

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 Reeve Hill Primary Academy on Monday 20 November 2017 at 5.00pm

- PRESENT: Mr P Addison-Child, in the Chair
Mrs S Dunn; Mr D Harrison; Mr M McKenna; Mrs H Taylor
- IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Ratcliffe and Mr G Stott, observers (staff at Reeve Hill Academy)
- CLERK TO THE BOARD: Mrs M Gibson, Independent Professional Clerking Services

- 1 APPOINTMENT OF LGB CHAIR. Governors noted that the Board of Trustees had appointed Mr Addison- Child as Chair of the LGB.

Introductions were invited.

The Chair outlined changes to governance arrangements and advised that they continued to evolve. He invited comments and questions should clarification be required throughout the meeting.

Governors noted that IPC Services had previously acted as Clerk for the Governing Board of Woodside Academy and consideration would be given to the appointment of the Clerk later in the meeting (minute 6 refers).

- 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS. Mrs Dunn and Mrs Taylor reported they had children at the academies.

Mrs Ratcliffe and Mr Stott advised they were employed by the Trust.

- RESOLVED: i) that the declarations be noted.
ii) that the Clerk circulate declaration forms to all governors, for completion.

- 3 APOLOGIES. No apologies for absence were received.

- 4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS. It was noted that safeguarding would be considered later in the meeting.

In response to a question, it was suggested that issues to be raised by parents be considered later in the meeting.

- 5 ELECTION OF LGB VICE-CHAIR. Governors were informed that Mrs Malt had submitted her resignation citing health and work pressures. Governors acknowledged her contribution and asked that their thanks for her service be conveyed.

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The Chair advised that he had invited Mrs Fletcher to meet with him to discuss her potential appointment as a co-opted member.

The Clerk outlined the criteria for appointment as Vice-Chair and pointed out that only Mrs Dunn and Mrs Taylor were eligible for appointment.

Mrs Dunn was nominated and left the meeting whilst an election took place.

RESOLVED: that Mrs Dunn be elected Vice-Chair until the first meeting of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Mrs Dunn re-joined the meeting and was notified of the decision.

6 APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE LGB. The Chair proposed that IPC Services be appointed as Clerk for the 2017-2018 academic year.

RESOLVED: that IPC Services be appointed as Clerk for the 2017-2018 academic year.

7 LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD REVIEW.

a) To note the constitution of the governing board:

The Chair advised that the LGB would be configured to meet the needs of the academies. Arrangements would remain as they were currently until suitable candidates could be sourced.

Governors suggested that an element of independence would be required; they would also need to be mindful of succession planning long term.

Mr McKenna advised that he would contact an individual who had submitted an expression of interest to join the LGB, to arrange a meeting with the Chair.

It was reported that the Articles of Association were under review; in the meantime, it was expected that staff representation could be flexible.

In response to a question, it was advised that model Articles issued by the DfE would not allow more than 33.33% staff membership. It was suggested this would be difficult to maintain given that both headteachers were entitled to a vote. The Chair pointed out that with the exception of pay reviews, it was unlikely decisions would be made that could not involve staff.

Mrs Ratcliffe and Mr Stott confirmed that they were willing to attend and contribute to board meetings without having a vote.

RESOLVED: i) that Mrs Sarah Joyce, Mrs Penny Ratcliffe and Mr Gary Stott be appointed as observers.

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- ii) that the above named be invited to attend meetings and receive all information circulated.

A discussion ensued regarding the appointment of independent members to the Board. Suggestions were presented which would be followed up by the Headteachers and the Chair.

- b) Register of business interests – this item had been discussed earlier (minute 2 refers).
- c) LGB Code of Conduct – the Clerk was asked to circulate the NGA Code of Conduct for governors to sign.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk circulate the NGA Code of Conduct via email.

- d) Governors' eligibility – the Clerk was asked to circulate forms for governors to sign to confirm their eligibility for office.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk circulate acceptance of office forms via email.

- e) Skills audits – the Clerk was asked to circulate skills audits for governors to complete.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk circulate skills audits via email.

- f) Appointment of governors with specific responsibilities and committees – Mr Harrison reported that all documents referred to Mr Addison-Child as the safeguarding governor. It was proposed this continue until membership of the governing body was finalised.

RESOLVED: i) that Mr Addison-Child continue as governor with responsibility for safeguarding.

Consideration was given to the appointment of a governor with responsibility for Pupil Premium and Sports Premium funding.

In response to a question, Mr Stott reported on the funds available and reminded governors of their responsibility and accountability to ensure it was spent appropriately. He pointed out that a significant level of income was received and governors would be expected to share information in relation to how it was spent and the impact it had on pupil progress and attainment.

The Chair advised that the Trust Board had commissioned an independent review of PP expenditure; this would provide evidence that the funding had been correctly targeted.

Mr Harrison pointed out that PP funding was also used to support the pastoral needs of pupils; governors would need to evidence the impact of this.

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In response to a further question, governors were informed that there would be an expectation to visit and review information at least termly; this included meeting with pupils.

Mrs Dunn and Mrs Taylor expressed concern at the time commitment expected due to working arrangements.

RESOLVED: ii) that the Chair be appointed governor with responsibility for Pupil Premium and Sports Premium funding and that this be reviewed at the next meeting.

Mrs Taylor agreed to work alongside the Chair to develop her understanding and knowledge of what was required.

Committee Structure – it was suggested that in view of the size of the governing body, all committees be convened using any eligible governor.

It was noted that the CEO of the Trust had agreed for performance management and pay reviews to be conducted by LGBs. Recommendations would be presented at the end of the meeting; these had been validated by the CEO.

RESOLVED: iii) that sub-committees be constituted by any eligible governor.

iv) that terms of reference for committees be developed following receipt of information from the Trust Board.

g) Website compliance – it was noted that the web-site would be managed by the Trust Board.

8 ACADEMY IMPROVEMENT.

Woodside Primary Academy

Mr Harrison tabled documents for governors to consider:

- Results and targets 2017-2018
- Pupil Premium Statement 2017-2018
- School improvement plan 2017-2018

It was suggested that governors review the information and submit comments and questions direct to Mr Harrison.

Mr Harrison reported that the Trust had provided the format of the reports to provide consistency across all schools. He pointed out that the first few pages were school specific to provide details of the mission, values and strategic aims, all of which remained unchanged.

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Governors' attention was drawn to page 2 of the school improvement plan which outlined Fullan's model of change leadership; this had guided thinking when considering priorities for improvement.

Mr Harrison advised that the sections of the school improvement plan correlated with the Ofsted Framework:

- Leadership: focus on the development of senior leaders in relation to use of assessment and middle leaders with a focus on curriculum expectations. Governors were informed that a new assessment system had been introduced by the Trust; this needed to be embedded to ensure standards were raised.
- Raising Standards: targets were very specific to provide impact on outcomes which would be data driven.
- Attendance: had declined following a three year rise. This had mirrored the locality and, although broadly in line with national, attendance had declined since the last Ofsted inspection.
- Early Years: the focus would be reducing the gender gap and increasing the number of pupils exceeding national expectation.

Governors asked for an explanation of acronyms used and also a consistent use of terminology; Mr Harrison agreed to address the points raised.

Mr Harrison pointed out that the plan was a working document which required further development. In future, it would be circulated in advance and reviewed at each meeting.

Governors expressed an interest in taking an active role in learning walks. In response, Mr Harrison outlined the timescales and the format of the process.

Governors asked what action was being taken to address attendance issues. In response, Mr Harrison reported that the pastoral team was meeting with parents to provide support and identify those who required intervention. He added that the team was currently supporting 38 families; actions were mainly generic but there was a core group being targeted to ensure attendance remained high profile.

In response to further questions, Mr Harrison advised that the 38 families equated to around 10% of families at the school. He pointed out that some of the case work included pupils whose attendance = 95%. There were ten pupils who were significantly below expectation and staff continued to work with them and their parents to address this.

Mr Harrison acknowledged the high level of detail included in the plan. He explained that as a working document, this needed to be included for the benefit of staff and leaders. It was suggested that a summary be presented to governors which focused on priorities and milestones for achievement.

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In relation to academic achievement, governors asked Mr Harrison to identify areas of concern. In response, it was reported that although maths was not an overall concern, the development of reasoning skills was a cause for concern. It was expected this would improve over the year however, a key focus would be to ensure planning was appropriate.

Mrs Ratcliffe explained the way in which maths was taught highlighting that not all course content had been covered; this would be identified during tests. Mr Harrison added that he was not unduly concerned regarding the outcomes for maths at the end of the year.

Governors were asked to note that reading would continue to be an area for close monitoring. Mr Harrison explained that good progress had been made in writing and maths; this had not been the case for reading. Intervention strategies had been introduced and would be monitored for impact throughout the year.

Mr Harrison concluded that tests would not be conducted until the end of the autumn term, to allow quality teaching to continue for as long as possible. The outcomes of the tests would be reported on in the new year.

In response to a question, Mr Harrison outlined the timetable for reporting to governors. He advised that data following the tests would be used to RAG rate the school improvement plan and to guide future planning. Pupils' reports would include outcomes of teacher assessment, work scrutiny and test performance to establish an accurate position. A summary of this information would be presented to governors in the spring term.

In relation to targets, Mr Harrison drew governors' attention to the targets set for 2018 and the comparison to previous years. He pointed out that although aspirational, the targets reflected teacher assessment.

Pupil Premium summary statement – governors were asked to note plans for expenditure in 2017/18 to address the key barriers identified. Mr Harrison advised that governors would be asked to contribute to the development of the plan in the future.

Reevy Hill Primary Academy

Mr McKenna presented the 2017/18 school development plan, copies of which were tabled at the meeting. He advised that actions would be RAG rated throughout the year. He asked that governors focus in the first instance, on areas rated amber and/or red.

Governors were informed that the plan was maintained on the One Drive; this gave staff instant access to update and provided dialogue for monitoring. Mr McKenna pointed out that the plan had been developed with a slightly different approach to that applied at Woodside.

In response to a question, it was noted that the One Drive could be extended to include access to governors.

Details of key priorities and actions to be taken were highlighted:

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Teaching and learning – Mr McKenna advised that they had ‘gone back to basics’ in relation to the structure of lessons using coaching models. Concerns identified were reducing as staff developed in confidence.

Behaviour – expectations had been reinforced to address a small area of defiance and inappropriate language. Clear systems were in place and a learning mentor had been appointed to support pupils to modify their behaviour.

Mr McKenna highlighted that the plan focused on improvements for outcomes on the previous year. He advised that some aspects needed to be revisited to ensure improved practice was embedded.

Governors asked for information relating to targets and how they compared to national. In response, Mr McKenna advised that currently, KS2 was performing below national; KS1 was in line with national. He reported that:

KS2 writing target = 55%; this was 10% below national average;
KS2 reading target = 73%; last year’s national = 71%; and
KS2 maths target = 76%; last year’s national = 75%.

Mr Harrison added that for both schools, KS1 data had been judged to be ‘unusual’; this would continue to be closely monitored to ensure progress was made and could be evidenced.

In relation to the quality of teaching, it was reported that two KS2 classes could demonstrate real strength; Year 1 had gaps which needed to be addressed and EYFS had significant areas which needed addressing. Mr McKenna advised that across a range of subjects, Year 5 was good and Year 3 was demonstrating experience and high quality.

Mr McKenna stated that future reports would be RAG rated to identify areas of strength and development.

In response to a question, governors noted that the omission of percentages in relation to quality of teaching had been a trust decision. It was highlighted that all judgements were based on observations, work scrutiny and test performance of pupils. Mr Harrison reminded governors that teaching was judged based on performance over a period of time.

Governors asked if there had been external validation of the quality of teaching. In response, it was reported that leaders in teaching and learning from across the Trust, along with the CEO, had worked across all schools to validate internal judgements.

Governors acknowledged that improving the quality of teaching was a leading factor for the school. They suggested that the quality of teaching be reported in a more specific manner to allow them to quantify good teaching. Mr McKenna responded that the monitoring and evaluation programme would support this. He added that external moderation had identified quick fixes to address a number of concerns.

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Governors stated they needed to be confident that strategies and support in place were having an impact to rapidly address shortfalls and that evidence was available to support this. Mr McKenna responded that the monitoring undertaken was based on the area of focus and target for each member of staff.

In response to a question, Mr McKenna explained the PASS initiative which had been introduced to support stressful situations. He added that restorative practice was also used to support reflection on behaviour.

Mr Harrison pointed out that statistics relating to behaviour and exclusions did not reflect the differing issues faced by the schools. Mr McKenna stated that staff had improved the consistency with which they dealt with behaviour to ensure pupils were quickly returned to task.

Governors asked for a summary of headlines; in response, Mr McKenna reported that:

- he would expect to see improvement in maths reasoning;
- there needed to be an improvement in the approach to home reading; this needed to be further developed to provide increased consistency;
- writing was performing less well than maths due to the newness of the scheme; the deficit should be made up in the first spring half term; and
- Early Years teaching and Year 1 progress were much stronger but remained areas of concern.

Governors were asked to retain the documents presented for reference and monitoring; they would be shared with new governors as they were appointed.

9 FEEDBACK FROM TRUSTEES. It was noted that this was a standard agenda item. There was no update to receive at this meeting.

10 CORRESPONDENCE. It was noted that this was a standard agenda item. There was no update to receive at this meeting.

11 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: that the dates and times of the next meetings be confirmed as 8 February and 19 March 2018 at 5.00pm.

12 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE. Governors were asked to approve the Woodside Primary Academy child protection policy which had been amended to reflect personnel changes and updates to statutory guidance.

RESOLVED: i) that the child protection policy be approved, as presented.

A template was presented which would provide a consistent reporting format for each school. Governors asked that safeguarding be included as a standard agenda item for each meeting.

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RESOLVED: ii) that safeguarding be a standard agenda item for each meeting.

Governors commended the evacuation time of 1 minute 45 seconds for a fire drill conducted at Woodside Primary Academy.

Governors were asked to note that a trust wide safeguarding policy was under review and would be presented for information at the next meeting.

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signature of Chair