

**Local Advisory Group Meeting**

**Wednesday 21 March 2018**

**MINUTES**

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| PL | Paul Lovern – Executive Head | NJ | Nicola Jarrett – Headteacher Richard Crosse |
| HB | Heather Bowman – Chair of Directors | RM | Rachel Mills – Headteacher Howard |
| SC | Sue Cockayne – Director for LAG | JW | Jon Wynn – Headteacher St. Mary’s |
| AA | Antony Allen – Parent Member Richard Crosse | AHod | Alison Hodgson - Director of Business Operations |
| MHE | Marcella Henley – PTA Member Richard Crosse | AH | Alison Howard - Clerk |
| JH | Jan Higgins – Community Member Richard Crosse | RC | Richard Crosse |
| PB | Phil Bate – Parent Member Howard | SM | St Mary's |
| CM | Claire Malcolm – PTA Member Howard | TH | The Howard |
| CB | Chris Billingham – Community Member Howard | TA | Teaching Assistant |
| CC | Claire Clarke – PTA Member St. Mary’s | HT | Headteacher |
| MH | Marie Havelock – Community Member St. Mary’s |  |  |

**Attendance :** PL, HB, SC, AA, CB, CC, JH, A Hod, CM, MH, RM, NJ, JW, AH

1. SC welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting opened with a prayer.
2. **Apologies :** PB and MHE sent apologies.
3. **Pecuniary Interest**

LAG members updated pecuniary interest forms.

1. **Minutes of last meeting**

An amendment was made to the minutes to show that in Item 7, paragraph 2, CB made the report for TH mostly on behalf of CM, referring to PTA fundraising at the school. These were then accepted as a true record and signed by SC.

1. **Head of School Reports**

**Richard Crosse School:** NJ reported that things were going well, with little change in staffing. The school welcomed 3 teacher-training students who were doing very well; NJ thanked staff who were mentoring these students and completing the paperwork. The volunteers do invaluable work in school, coming in on a regular basis and staying through the year. With regard to extra-curricular activities, there are many lunchtime clubs including a growth mindset club which is concerned with the health, wellbeing and nurturing of children. Responding to feedback from parents, the school tries to identify and inform about events in advance, but there are still sometimes unavoidable last-minute events and changes. The curriculum is constant across the three schools, but there are also many enhancement activities including World Book Day, Sports Relief and Easter productions and services. Pupils have taken part in a number of visits, including Pizza Hut and the residential. The sleepover went very well, with good behaviour on the part of the children. NJ explained that there has to be a balance between the priority of raising standards and the need to experience new activities and places.

JH asked about Age UK's involvement and NJ confirmed that visitors from Age UK come into school on a regular basis.

AA informed the LAG members about the project at RC to build a racing car; this has been organised and fully funded by the University of Warwick (where AA works) and the car is almost built, to be raced against other schools at Rockingham Speedway next term. He suggested that this project could be extended next year across another school, and possibly both schools, in the MAT and Warwick University were very keen to support the MAT with this. AA was thanked for all his contribution and hard work.

**Howard Primary School:** RM reported on staff changes in the school with the appointment of herself as Headteacher (and also teacher of Y1 and Y2 in the mornings) since February half-term and a new member of staff to teach Class 1. The previous teacher of Class 1 is working with a pupil on a 1-to-1 basis. RM is aware that parents appreciate the family aspect of the school and she is enjoying getting to know pupils and parents and working with the staff. The school office is now manned by 2 members of staff who are job-sharing the role. There are a number of TAs and volunteers working in the school, supporting children. Extra-curricular activities include study club, music, choir, sports including football and athletics and it is planned to have cooking and gardening clubs after the holiday, with a company called Funky Foods providing activities around healthy eating. The curriculum is enhanced with special days and events such as World Book Day, World fairytale week, the Scholastic Book Fair and the sleepover and RM is producing evidence of enrichment with contributions from pupils. There will be an electric guitar concert, Beat Feet, a Residential, an Easter Bonnet parade and for Sports Relief there is a variety of activities. The lunchtimes and playtimes are now more structured in the playground with pupils as play leaders; more playtime activities such as skipping games are being introduced.

RM considered it important to re-establish the MAT values of Respect, Friendship and Love in the school and is encouraging everyone to work together as a team. Children have painted pictures of the staff to display on the walls and assemblies are used to promote these values. A traffic light system of behaviour management has been introduced to reduce the incidents of low-level misbehaviour, enhance learning, improve behaviour in the playground and during lunch and encourage the children to make good choices.

**St Mary's School:** JW informed LAG members that staffing has remained consistent, but a teacher is leaving at Easter and a new teacher has been recruited. Teacher-training students have been working in school and been well supported by staff. There is also a member of staff training to be a TA. He said how lucky the school is to have many volunteers and supportive parents. One family has left the school due to re-location and one Looked After Child has moved back to Stoke. Extra-curricular clubs include archery and football tournaments have taken place with the Hart School. The children enjoy music and the choir and JW thanked Mrs Parkes for her hard work. Events coming up include the play and the Easter service. Grammar and phonics workshops have taken place. In general, safeguarding and behaviour are very good; the attendance is slightly down but it is hoped that this will now improve. JW expressed thanks to the vicar in Colton who is very involved with the school.

PL and SC thanked the three Headteachers and all the staff for their hard work.

AHod discussed ParentPay with the LAG members, stating that the parental surveys showed that there were some issues with this. She explained that problems arose because parents could not pay a lump sum to cover all costs as there were different accounts for different items and these had to be separately audited. AHod suggested that, at new intake events, there could be a ParentPay demo and a guide book could be produced to introduce new parents to the system. LAG members agreed with this and AA proposed that the guide book be offered to all parents who would welcome explanations on the different sections, including which items were not in use, as working out what items were in debit/credit was not easy. AHod will have a meeting with the office admin staff to discuss how to present the items of credit/debit to parents in texts and, as the admin staff do not see what is shown to parents, AA will meet up with AHod to show what appears on the system to parents. CC pointed out that the amounts for Care Club need to be amended. AHod said that she and the admin staff really want to make the system work for parents and that she is always available for parents to contact her with concerns.

1. **Community Updates**

**Richard Crosse/Kings Bromley:** AA read out MHE's report which stated that the PTA AGM had been held and new people had taken up posts. It was important to tap into the wider community, with local advertising and reporting. There is now more parental involvement in how the PTA money is spent and the Just Giving page is now up and running. £4811 was raised over the year and £7527 was spent, mostly on items requested by the school. The greatest challenge for the PTA is attracting parents to meetings and to help with the preparation for events and the aim is to encourage new parents to join in. It was suggested that parents could offer expertise in certain areas and an offer to supply school uniform at cost was discussed. Fundraising events have included the Christmas Fayre (£853 + £209 from selling excess stock) and the Valentine Day Disco; the PTA funded the school trip to the Rugeley Red Rose theatre pantomime. Events planned include the Easter play productions, Chocolate Bingo night, Big Breakfast, Summer Fayre and sports day; the PTA will be given a free stall at Kings Bromley Show.

JH reported that there will be an event in the Village Hall on 24 March as part of the fundraising efforts for the refurbishment of the Village Hall.

Village organisations were encouraged to let the office staff at RC know of events which could be included in the school newsletter.

**The Howard/Elford:** CM reported that after a year of very successful Friends of TH fundraising for the new classroom, it had been decided to also approach outside sources for additional funding, but planning permission had to be obtained before e.g. Lottery funding could be applied for. A new housing development in the village had been approved and it was agreed that developers should be approached as soon as possible to access community funding; the development was seen to be positive for the school. Although it had been an unusual term, with the departure of the Headteacher and Mr Lovern stepping in as temporary Headteacher, there was a great deal of good feedback and positivity on the appointment of RM. Parents agreed that Class 1 needed some stability. Fundraising events include the Christmas Fayre, Chocolate Bingo, a 'wedding' ball on 19 May and a 100-mile cycle ride in September; 'Howard haircuts' offer haircuts for children. Money has been raised for Forest School equipment, but a new member of staff has to be trained up to offer these activities.

CB had received very positive feedback from villagers about school participation in village events. There had also been very positive comments from a set of grandparents about the enthusiasm of their grandchildren; the children's attitude to learning was much improved compared to their attitude at their previous school. CB said there was some concern within the village about the amount of fundraising for the new classroom and suggested more explanation and positive publicity about the project. There was also some uncertainty about the school's policy on illness, as there was an emphasis on attendance; more guidance and greater clarity about when a child could return to school were needed. PL/RM agreed that information on returning to school after illness could be given out to parents, but the policy and a general guide was available to read on the website. There was discussion on a parents' handbook, but PL said that the website was being improved and a note would be put on the planner to draw parents' attention to the website and to ensure they keep checking it for changes. CB stressed the need to keep school events and success in the public eye.

**St Mary's/Colton:** CC reported that there had been a good turnout for the Christmas Fayre and the village Fayre. Events have included the Valentine's Day disco and Mother's Day; Chocolate Bingo, Big Breakfast, Film Night and Sports Day BBQ are coming up. Money raised for the leaving class teacher will be used for resources for the children. The Trustees and the PTA have funded an outdoor shelter which will be greatly appreciated. The school is eligible to raise money with Tesco Bags for Help and the chickens are laying lots of eggs which are selling well. It has been a good year with many positive events. The PTA have formed a WhatsApp group which has proved popular (CM reported that at TH there are class WhatsApp groups for parents).

MH emphasised the amazing difference the new vicar had made to the village and to the link between church and school. The pupils had helped to raise £652 for the Children's Society. Villagers and parents had greatly enjoyed the choir performance in church and would be very happy if it was repeated; tickets had to be limited due to the number of seats available, but it was felt that it was difficult to do repeat concerts or in more than one village at that time of the year. Donations from the event went to TSSMAT to purchase musical instruments. MH reported that the park project in the village has received full funding.

1. **Any other business**

There was no other business.

1. **Date and location of next meeting**

4 July, 4pm at TH

Signed............................................................. Date.........................................

Sue Cockayne, Chair of Local Advisory Group