

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY – FOUNDRY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

TUESDAY 20th MAY 2014

Governors present:	Janet Taylor [JT]	Marie Spencer [MS]
	Liz Smith [LS]	David Higlett [DH]
	Anne Webster [AWe]	Robbie Turkington [RT]
	Andy Withers [Head] [AW]	Kathryn Lugg [KL]
	Andrew Tindall [AT]	Neil Maddock [NM]

Associate Governors: Sean Taylor [ST]

Others: Jack Davis [JD]

Clerk: Elisabeth Ruggles

01. WELCOMES AND APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Jamie Caswell, Tony Croft [Chair] and Maureen Kirkland, which were accepted. Apologies had not been received from Claire Fyvie-Rae or Sam Barnes. In the absence of the Chair, the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chair, David Higlett.

02. SCHOOL COUNCIL

They are busy with ‘The Voice’ and so will attend the July meeting instead.

03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

04. AGREEMENT OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

p3: 5th paragraph, 3rd line - add ‘s’ after school

p3: 5th paragraph, 4th line - delete ‘d’ and insert ‘t’ – ‘built’

There were no further amendments the Minutes were signed by the Vice Chair as being a true and accurate record of the meeting.

05. MATTERS ARISING

Hard to place Children: Nothing more has been heard from the LA on this issue, so hopefully the points made very clearly by the school will mean an end to this matter.

Pupil Behaviour: The child who was excluded and discussed at the last meeting is now attending Compass School for five days a week for the time being.

Signed
Chair of Governors
Dated

Partnership: The meeting has not yet taken place. However LS e-mailed regarding the comment on the web-site and has received a response. Both items of correspondence were shared at the meeting and filed with the agenda. On 26.6.14 there will be Parents' Forum with all members of the IEB, with a question and answer session. A full consultation will be required for any decision that is made. There will be feedback after the meeting and LS is trying to get as many parents as possible to attend. AW will also put the date on the school web site to increase awareness.

06. CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

There was one main item of business. A report had been received from the Maths Subject Leader, outlining main areas for improvement

- Internal tracking had shown that pupils in Yr 1 and Yr3 had made less progress than expected. They were given extra support and coaching, which has had an impact.
- Intervention programme: teachers and LSAs have had training on how to use the programme
- New national curriculum. In English and Maths there will be an overlap, whereby Yr2 and Yr6 will be working to the old curriculum and all the other years to the new one. Staff have been made aware of changes in Maths for the new curriculum – calculators are no longer allowed.

The meeting also discussed the curriculum day, when Subject Leaders went into the classrooms, looked at books and spoke to the children. They were very pleased with what they saw; the attitude of the children was particularly good. Assessment is used very well in lessons. Some areas for development were identified – maths being used in as wide a context as possible, so that all mathematical thinking is applied. The consistency in the books is very good. A follow up of monitoring is important to ensure its impact.

There were no safeguarding issues.

07. FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Buildings Update

There has been a meeting with the surveyors and architects. They have presented costs of £643,000, which are higher than expected, although additional work has been incorporated into this (such as the installation of a lift and the building going up into the first floor).

The bulk of the money will be swallowed up in alteration works, working out at £2,000/m². It will result in not a lot of extra space costing a lot and with lots of compromises being made. This amount excludes fittings, fees and IT work. It also means a lot of money to raise, bearing in mind that funding is difficult to get. The last Finance Committee meeting discussed looking for a new place on the school site to build the hall and came up with the space next to the new school building, although this would mean losing the adventure trail.

Signed

Chair of Governors

Dated

It would, however, open more funding possibilities – Sport England etc. KL has been in touch with them, but funding is now closed until next year. It is important to look at whether this would balance out with the loss of the trail. The old hall could be used as a meeting space or for community use. If a purpose-built, stand-alone new hall were built, it would cost in the region of £1500/m² and the school would be totally in control of it.

The next step is for the Finance Committee and the Governing Body as a whole to look at this suggestion and decide whether to move forward on considering building a new hall.

LS asked whether the trail could be moved elsewhere. AW felt it could potentially be done, although the format would have to be changed. MS wanted to know whether all the children would fit in this new hall. They all would and it would perhaps give the school the opportunity to install a climbing wall. LS asked whether it would then also resolve the issues that would arise for PE as there would then be two halls to use. It would mean there would be more opportunity for community use, with more money being raised from clubs. One hall could perhaps be used for hot dinners or ‘wet’ lunches, giving more flexibility. JD pointed out that it would cut out some of the light on the side of the building. RT asked whether it would also involve the car park – it is hard to visualise the space as it looks so small.

The lift is a separate issue, which needs to be dealt with now. However, the school did not want to spend the money twice. The lift would cost £260,000 in the old plan, so it is envisaged that quite a lot of money could be saved.

JD talked of the practicalities of the use of the grounds with staggered lunch times as there would be a loss of green space where the children can play. However, the trail cannot be used all year round anyway. If the activity trail were moved to the field, it could then be used when the field is in use. There is lots of space on the field, so the trail would take up only a small part of that space. It could also be moved to the playground with the correct flooring. There could be a climbing wall on the traverse wall to encourage more activity outside.

MS felt it was very important to be able to have whole school assemblies and to be able to fulfil PE requirements. The hall needs to be 200m² to fit everyone in. The old hall is 150 m². JD asked whether it would be brick built like the new building or modular – it would have to be steel framed. She also asked about its height, but it would be no higher than the existing building; it would need height so that games like badminton could be played in there to increase the flexibility. JT pointed out that toilets and changing rooms would then also be required. DH asked whether there would be any planning permission issues – possibly, but it would be far enough away from the perimeter. The whole site would have to be looked at carefully to ensure the space was maximised. AWe asked whether it could be used for Tiger Club as it is under pressure for more space – this might be possible as there would be two large spaces to be used, but they might be too big as Tiger Club aims to offer a homely atmosphere.

Signed
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The bills for the architect and the surveyor have come in at £5,000, which is £2,500 less than was budgeted. As £7,500 has been committed towards looking at the feasibility for the hall, the issue is whether it would be a good idea to use the remaining amount for planning.

AW proposed to talk to the architect again to discuss the cost of the plan so it can be discussed at the next Governing Body meeting.

Bestival tickets are available for a raffle to kick off the fund-raising and it was also suggested to contact Costco to see if it would be willing to donate something. Businesses for School would also be good for fund-raising, as well as Sport Relief. JD suggested contacting Saints and the Cricket Club.

KL proposed to extend the feasibility study using the budget already identified to look at the option for the new hall. She was seconded by LS. All governors were in agreement.

Two other issues were discussed at the meeting:

Lift: This is for a Yr2 child, who will be moving into Yr3 in September, who cannot go upstairs on its own. There are four options:

- i) Provide a lift inside the building. This is impossible due to the 2ft thickness of the walls.
- ii) Provide a lift on the outside of the building. Two quotes have been received, both around £30,000 plus £10,000 for building work. The lift shaft would be on the outside and then go through the wall. A potential site is at the end of the YrR building. The problem is that there is no guarantee that it is waterproof and security is also an issue as it cannot be locked. There are also potential planning issues. MS thought it could also be dangerous. In order to access it, you need to go out and then in again and it will spoil the look of the building.
- iii) Re-arrange the school. LS pointed out that this would have to be done each year. A Yr6 class could be moved out of the top of the new building to the old building as there is a lift in this building already. However, it is a rite of passage for the older children to be in the new building and AT pointed out it only works if there is one child involved – there would be an issue if there were more. Or the old studio could be sorted out, but this will impact on Tiger Club and the room needs to be changed (there is no water).
- iv) Stair lift. This costs between £5- and £6,000. LS asked if it was slow. It is quite slow and also fire issues need to be considered. The fire assessor is being contacted as the bottom flight of stairs is narrower. A stair lift could be installed quickly as a short-term solution, but it is unclear whether it would be a long term solution. LS asked whether the school would have to fund this. Nigel is trying to get some support from somewhere, but at the moment there are no funding streams the school is aware of.

MS felt that the stair lift is the best option. Even if it might mean that a child has to go up to class 5 minutes before everyone else, it is still more inclusive than the other options. It seems the most sensible approach. AW proposed that this be installed subject to approval from the

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Fire Officer, who is coming 21st May. He was seconded by JT. If it is not acceptable, then the only other option is to move classrooms around. JD asked about the time scale and this can be put in place very quickly.

Tiger Club: The plan is to build a conservatory to extend the floor area if the room downstairs is lost. It will be looked at in twelve months' time – costs are in the region of £35,000. There are very few spaces available for September – although it might be necessary to extend the number of children it takes, staffing it is always difficult.

Pay Policy: The Finance Committee agreed to put £15,000 into the budget to allow for normal pay increases (not accelerated pay progressions). A new budget plan was handed out, which includes staffing to give a bigger surplus of £22,913.

LS asked about parental contributions towards trips and wondered whether it generally balanced out. It is subsidised a bit any way, but the school does pay more than it intends. LS asked whether the situation had got worse or better, but it varies from year to year. For example, Stubbington is very good this year, but the trip to London was not quite so good. The feeling is that there might be a snowball effect if some parents do not pay and others then follow suit. At curriculum meetings parents are made aware of the fact that trips will not go ahead if there is not enough financial support. It helps that there is now an opportunity to pay on-line in instalments.

The budget was agreed. AW proposed the budget for 2014-2015 with a total expenditure of £1,959,110 against an income of £1,948,426. This shows a deficit of £10,684. This proposal was seconded by DH and there was unanimous agreement.

08. COMMUNITY & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

KL asked whether the Governing Body needs to think bigger about Tiger Club. It generates more money than it costs and it is a huge bonus for the school. There is a big demand for it, which will only increase. MS asked how much extra space the proposed conservatory would give the club – 30m², which is large enough for 40 children in both it and the room. Now there are between 35 and 40 children for each session.

Unfortunately the infrastructure, that is needed to support it, is not there at the moment. It would require someone in place with the skills at the right level to manage it. MS asked if there was a way to make the canteen more Tiger Club friendly. However, the canteen has to balance different needs. In the holidays Tiger Club is running at 16 as it cannot be staffed. A governor asked whether demand exceeded supply in the holidays – a lot balances on the security of getting a space.

It was suggested that it would be a good idea to put together a review group to look at Tiger Club. It will be a struggle to have something in place for September unless the canteen is reviewed. LS asked whether the canteen use was an issue for parents – not them, but there have been comments from the children. It is a hard space and a long way from the community

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Chair of Governors
Dated

room. Perhaps the playgroup space can be used for younger children, although there are issues here too – the toys and equipment from playgroup would have to be secure and protected.

It was decided to review this again in the next Community & Facilities Committee meeting.

09. OFSTED UPDATE

In the governors' section subsidiary guidance has been added. The role of governors has been re-iterated and in particular:

‘Inspectors must evaluate the extent to which governors both challenge and support the school and hold senior staff, including the head teacher, to account for the achievement of the pupils. Governors are not expected to be routinely involved in the day-to-day activity of the school. Governors are not expected to undertake lesson observations, unless the school has clear protocols for visits so their purposes are understood by school staff and governors alike. However, they hold important strategic responsibilities for the development and improvement of the school.

Inspectors should consider whether governors:

- carry out their statutory duties
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction’

A strength is the implementation of learning walks. Governors need to think of a protocol for staff and then also include the information on the school web site.

There was a ten minute break

10. SATS RAISEONLINE

Governors were handed a sheet with a ‘G’ in the corner, to note it was of interest to them. The sheet looked at closing the gap between children receiving free school meals and looked after children with other children. There were graphs detailing both their attainment and their progress.

The first three tables (across the page) looked at their attainment in English and mathematics at L4 to see if pupil premium children have closed the gap that traditionally exists between them and other children. This is why extra money has been made available.

In 2011 they were 6% above, in 2012 (a low ability cohort) 12% below and in 2013 they were 5% below. Attainment does fluctuate depending on year group and cohort.

When looking at progress, the other charts give information. In 2012 English ceased to be a measure, but in 2011-12 this group of children was actually making more than expected

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progress – 100%, with other groups making 79%. So even though the gap was not closed between the two groups, the progress made was significant.

In 2013 there are no figures available for English on its own, however, in reading (89%), their progress was 7% above, in writing 10% above and in maths 8% above the other children.

This is proof that the pupil premium money is making a difference. It is hoped that the gap this year will start closing. DH asked whether OFSTED will look at both attainment and progress. No one was sure, as it seems that OFSTED is now moving back to looking at attainment based progress.

11. GOVERNORS' LEARNING WALK

A report on the walk was handed out at the meeting. The walk focussed on Management of Behaviour. RT found it very useful as a governor tool to get a feel of what is going on in school. He was very impressed by the general behaviour in school – on the whole behaviour was fantastic throughout.

There was a lot of praise and encouragement evident, particularly in the nurture room. The way children spoke to each other was good and respectful and classes were very well managed, particularly with regard to when potential bad behaviour could be about to happen.

The School Code was evident in classes as well as individual class action plans and class behaviour agreements. Gold and silver charts were observed – it was very consistent. How prominent they were depended on individual teachers, but they were always a good reminder to pupils.

RT also looked at individual behaviour plans and the central behaviour record (CBR), which shows a pattern of behaviour over time. There is a threshold beyond which parents become involved. The school's use of external agencies is very evident and exclusions have remained consistent over the past four years.

RT felt that there were two areas for improvement:

- 1) The CBR could be reviewed at set periods throughout the year and perhaps a child's record could be removed after a period of bad behaviour.
- 2) Governors in future might be able to have the opportunity to speak with teachers on behaviour and any issues they felt were important.

RT finished by saying that he was very grateful for the opportunity to become involved in the workings of the school in this way. AW found it a useful exercise to reflect on and the areas for improvement will be noted. With regard to the CBR, it is used for a very small number of children only and a child is reviewed by the phase leaders in their phase area. It is very useful when involving an outside agency as the triggers and strategies that work can be seen easily. DH suggested noting any CBR issues in the head teacher's report and all agreed to this.

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It was also agreed that an annual cycle for walks would be a good idea as well as having a folder with all the reports in it, together with an action sheet for easy referral. It will be discussed at the next Governing Body meeting. Suggestion for a walk was one looking at pupil premium children.

KL had also been on two learning walks. The Attendance Walk followed a review of the attendance policy, which is on the school web site. Good attendance is actively encouraged – there are class rewards and recognitions in assemblies. From Autumn 2012 to Spring 2013 there has been an increase in attendance from 95% to 96.65%, showing that the policy is working. KL also looked at the children who are at risk of persistent absenteeism (missing 22 sessions – 12 children) or those that are actually persistent absentees (missing 46 or more sessions). The number of these latter children has actually dropped from 9 to 0, proving that the money for the School Attendance Officer was money well spent. It is clear to parents what will happen if their children are persistently late.

A number of requests for absence are still being received and some penalties have been issued, although some parents seem to be unclear on the process. Some parents seem to be trying to sidestep the issue, with employers supporting parental letters; LS said she was aware that some holiday companies are offering to pay the fines for parents! Governors felt this will become easier over time – JT has already had fewer requests. LS asked whether the same policy applied across the whole of Southampton as some secondary schools seem to allow time off when primary schools do not. The school's policy is based on the SCC one.

Clothing Learning Walk. Overall the vast majority of children wear the correct uniform. There is a variety of styles, but still in the right colour. Some children have brightly coloured hair accessories and this is accepted by the school. One area that is consistently in need of attention is footwear, particularly in Yr6. Children wear trainers and slip-on shoes. School policy states that children should wear black shoes or trainers. KL felt that this should be amended to BLACK trainers, to ensure consistency. The school uniform policy should be on the web site.

There is a huge pile of lost property, even though a parent goes through the pile regularly and returns named articles to the correct child. There is a second hand uniform sale (21.05) and KL suggested bagging up unclaimed items and selling them to generate some income for the school.

It would be good to offer a discount for coloured T shirts before sports day.

12. PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

Trust. The Polygon School has voted to consult its stakeholders to either join the Southampton Co-operative Trust or to set up its own trust and to join our Trust as a partner. AW has spoken to Jon O'Connor who thinks it's positive for the Trust as the school will bring expertise on behaviour management which other schools in the Trust can benefit from.

Signed
Chair of Governors
Dated

If the decision is made to join our Trust, then it will have to check whether each Governing Body individually has to agree to this.

On 10th June there is a planning day, with projects to improve attainment and progress, with early language development at the forefront, with English as either a first or second language. There will also be projects for Yr3 and Yr4 to encourage boys' writing, but also looking at reading too.

There are currently 715 co-operative schools in the country, making the UK the biggest single group of co-operative schools in the world. LASER (= London and the South East Region) in partnership with Roehampton University is looking at school improvement in the South East. Potentially this could create a high level of expertise to help schools if they get into difficulties. AW and ST are hoping to go to the first conference at Roehampton on 3rd July this year.

Regents Park Community College. The school continues to improve and is now waiting for its third monitoring visit. The OFSTED inspection will probably be in October. The potential exam results for this year look good, which would mean good results two years in a row. The number of children from Foundry Lane applying to go to Regents Park has not decreased. AW has joined the academy group and attended a meeting which was quite interesting. The school's options moving forward are quite limited.

13. LUNCH TIME CHANGES / 5 YEAR PLAN

From September Yrs R, 1 and 2 are to receive free school meals. The school's five year plan is already looking at the provision of meals across the school. It can only serve a maximum of 90 meals in a half hour period. It has also met with City Catering to look at ways to increase this capacity.

Yrs R, 1 and 2 will be served their meals in the classroom. LS asked whether there were enough chairs – this will be checked. In future the same might go for Yr2, but for the time being the lunch time period is being extended by half an hour, although each year group will still have the same 1 hour lunch time period:

YrR – Yr4 Lunch: 12 to 1

Yr 5 – Yr6 Lunch: 12.30 to 1.30

This will have an impact on clubs and wet lunchtimes, lunch-time staff and PE timetables. It has been budgeted for in the agreed budget plan.

MS asked whether another cook would be required – this is not known at present. City Catering is doing a feasibility study now. They are also funding the extra costs for training in serving as well as health and hygiene training. Parents need to be contacted to see what the take-up will be – a pilot scheme in London suggests an 85% take-up. The lunch-time

Signed
Chair of Governors
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supervisor has agreed to the plan, but the other members of the lunch-time team need to be spoken to as soon as possible.

RT asked whether this could be rolled out provisionally with an option to discuss a contribution towards costs with City Catering. City Catering receive £2.30 per meal from central government and at the moment it costs just over £2 to provide a meal. The school has received £4,500 to offset the costs. It needs to be trialled initially as costs could increase. The trial will run for twelve months as a fixed term contract. City Catering are also trying to become a co-operative trust and if this is successful, their profits would feed back into the trust.

AW proposed that lunch-times be changed as outlined for the academic year 2014-15. MS seconded it and there was unanimous agreement.

14. SAFEGUARDING / HEALTH & SAFETY

There were no issues

15. TRAINING

There is nothing specific. KL asked whether governors wanted to update the Governor Handbook. AT asked whether numbers of governors increase as the number of children in the school increases. No as this was decided when the Governing Body reconstituted.

16. CHAIR

Nothing to report.

17. AOB

Playgroup Lettings: Due to the economic climate, the playgroup lettings charge has not increased since 2008. The school has been looking at lettings charges, particularly as inflation since 2008 has increased by 22%. MS asked whether the playgroup fees have increased. This happened just recently, but income wise the playgroup is fine. An increase of 15% was suggested, which equates to £3.38 per day. MS asked whether this increase was in line with other recent increases in charges, but the play group has always been charged differently from everyone else. JD pointed out that four local playgroups have had rent increases, so it is not unreasonable. AW proposed a 15% increase in the playgroup letting charge. He was seconded by DH and all were in favour.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.03.

Date of next meeting: 15th July 2014

Signed
Chair of Governors
Dated