

Governors of Fairisle Junior School

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Whole Governing Body Tuesday 7 February 2017, 4.00pm

Governors present:

1. Steph Thurston (Chair)
2. Peter Howard (Headteacher)
3. Nikki Webb
4. Alison Powell
5. Phil Chapman
6. Jess Donovan

Associate members present:

Bev Bessey
In attendance: Sophie Lee (Clerk)
Phil Hand (Director of Newport Educational)
Glenda Lane (LA Governance and Leadership Adviser)

Governors and guests introduced themselves.

1) Apologies

Daniel Le Feuvre, Kim Hadley, Mike Dant.

Apologies were also received from Lynn Ross, LA School Improvement Partner, who had planned to attend.

2) Declarations of Interest

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

3) Governor Roles

Following the recent HMI and Regional Schools Commissioner visits it was proposed by NW that the Chair (herself) and Vice Chair (ST) swap roles. The Chair and Vice Chair had discussed this idea before the meeting.

NW and ST withdrew from the room and governors discussed the proposal. They agreed unanimously to the swap so ST was elected Chair and NW was elected Vice Chair.

Governors thanked NW for all of her hard work as Chair over the years. ST chaired the remainder of the meeting.

4) HMI Visit – 20 January 2017

HMI Inspector Gehane Gordelier conducted a section 8 OFSTED inspection on 20 January. She stated that "senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement".

Her report lists three main action points for improvement:

1. further improve the effectiveness of the governing body by governors evaluating the impact of their work and that of the school more regularly and focusing more sharply on the progress made by different groups of pupils
2. refine the School Improvement Plan (SIP) (the plan has already been refined in response to this point)
3. ensure teaching provides good levels of challenge for the most able pupils, including those that are disadvantaged.

As part of the monitoring visit, the Inspector asked to look at teachers' planning and outcomes in children's books associated with that planning. She found that staff need to increase the challenge provided, especially for the most able pupils.

Safeguarding was found to be effective. She said the school had responded swiftly to address areas identified for improvement at the last inspection and that if any inspection team is particularly critical of our 2016 data the school should complain to OFSTED. We were disappointed in the 2016 results but explain why they happened and how we responded in our self-evaluation. She said our books fly in the face of those results.

The Chair reported the feedback of the Inspector who said that the governing body has not improved enough and could be the reason the school is not rated Good at the next inspection if improvements are not evident. Schools do not get rated Requires Improvement three times in a row so if governance fails to improve the school could enter a category and an interim executive board (IEB) could replace the governing body.

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) visited the school on 3 February 2017 and his feedback was shared with governors. The RSC asked whether an IEB should have been put in place by the LA after the 2015 OFSTED inspection. He noted that the external review of governance did not have the desired impact, was poor and had let the school down as it did not get to the heart of the issues.

The board noted that the governor peer review had not had an impact either. Governors need to improve how they challenge in meetings, how they conduct school visits and how often they visit the school. Action points from meetings should be more detailed and listed with a clear timescale.

The Chair asked all governors if they are able to commit to the necessary improvements and time commitment, including further training and four-weekly meetings with regular school visits in the interim (at least two visits to school between meetings). She highlighted that if this was not possible governors may need to step down.

Glenda Lane stated that governance has changed hugely and is an integral part of leadership. It is not just about the Chair, it is about the team working together. It is a tough role with significant responsibility and commitment. Governor support from the LA has reduced but there are support organisations out there.

Glenda Lane noted that the external review did not produce the results it should have done but the LA has no quality assurance over these reviews. The board needs to be in a position to drive its own agenda.

Both the OFSTED and the RSC reports contain many positives. The OFSTED report states: "Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement." The RSC report states: "We are on a journey to Outstanding."

Glenda Lane proposed that Phil Hand, with his company Newport Educational, provides a package of support for the governing body to explore key priorities. This would be a pilot scheme to see if the model has the appropriate impact; if successful the LA could recommend the model to others.

Question from AP: As it is a pilot scheme would there be a reduced fee?

Glenda Lane: That would be a negotiation. I have no budget.

Any support programme needs to have a rapid impact. FJS could have a section 5 OFSTED inspection any time from September 2017 and the next inspection would be likely to occur in autumn 2017.

Phil Hand was for several years Chair of an IEB in Banbury where two highly paid

teachers were underperforming. An HMI Inspector asked what governors were doing to fix this and he stressed that to say this was the Headteacher's problem would be incorrect.

Phil Hand asked governors how they would tackle the third action point from OFSTED: "Ensure teaching provides good levels of challenge for the most able pupils, including those that are disadvantaged."

Governors replied that they monitor how the pupil premium (PP) is spent and its impact and check if it is targeted in the right way. A PP review was recently undertaken on how the money is spent, including the purchase of maths equipment such as weighing machines. Children work together so able and less able children collaborate.

The board monitors teaching through senior leaders who do lesson observations and help with planning. Most teaching is Good. Evidence is put in front of the board for the quality of teaching but governors recognised that they need to see evidence for themselves. That evidence can come from the governor visits schedule, work scrutinies, learning walks etc.

Visits should focus on this third action point and provide good evidence of challenge. Headteacher reports are also relevant; governors need to decide what information they want from the Headteacher and how they want it provided.

The Headteacher should give account to governors about issues they are concerned about in a Headteacher's report focused on key issues rather than a long report on everything. The issue of disadvantaged and more able children has been clearly identified and governors should fix it alongside senior leaders.

(Phil Hand and Glenda Lane left the room at this point.)

Governors discussed the improvements they need to make as a board. The board must have a view of outcomes, quality of teaching and the main issues from the SIP and the section 8 report.

Governors are above all here for the children – are they getting the teaching they need, are they making improvements, are they going to meet the required standards. The board should be able to answer questions by saying "We came into school and checked so we have our own view on this" rather than "the Headteacher told us it was so".

It was acknowledged that governors are not in school frequently enough, talking to pupils and staff and investigating the issues. They are not currently validating information. Governors need to talk with confidence about the key areas.

All governors present agreed to commit to the necessary improvements and time commitments. Following all governor visits to the school, which will be tied to the key areas of improvement, governors will write a brief report of their visit and send it to the clerk.

Action A: Tell the clerk when you will be visiting school and send her the visit reports.

All gobs

Governors can ask what children feel about their learning, are they challenged enough, are they working hard, do teachers feel supported, do they get support with planning, do they have performance reviews that are regular enough. The Headteacher gave out documents containing further suggested questions at the last meeting. Questions can be prepared in advance.

5) Regional Schools Commissioner Visit – 3 February 2017

Covered above.

6) Governor Responsibilities

A governing body action plan was distributed, covering the following points which the board will address to improve governance:

- realign governor roles and responsibilities
- agree on four-weekly meetings
- governor pictures and roles to be displayed in school
- an external review of governance to take place (governors agreed instead to accept the support package from Newport)
- all data given to the board will come with a simplified summary
- all data given to the board will be backed up with evidence from visits to school so governors can validate it
- at the end of each meeting the action points will be reviewed to confirm who is taking what action by what deadline
- written reports of governor visits will be uploaded to Google Drive
- results from the 2016 SATs will be explained to governors
- sport premium and pupil premium reviews will take place termly
- the SIP will be updated with quantifiable milestones and governors will be more involved
- governors will self-evaluate termly
- questionnaires will be sent to pupils, parents and teachers to help governors get to know their views.

(Glenda Lane returned to the room at this point.)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair researched governor roles used in Good/Outstanding schools. The following roles were agreed:

Budgets/finance = AP

Curriculum = JD

Pupil premium and sport premium = AP

Health and safety = PC

Safer recruitment = ST and BB (safer recruitment training is available from NSPCC or Capita; Glenda Lane recommends that two governors take this training)

Appeals = any three governors who are not school employees

Disciplinary = any three governors who are not school employees

Standards and progress = ST

SEND/inclusion, safeguarding, gifted and talented, attendance = NW and PC

Skills and Knowledge

Strategic planning = AP, ST

Human resources = ST

Management = ST, PC, NW

Finance management = AP

Health and safety = NW

Law = PC

Business and marketing = AP

Education = JD

Required Training

The Chair had identified key areas of training and Glenda Lane advised that governors should take the following training if they had not already done so:

Induction = all governors

Safeguarding = all governors need to read Keeping Children Safe in Education

Safer recruitment = two governors
Prevent duty = all governors
Finance = governor responsible for finance
Understanding data = all governors
Holding the school to account = all governors (support and challenge training would be relevant and would be included in the Newport training)
Legal framework for governance = all governors (included in Newport package)
National curriculum = this comes from the professional advisers (the Headteacher, Deputy and school leaders)

The clerk will complete the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) clerk's development programme which is licensed by Hampshire LA. The clerk is also responsible for the annual audit of governors' skills and training plan.

Action B: The Chair will contact KH, MD and DL to ask if they are able to commit to the board and the necessary improvements. Chair

On Wednesday 15 February Mandy Gard (School Improvement Officer) will work with governors from 1pm-3.30pm in a supportive role to kickstart the governance improvements.

7) Programme of Governing Body Meetings

7.1 Governors agreed to increase the frequency of meetings to once every four weeks. The following meeting dates were set:

Tuesday 7 March, 4pm
Tuesday 4 April, 4pm
Tuesday 2 May, 4pm
Tuesday 6 June, 4pm
Tuesday 4 July, 4pm

7.2 Governors agreed to receive a package of support from Newport Educational as part of a pilot programme. Glenda Lane will contact Phil Hand and he will be in touch. Governors thanked Glenda Lane for her help and support.

(Glenda Lane left the meeting at this point.)

8) AOB

8.1 Before the behaviour policy is reviewed governors need to produce a governors' statement of behaviour principles. A draft statement was distributed, as produced by PH and ST.

The principles cover: searching/screening pupils for banned items, use of reasonable force, the Headteacher's power to discipline beyond the school gates, seeking advice from multi-agency support and protection of teachers against malicious accusations.

We have a policy on reasonable force and have referred to the DfE guidance. The Headteacher keeps a bound and numbered red book in his office to record any use of force, but staff have never used force to move a child. Staff have been trained in the use of restraint. Risk assessments have been completed for children if staff believe they might have to be restrained; these are signed off by parents.

Searching/screening is designed to keep staff and children safe. Staff will be involved beyond the school gate if children are in uniform and their conduct could be detrimental to the school. We would seek support from outside agencies if concerns arose.

Governors approved the governors' statement of behaviour principles.

8.2 It was proposed that the school purchases the same service level agreements (SLAs) as last year, plus SIMs back-up. The price is within £500 of last year's cost across all of the SLAs.

AP inspected the list and asked the Headteacher to expand on the following points: we are buying the gold data team who are data experts and could present to governors. We are not buying the financial support SLA as we get advice from Gary Wooldridge at £1730. We do not subscribe to IT services ad-hoc as we have an IT technician in school each Wednesday. We buy in language support as needed.

Governors approved the purchase of the proposed SLAs.

8.3 Please let the clerk know whenever you come in to school and send your written visit reports to her on slee@fjsslive.net

8.4 Action C: Please email the Chair in the next few days to state what support you would like from Newport, eg: guidance on school visits, asking questions, how to hold meetings etc.

8.5 NW thanked ST for all her hard work.

9) Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next whole governing body meeting will be on Tuesday 7 March 2017 at 4.00pm.

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

All gobs

ACTION POINTS FROM 7 FEBRUARY 2017

	Action To Be Completed	By Whom	By When	Complete?
A	Tell the clerk when you will be visiting school and send her the visit reports.	All govs	Ongoing	
B	Contact KH, MD and DL to ask if they are able to commit to the board and the necessary improvements.	Chair	ASAP	
C	Email Steph Thurston to say what support governors would like to receive from Newport Educational.	All govs	14 Feb	

	Agenda Items for Future Meetings		Date	