

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

GREENFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ellesborough Close, South Oxhey, Watford WD19 6QH

MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY 2017, 6.00PM

Attendance:

HEADTEACHER

Helen Cook

LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR (1):

Emma Maitland-Gray, *Vice Chair*

PARENT GOVERNORS (3):

~~Manish Patel~~

Nick Paul

Katie Tarrant

STAFF GOVERNORS (1):

Kim May

CO-OPTED GOVERNORS (4):

Larry Bowerman

Emma Maitland-Gray, *Vice Chair*

Carol Prior

David Ray, *Chair*

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Lisa Hartley

Ian McGowan

Kate Shockley

Ricky Turner

OBSERVERS:

John Burt, *Deputy Headteacher*

Joanne Evans, *Deputy Headteacher*

CLERK:

Liz Elgar

Strikethrough denotes non-attendance

1. WELCOME / CONSIDER AND CONSENT TO ABSENCES

1.1 Welcome: Ian McGowan was welcomed to his first meeting as an Associate Member.

1.2 Apologies: No apologies had been received.

2. DECLARATION BY GOVERNORS OF INTERESTS, PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE, IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

2.1 Kate Shockley declared that she teaches Michelle Cheetham's son at Merchant Taylor's School.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND GOVERNOR VACANCIES

3.1 Election of Parent Governor

3.1.1 The Headteacher reported that no nominations had been received following the recent Parent Governor Election process.

- 3.1.2 The Headteacher agreed to postpone repeating the election process until the new school year in September, and after Governor Day on Thursday 25th May, when the Governing Body would undergo a Skills Audit to determine what specific skills or experience might benefit the Governing Body.

ACTION: Headteacher

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH MARCH 2017

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

5.1 Safer Recruitment Training (Item 5.2)

- 5.1.1 The Chair encouraged governors to access the NSPCC Safer Recruitment Training, which Kate Shockley reported that she completed and found to be “very useful”, and for which licences were available.

- 5.1.2 Michelle Cheetham agreed to undertake this training as soon as possible.

ACTION: Michelle Cheetham

- 5.1.3 The Chair reminded Governors and Associate Members of the Governing Body to notify Lisa Hartley of all training attended for her records.

- 5.2 Monitoring governor visits (Item 5.4):** The Chair notified governors that Visits Forms and the folder were available in the school office.

- 5.3 Governors’ Award (Item 5.7):** John Burt noted that purchasing the cup to be used for the award remained a point for action and he agreed to utilise some contacts he had in doing this.

ACTION: John Burt

5.4 Single school policy review schedule (Item 5.8)

- 5.4.1 The Chair reported that Herts for Learning had introduced a tool called the “Compliance Tracker”, which was a spreadsheet template to be downloaded and populated in order to manage the compliance of school policies.

- 5.4.2 Michelle Cheetham asked where the school’s Compliance Tracker document would be kept. The Headteacher confirmed that it would be kept in her Governor File and an electronic version kept on her hard drive. Although it would not be accessible via a shared drive, it would be reviewed at Governing Body meetings and all reviews would be recorded in the minutes.

- 5.4.3 The Governing Body agreed to adopt the Compliance Tracker going forward.

ACTION: Headteacher to forward the spreadsheet to the Chair for initial population of data

5.5 Governing Body Code of Conduct (Item 5.9)

- 5.5.1 Hard copies of the Governing Body Code of Conduct were circulated, signed by all present and collected by the Headteacher to be stored in her Governor File.

- 5.5.2 Lisa Hartley agreed to keep a record of which Governors and Associate Members had signed the Governing Body Code of Conduct.

ACTION: Lisa Hartley

- 5.6 Multi Academy Trust – Northwood School (Item 7.4):** The Headteacher clarified that after visiting the Headteacher of Northwood School and considering the proposal to join their MAT, the governors did not feel that it was the right time to take the matter forward. The Headteacher is to contact Northwood to relay this to the Head.
ACTION: Headteacher
- 5.7 Electronic payment system (Item 9.1)**
- 5.7.1 The Headteacher reported that the school has a payment system in place that could possibly be extended for parents to use and she agreed to investigate if that would be more economical than other options.
ACTION: Headteacher
- 5.7.2 The Headteacher added that she aimed to have an electronic payments system in place by September 2017.
- 5.8 Annual Energy Survey (Item 9.5)**
- 5.8.1 The Chair and John Burt agreed to report back if any recommendations made following the Annual Energy Survey could be practically achieved.
- 5.8.2 The Vice Chair asked for an example of a recommendation that could be acted upon, and John suggested the reduction and monitoring of light usage.
- 5.8.3 The Vice Chair also recommended that the Governing Body reduce its use of paper.
ACTION: John Burt / Chair
- 5.9 Keeping Children Safe in Education (Item 11.1):** The Vice Chair agreed to ensure and record that all Governors and Associate Members had read the Department of Education ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ document on Governor Day on 25th May.
ACTION: Vice Chair
- 5.10 School office (Item 11.4)**
- 5.10.1 The Headteacher listed the obstacles to resolving the issue of the security of the school office, which were:
- Being granted Planning Permission to alter the building, as it was listed Grade 2 by English Heritage
 - Meeting building regulations, even if Planning Permission is granted
 - Finding the capital funding necessary
- 5.10.2 The Headteacher explained that building a conservatory type structure had been suggested, as it would possibly be considered a temporary structure. However this had not yet been costed and there may be concerns around working conditions for staff.
- 5.10.3 The Headteacher reported that Herts had suggested the use of keypads on internal doors at either end of the central corridor. However there was a concern that this could result in enclosing an adult and child in a confined space, as children use the corridors throughout the day.
- 5.10.4 In response to Michelle Cheetham’s suggestion of dividing the corridor, the Headteacher explained that it was too narrow to allow this, plus the amount of glass and the fire doors would also make this impossible.
- 5.10.5 Governors suggested installing higher quality monitoring equipment until a longer-term solution to security could be found. The Headteacher answered that no monitoring system could Fully resolve the issues that have been raised and the current system although not high-tech, provides a good level of security.
- 5.10.6 The Chair, Headteacher and John Burt agreed to meet after SATs week to undertake a risk assessment of the school office and entrance area in order to identify possible short-term actions that could be taken to mitigate any risk.

ACTION: Chair; Headteacher; John Burt

- 5.10.7 Following this risk assessment, the Chair, the Headteacher and John Burt agreed to write to Herts County Council to explain these difficulties and the necessity of building externally onto the school in order to create a secure "holding area" essential for safeguarding the children. This letter would be copied to Jeremy Loukes and the Herts Health & Safety Officer who visited the school to inspect the entrance arrangements.

ACTION: Chair; Headteacher; John Burt

- 5.10.8 Ian McGowan encouraged the school apply for external funding for modifying or rebuilding the school office and agreed to the Headteacher's suggestion that he liaise with John Burt regarding this and meet with herself, the Vice Chair and John Burt while they undertook the risk assessment and drafted a letter to Herts.

ACTION: Ian McGowan

5.10.9

- 5.10.9 The Vice Chair informed the Governing Body that the school's Herts Improvement Partner Jeremy Loukes has advised that the school must now be seen to be moving beyond the discussion stage to take action regarding this issue.

- 5.11 Budget discrepancy due to Herts Payroll error (Item 12.3):** The Headteacher agreed to write to Cheryl Faint at Herts Financial Services to insist that they waive SLA (Service Level Agreement) fees for this year and also give a 50% discount on the SLA next year while giving specific examples of their errors and mismanagement.

ACTION: Headteacher

The Governing Body noted that all other points for action had been either fulfilled or would be covered within the agenda of this meeting

6. TO RECEIVE THE HEADTEACHER'S VERBAL REPORT

6.1 30 Hours Free Childcare:

- 6.1.1 The Headteacher reported that she had a list of children who had been allocated Nursery places to start in September 2017 and that after the take-up of places had been confirmed on 5th May, she would send a letter to all parents informing them of the schools proposed plans for 30 hours free childcare, directing them to the website from where they could apply for the voucher code for childminder care and requesting that they respond before half-term (Friday 26th May).
- 6.1.2 The Headteacher reported that she had been in contact with a local childminder regarding the extra provision of childcare on the school premises and, if there was sufficient take-up, she would notify the childminder, who would calculate if providing childcare on the school premises would be cost-effective for them.
- 6.1.3 The Chair asked the Headteacher if the provision of childcare by a childminder on the premises would have financial implications for the school. The Headteacher replied that the childminder would pay a minimum charge to the school for the hire of the premises.
- 6.1.4 In response to a question from the Chair about whether insurance and liability cover was in place for this arrangement, the Headteacher explained that all registered childminders have this in place already, however checks would need to be made that their insurance would be valid in the setting of the school premises.

6.2 Staffing

- 6.2.1 The Headteacher informed the Governing Body that she had been advertising for staff since February, as school staff have until 31st May to resign in order to start a new role in

September, therefore it is advantageous to advertise during the spring term. She reported that she had only received three responses to advertisements, from which one impressive candidate was interviewed and subsequently offered a 1% contract for the remainder of this school year and three days per week from September 2017.

- 6.2.2 Nick Paul asked what is a 1% contract and the Headteacher replied that it is effectively a supply contract.
- 6.2.3 Michelle Cheetham asked what might be the reasons for the apparent lack of interest in jobs at the school. The Headteacher listed the following; there were now fewer teacher training applicants than previously and fewer people entering into the teaching profession, the neighbouring London Boroughs pay more in in both salaries and Outer London Weighting (£3,000 - £4.000 per annum) and due to tighter school budgets, extra financial incentives are difficult to offer and can be devisive.
- 6.2.4 Nick Paul asked if any staff would be leaving this term and the Headteacher replied that one teacher was leaving for unavoidable personal reasons, unrelated to their experience at the school.
- 6.2.5 Ian McGowan suggested recruiting via TeachFirst, Teach Direct or the Graduate Teacher Programme. The Headteacher replied that the school would be taking part in TeachDirect from September, however students are to be regarded as additions to the current staffing rather than as filling vacancies or gaps.
- 6.2.6 Ricky Turner asked the Headteacher what type of plan student teachers placed at Greenfields would work to. The Headteacher explained that they would work alongside teachers in order to build-up experience and skills progressively before eventually being given supervised teaching time.
- 6.2.7 The Vice Chair wished to add that she and the Headteacher had drawn Herts Improvement Partner Jeremy Loukes's attention to the current difficulties of recruiting staff.

6.3 Early Years review

- 6.3.1 The Headteacher reported that the Ofsted review of Early Years had taken place during the previous week and agreed to report back when their report had been received.
ACTION: Headteacher
- 6.3.2 The Headteacher notified the Governing Body that the 'Requires Improvement' grade had remained following the review. There were some safeguarding issues that were addressed immediately. A significant factor is the turnover of staff over the last four years (4th Nursery teacher /EY Leader and 6th Reception teacher). This has not allowed year on year development and embedding of high quality practice.
- 6.3.3 Ricky Turner asked whether the inspectors would have taken into account that children have lower than average ability scores on entry to Greenfields Nursery. The Vice Chair responded that this had been clearly put across during the review
- 6.3.4 The Headteacher also observed that inspectors had identified several points for action that were in fact already on the school's action plan.
- 6.3.5 The Governing Body noted that points for action identified in the Early Years and JARV reports would be items on the agenda of the next full Governing Body meeting.
ACTION: Clerk [for agenda]
- 6.3.6 The Governing Body agreed that Early Years would be a standing item on the agenda of full Governing Body meetings while action points in response to the review were outstanding.
ACTION: Clerk [for agenda]

6.4 JARV (Joint Annual Review Visit)

- 6.4.1 The Headteacher reported that Herts Improvement Partner Jeremy Loukes had spent almost the whole day at the school on Friday 28th April to carry out the JARV.

- 6.4.2 Nick Paul asked the Headteacher if she had a feeling for the outcome of the review. She replied that she did not feel confident that the points and arguments clearly made by herself, the SLT, the Chair and the Vice Chair would finally influence his overall decision.

Joanne Evans arrived at this point

6.5 Budget *The Chair circulated Budget Summary Report and Headteacher talked through*

- 6.5.1 The Headteacher explained that these were indicative figures for funding for 2019-2020 and not final figures and that although the forecast has had to be based on the current situation, the situation could change. She added that the school now only had to budget for two years ahead and not three years, as previously.
- 6.5.2 The Headteacher pointed out that staffing accounted for 75.26% of the budget, as hoped, and that there was flexibility within it for Teaching Assistants' hours.
- 6.5.3 Kate Shockley asked what the Apprenticeship Levy was and the Headteacher explained that is a new central government requirement.
- 6.5.4 Carole Prior asked if the school was expected to cover dinner debts. The Headteacher replied that there was a contingency to cover them if necessary.
- 6.5.5 Michelle Cheetham asked whether Play Rangers was part of the school curriculum and the Headteacher replied that it was. Staff work hard to make links with the curriculum to the outdoor learning led by the Play Rangers, which regularly covers aspects of PSHE, topic and science.
- 6.5.6 Ricky Turner asked the Headteacher to expand on the heading of 'Music' and she explained that this was money spent on using the Herts Music Service to provide tenor horn tuition in Year 4.
- 6.5.7 Carole Prior asked about funding for the biodome. The Chair replied that £10,000 of capital from the Heritage Lottery Fund had gone into the budget and then been taken straight out to pay for the biodome.
- 6.5.8 The Headteacher formally submitted the budget to the Governing Body, confirming that the Chair had read through it in detail. The Governing Body agreed the budget.

7. REPORTBACK ON FINANCE AND PREMISES

It was noted that Finance and Premises items had also been covered within Items (School Office)

7.2 Biodome

- 7.2.1 The Headteacher reported that the decking had been laid for the biodome and that the dome would be placed on it by 22nd May.
- 7.2.2 She added that John Burt would manage the biodome once it was in place.

7.3 Premises Annual Audit meeting: John Burt reported that he and the Chair would arrange the Premises Annual Audit meeting this within the next few weeks.

ACTION; Chair; John Burt

8. REPORTBACK ON GOVERNORS' TRAINING AND VISITS TO THE SCHOOL

8.1 Carol Prior

- 8.1.1 Carol Prior reported that she had visited Early Years on Tuesday 21st March, Wednesday 29th March, Tuesday 18th April and Thursday 20th April.

- 8.1.2 Carol Prior reported that she was compiling list of hints and tips for governors' visits to the school, which she agreed to have ready for the next Governing Body meeting.

ACTION: Carole Prior

- 8.2 **All governors:** The Chair encouraged all Governors and Associate Members to visit the school at least once per term and to complete the Visits Form (*see also Item 5.2*).

8.3 **Governor Day, 25th May**

- 8.3.1 The Headteacher reminded governors the Governor Day would take place at the school on Thursday 25th May, with training and team exercises as per last year.

- 8.3.2 The Headteacher agreed to e-mail all Governors and Associate Members in order to confirm attendance of Governor Day and plan activities accordingly. She therefore appealed that all governors respond to this message as soon as possible.

9. **SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

See also Item 5.10

- 9.1 **Actions following from Early Years and JARV:** The Headteacher and Vice Chair agreed to meet to look at Safeguarding actions identified in the Early Years report, once it has been made available.

ACTION: Headteacher; Vice Chair

9.2 **School lockdown**

- 9.2.1 The Headteacher reported that recently a man being pursued by the police had entered the school grounds during the chase, however the security clips on the school gate had proved effective and instead he was forced to exit by climbing over the gate.

- 9.2.2 She explained that the school had not been informed by the police that officers would be entering the school site therefore immediately on sight of events, all children were brought inside the building, which went into lockdown.

- 9.2.3 The Headteacher reported that the children had commented after the event that "the school had kept them safe" and that she had sent a letter to parents to explain exactly what had happened in order to reassure them and to counter exaggerated accounts.

- 9.3 **Front gate security:** Michelle Cheetham asked whether and when the front gate was closed. The Headteacher explained that it was closed only at drop-off and pick-up times in order to prevent parents from driving into the grounds when children were outside, otherwise it was not practically possible to keep them closed due to deliveries being made, visitors and other professionals entering the site during the course of the school day etc.

- 9.4 **Fire drill with blockage:** The Vice Chair asked if the school had performed a fire drill where there was a blocked exit or blocked route and John Burt agreed that one would be arranged for next term.

ACTION: John Burt

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 10.1 **Model Social Media Policy:** The Headteacher drew attention to the Model Social Media Policy, which the Governing Body agreed would be an item on the agenda of the next meeting on 12th July

ACTION: Clerk [for agenda]

10.2 INSET: The Headteacher reported that Monday 5th June would be an INSET day for staff and that the school would be closed to the children.

10.3 Donated items

10.3.1 Michelle Cheetham offered a donation of used books for the school library, which she would bring to the school office.

10.3.2 The Vice Chair offered to bring some second-hand ride-on toy cars to Early Years.

10.4 Ricky Turner: Ricky Turner announced that this would be his final meeting as an Associate Member of the Governing Body, as he would be leaving Watford on 3rd July to begin a new appointment. The Governing Body thanked Ricky for his support and wished him well in his new role.

11. DATE OF MEETINGS IN 2017

- Wednesday 12th July

The Chair thanked all for attending and brought the meeting to a close at 8.20pm

Agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 3rd May 2017, on 12th July 2017

Signed: