

MENDIP EDGE FEDERATION

MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Held on Tuesday 10 December, 6pm at Fairlands Middle School

PRESENT:

Mike Brownbill (arrived 18.24) Roger Burdock, Kate Golding, Lisa Hill, Richard Holmes, Tim Hawkings, Sarah Lorimer (arrived 18.34), Stefan McHale, Adrian Warman, Maggie Wookey (arrived 18.32), John Virgin

APOLOGIES RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED: Jo Dodd, Rachel Evans, Lucy Frampton, Diane Sleeman

IN ATTENDANCE: Debbie Andrews (Clerk)

MEGB19/20:19 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

MEGB19/20:20 AGREEMENT AND SIGNING OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 14 NOVEMBER

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December were agreed and signed by Mr Warman.

MEGB19/20:21 MATTERS ARISING

Finance funding letter – to be carried forward as no MP is in post until after the General Election on Thursday.

KG

Online Safety – to be carried forward.

RH

Recruitment and Selection policy – Mrs Andrews contacted Governor Services who have advised that there is not a new safer recruitment policy. The policy that Mrs Lorimer reviewed will be used as the Federation working document. Mrs Andrews will keep a look out for the new policy.

Email to the Parish Councils – Mrs Andrews has emailed the Parish Councils.

Prevent training – governors who have not undertaken the training agreed to do so by the next meeting in January.

Govs

Medical Conditions policy – there are a few queries to be resolved and it is hoped that the policy can be brought to the next meeting.

Letter to SCC ICT by Mr Virgin – Mr Virgin has liaised with Mr McHale regarding the letter. Mr McHale advised the meeting that the servers at Fairlands have been replaced at a cost of £7,000. The next stage, including purchasing laptops and enabling the staff to obtain remote access, will cost in the region of £20,000. Mr McHale is speaking to Somerset IT to see if they can meet some of the cost, e.g. the servers, from their emergency fund. Although it was appreciated that the situation was being rectified at Fairlands, Mr Warman is still concerned regarding the threat of future Ransomware attacks to the Federation schools and the need for insurance to be in place to cover this. Mr Virgin will draft a letter to the Local Authority regarding this.

JV

Cheddar Unofficial Funds – these have been signed by Mr Warman

Science presentation to governors – science curriculum leaders have been invited to present at the start of the January meeting for approximately 35/40 minutes to share and compare the approaches of federation schools. Governors acknowledged that those leaders are not obliged to attend and Mr Virgin offered to represent those leaders if they chose not to.

Advisory Groups – a discussion was held regarding the purpose and previous effectiveness of advisory groups. It was agreed that the schools will include information on how to contact governors in their next newsletters.

Hds

Signed Dated

MEGB19/20:22 REPORTS

Finance Committee – per the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November. All schools are on budget with careful management. Governors discussed what costs should be accounted for under the conversion grant and agreed it must be compliant and for the best interests of federation schools. Mr Perry is being invited to the next Finance meeting on 14 January to clarify the situation. All governors are invited to attend.

Govs

Mrs Golding said the number of governors on the Finance Committee meant there was a risk of meetings not being quorate and it was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chairs will be contacted if the committee is short. Mr Brownbill confirmed that he will attend the next Finance meeting.

Governors recognised that an interim budget will be required for the period from April to September and the desire for a smooth transition to any new finance software. The Trust can help with the setting of budgets but only if required to.

As Brent Knoll have gone through a similar conversion process to the Federation, it was agreed to invite their Finance Manager to the next Finance Committee meeting on 14 January. We will also ask if she can meet with the Federation finance officers. Governors are invited to attend the meeting on 14 January and if they cannot, provide questions.,

KG

KG

Foundation Committee – per the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November. A full day SIAMS inspection took place on 3 December. Alison Appleyard, inspector, met with staff, children, parents and governors. The inspection was thorough and it was a positive day. Mr Warman advised governors that the report had been published today and the grading was 'Good'. The report is available on the school web site. Governors thanked Mrs Dodd and her team for all their hard work and Mr Warman passed on Mrs Dodd's thanks to the governors.

Admissions – Governors have agreed to republish the Admission Arrangements for Draycott & Rodney Stoke C of E VA First School, with only the dates altered accordingly.

Governors were advised that Mr Ewens is visiting both Draycott & Rodney Stoke and Shipham First Schools on 12 December.

Governor support – nothing to report

Governor visits – Mrs Lorimer, as English link governor made a visit to Cheddar looking mainly at reading. She is meeting the Curriculum Leaders of English at Fairlands on Monday 16 December. Mr Warman has carried out both science and health and safety visits at Cheddar. Mrs Golding also visited Draycott & Rodney Stoke First School.

Headteacher Reports

Mr Brownbill mentioned that on a recent course it was suggested by the Diocese that headteacher reports should be at the beginning of the agenda. Consideration will be given to this. Mr Warman thanked the headteachers for all their hard work in compiling the reports and governors raised a number of questions.

AW/DA

Draycott & Rodney Stoke First School – Mr McHale thanked governors for the opportunity to temporarily lead the school and the staff for the welcome he has received.

New OFSTED framework / Curriculum. What could we do to make governors aware of the new OFSTED framework as you're doing with staff at Draycott?

OFSTED – Mrs Persaud and Mr McHale have undertaken a session at Draycott and Rodney Stoke First School on the new framework and Mrs Persaud has done a more individualised session.

Mrs Wookey added that the new framework is about taking colleagues with you and having challenging conversations. The framework focusses on the broader curriculum. There is no transition year. Coaching is good to give information and strategies. It was agreed that governors need to be aware of the new framework.

Signed Dated

Mr McHale will circulate the presentation he gave at Draycott & Rodney Stoke and Fairlands and will give a 10 minute presentation at the next governors meeting. Mr Virgin will also include the framework in his presentation. Governors to note that the the meeting will finish at 8.30 pm to allow for the presentations.

SM

Govs

Leadership and Management. How much time do curriculum leaders have to co-ordinate / plan / review their subject area at Draycott? How does this compare to other first schools?

Realistically no time given. Mrs Wookey added that a small amount of release time is given and weekly staff meetings are held. The bulk of these are for the curriculum.

SIAMS. A focus is on developing opportunities to engage in social action. Feedback from the SIAMS inspection at Shipham was that this should not just be local action but also support global crises and allow / encourage pupils to lead on it.

Mr McHale and Mr Perrett have started to develop opportunities, e.g. school council, eco clubs and well-being.

Cheddar

Cheddar Caves visit. Good to see a visit to the caves and learning about Cheddar Man as part of the Stone Age topic. I know Shipham and DRS were also doing Stone Age and wonder if there could be benefits in sharing external topic visits like this, like we do with the summer residential. Would the first schools be up for this?

Cheddar Caves visit – it may be that the other First Schools can ‘piggy back’ on the opportunities afforded to Cheddar.

REAL PE. This has come up a few times recently in reports and visits. At the meeting, can you expand on what REAL PE is please?

REAL PE – progressive programme of PE skill covering the fundamentals of PE. It is not all about being the best but personal skills, well-being, health and fitness. It uses PE to promote all aspects of development. It also fits with Cheddar First School’s ethos.

Jon Wood coaching. The coaching for middle managers sounds really positive, focussed and beneficial. Would you recommend this to other schools?

He looks at the issues we trying to tease out and keeps on track with the school improvement agenda.

Attendance. Is it right that a pupil who has moved to Burnham has their 8 weeks of absence counted against us? Can governors do anything to get this recorded differently? This appears to have been out of your control with a parent taking the situation into their own hands and being a bit political about it.

As the child is on roll then nothing really that can be done. Advice from safeguarding team was that, as we knew where the pupil was then they are not missing in education. Running a second attendance report without long term absent pupils gives a better idea of attendance situation.

Attendance. Would it be appropriate to ask the new school council’s opinion on unauthorised absence? Overall attendance is better than last year but it sounds like the unauthorised element is increased. Pupils need to understand the right behaviours and choices around attendance.

Incentives are given to the pupils for good attendance.

Felt by governors that it is the parents not the pupils that need addressing.

Dates. H&S update and Parents & Community sections have reference to 2018 dates ... presumably these are typos and should be 2019.

Amended headteacher report attached.

Signed Dated

Fairlands

MFL. Data shows standards dropping in MFL because we now teach both French and German instead of just one. Report says “I am happy that this breadth of curriculum is better for the pupils” but we should check governors agree. Essentially we are offering broader diverse learning of the different languages, but possibly at the expense of some pupils getting to know one really well and having some great data (100% reaching expected standard in German has fallen to 93%).

In Year 8 not all children did German, just French with additional literature. Under the new framework, it is imperative that all pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum irrespective of disadvantage or prior learning and attainment.

Pupils no longer need to do a language when they go to the Kings of Wessex Academy so may be a conversation for the future.

Governors acknowledged that there are benefits from a consistent curriculum for all pupils and agreed that the intent and impact of providing this breadth and balance (even at the apparent expense of data outcomes) is positive.

Year 5 cohort. Is there any suspected reason for the decline in GL scores from their year 3/4 scores? Is there any concern about the cross-phase projects which we’ve considered to be very successful in the past or concern about the prospects for this group in the KS2 SATS results?

Working with the First School headteachers regarding this area. Mixed picture across the Federation of performance in these tests across the schools.

Curriculum review. Can the document tracking key skills and concepts be shared? It could be useful for governors to get a broad overview of the curriculum. Or for first school curriculum leaders to know what their programmes need to build towards (though I assume that happens already).

Mrs Persaud can attend a governors meeting to share information with governors

SM

Shelly Weeks. I knew Shelly had some time out but hadn’t realised that she’d left – sorry if I missed this. Well done to the team for filling what I know were some (proverbially) big shoes.

Discussions were held with Mrs Weeks and she decided, for personal reasons to leave her post. We are very grateful for her hard work and commitment and wish her well for the future. The canteen seems to working well with Mrs O’Neill as Canteen Manager.

Pupil numbers. Currently on role = 481 (124, 124, 127, 106) – which way round are the year groups and which is the small cohort?

Pupil numbers – the Year groups in order are 5, 6, 7, 8. Year 8 is the small cohort.

Well being welcome. At the meeting please could you describe this to governors as I think it is a fantastic initiative. This is a big commitment and seems to be making a real difference “on the ground” ... but we need to make sure it is sustainable.

The initiative is for anxious youngsters. They are registered, set up and prepared for the day. It is sustainable at the current moment in time. With the grant money obtained from Homes in Sedgemoor, two more ELSA’s have been trained and there are now three.

Supply costs. Happy to discuss LSA options ... but is it also possible to buy insurance for these costs (and possibly maternity cover costs as we would need to cover within WLT).

Looking at viability of a cover supervisor rather than using teacher supply.

Music practice room. I was slightly disappointed to see a music practice room has been lost to an office. How are we providing suitable alternative space for activities which were taking place here. And more broadly, how are we encouraging and promoting extra curricular musical activities?

This was a cupboard that was converted. Not a practice room.

Signed Dated

A governor asked Mr McHale about the complaint in his report and to ensure the complaints process had been properly followed.

This was the way a pupil was treated in a particular subject areas. The child displays anxiety and is part of the well-being welcome. There were issues with a member of staff which were investigated and found to be unfounded.

Mr Warman also spoke to the parent. Action taken to alleviate the problem.

A governor asked about phonics. They are a hot area in the new framework.

Shipham

As Mrs Dodd was absent from the meeting, the questions posed will be answered separately

Child protection and safeguarding – Mrs Sleeman’s report of her visit to Shipham will be circulated.

DA

SEND – No report

Standards – meeting to be held in the New Year.

MEGB19/20:23 FUTURE OF THE FEDERATION

Mr Warman has prepared a Memorandum of Understanding which he has shared with governors, together with the timeline until conversion.

An invitation has been extended to the governing body to attend the WLT AGM on Thursday 12 December. Mr Holmes is attending.

The headteachers will complete the Browne Jacobson form by early January.

Hds

A discussion was held regarding using some of the services now, e.g.

Educator although Mr McHale commented that, although it could be appropriate for the first schools, he did not consider its primary / secondary approach to be suitable for Fairlands as a middle school.

A discussion was also held regarding the option of a seat on the board of the Trust and who may fill this position.

It was agreed to re-establish the MAT working group for the period through to planned conversion in April and the group will meet immediately after the Finance Committee meeting on 14 January.

WG
Govs

Signed Dated