

Minutes of a meeting of the local governing body of Sparkenhoe Community Primary School held at the Ark on Monday 13th May 2019 at 4pm

Present

Rhian Jones – Headteacher
Lee Jowett – Local Governor (Chair)
Robert John – Local Governor
Susan Hind – Local Governor
Jo Webb – Parent Governor
Sharmen Rahman – Parent Governor
Neil Thorpe – Staff Governor

In attendance

Jenny Bosworth – Associate Local Governor
Penny Cooper – Deputy Headteacher
Tom Bott – Business Manager
Lisa Christopher - Year 2 teacher and lead for writing
Robyn Cooper – Clerk to the Local Governing Board

Tom Bott and Lisa Christopher were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

1. IPEELL Writing

Following a question at the last meeting on IPEELL, Mrs Christopher had been invited to the meeting to talk governors through the approach to writing. Mrs Christopher explained that she had been the lead for writing in school for the last 2 years. She stated that reviewing the data showed that each year pupils attained slightly lower in writing compared to reading and maths and as part of the drive to improve writing she had looked into alternative whole school approaches. Mrs Christopher explained that the IPEELL approach came through the National Literacy Trust. She stated that she had taken elements of it to implement a consistent approach across the whole school to enable pupils to become increasingly familiar with the approach and develop into more independent planners and writers as they moved through the school. Mrs Christopher explained that the approach had been trialled in year 2 and 5 in the 2018 summer term before being implemented across the whole school in September.

Mrs Christopher took the local governing board through the structure of the English curriculum units used in school and how the IPEELL approach fitted into each phase. She circulated examples of the planning frames used for different text types and explained how these were used to structure pupil's response to a text and also to plan their own writing.

Q (JW): What impact have you noticed following the introduction of the approach?

Mrs Christopher stated that she had reviewed the data and it was looking positive. She stated that compared to this time last year every single year group had made progress in their writing. Mrs Christopher also explained that it was clear to see through book scrutinies that every year group was using the same approach.

Q (SH): Do secondary schools use the approach?

Mrs Christopher stated that the approach had started in secondaries and now had moved into primary schools.

Q (JW): Does the approach work with all groups of pupils (i.e. SEN, EAL, more able, etc.)?

Mrs Christopher stated that the approach was used with all groups. She stated that it was adapted slightly in KS1, with shorter frames used. Ms Jones stated that frames had always been used to support SEND pupils, but they also worked well for the more able pupils as they enabled them to control their thoughts more effectively. Mrs Christopher stated that they worked well across the curriculum too.

Q (SH): Had the approach been rolled out anywhere else in Trust?

Ms Jones stated not that she was aware of. She explained that they had found the approach when looking for writing schemes and explained that they were happy with the literacy scheme, but the writing element was not as effective.

Q (JW): The English curriculum had remained the same but IPEELL was used as an approach to teaching?

Ms Jones stated that placed more weight onto the writing and provided teachers with some more structure. She stated that it would be interesting to see if it resulted in closing the gender gap in writing.

The local governing board thanked Mrs Christopher for sharing the approach.

Mrs Christopher left the meeting

2. Election of Chair of the Local Governing Board

The local governing board unanimously elected Lee Jowett as Chair of the local governing board.

3. Election of Vice Chair of the Local Governing Board

The local governing board unanimously elected Jo Webb as Vice Chair of the local governing board.

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Prof John and Ms Hamid.

5. Declaration of Governors' Interests

There were no declarations of interest declared in the business to be transacted. For transparency purposes:

- Jo Webb was a governor and Vice Chair at Fosse Primary School.

6. Minutes of the Last Meeting – 18th March 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th March 2019 had been previously circulated to all governors and were noted.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item 4 Matters Arising – The schedule of link visits would come to the first meeting in the autumn term.

ACTION: LJ and RJ/Agenda Item

Ms Webb reported that she had attended the safer recruitment training session and was awaiting the results of the assessment. She would forward the certificate to Mrs Cooper once received.

ACTION: JW

Ms Webb would arrange a health and safety visit this term.

ACTION: JW

Item 10 Finance (SFVS) – Mr Jowett stated that he had requested an acknowledgment of receipt of the SFVS from the LA Finance Team, but this was never received.

8. Prevent in Education

Mrs Cooper reported that she had attended a briefing session on Prevent earlier this term. She stated that the main message from the session was that Prevent should be part of a school's safeguarding procedures and that if there was any concern from a child or adult in school, safeguarding procedures should be followed and then any Prevent concerns would be picked up through that process. Mrs Cooper stated that the school's procedures would pick up any concerns in terms of Prevent. She stated that it was also part of the PSHE curriculum.

Jenny Bosworth joined the meeting

Q (SH): Had there been any incidents/concerns raised through Prevent? What would the teacher do if there was a concern?

Mrs Cooper stated that there were occasional incidents of poor language choices by pupils. She explained that a teacher would talk to the pupils involved first and then take the concern to a DSL. Mrs Cooper stated that most incidents were dealt with through the behaviour policy and would be recorded on CPOMS as a child protection issue. She stated that they may also bring the parents in, as they would with any issue.

Sharmen Rahman joined the meeting

9. School Library

a. The Foyle Schools Library Programme grant

Mr Jowett drew governor's attention to The Foyle Schools Library Programme following the discussion at the last meeting on developing the school library as outlined in the school improvement plan. He explained that the programme accepted applications from state funded schools to develop their library, funding library/reading books. He stated that priority was given to primary schools and they could apply for funding between £1,000 - £10,000. Mr Jowett and Ms Webb would put together an application for the school and submit it prior to the summer break. It was suggested to also have some staff involvement.

ACTION: LJ/JW/RJ

Mr Jowett stated that they could also consider Awards for All (National Lottery) but this would also need to include community links. It was suggested that this could be through parents' workshops. Ms Webb also highlighted the work undertaken by the Literacy Trust in other parts of the country, targeting work with fathers in deprived areas.

10. ICT Updates

- Ms Jones informed the governing board that the school required a new server which would cost £9887.
- The new laptops were in school and in use.
- The ICT contract had one further year to run and they were the only school in the Trust to use the provider.
- Mr Bott informed the governing body that there was a Trust ICT strategy meeting scheduled to look at the long-term approach to ICT in the Trust.

11. Governing Body Business

a. Training and Development

- Ms Webb had undertaken safer recruitment training
- Mr Jowett was taking part in a webinar on 16th May delivered by Governors for Schools (Hot Topics for School Governors). He suggested that if the session was useful he would circulate future sessions to the governing board.

b. Governor Roles and Responsibilities

Mr Jowett circulated a list of suggested link roles including the ones required by the Trust. He asked governors to consider which link roles they would like to undertake, and this would be confirmed at the next meeting.

ACTION: Agenda Item/All Governors

The following visits would take place before the end of term:

- Safeguarding (Audit) – Mr Jowett
- Pupil premium and sports premium – It was suggested that Prof John could undertake this visit as he undertook the sports premium visit last academic year. Mr Jowett would contact Prof John.

ACTION: LJ

12. Review of Policies, Procedures and Publications

a. SEN policy review

Ms Jones had circulated the SEN policy to the governing board. She highlighted that there were no changes. The local governing board agreed the policy.

13. Health and Safety

There was nothing to report under this item.

14. Governor Recruitment

a. Parent and staff governor recruitment

Mr Jowett highlighted that the terms of office for the parent and staff governors ended on the 31st August 2019, so recruitment would need to take place this term. He stated that the current Scheme of Delegation did not include the process for parent and staff elections. Mr Jowett explained that the assumption was that they would continue with the LA election procedures and eligibility, but this needed to be formally approved by the Trust Board at their meeting on the 16th May.

The governing body congratulated Sharmen Rahman on her election as a local councillor. It was noted that Mrs Rahman would not be eligible to stand as a parent governor as an elected member, however she would be able to serve out her current term of office which ended on the 31st August.

Susan Hind left the meeting

Mr Jowett had circulated some suggested letters to go out with the election materials.

b. Associate members

It was agreed to look at recruitment of associate members at the start of the academic year.

Mr Jowett informed the local governing board that all appointments were recommended to the Trust for approval.

15. Staffing

Ms Jones reported that following an external advert for a teacher, they had shortlisted 5 candidates from 27 applications. The interviews would take place on the 21st May and Mr Jowett and Ms Webb would be involved from the governing board. Ms Jones highlighted that the majority of the applications were of high quality.

16. Finance

a. Budget intention

The budget intention had been circulated to the governing board. Ms Jones informed the governors that she had been working on the budget with Mr Bott and Dave Nimmo (Trust DFO). She stated that historically, when she had set the budget with the bursar there would be an in-year deficit of £200,000 and a large carry forward. Ms Jones explained that this was due to cautious budget setting.

Ms Jones explained Mr Bott's role as business manager and explained that his focus initially would be on Sparkenhoe due to the split site and the in-year deficit for the past 5 years, which could not continue.

Mr Bott circulated an updated budget to the local governing board. He explained that the academy financial year started from September, so they would have 5 months in the current year before the start of the first full financial year as an academy in September. Mr Bott drew attention to the column on the budget which outlined the budget for the remaining 5 months. He stated that the carry forward into this year was £437,504. Mr Bott explained that the budget from September was based on the October census from 2018.

Mr Bott took the local governing board through the budget and highlighted the following:

- The change in the budget for the Rates was explained.
- SEN Funding was estimated due to the impact of changes with pupils
- Pupil Premium funding was decreasing, which reflected a National trend. This will be something that the Trust would work on going forward.
- Income from catering had increased due to the school changing the catering provider. Mr Bott stated that the new provider would only charge for the FSM that were cooked and the Universal FSM income would come directly to the school. He stated that the Catering Supplies budget had also increased as a result of this change.

Q (JW): Had the school seen an increase in uptake of FSM?

Mrs Cooper stated that the uptake number was stable. Mr Jowett asked if there was more of an incentive to have more uptake of Universal FSMs. Mr Bott explained that the grant received was determined by the census. Mrs Rahman asked whether there were many eligible pupils that did not take up the FSM. Ms Jones stated that there was not a large number, approximately 4 per class. She stated that they did ask parents about their eligibility for FSM and worked with them. Mr Bott stated that if the uptake was over 80%, the school received a rebate. Mr Jowett highlighted that Food for Life had done some work on the reasons why pupils did not take up the Universal FSMs, which may be useful.

Mr Bott explained that the school would be cost neutral for the 5 months of this financial year depending on other income and invoices received. He stated that the full 2019/2020 financial year there was a projected in-year deficit of £36,000, which would leave a carry forward of £401,307.

Mr Bott stated that it was a deliverable budget but there needed to be some scrutiny in some particular areas – building maintenance, IT and recruitment. Mr Thorpe highlighted the potential savings on building maintenance by buying into BES. Ms Jones stated that all four schools had agreed to buy in this year to ensure that there was something in place. Ms Webb highlighted that it was about managing risk during a time of transition and judging whether it was a reasonable cost in light of this. Mr Bott explained that over the next 18 months they would work as a Trust to scrutinise value for money as contracts ended. Ms Webb stated that the governing body were mindful of the financial benefits of being part of a MAT when considering the Trust, particularly centralised procurement and increased buying power. Mr Thorpe highlighted the importance of school staff being involved in the strategy meetings. Mr Jowett suggested that they should request a report from the LA on what the school had accessed, in terms of BES, in order to evaluate the service. Mr Thorpe stated that this could be generated from the Concerto system. It was agreed that this would come to the October LGB meeting.

ACTION: NT/Mel Thorpe/RJ/Agenda Item

Mr Bott highlighted that as a Trust they had moved everyone onto the new payroll system successfully with only one or two queries and they had a new finance system. He stated that the discussions about bulk buying was the next step.

Q (LJ): What was a typical carry forward for a school?

Mr Bott stated that schools should look at a carry forward of 10% of the budget. He explained that once the school was operating at cost neutral it would provide the opportunity for large project work to use the carry forward.

The local governing board ratified the 2019/2020 budget, which would go to the Trust Board for approval.

Mr Bott thanked everyone at the school for the warm welcome he had received since starting in post.

b. Year End

Mr Bott stated that they were continuing to receive income and invoices from the LA so the final carry forward may yet change. Ms Jones stated that they were still waiting for bills, including District Heating, which had not been received since February 2017. She stated that the previous bill had included a very high estimate and as they had not received a bill since, this had not been rectified. Mr Jowett highlighted that this had an impact on the school's ability to budget effectively. Mr Thorpe that there was also an issue with maintenance. It was agreed that:

- Mr Bott would email Mr Jowett about the issue, so it could be raised with the LA.
- Mr Bott would discuss the issue with the other schools in the Trust and feedback at the next meeting.

ACTION: TB/LJ

17. Attenborough Learning Trust

- Ms Jones reported that there had been a Trust Headteacher meeting last week where discussions included the speech and language work and link with DMU, IT strategy, Target Tracker, top line assessment data (year group) and Headteacher report formats. She explained that the meeting had been focussed and strategic and had been very positive.
- Ms Jones reported that she had also met with Jane Ridgewell on where they were as a school 6 weeks into the Trust. She stated that she had raised the issue of the Trust health and safety policy did not fit the school and Mrs Ridgewell was now aware that they needed a different policy to reflect the split site and different structures in reporting arrangements. Ms Jones stated that Mrs Ridgewell wanted to discuss this with representatives in schools. She stated that there were a couple of other policies that needed to reflect the differences in each school more explicitly.
- The last PSIB meeting was on the 16th May and the Trust would officially take over from that date.
- The school had link Trustees who would attend occasional LGB Meetings
- Mr Jowett stated that he had put himself forward for the resources and finance committee.

18. Dates for next year's meetings

The suggested dates for next academic year were circulated.

19. Documents Received by the Chair of Governors

- NGA Newsletter

20. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

21. Date of Next Meetings

- Monday 24th June 2019

The meeting closed at 17:50

Signed  24th June 2019

