

Avenue Junior School

Minutes of a Full Governing Body meeting held 6th February 2017

Present: Margaret Bird, Georgia Bottinelli, Wendy Cleary, Debbie Dismore (HT), Mike Grimble, Mike Hooper, Sian Jones, Rob Machin, Jason Menezes, Nania Poulson, Nicki Teasdale, Jo Thompson, and Toby Whalen.

In attendance: Catriona Milne (clerk)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

Action

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies had been received from Ben Binns and Beverley Ellis. MB was welcomed to the FGB and introductions were made. WC advised the meeting that Mark Ashurst has resigned as a Co-opted Governor due to work pressures.
2. Minutes of meeting on 28th November 2016: These are approved as a true record and signed by WC. WC reminded governors that any suggested amendments to the acronym list at the end of the minutes should be sent to CM.
3. Matters Arising from the previous meeting (not on agenda):
 - a. Previously absent governors to sign NGA Code of Practice (Item 3b - JT) – Item complete.
 - b. Previously absent governors to complete Register of Business Interest (Item 3c – JT) – JT remains outstanding; her employment has changed since the form was originally completed. CM/JT
Clerk to issue new form.
 - c. Completion of submission of governors' details to Edubase (Item 3e – Clerk) – Item ongoing pending technical issues. All the relevant information has been collated for entry. CM
 - d. Previously absent governors to sign sheet to confirm Keeping Children Safe in Education has been read (Item 3g - MA, JT, TW, NT) – MB outstanding. CM/MB
 - e. Compilation of governor feedback from monitoring days (Item 4e - Clerk) – Item complete and posted on GovernorHub.
 - f. Report on Pupil Premium monitoring (Item 4e – MG) – Item complete and posted on GovernorHub. MG reported that there will be a further PP meeting on the 24/2/17.
4. Headteacher's report and questions: This had been circulated via GovernorHub and questions were invited.
 - a. Thanks were given to DD for her work in producing the report.
 - b. Languages:
 - i. It was noted that the number of different languages spoken by pupils outside school had increased from 18 to 22. There were no significantly large groups speaking a particular language but instead a very diverse profile had been shown.
 - ii. DD reported that Jake Brown has been working to raise the profile of languages in the school; there is a Language of the Month which at least one child in the school speaks.
 - iii. The fluency assessments undertaken to meet School Census requirements have been completed and have not shown a significant change in the numbers of children not fluent in English.
 - iv. Provision for EAL students was discussed; while it was felt that the best provision for EAL pupils is immersion in the English language in class, some tools and programmes are used, dictionaries are provided and support materials are available to staff.
 - v. DD confirmed that EAL pupils can be removed from SATs data if they have been in the UK for less than 2 years. Due to the amount of time they have been in the UK, these EAL pupils do not usually have KS1 data and so would not be part of progress levels.
 - vi. It was asked how EAL parents can be supported. DD explained that a letter had

been sent to parents asking them to identify the support needed and that some parent volunteers had offered to help provide support. DD and Jake Brown will meet with those parents in due course. An app has been used to provide translation where needed but a website translation service is not appropriate given the number of different languages spoken. Key letters, such as that advising parents of the school's participation in Operation Encompass, had been translated into two key languages.

- vii. DD confirmed that none of the refugee families moving to Norfolk and supported by the Sanctuary project would have children placed at AJS, although an offer had been made.
 - c. Admission Appeals were discussed. DD reported that Julie Sanders of CJS will be representing Junior Heads at a panel review meeting to provide feedback on the pressures schools face when asked to take on additional pupils. There had been 6 appeals for Year 3 places in the summer term and an additional number for other years since September had been made; DD explained that waiting lists are not held by Norfolk Admissions after December of Year 3, and that they are notified by the school if a vacancy comes up. It was felt that the appeal process can be uncomfortable and that success rate is largely dependent on the level of knowledge of the parent. While there is a cap on placements of 120 in line with the school's PAN, this can be increased following a successful appeal.
 - d. DD confirmed that an increase in holiday absences had been observed following recent court rulings. The LA have changed their regulations so that while fines were issued when there had been 9 sessions of absence in a 6 week period, the trigger for fining will now as a result of 13.5 sessions of absence within a 12 week period. HTs are still unable to authorise holiday absence unless in exceptional circumstances. Attendance of below 90% is deemed persistent absence by Ofsted (10 years ago this was set at below 80%). There is one Y6 child with significant attendance issues which have impacted the overall statistics. A child with complex health needs is included in the absence figures. DD noted that while term time holidays are always discouraged, there is more concern where a child has an inconsistent pattern of odd days of absence throughout the term. Attendance rates among Pupil Premium children in Years 3 and 5 have been low and DD is working with the PSA to support families. Attendance rates are good for pupils with physical needs. There is ongoing work to support children where self-esteem issues might affect attendance.
 - e. Attainment targets had been included in the report and were discussed. The targets for boys and girls has been set at 84.6% reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths. Attainment above the expected standard was set at 21.2 for boys and 27.7 for girls and this reflected the particular cohort. DD explained that the targets were higher than those which the FFT would set and were aspirational. The targets had been discussed fully at the recent TLP meeting.
 - f. Self Evaluation summaries for Autumn 2016 (Review 4) and Spring 2017 (Review 5) had been circulated with the Headteacher's Report.
 - g. Opportunities for governors to visit the school had been detailed in the report and were summarised by WC.
5. Committee action points and recommendations inc policy reviews:
- a. Resources: The minutes had been circulated and questions were invited.
 - i. MG reported that the detailed proposals of the Fair Funding consultation was that AJS would receive £23K less funding in 2018/19 and £46K less in subsequent years. High Schools are generally getting more income and primaries less, reversing a previous trend to weight funding towards primaries. AJS would lose some income based on social deprivation indices.
 - ii. The threat to SEND cluster funding that had arisen from Norfolk's High Needs funding deficit had been removed and only £1.8M will be taken from per pupil funding – a reduction of around £5.5k for AJS. The remaining £6.7M savings needed will be found instead through efficiency savings and the implementation of a

charge to schools per pupil permanent exclusion. There was concern that this might affect the selection and admission of more challenging pupils. It was unclear as to how this would be enforced in Academy schools.

- iii. It was suggested that parents might be approached for financial support but the consensus was that while this could be appropriate for specific projects it could not be used for core funding and would not be a guaranteed income stream.
- iv. It was felt that as the school had recovered from a deficit position some years ago through the use of extreme prudence this could be achieved again as necessary. The majority of the school's expenditure is spent on ensuring the quality of teaching is high, but AJS is not an over-staffed school. The important role that the Pastoral Team play was emphasised.
- v. A pension payment issue had been raised at the Resources Meeting and MG reported that he is negotiating a solution with the Head of HR.
- vi. The new catering suppliers are on track to have refurbished the kitchen and begin food provision after the Easter holidays. The current Norse serving staff will be transferred over to Edwards and Blake. Parents will be given the opportunity to taste samples of the catering that will be offered on March 17th at 3pm and governors are welcome to attend.
- vii. Schools Financial Value Standard: MG explained that this is an annual document designed to ensure that adequate skills and controls are in place. It shows that the school seeks good value for money and has a robust continuity plan in place. Its acceptance was proposed by MG, seconded by JM and agreed unanimously. WC signed the document.
- viii. Budget Revision 3: this showed a small surplus at the end of Year 3 but had not taken account of the as yet unknown implications of the Apprenticeship Levy. It was anticipated that there would be an income stream from Edwards and Blake but the amount was unknown.
- ix. Lettings Policy – item deferred.
- x. Update to complaint to NPS and building works – JM has written to NPS but not yet had a response. A meeting is pending.

Clerk

- b. TLP: The minutes had been circulated and questions were invited.
 - i. The adoption of the Collective Worship Policy was proposed by JT and seconded by NP. This was agreed unanimously.
 - ii. The Policy for Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Problems had been approved within the TLP committee.
 - iii. The value of the recent TLP monitoring morning was noted by JT who felt it had provided an invaluable opportunity for governors. Staff were thanked.
 - iv. There had been a meeting to consider school data prior to the TLP meeting. Additional questions had subsequently been submitted and DD tabled a summary of the questions and her answers. The progress of a same set of PP children was discussed; while progress had been made there were higher expectations this year and more accuracy in assessing had meant that progress trends were less evident. Staff have a better understanding of Herts 4 Learning, the assessment tool used. It had been noted that girls were not performing as well in test environments as they were in class and strategies to resolve this had been considered. Governors were mindful of the dangers of over-testing and need to maintain a balance between enjoyment of school and preparedness for High School.

- 6. Governing Body Composition: WC explained that as there had been a reconstitution of the Governing Body four years ago, some Co-opted governors had reached the end of their term of office. It was felt that given the changing environment continuity was important and that the governors had a high level of skills and knowledge of the school. WC proposed the reappointment of NT, MG, JM and JT; this was seconded by NP and agreed unanimously. CM to notify Educator Solutions. It was noted that there is an additional vacancy following Mark Ashurst's resignation and

that a governor with legal experience would be valued.

7. Governing Body Self Evaluation: WC will circulate a National Governors' Association skills matrix for completion. Governors should also view the 2016 Educator Solutions Healthcheck on GovernorHub and consider whether any amendments to the outcomes are necessary.
8. Governor training and involvement in school form: A sheet on which to record training and activity was circulated.
9. Safeguarding: DD reported that she had attended useful courses on Safeguarding Children with Disabilities and on Signs of Safety.
10. Correspondence: There was none.
11. Confidential items: See confidential minutes.
12. Any Other Business: There was none.
13. Date of next meeting: 24th April 2017. New guidance on complaints processes will be reported on at that meeting.

AJS - Avenue Junior School

CNS - City of Norwich School

CDP - Cluster Development Plan

DfE - Department for Education

ECP – Education Challenge Partner

ES – Educator Solutions

HT - Head teacher

LA – Local Authority

LAC - Looked After Children

NGA - National Governors' Association

NGN - Norfolk Governors' Network

NPQH - National Professional Qualification for Headship

PA - Persistent Absence

PAN– Pupil Admission Number

PSA - Parent Support Advisor

PATHS - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

PTA - Parent Teacher Association

RAG - Red Amber Green

RRIS - Recreation Road Infant School

SATs - Statutory Assessment Tests

SC - School Council

SEF – Self Evaluation Form

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability

SENDCo - Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator

SIDP - School Improvement and Development Plan

SFVS - Schools' Financial Value Standards

SNITT – Initial Teacher Training

SMSC – Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

SPAG – Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar

SRE - Sex and Relationship Education

SS – School Support

TA - Teacher Assessed

VA - Value Added

