



The Fields Nursery School, Galfrid Road, Cambridge, CB5 8ND

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body

Thursday 7th November 2019 at 6.30pm

<u>Present:</u>	Mrs Gloria Reed	GR	Chair of Governors
	Mrs Ann Abineri	AA	Local Authority Governor
	Dr Valerie Ashton	VA	Parent Governor
	Ms Florence Blagden	FB	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Ruth Holman	RH	Staff Governor
	Mrs Rebecca Mack	RM	Co-opted Governor
	Dr Luisa Pedro	LP	Parent Governor
	Ms Carmile Trancoso-Gordon	CTG	Parent Governor
	Rev Dr Roger Williams	RWi	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Dawn Willis	DW	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Rebecca Wylie	RWy	Parent Governor
<u>In Attendance:</u>	Mrs Gwyneth Barton	GB	Clerk
	Ms Paula Champion	PC	NEU Representative [6.30pm-6.45pm]

1. Welcome- GR chaired the meeting. The meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies- Accepted from Sarah Moynihan (SM), Simon Sykes (SS) and Rikke Waldau (RW).

3. Declaration of Interests- There were no new declarations of interest.

4. Briefing on Funding Campaign- Paula Champion, NEU representative, attended the meeting to update Governors on national and local campaigning for funding for maintained nursery schools. Governors noted that:

- The Government had recently announced that funding for maintained nursery schools would continue until the end of 2020/21.
- The announcement had followed a period of intensive campaigning by Heads and other staff, Governors and parents. The national campaign had formed in July and had included the NAHT, the NEU, the APPG and Early Education. Campaign activities included:
 - A single online petition, which was still running and would be submitted to the new Government following the December election
 - Publication of leaflets and posters
 - Rallies
 - A document called *100 Years of Tackling Inequality*, which was aimed specifically at informing County Councillors who would be taking funding decisions
 - Motions to County Councils across the country; a motion was due to be considered by Cambridgeshire County Council in December.

Signed:

Date:



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- The calling of the general election in December had opened up new opportunities for lobbying. A national election campaign on education funding had been launched by the School Cuts website. Commitment would be sought from all political parties to state education, including the early years sector. This should mean a levelling up for all to the quality of the maintained nursery schools' offer.
- Locally, despite the continuation of funding to 2020/21, the Service Director for Education at the County Council, Jon Lewis, was continuing discussions with the nursery school Heads and Chairs on what provision might look like in Cambridgeshire longer-term.
- Staff at The Fields were anxious about the ongoing uncertainty and continued lobbying was essential. All Governors were invited to support this lobbying, for example by:
 - Signing the petition
 - Displaying a banner
 - Helping to distribute leaflets and posters
 - Writing to local media
 - Attending the County Council meeting debating the motion in December.

Governors thanked Paula for her update and her efforts and expressed their continuing support for the maintained nursery schools campaign.

5. Open and Confidential Minutes of the Meeting of 10th September 2019- The open and confidential minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 10th September 2019 were confirmed as correct records.

All matters arising were covered on the agenda.

6. Governance Issues

- a) **Name change-** Governors received confirmation of the change of name from The Fields Children's Centre to The Fields Nursery School. The new Instrument of Government had been circulated with the agenda.
- b) **Committee membership-** It was agreed to appoint RH as an additional member of the Personnel Committee.

7. Head of Centre's Report- The Head of Centre's report was received. Governors discussed the following issues:

Data- Staff had completed initial assessments for rising 3s (Cherry) and for children in the nursery school (Willow). The assessments considered whether children were below, at or above age-related expectation in three key areas: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language. RH tabled percentage figures for both cohorts for the current



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year, 2019/20, and for the previous year, 2018/19. These enabled Governors to compare starting points across the two years. Governors noted that:

- The majority of rising 3s this year were coming in at similar levels to the previous year's cohort.
- Most of the children in Willow this year had been in Cherry the previous year and it was possible to trace progress made by this group during 2018/19. It was hoped that even more would be made in the coming year.
- Speaking assessments were relatively low, with 48% of children below age-related expectation in both Cherry and Willow. It was thought that this was in part because children were spoken at, not with, at home. Governors asked what percentage of these children had English as an additional language. RH explained that this information had not yet been extrapolated.
- 58% of children in Cherry were below age-related expectation in health and self-care. This assessment covered skills such as toileting and dressing. RH noted that The Fields was increasingly having to address skills that should be promoted by parents. It was noteworthy that only 20% of this year's Willow cohort was below age-related expectation in health and self-care, many of the children having benefited from Cherry staff support in the previous year.

Overall, RH reported that staff in both Cherry and Willow had reviewed the data and were constructing curriculum plans taking into account both what children were doing well and areas for enhancement. The weekly staff meetings in Cherry and Willow had facilitated this work.

Federation- The consultation on The Fields joining the Cambridge Nursery Federation had been published, as previously agreed by the Governing Body. Emma Dean at the County Council was collating responses. An update meeting with Emma was due to take place on 13th November 2019.

The catering team at The Fields was successfully delivering cooked meals to Brunswick and Colleges, with the total number of covers prepared back up to 100 per day. The courier delivery of the meals to the other nurseries was working well and Environmental Health were satisfied that food safety measures were being met or exceeded. Governors congratulated staff on this successful initiative.

Property issues- The Galfrid had now academised and the County Council was continuing to follow through on property issues. The heating system at The Fields was expected to be separated from the system at The Galfrid next summer. In the meantime, faulty radiators at The Fields were not being repaired and standalone heaters were being used.

The security system at The Fields needed to be updated. RM would be calling in a company to quote on replacing the key fob system.

Head of Centre- Governors thanked RH for her work as Acting Head during RW's absence. GR and RH reported that they had both met with RW.



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SEND- RH reported that two applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children with SEND had been successful. In total seven children currently at The Fields were expected to need EHCPs, as it was the view of The Fields that they would not be able to start school without them. Governors welcomed the successful applications, noting that these would bring in funding to help pay for a member of staff.

Discussions with the local authority

Fields financial position

[These items are covered in more detail in the confidential minutes.]

8. Children's Centre Memorandum of Understanding- RM explained that staff at The Fields normally met with Children's Centre representatives in October to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and to plan for the next financial year. However, this October's meeting had been cancelled because of continuing uncertainties both at The Fields and for the Children's Centres, whose budget for 2020/21 had not yet been confirmed.

Governors noted that the Children's Centres were being restructured again, with some groups running fortnightly instead of weekly and not running in the holidays. The Fields would need to discuss holiday arrangements with the Children's Centre, since the current MoU stated that The Fields would provide a member of staff during the holidays, which was incompatible with The Fields' move to term-time only opening.

9. Chair's Report- GR updated Governors on meetings she had attended since the last Governing Body meeting:

- 27th September 2019 – Meeting with Amanda Bannister, Executive Head of the Cambridge Nursery Federation, and Chris Willis Pickup and Carolyn Purser, co-Chairs. The meeting had been positive and the Federation was due to discuss The Fields joining at their next Governing Body meeting on 3rd December 2019.
- 3rd October 2019 – Meeting with Emma Dean, local authority officer allocated by Hazel Belchamber to support the federation process. Emma's guidance was proving very useful. Emma would shortly be meeting with HR at the County Council, to discuss the business case for federation submitted by The Fields. She would then be making recommendations on this to Hazel Belchamber.
- 3rd October 2019 – Governors' termly briefing. This had included: Jon Lewis talking about SEND; the challenges faced across all educational sectors in Cambridgeshire and particularly in Peterborough; an update on the structure of Governor Services, with George Hayes as Strategic Lead for Governance and Anna-Marie Cooper responsible for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. AA and CTG noted that they had also attended Governors' termly briefings.
- 14th October 2019 – Meeting with RW.



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- 18th October 2019 – Interview with the *Cambridge Independent* on funding for maintained nursery schools. A copy of the resulting article was circulated at the meeting.

10. Governor Visits- The report of the visit on SEN and the Early Help pathway carried out by LP and RWi was received. Governors discussed the following points:

- The Fields benefited from having RH as SENCo, with the support of other staff; all early years settings including PVI's were required to have SENCos, but these were not necessarily qualified teachers with the same level of expertise.
- All children were assessed for SEND, meaning that possible issues were identified early.
- Early identification and intervention had significant benefits. The support on personal, social and emotional development offered to some children throughout their time in Cherry and Willow could mean that they did not require additional support by the time they started school.
- There had been a recent change to the process for applying for funding for children with SEND, which meant that applications could now be made as soon as children turned 3. This earlier opportunity was welcome.

11. Any Other Business- VA noted that she was expecting her second baby in January and asked whether she would be able to bring the baby to Governing Body meetings. GR confirmed that she was welcome to do so if she wished.

12. Date of Next Meeting- It was noted that the next meeting of the Governing Body would be held on Tuesday 3rd December 2019 at 6.30pm at The Fields.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.