

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Shirley Community Nursery and Primary School held at school on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 7.00pm**

Present: Mr Grenz (Vice Chair), Mrs Leach (Head), Ms Meynell, Mr Saunders, Mrs Simoes, Mr Smith (Chair), Ms Winsemann-Falghera.

Visiting: Mrs Kidney and Mrs Marsters (Deputy Heads). In attendance: Miss Owen (Clerk)

The Clerk advised the meeting was quorate, as more than 50% of the current membership, excluding vacancies, was present.

### **1. Standing items**

#### **1.1 Apologies for absence**

Revd Adams (illness), Mrs Cook (illness), Mr Ferguson (work commitment), Mrs Gale (child care), Ms Fox (Illness), Mr Henderson (illness)

**Ms Winsemann-Falghera proposed, Mr Saunders seconded the apologies should be accepted. Agreed by all present.**

#### **1.2 Declaration of Interests (standing item)**

No direct or indirect interests were declared in items on this agenda.

#### **1.3 The Register of Pecuniary Interests 2014 - 2015**

Mr Saunders signed the Register.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 February 2015**

Page 2: 'be' added in to read 'to be'

**Ms Winsemann-Falghera proposed, Ms Meynell seconded with this correction the minutes should be approved. Agreed by all.**

#### **2.1 Matters Arising**

A presentation about the school's new tracking system that will be used from September, will be given to the Standards Committee in Autumn B. A presentation will be made to the GB in Spring 2016.

The GB Chair commented it was proactive not to have actions being held over.

### **3. Headteacher's Report**

The Head discussed specific points in her report.

The school's numbers are currently 443, with available places in Years N, 4 and 5.

Personnel Update: Mrs Guy retires at the end of this term; she will be missed and celebrations are planned to mark the end of her career at Shirley. A teacher's resignation has been received: the process to make an appointment will begin soon. Following discussion, it was agreed Governors are welcome to be involved in the appointment of teachers. The GB Chair noted the NGA states Governors are not routinely involved in an appointment process and should only be involved in SLT appointments; however, it is helpful to see how the appointment process is conducted. Miss Swann returns in June, from her maternity leave, on a part time basis.

A Governor asked about the process to replace the Business Manager. The Head said she is now reviewing the job descriptions of the finance and admin teams, as there are elements of the Business Manager's role that may be placed with other members of the teams. The Head said she is seeking advice from the LA and looking at the demography of other schools. The GB Chair said this gave an opportunity to look at the best ways to support the work within the school.

The meeting discussed the outcomes of the latest teaching and learning observations. The Head said whilst she was pleased the % of good or better lessons observed had risen to 77% in the Spring term 2015, from 65% in the Autumn term 2014, further work is needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The aspirational target is 100%. The SLT will observe NQTs in the summer term and drop ins will be carried out in all classrooms to monitor consistency. In June, there will be shorter observations of teachers, to inform appraisals in the Autumn term.

The Head discussed the number of exclusions and racist and homophobic incidents this term, using anonymised information.

The school has secured the use of an area in Bramblefields that is separate to the areas that are open to, and used by, the public.

A license has been drafted for the school by the City Council, which allows the school to have use of the area for the foreseeable future. This is very helpful for the school as Reception and Year 1 children now have the option to use both the school nature area and Bramblefields for Forest Learning work. The school paid a fee of £500 to access the enclosed area at Bramblefields; the Head said this was a reasonable payment for the long term use of an excellent learning area that is safe for children and staff.

The Head and Mrs Kidney have been invited to make a presentation, focussing on leadership and management and learning behaviours, to the Cambridgeshire Closing the Gap Conference on 22 April at CPDC.

CB4 Headteachers are providing half termly 'Challenge' Workshops for gifted and talented pupils in the CB4 cluster. These will take place in the summer and autumn term 2015.

The Head outlined recent events in school, including the KS2 Cross Country event, World Book Day and Red Nose Day that were enjoyed by children and staff.

Mrs Marsters noted disappointing attendance results for this term, in comparison with Spring terms of previous years. Significant absence was reported in Reception classes due to two outbreaks of separate illnesses. Individual pupils with significant absences have impacted on attendance figures. One family was allocated a fine following court action for poor attendance: this child has now left the school's roll. Lateness is continuing to reduce. There has been a 25% reduction in lateness this term, compared to the same term last year. GRT pupils' attendance is good and, in fact, is the only group meeting its target. Mrs Marsters noted that families who are engaging with school meetings or the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer), are showing an improvement in their child's attendance. The school continues to move forward with the drive to raise attendance, including interactive displays throughout the school to raise pupils' awareness of their class's attendance and attendance buddies continue to work with identified children. The school will now carry out a review of each pupil's attendance record to identify personalised intervention. The Head and Deputies were thanked for their reports.

#### **4. Approval of the SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard)**

The Chair of the Resources Committee, Mr Grenz, noted that whilst this is a document that must be submitted to the LA annually, it serves a useful purpose as a self-audit for the GB. Mr Grenz noted that whilst this year's SFVS remains fundamentally unchanged, perhaps a more thorough revision next year would be beneficial.

**Mr Grenz proposed, Mrs Simoes seconded the SFVS should be submitted to the LA. Agreed by all.**

**The Clerk will send the SFVS to the LA.**

#### **5. Approval of the Statement of Behaviour Principles**

Mrs Kidney said she and Revd Adams had met and written the Statement that was now presented for approval by the GB. It was discussed at the recent meeting of the Standards Committee who had agreed it was fit for purpose. Mrs Kidney explained the Statement needs to be considered by the GB to ensure that it is in line with DfE guidance and Governors are satisfied that it will support the school's Behaviour Policy. Mrs Kidney said it is an inclusive statement and one that is in line with the school's ethos. Governors discussed the Statement, noting their approval of the clarity of language. In answer to a Governor's question about behaviour outside school, Head said other documents from the LA gave guidance about the correct procedures to follow. Mrs Kidney said if the GB approved the Statement, she would revise the Behaviour Policy.

**Ms Meynell approved, Ms Winsemann-Falghera seconded the Statement of Behaviour Principles be adopted. Agreed by all.**

#### **6. Approval of Professional Days**

The Head said the LA has fixed two professional days for the 2015-2016 academic year: 2 September 2015 and 4 January 2016. The school has three other days to choose for training days, for which the school is closed. The Head discussed the three professional days the SLT had identified for approval by the GB. Mrs Kidney has been working with stakeholders on Assessment without Levels and a training day has been identified for staff in September on target tracker. The meeting noted this would mean the school reopens on a Friday; the Head said that whilst this is not ideal, it is important the school prepares for the new academic year, with two training days. Similarly to the current academic year, a second professional day has been placed at the beginning of the Spring term 2016 and a further date of 11 April 2016 at the beginning of the Summer term.

**Ms Meynell approved, Ms Winsemann-Falghera seconded the proposed three professional days: 3 September 2015, 4 January 2016 and 11 April 2016. Agreed by all. The Clerk will send the approved dates to the LA.**

#### **7. Nursery Admissions Policy**

The GB discussed an email received from the LA that asks all GBs to decide if they wished to continue to follow a common Policy operated by the LA for admissions to Nursery, or whether the GB wish to operate its own Nursery Admissions Policy. The meeting discussed this, noting the school has always followed the LA's Policy. The Head said the LA's Policy gave clear guidance, with set criteria which the school had previously referred to, when oversubscribed. In answer to a Governor's question, the Head gave examples of the criteria used in the LA's Policy when determining admissions e.g. LAC, SEND, sibling, within catchment area, outside catchment area. The Head said the LA's Policy operates in a fair way and saw no reason to change from the LA's Policy.

**Mr Smith proposed, Mr Grenz seconded the GB's decision to continue to use the LA's Nursery Admissions Policy. Agreed by all.**

**The Clerk will communicate the GB's decision to the LA.**

#### **8. Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding Governor was not present at this meeting. The Head noted this Governor's Report was circulated with the papers. A recent visit has been made by the Safeguarding Governor to talk to children about esafety and to meet with the Head and Mrs Kidney: a report to Governors will follow. The Head said the school would have a Safeguarding Audit tomorrow by the LA. The school has been one of ten schools, selected at random by the LA, for this audit. Recruitment documentation will be the main focus. The auditor will give feedback at the end of the day to the Head and Safeguarding Governor. An anonymised feedback report will be published by the LA and will come to the GB.

## 9. Parent Group

No further meetings have been held since the last GB meeting. The next meetings are on 21 and 22 April, when the topics to be discussed are how the non-core subjects of the curriculum are taught. The new website will also be discussed.

## 10. Governor Newsletter

A Governor reported the second Governor newsletter has been drafted and will include information about Team Shirley, the Parent Group and details of resources that Team Shirley have bought for the school. The Chair thanked Ms Meynell for her contribution.

## 11. Policies to be adopted by the GB

- **Recruitment and Selection Policy (EPM):** the meeting agreed the following in regards to points in section 2: (2.2) the Headteacher is expected to involve at least one Governor in the appointment of a member of the Leadership Team; (2.3) the Headteacher may invite a Governor to be involved in the appointment of other teaching staff.

(In regard to point 6.2, EPM will be contacted to confirm the extent of the rights to request access to notes).

**Mr Grenz proposed the Recruitment and Selection Policy for adoption: seconded by Mrs Simoes. Agreed by all.**

- **Whistleblowing Policy (EPM):** the meeting noted that whilst the County's Whistleblowing Policy had been tabled for consideration and was fit for purpose, EPM's Whistleblowing Policy was to be used by the school.

**Mr Grenz proposed, Ms Meynell seconded EPM's Whistleblowing Policy should be adopted. Agreed by all.**

- **Cambridgeshire County Council's Whistleblowing Guidance:** the meeting noted this guidance has been adopted previously and has now been revised by CCC.

**Ms Winsemann-Falghera proposed, Ms Meynell seconded CCC's Whistleblowing Guidance should be adopted. Agreed by all.**

- **Annex 7 of the 2014 – 2015 Pay Policy:** the GB Chair noted this Annex had been discussed at the recent meeting of the Resources Committee that had agreed it as fit to be tabled for approval by the GB. The Annex states the salary range of the Leadership Team.

**Annex 7 proposed by Mrs Simoes, seconded by Mr Grenz for adoption. Agreed by all.**

**The GB Chair will email the agreed Annex 7 to EPM.**

- **The Lettings Policy:** the GB Chair noted LA's Legal team had suggested minor revisions. Therefore, the revised Policy was now tabled for approval. In answer to a Governor's question, the Head said the charges have not been reviewed since 2011. The Centre is not oversubscribed and needs to remain competitive.

**Mr Smith proposed, Mrs Simoes seconded the Lettings Policy for adoption. Agreed by all.**

## 12. Reports from Lead Governors of Monitoring Groups:

**Writing:** no further updates. Ms Meynell and Mrs Carter are liaising about a date to meet to look at Writing Wizards.

**SEND:** Mrs Simoes reported the group had met with Mrs Marsters to look at Pupil Tracker. It was a useful visit to see how trends are identified and tracking takes place. The next stage will be to work out the key data to be tracked and undertake a learning walk. The GB Chair said different needs will be looked at closely. Mrs Marsters said Pupil Tracker will be superseded by Target Tracker. A Governor noted that Ofsted require children, who have come off the SEND register, to continue to be tracked. The SEND group will carry out a learning walk on 28 April.

**Curriculum:** no further updates.

**Maths:** Assessments are still ongoing.

The GB Chair noted the monitoring groups perform a vital role for the GB and asked that written reports from monitoring groups are presented using the proforma report. The GB Chair thanked the groups for their input.

## 13. Committee Reports

**Standards: The Committee Chair gave an update from the meeting on 10 March 2015.** The Committee had welcomed Mr Henderson to his first meeting and had discussed the role of the Data Governor; the meeting had been told of problems with Statements being issued; the benefits of the increased capacity of the SLT had been noted; updated policies under the remit the school are to be shown to Governors on this Committee.

**Resources:** The Committee Chair had not been able to attend the meeting on 4 March 2015 but he noted his concern at a considerable carry forward remaining in the budget and had asked the school to investigate why it was not reducing. Mr Grenz said he expected the majority of the carry forward to be used this year. The Resources Committee will monitor this closely.

**The Vice Chair gave an update from the meeting on 4 March:** the Finance Manager had looked at areas of the budget not being spent against the original budget. Initial analysis had shown an underspend resulting from the non-appointment of a second

substantive Deputy Head. Premises items have yet to be progressed. Mrs Bingham is undertaking a detailed analysis of the budget profiles for next Resources Committee meeting. The Head noted that at her recent meeting with the school's LA Finance Advisor, the carry forward was shown as £150,000. Mr Grenz said it would be helpful to know how the dynamics are created when building the budget. Mrs Kidney noted the infrastructure of ICT, built into the new building three years ago, is now coming to an end. The Committee Vice Chair said through the budgeting process, areas will be looked at closely; this will ensure accuracy for the future.

**Development Group:** the GB Chair reported that the Group had discussed staff changes with a view to moving forward. The Pay and Conditions document contained big changes; there are now no pay scales. Recommendations, following appraisals, will come to the GB for approval. Preparation for Ofsted was discussed. The GB Chair will start a process of self-assessment for Governors by preparing a questionnaire: this is a work in progress.

#### **14. Equality and Diversity**

The Head said it is now three years since the original Single Equality Statement (SES) and objectives were adopted. The Statement and objectives are to be revised and will be worked on by Mrs Taylor and Revd Adams. The updated Statement and objectives will be presented to the GB for approval in the summer term. The Head said the revised SES had been sent out the papers for this meeting and explained she had updated the final section of the document with the school's progress against the objectives set in 2012. The meeting discussed the updated objectives. The GB Chair noted the updated objectives represented a very pleasing set of results and said the SLT are to be congratulated.

#### **15. Training and Development**

The Chair asked Governors to note the email he had asked to be included with the meeting's papers. The GB Chair said he found booking via the new training website an interesting process and hoped Governors would find the explanatory email useful.

#### **16. Membership of the GB**

No nominations were received during the recent election process for a Parent Governor. Therefore, the meeting agreed the GB would move to appoint a parent to this vacancy. Governors are asked to explore possibilities and report back. The vacancy for a Co-opted Governor remains. The GB chair asked Governors to consider suitable candidates: a person with HR experience would be welcomed.

#### **17. Correspondence**

No items.

#### **18. New school website and ways of communication with parents**

Mrs Kidney gave a presentation about the new website to the meeting. The website will be launched on 27 March 2015. The website will have links to the school's Facebook and Twitter account, allowing instant messaging to parents. There will be a 'contact us' form for parents to use on the website. A letter will go out before the end of term with a clear message about safety and to ascertain parental permissions. The website will have consistency across year groups and include class teachers' blogs. In conclusion, the GB Chair said the school had responded well to a need that was identified last year and congratulated all involved.

#### **19. Electronic storage of GB paperwork**

The meeting discussed possible benefits of an electronic platform for storage. After discussion, it was agreed that Mrs Simoes would look at possible ways of implementing this proposal for Governors. The GB Chair asked for updates at a future meeting.

#### **20. Any other business**

Governors have had a trial membership of the Key. The trial period is about to end and the meeting discussed whether it wanted to take out membership. The meeting decided not to proceed as it had other routes to access information Governors may need.

#### **21. Date of the meeting**

**Thursday 7 May 2015 (to include budget setting).** The meeting agreed the meeting on 7 May 2015 should start at 6.30pm as it is the General Election.

In answer to a Governor's question, the Head confirmed the Resources Committee will see and discuss the draft budget on 5 May 2015. The school's Finance Advisor is in school on 28 April to set the final draft budget. *The draft budget will be sent to Governors on 30 April.* Mr Grenz said he hoped the budget would be more responsive in regard to the carry forward and the needs of the school.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm.