

MINUTES

The meeting of the Local Governing Body of The Albert Pye and Ravensmere Schools Federation held at the Albert Pye on Wednesday 22nd March 2017 at 6pm.

Present:

Phil Tate (Chair), Melanie Mills (HT), Sally Brooks, Sam Burton, Gillian Lee, Jeanette Kershaw, Helen Nicholson, Jodie Poll, Katie Rattenbury, Emma Plane (Business Manager, Clerk)

1 Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Dee Moxon. The Chair informed the governors that she has resigned from the governing body. He thanked her most sincerely for all her hard work and support in the last few years. The Headteacher confirmed how much her input had been valued. The governors wholeheartedly supported her decision and wish her well.

2 Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 There were no declarations of any pecuniary or other interests with regard to items on the agenda.
- 2.2 To clerk confirmed that all governors have completed the register of Pecuniary Interests and there were no updates to be made.

3 Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 25th January and Wednesday 1st February 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

3.2 Matters arising:

Minutes 25.1.17

Page 3 –Safeguarding Governor was Dee Moxon. It was unanimously agreed that Gillian Lee would take over the role. Attendance Governor role was 'TBC'. It was unanimously agreed that Gillian Lee would take on the role.

Item 7.2 - **Governors asked whether any feedback had been received from the Regional Schools Commissioner with regards to the response to the coasting schools letter.**

The Headteacher explained that she has still not received a formal reply to the response letter. Gary Peile (ALT CEO) has advised to keep progressing the strong plans that have been put in place.

Minutes 1.2.17

Governors queried why 'Nursery Admissions' isn't on the agenda for this meeting.

The Headteacher explained that Jeanette Kershaw, Early Years Leader will attend training early next term about 30 hours nursery provision for working families and it was therefore decided that it is more appropriate to discuss this at the next meeting.

4 School Improvement

- 4.1 Governors received a copy of the Headteacher's written report prior to the meeting.

The Headteacher talked through the report.

Attendance

The Headteacher drew governors' attention to the fact that no class is rated red for attendance, apart from nursery where attendance is not statutory.

Governors asked what Ever 6 means.

The Headteacher explained that it is any child who has been eligible for Free School Meals within the last 6 years as they attract pupil premium funding.

Governors clarified that the PAN for each class is 30 and so, with the exception of 1 space in Reception and 2 spaces in Year 5 at the Albert Pye, both schools are full, which is good.

The Headteacher confirmed that today, places have been offered to two children for year 5, leaving only one space in Reception.

Governors queried why there were much higher numbers in morning nursery than afternoon nursery.

The Early Years' Leader confirmed that this is because generally people prefer their child to attend in the morning. Many 3-year-olds still nap in the afternoon.

Governors also queried whether there is a reason why nursery attendance is much lower in the afternoon than the morning.

The Headteacher clarified that lower class numbers mean that each child constitutes 10% of the class and so all absence has a greater impact on the data.

The Headteacher highlighted that the Panathlon children have qualified for national finals and will be going to the Olympic Park in London to take part. **All agreed that this is invaluable for the self-esteem for those children involved. The Headteacher and the Governors extended their congratulations to all involved and in particular, thanked Stuart McKenzie and Zella Chambers for their commitment and dedication to the Panathlon.**

The Headteacher highlighted the parents' attendance at parents meetings and explained that those parents that didn't attend were followed up. Staff are continuing to work on engaging those parents that don't attend.

The Early Years Leader informed governors that for Nursery parents were invited to attend 'My learning journey' meetings which are held during the child's nursery session. Attendance was 100%.

Governors commented that the level of sporting opportunities for children is excellent. The Headteacher confirmed that clubs are open to all and sporting opportunities at our federation are inclusive. Club provision is really strong and staff are really passionate about sport, which is why we do so well. Staff are proud of our sports ethos, which above all demands good sportsmanship.

The Headteacher highlighted that the Standards Group meetings have been very successful and powerful for staff. Staff have found them extremely beneficial. The Early Years Leader jointly leads the EYFS standards group. In the Autumn Term they covered Communication and Language - Characteristics of effective learning. The sessions are especially good for NQT's development.

Governors noted that at the Personnel Committee it was hoped that these sessions would be extended to also cover years 1, 3 and 5 and asked whether this has been possible.

The Headteacher explained that dates have been agreed for our federation and that she is hopeful that this will extend to other schools in the hub.

The Headteacher circulated the Maths Review report from Andy Redman, which is confidential. Governors discussed the content of the report.

Governors asked what the federation's policy for 'hands up' is.

The Headteacher explained that we don't want children sitting with their hand up waiting to get help from the teacher as this loses learning time. Teaching the children resilience and how to seek help and support from other avenues before asking the teaching is increasingly important, particularly as most classes are now full.

Kate Rattenbury fed back on the pupil perceptions on maths gathered in year 6. All children had enthusiasm for maths, which was unexpected and great to hear. The children were very articulate about their learning. All children like to relate their maths to real life. A lot said they don't get enough homework. The small group being taught by Henrietta Lane were all very clear about the benefit they are getting from working in this small group. Kate reported that the children seemed unclear about what resources are available for them. The Headteacher explained the 'Helpdesk' approach that has been shared through the standards groups and will be trialled here. Governors look forward to hearing feedback about the impact of these 'helpdesks' at future meetings.

Governors questioned how it was anticipated that marking and feedback could be improved, as marking was considered to be very thorough. The Headteacher explained that it was hoped that staff could spend less time on marking and feedback but still achieve the same impact. One change is that the children will be asked to RAG rate their own progress within the lesson.

Governors asked whether there is a timetable for observation and monitoring.

The Headteacher explained that a combination of monitoring and coaching is used. The leadership team has a shared drop-in grid. NQTs are seen more frequently as part of their induction to the teaching profession. Different members of leadership team observe members of classroom staff and record on the shared grid when they have done so. This method ensures that nobody is either overburdened or missed. The sessions are developmental and feedback is given as soon after the observation as is practical. They are very much a collaborative process. Governors felt that this method supports SLT in being able to track the development of staff.

The Headteacher referred governors back to the Headteacher's report.

The Headteacher reported that 'Persistent Absence' is higher than it should be and so staff are working hard to improve this. This is where attendance is below 90%. The school year is 38 weeks and as such 38 sessions is 10%, which is only 19 schools days.

The RAG letters on attendance have been amended in light of feedback and will be sent out to parents again on Monday. All letters will be in envelopes. The letters have had an impact on attendance for some children that were causing concern. There have been 4 referrals to the Education Welfare Officer since the letters were issued.

Governors questioned why attendance in Reception is lower than other year groups and whether there is anything that can be done to improve it. All agreed that the importance of good attendance for all children would be really highlighted during the new parents' meetings in the Summer term.

The Headteacher explained that Jo Verrall, Year 1 teacher at Ravensmere is focusing on improving spelling as her project for the Leading Active Learning programme. It was agreed that Helen Nicholson (literacy governor) would meet with Jo to find out about this. In particular, Jo is looking at what more can be done for SEN children who find spelling difficult.

Governors noted that progress is lower for SEN children across the federation and asked if there is any more that can be done for SEN children.

The Headteacher said that this is being considered by staff and she will feed back to governors at future meetings. Gillian Lee, as the SEN governor, will visit to monitor provision for SEN children.

Governors asked whether there is any scope to expand the small group teaching method currently being used for maths in year 6 for SEN children, particularly in year 5.

The Headteacher explained that SLT will measure the impact of this teaching and then decisions will be made. However, this model is very expensive and it is unlikely that budgets will support it in the future.

Governors asked to receive the performance data broken down by gender in future meetings to enable them to monitor, following the RaiseOnline data highlighting a gap here.

Governors wondered whether parents were being prepared sufficiently to help their children through SATs. The Headteacher explained that parents had been invited to a SATs preparation meeting but that the turnout had been poor. Following the meeting, '10 for 10' information was added to the website. **Governors asked for further information on how parents can support their children's learning at home throughout the school to be added to the website.**

It was agreed that governors would look at the help/information that is currently available for parents on the website to identify the gaps.

Governors asked how racial incidents are reported.

The Headteacher clarified any racial incidents reported are always investigated.

Governors asked what the procedure is once a report has been made.

The Headteacher explained that staff talk to the child affected and the perpetrator and the whole class. They talk about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. In assemblies, we focus on strong role models, such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. However, it has been decided that more current role models eg popstars and sports stars should also be celebrated.

Governors asked what is the current process for dealing with bullying.

The Headteacher explained that it is investigated thoroughly by staff and that the process links to the behaviour policy. There has been some persistent behaviour that has been unacceptable recently. There has been a focus on bullying and anti-bullying in assembly. Children have been reminded of the anti-bullying charter.

All agreed that our aim is to reinforce the culture that it is ok to tell someone.

Governors pondered how best to get information about bullying and anti-bullying out to parents.

Governors asked whether children know who to speak to in school.

The Headteacher explained that the children know that they can speak to the Pastoral Support Leaders (Mrs Chamber and Mrs Powles) but that she will be putting up their photographs in the hall to remind children.

Governors asked whether we have an anxiety box and anti-bullying buddies.

The Headteacher confirmed that we don't at present but that it would be considered as part of the review of the bullying policy.

Governors highlighted that the Bullying policy is missing from the website and asked for it to be added as a matter of urgency.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for providing such a comprehensive report.

4.2 School Development Plan

Governors discussed and adopted the English and Maths plans and agreed that they would be the focus of their monitoring for the next term.

4.3 Report on results – this was discussed as part of item 4.1

4.4 The Knowledge

The Chair circulated a hard copy of the Governors Competency Framework to all governors.

Governors asked whether the school participates in the 'Raising the Bar' awards.

The Headteacher explained that two members of support staff were nominated under the 'Support Staff of the Year' category last year and were finalists, which was a huge achievement.

Governors agreed that they would like to visit Ravensmere soon after Easter. It was agreed for Wednesday 26th April at 9.15am.

5 Budget Items

- 5.1 The Business Manager explained that the finance team are well underway with the first draft of the 2017/18 budget. A large increase in pupil numbers at the Albert Pye mitigates funding losses. Funding is still very tight and the budget will continue to be very closely monitored but there is no need to make staffing changes for September. At Ravensmere, we are continuing to predict an in-year overspend but the carryforward is large enough to enable us to take a strategic review of staffing across the federation. Details of the 2017/18 budget will be given to governors at the next Finance and Premises committee.

6 Policies

- 6.1 Governors unanimously agreed to adopt the Financial Control Manual

Governors unanimously agreed to adopt the Health and Safety Policy and to receive notification of additional appendices via the Finance and Premises committee.

7 Committees, Working Parties and Governor Monitoring

- 7.1 Governors considered the minutes of the Personnel Committee and the Finance and Premises Committee which took place on 27th February 2017.

Governors asked whether there had been any progress with the automation of the gates at the front entrance to the school.

The Business Manager confirmed that a contractor has been appointed and the work is due to be carried out during the Easter break.

Governors queried whether the locked gates would hinder exit / entrance for emergency services in the case of a fire.

The Business Manger explained that they would not. The gates will be unlocked by a switch in the school office. On hearing the fire alarm, the office team will deactivate the lock when exiting the building.

- 7.2 Katie Rattenbury had given feedback from her monitoring visit earlier in the meeting.

Sally Brooks fed back to governors following her meeting with Heidi Dimmock, Science Leader. **Sally found her to be very positive about science and about 'Leading Active Learning' and the project that she is doing. They had a walk around the school. Heidi explained that she would be producing 'I wonder ...' boards in the next few week and Sally will visit again to view them and hear about science week.**

Governors discussed arrangements for further governor monitoring next term. The Chair underlined the importance of completing Governor Visit report forms after each visit.

Clerk to circulate the Governor Visits Policy and Monitoring Visit Report form to all governors.

- 8 Governor Training**
- 8.1 The Chair advised new governors that the 'How do I start?' training session for governors is very valuable. As session in Lowestoft was identified on 3rd May 2017. Governors to let contact the clerk if they want to book a place.
- Governors discussed the other training available and again should contact the clerk if they want to book a place on any of this training.
- 8.2 The Chair reminded governors that there will be an ALT Governor Training Session on Wednesday 10th May 2017, 5.45-7pm. Clerk to advise Governors of location once known.
- 9 Any other business**
- 9.1 Of sufficient urgency and importance to be raised as an agenda item at the next meeting.
- 10 Date of next meeting** – Wednesday 17th May 2017, 6pm
- There was no other business and the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Agreed Actions

1	Nursery admissions to be added to a future agenda	Clerk
2	Visit to Ravensmere to meet with Jo Verrall about spelling	Helen Nicholson
3	Monitoring of 'I wonder ...' boards	Sally Brooks
4	Breakdown of data by gender	Headteacher
5	Review the advice for parents on supporting learning at home available on the website	Parent Governors
6	Circulate the Governor Visits Policy and Monitoring Visit Report form to all governors.	Clerk
7	Contact clerk to book a place on any training course	All Governors
8	Advise governors of location of ALT training on 10/05/17	Clerk

These minutes are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

 Chair of Governors, FGB 17/05/2017