

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY – FOUNDRY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

TUESDAY 6th DECEMBER 2016

Governors present:	Sean Taylor [ST]	Marie Loftus [ML]
	Liz Smith [LS]	David Higlett [DH]
	Kathryn Lugg [KL]	Emma Wareham [EW – 6.35]
	Paul Candy [PC]	Cathy Baggott [CB]
	Andrew Tindall [AT]	Robbbie Turkington [RT]
	Katie Collins [KC]	Debbie Wyatt [DW]

Associate Governors:

Others: Helen Aldred [HA]

Clerk: Elisabeth Ruggles

01. APOLOGIES & WELCOMES

There were apologies from Neil Maddock and Liz Smith had advised that she would be late. Nothing had been heard from Emma Wareham.

Debbie Wyatt was welcomed to the Governing Body and all governors and the clerk introduced themselves to her. She will join the Resources Committee.

02. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest. DW signed the Register.

03. AGREEMENT OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

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

04. MATTERS ARISING

- Learning Walks: These were discussed at the meeting in October. A few offers have been received from LS (early years), NM (collective worship – the date to be re-arranged), RT (pupil premium). DH asked whether there were any other topics to be arranged in 2017 – safeguarding and possibly other topics arising from the audit.

[EW arrived 6.35]

- Confidentiality Policy – This was sent out with the Agenda and needs to be signed by each governor and handed in to KL.

05. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

This was handed out at the meeting.

The NUMBER ON ROLL is very healthy; 9 have been admitted to the school, although a few might leave at the end of the year. On census day there were 563 pupils. There have also been no appeals so far this year.

Signed

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YrR had 90 pupils admitted this year, although the school actually took in only 85. Deferred entry is a new point this year, whereby pupils can be held back a year and start school in Yr1, in the term after they are five. Each case is discussed individually, but ST would strongly advise against it. It is frustrating as the school place cannot be offered to another child, but equally the school will also not get funding for that child. ML asked how this arrangement would affect the child's base line, but no one knows as it has never been done before. Another question is whether – if the child starts school in Yr1, whether they stay with their year group or whether they have to make up the 'lost' year. Again ST said there was no information available. Currently the school has a girl with SEN in Yr1 who should really be in Yr2.

STAFFING:

- The structure has been reviewed:
- The NQT (who is observed at the end of each term) is very successful.

This term there have been issues with illness. In the last week there have been six members of staff (one of whom was a teacher) off work due to either an operation or convalescence after an operation. The school has tried to cover this in-house.

- There is hope that the LSA plan will work when they all return to work after the Christmas break. When everyone was in school it seemed to be working well. Staff have been very flexible and have worked under difficult circumstances.

DH asked about the number of midday supervisors. There are now 24. A new member of staff has been appointed. I was not re-appointed as had been supporting a child one to one, who is now leaving.

SIP

This was handed out at the meeting. ST had a day with Mike Thompson.

WHOLE SCHOOL PRIORITIES

ENGLISH: This is not as strong as Maths. The school needs to look at vulnerable groups – disadvantaged children and EAL as well as overlapping groups. This was apparent, particularly in the Yr1 phonics screening. However, by Yr2 the children have caught up with national results.

There has been a concentration on the technical aspects of writing, which will remain as an English target, but the whole school will have a reading focus, in order for this to have an effect on written language. There are ways of supporting parents, as well as increasing the amount the children read out in school or the amount the read in school.

ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT: Again the focus is on vulnerable groups. There is a tracking system in place to ensure that they are on track. The children with a very complex background are hardest to track and it is also hard to decide what and how much progress they are able to make and maximising this.

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DIFFERENTIATION: In tasks so that individual children have differentiated outcomes. This is quite tricky, but is being refined this year.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT: within a financial context as the previous one is unaffordable. It needs to be more flexible. Bench marking is important, so the school is looking at how similar schools spend their money.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE: Last year the focus was on attendance. The Isle of Wight judgement has had an impact and there have been more in term holidays this year. ST is still telling parents that there is no reason for a holiday in term time. SCC still feel that fines should be given, but is looking at a child's overall attendance. Penalty notices are being used now only if the action is repetitive, although most parents say it is still cheaper to go and pay the fine, others will lie about where their child is, although this is hard to challenge. However the school will send out a letter if evidence to the contrary comes to light.

AT wondered why attendance cannot be treated like truancy. The law states that regular attendance, which is taken to be 95%, is required, but this seems to be arbitrary. LS pointed out that families are being squeezed financially and holidays out of term time cost a fraction of those taken in holiday time. Some parents cannot take holidays during the school holidays and this is accepted if a letter from their place of work is received stating this.

The OFSTED ACTION PLAN: is contained in the SIP.

STAFF APPRAISAL: is on track.

SEN: There are very high numbers of children in school with EHC plans (currently 13, not 15 as stated in report), As the LA SEN team is overwhelmed with work, it is very slow to react to Foundry Lane's requests and the budgetary impact this has as a result. CB told of a case going before panel before Christmas. There has been another plan which was agreed in May, but no funding has been received yet. This is a very big issue due to budgetary restrictions. The school pays the first 12 hours for any child with a statement. Although it receives a block of funding for SEN, this does not cover the costs and takes up £75,000 – 100,000 of the budget. There are currently five more children who need a statement, which CB is working on.

Another issue is after school care for those with SEN. The school has resisted this as it is not sure that this is in the best interests of those children, nor does it have the finances to cover it. However, this could be viewed as discrimination, so it needs to be looked at carefully. A trial period for a child has been agreed, although the extra cost has not been funded by the parents. SCC has found a source of funding for the parents (Buzz Network and DNA). There is another child for whom a place is being sought. However, this too has HR implications in terms of redundancy for the person working one to one with a child who then leaves.

FRIENDS: has been fantastic this year and have been supporting the budget as best they can. They have supplied laptops and are now looking at playground equipment, which needs to be replaced. There is a meeting this week with a company which has a team of fund finders, who try to find some funding once they have quoted for a big project. The most favourable

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projects are those that have community use. The cost in the region is £10-15,000 per play structure.

Jacqui Dowdell continues to offer courses. EW asked whether it would be possible to offer some evening courses. One is already from 5-8pm (for years 5 and 6). This has been discussed before and Jacqui has trialled various times and not all have been well attended. Friends has also tried to do the same.

EXCLUSION: There have been three fixed term exclusions this term due to behaviour. Outreach is increasing as is Springwell involvement, and the school has lots of training in place. However this is still not enough for very challenging children.

06. GOVERNOR ACTION PLAN

This was handed out at the meeting.

Mike Thompson suggested that governors have a look at their accountability. The starting point is whole school targets. Safeguarding is a big OFSTED focus as Southampton's LSCB was found to be inadequate in its work. It is a new requirement for schools too.

This is to be looked at during the next meeting. Ideas are welcome. There were no immediate questions.

07. TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE

This was handed out at the meeting.

4) EYFS Report: Clair Phillips. Clair spoke about the early years. Children are able to score either a 1, 2 or 3. This information is used on entry. There is a good level of development, although below the national average. This is disappointing as levels had been rising over the past three years. However, it is still positive as levels are still rising but at a slower rate.

Data analysis shows that the groups of concern are EAL children, boys born in the summer months and disadvantaged children. On entry, data shows that they were significantly below the national average, but had made very good progress by the end of the year. It was pointed out that intake is from 27 different playgroups within the city.

5) SEN: Cathy Baggott. CB shared her SEN report. SEN children at KS2 have made good progress due to their support. Children with EHC statement plans are not making as much progress, but their attainment is good. She is looking at ways to measure their progress.

Mike Thompson spoke about skills based on taxonomy, particularly for reading and this might also be good for SEN children. CB works with outside agencies to support the children. Training sessions with the LSAs have also been very positive. LS said that at her place of work Foundry Lane is seen as being a very inclusive school.

Phase 3 training for LSAs at the higher end of the school by Marie and Sarah has been very beneficial.

ML pointed out that there had been a discussion in April about the need to talk about outdoor teaching (with Susie) which was discussed at every meeting. This has now been reduced as it was felt necessary to raise the profile of core subjects and the early years.

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08. SCHOOLS ADMISSION

Foundry Lane was randomly picked for an audit to check:

- How pupils in YrR were admitted as well as pupils admitted during the year
- If attendance was recorded accurately
- How exclusions were handled, including the letters sent home to parents and the forms to the Exclusion Officer and its recording on SIMS.

No risks were identified and the questions asked were answered accurately.

SCC is pushing attendance as a whole, not only for primary and secondary education, but now also further education. Outside agencies are involved, such as the police, YOS (youth offending services), Duke of Edinburgh. They are present at meetings.

The Southampton Primary Absence handout was given out at the meeting. Out of 151 local authorities, SCC is ranked 118 (the year before it was 131). Establishing good routines is very important, but attendance cannot be enforced at age 4. Some parents see it as optional until the child is 5, although they have signed the Home-School Partnership. DH pointed out that it is disruptive and KL said that children arriving late in a class also had an impact. The data allows a tracker which shows that attendance has an impact on achievement.

One area that SCC is looking at is SEN absence this year as they have seen a higher level of absences, although there are possibly complex medical issues for some children.

The school has built up a good relationship with SAAG, so it was a worthwhile exercise.

09. PARTNERSHIPS

The group of head teachers has met with a small multi academy trust in Birmingham, consisting of 2 secondary and 3 primary schools. What is apparent is that some sort of CEO would need to be in place so as not to over burden the leadership structure. Funding can be achieved through economies of scale, but there is nevertheless a budgetary impact.

There has also been a representation from the local area co-operative schools society. Accountability is different here – it is not the LA but the schools commission who decides on support or changes if there is a problem.

In terms of funding it is felt that at least ten schools are needed to form a multi academy trust, as a CEO and administrative support is needed. This is challenging as there are financial constraints within the trust now, although it can be supported in its current form at the moment. There are ongoing discussions.

Talks are also going on with a small multi academy trust in Hampshire. Different structures are being discussed and looked at.

LS asked who the schools are accountable to. They will be accountable to central government with no local body involvement. Some do not have governors, but have trustees instead. DH asked that if there is more than one school, does it then by definition become a multi academy

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trust or can there be a one school academy. Often a multi academy trust will have at its head a profit making organisation.

Teaching schools play a large role in supporting school improvement and on 20th January 2017 there will be a visit from a school improvement group who will categorise schools from 1 to 4. Foundry lane is in category 2. In Portsmouth there is no LA support at all. EW asked whether Foundry Lane would become a teaching school if it achieved category 1.

DH asked if there were any thoughts on the timing of moving forward. As the government has stepped back a bit on its 2018 deadline, there is no longer such a rush. Foundry Lane would like to remain a LA school for as long as possible. It could dissolve the trust or change it to make it work better. ML pointed out that Foundry Lane wants to be in control, ST said the situation is frustrating – had the school decided to become an academy, it would not now have the deficit budget it has as it would have received academy funding.

Andy Withers will be looking at other groups within the city. The other Shirley group (JET) is a multi-academy trust and the suggestion was made to perhaps link up with them. There is also a group for the Millbrook schools. ML pointed out that in each partnership there is one good school – the Millbrook schools are not as weak as they once were. RT asked how the Governing Body proposes to look at this – will there be additional meetings or a steering group to look at options and put forward a proposal.

If governors are interested in joining a working group, could they please let DH or RT know.

10. RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes were handed out at the meeting for the meeting held 8th November.

Everything is broadly in line with the budget, except staffing - notes are included as to why.

There will be some areas for recovery, but there has still been no feedback on the submitted deficit budget or the application for the hardship fund. ST thinks the latter will be distributed pro rata at the end of the year to all schools with a deficit.

It was noted that the school had worked really hard to keep the budget on track. £3,000 is to be carried forward.

POLICIES REVIEWED

- Short term absence policy was updated last year and has had a positive impact. More vulnerable staff have been supported. Now the long term absence policy is being reviewed. SCC has a redeployment register, which is useful.

LETTINGS

The judo charge is fair.

There is room for a review of charges for the Polish school. AT asked whether the school has a price for lettings. In 2014 governors agreed on £14 per hour. When classrooms are booked, there is a charge for the first room and then additional ones are cheaper. However, the Polish school pays per session, not per hour. It is an annual agreement, so a cost price needs to be agreed.

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The roof on the new building is faulty. A way forward is being discussed with Balfour. Nigel is still pursuing the issue of money for the fire door with SCC. There is also an issue with SCC about money received from the electricity board from the solar panels. This stems back to the point at which the agreement for the panels was signed with SCC which the school did not challenge at the time. The panels were needed in order to meet building regulations for the new building. When it was being built, the tariff was about to drop, so SCC arranged for the panels to go on the hall rather than the new building, which meant they became an additional cost and not part of the new build project.

LS spoke about INSET days. Previously if staff were not working that day, they could claim for the hours worked, but this is no longer the case. The school has had a meeting with schools finance. Spend is fine in general, but staffing was looked at in detail. There is a £10,000 variance between budget and actual spend. The living wage calculations have had an impact in this.

Overtime was an issue – out of £10,000, £6,000 was spent on this to cover illness. This cannot be budgeted as it is needed for the school to function and sickness cannot be predicted. There is no alternative to the computer programme the school uses (SBS), which SCC does not support. Schools Finance has designed a series of spreadsheets and feedback is hoped for after Christmas. It is also worth looking at the external budgeting tool academies use. EW asked whether any other system would solve all the problems – there is not a fool proof system and it is very frustrating, given all the hours spent checking the financial details on the budget are correct.

12. CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

This is something that should be on the web site but is not yet. As legislation has changed recently, there have been some changes in what parents can legally be charged for.

School activities can be very expensive, particularly residential trips, for example coaches can start at £500 - 600 before any admission costs. However, the school cannot require any parent to pay for any activity which takes place within a school day. It can only ask for a voluntary payment. Parents who are in receipt of various types of benefit, do not have to pay at all. In future a caveat will be necessary, stating that a trip may be cancelled if there are not enough voluntary payments. Hopefully this will not have too big an impact as most parents like their children to go on trips. The problem arises in situations where the school has to pay a deposit in advance for a trip that might not take place.

For residential trips, the school can charge for board and lodging, but not for the coach there and activities during the school day. The school will have to start planning long term to ensure monies are received before a deposit becomes payable. A lot of places have a 16 week cancellation fee.

Some schools ask for money in September to fund potential trips and RT suggested a payment plan. EW thought a breakdown of costs was also a good idea. DH asked whether a situation might arise where part of a year group goes on a trip and yet some children remain behind. The whole trip would have to be cancelled in this case. However, it was pointed out that secondary schools do this. However the ethos at Foundry Lane is to give access to

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everyone. KL pointed out that it is a very big issue and it might be an idea to look at secondary schools.

At the moment the school cannot subsidise anything. Contributions were asked for a DT project some time ago and 90% of that was paid by parents. RT asked whether the school lottery could be used to help finance trips; KL said some parents might be keener to spend money on a lottery ticket.

It was decided to put it on the web site as a draft for the moment as it is a statutory requirement. ST proposed this and was seconded by KL – all governors were in favour.

13. SAFEGUARDING

The audit was handed out at the meeting to ensure that all safeguarding policies and actions are up to date. Currently new safeguarding and child protection policies are being updated as well as the Admission of medicines and Drugs policy. Any comments please to HA, so they can be agreed at the next Governing Body meeting.

14. TRAINING

KC has had her governor induction and has also attended teacher appraisal, safeguarding and 'running a school as a business' training.

DW is due to do her governor induction training.

In January there is a meeting at the IBIS on governor updates, which KL and DH are attending.

15. AOB

- Lottery / 100 Club: This is another stream of income and is easy to administer. There are monthly prize draws, whereby 50% is allocated in prizes and 50% goes to the Friends. Tickets cost £12 per year. ML felt it was important that the money from this is in a separate bank account; DW will check. LS felt that it should not be possible to get money back if people decide to leave during the year. KL wanted to know when the draw would take place as it needs to be relatively public. The Friend's coffee morning was suggested.

MS proposed and EW seconded the proposal as long as it was organised in line with the proposal with strict limits on the number of tickets any one person can buy and that the money be held in a separate bank account. Ten were in favour with 2 against.

- School Council: RT asked if they could be asked to attend a meeting at some point. ML suggested they come after an event.

- Minutes: ML suggested they be sent by email. Other documents could also be distributed this way.

DH thanked all governors for their commitment and support throughout the year.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.57pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7th February 2017

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Chair of Governors
Date:

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