

## Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body of Shirley Community Nursery and Primary School held at school on Thursday 7 May 2015 at 6.30pm

Present: Mrs Cook, Mr Ferguson, Mrs Gale, Mr Grenz (GB Vice Chair), Ms Fox, Mrs Leach (Head), Ms Meynell, Mrs Simoes, Mr Smith (GB Chair), Ms Winsemann-Falghera.

Visiting: Mrs Marsters (Deputy Head). 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 (work commitment), Mr Henderson (out of Cambridge), Mr Saunders (out of Cambridge), Mrs Kidney (Deputy Head: visitor: illness).

**Ms Winsemann-Falghera proposed, Ms Meynell 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

All present have previously signed the register.

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 March 2015

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

#### 2.1 Matters Arising

- The school has submitted the SFVS to the LA.
- The Clerk sent the approved professional day dates for 2015-2016 to the LA.
- The Clerk sent confirmation of the GB's decision to continue with the LA's Nursery Policy to the LA.
- The GB Chair emailed the agreed Annex 7 of the Pay Policy to EPM.

### 3. Headteacher's Report

The Head discussed specific points in her report.

Mrs Guy retired at the end of last term. Celebrations were held to mark the occasion. The Head discussed future staff changes and recent appointments. One teacher has been appointed permanently to KS2: another teacher has been appointed to cover a forthcoming maternity leave. Future recruitment processes will be held to appoint a School Bursar and ASC staff.

Data from the Spring term assessments was discussed. The SLT and Team Leaders will revise provision maps, following assessments, to close gaps. An Easter school was held during the holidays: 16 children were invited to work with three teachers, prior to SATs in May. KS2 SATs take place next week. The Head said this year's cohort presented a wide range of challenges through attendance issues, SEND etc. In answer to a Governor's question, the Head said Reading, SpaG and Maths SATS papers are marked externally. Writing is marked internally. \*6.40pm Mrs Simoes arrived. Year 6 teacher assessments for Writing are being moderated by the LA this year. The documentation for the Year 6 Writing assessments has to be prepared by the Year 6 teachers for 2 June, prior to the visit by the LA moderators on 9 June. The work of 6 - 9 children will be requested by the moderators, although the identity of the children's work to be scrutinised will not be known until the day before the moderators' visit. Six pieces of work will be scrutinised that must support and evidence the Year 6 teachers' judgement of their marking.

KS1 Writing was moderated last year. In answer to a Governor's question, the Head said the KS1 Teacher Assessments for Writing, Reading and Maths, would be given to the meeting of the Standards Committee on 23 June. The CB4 schools have an active writing blog for Year 5 called 'Write Path'. The Head said she was delighted to report that a Year 1 pupil has won a CB4 competition to write a story that will be taken (electronically on a stick) to the moon. The Head discussed the new website, which has proved very popular with already over 80 followers on Facebook and Twitter. When the school posted a twitter message about the delayed arrival of Year 4 pupils returning from Hunstanton, 157 people read the message. The Head said she was pleased the school now had a Facebook and Twitter account, as the school wanted to communicate with as many parents and carers as possible. The school also uses Parentmail to email out communications. The GB Chair asked when the assessments and SATs results would be available for Governors. The Head said all results would be given to the GB meeting in July. RAPs, which include spring term assessment updates, are shared with monitoring groups. When Mr Henderson is available, he will contact Mrs Kidney for an in-depth meeting about the school's data.

The GB Chair thanked the Head for her report and updates.

#### 4. Staffing structure and levels for the next financial year to be agreed and approved in respect of the proposed 2015-2016 budget

The Head discussed the proposed SLT staffing structure for 2015-2016 with the meeting.

It is proposed to keep the current SLT in place: 1 Headteacher, 2 Deputy Headteachers, 2 Assistant Headteachers. However, following budget building, it has become apparent there is a clear need to build a tighter budget and accrue savings to contribute towards the carry forward for 2016-2017. This has prompted discussions with the aim to plan to establish saving some costs in staffing over this year. Four TAs who are leaving at the end of this term will not be replaced.

*\*A confidential note is held.*

Following discussion, the GB Chair said it was a proposal that fits the budget. The staffing structure is always open to unknown factors and ways to look at making savings should be under constant review by the school.

**The GB Chair proposed, Mr Grenz seconded that the staffing structure for 2015-2016 fits with the proposed budget and should be approved. Agreed by all.**

#### 5. Approval of 2015 – 2016 Budget

The Chair of the Resources Committee opened discussions about the proposed budget. Mr Grenz noted the budget building process involves considerable work and the Head and Mrs Bingham have been supported by the school's Financial Advisor in building the 2015-2016 budget that is now brought to the GB. Mr Grenz noted the importance of an assurance by the school that all the financial facts are correct. The Resources Committee, to whom the draft budget had been presented on 5 May 2015, prior to bringing it to the GB, had discussed the proposed budget in detail. Mr Grenz said the major change for Governors to note was that the carry forward has reduced considerably. The carry forward in last year's budget was considerable at £194,000; however, this was primarily a result of the historic brought forward. Governors had previously agreed that the strategic aim was to strengthen the SLT, to engender a culture of outstanding teaching across the school and to create a stepped progress, towards an Ofsted judgement of outstanding. As part of this strategy, a second Deputy Head and two Assistant Heads had been appointed. Funding has been moved into ICT and improvement of outside facilities, with the expected outcome of reducing the carry forward. Governors had previously agreed the considerable carry forward should be used to advance pupil progress and attainment. The carry forward at the beginning of this year was £96,000. Whilst this afforded the GB and SLT the certainty of moving funding into key areas, the carry forward has now reduced in the proposed budget to £15,000. This is the lowest carry forward presented in a budget to Governors. Mr Grenz said the impact of the previous carry forward being used to enable the stepped progress of the school, is reflected in the reduced carry forward in the presented budget. However, the GB is confident that the school will achieve the progress for which the funding has been released.

This year's proposed budget was discussed in detail, with the meeting noting possible reasons behind the changes in income and expenditure.

Total revenue funding in the 2015/16 budget is £2,112,013, compared to actual total revenue funding in 2014/15 of £2,228,491.

SEND funding is £80,281 in the 2015/2016 budget, compared to £103,015 in the actual 2014/15 budget.

Pupil premium funding is £175,560, compared to £225,024 in the actual 2014/15 budget.

Other income is £43,024 in the 2015/16 budget, compared to £84,772 budget.

The Head said it has become more difficult to obtain statements for pupils; it has also become more difficult to persuade parents to apply for free school meals, as Reception and KS1 parents are entitled to universal free school meals.

The school is losing three pupils from this year's Year 6 cohort with statements. Free school meals funding is not being matched by the incoming Reception cohort. This means funding is decreased, or flattens out, in the budget.

Staffing costs have decreased slightly; currently 86% of the budget is assigned to this profile, a decrease from last year of 89%.

Expenditure was discussed. The actual outturn from the 2014/15 budget was £2,326,583. The 2015/16 budget is £2,192,732.

Employee costs have decreased in the 2015/16 budget to £1,822,213, from £1,866,607 in the 2014/15 budget. Learning resources have risen by approximately £11,000. School meals have £17,500 allocated in the 2015/16 budget, compared to £94,788 in the actual 2014/15 budget.

The meeting discussed the changes in income and expenditure between this, and last year's budgets, particularly noting the consequences of a reduced carry forward of £15,000. Mr Grenz noted there is a considerable narrowing of the gap. The school has spent more this year than it has received in funding. Traditionally there has been a pattern of funds coming in during the year to bolster the carry forward; however, this pattern cannot be relied on. If the carry forward increased, then funding could be released for e.g. premises and grounds improvements but this cannot be guaranteed. The meeting noted schools are not allowed to put forward a deficit budget. The Head noted possible redeployment of staff within the school to reflect the changes in the Nursery class. Governors agreed it had been the right decision to release available funds to create stepped changes for the school from the previously considerable carry forward; however, now an aggressive budget was being presented that needed very close monitoring. Mr Grenz said that he has previously recommended retaining some flexibility in the budget, broadly equivalent to one

teacher's annual salary, by holding a carry forward of £30,000-£40,000. The proposed 2015-16 budget reduces this carry forward to £15,000 to accommodate the release of funds to meet school development needs. Governors should be aware that the budget does therefore carry a higher (albeit modest) level of risk of deficit, and will require an increased level of scrutiny and monitoring. The GB Chair noted that if the carry forward exceeds 16% of revenue, there is a danger of clawback by the LA. Mr Grenz noted that previous budgets had been set to use the majority of the carry forward; however, the carry forward had re-established itself. Whilst Mr Grenz noted that this may happen, he warned that it might not, this is the reason Governors must be particularly vigilant in monitoring the financial reports and resultant carry forward during this year. From September, the Resources Committee will see monthly reports that will identify any potential financial issues. In answer to a Governor's question, Mr Grenz said there were no areas that, at present, were causing concern. Exercises had been carried out in the past concerning the high levels of water and electricity consumption. However, maintenance issues may be a worry and it is hoped that if any issues arise, they may be centrally funded. The Head said there are areas the school is exploring with the aim of making efficiency savings, so amounts could be trimmed which, no matter how small, would help towards increasing the carry forward. In regards to future staffing, the Head said, where applicable, the school would use opportunities arising from movement to strengthen the carry forward. The school will look at fundraising towards meeting the costs of grounds improvements. The possibility remains of accessing grants and the potential for increasing lettings will be explored. A Governor asked if the school was being imaginative enough in pursuit of raising additional income. The meeting discussed this point and agreed the school should pursue all possibilities to increase income from lettings.

The Head said funds released from the budget have allowed the school address its priorities. The capacity remains within the SLT to move the school to outstanding and this aspiration will not change. Investment in ICT must continue; current equipment is three years old and a rolling plan of replacement means the ICT budget is a priority to build on what the school has in place. Other budget areas have been trimmed but ICT needs input from capital to upgrade and replace.

The GB Chair said there had been no advantage in keeping a considerable carry forward; in fact, Governors could be criticised for allowing a considerable carry forward to accrue. Funds had been released to enable the raising of pupils' attainment. The Chair of Resources said funds had been put into key areas to enable improvement to take place and, consequently, the budget is now tighter; however, the GB now finds itself in a similar position to the majority of schools. The GB Chair said the Resources Committee had met on 5 May 2015 and had gone through the proposed budget in detail. The Resources Committee was satisfied to bring the proposed budget to this GB for approval.

**The GB Chair, Mr Smith proposed, Mrs Simoes seconded the resolution that the Governing Body approves the School Budget Plan for the financial year 2015/2016 total spend of £2,192,732.**

**Agreed by all.**

The GB Chair asked the Headteacher to ensure the budget is submitted to the LA by 9 May 2015. The meeting noted its thanks to the Head and Mrs Bingham for their work, with the school's financial advisor, in preparing the Budget.

In answer to a Governor's question, the Head said the school is approaching new Nursery parents to complete forms to assess if they are eligible for pupil premium. The Head said schools have noted that fewer parents are eligible for pupil premium, as thresholds have been changed. Seven out of forty Nursery children are currently eligible for pupil premium. The meeting noted that whilst eligibility for free school meals is the criteria used to award pupil premium, this might change in the future. The Head said this area would be monitored closely.

## **6. School Development and Improvement Plan 2015 2016**

The Head said the SDIP for the next academic year would continue with the school's overarching priorities:

- **The quality of teaching** to be good or outstanding.
- A review of the systems of **summative assessment** that links to end of year expectations (new systems have been purchased and staff training will be held).
- To continue to focus on barriers to learning for **SEND pupils**, in order to improve this group's levels of achievement.
- **Attendance and punctuality** will continue to be closely scrutinised. Whilst punctuality has improved, there has been a dip in attendance this year.
- **Develop children's learning behaviour:** by encouraging resilience, independent learning, better well-being and changing mind-sets. This is founded on personal ownership of individual progress. Miss Fonseca is introducing a 'token economy' to Year 5 to after half term, before it is rolled out to KS2 in September. The Head explained how the token economy scheme would work: pupils can earn tokens in a range of ways e.g. for a whole week of attendance, or for undertaking jobs around the school e.g. lunchtime monitors. Tokens can be spent in the school shop where items such as pens,

notepads etc will be available. It is an early understanding for pupils of the ways in which their adult life will be affected by personal economics.

The Behaviour Policy will not fundamentally change; however, there will be the introduction of a token system to reward positive individual efforts. The impact of the introduction of the token economy will be evaluated throughout the summer term.

**RAPS** for Maths, SEND, English/Writing will come to monitoring groups.

The work undertaken by the Deputies and Assistant Heads has contributed to the overall improvement in the quality of teaching this year. The coaching and mentoring work carried out by the SLT has been particularly effective and will continue next year. The Head had presented updated figures to the Standards Committee in the Spring term that showed the number of lessons requiring improvement is decreasing.

This term, all teaching staff (except NQTs) filmed a lesson that demonstrated best practice in teaching shared writing. This film was shared at a recent staff meeting. The teaching staff were very positive about exploring new approaches. The Head said challenges remain for the school with forthcoming staff changes and expected maternity leaves. Whilst the school has no NQTs joining the staff, further time will be given to the NQTs the school has recruited this year. The whole school focus continues on teaching in the classroom, particularly the ways to support vulnerable children.

The GB Chair said the links to school improvement were clearly demonstrated in the SDIP outline given by the Head. The Head will bring the SDIP to the GB in the Autumn term.

## 7. Safeguarding

Hannah Fox, Safeguarding Governor, visited the school in March, with the focus of her visit on esafety. Ms Fox thanked the Head and Mrs Kidney for providing an interesting programme for her visit, which included meeting with Yr 4, 5 and 6 pupils to talk about esafety. Ms Fox said it had been a fully-packed visit that demonstrated the ways in which the school addresses esafety. Ms Fox scrutinised some training materials on safety that she said triangulated what she has seen/been told/knows. It was a good visit.

The Safeguarding Audit, carried out in March, was noted. In answer to the GB Chair, the Head said whilst there were no areas of major concern, some points had been highlighted by the Auditor which were discussed with the school. The Audit had been an excellent experience that would contribute to best practice. The Head explained staff changes at the LA had contributed to the delay in the Report being received in school. The GB Chair noted he was dissatisfied with the delay. The Report will come to the GB when it is received by the school.

## 8. Audit of GB effectiveness from CGS

The GB Chair said he would prepare a draft response for discussion by the GB in July.

## 9. CGS Service Level Agreement

The Clerk noted that the GB's agreement with CGS is already in place for April 2014 – September 2016. The GB Chair said CGS provide a good service and support, with many helpful courses. The GB Chair asked Governors to make full use of the courses, briefings and training offered by CGS. The Clerk will ask CGS if they offer an in-house course on general issues connected with safeguarding.

## 10. Parent Group

A Governor reported that attendance at the recent meetings was not high; however, discussions were very positive, about how curriculum objectives are met; sports, music, and how teachers support each other. Parents had said they were impressed with the new website. Feedback about the school's social media feeds, Twitter and Facebook, was also positive. A Governor suggested a 'frequently asked questions' area should be included on the website.

Parents from the GRT and EAL communities had attended the most recent meeting. Suggested topics for future meetings include Outdoor Learning and Forest Learning, revisiting previous topics for updates, and the school's reward system. The teachers who attend the Parent Group meetings, Mrs Stant and Miss Kurc were thanked for their input.

The GB Chair thanked the Governors who attend the Parent Group meetings and said ways of increasing communication with parents is a priority for the GB. The second GB newsletter will be sent out before the end of the summer term. The meeting thanked the Governor concerned for her input.

## 11. Policies to be adopted by the GB

No policies were presented.

## 12. Reports from Lead Governors

**Writing:** The Lead Governor met with Mrs Carter this week and discussed the Writing RAP. The emphasis remains on closing the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils, and between girls and boys, with the aim of a gap of less than 10%. The Writing targets are challenging, although late changes with KS2 cohort changes can affect predictions. Ms Meynell said she was very impressed by her observations of Forest Writing in Reception, following a Forest Learning session. The air of concentration and excitement from the children, as they linked their outside learning to work in the classroom, was discernible. A Governor noted that this type of learning encourages boys to write.

**SEND:** The monitoring group visited last week. The group had discussed interventions, ECAR with the specialist Reading teacher, and had visited a social skills group. Overall, the group was very impressed by the wide range of interventions being delivered to meet different identified needs. The balance of taking children out of class for intervention work was noted but teachers and TAs do make every second count in pupils' education. Mrs Marsters was thanked for facilitating this visit.

**Curriculum:** No update was given as Revd Adams was not present at this meeting.

**Maths:** The Lead Governor met with Miss Fonseca last week to discuss progress in maths in each year group. KS1 targets are on track and may exceed projections of 85-90% at L2c+. Maths interventions continue for targeted groups across the year groups with progress made being closely monitored. Most areas are on track to make expected progress and interventions were discussed by the Lead Governor and Miss Fonseca.

## 13 Committee Reports

**Standards:** No updates were given as the next meeting is scheduled for a date after this GB.

**Resources:** The Committee Chair reported the most recent meeting had discussed the proposed 2015/2016 in detail. The school is to advertise for a Bursar.

**Development Group:** The GB Chair reported the group had discussed the staffing structure for 2015/16 and the SDIP priorities.

## 14. Equality and Diversity

The Head reported Revd Adams has met with Mrs Taylor and discussed the timescale for a new Statement. Updates will come to the GB in July.

## 15. Training and Development

The GB Chair asked Governors to look at the courses on offer from CGS. The Chair noted there is a new booking website.

## 16. Membership of the GB

The Chair will contact a potential parent governor. OSGS continue to look for a suitable candidate for a coopted vacancy.

## 17. Correspondence

No items.

## 18. Any other business

The meeting agreed the new website looks good and appears to be working well.

Electronic storage – a Governor will resend an email about electronic storage for comments. Another Governor may take this project on. The Chair said this would be kept on future agendas.

## 19. Date of the next meeting

### Thursday 16 July at 6.30pm\*

Governors discussed availability and agreed a future earlier start time of 6.30pm for GB meetings, with an informal catch up time starting at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.