

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL CLERKING SERVICES

The Local Governing Board of Woodside and Reeve Hill Primary Academies

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Governing Board
held at Woodside Primary Academy on Thursday 8 February 2018 at 5.00pm

PRESENT: Mr P Addison-Child (in the chair)
Mrs S Dunn; Miss A Fletcher; Mr D Harrison; Mr M McKenna; Mrs H Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Ratcliffe (Assistant Headteacher, Reeve Hill Academy)

CLERK TO THE LGB: Mr A Hammond, Independent Professional Clerking Services

Prior to the commencement of formal business, governors and the Clerk were welcomed to the meeting. Miss Fletcher was welcomed in particular as new parent governor.

Governors were issued with folders containing key reference documents and it was noted that some of the information within the folders should be treated as sensitive.

13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS. No interests were declared.

14 APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence were received from Miss Joyce and Mr Stott. It was noted at this point that Mrs Taylor had resigned as parent governor.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS. Mr Harrison informed governors that academy updates would be provided as part of the Academy Improvement agenda item.

It was noted that there would be an additional item of business for consideration in Part B.

RESOLVED: that Academy Update be a standard agenda item in future.

16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

i) Governor with Responsibility for Pupil Premium and PE and Sport Premium Funding
(minute 7(f)(ii) refers)

RESOLVED: that Mr Addison-Child continue in the role until the next meeting and Miss Fletcher consider whether she would be willing to take over.

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ii) Committee Terms of Reference (minute 7(f)(iv) refers)

It was understood that the LGB required sub-committees to deal with pay and pupil exclusions, though the Chair would check with the Trust Board whether there might be a need for others.

RESOLVED: that the following sub-committees be established:-

Pay Sub-Committee

Membership

Any three eligible governors

Terms of Reference

To undertake annual salary assessments in accordance with the agreed pay policy.

Pupil Exclusions Sub-Committee

Membership

Any three eligible governors

Terms of Reference

To review permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions exceeding fifteen days in a term, in accordance with the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and associated statutory guidance.

18 SAFEGUARDING.

Woodside Primary Academy

Mr Harrison tabled copies of the safeguarding update for the period 21 November 2017 to 8 February 2018. It was noted that this included the numbers of children in various categories of vulnerability (including children looked after, subject to a child protection plan and subject to a family Common Assessment Framework plan), which were likely to remain relatively stable. It also included statistics in relation to referrals (including referrals to a designated safeguarding lead, social care and Early Help), which governors would be expected to question in the case of any significant changes.

It was noted that the data did not highlight any particular issues and that the 30 referrals to a designated safeguarding lead could range from very minor to very serious issues, as staff were encouraged to record all concerns. It was noted that four of the 30 referrals had

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met the threshold for referral to Social Care and there had been three referrals to Early Help.

Governors noted that there had been one allegation against a member of staff and Mr Harrison informed them that the allegation had not been made formally and had been retracted after the circumstances had been explained to the parent. The allegation had been notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer, who had confirmed that the procedure followed by Academy staff had represented best practice. In response to a question, it was confirmed that allegations against staff included allegations made by pupils, parents or other staff and would generally be made formally.

It was noted that a new member of staff had started and the safer recruitment checklist had been completed accordingly. Relevant staff had completed named person refresher training and DSL training.

In response to a question, Mr Harrison confirmed that he would in future include the number of families involved under each relevant heading.

Governors pointed out that the data as presented did not allow them to identify trends over time and the principals were asked to include historic data at the first meeting of each term.

Mr Harrison was asked if the number of referrals to a DSL was a concern and he confirmed that the figure was broadly consistent with previous years. It was noted that an increase in referrals was likely to be an indication that reporting had been effective and that the number of subsequent referrals to Social Care or Early Help were the key indicators on which governors should focus.

It was noted that it was important that a culture of safeguarding existed in both academies.

In response to a question, Mr Harrison confirmed that during the fire drill on 14 November 2017 a fire exit had been deliberately blocked and in the next a child and adult would remain in the building; both of these strategies were designed to test how staff reacted to unforeseen circumstances. Mr Harrison informed that the Fire Brigade risk assessment deemed that full evacuation should be completed within 4 minutes.

Governors were referred to the single central register (SCR) register and suggested that a governor should periodically check the register, in addition to existing internal and external checks. Mr Harrison confirmed that he would show the register to governors at the next meeting.

Mr Harrison was asked about the three children who were missing in education and he confirmed that the whereabouts of the children were known to the Academy and to Social Care. He explained that when children were taken off roll they were classified as missing in education until they started a new school. In response to a question, Mr Harrison confirmed that the children in question affected attendance data, but once they had transferred to the roll of another school/academy, the data was retrospectively adjusted

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(as far as the most recent census). It was noted that there was a relatively high level of in-year mobility and that some of this was due to children being placed in the Academy after being housed in the nearby refuge following domestic violence; in some cases children remained for longer than might be expected because parents were unhappy with the permanent school/academy allocation.

Reevy Hill Primary Academy

Mr McKenna tabled copies of the safeguarding update for the period September 2018 to-date.

Governors were informed that the Academy's systems were being developed to ensure that the template could be fully populated with accurate data, but on this occasion the number of referrals to a DSL (30) was an approximate figure; this was the result of issues with the previous tracking system. In response to a question, Mr McKenna confirmed that a robust tracking system was now in place and future data would be accurate.

It was noted that there had been learning as a result of the fire drill on 15 September 2017, which meant that there had been a better system in place on 15 December 2018.

Governors noted that there had been two Prevent referrals, both of which had related to the same child (who had complex needs); the Police had concluded that there was no risk of radicalisation. It was noted that the child was subject to a child protection plan and that support was being provided by the Phoenix Behaviour Unit.

Trustees noted that there had been two allegations against staff and Mr McKenna confirmed that, following investigation and advice from the LADO and HR, the allegations had been deemed to be unfounded. In response to a question, Mr McKenna confirmed that both cases had been closed.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that safeguarding policy review dates would be included on the update as appropriate. Mr McKenna informed trustees that a number of policies were being rewritten with a view to ensuring as much consistency with Woodside as possible, bearing in mind the need for some policies and procedures to be tailored to the specific needs/context of the respective academies – particularly in relation to child protection. It was noted that it was likely that there would in time be a Trust-wide safeguarding policy supplemented by academy-specific child protection policies, but in the interim local policies must be in place.

It was noted that Woodside's child protection policy had been approved at the last meeting (minute 12(i) refers) and that Reevy Hill's safeguarding and child protection policies would be presented at the next meeting. In future the policies would be reviewed at the same time.

Mr McKenna was asked about the Academy's approach to bullying and he confirmed that following parental concerns early in the Autumn term, the Academy had updated its Anti-Bullying Policy and implemented a number of strategies to raise the profile of bullying and ensure parents were confident that they could raise concerns and would be listened to.

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The Academy had engaged with the This Morning “Be Kind” campaign and had added a “Tell Us” page on the website so that parents could raise concerns confidentially. In addition, circle time had been introduced in classes and had been used to increase understanding of the effect of words and actions on others. There was a reflection book in which pupils could record concerns for discussion in circle time and Mrs Ratcliffe informed governors that the book was important to the pupils as it provided them with a means to express their feelings and calm down, in the knowledge that staff would follow up issues restoratively.

It was suggested that the Academy should actively promote the “Tell Us” page and reassure parents that any concerns logged would be followed up immediately – though it was noted that the Principal had responded immediately to concerns raised to date.

In response to a question, Mr McKenna confirmed that there was now a much more structured approach to dealing with bullying/alleged bullying, with a variety of means by which concerns could be raised. He was asked how governors would know that the situation was improving and confirmed that he could report to the LGB on actions taken and the impact on statistics, as well as reporting on pupil and parent voice. Mr McKenna was asked to provide an update on bullying at the next meeting.

Mr McKenna informed governors that attendance was currently below 94% and persistent absenteeism above 20% so strategies used in the Autumn term had clearly not been sufficiently effective. The Academy had looked at practice at Woodside and would be using One Education until the end of the Summer term.

19 ACADEMY IMPROVEMENT.

Reevy Hill Primary Academy

Mr McKenna tabled copies of the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP), together with RAG-rated December, April and June milestones for the writing, maths and parental engagement sections. Mr McKenna confirmed that the Academy Improvement Plan was a live document and would be subject to further refinement.

Parental Engagement

It was noted that a significant amount had been raised by the fundraising body and that there had been a 65% turnout at the Parent Evening (target: 85%). It was also noted that to date only three parents had volunteered to join the “reading army”.

It was noted that some parents had been aggressive on occasions and Mr McKenna was asked how the Academy would measure whether aggression had reduced as a result of AIP actions. He acknowledged that this was difficult, but confirmed that letters had been sent home and signs put up to make clear what was expected in terms of parental behaviour. He confirmed that leaders understood the historical context and that there was a need to change the culture.

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Governors noted that the AIP included some quantitative targets against which progress could be measured.

Maths

It was noted that the percentage of Year 1 pupils at the expected level was below target, though they had made good progress from low starting points as a result of improving teaching quality. In response to a question, Mr McKenna confirmed that pupils were making accelerated progress, so attainment would be higher at the end of the year.

It was noted that the position was similar in reading.

Writing

Mr McKenna informed governors that the quality of teaching was good but progress meetings had identified that there had been insufficient opportunities to write and that targets had not always been appropriate. He confirmed that the Academy was making use of elements of Read Write Inc, and although Year 6 attainment was currently below target, he expected April and July milestones would be met.

It was suggested that governors would benefit from a training session in relation to assessment data, to facilitate challenge and allow them to identify key areas of focus. It was also suggested that leaders be asked to add summaries of key strengths and areas for development to the AIPs.

Woodside Primary Academy

Mr Harrison tabled copies of the RAG-rated AIP.

Leadership

It was noted that the December milestones had been met as assessment grids were being used consistently across the Academy and rigorous monitoring and evaluation demonstrated that all subjects were being taught to improving standards.

Raising Standards

Raising Standards had been rated amber, largely because three children in maths and one in reading who had achieved a L3 in foundation stage were not currently exceeding in Year 2. It was possible this was the result of inaccurate assessment at the end of FS or increasing expectations, but irrespective of the reason this was something the Academy needed to address. One Year 6 pupil who had achieved L1 in Key Stage 1 maths and four Year 6 children who had achieved L1 in Key Stage 1 reading were not currently at expected.

Mr Harrison was asked what was being done in relation to pupils below expected and he confirmed that progress meetings were used to identify gaps. He was asked whether parental support was sought and confirmed that where teachers believed parents could

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help they were informed and involved – though the majority of gaps should be addressed through quality first teaching and some gaps were simply linked to coverage. Mr Harrison confirmed that as a minimum the aim was to ensure pupil attainment was in line with prior attainment.

It was noted that there were fewer pupils on track to meet end of year expectation in reading and maths in Years 1 and 5. In Year 1 this had been linked to quality of teaching and the member of staff (an NQT) had now resigned. The post had been advertised and seven applications received, but in the meantime a strong member of staff was teaching the class. In Year 5 there had been some issues in relation to the assessment system and coverage, so action had been taken and should result in an improvement in April data.

Attendance

Attendance was amber as it was 0.6% below target and in line with last year. Punctuality had improved and persistent absenteeism had reduced by 2% compared to last year, though PA had increased this term (which would be reflected in the report to the next meeting).

Early Years

Governors were informed that it was difficult to accurately judge the percentage of children on track to achieve a good level of development and there was a need to review the criteria used. It was noted that the Trust was currently developing an early years assessment system.

Currently, 50% of children were judged to be at least at expected, which was higher than usual at this point in the year and should not be an issue if accelerated progress could be maintained. The gender gap was 14%, compared to 25% last year. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the cohort was “boy-heavy” (in line with other year-groups) and that this had significant impact because of the development of boys’ fine motor skills was slower than those of girls. For this reason, the Academy needed to ensure provision was as well suited to boys as possible and, for example, guided reading texts now better reflected the stated interests of boys. It was noted that forcing children to write too soon could put them off, so there was a need to find an appropriate balance.

It was noted that the governor evaluation table within the Early Years section of the Plan had been populated with examples of what governors might include after having undertaken visits or there having been a discussion at an LGB meeting. The Chair confirmed that the methodology for completing the table could be discussed during a review of the format for reporting to the LGB.

It was noted that a number of areas were rated amber and Mr Harrison was asked how confident he was that they would all be green by July. He confirmed that Leadership and Raising Standards would be green and his only concern was attendance.

In response to a question, the principals confirmed that there were no further key issues for discussion at this meeting.

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- RESOLVED: i) that training in relation to assessment data be provided at the beginning of the next meeting.
- ii) that the Chair and principals meet to review the format for reporting to governors.

20 FEEDBACK FROM TRUSTEES. The Chair informed governors that the Trust had been subject to a DfE review and Mr Harrison confirmed that the Regional Schools Commissioner would be asking her school improvement lead to undertake one-day visits at Woodside and Worth Valley, with a focus on data.

21 CORRESPONDENCE. There was no update.

22 GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING. It was noted that training in relation to assessment data had been arranged earlier in the meeting.

23 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: that the dates and times of future meetings be as follows:-

Monday 19 March 2018 at 5.00pm (Reevy Hill)

Thursday 3 May 2018 at 5.00pm (Woodside)

Monday 16 July 2018 at 5.00pm (Reevy Hill)

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signature of Chair