

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGE TOMLINSON PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2017
AT 6.00 PM
AT THE SCHOOL**

Present: Mrs Debbie Strowbridge, **Local Authority Governor** (Chair)

Co-opted Governor

Mr Andrew Warren

Head Teacher

Ms Verity Carter

Parent Governors

Mrs Maya Peyton-Nicoll

Ms Ellie Ross

Staff Governor

Dr Matthew Laban

Clerk to the Governors: Lynne Troughton

Also present: Ms Darra McFadyen, School Effectiveness Advisor (Item 5)

Mrs Gillian Hart, School Business Manager

Miss Mendelssohn EYFS

Chloe Alder, Deputy Head Teacher

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
4.2	Mr North to complete skills audit	GS	Immediately
4.2	Link governor responsibilities: Ellie Ross to focus on Health and Safety and Safeguarding Debbie Strowbridge to focus on 3/4 priorities from the SDP Ellie Ross to focus on Maths and Literacy and produce a report	HT /GS ER DS ER	Immediately Next meeting
4.2	School Critical Management Policy to be sent to Ellie Ross	SBM	Immediately
4.2	Hard copy of the Health and Safety Policy to be placed in the school office.	Matthew Laban	Immediately
4.2	Inspection and risk assessment of school field	HT /SBM	ASAP
4.2	Lettings Policy to be reviewed	Chair/HT	ASAP
6.10	Monthly budget monitoring reports by cost	SBM	Immediately

	centre to be given to governors		
9.2.1	To send out Health and Safety Link Governor report	GS (Nike Shogbolu)	Immediately
9.4	Complaints policy	GS	Next agenda
9.5	SFVS to be sent to all governors for completion by email	SBM	Immediately
9.6	Query over liability for £10k to interim school leader to be taken up with Gerry Kemble	HT	Immediately
9.7	Skills/governor training – agenda item for next meeting	GS (NS)	Next agenda
9.9	Review of governance – agenda item for next meeting	GS (NS)	Next agenda
10.	Date of next meeting: 27 April 2017	All /GS	Immediate

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 The chair welcomed those present.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Gillian Barker and Alun North.
- 1.3 The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 6 of a possible 8 governors present.
- 1.4 Notice was given by the head teacher that the School Effectiveness Advisor (SEA) was attending to present the teaching and learning review. Gillian Hart gave notice that she wished to present the school budget monitoring report to governors. The chair agreed to take the teaching and learning review as item 5; and the school business manager's report as item 6.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The head teacher completed a pecuniary interest form and returned it to the clerk.
- 2.2 There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2017

AGREED That the minutes, including the confidential minutes, be approved as a correct record.

3.2 Matters arising

AGREED (1) Link governor responsibilities:
 Ellie Ross to focus on Health and Safety and Safeguarding
 Debbie Strowbridge to focus on ¾ priorities from the SDP
 Ellie Ross to focus on Maths and Literacy and produce a report
 (2) That the critical incident management policy be approved.

Action: School field risk assessment
 Lettings Policy

4. GOVERNING BODY

There were no vacancies on the governing body and no terms due to expire this year. There were no disqualifications to consider.

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING REVIEW

- 5.1 There is good or better teaching across all groups.

- 75% in EYFS
 - 80% in KS1
 - 80 – 85% in KS2
 - Whole school: 80% or more
- 5.2 Q Governors asked whether any teaching required improvement?
A The SEA responded that there was. Effective teaching meant:
- high expectations
 - planning for progress
 - knowing how children learn
 - providing feedback and challenge
- 5.3 Good teaching meant:
- effective learning
 - behaviour at least good because that created an environment for learning.
- 5.4 “Inspire Maths” ensures children learn.
- 5.5 Teacher knowledge is essential and is improving: knowledgeable teachers are also good teachers.
- 5.6 Teacher writing and reading basics, such as phonics and Read Write Inc were also essential for good teaching.
- 5.7 Whole school and quality inset were also essential.
- 5.8 Q How is teaching measured?
A With lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutinies, student surveys, talking to children, teacher assessment confirmed by student tests, moderation with other schools, assessing outcomes, tracking pupil progress, and evaluating the impact of interventions.
- 5.9 Q Does this include more able children?
A Yes: tracking every six weeks ensures all children, including more able and those at risk of underachieving are supported to succeed. Pupil progress meetings ensure none slip through the net and also ensure there is sufficient time to put interventions in place. Progress of significant groups is also reviewed, and all dots are joined up. This also keys in with the school development plan.
- 5.10 Q If there are weaknesses, how are they addressed?
A There are pockets that are less than consistently good and that need to be good every day. They require support plans to ensure consistently good teaching. The support plans where needed are in place, with tight timelines for improvement. Weak teachers have low expectations, poor pedagogy, poor subject and national curriculum knowledge. Progress for their pupils will usually be less than good.
- 5.11 The school is giving verbal and visual feedback to all staff and offering high quality CPD with, for example, modelling, opportunities to observe good teachers. CPD in the school is outstanding.
- 5.12 Q What has made the difference to teaching in the school?
A Strong leadership, raising expectations, clear guidance and support, an inspired curriculum for instance, destination reader; tracking, analysis, investment in CPD, learning of subject areas, developing middle leaders, holding teachers to account and acknowledging success, and improved behaviour for learning.
- 5.13 The next steps are to develop middle leaders with personalised professional development for good and getter teachers, remodelling staff, and further work with local schools to improve teaching and learning. The school is improving with strong a purposeful leadership but pockets of weakness persist. There is a cultural shift and most teachers took this well. Leadership needs to grow within the school, which will result in consistency in leadership.
- 5.14 Governors thanked the leadership team and remarked that it had been a journey but one that was a joy to have been part of.

6. BUDGET CLOSEDOWN AND FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

- 6.1 Gillian Hart reported that she has produced a closedown checklist, which was circulated. The bank account is reconciled to 20 March. She circulated a budget report as of today's date. There is a deficit of £1,204 and a capital spend of £5,225 in year, however historical funds need to be spent.
- 6.2 The projected bank balance is £215k. Debtors control shows £33k owed for redundancy, and £81k for VAT. The paperwork is in hand and the borough is processing the payments.
- 6.3 The creditors shows £52k owing. The accounts balance but at present there are £73k worth of outstanding orders. The majority of these go back a considerable time. It is expected that many are old and the reality suggests the figure should be nearer to £30k.
- 6.4 Universal Free School Meals may also be owing, together with sports grant. The SBM is chasing the borough for these funds.
- 6.5 Governors will receive regular budget monitoring reports.
- 6.6 Q What are the notes?
A There were a few salary queries: the payroll ledger was showing people being charged to incorrect cost centres, but the SBM has been sorting that out and produces a payroll journal that is signed off by the head teacher. The payroll contractor is Strictly Payroll.
- 6.7 System improvements are being made. All catering orders are on Waltham Forest Traded Services.
- 6.8 The 2017/18 budget is being worked up now.
- 6.9 Q How does the budget work? Are cost centres for heads of years or subject areas?
A The head teacher responded that the budget is in line with the SDP then the SLT allocates funds to subject leaders who then receive monthly reports on their spending. The aim is to make the process more transparent and user friendly. At the moment the budgets are being monitored by the SBM monthly, but quarterly monitoring will resume when she is confident that budgets are being effectively controlled.
- 6.10 Governors asked to receive monthly budget reports in cost centre form.
- 6.11 Q Has there been any progress with health and safety and energy costs?
A The school business manager responded that no response had been received from the utility provider. Gas costs are low but electricity costs are very high. This is one of many areas she is trying to resolve.
- 6.12 Nursery provision
- 6.12.1 The Assistant Head for EYFS reported that some boroughs are running 30 hours provision and George Tomlinson would like to offer this. Nursery children may also have siblings in breakfast and after-school provision so in addition, the school would like to offer breakfast and after-school provision to nursery children – in effect 8am – 6pm. Some of the hours would be paid for.
- 6.12.2 The 6 hours a day free provision runs over lunch time and counts towards education, so the free hours would be 8.45am – 2.45pm. There would an option of remaining till 3.30pm for a minimum charge.
- 6.12.3 There is also some provision for eight 2 year old children, being delivered by experienced staff on a 1:4 ratio, for eligible parents. However, if those places are not filled by parents meeting the criteria, the school would wish to fill the provision and offer it to other parents on a paid for basis.
- 6.12.4 Q Does the school have the capacity to offer this provision?

A Considerable preparation is needed but parents are being surveyed about the need and there will be advertising and fliers. An open day event has been held, the FEE inspector is very supportive. Baby and toddler groups will be leafleted.

6.12.5 Q What is the next step for governors?

A To review policies and check they are adequate for the provision. The EY risk assessment also needs to be approved and monitored on an ongoing basis.

7. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

7.1 The head teacher's report was circulated. The head teacher reported that SEN provision has greatly improved, with 60% making expected progress. Age related expectations are 32%, which compares very well.

7.2 EYFS SEN progress is exceptionally good. Much has been put in place. Attainment is still low but the pupils had a low starting point and have made exceptional progress.

7.3 Year 6 shows the school is progressing well towards the school's own targets and very well compared to last year.

7.4 Children who need support are identified and staff put together very good intervention programmes of booster groups.

7.5 Q How do children respond?

A They enjoy the small groups and find it easier to make progress. Behaviour is also easier to manager. It is easier to establish high expectations for them. As from next term, where children needing support are identified, a new teacher will provide the intervention for them.

7.6 The most recent phonics assessment shows 57% at the expected level: the target is 80%. 25 children have been identified as needing additional support.

7.7 Q Were there many retakes of the phonics test this year?

A A few but they are now making progress.

7.8 In other year groups, year 3 had very low attainment but this has been addressed. The school is targeting disadvantaged children, including middle and higher attaining children, mainly through pupil progress meetings. The gap is no more than 13% in any group. These children will be the focus after Easter.

7.9 Prior middle attaining children in years 2, 5 and 6 are also a focus, with 47% and 50% of the years 5 and 6 cohorts respectively falling into this group. Interventions started in early March and there is a read drive amongst the year 6 group in particular to raise their attainment.

7.10 Q Are looked after children monitored?

A They are monitored within vulnerable groups but could be monitored separately. New ways of making mentoring work are being considered.

7.11 Q What is in place for higher attaining children?

A The maths system "Inspire" is designed to challenge higher achievers and drive year 6 pupils to mastery (equivalent to year 7). Destination Reader does the same for reading. It contains high quality text and although an external reviewer commented that the text was too advanced, the children really enjoyed it.

7.12 Pupils completed projects and some have been outstanding. Governors remarked that they had noticed how articulate children were when they had visited.

7.13 The head teacher reported further on staffing and HR matters.

7.14 New teaching staff will join the school after Easter.

7.15 A new ICT technician will also be joining after Easter for 5 days a week.

Q Is this appointment key to driving up standards?

A Yes: new hardware will be used across the school for various purposes across the whole curriculum.

7.16 A mock Ofsted is planned.

- 7.17 A safeguarding review has been completed: the reviewer was impressed with the safeguards, although the SCR was in need of a little tidying up.
- 7.18 Growth mindset will be addressed at the beginning of every lesson, which is good for children.
- 7.19 Q Is philosophy for children taught in EYFS?
A Yes, around games: it progresses to discussion for older years.
- 7.20 Q What will the wellbeing co-ordinator be responsible for?
A Growing projects: mindfulness, growth mindset, garden, animals. The post holder will share a class. Wellbeing and pastoral care will be a huge focus next year.
- 7.21 The website is now up and running and staff are very pleased with it.
- 7.22 There have been exclusions in years 5 and 6. A case was put to the Fair Access Panel last week. One child will be transferring to the PRU, which is very nurturing and has a high success rate.
- 7.23 Q What is the school's policy on exclusions?
A The policy is basically the behaviour policy: the exclusion procedure is statutory. The school's policy is one of inclusion and child safety.

8. CHAIR'S ACTION

There had been no chair's action.

9. SCHOOL ITEMS

- 9.1 2 year old provision: see item 6.13.
- 9.2 Link governor reports:
- 9.2.1 Following a Health and Safety visit on 17 March 2017 Ellie Ross has sent a report to Governor Services for circulation. She thanked, in particular, the SBM and SSO for the work they have done to put the necessary health and safety protection in place. She is confident all issues are being addressed and being moved forward: progress has been significant. The SBM is taking responsibility and has arranged all the necessary SLAs so that governors do not need to deal with these operational issues.
- 9.2.2 Safeguarding Visit: Gillian Barker and Maya Peyton-Nicoll completed and sent out a report.
- 9.3 Parking: The head teacher has received a visit from Clyde Loakes who spoke about cycling to school. The school will be involved in the Tour de Waltham Forest.
- 9.4 Complaints policy: **AGREED** to defer.
- 9.5 School Financial Value Standard: to be completed by email.
- 9.6 Engagement with Director of School Effectiveness
- 9.6.1 David Kilgallon visited and discussed the Ofsted complaints.
- 9.6.2 It has been suggested that the school is liable for a £10k payment owed to an interim leader however the school has no audit trail relating to a commitment to pay the leader. Governors felt it was reasonable to pay the leader for the time she spent in the school however there are no records from which to estimate the sum.
AGREED That the issue will be addressed with the Head of Traded Services.
- 9.7 Governors' reflection/key priorities/skills
- experience of procurement and purchasing
 - links with local businesses
 - experience of chairing governing bodies and committees
 - experience of premises and facilities
 - overseeing merger/change
- AGREED** To have skills and training as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- 9.8 Key Priorities from the SDP:
The chair suggested governors each focus on 3 or 4 areas to focus on. Ellie Ross will conduct a visit on disadvantaged children.

9.9 Review of governance:

The chair reported on the review: governors needed to have clarity of vision, hold the head teacher to account and have financial oversight.

Key documents / areas are:

- SDP
- British Values Plan
- Knowing strengths
- Knowing weaknesses

She suggested that this be a focus for the next meeting – particularly identifying the strengths and weaknesses. There are many good areas but governors should focus on what the most important priorities are now and how effective the governing body is in terms of proving child outcomes. The work is ongoing but governors need to ensure it is documented.

9.10 It was noted that Matthew Laban is leaving: governors wished him success in his new position.

10. DATES OF MEETINGS

10.1 The next meeting will be on Thursday 27 April 2017.

10.2 The meeting closed at 8.15pm

Chair: (print)

..... (sign)

Date:

Chair of Governors Initials:
