

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY – FOUNDRY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

TUESDAY 17th MAY 2016

Governors present:	Sean Taylor [ST]	Marie Spencer [MS]
	Liz Smith [LS- arr'd 6.40]	David Higlett [DH]
	Kathryn Lugg [KL]	Emma Wareham [EW]
	Paul Candy [PC]	Robbie Turkington [RT]
	Andrew Tindall [AT]	Cathy Baggott [CB]

Associate Governors:

Others: Helen Aldred [HA] Jack Davis [JD]

Clerk: Elisabeth Ruggles

01. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

David Higlett, who chaired the meeting, welcomed all governors

02. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Tony Croft and Neil Maddock. No apologies had been received from Anne Webster or Claire Fyvie-Rae

03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

04. AGREEMENT OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

These will follow.

05. MATTERS ARISING

- Whistle blowing Policy: The school is waiting for HR to get back to them as a few questions arose after the Resources Committee meeting. Some governors (RT/AT/DH) have some comments on the policy included with the Agenda and these will be passed to ST.

- Committee Membership. There are too many staff members on the Resources Committee, which has not had a full meeting for some time due to various unforeseeable events. In September 2016, at the beginning of the new academic year, governors need to think about committee membership to ensure an even spread of governors on both committees.

Resources: RT, EW, TC – meeting on Wednesday at 3.30

Teaching & Learning: LS, AT, DH, NM, CFR – meeting on Wednesday at 4.45

Meeting days and times can be changed to suit governors.

Signed
Chair of Governors
Dated

06. ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS

This is currently in the news and Foundry Lane is also doing a lot of work on it. The Agenda pack included all the letters that are sent to parents over the course of a year to do with attendance issues. The aim is not to 'tell parents off' but to try and help and support them as this is more constructive and helpful.

The lateness of children is a growing issue and is the subject of focus. Sometimes a child is being difficult and parents are happy for the school to step in and try to help. Sean has also met with some parents, which can be productive. Sometimes attendance officers are also called in to help with certain issues.

With regard to attendance 95% is considered 'good' attendance. Once attendance falls below this a letter is sent out to parents. Quite often parents whose children's attendance is giving cause for concern do not approach the school with reasons for the lateness or lack of attendance. There is now an attendance board which is working well.

The biggest issue is around holidays. Parents fill in forms so the school knows when they are taking their children out of school. The school is now in talks with SCC about the judicious use of penalty notices, although the recent case on the Isle of Wight that went to the High Court has not helped matters and all local authorities are less keen to send them out.

At the last count the average attendance was 96.1%. The City is also running an Attendance and Lateness Action Group to support schools and parents which is running well.

[LS arrived 6.40]

There is an upward trend, both in the city and nationally, on primary school absences. There is an aim to have a uniform approach for all schools encompassing a consistent approach. There is a buddy system between schools for support. The City is pushing schools to challenge parents and to get the attendance officers involved. GPs and police officers (truancy sweeps) are also becoming involved. Foundry Lane has also developed a leaflet for parents around the issue, which has been designed to inform rather than confront them.

DH wondered whether an appointment with the head Teacher could be outside of school hours as that might allow parents to come in if it does not clash with work or other commitments.

Another comment was whether parents knew who the Senior Management Team was. The photo board needs to be updated.

RT asked whether Lateness and Attendance was included in the prospectus – it is and is also discussed with new parents visiting the school. The issue is also addressed with the older children in assemblies. JD pointed out that children often get upset if they have to lie about their lateness or absence, particularly if it is not their fault.

AT pointed out that a parent had made a comment about punctuality when he had had to wait for an awards assembly, saying the school had to be punctual if it wanted parents and children to be. Please could the school be mindful of this.

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07. RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting had to be re-arranged a few times.

ST and KL have found the first year of budget and the yearend financial situation to be very challenging.

The short term staff absence policy has had to be looked at in detail. KL has spoken to HR and the decision was made to go back to the SCC model. This leaves out a few of the stages which the original model included, but which made it hard to manage. The SCC model is industry standard. The back-to-work form has been a good idea, the aim of which is to support staff. The school wants to implement it as soon as possible.

Governors pointed out a few mistakes to be corrected:

- p1 – there are a few spelling mistakes. Some paragraphs are duplicates of what has come before
- p3 – RT pointed out that it includes Step 3 and Step 4, but Step 5 is in the middle. In Step 3, ‘the appropriate manager’ should be included.
- p5 - just above paragraph 7 – there is no Appendix 4
- is paragraph 6 a separate part of the policy? Issues that impact on all types of leave should perhaps be in a separate section

With these amendments in mind, KL proposed that the Policy be accepted. She was seconded by RT and all governors were in favour.

Support from Schools Finance has been intermittent since ST and KL have been in post. Gary Aldridge, who has worked in finance positions at SCC, is offering an SLA, which the school has decided to take up for £1700. He has already visited the school four times so it seems to be well worth the money.

08. BUDGET AND POSITION 2016-17

Budget setting has been very challenging. ST has been running someone else’s budget for a year, although on the whole this has gone smoothly. Tony ?? from SCC has been suggesting throughout the year that the budget is largely on track. However at the yearend he said that a deficit budget was now apparent, which seemed to be getting bigger. ST and KL have been looking into this and now have a clearer picture and know where the discrepancy is.

There seems to be a final deficit of £72,000. Of this £42,000 is already in the Community Budget to pay for the conservatory for Tiger Club. ST/KL had wanted to move it across earlier, but were advised against this until it was too late as the year end had come. However, it is now included for next year. This means that the school is £32,000 out of pocket, whereas it has hoped to have a £10,000 surplus.

An amount of funding which came into the budget assigned to FSM was not coded as FSM and was put under other cost centres. The invoices from City Catering amount to

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approximately £40,000. The funding for meals is very complicated as there are those children who have free school meals. Those children whose parents pay for them, the midday meal supervisors who get a free meal as part of their wages and universal FSM for all children who want them in YrR and Yr1. School meals had a deficit of £22,000 at the end of the year.

DH wondered whether the money should have been received at all. It was allocated correctly to the school, but it should have been ring fenced which it was not. It was allocated to other cost centres and spent.

So therefore the school started the year with a deficit of £22,000 and has not been able to set a budget. ST and KL have now sat down with Gary Aldridge and worked out all the costs. There has not been an increase in teacher staffing, nor has support staffing been increased.

Despite this the first estimates that came back on costings saw a deficit of £106,000. The difference in costings for staffing for 2015-16 and 2016-17 sees an increase of £140,000 despite there being no changes at all. This is due to increased pension contributions, national insurance contributions and the living wage.

Staffing, compared with other schools, has been analysed. It is higher than most other schools, so is not ideal. Any staff, who are leaving, are not being replaced. The next biggest spend is learning support, which is 20% of the budget and most other schools spend between 10-15% of their budgets on this. The only way forward is to look at this in more detail to see if there is another, different model which can reduce costs.

With some changes already made and others to be made, it is hoped to set the budget with a deficit of £64,000. It is hoped to reduce this year on year by reducing staffing year on year.

EW asked if the school has the right amount of cover for children with special needs. Other schools which spend less might have fewer SEN children. 1:1 support should remain a priority.

DH pointed out that the number of supervisory assistants seems quite high. The school is no longer taking any more on, but at Foundry Lane it is more a site issue that determines the number rather than the children. It is so spread out with many hidden areas, so necessitating a higher number of supervisors. The children in YrR and Yr1 also eat in their classrooms, requiring more supervision and staffing. The school is looking at ways to reduce this.

Lots of schools will be setting deficit budgets this year. There is a meeting next week with Jo Cassey from SCC to discuss it with her as only SCC can agree a deficit budget.

This year (2016-17) there is also a discrepancy with City Catering. They have reduced the SLA and are now charging on a meal by meal basis. This amounts to £150,000/ LS asked how this can work if the children choose their meal on the day. There are two census days each year when the number of children eating school meals are counted.

ST and KL are working with financial support to set a budget. This will be emailed to governors next week, for agreement. The approval deadline is 31st May, so it is vital that governors agree it before Foundry Lane go to SCC. This is something that OFSTED looks at too and they will ask the same questions as SCC, so it is important to have a trail to show

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how it came about. RT asked that there be staff members on hand to answer any queries once the email has been sent. ST, KL and HA can be contacted.

£140,000 extra for staffing and £150,000 for school meals. There has been £100,000 of extra funding, so there is still a deficit here of £90,000.

JD and MS thanked ST and KL for their hard work. MS felt the school was very lucky to have appointed ST as the Head Teacher rather than having to share a Head with other schools.

09. TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE

The last meeting was very good and interesting. Science was discussed as the assessment has changed. The teaching of it has not.

Susy Hoskins spoke about her role in the school; she manages to get lots of grants. A working party has been in from Community Payback. This does raise safeguarding questions, but no one with drug or child abuse charges is allowed on site and they do not work near the children, who are supervised by their parents.

AT volunteered to come on the Civic Award camp and MS will let him know what it involves.

10. PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Trust: The school is working closely with the Trust, with a number of very useful projects ongoing. There is peer to peer monitoring. Sarah Clifford has been trained as an Improvement Champion and is going to lead a workshop to address any monitoring issues.

In the autumn two people are going to look at challenging able children.

ST has been involved in Banister Park on effective governance. The school has asked for support from the group.

The Thursday meeting of the Trustees will look at the Trust strategy. The Trust Co-ordinator has been very effective and has agreed to be at the school fair with a stand. There are two Trust champions in the staff – Theresa and ???? ST is helping to interview at St John's for a senior leader, so there is ongoing help and support.

The Trust SEN group is still very active. CB told the meeting they meet every term. They are using an EP to look at dyslexia training and hopefully also a strategy on core precision teaching.

Jonty Archibald has also been in to school and he has spoken to the children going to Regents Park. He spoke about the security incident and was able to reassure them.

There has been a meeting of business managers (and a web forum has been set up) to share ideas.

On 31st October 2016 there will be a Trust re-launch day at Regents Park. This will be a joint INSET day.

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Playgroup: Meetings have continued. There is joint moderation of the pre-school setting and JD is shadowing the new children moving into the school.

11. SAFEGUARDING

Nothing to report.

12. TRAINING

EW was signed up to do Governor Induction training, but it was cancelled.

KL has emailed out a list of training opportunities.

Governors need to do PREVENT training.

13. AOB

- Zigzag lines and the lay-by. Alan Whitehead has not got back to the school on this. AT feels that SCC and the police should be responsible for the situation and Foundry Lane should not have to give up its land. ST has asked for the police to come and give out penalty notices. The school has also received an application for a crossing patrol person.

- 12th July was agreed for a social event.

- An ice cream seller has set up immediately outside the school. HA has spoken to him and he has now moved further away from the school gates.

- The Yr2 and Yr6 teams have been thanked for all their hard work now that the KS assessment is at an end. ST had a surprise monitoring visit for KS2. The children were well prepared and did well. The monitoring team praised the school on the behaviour of the children.

Monitors were also in for YrR assessments. They in turn were being monitored by the monitoring team (STA). Good practice going forward is to have a governor in school when the assessments are taking place.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.46.

Date of next meeting: 14th July 2016

Signed
Chair of Governors
Dated