



**Minutes of Willingham Primary School
Governing Body Meeting
held on Tuesday 11th December 2018 at 7pm**

Present

Caroline Hyde (CH)	Chair
Katy Stevenson (KS)	Vice Chair
David Morel (DM)	Headteacher
Jo Aldhouse (JA)	
Sarah Ashworth (SA)	
Liz Bowen (LB)	
Emma Fuller (EF)	
Laura Latham (LL)	
Matt Lockyer (ML)	
Emma Mason (EM)	
Sarah Morgan (SM)	
Kate Van Dort (KVD)	

Apology: An apology for absence from the meeting was presented on behalf of Sarah Nelson.

Also in attendance: Megan Aldhouse, Phonics Lead and Christine Brandon (Camclerk)

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present.

Whilst requesting Governors to confirm, by signature, that they have read, understood and will implement the principles of KCSiE 2018 and comply with the Code of Conduct, both of which had been circulated at the start of the meeting, the Chair reminded the Governing Body of its strategic function and its responsibility to debate and question yet accept collective responsibility for its decisions and ensure that complete confidentiality is maintained around school issues.

2. Declarations of Interest

No pecuniary interests were declared by those present.

3. Minutes

Subject to an amendment to Item No. 10 of the October minutes in respect of the Pay Award 2018/19 to reflect that the '3.5% uplift should be applied to main scale

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and unqualified staff', the Minutes of the meetings of the Governing Body held on 17th July and 2nd October 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Presentation from Literacy Teams on Improvement Focus & Impact

Before commencing their presentations, DM was pleased to announce that Megan Aldhouse had been appointed to the Phase Lead Post for EYFS and KS1.

Megan Aldhouse: Phonics

Megan addressed Governors on the impact of 'Storytime Phonics' which had been introduced initially into the school 3 years ago. Staff had become increasingly familiar with it such that it was working well in all classes and Honeypots with back up resources available and the appropriate planning systems in place for teachers to follow. Key vocabulary was being used by TAs as well as teachers. MA explained how each sound is taught through books with a familiar story linking phonics to reading rather than being taught separately. Governors were apprised of the key features of the scheme and the use of teaching videos and fairy dust! An overview of the scheme would feature as a Parents Evening for new children in January which would focus on the teaching of phonics (basics and terminology). An invitation to the evening had been extended to nursery settings in Girton and Scallywags. MA noted the strong predicted phonics results for the current Year 1 cohort.

EF asked any consideration had been given to applying the benefits of the scheme to children in higher years within school who had not had the same phonics delivery? DM confirmed that the performance of the year groups that had been exposed to this scheme had been enhanced and that it was important now to work with TAs and consider needs further up the school year groups.

Laura Latham: Reading

Laura reminded Governors that it was a current RAP objective that 'Reading should be taught in a consistent way across the school that reflects sound research principles'. She referred to the contribution of Dr Danielle Dennis, Professor of Literacy Studies at the University of South Florida and the two PD Sessions which had been held with staff on the 'Learning to Read' process and 'Teaching Vocabulary for Reading & Writing'.

Laura also referred to the ideas of Isabel L Beck in her book – 'Bringing Words to Life' which provides practical strategies for vocabulary development with children at different key stages. Not surprisingly, her findings suggest that the more a child reads the more they will achieve and an ability to understand the spoken word will enhance a child's future performance. As some children do not read outside of school, reading time has been structured into the school day and the school was aiming to attract more parent helpers to read with children which had previously proven successful. The school has also introduced the Bedtime Story Project to promote children to take books home to read with parents and carers. Mention also was made of the work of Solomon Kingsnorth and his approach to 'Reading Comprehension'. Each class now has independent silent reading every day. Use of the same book across the class is encouraged. Ultimately, it is

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intended to have 6 high quality texts in use across the school. In response to a question from the Chair, DM replied that it had not yet been decided how these texts would be chosen. A discussion also took place on use of 'Robust Vocabulary Techniques' and age appropriate literacy skills using words from all three tiers so Tier 2 high frequency/multiple meaning words were recognised by children when reading.

Lastly, Laura announced that a grant of £3600 had been received from the British Schools Trust. This funding had been used to buy 400 new books and to update the school's non fiction collection.

Dave Morel: 'Talk for Writing'

DM explained that 'Talk For Writing' had been developed by Pie Corbett as a way to enable children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading and analysing it and writing their own version. It involves three stages – Imitation, Innovation and Independent Application. This approach was now being used in all classes. To help teachers, a planning pro forma had been introduced to ensure consistency in practice across all classes and enable monitoring of performance to be undertaken. DM was already of the view that the approach had resulted in better quality writing across the school although perhaps it was still not as creative as it should be. Although there were still improvements to be made, DM was of the opinion that writing in school had changed considerably in just a year.

SM asked the SLT whether they believed that teachers were sufficiently confident to practice the system. LL replied that staff were increasingly gaining experience and understanding and reflecting upon what worked in class or otherwise. Future personal development sessions would assist this process.

In answer to a question from the Chair, DM explained that teachers were encouraged to have detailed plans that included definitions of specific words used in comprehension and maths although it was accepted that use of non-planned words was harder to deal with.

Regarding use of 'Tier 2' words, DM advised that teachers and TAs were encouraged to use these frequently, every day.

5. Head teacher's Report

In presenting his report (a copy of which had been circulated in advance to Governors), the Head teacher underlined the importance of the planning process and his desire to ensure that teachers understood clearly what was expected of them in terms of mathematics, writing and foundation subjects. To this end, included in the updated RAP would be a requirement to write a Framework of Expectations which would replace the Teacher Toolkit. Training sessions on 3rd and 4th January would consider the 'Framework of Expectations' and review the Feedback and Behavioural Policies respectively. Governor participation would be welcomed at the sessions set aside to develop the two new policies. Emma Mason, Sarah Morgan and Sarah Nelson were invited to participate in a Working Group to look at the new Behaviour Policy on behalf of the Governing Body.

The Head teacher took the opportunity to discuss the class structure for 2019/20 and suggested that the Governing Body should adopt two guiding strategic principles to avoid having to revisit the basis for their decision each year.

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Governors noted that 45-50 children were expected to enter the school in 2019/20 with the result that some year groups would need to be combined again.

The Governing Body,

RESOLVED

that the following strategic principles be adopted to support future decisions made by the Governing Body on school structure –

- **Curriculum development is the cornerstone of school improvement; and**
- **Children's first experiences of school are key to successful future development.**

Taking these principles into account and mindful of curriculum coverage and the importance of staffing in Years 5/6, the Governing Body further

RESOLVED

that the proposed school structure for 2019/20 be approved as follows –

EYFS - 2 classes

Y1/2 - 3 classes

Y3 - 2 classes

Y4 - 2 classes

Y5/6 - 3 classes

Total: 12 classes

DM reported that several changes had been made to the SMT and staff structure consequent upon the resignation of the Deputy Head. Changes made reflected the importance of continued and effective leadership and school improvement. Particular reference was made to the decision to pay allowances to two members of the SMT for the duration of the Spring Term to act in the absence of the Head teacher. It was noted that an advert for the vacant post of Deputy Head had been posted with a closing date of 10th January. It was intended that candidates would be interviewed on 18th January. A handout on the current teaching structure of the school and allocated roles and responsibilities was circulated for information.

Lastly, Governors were very pleased to note that the school attendance figure was currently at 96.26% and could rise to over 97% if children on reduced timetables were not included. All processes for monitoring attendance were in place to ensure this level of achievement was maintained.

6. Policies for Ratification

Governors reviewed the content of several policies that had been recommended to them for adoption by the Personnel Committee (copies had been distributed in advance to the Governing Body).

Regarding the draft 'Complaints Policy' and in the light of experience, the Chair requested that consideration of this policy be deferred to the January 2019 meeting to allow for further review by the Complaints Panel to ensure the processes/timescales described and terminology used were consistent and practical given the volunteer nature of a Governor's position.

As the draft Policy & Procedures for Governor Visits was almost complete, the Chair asked that it be placed on the secure section of the School Website for Governors to review in advance of the next meeting.

Whereupon, and subject to updating of the names of the trade unions to which it referred, it was

RESOLVED

that the following policies, processes and procedures be adopted –

- **Statement of Policy on Trade Union Membership & on Recognition of Trade Unions;**
- **CCTV Impact Assessment;**
- **CCTV Policy;**
- **Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy;**
- **Code of Conduct for all adults;**
- **Disciplinary Procedure Relating to Misconduct; and**
- **Disciplinary Rules for all employees.**

7. Governing Body Business

- i. **Governing Body Self Evaluation:** The Chair reported that this was underway and that she and Emma Fuller would work together to complete it.
- ii. **Refresher/Introduction to Analyse School Performance (ASP) & FFT:** Deferred to next meeting because of planned IT maintenance. In the meantime, the Head teacher recommended that Governors read NGA Guidance entitled 'Knowing your School: FFT data dashboard for Governors & Trustees' which was circulated at the meeting.
- iii. **Governor Visits & Training Records:** Governors were reminded to capture their visits to school on the appropriate forms and to upload these to the secure area. DM undertook to ensure the 'Monitoring Calendar' which would allow Governors to book visits related to their 'Lead Roles' would be operational by the January meeting. Governors were alerted to impending changes to email about which they would be notified.
- iv. **Public Sector Equality Scheme:** Sarah Ashworth and Katy Stevenson were appointed to the Working Party required to undertake this piece of work.
- v. **Training Reminder:** Governors noted that the following sessions would take place on the 3rd and 4th January respectively – Framework of Expectations/Knowledge Rich Curriculum and Feedback/Marking/Behaviour.
- vi. **Governor Briefing & Networking Sessions (Spring Term):** Katy Stevenson undertook to attend the session on 6th February and Emma Headteacher: David Morel. Chair of Governors: Caroline Hyde

Mason and Liz Bowen indicated their intention to join the session on 30th January.

- vii. **School Visit:** Governors noted that the Chair of Cottenham Primary School FGB would be visiting the School on 14th December. Sarah Morgan undertook to accompany the visit on behalf of the FGB.

8. Reports and Updates from Committees

Having been circulated in advance, the Minutes of the TALB Committee held on 6th December 2018 were received. In the absence of formal minutes, respective Chairs gave a précis of the proceedings of meetings of Finance & Premises and Personnel Committees.

In terms of the Personnel Committee, most items had already been discussed but mention was made of the opportunity to appoint Mental Health First Aiders and the offer of flu jabs to staff which had been well received. In addition to matters already discussed, reference was made to the feedback received following the visit to the school by Primary Adviser. A full copy of her report had been circulated to Governors. Regarding Finance & Premises Committee, Governors were informed that the Committee would review the Evacuation Policy and Critical Incident Plan in January and had undertaken a school website audit. It was confirmed that school and Honeypots budgets were on track and that the out of school clubs were also doing well.

EM raised the possibility of letting the school premises to external providers to use for holiday schemes as this could attract additional funding to the school. As the Head teacher suggested that he did not have the capacity to undertake this exercise, EM undertook to make some enquiries. The Chair/Vice Chair also agreed to discuss opportunities to apply for grant funding.

Governors were updated on the traffic management scheme and noted that 'double yellow lines' would be painted before the start of the new term. A letter to parents/guardians explaining that parking around the school would be restricted from January was to be sent out before Christmas.

Lastly, it was reported that the school would be encouraging parents to give feedback via 'Parent View' and confirmed that Governors without children at the school would be set up on 'Parent Mail'.

9. Outcomes and Key Messages

The Chair commended the new initiative whereby subject leads presented to meetings as a way of enabling Governors to be better informed and more aware of the way literacy/reading/writing/phonics were being taught in school and of the progress being made.

The Chair positively reflected and commended Laura Latham for the work she had done as part of her NPQH to improve school attendance, the impact of which was being seen in the latest figure of 96.26%.

Lastly, the Chair underlined the importance of recent key staff changes that ensured that the SMT continued to have sufficient and robust management and operational capacity.

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Before closing the meeting and on behalf of the Governing Body, the Chair wished to place on record her sincere thanks to Laura Latham, Deputy Head who was leaving at the end of term to take up another position. Through hard work, time, effort and passion Laura had made an enormous impact on the school and introduced important core values to the children for which Governors would be forever grateful. On behalf of the Governing Body, the Chair extended her best wishes for the future and wished Laura every success in her new role.

Laura thanked the Governing Body for their support over five years at the school particularly during some difficult times and latterly, in helping her complete her NPQH qualification.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Noted - that the next meeting of the Governing Body was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 22nd January 2019 at 7.30pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Hyde', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chair

The Meeting ended at 9.38pm.

