parents is a regular worshipper (at least once a month for at least the 12 months preceding the application date) at Earley St Peter’s church. For those moving into the area within the previous 12 months, time worshipping at a previous Anglican church may be taken into consideration. Church attendance form(s) required to verify church attendance.</p> <p>Category 3 Siblings in catchment.</p> <p>Category 4 Children in catchment.</p> <p>Category 5 Siblings outside catchment.</p> <p>Category 6 Those applying for any other reason.</p> <p>Committee Reports</p>	<p>The Head</p>
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<p><u>Resources Committee:</u></p> <p>J. Peters confirmed Resources had not met but possibly one more meeting would be held before the end of term.</p> <p>Minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated to all governors.</p> <p><u>Child Development Committee: Friday 10th June 2016</u></p> <p>M. Bisset had circulated latest performance data to all governors.</p> <p>C. Ferris challenged the results highlighting discrepancies in the ARE percentages, particularly for year 3.</p> <p>The Head explained targets had been set particularly high for this group because of unknown national targets. Targets would now be reset.</p> <p>SEN Policy:</p> <p>The Head explained in order to achieve the IT Mark, statements needed to be added to the SEN Policy relating to use of technology to support SEN children.</p> <p>Governors' approval was sought to amend the Policy.</p> <p>All governors agreed.</p> <p>Artsmark – The Artsmark award celebrates schools that champion the arts and strive for excellence in their provision:</p> <p>The Head had submitted a self-evaluation aiming to achieve silver Artsmark rating. However, feedback from Artsmark suggested the school should aim for gold with further illustration of digital media and dance.</p> <p>The Head explained an application had been made to Artsmark for a 'critical' friend to advise.</p> <p>ICT Vision Statement:</p> <p>J. Williams sought governors approval of the ICT Vision Statement previously circulated to all governors.</p> <p>All governors agreed.</p> <p>J. Peters thanked A. Powley and J. Williams for their work on this.</p> <p><u>Personnel Committee:</u></p> <p>G. Reddie explained recent meetings had focused on admissions for September 2016, in-year admissions and proposed revisions to the 2018-2019 Admissions Policy.</p> <p>G. Reddie confirmed that for September 2016 it had appeared that the Reception year group would be full, although following coordination by Wokingham, the current number had fallen to 66 pupils. It was however hoped that more spaces would be filled by the start of term.</p>	
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	<p>The Head explained school applications and numbers on roll had been affected by the introduction of a three form entry at Loddon for September 2016 and the additional 30 places created there in Year 1. Additional places were being created at the new school in Shinfield and at the potential of additional places at Aldryngton were under discussion. The likely effect would be ESP receiving more pupils from the Reading Borough.</p> <p>The Head stressed the need to follow up with Wokingham BC to confirm the school appeared in the right section of the Primary Application brochure sent to all parents when choosing Primary places. Currently the LA guide had wrongly shown it in the Woodley section rather than Earley.</p>	
10.	<p>Performance Management Reports</p> <p>Governors agreed this would be dealt with at the next FGB meeting.</p>	The Clerk
11	<p>Governors' Self Review</p> <p>B. Williams reminded governors of the Governor Conference organised by WBC for September 2016. The governing body had the opportunity to send two governors free of charge. J. Peters and H. Hobday agreed to attend.</p> <p>B. Williams explained that at the recent Development Governors' meeting the introduction of online forums as a support tool was suggested. It was requested Development Governors seek feedback from their governing bodies. Governors agreed this could be useful tool.</p> <p>B. Williams proposed the creation of evaluation forms for governors to complete following attendance of training courses. These would be use to support discussions amongst governors on the merits of attendance and content of a particular course. B. Williams agreed to email evaluation forms to all governors.</p> <p>J. Peters suggested 'Feedback from Courses' be included as a rolling Agenda item.</p> <p>J. Peters stressed the importance not only of self-evaluation but also evaluation of the governing body as a whole.</p> <p>J. Peters asked B. Williams to chair a small group of governors to devise a variety of questionnaires analysing core strengths and areas for development within the governing body. The same group would also collate and analyse results. This group should commence in the Autumn term 2016. H. Hobday and A. Barlow volunteered.</p>	<p>J. Peters / H. Hobday</p> <p>B. Williams</p> <p>The Clerk</p> <p>B. Williams</p> <p>A. Barlow/</p>

	<p>Eid celebrations. All agreed.</p> <p>J. Newman – End of term of office. J. Peters thanked J. Newman for his contribution to the Governing Body and his leadership of the Child Development Committee throughout his term of office as a governor.</p> <p>Governors’ Tea Party J. Peters invited all governors to a tea party on Monday 18th July at 3.30pm in the school hall to join with staff to celebrate the good Ofsted ranking and the end of the academic year.</p> <p>Thanks to the Leadership Team J. Peters thanked the Head, Deputy and Leadership team for their hard work throughout the academic year on behalf of all pupils and governors, and expressed the confidence of governors in the leadership team as they built for the future.</p>	All governors
15.	Date of next meeting TBC	All governors

The meeting ended at 9.40pm with the saying of The Grace.