

Threshfield Primary School
Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body
held at the School on Tuesday 17th January 2023 at 4.30pm

Present:

Sarah Harper (SH)- Headteacher
Natasha Midgeley (NM) – Chair – Co-opted Governor
Sarah Hill (ESH)- Co-opted Governor
Richard Hore (RH) – Parent Governor
Brettle Roberts (BR) Vice Chair - Co-opted Governor
Ian Green (IG) -Parent Governor
Tina Tierney (TT) – Co-opted Governor

Apologies:

Pete Huff (PH) Trustee Governor
Bethany Alexander (BA) -Staff Governor
Andrew Bode (AB) -LA Governor

Question Types:

Finance

Strategic Direction

Outcomes for children

1.Welcome and Introductions:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. BR offered to take the minutes as no Clerk available.

2.Consideration of absence:

Apologies from Peter Huff, Andrew Bode and Bethany Alexander were consented.

3.Declaration of interests, pecuniary or otherwise, in any agenda item:

SH said that she felt it was inappropriate for AB to be a link Governor for Sports Premium as his company benefitted from the funds.

4.Any Confidential Items to be excluded from the publicly available minutes:

One.

5.Notification of any other urgent business items:

Three- one confidential item, taxi letter and attendance letter.

6. Minutes of Meeting held on 8th November 2022:

The minutes were agreed and the following Actions completed:

The SFVS has been completed by SH, NM and the School Administrator.

The staff were asked and were happy for BA to remain as Staff Governor during her maternity leave.

Monitoring visits have been carried out by many Governors. Some reports yet to be completed.

The following actions are yet to be completed:

PAN numbers to be amended on the website – see Section 21

Some Governors still to sign the KCSIE cover in the Office.

Pay Policy to be sent to the Governors.

Q) NM Are there any staff members earning over £100K as they now need to be declared on the Website.

A) SH. None NM Suggested that SH ensures that there is a zero in that section on the website.

***ACTION Update relevant section on the website.**

7. To consider matters arising from the minutes for which there is no separate agenda item:

None

8. Governing Body matters:

The Chair informed the Governors that she will be standing down in March due to increased workload and family commitments. The Headteacher thanked her for her valuable contributions and commitment as a Governor over the past 6 years. Consequently, there will be a vacancy for Chair of Governors after the following meeting in March.

SH explained that AB's position as a LA Governor has yet to be confirmed by the LA and that until that happen his profile needs to be removed from the website. Hannah Peace is currently registered as the LA Governor

*** ACTION: AB to contact the LA re: his Governor status**

Q) RH What is the implication if there is a shortage of Governors?

A) NM & SH – None as long as the meetings are quorate. (This currently stands at 3 to be present at the meeting).

Q) TT Are we looking for any particular skill sets for the Governing body?

A) SH- We currently have a good range of skills.

NM- We had been short of Governors with Educational knowledge but that has been rectified.

IG It would be useful to have a local business interest. Some people were suggested but this would be deemed as confidential until approached.

***ACTION NM asked for potential volunteers to come forward via the school newsletter.**

SH told the Governors that she felt that it would be good practise to publish Governing Body Meeting on the Website once they were 'signed off'. The Governors agreed.

***ACTION To publish future meetings**

9 School Improvement Plan:

Link Governors in relation to the School Development Plan were modified and clarified :

Ian Green -Safeguarding and Knowledge and Skills of the Governing body
Pete Huff – Health and Safety
Natasha Midgeley – Curriculum
Andrew Bode - Pupil Premium
Sarah Hill – English and Writing
Bethany Alexander – EYFS
Brettle Roberts – SEND
Tina Tierney - Mental Health
Richard Hore- Middle Leaders

A discussion was held as to whether it was appropriate for AB to have responsibility for Sports Premium as his company (KANGA Sports) works in school.

***ACTION: SH to talk to AB**

Q) RH How would one monitor middle leaders?

A)SH Question staff; through a learning walk, through book scrutiny.

Q) NM Are all staff middle leaders?

A) SH Yes as they all have responsibility for areas of the Curriculum.

Q) ESH What is the significance of the colour coding on the SDP?

A) SH Red indicated completion during the Autumn term.

Q) NM How often are book scrutinies carried out?

A) SH The focus last half term was on classroom observations some of which included book scrutinies. The intention is to carry out a book scrutiny on a selection of books every Friday for a month to ensure that expectations are being met – ie. Big Books, marking and presentation policies are being followed etc. Following the Scrutinies individual feedback will be given to members of staff.

SH explained that she had not yet carried out any Book Scrutinies as the first two weeks of term had been taken up with ensuring the policies are up to date. The Assessment policy had yet to be completed. Scrutinies will start as soon as possible.

SH informed the Governors about Karen Butler's (School Improvement Officer) suggestion that, where possible, evidence for adaptations made for children with SEND should be evident in their books. If plans state that certain equipment or additional support is used, it should be evident in marking and /or written comments.

***ACTION BR and SH to carry out a book scrutiny on Children with SEND.**

NM clarified that Monitoring visits should be carried out by Governors with reference to their Link Area and all should ask children questions relating to Safeguarding.

***ACTION SH to give Governors a 'tick' list for when they are visiting to support them on learning walks and discussions with staff.**

10. Assessment report:

Many Governors expressed concern around the Year 2 assessment results. SH explained that the children had been assessed using the previous summer's actual SATs paper and so they had not covered all the curriculum areas. She would not expect more than a small minority of children to reach "Expected" at this point in the year. She was very pleased with how these children seem to be progressing. She explained that the main focus of the Autumn term assessments was to look for trends within each year group for areas of the curriculum they may have found difficult, or not retained, from the previous year- eg. Working with fractions.

SH As a result of last term's assessments, three children in year 3 are taking part in an accelerated phonics programme called Little Wandle and two are having daily reading practice having completed the Little Wandle intervention.

Q) NM What form of assessment do the other year groups use?

A) SH Year six also use the previous year's SATs paper. She was very pleased with how the current year six had performed with only 2 children not achieving the "Expected" result for the end of year.

The rest of the year groups use assessments from the NFER which the school buys in.

***ACTION SH to bring examples of the assessments to the next meeting.**

SH explained the assessment process for the Summer Term – Year 6 SATs start Tuesday May 10th, which being the day after the Coronation could mean that the children are tired. Year 2 are given two specific weeks in which to complete theirs – this will not be the same week as Year 6. Years 3, 4 and 5 do theirs in the same week. The Year six SATs are very prescriptive whereas the year two children are not given time limits in which to complete their tests.

Unlike some other schools, Threshfield does not use formal assessments in Year One which means the Autumn term assessment in year 2 can be a big learning curve for some children. Miss Knox is doing a small test every morning so that the children get used to reading tests and answering questions.

Q) RH Can any issues that appear during the assessments be addressed before the end of the academic year?

A)SH Yes for all year groups apart from Year 6 whose papers must be bagged immediately on completion ready to be collected for marking.

SH told the Governors that there are termly pupil progress meetings after which decisions are made as to who may need an 'intervention' to support their learning.

11 Sports Premium:

An allocation from Lottery funds of £16k should show impact on the sports in the area.

Q) NM Do we pay for Kanga Sports through this?

A) SH Yes. We have recently started to pay for Kanga Sports to run some after school sports activities.

Activities funded by Sports premium:

The new playground equipment also supported from 'roll over' of funds not spent due to COVID.

After school club was previously paid for through lottery funds but now Pupil premium. Cross country activities.

Staff benefit from training during children's lessons from Kanga (Sports skills), Adele (swimming) and Hedley (tag rugby).

A contribution towards the residential at Netherside.

Q) NM Was there an inter school's rugby competition last year?

A) SH No, nor cricket. Kanga sports are planning on putting together a 'small schools' competition – a day of sporting events. SH went on to say that she felt our weakest area is competitive sports.

Q) ESH Do you have any links with other schools eg. Giggleswick? She went on to suggest that they may be able to help out by providing coaching or use of facilities,.

A) SH We used to use 'young leaders' from Upper Wharfedale School but this stopped during Lockdown.

***ACTION ESH to contact Giggleswick Junior school to see what, if anything, they could offer.**

The Sports premium report was signed off.

12. Pupil Premium:

SH explained that pupil premium resources include funding from LA for free school meals; 'looked after' or 'previously looked after' children and children from families in the armed forces. It does not have to be spent on the specific children, but they have to benefit from the money spent. It is a legal requirement that the use is shown on the website as well as the use of Sports premium money.

The money for this year has been used to fund an extra ATA in the years three and four class which is both a large cohort and one with need.

Waiting for AB to complete his monitoring report having looked through reports, answered probing questions etc.

13. Safeguarding:

IG completed his monitoring report having gone through the policies. The audit will be reviewed when completed before the next meeting. IG asked whether governors would be happy for him to approve the review on completion. All agreed.

NM reminded governors that the safeguarding section must be completed following a visit .

14. Policies:

All are rolling over. Because they are dated they appear out of date and consequently need updating on the website.

***ACTION to update the website.**

15. Finance update:

SH There is a variant on where we were expected to be at this point of the financial year, but the reasons were explained by the Bursar at the start of the year meeting. The DFE is granting an additional £50K this academic year to cover unexpected additional staff costs due to wage increases. This should cover the deficit.

16.SFVS

No questions were asked.

17. Benchmarking (26/21.2)

Q) ESH Who determines which schools are compared?

A) SH Headteachers are asked whether they want comparisons with Local or National schools with similar criteria. Local seems more appropriate.

RH Our expenditure seems relatively low in comparison to the other schools. He wondered whether it was because we are not spending enough, or whether we did not have as much money. NM explained that the number of pupils changes the variants.

18. Health and Safety Update:

SH Dale Barton is no longer our Safety Officer. His replacement was happy with everything in school.

Action: Health and Safety review to be shared once received. NM to send in monitoring form.

19. Attendance:

SH There is a new guidance on Helping parents to improve attendance. Although this is a guidance at the moment, the recommendations will become Statutory. It is a National Problem and we need to be seen to be doing what we can to improve the attendance at Threshfield School. A letter will be sent to parents explaining the new guidance.

NM Our attendance target is 97%.

SH explained that 5 days off reduces the attendance record to 97% so recurring illness can badly reduce a child's attendance record. Conversations are had with

individual parents depending upon the historical attendance record for the family. Parents of a child with an attendance record below 93% receives a letter form the Governors.

The attendance records for each class are shown on the weekly newsletter – red indicates below 95%, Amber 95-97% and Green above 97%. SH acknowledged that 95% is a high target, but felt it was important to be high due to the impact of non-attendance on a child's learning.

SH informed the Governing body that she receives both verbal abuse and criticism from parents around the issues of attendance. She intends to create a flow chart explaining what she needs to do in relation to attendance following the DFE guidelines. If there is an issue, she can talk parents through the process using National guidelines so that the conversation becomes depersonalised.

RH thought it would be helpful to see the flow chart.

SH asked whether it was alright to produce this after half term as she is currently working on creating a flow chart explaining the behaviour policy – sanctions and rewards. She explained that she felt this was important as there as some new members of staff who seem unclear on some of the 'rules' in the playground etc.

***ACTION SH to email the flow chart to Governors after half term**

SH requested that a letter be sent from the Governing body outlining the DFE guidelines around attendance and school and parental responsibility. These guidelines will become statutory from September.

20. Governor training opportunities and learning activities:

RH has signed up for the Introduction to Governors and Governance and OFSTED webinars.

SH reiterated that all new Governors need to do the PREVENT course and KCSIE.

Q) TT If Safeguarding training has been completed in another role, does it have to be done again?

A) SH It is necessary for Governors to do a refresher every year?

Most Governors attending have completed the Governance and OFSTED webinar.

21. To deal with any matters agreed for consideration under item 5 above:

See Confidential minutes.

Taxi letter:

SH asked Governors to support a parental request for a free taxi from Arncliffe as the taxi service takes the children directly past Threshfield School. Historically parents could choose the nearest school or one in the catchment. Grassington School is deemed to be the nearest as the crow flies, but as the taxi goes along Low Lane and so straight past school, that measurement seems outdated. Currently there is a stream of taxis leaving Littondale for a range of Primary and Secondary Schools.

Q) RH Would the council pay for a minibus for all children from that area rather than fund separate taxis?

A) No one knew.

Q) NM Would school consider putting on a taxi for the children?

A) SH Potentially

Q) BR How many children are attending Threshfield from up the Dale?

A) SH Currently 7 and potentially 9.

The Governors agreed to supporting the parental request.

PAN (Published admission Number)

SH We had applied for our PAN to be reduced from 17 to 15. The numbers were reviewed last March, but it seems that ours has not been changed for the current nor following academic year (Sept 2024). The reason for the request for reduction is to have 15 children in each year group and therefore no more than 30 in each class. This would mean that we can maintain 4 classes without splitting the curriculum areas- EYFS; KS1; Lower KS2 and Upper KS2. Coincidentally there has been intake of 15 for the past couple of years.

SH Numbers for next year: 13 have put Threshfield as their first choice; 9 as their second choice and 4 not yet put in an application.

Q) IG Is it possible to speak to the Education Authority to have the PAN changed as we definitely applied for 15 before the March deadline?

A) SH It is at least 18 months since the application went in.

***ACTION SH to enquire.**

Q) RH Would you limit preschool numbers to 15?

A) SH We would not want to turn any children away as we could lose them as potential pupils for the main school. Children attending Pre-school will not necessarily all start in the same academic year.

Considering the success of the pre-school, SH spoke to planners about the possibility of a new building (for EYFS) and where to site it – either in the garden outside years 1 and 2, or behind the staff room with access through the glass corridor. She would like it to be large enough to have a discrete teaching area for Reception as well as a toilet block for girls. Currently the girls in Oaks class have to use the toilet block at the other end of school.

Q)BR Did the planners agree in theory to a new building?

A) SH The planners had suggested the two sites mentioned above as they did not approve of siting one by the road in the EYFS garden.

IG felt a permanent building would be a better solution than a portacabin and suggested that SH get some quotes for outline costs before discussing how to fund the project.

***ACTION SH to get some quotes**

How has the meeting impacted on the welfare and progress of our children?

Through discussion around financial expenditure; use of Pupil and Sports premium; through creating a link Governor for mental Health; through analysis of assessments an impact on learning and the potential for a new building for EYFS.

Close of meeting 6.35pm

Date of next meetings:

Tuesday 7th March 2023 4.30pm

Tuesday 9th May 4.30pm

Tuesday 27th June 4.30pm