



Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Full Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 11th July 2018

Membership: Mr M Piper (Chair)*
Mr T Wilson (Head)*
Rev L Jørgensen*
Ms A Frain*
Ms B Makin
Ms B Ryan
Ms I Culpan
Ms Z Lawley*
Mr A Wright*
Dep H Jones*
Mr J Fletcher
Mr D Williams
Ms S Moore*
Mrs J Greenlees*

** denotes attendance*

In attendance: Henry Jones
Alex Allan

Clerk: Tatiana Kazim

Mr M Piper *in the Chair*

Meeting opened at 16:00

1. Opening Prayer

- The meeting was opened with a prayer

2. Apologies

- Apologies were received from John Fletcher; Bonnie Makin; David Williams; Lizzy Webb; Isabel Culpan; Beverly Ryan; Theresa Shortland; and Christine Beaumont.
- Noted that Beverly Ryan is replacing Ed Keene. She will be the GDPR governor and will sit on finance committee. She will attend all committee meetings in the coming term.



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Question: What is her background?

Answer: She has experience as a university administrator, and is already experienced in GDPR.

3. Declaration of Interests

- None.

4. Agree Dates

- 26th September 2018 – Full Governing Body Meeting
 - 10th October 2018 – Curriculum Meeting
- To be circulated by email*

5. Minutes of the previous meeting; minutes of committees and updates

a. Finance Committee Meeting

- Regarding the premises report, it was noted that a fundraising working group has been set up.
- A list of companies to approach has been drawn up – mainly consisting of banking and insurance companies. Some promising meetings with potential funders have taken place.
- Regarding the meeting with Miller company - 8 charities are chosen every year and Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School is expected to be in the list for September. Though the school is not a charity, there is willingness to find a workaround – for example, by providing in-kind support, such as equipment.
- Noted that a presentation pack for approaching companies is in the process of finalisation.
- Tim Wilson has also sent a letter reaching out to potential funders regarding the library.
- Noted that film companies could be an additional source of income. For example, use of the school's parking facilities generated an income of approximately £2,000.00.

Question: Will potential funders want to know the plan for spending?

Answer: The role of the fundraising working group is to put this information together.

- Action points from the minutes:

Action point 1 – followed up

Action point 2 – followed up



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Action point 3 – still needs to be followed up.

Action point 4 – followed up (in short, air quality generally improving, but there remains particular risk around nitrogen/asthma).

- Procedures for debt collection are being revised; L Webb is revising and updating the policies over the Summer.
- Noted that free school meals for children in Years 3 – 6 are now to be provided at a value of £3.00 per meal. Parents will be refunded for any fees paid in advance. £58,000 of funding will be received for this purpose.

Question: Why are Early Years pupils not included?

Answer: Early Years pupils are already included in the pre-existing free school meal provision.

b. Curriculum Committee Meeting

- Reported that the committee reviewed the Education Visit Reports, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and Science Framework. A meeting has been planned to discuss a draft vision.

Q: Have the Terms of Reference been agreed?

A: To be decided at FGB on 26 Sept 2018, along with skills audits and declarations of interest.

- All action points have been completed.

All minutes from committee meetings were agreed.

c. Full Governing Body Meeting 15 March 2017

- Action points:

Action Point 1 – complete

Action Point 2 – complete

Action Point 3 – complete (item 6c)

Action Point 4 – complete

Action Point 5 – not yet complete (consultation in early Sept)

Action Point 6 – complete

Action Point 7 – not yet complete (dates for informal meetings to be agreed)

Action Point 8 – not yet complete (will be completed when work is complete)

Action Point 9 – complete

Action Point 11 – complete

- Noted that Jacqueline Greenlees has not yet followed up on the well-being meeting, and will do so as soon as possible.



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Action point: Jacqueline Greenlees to follow up on the well-being meeting as soon as possible.

All minutes from the FGB were agreed.

6. Governance

a. Visit forms from Governors

- Noted that the visit forms are not yet complete – Tim Wilson to collate and distribute before the end of term.

Action point: Tim Wilson to collate and distribute governor visit forms before the end of term.

- The Governors Attendance Schedule was reviewed, with emphasis that governors cannot miss three meetings in a row.

Question: Should Jo Welsh be removed from the list of governors?

Answer: Yes, she should be removed from the list.

Question: Could dates of meetings be kept as they are, to accommodate people who work full time?

Answer: Yes, dates are fixed; apologies for last week's change of date, which was unavoidable.

b. Governor training update

- There was no training to report.

c. Reconstitution update

- Noted that the latest correspondence was on Friday 6th July, when the school received a letter from Department for Education (DfE) suggesting mediation over the Summer.

Comment: The mediation process is concerning in any case, since the school, unlike the Foundation, cannot justify using resources on a legal representation.

Comment: The proposal to mediate in the last week of the school holidays, or in the first two weeks of the school term, when there will be a new Head who needs a positive induction process, is concerning.



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Comment: It's not an acceptable concession to make, if the mediation will not result in a better governing body or a better school. Our duty is to act in the best interests of the school.

Question: What is the tone of the DfE in previous conversations?

Answer: They are surprised that the positions are so entrenched and that the matter has not been easily resolved.

Question: Do we know how the Secondary school intends to respond?

Answer: No, we don't yet know.

Question: Do we want to defer, given that the main issue is not the timing but the substance of the proposal?

Answer: Mediation is subject to a consensus to mediate; it is not being imposed.

Question: One mediation is being proposed for both the primary and secondary school, at the same time. Is this appropriate?

Answer: Arguably not, given the different positions.

Question: What are the options of legal representation?

Answer: We couldn't justify the expenditure; and cannot not rely on the council to fund this.

Comment: The sheer number of parties, with different interests, makes mediation seem unworkable.

Question: Could we get support from other parties to write a joint letter, saying that the mediation is not deemed appropriate?

Response: Should we try to make the situation fair, before dismissing the proposal?

Response: It is not only unfair but unlikely to work, given entrenched, principled positions.

Question: From where do the appointment rights derive? The DfE requires an agreed answer to this question.

Answer: This is a difficult question and requires proper research; since the 1980's or even before, the appointment rights appear in the relevant instrument.

Comment: Better to demonstrate the DfE that we follow the same instrument of governance since the 1950's; this shows that the proposal for the new constitution is not anything new.

Agreement on wording of the letter: Express a disappointment that, having once appeared to be minded to make a direction, the DfE is now not minded to do so. The governing board feel that a DfE direction is the best route forward, since the parties have reached their positions based on irreconcilable principles, which are unlikely to be resolved by mediation. As a secondary point, the mediation is likely to be unfair.

Question: If we don't engage with mediation, how will this issue ever be resolved?



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Answer: We need the DfE to make a direction, so that we can focus on our role as governors.

Comment: The letter could be crafted in such a way to convey all relevant points; regarding both the unfairness and the inappropriateness of the mediation.

Action point: Letter to DfE to be written, consistent with the agreed wording (above).

7. Approve policies and statements from committees

a. Policy overview and review dates

- Suggested that this overview could be published on the school website, making this the sole access point for policies.

Question: Would it be more helpful to have a clear system of review dates and responsibilities?

Answer: This is for committees to decide.

Response: Committees will accept whatever is decided here at the FGB, regarding review dates. Therefore, review dates should be added to the policy overview.

Action point: Add dates to policy overview.

b. Safeguarding

- The Safeguarding Policy was approved by Curriculum committee.

c. Attendance

- The Attendance Policy was approved by Curriculum committee.
- Noted that Hackney LA has shared a policy with all schools in the borough, following the death of a child which was in part caused by a lack of procedures in place for following up attendance.

d. Health, safety and welfare

- The Health, Safety and Welfare Policy was approved by Curriculum committee.

8. Head teacher's Report

a. Report



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The Head teacher's Report was presented to governors. Full details of the report are available separately. The governing board discussed, in particular, the following items:

Staffing update –

- Noted that the school is fully staffed without the need for any appointment agencies. Anna Letts, Rebecca Stanley, and Susannah Ryall are all joining the school.

Question: Are any staff members out on secondment, and are secondees coming in?

Answer: No.

Question: Are exit interviews in place for leavers?

Answer: Not at present. It can be difficult to hold this information. There is no policy at present.

Response: It could be something that is offered; the interview could be with a governor in the first instance, and the governor could then consult with the line manager.

Response: There needs to be a considered approach about how this is done; how the information is treated; confidentiality and so on. Insufficient time for the system to be put in place this year.

Response: This could be an informal, half-hour chat, with governor discretion about how to use and protect information going forward.

Question: Informal conversations between governors and leaving members of staff should not necessarily be regarded as exit interviews?

Answer: Because of the duties attendant to the role of governor, the approach to discussions with leaving members of staff must be more considered.

Action point : Proposal regarding an exit interview policy to be considered at the meeting on 26th September 2018, following research into practice at other schools.

- A number of students with EHCP's are moving on, resulting in reduced funding from April 2019.

Training school development work –

- Notably, the WAMHS project has will aim to raise profile and expertise of school staff in working with children with mental health needs. This is run by CAMHS and some Hackney schools. Staff should, by the end of next year, feel confident in identifying and addressing mental health needs. There may not be a significant change in provision; we already display best practice in most areas. This is about bringing together knowledge and practice, and formalising the sharing process.

Premises –



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- Noted that the new boiler has arrived, and asbestos removal was straightforward.

Question: Is there a proposal to extend CCTV to more remote parts of the building?

Answer: CCTV could be extended, depending on funding; more basic site security will be addressed in the first instance.

- Noted that thanks are due to Henry Jones for work his on s.106 and City funding. A Back-to-back agreement is currently in the process of finalising. Capital projects will need similar agreement. Funding should be in place by the next financial year.
- Noted that a more piecemeal approach to expenditure may be more palatable to funders.

Question: What about the school playground?

Answer: Progress is being made.

Admissions –

- Noted that there are some issues around pupils leaving for the private sector in Year 2. This is a cause for concern generally, in that parents don't perceive that there are good secondary choices for girls - the move to the private sector at Year 2 is with a view to secondary school places.

Comment: Losing four children from a year group is massively destabilizing for the school and for the other children.

- The school is oversubscribed in every year group, so filling the places will be straight forward; but taking students on later is not always desirable and can impact on overall school performance.

Catering –

- Noted that there is an urgent need to invest in kitchen and dining room. As mentioned, there are plans to extend free school meal provision to cover Years 3 – 6.

Question: Have parents been informed about free school meals for Year 3 – 6?

Answer: Not yet.

Finance –

- Noted that there is an overspend of approximately £9,000 on the bottom line.



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- Noted that there are no high risk areas at the present.
- Noted that a bid has been made to the Cass Foundation for replacement of equipment associated with performing arts.

SEND Provision –

- Noted that a new counsellor has been brought in for a one-year contract, who is highly experienced in education sector as well as in a counsellor role. From Autumn term she will offer one-to-one sessions; group and class sessions; whole school assemblies; and parent engagement is also planned.

KS1 Outcomes –

- KS1 results this year were excellent, with interventions having a striking impact in Maths.

Question: The number of girls working at greater depth in Maths was significantly lower than the number of boys in one class – what is the explanation for this?

Answer: The gap is a cause for concern, though the result itself is good. In that class, there's a number of unusual boys who are very number-focussed. The data across the school shows that the gender gap is closing.

EYFS Outcomes –

- Noted that the average reading level increased significantly and the phonics check result was very strong.

Question: What explains the 50% pass rate at Year 2?

Answer: There are only 4 students; one has an EHCP and, for the other, we are applying for an EHCP.

Other data –

- SATS reading were disappointing; 7 student exams are being reviewed and at least 3 questions are being appealing against.
- The data is somewhat messy; Reading at greater depth has gone up significantly; Maths pass rate has gone up. Disadvantaged children have performed really well across the board. It is expected that the figure for Reading will rise to 83% following review.



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- Noted that 2 or 3 marks for a few children would have made the difference between really outstanding statistics and good statistics. Statistics are important but are not the whole picture.

Question: How confident are you in the quality of teaching?

Answer: We were genuinely surprised by these results; we set ourselves challenging targets and were confident in doing so. The results do not reflect the standard of teaching, and must be interpreted in the context of a changing examination landscape.

Behaviour –

- Differences by gender are quite significant; boys' behaviours are much more overt and tend to be punished with greater frequency.

Question: How is that there were no incidents of bullying during the entire school year?

Answer: Issues that have come up in reviews of particular children; but no incident met the threshold for bullying.

9. School improvement planning and self-evaluation

a. Single Year Plan

- The Single Year Plan was discussed at Curriculum Committee Meeting, and noted that progress on writing Single Year Plan is good.

b. Draft Priorities

- The aim is to harmonize the the theological base of the school's vision and values with that at St. Botolphs. The plan to use something from Corinthians about faith, hope and love enduring. The summary of about 30 words will be expanded out into 3 goals.
- For the 9 key areas to improve over the course of next year, actions are either already underway or are planned.
- There will be a renewed focus on planning and resourcing, including detailed schemes of work for new teachers in maths and literacy, history, geography, RE and science.

Action point: Draft Priorities to be distributed to governors by next governors meeting 26th September 2018.



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Question: What is the rationale for point 2 of Vision – ‘a place where each subject is as important as one another’?

Answer: It is the aspiration that all subjects are considered to be equally important; in terms of raising aspirations and status of subjects beyond maths and literacy.

Response: The language could be tweaked, to reflect the centrality of particular subjects.

Comment: Breadth of curriculum is key in education policy going forward; to reflect that excellence is being pursued in all subjects despite different time allocation.

10. Premises

a. Summer Works Plan

Question: Have toilets improvements moved forward at all?

Answer: Not yet. This will be the first priority for new expenditure.

Action Point: Specification for the toilet improvements as a matter of priority for new expenditure.

11. Monitoring and school improvement

a. SSAT Evaluation Report

The SSAT Evaluation Report was received in advance. Questions were as follows.

Question: How useful was the SSAT process?

Answer: Seeing other schools was a useful exercise. The three Outstanding Church of England schools are all very different. This experience rounded off the Maths project and verified that what we see in Maths is what outside observers also see.

Question: What are the areas for further development in the Maths project, particularly relating to outdoor space downstairs?

Answer: The aim is to introduce more visible Maths outside – numbers and signs, and so on, in the outdoor space. A new wooden numicon has been put in place.

Question: Will peer reviews continue next year?

Answer: Yes - though independently, rather than with SSAT.

b. Science Review SIP

The Science Review was very positive, and was received in advance. Questions were as follows.

Question: Is Science moving back to being taught by the main class teacher?



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Answer: Yes, in some instances, but David Bello will remain STEM lead. He will spend more time with Year 1 and with new teachers. Work will continue through staff meetings with leading investigations and experiments.

Question: How do you envisage science lab being used?

Answer: The science lab will be used by class teachers; and as a group space for adult education. This will be timetabled to ensure maximum usage. Acoustic and lighting will be improved.

12. AOB

- a. Lizzie Webb will set up governor's email address for each governor, for GDPR purposes.
- b. Noted that this is Tim Wilson's last governor meeting. Warm thanks were given for his huge impact on the school, including budget usage; improved teaching and learning; sustaining results; and delivering a broad curriculum. Tim possesses all the qualities of an exceptional Head, and leaves the school in a better state than he found it.

Meeting closed at 18:10

Signed

Date 5th October 2018

Matt Piper
Chair of Governors