



- GR led Governors in thanking ML for her six years' service on the Governing Body.
- It was agreed to begin the parent governor election process on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017. This would mean that the new parent governors would be in post in time for the next Governing Body meeting. Governors agreed to consider and approach parents who might be willing to stand.
- Governors also discussed possible nominees for the co-opted governor vacancy and agreed to give this further consideration.

**b) Governor Code of Practice**

Governors reviewed and agreed the Code of Practice for 2017/18. Governors present at the meeting signed a paper copy of the Code to confirm adherence to it. GB would chase up signatures from those Governors not present at the meeting.

**c) Committee memberships and governor appointments for 2017/18**

- GR agreed to continue as Chair for the coming year, but reminded Governors of the need to consider a successor for when the time came for her to stand down. She would be pleased for another Governor to join her as Co-Chair if they wished.
- Governors agreed unanimously to reappoint AA as Vice-Chair and GB as Clerk.
- Governors noted that Paula Champion was willing to continue as an Associate Member serving on the Curriculum Committee. It was agreed unanimously to reappoint her.
- Governors confirmed the following appointments for the coming year:
  - Curriculum and Equalities Committee – RW, RH, AA, DW and one vacancy; Paula Champion as Associate Member
  - Finance Committee – SM, RW, GR, RM and DW
  - Health, Safety and Premises Committee – RM, RH, RWi and one vacancy
  - Personnel Committee – CH, RW, FB, RM, RWy and one vacancy
  - Appeals – AA and SM
  - Hearings – AA, RWi and one vacancy
  - Head's Appraisal Review – GR, SM and RWy (to be confirmed)
  - Named Governor with Responsibility for Safeguarding – JH
  - SEN Governor – CH (JH to support this role)
  - Link Governor for Training – GB (non-governing Clerk).

Vacancies would be reviewed once the new co-opted and parent governors were in post.

[JH arrived at 7.05pm.]

**d) Dates for Committee meetings**

Governors were invited to confirm dates for first Committee meetings as soon as possible and, if possible, dates for the rest of the coming year at their first meetings. GB reminded Governors of the need to keep her informed of Committee dates, to enable her to draft and issue agendas in good time. It was noted that the following Committees already had first dates set:

- Finance Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 at 12.00pm
- Personnel Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 9.30am

**e) Committees' terms of reference**

Governors reviewed and agreed the terms of reference for the following Committees and meetings, subject to updating them with the new memberships agreed under c) above:

- Curriculum and Equalities Committee
- Finance Committee

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Date..... [ ]

- Health, Safety and Premises Committee
- Personnel Committee (clerk to be a member of the admin team)
- Named Governor for Safeguarding meetings.

**f) Governing Body training update**

- GR and AA reported that they had attended the Governors' Briefing earlier that day.
- RM reported that she had attended an EPM Personnel briefing earlier that day.

**6. Safeguarding-**

**a) Safeguarding checklists**

RW invited Governors to complete a safeguarding checklist. Returns could be anonymous if individuals wished, but if Governors included their names, RW would follow up any issues raised. Governors present at the meeting completed the checklist; GB would chase up checklists from those Governors not present.

**b) Keeping Children Safe in Education**

All Governors present signed to confirm that they had read and would abide by the Keeping Children Safe in Education document (September 2016 edition). GB would chase up signatures from those Governors not present.

**7. Head of Centre's Report-** RW presented her report and Governors discussed the following issues:

**a) Governors' contributions-** Governors recognised the ever-increasing workloads and pressures on resources described in the report. They commended RW's staff newsletter and the pledges from RW that this contained. RW emphasised that the Governing Body's support for these pledges and for the wider aspirations set out in her report was essential. Governors confirmed this fully and also considered how they themselves might contribute. Governors particularly considered the issue of staff wellbeing and considered a number of actions that could be taken, including:

- A letter from the Governing Body to staff expressing appreciation for their continuing efforts and hard work, well in excess of usual expectations. GR agreed to write this.
- A formal Governor visit to consider staff wellbeing.
- Where appropriate, adding praise for named members of staff as part of the observations in all Governor visit reports.
- Feedback to all staff as part of the new face to face briefings on the role of the Governing Body, its current work and its appreciation of staff efforts.
- Opportunities for supervisions with an external person. It was noted that staff could choose to access a counselling service if they wished. It was suggested that staff might wish to meet with a Governor informally or to e-mail their concerns. Meetings would need to be managed carefully, for example to ensure that formal complaints were directed appropriately and that expectations of outcomes were realistic.
- A staff survey focussing on wellbeing, the findings of which could be brought to Governors. Governors welcomed this suggestion, noting that it could be timed to assess the impact of new arrangements being implemented at the start of this term, perhaps in six months' time. Governors expressed the need for caution in carrying out such a survey, to ensure that anonymous feedback could be followed up constructively.

RW also urged Governors to consider individually what skills or expertise they might be able to offer to support the Centre's work, even if only on an ad hoc basis.

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Date..... [ ]

**b) Improvement Plan targets and Governor visits-** Governors noted the Improvement Plan targets for 2017/18 and discussed how the programme of Governor visits should be linked to these. The following visits were agreed in addition to the three confirmed at the last meeting:

- Focus 1, Children's well-being: 1) Having fun and feeling safe, both physically and emotionally – Spring term visit 1, AA and RW
- Focus 2, Children's learning: 1) and 2) SEN and the Early Help pathway, especially for funded 2 year olds – Spring term visit 2, JH, RH and RM
- Focus 3, A future for all: 1) Stimulate children's curiosity, ensuring that they maintain a zest for learning – Summer term visit 1, Governors to be confirmed.

It was also noted that:

- RW would contact GR and RWi to make arrangements for the Autumn term visit 1, meeting a teacher to discuss their action plan and area of work
- For the Summer term visit 2, Observing children's engagement in activities that have an element of number, a second Governor would need to be appointed to join DW.

**c) Progress data for 2016/17-** RW tabled papers showing autumn baseline and summer exit data for 2016/17 for children in Willow (the nursery school) and in Cherry (rising 3s). Governors discussed the following points:

- For Willow, the overall average percentage of children achieving at or above expectation had increased, from 78.4% at the beginning of the year to 81.9% at the end. The increase was less than in the previous year. This was because the 2016/17 cohort had been a particularly challenging one. Staff had had to place greatest emphasis on PSED and their success was reflected in the percentage increases in this area, from 83.6% at or above expectation at the beginning of the year to 87.8% at the end for the PSED average and increases for all of the individual categories, including from 78.7% to 85.4% for managing feelings and behaviour. The necessity of focussing on PSED had meant that progress had been slower in more 'academic' areas: whilst the Mathematics average had increased from 64.0% to 74.8%, due in part to the interests of some specific children, the Literacy average had fallen from 75.4% to 65.4%.
- Governors recognised the challenges of the 2016/17 cohort and commended staff efforts. They also noted that the age bands used for the assessments were wide, especially the 40-60 months band, meaning that all assessments could only be indicative; and that increasing expectations over the year meant that individual children had not necessarily gone backwards, but may only not have improved at the expected rate.
- For Cherry, only the prime areas of PSED, physical development and communication and language were assessed.
- Governors asked why no children in Cherry had been assessed as above expectation in any area. RW explained that staff in Cherry were developing their skills to make more nuanced assessments; the wide age bands were also an issue here.
- Governors also commented on the relatively low percentage, 68.0%, of children who were at or above expectation for health and self-care at the end of the year.
- RW advised Governors that Curriculum and Equalities Committee would be asked to review the data for both Willow and Cherry in more detail, drilling down to consider factors such as gender, English as an additional language, whether children were summer born and eligibility for the Pupil Premium.

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Date..... [ ]

- d) **Children's Centre-** RW reported that during the summer holiday, the County Council had requested a meeting to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 on 'building use'. She had been informed only on the morning of the meeting that Theresa Leavy, Service Director, would be attending, in addition to Helen Freeman, Commissioner, and Jo Maxwell, District Manager for Cambridge City. The meeting had proved to be wide-ranging and to cover many issues relating to the future of the Children's Centre at The Fields.

RW circulated to Governors a summary of points raised at the meeting and of her understanding of the financial implications for The Fields. Key issues included:

- TUPE transfer of Family Workers to the County Council
- The Children's Centre Manager post ceasing to exist
- Centralised management of the Children's Centre, possibly by a post-holder based at Babbage House
- Consequent reductions to budgets at The Fields, possibly resulting in a substantial loss of income.

Governors responded to this update with serious concern, highlighting:

- The failure to give advance notice of the true purpose of the meeting and the people who would be attending, which meant it had not been possible for Governors to attend
- The degree of detail in the proposals, when the consultation had not yet concluded
- A possible lack of understanding of the unique set-up at The Fields, the only children's centre in the County to have the Head of Centre as its Manager
- The uncertainty faced by staff currently employed by the Children's Centre, who were likely to have to reapply for their jobs
- The financial implications for the wider Centre, including the salaries for the Head of Centre, Business Manager and administrative staff, and maintenance and running costs; and the consequent implications for all staff and their workloads and the resources available to them. Funding guarantees would be essential to ensure that other parts of the Centre remained viable
- The implications for the Governing Body, which would no longer have oversight of the Children's Centre.

Governors recognised that it was positive for Abbey families that services would continue to be delivered from The Fields, and good that the excellent work done by the Centre to date had been recognised. However, both the proposals themselves and the way in which they had been communicated were deeply concerning. Governors noted that the outcome of the consultation was due to be considered by the County Council's Children and Young People Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, meaning that documents should be in the public domain by 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017. This allowed very little time for genuine consideration of consultation responses after the consultation closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017.

RW noted that Theresa Leavy had offered to come and meet with Governors. Governors agreed that GR would write to Theresa Leavy setting out Governors' concerns and attaching RW's note, seeking confirmation that the conclusions in it were correct. She would also accept the offer of a meeting with Theresa Leavy, to be arranged as a matter of urgency. ML offered to provide additional lobbying support until the end of her term of office.

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Date..... [ ]

**8. Teaching School-** RW updated Governors on plans for the Teaching School to acquire charitable Trust status. Legal advice on the process had been sought. Heads would sit on the Board and the role and responsibilities of the Governing Body would not be affected. However, with charitable status, the Teaching School would be able to apply for external funding from statutory bodies that it currently could not access.

**9. Pupil Premium-** RW reported that it was not yet known how many children attending Willow from September 2017 were eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium. An update would be brought to the next Governing Body, or to Curriculum and Equalities Committee if available sooner.

**10. Chair's Report-**

**a) Governors' training subject-** GR proposed that the Governing Body should not employ an external facilitator for its February 2018 meeting, but instead should use this meeting for reflection and forward planning. This proposal was agreed by Governors.

**11. Governor Visits Programme for 2017/18-** This had been covered under Minute 7 above.

**12. Any Other Business-** none.

**13. Date of Next Meeting -** It was noted that the next meeting of the Governing Body would be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at 6.30pm at The Fields.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

**Actions from the meeting:**

Governor Name	Minute	Action	When
GB (Clerk)	3 a), 5 b), 6 a), 6 b)	Chase up paperwork from Governors not present: pecuniary interest form, Code of Practice, safeguarding checklist, KCSIE	ASAP
GB All Governors	5 a)	Begin parent governor recruitment process Consider possible co-opted and parent governor nominees	9 <sup>th</sup> October 2017 ASAP
GB	5 c)	Review Committee memberships at next Governing Body meeting	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
All Governors	5 d)	Committees to agree first meeting dates and advise GB	ASAP
GR	7 a)	Letter of appreciation to all staff	ASAP
GB	7 b)	Circulate updated Governor visits programme	ASAP
RW		Liaise with GR and RWi to arrange their visit	ASAP
GR	7 d)	Letter to Theresa Leavy	By 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2017

Signed.....

Date..... [ ]