

HOME F ARM PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY – TUESDAY 27TH MARCH 2018, 19:00
MINUTES

PRESENT:

Marilyn Rivett (Chair)	Emily Hale	Martin Wilson
Richard Potter (Headteacher)	Tracey Khan	Kelly Wright
Lorna Catmull	Stephen Lefley	Mary Smith
Caroline Croydon	Dan Mansfield	Vicky Carlin (Clerk)
Chris Ketley	Clare Palmer	

<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>1. Marilyn Rivett welcomed Governors to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Hugh Crayston and those apologies were accepted by the Governing Body.</p>	
<p>Register of business interests</p> <p>2. The register was available in school – no additional interests were declared.</p>	
<p>Notification of other items of urgent business</p> <p>3. There were no other items of urgent business.</p>	
<p>Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p> <p>4. Marilyn Rivett thanked Dan Mansfield for chairing the meeting of 9 January 2018. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. All matters arising were on the agenda for this meeting. Marilyn Rivett reminded Governors that they were welcome to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for full Governing Body meetings. Any suggestions should be emailed to the Chair for consideration.</p>	
<p>Headteacher’s report and open questions to the Headteacher</p> <p>5. Richard Potter confirmed that there no current safeguarding matters to report. Marilyn Rivett noted that she meets with the Headteacher regularly to discuss a range of matters including safeguarding. A written update from the Headteacher and the updated School Improvement Plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Richard Potter invited questions from Governors.</p> <p>6. Governors noted that the school would be taking an additional EYFS class and an additional Year 4 class from September 2018, and asked whether there would be pressure from Essex County Council to take another additional class from September. Richard Potter confirmed that there was no indication of this at this point, and that a number of other local schools were taking additional classes in different year groups. Governors discussed the ECC strategy for dealing with the pressure for school places in this part of Colchester.</p> <p>7. Governors asked who was likely to get places in the additional Year 4 class, and whether they were likely to go to people who lived locally. It was not possible to be definitive about this, but the school was aware of a number of people living in the catchment area who wanted places at the school.</p> <p>8. Governors noted a reference in the Headteacher’s report to strengthening leadership at all levels, and asked how this was being delivered and what impact it was having. Richard Potter explained that the Senior Leadership Team met regularly to focus on its</p>	

priorities, and that these were then a focus at phase meetings. The phase teams were able to be proactive in actioning things quickly when they needed a fast response.

9. Governors asked how Pupil Premium Grant funding was being targeted to ensure it met the needs of individual children. Richard Potter explained that the majority of the funding was used for targeted 1:1 and small group interventions led by Mrs Simpson and supported by LSAs. Mrs Simpson worked closely with class teachers to focus on individual needs. Progress was monitored in a number of ways including through termly standards meetings. Overall, children eligible for PPG had attainment which was equal to or slightly less than their peers. Caroline Croydon noted that she had carried out recent Governor monitoring visits focusing on SEND, and she had found the level of intervention involved for children with SEND to be very impressive.
10. Governors noted the relatively high numbers of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in one specific cohort, and asked what the first language of these children was. Richard Potter explained that they were all different, and that across the school, there were a wide range of languages spoken at home. Governors asked how the school classified a child as having EAL, and it was explained that the school looked for children whose 'mother tongue' was not English, and asked families whether there were other languages spoken at home. Governors asked whether these classifications were made available to parents, and it was confirmed that personal data was made available to parents on request.
11. Governors discussed some staffing matters – this discussion is recorded separately.
12. Governors asked what was being done to address concerns about writing in Year 2 and Year 6. Mary Smith explained that the concern related to securing evidence for working at greater depth. The criteria which needed to be met were very tough, and a number of children had been identified for some additional targeted work. It was important that teacher assessment was accurate. The school could expect its assessment to be externally moderated and staff had undertaken some additional training in moderation in this area of the curriculum.
13. Governors asked whether any concerns about writing in Year 2 pointed to the possibility of children being 'over-assessed' at Year 1. Richard Potter explained that this was not the case – assessment no longer focused on cumulative 'levels' and the stage 2 curriculum was an entirely new and different set of objectives to the stage 1 curriculum. The focus was on deepening learning within a stage. There was evidence for Year 1 and Year 2 that children had met the required standards, but it could be more challenging to measure their resilience and ability to apply their skills in different contexts.
14. Governors asked how the school would address pastoral care needs in the context of expansion, and how the school would ensure that it was a nurturing environment for children joining in Year 4 from September 2018. Richard Potter explained that it was likely that new children would be paired up with either an existing Year 4 child, or Year 5 child, drawing on the 'buddy' system which worked well for new Reception children. Approaches such as circle time also worked well to address pastoral needs.

Update from the Chair of the FAM and HR Committee

15. Stephen Lefley provided an update on the Committee's work. The draft budget for 2018-19 was under preparation and would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 17th April. The Committee had scrutinised the progress on the build project, and a health and safety inspection would take place in the summer term.

Update on the school build project

16. Richard Potter provided an update on the ECC-led building project. The contractors Morgan Sindall had begun work on the car park, which would result in 22 newly marked spaces. An additional section of the field had been cordoned off to allow vehicle access to the car park, as it was a planning requirement that lorries did not access the school via Shelley Road. Governors asked whether the area was being levelled, and whether there would be drainage issues, and it was explained that the area was not being completely levelled due to the proximity to the pool and its drainage system. The construction of the new classrooms was ahead of schedule, and by the end of the Easter break there would be the shell of a building.

Academisation

17. The Governing Body discussed its ongoing consideration of issues relating to academisation. This discussion is recorded separately.

Updated policies for approval

18. The Governing Body considered the updated policy on curriculum and homework. Governors asked a number of questions:

- a) Is homework compulsory in a primary setting, and does the school monitor whether homework is being done? Richard Potter explained that homework is not a legal requirement, and Home Farm took the approach of encouraging or rewarding homework. Individual class teachers monitored whether homework was being done within their class. In some classes, the pupils marked it together in class. Generally, there were a small number of pupils who didn't complete homework, but in some cases there were well-being factors or wider issues involved.
- b) What was the outcome of the recent RE review and were there any implications for the curriculum policy? Richard Potter explained that the school had volunteered to take part in the RE review, which had been carried out by two specialist inspectors. The reviewers had taken account of the school's self-assessment; assessment data; work samples; pupil feedback; lesson observations; displays; assemblies; and a discussion with Governors. The report drew conclusions across five stated outcomes – three were judged to be highly effective, and two were judged to be effective. Governors asked whether there was any data which could be used to compare these outcomes to other schools. The review was a new process and there was no baseline data which could be used for comparison, but the Headteacher had asked the reviewers if there was any other source of comparison data. The school already tracked progress and attainment in RE and this was not something done by all other schools.
- c) Could the school opt to have such reviews done in other subjects? Ofsted was able to carry out subject-level inspections, and there was a wider debate about science becoming an area of focus here.
- d) The curriculum policy referred to home school contact books being signed by parents once a week – was this accurate? The reference would be amended to clarify that it was reading records which were seen and signed regularly by parents rather than home school contact books.
- e) There was a reference in the policy to online reading homework. The school no longer subscribed to Reading Eggs and this reference would be removed.

<p>and that it led to rapid changes in the way children were taught. She had concluded that children were in general very well-served by the school's approach.</p> <p>23. She asked whether the school was confident that staff and parental perceptions were the same, and whether parents were routinely informed if their child was included on the SEN register. She asked whether One Plan meetings were intended to be termly for all children, and commented that not all children had had a One Plan meeting in the spring term. Richard Potter explained that One Plan meetings should take place regularly, but not necessarily termly. All children in the school had a One Plan – this was written by the children themselves, and this approach had been commended by Ofsted in its inspection. The school would review the Code of Practice on SEND to clarify the requirements in relation to informing parents. It was noted that it was important for parents to know what support their child was getting, but the 'register' was a tool for professionals to help target resources and monitor impact.</p> <p>24. The Governing Body discussed the options for subscribing to Governor Services and Governor training for 2018-19, and agreed to subscribe to both.</p>	<p>Action – School to check SEN Code of Practice in context of communications with parents.</p> <p>Action – Subscription to Governor services and training to be arranged.</p>
<p>Chair's action</p> <p>25. The Chair had taken a decision in consultation with the Chair of the FAM and HR committee outside of the Governing Body meeting, agreeing for the school to commit £8k of its Devolved Formula Capital Grant to the proposed re-roofing project. This was noted by the Governing Body.</p>	
<p>Any other business</p> <p>26. Governors asked what the current level of absence was in the school, and what was being done to address this. Richard Potter confirmed that attendance levels were currently at 96.9%. Each month, the school followed up attendance and absence data, focusing in particular on children with absence levels of 10% or more. Some of this absence was as a result of term-time holidays. Governors asked whether parents were being issued with penalty notices for term-time holidays. It was noted that it was the local authority's role to issue penalty notices and not the school. Some penalty notices had been issued.</p> <p>27. Governors asked whether all forms of absenteeism were followed-up and Richard Potter confirmed that this was the case and that there was analysis of trends. Governors asked whether the school followed-up absences due to medical issues and it was noted that the school often did not receive much communication or information from other agencies, and was reliant on parents keeping the school informed about medical issues. There were safeguarding implications of this. It was noted that the school experienced some fragmentation between the different health care providers, but also that providers needed specific permission to release patient information to other partner organisations.</p> <p>28. Governors asked whether there were any plans to expand the Governing Body as the school expanded, and Marilyn Rivett noted that there were no plans for this and that the trend was generally for smaller Governing bodies which reflected the specific skill set required.</p>	
<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>29. The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 1st May at 7:00pm. This meeting closed at 8:05pm.</p>	