

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY – FOUNDRY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

TUESDAY 4th DECEMBER 2012

Governors present:	Andrew Tindall [AT]	Tony Croft (Chair) [TC]
	Janet Taylor [JT]	Marie Spencer [MS]
	Liz Smith [LS]	Claire Fyvie-Rae [CFR]
	Pat Kennedy [PK]	David Higlett [DH]
	Anne Webster [AWe]	Robbie Turkington [RT]
	Maureen Kirkland [ML]	James Caswell [JC]
	Andy Withers [Head] [AW]	Sam Barnes [SB] <i>[arr'd 6.40]</i>
	Kathryn Lugg [KL] <i>[arr'd 6.55]</i>	
Associate Governors:	Sean Taylor [ST] <i>[arr'd 6.40]</i>	
Others:	Jack Davis [JD]	
Clerk:	Elisabeth Ruggles	

01. APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Neil Maddock, which were received and accepted. KL and ST had advised they would be late. TC apologised that he had not sent out details of committees to governors; this would be done 5th December.

02. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jamie Caswell (Trust Governor) introduced himself to all governors, who in turn introduced themselves.

03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

04. AGREEMENT OF MINUTES

(p9) AOB – line 4. The work is completed at home and discussed at school

With this amendment the Minutes were signed by the Chair as being a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

05. MATTERS ARISING

- Three-form entry: There is an issue about the fire exits. It involves a disagreement between SCC and the Fire Officer and Fire Risk Assessment Assessor on the size of the door at the top

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

and bottom of the fire escape. The fire escape itself is fine. AW has to make a decision on behalf of the GB on this. At a meeting held before half term, two options were put forward:

- use of a voice activated system which says when it is ok to use both escapes up or down
- (and this is seen to be the better option) to widen the doors (top and bottom) to allow two flows of people through. AW is working with Nigel on this.

[ST and SB arrived, 6.40]

SCC does not want to pay any more for the building. It says the width is unimportant as children are smaller and do not need the additional width. The cost of widening the doors comes to £5,000 and this has already been discussed by the Finance Committee.

AW mentioned that he went on a fire assessment course, where SCC was also present. They claimed to talk to all parties concerned to ensure all aspects of fire safety were covered, which AW repudiated. He is now in contact with someone higher up at the council and it may be that they will pay the additional amount after all. The Finance Committee in the meantime has agreed that it would deduct the £5,000 from the debt on the building and the council has been informed of this decision. At present there is no immediate risk as the building is not fully occupied.

All governors agreed to this course of action. CFR asked how much the doors were too small by. It is not a big amount (an additional slim panel to the side of the door itself). PK asked if there was a law which referred to the width of the doors. There is one, but SCC maintains that as it was signed off by building control, it meets building regulations. As they have made the mistake, they are looking for loopholes; it may well be a case of replacing the doors and seeking to get the money refunded afterwards. PK stressed the importance of keeping all copies of e-mails and letters.

Parent Mail was discussed later in the meeting.

06. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

The school is almost full.

OFSTED – the key issues are being addressed though the SDP, which was discussed later in the meeting.

The SEN statistics from the October census show that the number of statemented children is 8, which is quite high.

Parental involvement is higher than ever.

Pupil behaviour: Although the report states there were no exclusions, one child was excluded on 3.12.12 due to an incident with a dinner lady.

Attendance remains high and now the school needs to work on the next benchmark.

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

There were no further questions. AW reminded governors to let him know if they would like to see any other information in the report.

07. ADMISSIONS POLICY

As a Trust School, Foundry Lane is able to set its own Admissions Policy. The one enclosed with the agenda is exactly the same as last year, apart from the fact that the dates have been changed. Last year this was agreed with and by the Admissions Forum.

Last year there were only 3 criteria, of which distance to school was the final one. The last child accepted lived 0.7 miles from the school.

However, other schools in the family with nurseries on site give priority to those children at the nursery. Governors were asked if they wanted to do likewise with the playgroup, in which case this could come between criteria 2 and 3. There was a lot of discussion on this point.

MK felt that some parents assumed that if their child was at playgroup, they would automatically go to Foundry Lane, which may not be the case. However CFR pointed out that other parents may use other childcare options as this is more convenient for their work, but still want their children to attend Foundry Lane when they reach school age. Generally speaking, playgroup parents are local. MS asked how many of these who want a place do not get one. Last year there were 2 or 3 children on the end of the list, who managed to still get a place as some other families dropped out. LS felt that it was very good for the children to be able to make the transition from playgroup to school as they are already used to the school and its grounds, with school staff visiting to make the change even easier.

[Kathryn Lugg arr'd 6.55]

CFR said some parents, who chose childcare elsewhere for the sake of convenience, would be annoyed if another child from playgroup got in ahead of their children. Children at that age are quite adaptable, although LS felt it was still quite hard as children are generally at playgroup for 2 years.

TC said there was a danger that if the playgroup criterion goes to priority three, someone could join playgroup in December to get preferential treatment in January.

Playgroup is not really big enough for a three-form entry primary school. If it were a nursery, both it and the school would have the same Admission Policy, whereas Foundry Lane has no control or influence over the playgroup's admission policy. PK felt in this case it should be left as it is, although SB said that whatever decision is taken, it does need to be stated somewhere, both at school and at playgroup.

Governors decided to vote on it at the meeting rather than defer it to the next full meeting as the Admissions Policy needs to be agreed early in the Spring term. Otherwise it will carry on as before by default.

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

ST felt that the school served a geographical community. It is important for siblings to have continuity if a family moves house. The rules about looked after and statemented children remain as before – they have a legal priority over all other criteria.

TC proposed that the Admissions Policy remained the same, but that a footnote be added explaining that playgroup and Foundry Lane have different admission policies.

There were 13 governors in favour of this, with 2 abstentions.

05. MATTERS ARISING (cont'd)

-Parent Mail. KL had nothing new to report on this. JT said that the school had had a demonstration from Parent Mail and had compared this system with Tucasi (current system) who also gave a demonstration. There was also another quote from a company, who do truancy calls.

With regard to Parent Mail, the mail side is very good, but they cannot provide all the modules that Tucasi have. Tucasi can add two additional modules (online payments and communications) to what the school is already using. The school would like to keep with one company if possible.

Training has been planned for January for the four administration staff.

08. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT INCL. RAISEONLINE

Two policies were looked at during the meeting – teaching and learning and the assessment policy. Both were kept with a few amendments.

The first draft of RAISEonline has been received (70 pages); ST reminded governors that it had been considered for training. PK raised the point that there seemed to be some confusion in interpretation by schools between Action and Action Plus children. ST agreed with this and was looking into it. According to the national statistics half of all Action Plus children are achieving a Level 4, but the results at Foundry Lane are lower than average.

A sheet was handed on with jargon which was explained to governors. School Action Plus children involves a group of children who have a very broad spectrum of needs, some of which are far greater than others. FSM (free school meals) is now a much bigger group that was previously the case as it involves children who have been in receipt of free school meals at any time in the past six years.

OFSTED is now looking at children making *more than* expected progress, as more and more children are achieving their expected progress.

At tonight's meeting ST took governors through the school and the levels it was expected to achieve.

1. Foundry Lane is amongst the group of biggest schools in the country, but it is in the group with the lowest percentage of girls nationally.

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

2. It is in the middle group for FSM, but this data relies on parents applying for it, which many do not / will not do. KL asked how much awareness there is for this. The school does encourage eligible parents to apply, as Pupil Premium pricing is dependent on it.

3. It is in the national average group for deprivation.

4. EAL / minority ethnic group: It is in the top group for this, with more children as part of this group. The same applied for SEN. It has more than the national average for Action children, but less than the national average for Action Plus and statemented children. The school needs to look at these statistics very closely.

(p22) shows a summary of attainment at KS1. Level 2 is the only level that is divided into 3 (C-B-A), giving a broad range of attainment. There is a big jump this year at both KS levels nationally. Reading and writing fall broadly within the national curve. There are more children at Level 2, but fewer children at the top end. With maths there are more children at a higher Level 2 and level 3. This data refers to a Yr3 with a high percentage of boys. At YrR a lot of children have come into the school with a less than average attainment, but by Yr1 they have caught up.

(p24) looks at KS2. Nationally there has been a 4% rise in both English and Maths. Foundry Lane saw a 7% rise in both, which means English is now at the national level and maths at 90% is head of the national average of 84%. This increase needs to carry on year on year. 83% of children got at least a level 4 at both English and Maths. Boys and girls show a similar performance in Maths. The difference in English is decreasing.

Other statistics:

- (p24) Of the low attainers at KS1 only one of these got a Level 4, when according to the data nationally, it should have been 4 children.

- (p25) Under EAL the school had two late arrivals; their results are allowed to be deleted, which will bring the results to 100%.

- (p27) Children receiving FSM: Nationally their attainment is very low; it is still low at Foundry Lane, but higher than the national average.

- (p27) KS2 Level 5. At Level 4, boys have caught up the girls, but are still not matching them. The school needs to look at this year's cohort. The national average for SEN children achieving Level 5 is 8%. Of the 12 SEN children at Foundry Lane, not one achieved a level 5. MS said there would be one this coming year.

There are two training sessions available for governors particularly interested in learning to read the data – 15.01.13 and 24.01.13. ST will continue to guide governors through RAISEonline at the next meeting.

There was a ten minute break.

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

09. FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

At the meeting the budget was monitored – discussions on the capital budget have been mentioned earlier in the meeting.

The Head Teacher's performance review has taken place.

OFSTED has stated that CRB checking is no longer required; however, the school will continue to CRB check new governors.

10. GOVERNOR TARGETS

All governors have a copy of the School Development Plan. It contains budgets and appendices. Subject areas are also available on request.

Under leadership and management there should also be at least two governor targets. Most areas have targets; some up to three with other targets to be looked at if there is time or for the following year.

ST suggested the OFSTED framework and governance would be a good target for governors. CFR suggested governors being involved in teaching and learning in the classroom. (MS interjected that the teacher unions are not in favour of this). However, it would not be a lesson observation, merely experiencing a lesson. JC suggested a so-called 'learning walk' with a particular focus (e.g. equality of ethnic minorities). This has been suggested before. AT felt that governors are lay people and as such as not looking for judgements on a teacher, merely seeing how a lesson works. ST suggested that a learning walk could involve looking at action or action plus children as governors have been looking at SEN.

PK wondered why this was necessary. What is the job / role of a governor? RT felt that governors are to act as a 'critical friend' and this would allow them to have a broader understanding of what goes on in school.

At the Curriculum meeting, curriculum leaders are invited to come and discuss certain themes, which give governors an opportunity to ask questions. CFR felt that whilst this is valuable learning walks would allow governors to become a little more involved and also be more visible to the children as well as staff. Governors wondered what the reaction from staff would be. As long as there was a clear focus it would be fine, although some members of staff might be a bit defensive. JD felt that some teachers would wonder what the point was.

Both suggestions would be enough as a target. Another suggestion was to look at doing another skills check. AW and TC will look at this and perhaps ask Nigel Ash for some advice.

11. COMMUNITY AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

- The playground partnership is moving ahead positively.

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

- The school is looking for contacts with international schools. On 5.12.12 at lunch-time it will be skyping an eco school in Poland.

- Repairs and Maintenance budget: The school has spent a little more this year, but it is still making savings. However with the new building in place, the allocation should increase in the next budget.

- The re-decorating budget needs to be reviewed and renewed.

TC asked if the children are going to go out again and try to improve parking outside the school again. It is usually done in May during walk-to school week, however it can be requested that the School Council and/or the police do something sooner. A reminder will also be put in the Newsletter.

12. PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUSTS

- Assessment: There has been a L3 and L5 meeting with all the five schools in the family, with the aim of increasing understanding in these assessment levels. On Thursday 6.12.12 there will be an assessment co-ordinators' meeting to moderate work, so there is a better shared understanding of the levels of work in reading, writing and maths. SCC said that assessment was not rigorous enough, so this will address their concerns as well as providing evidence with OFSTED in mind. PK asked why SCC said it was not rigorous enough, when it was itself in charge of moderation. It was however using schools to do it for it. KS1 is teacher assessed, so this is not an issue here, but KS2 is test based and so moderation needs to be the same for all schools.

- Trust. There is a development for membership. AW is booked on a course on 6.01.13 to look at the steps involved in this. The Trust wants to launch membership at the end of February. The stakeholders need to have representation on a forum. At the moment the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors are trustees. Further partnerships are being explored (1 partnership was dissolved); the co-operative insurance group is being considered.

13. TRAINING

RT and JC have been on a finance course.

KL will email courses offered in the New Year. New governor training is also available if anyone is interested (perhaps this too could be a target for all new governors). If governors book themselves on a course, please tell KL so she can keep a record of courses attended and by whom.

14. SAFEGUARDING

There was nothing that had not already been discussed. ST and AW have done safer recruitment training. JT has guidance on CRB on those who have not yet had theirs done or have it from elsewhere.

Signed
Chair of Governors
dated

15. CHAIR

Nothing to report

16. AOB

- AT asked what happened to the 'walk to school' badges. MK thought it might have finished, but ST said it would carry on. MS thought the badges proved to be too expensive, so ST would look into it. CFR suggested a non uniform day to pay for the badges.

- Governors are needed for house point ceremonies on 14.12.12 at 9.15 and 10 o'clock. Let ST know if you can help.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.20

Date of next meeting: 12.02.2013