



Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body of
Loddon Primary School on Wednesday 7 February 2018

Present:

Suzanne Ambaum, John Brady, Gemma Didcock, Eleanor Gunbie, Jenny Hall,
Rob Henderson (Chair), Donald MacDonald, Sarah Phillips (Headteacher), Kevin
Wooldridge

Sue Lunn (clerk)

27/17 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from Faisal Hussain and Katja Strohfeldt-Venables.

28/17 **Declarations of interest in Agenda Items**

There were no declarations.

29/17 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes were agreed.

30/17 **Matters Arising**

The template for Link Governors has been circulated and some reports have been completed.

A meeting was held with the Local Authority regarding the revenue funding for the expansion of the school and some progress has been made. The Headteacher had received an email with further details and the governing body will be updated when the full details are known.

31/17 **Committee Updates**

Personnel

There had been some staff changes and unfortunately one of these was the appointed person for the post of temporary assistant headteacher, who had withdrawn at short notice.

The Headteacher was commended for the new arrangements that she had put in place and the Governors expressed their thanks to all the staff who have taken on additional responsibilities.

Finance

The finance committee still had concerns about the level of funding.

Due to the timing of the expansion there is a gap in the funding for Year 1 and the local authority have been asked for additional funds to address this.

With regard to the predicted surplus at year end, this has occurred mainly due to the fact that the school has had staff vacancies and without those the school would not have been funded to the desired level.

The importance of good financial monitoring was stressed as there is very little spare capacity.

Curriculum

The curriculum committee meeting had included an overview of the SEN provision and this included an excellent visual map outlining the key information. This was very useful.

The committee had considered the main priorities for SEN and had considered the pressures going forward.

The SEN policy was also reviewed and a clearer statement was included to stress that the availability of personal budgets only applies to pupils with specific care plans.

Kevin Wooldridge joined the meeting.

Environment

The committee had received updates on the expansion and noted that despite the delays in completing the games area, the main build was on target.

The hot topic had been a review of the swimming pool and the options for the future. The possibility of applying for grants to help fund the refurbishments was discussed. One of the main challenges was to find new volunteers to assist in opening the pool and it was hoped that this could be mentioned at parent evenings.

The emergency plan had been updated.

32/17

Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher commented that the half term had been particularly busy due to the rearrangement of the leadership roles and the visit of the OFSTED inspector.

With regard to inspection, the letter outlining the results of the inspection had been received and made available to governors. Questions were invited.

Question: Do you feel that the letter reflects the findings on the day?

The Headteacher felt that on the whole the letter was a fair assessment and did highlight that the school had already taken steps to address any issues. It was however a surprise to find that the marking policy was included in the next steps as this did not particularly arise during the day and had not been included in the verbal feedback.

It was not felt that this was a major concern and this has not been highlighted previously.

Question: Will this element be challenged?

It is not planned to challenge this. In the inspection feedback a comment has already been included to the effect that this was not something included in the verbal summary.

The inspection letter will be in the public domain the next day in any case.

One area of concern was that there would be an expectation amongst parents that marking would increase. This expectation would need to be managed as an increase in marking does not necessarily lead to an increase in children's understanding and learning.

A suggestion was made that a letter be issued to parents explaining the 'next steps' that have been included in the OFSTED letter.

Question: What evidence will be required in the future to show that this has been addressed?

The Headteacher will monitor the books again, although this is something that takes place already. It is to be noted that not every spelling is corrected, for example, as it depends if the focus of the lesson is on spelling or comprehension.

The Marking Policy will be reviewed to look at the approach and philosophy so that teachers can be accurately assessed against the expectations.

Question: What is the general feeling about the day?

The day went well although some members of staff did not feel that they were offered the opportunity to show what they were capable of. However this is to be expected for a short inspection.

The Values Based Education could have been given a higher profile considering that it is one of the schools strengths.

Question: How does the staff feel about the process?

Most are pleased with the report although some felt that they did not participate much on the day. However it is to be stressed that the report is collective and therefore all staff have contributed.

The governing body thanked the leadership and all staff for their input and hard work which have resulted in a very good report. This is to be celebrated.

A letter was to be sent to parents together with the OFSTED report on the following day.

Expansion Update

The work is progressing well and the framework for the new building should be in place at half term.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager are to meet with the builders to discuss fixtures and fittings for the new school hall.

33/17

Policies for Review

Attendance Policy

The Local Authority have produced a new model policy which was presented to governors for adoption as it is felt to be a much better document than the one currently used.

The Headteacher welcomed the clarity in the new policy.

The document had already been reviewed by Team Leaders to ensure that it worked with school arrangements.

Question: In respect of the request for absence, parents are asked to complete this one month in advance but this is not always possible?

The timescale does relate to general absences and for medical appointments parents are asked to let the school know in advance where possible.

Question: A concern was raised regarding an instance where a pupil's non-attendance was advised by parent mail. Does this need to be dealt with through a telephone call?

This is not mentioned in the policy as it is procedural but all pupil absences are followed up. The procedure on the day for any pupil not registered is to firstly check if they are late and then send a parent mail. Where there is no response a check is made with the class teacher and then a telephone call made.

It was felt that the system was working on the whole.

A discussion then took place regarding the difficulty of contacting parents. The first call is always to the first priority contact given. The school does frequently remind parents to update their details as sometimes these are not correct.

Question: If a parent phones in every day during their child's illness, why is it necessary to send in a letter on return as well?

The Headteacher advised that the Education Welfare Service does promote this. On reflection it was felt that this not practical because of the time taken to follow up on the paperwork. It was agreed that the words 'if requested' be added to the policy so that it was not necessary in every case but the Headteacher could ask for a written statement if she had concerns.

Question: The policy states that if a pupil is still absent at 10.30am, the parent will be contacted. Should this be done sooner?

The Headteacher advised that registers do not officially close until 9.30am and that until that point a pupil is late. After that time a pupil is recorded as absent but with the number of pupils involved, it would not be administratively possible to make all the calls at an earlier time.

Governors were advised that any pupil considered vulnerable or for whom there are concerns is made known to staff and the parent or guardian would be contacted as soon as possible.

The following amendments are to be made:

With regard to the paragraph on evidence to support medical absences, the reference to a stamped compliment slip should be removed.

Where pupils were leaving during the school day, 'as soon as possible' should be added

The statement 'The governing body expects that the Headteacher should apply reasonable judgement for exceptional circumstances' should be added.

The policy was then agreed.

34/17

Link Governor Visits

All Link Governors were asked to contact the Subject Leaders to arrange a visit to school if they had not already done so.

Question: Is it expected that the visit would be based on include a specific topic or general discussion?

This is for the Link Governor to decide, using discretion. A focus can be selected if appropriate. Most visits included the opportunity to observe a lesson.

35/17 **AOB**

Parents' Evening

It had been suggested that an exercise be undertaken to ask parents for their one area of focus/change for the forthcoming year. This was thought to be a good idea. In addition it has been decided to ask for volunteers to assist in school. Members of the swimming pool committee will also attend for this purpose.

The date is 7 and 8 March 2018 and further details will be sent to governors nearer the time.

Action Chair of Governors to email all governors regarding the plans.

The Chair of Governors advised that this was the last meeting for Kevin Wooldridge whose term of office had now come to an end after 8 years of service as a governor. Thanks went to Kevin for his invaluable support for the school over the years and for his input into ICT, which will be greatly missed.

36/17 **Date and Time of the next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Governing Body will be on Wednesday 21 March 2018 at 6pm.

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Signed by the Chair of Governors

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Date