



Minutes of a Meeting of the Governors of Barnabas Oley School, Great Gransden, held on Thursday 6th February 2014 at 7:00pm

Present: Mrs M Downes, Dr D Doyle, Mrs R Fogg, Mrs C Hall, Mrs E McLaughlin,
Revd C Furlong, Mr J Petre, Mr A Pett, Mr C Santus, Mrs R Smith (HT),
Mrs A Whiddett, Mrs K Whinney(C)

In Attendance: Mrs C Morton (Clerk), Ms C Jarvis (Deputy Head), Sam (Head Boy), Beatrice (Head Girl)

Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received and accepted from Mr D Merrill.

The meeting began with prayers

14.1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

14.2 Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 28th November 2013 were agreed as correct and signed by the Chair.

14.3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

14.4 Welcome Head Boy and Head Girl

Mrs Whiney welcomed the Head Boy and Head Girl to the meeting and the members of the governing body introduced themselves.

14.5 School Kitchen and School Meals Update

Mrs Smith explained that, from September, funding would be available to provide free school meals for all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. This would mean upgrading the kitchen from a Satellite Kitchen providing blast frozen meals to a Production Kitchen providing freshly cooked food. This would entail extending the kitchen. Architects' plans have already been drawn up and building works have been agreed estimated at £100,000. Mrs Smith has applied for the funds from the Local Authority. If the application is successful, it is planned that the work will start in the summer holidays. Ely Property Management will be managing the work. Sam asked if the building work would mean a change of entry into the school. Mrs Smith confirmed that entry arrangements would be unchanged.

14.6 Pencils / Pens of Perfection

Beatrice explained that poor handwriting had been highlighted in the Ofsted report. To combat this, the school council had introduced pencils and pens of perfection. These are coloured, inscribed pencils and pens that are awarded to pupils who improve their handwriting - silver, gold and blue pencils and then

on to a pen. She handed round samples of the pencils for the governors to inspect. When asked if any improvements had been made, she confirmed that awards had already started to be made. Miss Hodges explained that letters had specific shapes to be judged as correct and noted that help was being made available to parents, via the website, so they could help with continued improvement at home.

14.7 iPads and IT

Mrs Smith and Sam demonstrated the new iPad trolley and Mrs Smith explained that 8 iPads had currently been bought with a further 32 to be purchased by the end of the year with a warranty of 3 years. £16.5k has been spent so far on the new technology; this has been largely funded by fundraising from the PTA (£15,000). Staff are to be trained on using the new apps in a few weeks time. Beatrice asked if the iPads were secure from accessing inappropriate websites. Mrs Smith explained that all the iPads were connected to the internet via the school server and that inappropriate websites were blocked by the server. Mrs Hall asked about the physical security of the hardware, Mrs Smith said that the iPads were locked away with a combination lock and were very secure. Post training, Mr Santus suggested demonstrating the educational value of the iPads to the governing body.

14.8 Watoto Choir Visit

Revd Furlong thanked everyone for their support for the impending visit and said that offers of lodgings had flooded in. The choir was fully housed with reserves in case of last minute hitches. She explained the provisional timetable but indicated that this might be changed by the choir leader. Sam and Beatrice will be in the welcome party to the church for the concert but Revd Furlong asked for governors to be there also. Mrs Hall and Mrs Whinney agreed to attend.

Sam, Beatrice and Ms Jarvis left the meeting

14.9 Parent Governor Vacancy and Succession Planning

Mrs Whinney explained that, although the first request for parent governor nominations had been poor, we now had three possible candidates. Elections will commence as soon as possible.

Regarding succession planning and the imminent possible loss of two strategic parent governors, Mrs Whinney asked Mrs Morton to explain the benefits of reconstituting to allow more flexibility on the membership categories of the governing body. Mrs Morton explained the new regulations and said these were not currently compulsory but were likely to become compulsory by 2015. Mrs Fogg was concerned that reducing the number of Parent Governors might be seen as making the governing body an exclusive club. Mrs Morton agreed to circulate the regulations and investigate possible solutions, this would be considered again at another governing body meeting.

14.10 Feedback from Spring Termly Briefing

Mr Petre briefly went through his previously circulated notes. He confirmed he had checked that the formal complaints procedure was in place on the school website but asked if an informal method could be published for minor complaints. When asked about "Virtual Head Teachers", he explained that these were people of headteacher grade who were assigned to a particular child or group of children who may move around between schools e.g. special needs or Travellers.

14.11 Training Update

Mrs McLaughlin confirmed the in-house training session on 12th March and asked that governors considered the forward planning sheet to be completed after the course. Mrs McLaughlin urged governors to attend courses and notify her of any training.

14.12 PHSE Feedback

It was indicated that parent involvement with the school via the Parent Forum was still low and parents should be encouraged to come and make their views known.

14.13 SDP Update

Mrs Smith said that the latest update of the SDP was on the website. Mr Santus reported that the date of the latest Ofsted inspection was out of date in the SDP. This is to be corrected.

Action: Mrs Smith

14.14 CVC Catchment Update

Parents' responses to the questionnaire on change of catchment is coming to a close. It was suggested to print copies of the questionnaire and hand deliver them to 5 to 10 parents each in an effort to improve the response rate. This has to be done to get the responses in by 28th February. It was also suggested to give some to parents at parents evening on 24th / 25th February.

Mr Petre discussed the governing body's formal response document and he suggested only noting a positive response to question 6 of the response document, leaving the other questions as not applicable. Mrs Hall questioned whether we should respond positively to other questions within the response document. Mr Petre felt we did not know sufficient detail to respond positively. Mrs Smith felt it was sufficient to just address question 6. Mr Petre circulated a suggested response to question 6. All were in favour of the suggested response to question 6 and the rest of the response document. Mr Petre agreed to submit this on behalf of the governing body.

Action: Mr Petre

14.15 Curriculum Committee report

Mrs Fogg was asked to thank her daughter for the templates submitted for the handwriting awards. These will be voted on next week.

It was suggested that questions on Ofsted and reading/writing results should be added to the parent questionnaire this year. Mrs Whinney and Mrs Smith will confirm whether there were extra questions to add. Miss Hodges and Mr Petre are planning to send it to parents in March.

Action: Mrs Whinney, Mrs Smith, Mr Petre

Several policies had been reviewed but for various reasons, all needed more work and none had been adopted.

14.16 FGP Committee Report from October Meeting and Breakout Session

Mr Santus highlighted two things from the F&GP Committee minutes.

The overspend on employee costs was because of the extra staff training undertaken for new roles and SEN needs. He noted that increased monitoring would be implemented going forward due to a reduced reserves position to ensure that overspends are identified early.

The Lettings Policy is being reviewed and Mr Santus asked the governors if they would consider increasing the letting rates and whether they were comfortable with actively marketing the facilities at the school. After a lengthy discussion regarding comparison with other amenities in the village and possible insurance and noise implications, suggestions of increasing the current rates by £5 and marketing the amenities to community groups were made. These will be considered at the next F&GP meeting.

Revd Furlong left the meeting

14.17 Personnel Committee Report

The Personnel Committee had not met.

14.18 Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report had been circulated. Mrs Smith noted that 2 children were adopted children and new DfE guidance meant that those children were eligible for additional funding.

Mrs Smith also pointed out that an inspection from the Diocese was imminent, however, one weeks notice would be given and the school was ready with all required documents in place. Mrs Smith encouraged everyone to read the SIAMS SEF which was now available on the website.

The Headteacher was asked if she had any idea of next year's intake as we would be losing 21 children from year 6. Mrs Smith replied she did not but that she had been showing several out of catchment parents around the school and she hoped that numbers would increase.

14.19 Data Report

Mrs Smith introduced the Data Booklet that had been circulated. However, she did point out that the data was already 8 months out of date and some of the problems highlighted had already been addressed as part of the school development plan. She also asked governors to note that the cohort was small and one poorly performing child could represent between 5% and 10% of the figures.

Mrs Smith also discussed the KIT report (Keeping in Touch). Mrs Whinney questioned the results in the EYFS particularly the contradiction between the Good level of development % and average score. Mrs Smith explained that this was the first year that the good level of development % had been monitored and that it was to be changed again. Comparison of this measure had been difficult due to unclear rules of assessment.

14.20 Annual Report to Parents

As agreed in previous minutes, Mrs Whinney told the governors that this report was due out in March. She asked for suitable content and suggested governors each took an item and then she would amalgamate them into the complete report. This was agreed and several items of content were suggested. Mrs Whinney will coordinate the writing and allocate items to each governor.

Action: Mrs Whinney, all governors

14.21 Academies Meeting

Mrs Smith reported that several attempts to find a mutually agreeable date for this meeting with a representative of the Multi Academy Trust from Ely Diocese had failed. She had left it for the Trust to come up with dates during the next school year.

It was suggested that, in the meantime, someone from the Bourn School should be approached to ask whether they would talk informally to 2 or 3 governors who could report back to the FGB.

14.22 Dates of next meetings

FGB Thursday 13th March 2014 at 7 pm
(this will also include breakout sessions for the Curriculum and F&GP Committees)

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm with the Grace.

Signed:

Date: