

Threshfield Primary School
Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body
held at the School on Tuesday 7th March 2023 at 4.30pm

Present:

Sarah Harper (SH)- Headteacher
Natasha Midgeley (NM) – Chair – Co-opted Governor
Pete Huff (PH) Trustee Governor
Brettle Roberts (BR) Vice Chair - Co-opted Governor
Ian Green (IG) -Parent Governor
Tina Tierney (TT) – Co-opted Governor

Apologies:

Bethany Alexander (BA) -Staff Governor
Andrew Bode (AB) -LA Governor
Sarah Hill (ESH)- Co-opted Governor
Richard Hore (RH) – Parent 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 still no Clerk available.

2.Consideration of absence:

Apologies from Andrew Bode, Bethany Alexander, Sarah Hill and Richard Hore were consented.

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

None

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

None

5.Notification of any other urgent business items:

Academisation – see section 7

6. Minutes of Meeting held on 17th January 2023:

The minutes were agreed and the following actions completed:

Pay policy completed, sent to Governors and published on the website along with all other policies..

PAN numbers to be amended on the website from academic year 2023-2024 . Some governors to sign KCSIE in the school Office.

SH has had confirmation of AB's status as a LA Governor.

Minutes of Governors meeting area available on the website.

Health and safety review shared – see section 11.

School has received a quote of approximately 2,500 per square metre for the proposed new building for EYFS. The surveyor thought that the site outside the Sycamore classroom would be less expensive than by the glass corridor due to the location of the sewers etc.

The following actions are yet to be completed:

SH and BR to complete a book scrutiny on children with SEND.

As ESH could not attend the meeting it is unknown whether she has spoken to Giggleswick School regarding coaching or use of facilities.

SH to email flow chart relating to attendance to Governors.

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

Proposed academisation through Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust (YCAT):

NM confirmed that after the meeting for parents delivered by Jo Robinson CEO of YCAT, parents were invited to send questions or share views via email to the chair of Governors. None have been received.

IG: How were they contacted?

NM Via the newsletter and through the Whatsapp groups.

TT A lot of questions were asked, and answered at the meeting, so there may not be any more.

NM asked SH whether she had made a note of the questions to which SH replied all that she could remember but could not access them after the event.

BR: How many attended through Zoom?

SH 25 on zoom and 2 in school. 27 in all which is a fair proportion of parents.

NM The month's consultation period for parents started when the letter went out on 8.2.23 and so is now over.

PH: Will we be contacting YCAT again before making a decision as the trustees had some questions to ask?

SH said that that was not the plan, but that she was happy to talk to the trustees and answer any questions they may have. She would like to meet them anyway.

SH has asked Jo Robinson for a copy of the presentation so that she could make it available for parents. She went on to say that she could also share it with the trustees.

PH has already forwarded the letter to parents to the trustees. He explained that the Trustees own both the old building and the land on which the new building sits, although North Yorkshire own the new building.

SH confirmed that Jo Robinson knew about the trust and issues that might be raised. Jo had explained that the 'changes' grant given to school when transferring to an academy would cover the legal fees that would be incurred due to issues with the

trust. She believes that a similar lease agreement would be arranged with YCAT as is currently in place between North Yorkshire and the Trust.

PH: Is YCAT a company?

NM It is a non-profit making organisation overseen by a number of trustees who get paid from their current employers to sit on the academy board.

BR There are only two members of YCAT board who receive a salary. The CEO and the Financial officer.

PH: Would YCAT have the legal authority to close a school should the numbers drop significantly? He went on to say that NYCC could not close a school held in trust.

SH explained that YCT have the means to support schools and suggest strategies to improve the budget should numbers drop.

BR The future of the school would probably be more secure with YCAT as they are likely to be more pro-active in offering early support and advise than NYCC. YCAT continually monitor numbers and the budget.

SH YCAT are not allowed to go into deficit.

PH: Maybe a financially more secure situation?

SH explained about the maintenance grants that would be available for the upkeep of the school.

NM: My only concern would be if the ethos of YCAT changed over time as the leadership changed.

IG: The (YCAT) trustees are a strong enough body of like -minded people to ensure that the ethos would not change.

SH They are continually looking for members who have the same beliefs about small schools and education.

IG: (directed to PH) What do we need to do with regard to the trustees?

ACTION: PH to go back to Michael Harrison to see what they want to do and contact school.

PH The concern is around the trust building – not the education of the children.

Following the consultation process that took place between January 2023 and March 2023. Governors were satisfied that all Stakeholders including staff and parents had been sufficiently notified of the intention to convert to academy status and that no objections were received.

ACTION: SH to contact absent Governors but it was felt that they were all in agreement following earlier discussions.

8. Governing Body matters:

Governor vacancies:

PH We are short of a trustee Governor. It was Hannah Peace but the position has not been replaced since she left.

BR: Does it have to be someone within the Hewitt Trust members?

PH NO.

SH: asked TT whether she would be happy to change from a co-opted Governor to a trustee one. She was.

NM: suggested that an advert for a governor went in both the school newsletter and the Parish magazine.

IG: pointed out that we already had two parent Governors so the vacancy would be for a co-opted one.

ACTION: SH to advertise for a Governor.

Clerk to Governors:

We have still no Clerk to Governors. SH pointed out that we are still paying for their service which is a substantial sum per annum.

TT has not completed her form. SH said this was the clerks job to send it to her and ensure that the process of becoming a governor is complete. TT thought that RH may be in the same position.

NM Other services that they are responsible for include declarations of interests; keeping governors informed of training and changes in legislation. They also have responsibilities as outlined in the Complaints policy.

ACTION: SH to enquire about service and possible refund.

9 Budget and Finance:

NM SFVS has been submitted by the School Administrator.

SH The school bursar was unable to attend the meeting as planned. A new format for Benchmarking has been received. The Bursar will go over it and the end of year budget at the next meeting.

Discussion was had about the budget and shortfall explained by SH. Partly due to Gas and electricity charges being 130% over expected amount.

10 School Development Plan:

SH has linked Governors monitoring forms to the SDP. They are colour coded so that she can easily see where any gaps may be.

SH Governors have been sent copies of the behaviour flow charts which have been displayed in all the classrooms. The TAs carry them on lanyards so that it can be referred to during playtimes. She explained that most of the behaviour issues tend to be levels 2 or 7 which tends to be when tempers are lost during football games etc. Very few of the other behaviours are seen in school.

11. Health and Safety:

As PH was away NM met with the new Health and Safety officer who made some recommendations for improvement:

SH has completed a Risk Assessment for lone working in school. This states that no-one is to go up ladders or onto heights when alone. Staff are to text another member of staff when they come into school with a predicted time of leaving and to text when they have left. There have been discussions around arranging set days in the holidays when the school is open for staff to come in together, but this is not a practical solution.

PH The security lighting at the back of the new building is not working properly and so is currently switched off. It can be changed to a switch on and off mechanism rather than being triggered by a light sensor. He feels that they are too bright and were initially installed because there had been a spate of break-ins at school. They are currently switched off.

NM Many people have mentioned that the lights are too bright. She had heard that there is a grant to get the lights changed due to the dark skies policy in the National Park.

PH they could be changed to LED lights that face towards the ground.

NM: Is there a hood over the light to minimise light pollution?

PH No

ACTION: NM to contact a member of Friends of the Dales to enquire about a grant.

PH highlighted concerns around containers filled with water in the EYFS area and by the side door.

ACTION SH to ask staff to empty pans/ containers and leave them upside down when not in use.

ACTION SH to add water containers to the Risk Assessments.

12 Safeguarding:

Audit:

Actions 4 and 5 now completed and two actions to be completed.

ACTION IG to complete remaining Actions.

Attendance:

SH As of September Attendance guidelines will become statutory- Headteachers will have to send letters out and parents will be expected to come to meetings to discuss poor attendance when relevant.

SH School attendance up to March – ie. Half the school year is currently at 95.5% which equates to 10 days absence for every pupil. Attendance letters will go out to relevant families this week.

TT: Is that authorised or unauthorised absences?

SH Both. More unauthorised absences (Holidays) than authorised (Illness/ important family events such as funerals) There was a lot of illness during the Christmas term, but a lot of families have taken holidays this term.

NM: Do you have certificates / rewards for good attendance?

SH No. I don't like it because full attendance does not take into account illness or serious family issues. It is not the child's fault if their attendance record is poor.

Persistent absentees are below 10% . They are being tracked on a monthly basis to show that their non- attendance is not increasing.

BR: Is that due to illness or holidays?

SH Combination of illness followed by a holiday. It has a huge impact on learning especially children who are missing a daily intervention. It also impacts on the learning of others in the group.

BR As the way the curriculum is devised now, a child can miss a chunk of work which may not be repeated for a long while. Sometimes misunderstanding around a mathematical topic can be due to this.

SH English topics are planned in blocks so if a block is missed it is very hard for a pupil to catch up.

TT If a child is poorly they can get very anxious about missing work etc.

SH As of Sept parents can present letters re: visit to doctors etc and this can be recorded on CPOMS.

13 SEND:

SH talked Governors through a chart on Subject specific support which outlines support given in all subject areas. TAs are now using green pens to show in the children's books that support has been given.

ACTION SH and BR to complete book scrutiny to see evidence of support given.

14: Monitoring Visits:

BR completed monitoring reports on visit to school outlining SEND support in all classes.- this was briefly shared with Governors. Also, a report of SEND training delivered as well as a Speech Language and Communication screening process was submitted. A list of future dates has been sent to Governors.

15: Governor training opportunities and learning activities:

Governor training:

ACTION TT and RH to complete Safeguarding training.

NM explained that courses are available on the Educare website.

BR Completed NYCC Governor training around complaints.

16 Any matters agreed for consideration under item 5:

NM Confirmed that she will be standing down from the Governing body as of March 10th 2023.

SH and all Governors present thanked her for her hard work and impact on the governing body.

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

Through discussion around and subsequent vote to progress with Academisation which was felt will impact positively on the education and welfare of our pupils; discussion of impact of non-attendance; behaviour flow chart will provide consistency of approach; arrangement of future monitoring visits in line with the School Development plan.

Close of meeting 6.25pm

Date of next meetings:

Tuesday 9th May 4.30pm

Tuesday 27th June 4.30pm

