

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body

Tuesday 18th September 2018 at 6.30pm

<u>Present:</u>	Mrs Gloria Reed	GR	Chair of Governors
	Ms Ann Abineri	AA	Local Authority Governor
	Dr Valerie Ashton	VA	Parent Governor
	Ms Florence Blagden	FB	Parent Governor
	Mrs Caroline Hart	CH	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Ruth Holman	RH	Staff Governor
	Mrs Rebecca Mack	RM	Co-opted Governor
	Ms Sarah Moynihan	SM	Co-opted Governor
	Mr Simon Sykes	SS	Co-opted Governor
	Ms Carmile Trancoso-Gordon	CTG	Parent Governor
	Ms Rikke Waldau	RW	Head of Centre
	Rev Dr Roger Williams	RWi	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Dawn Willis	DW	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Rebecca Wylie	RWy	Parent Governor

In Attendance: Mrs Gwyneth Barton GB Clerk

1. Election of the Chair- It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously to elect GR as Chair of the Governing Body.

GR welcomed Governors to the meeting. The meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies- None.

3. Declaration of Interests- There were no declarations of interest based on the agenda items.

All Governors completed new pecuniary interest forms. GB would update the register of interests on the website.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd July 2018- Confirmed as a correct record by those present at the meeting. GB and Governors thanked AA for standing in to take these minutes at short notice.

All matters arising were covered on the main agenda, including the Governing Body self-evaluation exercise, which was discussed under Minute 5 g) below.

5. Governing Body Matters

a) Governor recruitment and appointment

- FB's term of office as a parent governor was due to end on 13th October 2018. FB confirmed that she would be happy to continue on the Governing Body as a co-opted governor. It was therefore agreed unanimously to accept FB's resignation as a parent governor and to appoint her as a co-opted governor with immediate effect.
- Governors noted that with FB's appointment as a co-opted governor, there were now two parent governor vacancies. It was agreed to run a parent governor election after the

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October half-term, once new families were more established in the Centre. All governors agreed to consider possible parents to approach at this time.

b) Governor Code of Practice

Governors reviewed and agreed the Code of Practice for 2018/19 and all signed a paper copy of the Code to confirm adherence to it.

c) Standing Orders

Governors reviewed and agreed Standing Orders, subject to the updating in Section 1 of the expiry dates for the terms of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

d) Committee memberships and governor appointments for 2018/19

- Governors agreed unanimously to reappoint AA as Vice-Chair and GB as Clerk.
- Governors noted that Paula Champion on sabbatical until January 2019. It was agreed unanimously to reappoint her as an Associate Member of the Curriculum Committee, subject to Paula confirming her willingness to serve when she returned.
- Governors confirmed Committee appointments as circulated with the agenda, subject to the following amendments:
 - Curriculum and Equalities Committee – RM to join
 - Hearings – DW to join
 - Named Governor with Responsibility for Safeguarding – GR and CTG to be named jointly, with a view to CTG taking on sole responsibility in due course. CTG noted that she had recently attended a three-day safeguarding course in an external capacity and had also booked to attend the local authority's safeguarding training for governors.
- GR reminded Governors of the need to keep in mind succession planning for the Chair. AA noted that whilst she was happy to continue as Vice-Chair, her other commitments meant that she would not be able to take on the role of Chair.

e) Dates for Committee meetings

Most Committees had already agreed their first meeting date for the year. RM agreed to set a date for Health, Safety and Premises Committee. GR, CTG and RW arranged a Safeguarding meeting for Friday 28th September 2018 at 9.30 am.

f) Committees' terms of reference

Governors reviewed and agreed the terms of reference for the following Committees and meetings:

- Curriculum and Equalities Committee, subject to the addition of RM to the membership
- Finance Committee, subject to amending the third bullet point under Section 7 to increase the Committee's delegation to write off irrecoverable debts from £500 to £1,000
- Health, Safety and Premises Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Named Governor for Safeguarding meetings, subject to the addition of CTG jointly with GR as the named governors.

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g) Governing Body training

Governors reviewed the notes of the self-evaluation exercise carried out at the previous meeting and:

- Noted that the exercise had been useful and suggested that it should be done again at regular intervals
- Welcomed the considerable number of positive comments
- Agreed with the comments made about the continuing uncertainty both locally and nationally; the challenges this brought; and the need to support the Senior Leadership Team and all other staff effectively.

Governors agreed the following actions:

- Communication to Governors, especially with so much happening between meetings: Head and Chair's reports to be as early as possible on Governing Body agendas; RW to begin her report with a bullet point list of key events and Committee decisions since the last meeting
- Effectiveness of sub-committees: RW commented that some Committees were more business-like than others. Because its scope was so wide-ranging, Curriculum and Equalities presented the greatest challenge in terms of balancing the level of Governors' involvement. The Governor visits programme, which would be reviewed later in the meeting (Minute 11 below), would help to provide this Committee with better momentum and focus. It was suggested that each Committee be asked to review and consider how to improve its effectiveness.
- Governors' key skills: GR invited all Governors to contact her if they felt that their skills were not being used to capacity.
- Communication with parents: RW noted that there had been some confusion over summer term dates. The process surrounding this was being reviewed. Parents' newsletters would continue, with one just sent out. RWy and VA had formed a parents' group, which RW would attend and update when invited. It was hoped that this group would help to disseminate information to other parents. Governors welcomed the establishment of the group.
- Collation of Governing Body papers: GB agreed to investigate this, with input from Governors if interested. SM noted that her PA may be able to help.

It was suggested that actions identified above could be added to the Centre's Improvement Plan. RW agreed to review this.

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. All Governors completed and returned the checklist.

b) Keeping Children Safe in Education

Governors were invited to sign to confirm that they had read and would abide by the Keeping Children Safe in Education document. There was a new edition for September 2018, with changes from the previous version listed in Annex H. RW noted that key updates related to sexual exploitation and violence; homelessness; domestic abuse; and children missing from

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education. Some Governors signed their confirmation; GB would follow up with those Governors not yet ready to sign.

RM noted that Part 1 and the list of changes in Annex H would be circulated to all Centre staff.

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

a) Changing profile of children within the Centre- RW advised Governors that the introduction of the 30 hours was causing the profile of children within the Centre to change, together with the children's patterns of attendance:

- Attendance was becoming more varied, with children leaving at different points in the day. This made it harder for teachers to plan and teach and highlighted again the tension between childcare and education. Attendance overall was lower in the afternoon.
- There were 20 Bluebells children turning 3 in January, whom it would not be possible to move to Willow because their attendance requirements did not match the exact slots available.
- Keeping these children in Bluebells would mean that it would not be possible to bring new 3 year olds into the Centre in January or April. A waiting list had been set up. RW was keen to involve the local authority, as it was likely that these families would not be able to find alternative provision locally. She had also suggested that it would be useful to keep in touch with these families, for example through a weekly drop-in, with a view to bringing them in next September.
- The age profile of the baby room would also be affected, with children remaining in this room after they turned 2 and no new places available for babies until September 2019.
- In terms of finances, a lower staff to children ratio was required for 3 year olds. However, the longer-term sustainability of the Centre would be adversely affected if not enough new children came in.

b) National update- National uncertainty over the funding of maintained nursery schools continued. A group of MPs had recently written to the Government asking them to establish long-term funding. The Treasury had commissioned a short piece of research on maintained nursery schools. The submission from The Fields had been circulated with the agenda. This research had seemingly focussed primarily on the differences in governance between maintained nursery schools and private providers and the financial implications of these.

c) Local update- The planned meeting between Nursery Heads and the local authority's Director of Education, Jon Lewis, had been postponed. The funding for maintained nursery schools was supposedly agreed until 2020 but the local authority had questioned this, given its own financial uncertainty. RW advised Governors that she had just received notification that the hourly rate paid to the Centre was being reduced, equating to a budget reduction of £14,000 a year.

d) Schools Forum- RW reported that she had recently attended a meeting of Schools Forum, at which schools' end of year financial positions had been reviewed. Some schools had been reporting carry forwards of up to £160,000, in contrast to the carry forward at The Fields of £5,000. County Councillors had been emphasising to schools that carry forwards should be used, otherwise it made no sense to lobby Government on the basis of inadequate funding. RW had questioned whether carry forwards could be redistributed to other schools.

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- e) **Nursery Heads-** Nursery Heads had also met recently and had discussed a number of issues, many relating to collaboration:
- Some nursery schools had ended 2017/18 in a much stronger financial position than The Fields, but there had been no suggestion that funds be pooled. Nursery schools that were currently better off had emphasised that they did not expect this situation to continue.
 - Heads had considered how they might bring their Governing Bodies closer together. GR suggested that it might be useful for nursery school Chairs to meet. RW noted that Huntingdon in particular was experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining Governors, putting them at risk of takeover by another school. Another request had been made for nursery schools' Governing Bodies to appoint a joint pool of Governors for appeals. The other nursery schools had remained reluctant to do this but had been sympathetic to Huntingdon's recruitment problems. GR offered to meet with the Head at Huntingdon to share some of her ideas. SS also offered to contribute, noting that he had some contacts on the Oxmoor estate in Huntingdon whom he could ask if they might be willing to become Governors.
- Governors noted that Nursery Heads would be continuing to meet regularly.
- f) **Improvement Plans-** Governors received the evaluation of the Improvement Plan for 2017/18 and the draft Improvement Plan for 2018/19. RW explained that the 2018/19 Improvement Plan would be broken down into action plans which would be shared with Curriculum and Equalities Committee and would be available to other Governors if they wished to see them. RW asked Governors to consider whether possible challenges should be identified in the 2018/19 Improvement Plan, as had been done in the previous version. Governors commented that most of the challenges anticipated for the coming year were well known and beyond the Centre's control: the challenge would be to respond to them appropriately.
- g) **Early closure-** RW noted as previously agreed, the Centre was now closing at 4.00pm on Mondays, with two early closures having taken place so far. Parents were adjusting to the new arrangements. The positive benefits for staff were already apparent, with constructive meetings taking place between Willow and Cherry staff; more time for staff to prepare and reflect; and Cherry staff transforming the children's outdoor environment. The impact of early closure on Mondays would continue to be monitored and reported to Governors. Governors also asked RW to send them details of proposed staff training. *[RW has advised since the meeting that this is set out in the Head's end of year report presented to Governors on 3rd July 2018.]*
- h) **Ofsted-** Governors noted that an Ofsted inspection of Cherry was expected this term, probably in November.
- i) **Teachers-** Paula Champion was on sabbatical until January 2019. RH was currently teaching her class, with additional cover employed for teachers' planning and preparation time.
- j) **Local authority financial adviser-** Janet Jallow, local authority financial adviser, would not be returning to The Fields. Instead the Centre was receiving support from Ray Byford. As a more senior local authority employee, it was possible that he might help to raise the profile of the challenges faced by The Fields.

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- k) **Abbey Meadows-** RW reported that she had still not been formally approached by the local authority concerning Abbey Meadows's plans to academise. However, surveys of The Fields had been taking place, including its boilers and electricity supply.
- l) **Fire alarm system-** RM reported that the local authority was looking into the fire alarm system, with surveys being carried out.

8. Teaching School

RW noted that she would be reducing her input to the Teaching School this year, not least because the time she had contributed previously had not been offset by the payments received. She also noted that nationally, attitudes towards Teaching Schools appeared to be shifting.

9. Pupil Premium

AA asked whether the figure recorded accurately reflected the number of children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium. RM confirmed that the figure had been checked. However, patterns of deprivation in specific local neighbourhoods were changing, particularly with poverty in new developments not always being identified. RW emphasised that the Centre's spend on interventions far exceeded the EYPP funding received for particular children.

10. Chair's Report

GR reported that she had met with Mike Davey, Chair of Governors at Abbey Meadows, shortly before the summer break and would be seeing him again soon. Academisation of the school was progressing, with much discussion of property issues. Both the name of the school and its governance arrangements would be changing. GR would keep Governors informed.

GR also reported that she would be attending a meeting the following day to discuss a memorandum of understanding with the Children's Centre.

11. Governor Visits Programme for 2018/19

RW had circulated proposed Governor visits for 2018/19 with the agenda. The following dates and people to undertake visits were agreed:

- Autumn term visit 1, Outdoor play and continuous provision in Cherry – AA and VA, Friday 12th October 2018 at 10.00 am
- Autumn term visit 2, Makaton and communication – GR and DW, Thursday 29th November 2018 at 9.30 am
- Spring term visit 1, Children's wellbeing: confidence and emotional support – CTG and RWy, Friday 25th January 2019 at 9.30 am
- Spring term visit 2, Imaginative play and open-ended resources in Cherry and Willow – FB and RWy, Monday 11th March 2019 at 9.30 am
- Summer term visit 1, The role of the unexpected/the role of provocations – SS and RWi, Wednesday 8th May 2019 at 9.30 am
- Summer term visit 2, SEN and the Early Help pathway, especially for funded 2 year olds – CTG and CH, Monday 8th July 2019 at 9.30 am

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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 4th December 2018 at 6.30pm at The Fields.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Actions from the meeting:

Governor Name	Minute	Action	When
GB (Clerk)	5 a)	Prepare to run parent governor elections	After October half-term
RM	5 e)	Set date for meeting of Health, Safety and Premises Committee	ASAP
RW, GB and all Governors	5 g)	Follow-up actions to review of self-evaluation exercise	ASAP
GB	6 b)	Follow up KCSIE signatures	By 4 th December 2018
RW with GR and SS	7 e)	Contact Huntingdon Nursery to offer help with Governor recruitment	ASAP

Draft- subject to confirmation

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