

Shebbear Community School
Minutes from the Part One Governing Body Meeting
Monday 3rd February 2020 at 6.30 p.m.

PROCEDURAL

Present:

Mr N Alford (Head Teacher), Mr A Goode, Mr J Quance, Mrs A Bernstone, Miss R Curtis, Mrs C Coward (chairman), Miss N Derwin, Mrs P Kirby, Mrs L Marshall, Mrs S Hawker (clerk). The meeting was quorate.

1 Apologies:

Mrs G Cooper, Mrs G Fowler and Mr J Franklin sent their apologies; governors agreed to accept and sanction these.

2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests:

No new declarations were made.

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

3 Head Teacher's Report (circulated previously to the meeting on GovernorHub):

Mr Alford started by going through Neil Swait's report, following his visit before Christmas. This had been a very useful exercise, helping the school to see how 'OfSTED ready' it is. As well as the curriculum, he spent time looking at the single central record and recruitment processes and records. He looked at some examples of CPOMS safeguarding entries and was happy with the level of detail and actions taken. He spent time with Mrs Coward (see later minutes). Acting on advice given, we are now logging behaviour incidents and any bullying incidents.

In regard to the recent whole school monitoring exercise, Mr Alford highlighted that some good progress has been made on the previously identified reading targets. Likewise, progress has been made in mathematics although overall attainment and progress appears to be still lagging behind reading.

The monitoring report was circulated to all governors in advance of the meeting and identified the key actions in respect of the subject monitored (writing, mathematics, DT and music).

NA shared projections for forthcoming statutory assessments. The current year 1 cohort remain a cause for concern. NA explained some of the strategies being deployed to raise their achievement. Projected achievement in other year groups indicate that outcomes should be in line with national expectations. Year 2 should do particularly well. Year 6 are a mixed year group. Identified pupils are receiving additional interventions as necessary.

NA reported that the school was using a coding program (code.org). This allowed pupils to follow a structured course to develop their coding skills as well as supporting teachers in terms of their subject knowledge.

Q: AB: Advised that her husband is a professional coder and offered his services if he was able to help the school in any way.

Mr Alford reported that there continues to be a clear improvement in handwriting and presentation across the school. As an example, there has been a strong focus on improving cursive handwriting in Panda class and this appears to be yielding success in terms of improved standards.

Q: CC: Are the children taught to join in Reception?

The main focus in Reception is ensuring children are having lots of opportunities to write. As pupils move towards and in to year 1, there is a greater emphasis on developing a pre-cursive style.

He continued, explaining that there is an emphasis in the new OfSTED framework are on extra-curricular activities; the wider world; and diversity. This can be challenging for us given our location, however we use focused assemblies, follow the Devon agreed RE syllabus and are currently organizing a whole school trip to Exeter to visit the Cathedral, Mosque and Synagogue and Koala will be meeting with a County Court judge - all of which help to address these topics. There remains a good range of clubs on offer for which take up is good as well as opportunities to take part in inter school competitions.

Mr Alford replied that as opportunities come up we will continue to work with those schools too; Langtree and Monkleigh have been working with Bluecoats, but unfortunately due to his teaching commitment he was unable to attend those meetings. He will be visiting Boasley Cross Primary School soon, and Winkleigh have invited a couple of our pupils to join them for a creative writing workshop later this term.

He advised that the school quiz team would be action later this week, and that a very successful teddy sale had been organised by the School Council to raise funds for the Australian Bushfire Appeal.

All in all, he felt that that Neil's visit had been reassuring and useful to us in getting 'OfSTED ready'.

Attendance: Q: CC: [Looking at the Head Teacher's report, are attendance figures improving?](#)

Mr Alford responded that the previously persistent poor attenders had improved greatly with all now being above 90%.

Q: ND: [How do we deal with persistently low attendance?](#)

He and Mrs Hawker monitor attendance monthly to identify pupils who have or are moving towards having poor attendance. Individual pupil attendance is checked and individual circumstances taken in to account (e.g. time missed for an operation). As appropriate, the school will issue letters outlining the concerns with follow up meetings as required. As attendance is checked each month, NA and SH are able to identify pupils with rising or falling attendance and take the necessary action. In some cases the EWO has been involved.

Q: JQ: [What is your policy on term time holiday requests?](#)

Mr Alford said that these are generally refused and appropriately coded in the registers. Mrs Bernstone added that she believed the criteria had recently changed for this.

ACTION: CHECK CURRENT TERM TIME HOLIDAY REQUEST CRITERIA.

SEND: Mrs Gough's annual SEND report was circulated to governors before the meeting.

Safeguarding: He continued to report that there had been one MASH referral since the last meeting, raised by Little Bears who have a sibling of one of our children. He felt that this was a good example of our two organisations working together to safeguard our children. He was pleased to let governors know that the behaviour was much improved from our CIC.

4 Governors' Reports:

Neil Swait's Visit: Mrs Coward reported to governors from her meeting with Neil Swait, document available on GovernorHub. Her meeting with him focused on the key questions that OfSTED would be asking governors. She stressed how important it is that governors really know the school and the journey that is being undertaken in terms of the vision and strategic direction. She also emphasised the importance of regular monitoring visits by a variety of governors be completed, link to the SIP and that these clarify the strategic direction of the school. Mrs Coward also added that although OFSTED's focus is no soly data, it is imperative that governors are familiar with current data (ISDR). She also explained that we will also may have to discuss the strengths and weakness of teaching across the school.

Q: JQ: [How can we judge how good a teacher's subject knowledge is? We are not qualified to do this.](#)

Signed:

Dated:

Mrs Coward explained that this can be achieved, not by judging the teacher's subject knowledge as such, but by receiving pupil feedback, evidence from Head Teacher monitoring reports, pupil behaviour etc. however it is important that governors back up their knowledge and do not simply rely on the Head Teacher's reports. We need to have concrete examples to hand, such as how governors implement cultural capital, staff wellbeing and safeguarding. She intends to put together an evidence file and to update the document tabled at today's meeting which will be available on GovernorHub, however there is an expectation that all governors will become familiar with it please.

Q: AG: Are any staff members subject leader for more than one subject? If so we need to make OfSTED know when choosing subjects for 'deep dives' so that a staff member isn't overloaded.

Mr Alford replied that all of them are, due to small numbers, but the experience of another local school who have recently been inspected was that an element of choice was involved to avoid this.

Mrs Coward also discussed the importance of governors understanding the curriculum and how it suits our school and how we tackle being an isolated school and ensure the children understand the 'cultural capital' of our society.

Governor Visits: Mrs Coward and Mrs Marshall did a reading monitoring visit before Christmas, report available on GovernorHub, which they both really enjoyed finding it interesting to hear the difference between a Reception child and a Year 6. They reported that there were generally impressed by the standards of reading they encountered including amongst the disadvantaged pupils they heard reading.

Mr Alford advised that for early readers, reading books should be linked to the phonics sounds being learned and thanked Mrs Marshall for sourcing a grant from the Parish Council in the sum of £651 which has allowed us to order some additional resources to support this. He also told governors that Mrs Evans had delivered a phonics training session to the Teaching Assistants recently and this was already impacting on improved confidence and phonic knowledge amongst the staff.

Link Governors: There was no link governor visit report for this meeting.

Training: There was no training to report on at this meeting.

Monitoring visits: Are to be arranged for after half term and both Mrs Coward and Miss Derwin said that they would like to do a maths monitoring visit. Mrs Bernstone offered to come in and do another safeguarding monitoring visit. Mr Alford will send them some suggested suitable dates.

ACTION: MR ALFORD TO CIRCULATE SUGGESTED DATES FOR MONITORING VISITS.

Q: ND: Asked if perhaps governors could come in and see assemblies as the one that she recently observed was excellent (Holocaust - Mrs Fuller).

Mr Alford said he was happy to draw governors' attention to key assemblies - the week commencing the 9th March is 'Inter-Faith week', with a 'Safety week' being held the last week of term.

5. Clerk's Report:

The Clerk drew governors' attention to the new-style agenda, which will help us to focus on governance; the Checklist which has been circulated; and also training available. Regarding new legislation, of particular note are the proposals for revising teachers' salaries, with the Government decision that NQTs will start on £30,000 to make teaching a more attractive career option, and this will need to be carefully reflected in our budget forecasts over the next few years.

GDPR: GDPR Sentry visited in December to carry out their initial audit. This seemed to go well and the initial feedback to the Clerk, Head Teacher and Chair was very positive. We have yet to receive anything from them to evidence this visit and the clerk will chase this up.

ACTION: CLERK TO CHASE GDPR SENTRY FOR VISIT NOTE/REPORT.

Signed:

Dated:

Skills Matrix: The collated results were interesting and are available on GovernorHub. The key area for improvement, as identified by governors, is curriculum knowledge and the Chairman and Clerk urged governors to consider attending the relevant training sessions as and when they occur.

6. Financial Reports:

The FRS report from January had been circulated to governors before the meeting and indicates a projected carry forward to next year of approximately £27,000. This is a little less than initially expected, however the clerk explained that we have invested in upgrading the lighting system in the Hall, the new electricity contract rates are 25% more than prior to October, resulting in much higher bills than for the equivalent period last year. There has also been some additional investment in school improvement, such as Neil Swait's visit and additional resources. Governors asked no additional questions regarding this budget statement. The next one will be taken to the Resources meeting on the 16th March, alongside the draft budget for next year.

An up to date Sports funding report was also circulated before the meeting. This breaks down both the spending within the financial and academic years as we have to report on the latter. Again, there were no questions at this time regarding the sports funding which we understand will continue next year. The monies continue to be used to support good quality teaching of PE in the school and wide participation in extra-curricular opportunities such as sports festivals, coaching and fixtures.

STRATEGIC ITEMS

7. Approval of Committee Structure and terms of reference; committee membership; governor recruitment:

The committee structure will be circulated to governors before the next meeting.

ACTION: CLERK TO CIRCULATE CURRENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Both Mrs Marshall (March) and Mrs Fowler (April) are coming to the ends of the term of office as parent governors. Mrs Fowler will not be eligible to stand again as she no longer has a child at the school.

ACTION: CLERK TO ORGANISE PARENT ELECTION WITH A VIEW TO NEW PARENT GOVERNORS BEING ABLE TO ATTEND THE NEXT FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING.

8. Approval of minutes of the last meeting(s):

The Part One minutes of the last full Governing Board meeting held on the 25th November 2019 were circulated prior to the meeting. They were agreed by governors present and signed as correct by the Chairman.

There were no committee minutes to approve at this meeting.

9. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting(s) including progress made on 'Actions':

Mr Alford has circulated the mission statement to all staff and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mrs Coward addressed 'key questions' earlier in this meeting. There were no other matters arising from the minutes.

10. Policy adoption and review:

Four policies had been circulated to governors before the meeting:

- *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (updated by Mrs Gough SENDCo, very little changed)
- *Religious Education (updated by Mr Alford in line with the Devon agree syllabus)
- *Children in Care (updated by Mr Alford, very little has changed)
- *Management of Sickness and Medical Conditions and Administration of Medicines in School (updated and changed by Mr Alford as outlined below)

Mr Alford explained that he felt the Medical policy was a little 'unfriendly' and has amended it so that medicines can be administered in schools in exceptional circumstances; he said that there would be no expectation of staff to do this but hoped that, where appropriate, this would be done. He said that good attendance is important and he believes the school needs to help parents in instances when the child is well enough to attend school by giving medicine if need be. He would rather that, than children miss any school sessions because parents are unable to come in to administer medicine.

Mr Goode proposed that these four policies be adopted by the Governing Body, seconded by Mrs Kirby and agreed by all present. The policies were signed by the Chairman at the end of the meeting.

Q: JQ: Now that we no longer have a Surgery in the village, do we have other policies that may need to be amended to reflect this?

Mr Alford responded that we would double check that the First Aid policy has been updated, however he and the Clerk couldn't think of any others that specifically referred to the village Surgery.

ACTION: FIRST AID POLICY TO BE UPDATED, IF NECESSARY.

11. Items brought forward by the Chairman for this meeting:

Teddy Class Garden and Reading Garden Areas:

Despite the best efforts of the Head Teacher and Clerk, we currently have only received two quotes for this work:

Sam the Diggerman - £11,200

Dave Hockin - £11,306

The clerk advised that, adhering to the Finance Policy, until we have received three quotes we are unable to proceed and made a decision. We are keen to have the work completed during the Easter holidays, but this may not be possible unless governors are happy to hold an additional, one agenda item meeting. Governors agreed that they would be willing to do so.

Mrs Marshall confirmed that with the matched funding from the Parish Council, the SSSG have raised enough funds to cover the Reading Garden project (£3576 - Dave Hockin, included in Sam the Diggerman but not broken down) however, ideally the two projects need to be completed at the same time.

Mr Alford said that a possible saving of £1000 could be made if we are able to find someone willing to take the soil away. He asked governors that if they knew of anyone who could help to let us know.

Little Bears Path:

Whilst discussing the above, the clerk told governors that Kim Rumsam had met with Selina Woollacott from Little Bears and herself to discuss extending the concrete path leading to Little Bears, which Kim is kindly going to provide free of charge. We will need to prepare the area and, again, it may make sense if a digger is on site to have it all done at the same time. This would be a relatively small job, however good weather is essential for the concrete!

Heating System:

The clerk informed governors that she has come across a scheme, whereby the school can be offered in interest free loan, government funded through Salix, which can be used for upgrading the heating system to a much 'greener' option such as an air source heat pump system. She advised that since the electricity contract had been renewed (1st October) the unit rate has increased by 25% and the last two bills have been approaching four figures. She is currently communicating with the company to see if the newly installed Smart Meter is operating correctly as our usage seems highly increased compared with this time last year. In the longer term this will not be sustainable as we will need to allocate more the school budget towards energy costs. This is not helped by the fact that we no longer enjoy a dual rate (night storage heaters) and we have been advised by the energy company that due to our size it is better to be on a single rate. Loans are also available to upgrade lighting.

The company - Pied Piper - who have been in contact have put together a Salix loan application on our behalf, with absolutely no obligation, and one of their engineers visited last week to see if this would be feasible for us, extending on the two systems that we already have in place for the Hall and the Library areas. Potentially, by installing these units our heating costs would reduce by 75%. They would carry out the installation, however we would need an electrician too.

This would involve installing units to individual areas: classrooms, office, entrance lobby, staff room, head teacher's office, Bear Cave and Little Bears at a cost £16,500. We are only eligible if our forecast electricity bills for the next 8 years would exceed that amount. We would then be required to pay the loan back over a period of time, determined by them, from our school budget. The figures indicate that we would show a saving of £3,700 a year (current forecast cost £6,000) and use 6,400 less kilowatt hours, thus reducing our carbon footprint significantly. A negative aspect would be aesthetics as the units can be unsightly, however they can be covered by trellis etc. Mr Goode proposed that we submit the loan application to see if we would be eligible, seconded by Mrs Coward and agreed by all, with a view to upgrading our system.

Class structure 2020:

This was discussed in the Part Two section of the meeting.

12. Correspondence:

Devon Governor Services - Spring Checklist - all governors have a copy.

School Financial Value Standard - the Clerk advised that Ross Allen, Senior Auditor, had contacted her as he has adjusted some of the figures on our return. This has made no change to the overall traffic light rating. Noted.

GOVERNANCE**13. Approval of Chair and Vice-Chair's terms of reference and election Chair and Vice-Chair:**

This was not required for this meeting.

14. Impact from this meeting:

*Governors have agreed for a number of building improvements to the school site giving educational benefits for the pupils;

*Monitoring visits have been agreed with the focus linking to the School Improvement Plan and curriculum to ensure best quality education for the pupils;

*The new OfSTED framework has been discussed, focusing on the role required from governors during an Inspection to ensure the best outcome for our school;

*The skills matrix submitted by all governors has been collated, identifying any weaknesses within the Governing Body to be addressed which, when done, will allow for robust leadership.

Signed:

Dated:

15. Dates and Times of Next Meetings:

Full Governing Body: Monday 27th April 2020 at 6.30 p.m.
Monday 15th June 2020 at 6.30 p.m.
Wednesday 15th July 2020 at 6.30 p.m.

Resources: Monday 16th March 2020 at 7.00 p.m.
Monday 18th May 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

Pay: Wednesday 15th July - time to be confirmed

These are available as separate files on OneDrive/Governor Hub and will be populated with paperwork nearer the time of each meeting. The clerk will email governors a reminder approximately one week before each meeting.

Mrs Coward proposed that we move into the Part Two section of the meeting, seconded by Mrs Kirby and agreed by all. The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.33 p.m.