



**Minutes of Willingham Primary School
Full Governing Body Meeting
held on Tuesday 12th March 2019 at 7.30pm**

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)	
Matt Lockyer (ML)	
Emma Mason (EM)	
Sarah Morgan (SM)	
Sarah Nelson (SN)	

Apology: An apology for absence from the meeting was presented on behalf of Kate Van Dort.

Also in attendance: Danny Carminati (Sports Lead), Angela Walker (Deputy Head Teacher) and Christine Brandon (Camclerk).

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present. The Chair introduced Angela Walker, newly appointed Deputy Head Teacher to the meeting. As Angela was due to start her new duties on 23rd April she attended the meeting as an observer.

2. Declarations of Interest

No pecuniary interests were declared.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 22nd January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

As the DfE had released new guidance for schools in January on setting up or reviewing complaints procedures and as LA guidance was being updated as a consequence, Governors agreed that it would be sensible to await the issue of a new model policy and procedure before adopting a new version for Willingham School.

In the meantime, it was noted that Liz Bowen, Emma Fuller and Matt Lockyer had been appointed as the Complaints Committee and that they, together with the Chair, would meet to discuss the new policy and procedures in advance of their adoption by FGB.

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4. Presentation from Sports Lead on Impact of Sports Funding & Activity

Before the presentation, DM referred to the 'Olympic Legacy Sports Premium Funding Impact Statement 2017/18' that had been circulated in advance to Governors and drew attention to the objectives and indicators against which achievement had been measured. Danny Carminati began by describing his career up to his appointment as f/t Sports Lead in June 2018. He had previously been employed at the school in various capacities since 2014.

Governors noted that it was Danny's role to lead every class in PE once a week alongside teaching staff. The school had also competed in 35 external events (sports friendlies, tournaments and activities) since September. Eighty seven children from a total of eighty nine in Years 5/6 had participated in one of these events and represented Willingham Primary School during the academic year so far. Particularly pleasing to Governors was the report that 70% of SEN children had participated in a sporting event. Danny had also established links with other schools and Willingham had hosted several events at which tea/coffee and cake had been served. The school now offered a variety of sports and sporting opportunities such as curling which had become particularly popular. No additional cost had been incurred by the school in their support of this level of involvement. For example, 52 children travelled to Wimpole Hall for a cross country event and all transport needs were met by parents.

Danny also described the sports clubs held during lunch breaks and before and after school including Dodge Ball, Football Club, Tag Rugby, the Running Club and sensory circuits. The latter, which is held between 8.40-9am, brings many benefits and Danny was of the view that it helps children to begin their school day with a calm, focussed and ready to learn mind set. A 'Sports Blog' had been established where every event was reported. Children were encouraged to write their own reports. A Sports Council had also been formed.

In response to questions from Governors, Danny reported that other schools generally had a designated sports lead but that this was often linked to another role within school such as IT. The Head teacher confirmed that DC was singularly responsible for the achievements at Willingham and had expanded the sports offer from 2/3 events in the past to the extensive range of opportunities now available such as hockey, orienteering, curling and archery. DC reiterated that that taking part was just as important as competition and that he was hoping to be able to involve KS1 and Years 3/4 in sports events in the future.

In terms of links to the Village College, Governors understood that classes engaged in multi sports events once a year and that it was the goal ultimately to establish a 'daily mile' as part of the school routine although timetabling this might prove difficult. It was also hoped to attract external funding for the creation of a running track.

Before closing, the Chair commented that engagement in sport should be encouraged as it contributed to school improvement, could improve behaviour, prepare SEN children for a good day at school and build resilience and self esteem. The Chair thanked Danny for his presentation, his enthusiasm and the

hard work that had led to the achievements at Willingham School adding that these outcomes were exactly what the sports funding was designed to drive.

5. Head teacher's Report

By reference to his report (a copy of which had been circulated in advance), the Head teacher reminded Governors that a RAP Update had been distributed and that they were welcome to contact him with any comments they might have on the content. Governors also acknowledged that there were no safeguarding issues that needed to be discussed.

Regarding the class structure for 2019/20 and 2020/21, DM reminded Governors that they had resolved, at their December 2018 meeting, that future decisions on school structure would be based on the following principles -

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

He added, however, that the school roll continued to fall and numbered 313 as at October 2018. The consequent impact on funding meant that the school was underfunded and that the structure should ideally comprise 10 rather than 12 classes. In terms of the budget, the school should be able to operate at the same level in 2019/20 but Governors would need to consider how it would be able to continue to operate financially in 2020/21 without a significant increase in new pupils or a reduction in classes from 12 to 11. Teaching and TA staff might also need to be reduced and the process for this would, by necessity, have to begin early in the 2019/20 academic year. If this was the position, the class structure might look as follows -

EYFS - 2 classes
Y1/2 - 3 classes
Y3/4 - 3 classes
Y5/6 - 3 classes
Total: 11 classes

Governors were concerned at the potential size of Years 1/2 and questioned whether the extent of new development in the village might increase pupil numbers. In response, DM reaffirmed that forecast numbers were inconsistent, that it would be difficult to sustain 12 classes and that decisions would need to be made on future class mix. The Chair asked whether any adverse comments had previously been received from parents on mixed classes that Governors should be made aware of. DM confirmed that parents had welcomed the honesty the school had shown when announcing new mixed year classes previously and acknowledged that these were, irrespectively, productive learning environments. He undertook to keep Governors up to date on this issue. The Chair envisaged that the Government would be under pressure to look at education funding over the next 12/18 months and was of the opinion that this review might have consequences that could change the position, in any event, for the school's budget and class structure.

6. Academisation

Governors were reminded that they had previously deferred any further work on academisation in view of the appointment of a new Head teacher on the proviso that the subject would be reconsidered once he had been in post for a period of time. Since then, the subject had lost further impetus due to Ofsted Outcomes and the change in teaching approach at the school.

DM reported that he had been approached by the Executive Principal to 'Advantage Schools' to ask whether he would wish to participate in an exploratory meeting to discuss an opportunity for Willingham School to join the multi academy trust. DM explained that this had arisen as the school had begun to align itself with the curriculum direction also adopted by Bedford Free School, Elstow Primary School and the West London Free School. He added that as the MAT landscape had begun to settle and various models had emerged, it had become more attractive to consider becoming part of a MAT rather than to continue to operate as a maintained school given all the funding and resource issues associated with a LA. However, the approach from 'Advantage Schools' had been purely coincidental and, as such, DM wanted to first discuss the invitation with Governors before taking the matter any further.

The Chair reminded Governors that the school was in a completely different position now than when it last considered academisation. At that time, it was Government policy for all RI schools to become an academy and the Governing Body wanted to be 'masters of its own destiny'. As a result, both the Chair and Head teacher attended training/briefing sessions distilling any relevant information to Governors, a specific Working Group was established and several visits were made to Academy schools (including CPET, CMAT & Astrea) until Governors agreed not to proceed any further. Receipt of the letter from 'Advantage Schools' had prompted re opening of discussion on the subject.

In the ensuing discussion, KS was of the view that it was not necessary to start the exercise from scratch, that it would be useful to draw on the original work undertaken and to re establish the Working Group and to ask that Group to report its findings to the FGB. She also questioned whether it would be useful for the FGB to re establish its principles in advance of any meetings with 'Advantage Schools'. EF considered it important to make any decision for the school going forward regardless of the preferences/direction of the Head Teacher in post and expressed the view that, given what the school still needed to achieve in terms of data monitoring and improvements, a new academisation project might not be best use of time. The Chair indicated her support for this view having been aware of the extent of Governor time spent on the last exercise and having acknowledged the new methodology that still needed to be embedded..

Unless the Governing Body considered that there were compelling reasons to join a MAT, EM, SA and SM were of the view that the school should continue to 'explore the landscape' and build informal relationships with other schools/academies etc. especially as it had a relatively new Senior Leadership

Team and Governors. The Chair added that there was no recent Government policy on this so there was an opportunity to enjoy the current freedom, explore informal links and begin to form an opinion, without pressure, about the benefits or otherwise of formal alignment with a MAT.

Governors concluded that they would wish to continue to look at options to increase understanding, to support opportunities to work more collaboratively including a meeting with the Executive Principal of 'Advantage Schools' but that they would not want to compromise the 'Knowledge Rich' Curriculum that the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body were looking to instil in school. With this in mind it was agreed that Stuart Lock, Executive Principal should be invited to the next Governing Body meeting.

7. Budget 2019/20- Update

Ahead of the budget meeting, Governors briefly discussed the outturn position and noted that it was currently estimated that £50,000 could be available to carry forward to the 2019/20 financial year. The LA Financial Advisor was due to visit school so work on finalising the budget would commence shortly.

Having also reviewed the draft 2018/19 SFVS and been assured that robust controls were in place to ensure secure financial management at the school, the Governing Body

RESOLVED

that the School's Financial Value Standard be approved and signed by the Chair for submission to Cambridgeshire County Council by 31st March.

8. Policies for Ratification

In terms of the policies circulated in advance to Governors, it was noted that a new Complaints Policy (See Minute No 3) would be reviewed by the Complaints Committee in due course and that the SEND Policy & Statement and Interim Care Policy would be submitted to the next meeting. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the following policies and procedures be adopted by the Governing Body –

Pay Policy 2018

Whistle-blowing Policy & Procedure

Flexible Working Policy

Shared Parental Leave: Adoption

Shared Parental Leave: Birth

Policy & Application for Time Off for Training or Study

Policy & Procedure on Handling Redundancy; and

Health & Safety Policy.

9. Governing Body Business

Headteacher: David Morel. Chair of Governors: Caroline Hyde

- i. **Governor Visits & Monitoring Forms/Feedback** – Governors were reminded that a template for recording their visits was available on the secure area of the school website. KS reported that she had undertaken a safeguarding visit and made several recommendations in her report to the Head teacher. She added that a digital system was to be introduced across the LA to enable safeguarding concerns to be reported. It was suggested that Governor Training Certificates should be copied to JA and retained on file in the School Office.
- ii. **Governing Body Membership** – Having been apprised of the current position in terms of membership of the Governing Body and outstanding skills audits, the Chair/Vice Chair and EM undertook to commence recruitment of new Governors to the three remaining vacancies. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that Angela Walker and Louise Johnston be appointed as co opted Members of the Governing Body.

- iii. **Governor Training** – It was noted that the next round of Governor Briefings should take place in May.
- iv. **Other Updates** .
 - Annual Staff Sickness return to be reported as part of the Head teachers report to Summer 2 meeting;
 - Verified that all S128 checks on Governors had been completed;
 - Noted that an annual GDPR report would also be submitted to the Summer 2 meeting; and
 - Letters would be sent to staff from overseas impacted by Brexit. It was understood that EPM had a draft letter available for this purpose.
- v. **Recognition of Contribution to School** – The Chair nominated Mrs Sara Varty who had addressed a National Conference on the 'Knowledge Rich Curriculum', set up related Blogs and responded to interest and requests to visit the school.

10. Questions To & Updates from Committees

The Chairs of the Personnel, TALBs and Finance & Premises Committees gave a précis of the proceedings of each meeting.

Regarding the Personnel Committee, the FGB noted that the school was still one teacher short for the summer term although discussions with a potential candidate were progressing. The Head teacher had expressed some difficulty in understanding the link between the school and Honeypots and the legal framework for this and was recommended to contact Penny Price at the LA for advice. Staff questionnaires had been returned with some positive but interesting comments.

In response to a request for ideas, Governors suggested that KS might like to look at Induction Plans for Governors/or review of the Committee Structure as

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projects to undertake for her Course. The Chair added that the Governing Body still were not efficiently nor effectively using the RAP to organise Governor visits and to understand where the school was in terms of progress.

In terms of TALBS, SM reported that the Committee had reviewed examples of the new marking policy and its impact on teaching staff. It was the Committee's view that the new policy had improved the quality of marking and an understanding of what was happening in the classroom. It also had freed up time for teachers to concentrate on planning, quality of teaching and learning. The Committee also discussed a new format for school reports, the return of staff questionnaires and house emblems.

Lastly, Governors noted that the Finance & Premises Committee had reviewed the budget, the SVFS, relevant policies, the capital asset plan and the performance of the breakfast and after school clubs and Honeypots.

11. Potential S106 Agreement Funding

Despite a recent flurry of emails, DM reported that there had been no progress in securing S106 funding for development at the school. The Chair/Vice Chair undertook to apply to the 'Community Chest' for a contribution towards the running track project.

12. Outcomes and Key Messages

In concluding the meeting, the Chair expressed total confidence that the Sports Premium Funding used to create the Sports Lead role had been completely justified and that the Sports Lead had clearly demonstrated that the Impact Statement Outcomes had been achieved. In terms of academisation, the Chair reaffirmed the Governing Body's willingness to proactively explore informal links with schools also seeking to promote the 'Knowledge Rich Curriculum'. Lastly, the Governing Body were cognisant of the decisions that might be required in the future in relation to class structure, staffing and the budget. The Chair also took the opportunity again to welcome Angela Walker to Willingham School.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Noted - that the next meeting of the Governing Body was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30th April 2019 at 7.30pm (subsequently changed to 7th May).



Chair

The Meeting ended at 9.42pm

