

MENDIP EDGE FEDERATION

MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Held on Tuesday 17 November at 6pm, Via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

Mike Brownbill, Will Ewens, Kate Golding, Tim Hawkings, Richard Holmes (arrived 20:15), Sarah Lorimer, Stefan McHale, Diane Sleeman, Suzi Smith, Adrian Warman, John Virgin

APOLOGIES RECEIVED: Lucy Frampton

IN ATTENDANCE: Debbie Andrews (Clerk)

MEGB20/21:09 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

MEGB20/21:10 AGREEMENT OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 22 SEPTEMBER

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September were agreed and will be signed by Mr Warman when possible in person.

MEGB20/21:11 MATTERS ARISING

Pecuniary interest forms – governors were asked to return the form emailed by Mrs Andrews. If they wish to submit a nil return and have read the form, they can email Mrs Andrews to confirm this.

Govs

DSL job description – Mrs Andrews has spoken to the Wessex Learning Trust (the Trust) and there is no central job description. Mr Warman will mention the devising of one with Mr Perry when in conversations with him. It was agreed that the item could be removed from actions to be taken.

Conversion grant – Mr Ewens has been advised that the Trust will cover the cost of overspend beyond the £25k conversion grant for Draycott & Rodney Stoke. Fairlands and Shipham Pre School have come in slightly under and are expecting to be reimbursed.

MEGB20/21:12 COVID-19

Covid Governor Update – Mr Warman, as the Covid Governor, has been staying in touch with the schools and tracking the risk assessments. He has made visits to all four schools and made suggestions. These have been actioned appropriately.

The country went into national lockdown on Thursday 5 November. As well as following the contingency plan in place, the schools were provided with a new set of instructions from the Trust. There have been a few contentious issues for staff, particularly in the first schools with regards the wearing of face coverings with foundation age children.

Although no cases in the Mendip Edge schools, there are cases in both Trust schools; Axbridge and Kings of Wessex and also Churchill, a local secondary school in North Somerset.

A governor commented that staff need to be strict with bubbles, as it has such a huge impact when there is a case.

Verbal Reports from the Headteachers

Draycott & Rodney Stoke and Shipham – Mr Ewens provided governors with the following update:-

The children remain in school in bubbles which is working well. Collective worship is also now taking place within the risk assessed control measures. Staff are being affected – two isolating as family have tested positive. They

Signed Dated

have not shown symptoms themselves and workload has been covered. Levels of anxiety amongst the staff is greater as there are more local cases. Remote learning – better prepared now. There is a policy for both schools which has been shared with staff. Confident of teachers following the policy and the technology is fine with a blend of Zoom, pre-recorded videos and Class DoJo software. The schools have engaged with families to understand pupils’ access to devices and internet from home and have laptops available to issue for use at home if required. Parents are kept up to date with newsletters. Ongoing conversations are held with parents regarding when to self-isolate.

The car park at Draycott and Rodney has been closed to allow safer distancing and reduce risk of accidents. This caused some consternation but the situation has settled down and the school has engaged with other village stakeholders.

Cheddar – Mrs Smith provided governors with the following update:

Still operating in bubbles with staggered start, lunch and finish times.

One teacher has been out for the whole period and some teaching assistants have isolated but not for the full period. Able to cover these instances. High level of staff anxiety as the number of local cases increase. School is cleaned regularly throughout the day. Able to have areas in the classroom where staff do not need to wear face coverings.

The risk assessments are working and there are regular updates for both staff and parents.

Remote learning is set up and ready. Years 1-4 are set up on Edmodo and Reception on Purple Mash. Sign up has been good at 93% and those not signed up or unable to access have been recorded so that it can be updated regularly and then additional arrangements can be made. A timetable of home learning has been drawn up to share clearly the expectation for a balance of ‘live’ sessions, pre-recorded sessions and directed tasks. The aim is to have a ‘live’ welcome and ‘end of day’ session each day as well as interactive sessions throughout the day along with feedback opportunities. Staff have received training on MS Teams to facilitate the ‘live’ element and are currently practicing. Homework is being set weekly using the online platform to also allow parents and pupils to practice.

Fairlands – Mr McHale provided governors with the following update.

Measures of districts and separate entrances for pupils are still in place with a few tweaks. The school is following the mandate for staff and pupils to wear face coverings, which is working well. There are six pupil exemptions to this. Year heads are on the entrances in the mornings to check face masks, giving out to pupils where needed. Pupils have been really good with wearing them, only needing gentle reminders.

Classrooms still have the 2 metre space. A member of staff working with an EHCP pupil with epilepsy is trying to wear a different face covering as the pupil struggles with the glare from her visor.

Staff have been great maintaining protocols and wearing masks. Reminder emails with updates are sent to them weekly.

Remote learning – there is a blended plan which staff are aware of. If a bubble needs to be closed, pupils will stay in their tutor rooms until they can go home safely. If a bubble closes and the pupils are at home, the tutors would be covered to check in with their tutor groups at 9 am. The pupils would then do a mix of Fitbit and ‘live’ lessons.

Three staff have had to isolate and have done online teaching. Additional training has been carried out for staff feeling anxious about online teaching. Four pupils waiting for test results.

A governor thanked the teachers for their reports and all the hard work being undertaken by them and the schools. She then asked where the extra costs for Covid were coming from. She also asked if pupil premium money was available and were schools in receipt of this?

Signed Dated

Mr McHale replied that Fairlands have spent £13,000 on Covid related products. £2,000 of this was for water fountains for the districts which the FPTA has funded. The DfE had stated that schools should be using the money saved by not having as many pupils in school during the first lockdown. However, there were no savings as the schools were still open using electricity etc.

The teaching unions are pushing for reimbursement for the costs and also SASH is approaching the LA for a share of the funding they received. The Catch up premium replaced the Year 7 Catch Up premium, however, this is constant throughout the year. A lot of money is needed to cover colleagues at the current time. Mr McHale has been close to closing a bubble on occasions due to the number of staff self-isolating.

Governors agreed that they would like to recognize the hardwork of all the staff during this time. Mr Warman will email the headteachers for them to forward an email to staff. A governor commented that it would be nice to do something else, e.g. provide staff with cakes, but it was agreed that due to the risk of infection and the staff being in bubbles, this was not a good idea at the current time.

AW

Mr McHale commented that it would be useful for staff to have time to breathe and suggested an extension of the Christmas holiday, with 5 Jan January being an extra INSET day. Governors agreed that this would be a good idea. Governors agreed for Mr McHale to speak to Mr Perry and delegated authority to Mr Warman to make the decision on behalf of the governing body

SM
AW

A governor asked what the 'X' attendance code covers. Mr McHale replied that it is for Covid related absences, e.g. self-isolating and awaiting a test.

A discussion was held regarding staff wearing face coverings when working with foundation age children due to impact on pupils' phonic development and their sense of safety in school. Mr Warman has spoken with Mr Perry at the Trust and emails from staff have also been forwarded to him.

Mr Ewens added that headteachers were able to feedback before the latest set of instructions were implemented by the Trust. It was decided that in a phonics lessons, if there was a distance of 2 metres, a staff member would not need to wear a face covering. The visors were a compromise if the distance was less than this.

The situation will be reviewed by the government on 2 December and further guidelines may be provided. It was acknowledged that the current position would not be reversed but governors agreed it would be beneficial for the governing body to be represented at the Trust review meeting if that were possible.

A governor asked whether governors can have access to Trust board meeting minutes. Mr Warman believes full Board minutes may be available as through company regulations but not minutes from Committee meetings. Mr Warman will speak to Mr Perry to enquire as to which minutes governors are able to see.

AW

MEGB20/21:13 REPORTS

Child Protection and Safeguarding – Mrs Sleeman has been in contact with all the schools regarding their safeguarding at this time. The headteachers are working hard to cover all aspects of safeguarding and training is up to date. Fairlands are in receipt of a Trust safeguarding audit where the following needs clarification with regards governance:-

- Deputy Safeguarding Governor. This will be addressed following the recruitment campaign.
- It was suggested that governors read the latest KCSIE and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and both these documents will

Signed Dated

be circulated with the minutes, together with the Code of Conduct for governors to sign and return to Mrs Andrews.

DA

Mr McHale commented that SLG, DDSLs, Heads of Year and ELSAs in Fairlands have been requested to read KCSIE 2020 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. When they have read them, they will confirm by email to Mrs Heffernan, DSL.

It would be useful for governors to be given greater insight early years provision. Mr Ewens, Mrs Smith and Mr Warman will discuss how governors can receive information or a presentation regarding this.

AW/SS/
WE

Headteacher Reports

The Chair advised that he had asked for verbal updates from Headteachers for this meeting to save preparation time in this exceptionally busy period, as there had been no reliable data drop in the window to prepare pupil data and as events are evolving so quickly during Covid that a written report circulated in advance would have been out of date by the time of the meeting. Written reports will be reinstated for the next meeting and minutes of this meeting will document the current school positions.

The headteachers provided verbal reports as follows:-

Draycott & Rodney Stoke and Shipham

Pupil attendance – Shipham 96% and Draycott 95%. One non school age child with difficulties coming into school at Draycott but this is being addressed and does not affect the figures.

Baseline tests - behind in all areas in all year groups. Interventions being carried out for children the schools are most concerned about. Extra interventions being provided for Covid catch up. Writing and maths needs addressing for all pupils and Mr Ewens will address closing the gap with Staff.

Finance – Draycott & Rodney Stoke – need to make savings of £40,000. Two staff meetings held with Mr Perry at the Trust and Mr Ewens. Staff have been given the opportunity to speak to Mr Ewens and Mr Perry regarding reducing hours etc. One member of staff has chosen to retire at Christmas, although this is not enough money saved. It is likely that a consultation process will therefore, need to be held regarding a re-structure. Pupil numbers coming in are low and there are problems attracting children into the pre school. Mr Ewens is trying to raise the profile of the pre school and school and has done work to market both, There is a new logo, signage and web site.

One extremely clinically vulnerable member of staff has been told to stay at home on her doctor’s advice, although she would like to come into school. Mr Ewens is providing reassurance to this person.

Recruitment at Shipham is being undertaken as follows:-

Cover for maternity leave for a TA, increase of hours for one to one teacher for child with complex needs and a lolly pop lady, which will be funded by Somerset County Council. Looking at the recruitment opportunity at Shipham alongside staffing changes possibly required at Draycott and Rodney Stoke. A new pre-school leader has been appointed internally following an interview process and retirement of the previous leader.

Pupil behaviour is exceptional and the children have settled back in well.

Site update – there are ash trees dying at Shipham, which will need to be felled for health and safety reasons. Quotes have been obtained from three tree surgeons, which have come in at £5,000/£6,000 but it is hoped this will be dealt with by Somerset Highways.

Quotes are being obtained to replace decking at the pre school.

An application has been successful for a full grant to replace the current oil boiler with an air source heat pump which is much more eco friendly.

Signed Dated

No complaints.
No exclusions or racial incidents.

Cheddar

Baseline tests have been completed and included a maths assessment, spelling test and reading test for KS2 with a phonic phase assessment for KS1 and Foundation stage. Early Years are also completing the Early adopters baseline. Baseline assessments have identified gaps in learning, which are being covered as the school moves forward.

A wide range of interventions are currently running with priority on well-being and catch up. Examples of successful interventions are anxiety gremlin, mentoring, ELSA support, nurture group, PP and SEND have been included within these interventions and all interventions are being carefully monitored and evaluated through Provision Map

Finance - two members of the pre school team have left who have not been replaced but have been covered on a temporary basis by school staff. This has also enabled the school to increase the CPD opportunity which is very much needed. The Trust and Mrs Dexter have agreed a transition proposal from Mrs Smith to ensure that the current SLT remain in place and that Mrs Smith remains non-teaching until 21st February.

Training - all staff undertook safeguarding cascade training at the beginning of term, phonics training also held for some preschool and school staff, Jigsaw training

Bluesky

Provision map

Insight

First aid training

Fire safety training

New to Yr 2

Staffing- one member of staff is off on long term sick leave and it is looking increasingly likely that she will not return soon.

Behaviour is good currently and feels 'normal' which is a credit to the staff and pupils themselves.

Site update- none for CFS. Preschool has secured the funding worth c £40k to reconfigure the building which we thought may have been lost through changing to the academy. The work will take 4 weeks and is likely to take place over the summer holidays.

Complaints- None.

Racial incidents- None.

Fixed Term exclusions- None.

Fairlands

Baseline testing – GL tests were used to gain a better understanding of where pupils are. The tests used were the ones pupils would have sat in the summer. The results show that pupils continue to do well in English and is significantly above the national average, however, they show that pupils are behind the national expectation in maths, particularly in Year 5.

Catch up plans – additional numeracy and literacy teaching being provided for all pupils. Years 5 and 6 continue to have 6 lessons per week by developing the CID curriculum area. Years 7 and 8 pupils have an extra numeracy lesson in place of DT and 2 additional literacy lessons in place of drama and MFL. The Year 7 catch up group continues as a separate lesson and Year 8 pupils disappplied from KS2 tests are a separate pre-tutored group to support their work

Catch up premium has been received and interventions planned but there is limited classroom space and teaching resource and the second lockdown has restricted these plans. They must take place after Christmas.

No plans to use the National Tutoring Programme as yet.

Finances are on track as reported to the finance committee. Still some issues with understanding the reports but getting better.

Staffing – two new teachers have joined the staff team and made very

Signed Dated

positive starts to their time at Fairlands. Mr McHale has observed both and seen good lessons.

New Head of Year 7 has made a good start.

All the staff recruited to the role of 1-1 for pupils with an EHCP have made positive starts. Also the new Humanities LSA has made a positive start.

One member of staff has been signed off for a further 4 weeks after 2 off already. As much as possible had been put in place from the OH report

Behaviour - on the whole pupil behaviour has been good. There are of course a few exceptions. The pupils are adhering to systems well.

Internal exclusions are as follows:

Y5 - 0

Y6 - 5 pupils ½ day each and 1 pupil full day

Y7 - 1 pupil ½ day

Y8 - 4 pupils. 1 has 2 x ½ days, 1 has 2 ½ days, 1 has 1 day and 1 has ½ day

There have been 3 external exclusions of a day each, one in Year 6 and two in Year 8. However on the day of the meeting, there had been two further exclusions for Year 8 pupils for physical assault against a pupil. One of these exclusions is for five days, which will be investigated further and may incur a more severe penalty.-

Site update - both boilers have been replaced under the LA scheme

CO2 monitors fitted in both science labs and both DT rooms

Asbestos removed from window cheeks in SC1, SC2 and SC computers

All PC's updated to Windows 10 and fitted to office areas and ICT1 & 2

All teaching and LSA staff issues with laptops

The lift has been recommissioned and is back in service to support needs of a new pupil

4 new fresh water fountains installed outdoors for pupils. One in each district area. Also one internal one in Y5

Complaints - two. One level 2 formal complaint was received over the summer holiday to do with a safeguarding referral. This has been resolved following an investigation by Mr McHale.

One level 1 formal complaint was made following an exclusion. Mr McHale talked this through with the parent concerned and the complaint went no further

Attendance – 95.17% all pupils. 91.22% PP, 80.92% SEND

Racial incidents – 2. A Year 5 – did not understand the meaning of the comment, dealt with through follow up with family and a Year 8 – received an internal exclusion.

Standards - meeting held on Thursday 12 November. It was agreed in the meeting that there will be changes to the format and the group will be re-named 'School Standards and Improvement to align with Trust terminology. The group will continue to review data but give greater focus to curriculum initiatives, impact on AIP targets and will hold meetings more frequently in line with the data drops.

Finance Committee – per the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October.

Following up with the Trust the new system to ensure there is cohesion for the finance officers.

Mrs Golding confirmed that the Cheddar and Shipham Pre School funds are included in the balances carried forward but are reserved for pre-school use.

Foundation Committee – per the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October. Mr Brownbill is now Chair of the committee. He thanked Rev Hawkings for his time as Chair. It is understood that Mr Percival is standing down as an Associate Governor. It was acknowledged by the governors that Mr Percival has done a lot for Draycott and Rodney Stoke First School and Mr Warman gave a vote of thanks for his hard work and support. Mrs Golding seconded the vote of thanks.

SEND – no report

Health and Safety – no walkabouts have been done due to Covid

Signed Dated

restrictions. Shipham underwent an external health and safety audit obtaining 93%. Mr Warman congratulated Mr Ewens and his team for this outcome. The new Trust Health and Safety policy has been adopted by the schools which includes wording for school-specific policies. Mr Warman will draft a template based on this wording for schools to fill in their specific arrangements.

AW

Governor visits – Mrs Lorimer, as English Link Governor, met with Miss Hinchcliffe and Mrs Naden, the Curriculum Leaders for English at Fairlands. She will share her report with Mrs Andrews. She has also booked a session with the lead at Draycott and Rodney Stoke. Mr Warman encouraged governors to undertake their link visits via telephone or video calls.

Link
govs

Governor Support – Mrs Andrews is attending a Clerks Briefing on Teams and will forward any notes to governors following that meeting. Mr Warman attended a virtual Chairs meeting and was reassured by the discussion held regarding our measures in schools at the current time.

Trust Governor – all governors are named on the system and Mrs Andrews has inputted term and committee information for all the Mendip Edge governors. There is a further training session for Clerks to iron out problems, so that the system can be used by Clerks and governors. Mrs Andrews will share a powerpoint and log on details with governors so that we can use Trust Governor for the next meeting in February.

DA

MEGB20/21:14 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PAY REVIEWS

The pay committee met on 10 November. They have reviewed and agreed both the headteacher pay and headteacher staff recommendations.

MEGB20/21:15 GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT AND ROLES

An advert has been drafted which Mrs Andrews will share with schools in the Trust and local village newsletters. Mrs Andrews has also drafted a letter for a parent governor which she will share with Mr Warman.

DA

It was acknowledged that the governing body have done well supporting the schools as a whole body and not having a governor attached to a particular school. Mr Warman suggested that it would be beneficial having a governor linked to each school so that they can understand that school and be their primary point of contact.

Mr Ball, CEO of the Trust, would like governing bodies to certain schools to have shadow councils, which would be more in-depth than the governing body. The shadow councils could work through the link school governors. A governor commented that it sounds similar to the advisory groups that were set up when the schools federated. Another governor commented that the Foundation committee works very much like a shadow council. A governor asked about the Terms of Reference for the Trust Governing Body and Mr Warman will look into this.

AW

Mr Warman will seek further information as to how the shadow councils may work. The governors volunteered as link governors to the schools as follows:-

AW

Cheddar	Mr Holmes
Draycott and Rodney Stoke	Mr Brownbill
Fairlands	Mrs Golding
Shipham	Mr Warman

A governor asked whether any further information had been published to parents regarding Mrs Dexter’s starting at Cheddar. It was felt that Mrs Dexter may wish to do something herself when she starts or through a letter to parents before Christmas. Mr Warman will discuss with Mr Perry. Governors acknowledged that Mrs Smith is doing a tremendous job and thanked her for all her hard work at the current time.

AW

Signed Dated

MEGB20/21:16 ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Although the Local Authority processes cyclical admissions on behalf of the Mendip Edge schools, as they are a VA/Foundation or Academy schools.

The governing body remains responsible for ensuring that places are allocated on the basis of their determined admission arrangements and for the ranking of them. Although Somerset School Admissions will rank the preferences and administer the cyclical admission process for the year on behalf of the governing body, they still require written confirmation from the governing body that they are in agreement with the process. The Trust have confirmed this is correct.

Governors agreed the process and the pro formas will be returned to Somerset School Admissions.

Hds

Mr Warman closed the meeting by thanking everyone in schools for their massive effort in keeping children safe and secure.

Signed Dated