

Governors of Fairisle Junior School

Minutes of a Meeting of the Whole Governing Body Tuesday 3 December 2019, 3.30pm

Governors present:

1. Steph Thurston (Chair)
2. Peter Howard (Headteacher)
3. Alison Powell
4. Mike Dant
5. Brent Schwarz
6. Katherine Minns

Associate members present:

- Bev Bessey
- In attendance:
Abi Saunders (English Leader)
Gemma Summers (English Leader)
Sophie Lee (Clerk)

1) Apologies

Phil Chapman, Nikki Webb, Jess Planter-Dixon.

2) Declarations of Interest

Declarations relating to today's agenda: none. Changes to the register of business interests: none.

3) Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes from 5 November 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair. One amended page from 1 October was also signed.

4) Matters Arising – Including Action Points

All actions from 5 November are complete except those listed below. Governors are invited to the English staff meeting at 3.30pm tomorrow.

Action A: Write a report on the curriculum presentation.

Action B: Attend assemblies to talk about the role of governors and give termly updates on governance.

Action C: Write a health and safety report once a term.

Action D: Attend one visit between meetings plus events emailed from BB. Clerk to email date reminders.

Action E: Invite governors to staff meeting.

Action F: Arrange a time to come in to ask children about using Chromebooks and what they added to learning.

Action G: Confirm dates/times from leadership cycle and send to governors regularly.

Action H: Review SEND report with Robin Hayes.

Action I: Write to LA about their lack of support on attendance.

Action J: Begin link governor work on curriculum.

Action K: Review food standards and ask how allergic children are safeguarded.

JPD
All gov's

BS
All gov's/
Clerk
ST/PH
PC/BS

Clerk
NW
ST/PH
PC/JPD
MD

5) SIP Objective 2: English Leaders

(Abi Saunders and Gemma Summers entered the meeting.)

English Leaders Gemma Summers and Abi Saunders explained that their focus since the summer holiday has been on supporting other year groups and teams. There are lots of new ideas in Y3 where Abi has spent time mapping out the overview until Christmas.

Governors were shown books of very able children and work which demonstrates the outcomes of the leaders' efforts. We can see how pupils in the higher set have progressed differently to those in the lower set.

Gemma has used her KS1 knowledge with the SEND group looking at phonics, meeting needs of SEND children and filling gaps. This is starting to show in their writing. Y4 are building up their reading and have worked on understanding texts.

Question for ST: What are you doing differently now in all year groups?

Gemma Summers said that is where their impact has come in, with the different knowledge skills they have now got in the team. It is about using best practice and sharing more.

Abi Saunders noted that particularly in Y3 staff had felt they must rigidly stick to the written overview. Leaders have told staff they can talk to them about their year group and what opportunities they are giving them to reflect that cohort.

Abi has changed the overview for Y3 using a new text. They have reflected on the texts and are developing that further in a staff meeting tomorrow. Leaders met the SLT on Monday to discuss issues arising.

Leaders have been proactive in identifying issues, as have staff, with teachers asking for help if they need it rather than just doing what they did last year. There is more professional dialogue now.

Gemma has looked at what will engage the lowest performing pupils, with teachers allowed to say if a text is not appropriate for them and choose another. The Deputy Head noted there has been more freedom to do that and that has been the biggest change.

Mock reading SATS at the end of autumn 1 showed 58% at Expected Plus and 16% at Greater Depth, the highest results for years. Y6 are quite able readers and we have a reading culture. A separate book shelf was set up for high quality texts for free readers which the children love, motivating higher performing children to read richer texts and different genres.

The main focus is on bridging the gap between what was done previously and what can happen if we take risks. We have a really solid reading curriculum and are now trying new things and taking risks.

Every year group has had conversations saying what was boring last year and needs to change. The Deputy Head explained that the focus weeks have shown a lot more differentiation for individual children, including lower ability children.

Gemma stated it is about being realistic with lower ability children which is why we have SEND groups. One child's books show she has made incredible progress in her basic skills.

If children feel they can succeed some of the time they feel positive, motivated and feel they can move forward. Children see their successes and build confidence. It is about where that specific child needs to go and there is still a progress point for them, even if their work does not quite look like the rest of the class.

Areas to improve include:

- looking at the amount of writing done, quality versus quantity
- make reading more explicit, how reading supports writing and the comprehension side with a wide range of texts used
- covering different skills using different texts
- discussing what comprehension means with the staff as it is not just answering questions. Make the skills explicit to pupils
- ensure continuity about presenting a learning journey to children across the school, ask each year group to do certain things so we can still map what is happening in each group
- more dialogue in PPA between teachers and sharing to be creative.

Question from ST: How do you provide opportunities for pupils to engage and enjoy English?

Abi Saunders explained that they use texts, activities and clear differentiation of lessons for SEND through to Greater Depth children.

Gemma Summers noted it all comes back to quality first teaching.

Question from ST: How would governors see that progress?

Abi Saunders replied that in the books they have brought tonight governors could see clear progression from lower to higher ability children and how they engaged with the text and outcomes.

Gemma Summers stated you can see the differentiation between sets, with marking and feedback applicable to those children.

The Deputy Head added it can also be seen in the presentation.

Question from PH: How do you help staff feel trusted to do their jobs and do you feel trusted by leaders and governors?

Gemma Summers noted that the fact staff ask leaders for support at all shows trust.

From September they have worked with every colleague who has asked for support and if not asked they have been and offered.

Question from the Headteacher: What if staff do not want support?

Abi Saunders reported that she offered to go to a PPA and one teacher said yes but the rest of the team wondered what they were doing wrong, but now all staff will come and share. Holly Cleveley has worked on English with them and JPD asked to develop Greater Depth.

The Deputy Head stated that they have held meetings to support staff in planning.

Gemma Summers noted that if work is not as expected in books the leaders have had conversations with the year group. If it relates to an individual they take it to SLT. From that they were able to put something in place that has had an impact.

Staff will say if they do not understand something and ask leaders to clarify which shows trust. The leaders are honest and admit if they are not sure, saying they will find out how to help and that also builds trust.

Question from ST: Do you have everything you need for the role, including training?

Abi Saunders noted they are looking at non-fiction and poetry books for the upper end of the reading scale.

Gemma Summers said Amelia and herself had attended writing training this year.

Abi would like more training on spelling. (Abi already has moderation training as she is an LA moderator.)

Question from AP: Could you provide spelling training on the next INSET day?

Abi Saunders stated that many teachers would say they feel unconfident in delivering spelling. The scheme is okay but needs adapting to FJS.

Gemma Summers has seen what local schools do on spelling.

The Headteacher said all the INSET days are booked for the year but part of the staff training is on spelling. Average scores in KS2 papers have gone from 10.5 in 2015 to 13.5 in 2018.

The Deputy Head stated we need someone to come in and do spelling basics training. Spelling is a work in progress. Tomorrow a staff meeting will look at reading, writing and vocabulary. We need to do some homework before rolling anything out on spelling.

Question from AP: Are you making good use of the IT kit?

Abi Saunders reported they have videoed presentations of children's writing and some pupils type if they have poor handwriting.

Gemma Summers said that whole-class work uses Chromebooks and Ipads at least once a week in different year groups. Children also record sentences on Ipads.

Comparative judgements for Y3 showed our pupil premium children performed better than non-PP children nationally. Results for Y5 comparative judgements will be out on 6 December and Y4/Y6 will be done after Christmas.

Question from MD: You are doing a lot for average and higher pupils but I am concerned about SEND children?

Abi Saunders reported that provisions are in place for individual children and SEND groups are catered for in a completely different way in their texts and work. Gemma Summers explained that every child with SEND in Y3/Y4 she had worked with has very different needs and so are in a much smaller group of about 12 so staff can hone in on what they need.

Question from MD: Are those 12 SEND children properly catered for?

Abi Saunders explained that they do not try to teach the same books and they are catered for in a completely different way. They have conversations about very specific SEND children. They sometimes do the same tasks and sometimes not. The Deputy Head stated that some planning has not been pitched correctly so they have worked on that. They have monitored and observed quite a lot. Gemma Summers noted that this is on top of any interventions.

(Abi Saunders and Gemma Summers left the meeting.)

6) LA Building Extension Update

The steels have been ordered and will be erected in the weekend of 14 December. Progress meeting three is on Thursday at 1.30pm; MD will attend.

7) Performance Against SIP Targets

For objective 1 the second focus week (review) for Y3 and Y4 is going well. We have become more forensic and sharper. SLT will meet on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss focus weeks and how they can be more effective. They do take up a lot of time.

We may need to give staff defined roles and think strategically. They also cost more as supply cover is needed. Year leaders will be asked what they have got out of the weeks.

Question from ST: Have we incorporated within that the redefined SLT roles?

The Deputy Head said no, it has not been successful on that score. The Assistant Heads are in charge of year leaders and should be more involved with the focus weeks.

We have redefined who staff report to, with only the Deputy Head and Business Manager reporting to the Headteacher. Assistant Heads report to the Deputy Head. Year Leaders report to the Assistant Heads and manage their own teams.

The Deputy Head stated that focus weeks mean she has not had time to meet Assistant Heads formally although there are many informal occasions to meet. We may not need to do focus weeks every half-term and could just do a book look or observation instead. The leaders of the school need to effectively lead rather than just having a title.

The SLT need to talk about the most and least effective year groups. The Assistant Heads and Deputy Head attended a leadership course. Triangulation is on the calendar. We need to know where the best/worst teachers and year leaders are.

Objective 2 is covered above. For objective 3 we have pushed national online safety with staff, parents and pupils and do Wake-up Wednesdays on social media.

Question from ST: Could we set a questionnaire on online safety to each year group?

The Headteacher reported that the pupils know the right answers to give but this may not reflect what happens in reality, for example being on TikTok at age nine.

Question from ST: Do we do everything we should as a school?

The Headteacher said we always feel we could do more but this is also a parental responsibility. We work with the NSPCC and run an internet safety day with parents. The Deputy Head said we also do lessons but some parents do not engage.

Question from ST: Is there anything we have not tried yet?

The Deputy Head suggested we could invite individual specific vulnerable children's parents in.

The Chair stated we should talk to parents at the Christmas concert for 10 minutes.

The Deputy Head suggested a leaflet on every chair or a page in the program.

Objective 4 (attendance and punctuality) was discussed by governors recently.

Objective 5 includes whether staff feel trusted to do their jobs, which governors asked of the English leaders.

On 13 November about 175 children were represented at the first workshare. Every parent signed in and commented on the children's work and progress. Comments were overwhelmingly positive.

8) Governor Visits

Action L: Write up all outstanding governor visit reports.

All gobs

On Friday BS, KM, PC and NW met with the Headteacher, two Deputy Heads and the Chair of Governors from Herne Bay Junior School. The visitors were very impressed and found the visit hugely beneficial. They had asked to visit a school with high pupil premium numbers and very good results.

FJS governors explained that what has worked includes high expectations, consistency among staff, celebrating success (but not what children should be doing naturally), governance improvements and the restructuring of teaching assistants. Visitors were impressed by our children and the lack of TAs when they conducted a learning walk and spoke to children. We have an open invitation to visit Herne Bay Junior. (Note: we have now arranged a return visit on 31 January 2020.)

9) Dates from Leadership Cycle

Governors are invited to a book look tomorrow. Observations will take place on Friday. Next week will be the SIP on Tuesday morning and Wednesday from early until 10am. A triangulation will take place with SLT feedback to staff. Rehearsals start next Wednesday.

On Friday 13 December governors are invited to judge the Christmas hat competition from 10-11am; let BB know ASAP if you wish to judge. The Christmas productions are on Monday 16 December; please email the Headteacher for tickets to either the 2pm or 5.30pm show.

Tuesday 17 December is Christmas craft day with governors invited any time. Wednesday 18 December is the Christmas lunch with eating from 12.15pm. Thursday afternoon on 19 December is the Christmas party.

10) Safeguarding

A report shows safeguarding information for 25 October to 1 December. There were 53 different children recorded on CPOMs with 120 incidents in total. There were also 24 children who started at FJS who have had their provided information put onto CPOMs.

One child is on child protection, five are children in need, two have a team around the family and three have a special guardianship (two of whom were previously looked after).

Question from MD: What exactly is parental contact?

The Headteacher explained it is specific contact around a safeguarding issue of a particular child. They might get a public protection notice but they would not write that up as parental contact although there could be home issues. Many issues recorded as parental contact are also pastoral care concerns.

11) Policies

The LA have not updated the SCC information sharing protocol which is due for review, although Christine Hallett has told the Headteacher she believes it is being updated and will get back to him. Governors agreed that the current protocol will remain FJS policy.

12) AOB

12.1 Question from MD: Why do we not have a school council?

The Headteacher noted we do as we have learning leaders who work on making the curriculum more engaging and enjoyable. They recently went to a basics bank depot and sorted harvest festival goods which went to food banks.

Action M: Ask learning leaders for a report to governors.

BB

12.2 Question from BS: When did we last push parental parking/driving issues?

There was a child run over in national news.

The Headteacher said it was last Friday. The school logo will be printed into the road and a new zebra crossing will be placed next to the red pencils.

12.3 Business World (the Agresso replacement) has had a chequered start. PH will represent primary heads tomorrow at a meeting with the LA. It is making more work, is more expensive and less streamlined.

Question from AP: Who decided to change to Business World?

The Headteacher stated it was the LA's decision.

12.4 FJS had a successful two weeks at Stubbington with 65 pupils attending, shared with Hatch Warren Primary School for the first week and then Foundry Lane. Governors thanked staff for giving up their time.

12.5 We will be visited by the Head of Manor Field Primary in early spring term after they looked at the national schools comparator and picked us out as high achieving.

12.6 The Portswood Teaching School Alliance CEO will bring NQTs to see our teaching next term.

12.7 This item is covered in a confidential minute.

13) Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next whole governing body meeting is on Tuesday 7 January 2020 at 3.30pm.

The meeting closed at 5.05pm.

ACTION POINTS FROM 3 DECEMBER 2019			
	Action to be completed	By whom	By when
A	Write a report on the curriculum presentation.	JPD	7 Jan 2020
B	Attend assemblies to talk about the role of governors and give termly updates on governance.	All govts	End spring term
C	Write a health and safety report once a term.	BS	End spring term
D	Attend one visit between meetings plus events emailed from BB. Clerk to email date reminders.	All govts/ Clerk	Ongoing
E	Invite governors to staff meeting.	ST/PH	7 Jan 2020
F	Arrange a time to come in to ask children about using Chromebooks and what they added to learning.	PC/BS	7 Jan 2020
G	Confirm dates/times from leadership cycle and send to governors regularly.	Clerk/BB	Ongoing
H	Review SEND report with Robin Hayes.	NW	7 Jan 2020
I	Write to LA about their lack of support on attendance.	ST/PH	7 Jan 2020
J	Begin link governor work on curriculum.	PC/JPD	7 Jan 2020
K	Review food standards and ask how allergic children are safeguarded.	MD	7 Jan 2020
L	Write up all outstanding governor visit reports.	All govts	7 Jan 2020
M	Ask learning leaders for a report to governors.	BB	4 Feb 2020
N	Write letter stating governors' view on admission of two children.	ST/PH	7 Jan 2020
Agenda Items for Future Meetings			Date
	Update on building extension	PH	Ongoing
	Performance against SIP targets	All govts	Ongoing
	Agree newsletter updates on the budget, decisions made and governor roles	All govts	Once a term
	Safeguarding (standing item, to include CPOMS reports, safeguarding meeting summaries and accident reports)	PH	Ongoing