



Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body of
Loddon Primary School on Wednesday 21 March 2018

Present:

Suzanne Ambaum, John Brady, Rebecca Chamberlain, Gemma Didcock, Eleanor Gunbie, Rob Henderson (Chair), Faisal Hussain, Sarah Phillips (Headteacher)

Sue Lunn (clerk)

37/17 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from Donald MacDonald, Jenny Hall and Katja Strohfeldt-Venables.

38/17 **Declarations of interest in Agenda Items**

There were no declarations.

39/17 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes were agreed.

40/17 **Matters Arising**

The action points had all been completed.

41/17 **Committee Updates**

Personnel

The committee had reviewed the progress on the current vacancies and on the review of Teaching Support staff. The latter will also be looked at by the Curriculum committee in order to consider the impact on teaching and learning.

With regard to the teacher vacancy, the Headteacher advised that she had prepared the advertisement as requested but in the meantime had been discussing the options with two candidates requiring part-time positions since they may be able to cover the full-time vacancy between them. One candidate is to visit the school this week.

The Headteacher advised that an Early Years Teacher was leaving the school and a replacement for one term had been secured via an agency.

A vacancy had also occurred for a Grade 4 Early Years post and this had been filled through internal promotion. The resulting Grade 3 vacancy was being covered on a temporary basis by another staff member until the review of support staff was complete.

Governors were pleased that professional development for staff could be offered in this way and hoped that this could continue as much as possible.

Thanks go to the members of staff who are leaving for their contribution to the school.

Finance

The finance committee had received a report on the draft budget and noted that there was less confidence in the ability to set balanced budgets going forward. The SFVS assessment had been reviewed and is presented for approval at this meeting.

With regard to the dispute over funding as a result of the increasing number on roll, the Local Authority seemed to have accepted that there was a case to answer but had only offered a very small amount of additional money in compensation. The committee had reluctantly accepted that any further time spent on the matter was likely to be unproductive.

The next meeting would be to approve the submission of the final budget plan. The proposed budget will be circulated to governors over the Easter holidays and governors were asked to raise any questions or challenges prior to the meeting as any amendments need to be made by 27 April.

Action **School Business Manager to circulate the draft budget**
Action **Governors to respond with any queries prior to the meeting**

Curriculum

The curriculum committee meeting had focussed on Home Learning. There was valuable feedback from the Parents Forum and the policy had been reviewed and agreed.

One aspect that had come out of the review was the underuse of the learning platform by parents who found it difficult to navigate. This is going to be investigated.

The e-Safety policy had also been reviewed and would be looked at again at the next meeting following some amendments.

Environment

The committee meeting had been cancelled this half term.

42/17 **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher felt that the Spring term has been fairly intense due to it being a very short term this year.

Questions were invited.

Question: When is the multi-use games area due for completion?

Following months of delays, the MUGA had been due to be completed this week and it had been hoped therefore to use the area for Sports Relief events but unfortunately the work had run over by one week. It is now complete and the paths are in.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will meet the contractors this Friday for the monthly review and it is expected that the area will be signed over to the school at that point.

The Deputy Headteacher will liaise with the PE staff to timetable the use of the area. It is still planned to celebrate the opening of the area in some way.

The other aspect reported relating to the building project is the project to design the mosaics which will decorate the front areas.

Question: With regard to your recent presentation on Values education, how many schools have followed this up?

Several schools showed an interest immediately after the presentation and others wish to make arrangements to visit the school.

The Headteacher has been in discussion with a professional development coach who is currently assisting with a review in school and who is also a consultant for Values education. It is planned to arrange a day during the summer term to start a network of schools, with Loddon as the lead school.

The Headteacher has been invited to become a Values Based Education Associate which will make available additional training and network days.

The Headteacher has spoken to pupils and staff to ascertain feedback on the difference that Values has made to the school. The comments were positive and the highlights were:-

“values is a map to help me become a better person”

“the school felt black and white before and now is filled with colour”

“the school feels a calmer place and the children are more considerate to each other”.

The school is also currently applying for a Leading Partner status in the Parent Partnership Awards.

This involves a very thorough audit and success will mean that a logo can be added to the schools credentials. The main benefit however had been the learning and changes made as a result of the process.

Question: The number on roll is still increasing as expected; how soon will you know the numbers for the next cohort?

The Local Authority deals with our admissions and the numbers will hopefully be known in April, although sometimes it can be as late as May.

Question: How many are taken from the catchment area?

The school thinks approximately two thirds of pupils came from within the catchment area but this will be analysed again once the admissions figures are received.

Question: With regard to the attendance figures, are these satisfactory?

There could be improvement although the statistics for this term have been affected by the ‘snow’ days. Many pupils did not attend even though the school was open.

Question: What were the reasons for this?

Many parents indicated that they did not think it was safe to travel.

Question: Will these absences be treated as authorised or non-authorised?

It depends on the circumstances. There is a special absence code for when adverse weather conditions are responsible for absences and this was deemed applicable on the first day.

For the second period of snow those who were close enough to walk to school but absent were considered an unauthorised absence.

The Education Welfare Officer is due to visit the school shortly to review attendance.

Question: With regard to the section on sports activities, what is new age curling?

This is curling indoors. The tournament was designed for inclusion and a percentage of the participants had to be on the SEND register.

The Headteacher was thanked for her report.

43/17 **Feedback for the Parents Consultation Evenings**

Governors had attended the parents' evenings and the feedback had been very positive.

The main questions had been regarding the building works and future plans, The overall feeling had been one of interest and excitement.

44/17 **Policies for Review**

Governor Code of Conduct

The Local Authority policy had been replaced with a more comprehensive document. This was discussed and agreed.

45/17 **Schools Financial Values Standard**

The self-assessment document had been reviewed by the Finance Committee. This was approved subject to the completion of the second column.

46/17 **Feedback on Academy Conversion Update**

The Local Authority had arranged a presentation to update schools on the latest status of conversion to academies and all Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Headteachers had been invited.

A presentation was made by a newly converted school and whilst this was very interesting in respect of the process involved, the school had not yet had time to properly evaluate the outcomes.

A lot of discussion had taken place regarding the likely impact on pupils.

The Chair summarised the main points which were:

- 50% of schools in Wokingham will have converted to academy status within the next year
- Most of these schools within the 50% have chosen to form or join a multi-academy trust
- The most complex aspect is the property and asset transfer
- The process for conversion takes a year
- Factors differ for according to the size and type of school and the age of its pupils
- The most noticeable advantage was the ability to share resources and to

have control over funding

It was noted that there was no way to quantify the outcomes yet and it is too early to establish if the conversion to academy status translates into real improvements in the children's learning.

Question: Is there still a deadline for conversion?

The original deadline suggested by the government has been removed but there is still the expectation that schools will have converted by 2022.

Some schools may choose not to convert but will then be faced with a reduction in the level of service from the Local Authorities as time progresses.

Additionally, there are already grants that are only available to academies and this gradual transfer of funds will affect maintained schools.

The consensus was that a formal strategy now needs to be formed although, as previously agreed, any conversion could not be undertaken until all building work is complete.

47/17 **Date and Times of Future Meetings**

The dates and timings for future committee meetings were discussed as it had on occasion been challenging to secure a quorum for morning meetings.

On balance it was felt to be preferable to have meetings at different times and the current situation is to be retained.

Action The Clerk to prepare a draft dates list for next year and add this to the next agenda.

48/17 **AOB**

Nursery Admission Places

The school had consulted on a change to its admission number for Early Years places with a view to reducing the number from 72 to 52.

This was because the previous admission number had not been a multiple of the legal staff ratio and therefore caused a financial shortfall.

The consultation had resulted in very few responses but of those that were received the vast majority were in favour of reducing the admission number.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager had therefore looked at various financial models in order to cover costs as the nursery provision cannot be subsidised from the main school budget and must be self-funding.

The current position is that 15 hours of funded nursery provision is catered for and if all places were in future converted to 30 hours funded places, there will not only be staffing implications but there may not be any remaining places to offer in the summer term admissions round due to Autumn term admissions taking up all the available hours in the setting.

The Headteacher was therefore proposing to move, in line with the consultation, to an admission number of 52. Included within this will also be 10 places offered as 30 hours funded either by government funding or independent buy-in from parents. An additional charge for the lunchtime session would also be required for all 30 hours places to ensure costs of Nursery provision were fully met in the future.

Question: Are you confident that you will achieve the required numbers?

A short survey of the current applicants has shown that nine families (25%) would be eligible for the 30 hours funded provision.

There is also the implication that the nursery is not currently full as it appears that parents have secured the 30 hours funded places elsewhere in 2017-18.

The proposal was agreed and it should be reviewed in a year to establish that the model meets the requirements.

49/17 **Date and Time of the next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Governing Body will be on Wednesday 23 May 2018 at 6pm.

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Signed by the Chair of Governors

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Date