

MENDIP EDGE FEDERATION

MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Held on Tuesday 11 May 2021 at 6pm, Via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

Will Ewens, Kate Golding, Richard Holmes, Stefan McHale, Phil Maddock, James Norwood (arrived 6.25 pm), Diane Sleeman, Adrian Warman, John Virgin

APOLOGIES RECEIVED: Mike Brownbill

IN ATTENDANCE: Debbie Andrews (Clerk)

MEGB20/21:24 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

MEGB20/21:25 AGREEMENT OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February were agreed and will be signed by Mr Warman when possible in person.

MEGB20/21:26 MATTERS ARISING

Trust Governor – an awareness session was held for local governors on 20 April 2021 which they found useful.

Health and Safety policy – a Word copy has been acquired by Mr Ewens.

Governor recruitment – Mr Reeve is not interested in being a governor.

Mrs Andrews has contacted Mrs Oliver regarding being a governor and provided her with the necessary form. There are also two more people interested. All applications have been put on hold until the Trust's review of the governing bodies is made public. See item MEGB20/21:29 below.

SEND policy – Mrs Andrews enquired and was advised that there is not a Trust SEND policy. Mrs Andrews and Mr Vincent, SENDCo at Fairlands, have reviewed the current policy. Mrs Andrews will share with the First Schools and then the policy can be agreed by governors.

DA

English link role – Mr Warman and Mr Norwood met with Miss Hinchcliffe and Mrs Naden, the English leads at Fairlands and Mr Norwood's report has been uploaded to TTG.

Safeguarding - Mrs Sleeman and Mr Maddock have started to liaise.

Pre-school awareness – it is hoped that a session can be held to look at pre school and early years provision.

MEGB20/21:27 COVID 19- HEADTEACHER REPORTS

Mr Warman reported that the schools have been open since 8 March in conjunction with Covid guidance. Risk assessments were updated, control measures followed and no bubbles have had to be closed. The Trust has been proactive in their support for schools.

Mr Ewens reported that the First Schools are operating in line with the guidance. Staff are wearing face coverings where they cannot stay two metres apart. Hand washing and the arrangements for drop offs and pick ups are continuing. The schools are operating in bubbles, so that if there is a positive case, only one bubble needs to be closed. The restrictions have impacted on the practicalities for breaktime supervision and collective worship. Given the small whole school numbers, Mr Ewens intends to consider whether the two schools can go back to a single bubble in each. Government guidance suggests that the pupils will not need to wear face coverings from 17 May. Awaiting Trust guidance regarding their stance and the guidance for staff. Mr Ewens is starting to talk about day trips, PTA events and sports days following the next government review on 21 June. Mr McHale added that the pupils and staff will be delighted that the pupils do not to have to wear face coverings in class from 17 May. Staff will

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continue to wear face coverings in communal areas in Fairlands where social distancing is not possible. Mr McHale will consider use of specialist teaching areas again, e.g. DT, science and music, but the balance needs to be right with the district arrangements.

A governor asked how many staff had been vaccinated and whether there were any that planned not to accept the vaccination. Mr McHale replied that all those that are eligible are receiving it. He had not heard of any staff members that were not having it. He went on to say that some staff were receiving it at the weekend in case they reacted to the vaccine.

Mr Ewens added that his staff were keen to get vaccinated.

Governors noted their thanks to those staff receiving their vaccinations at the weekend and thanked the headteachers for the measures they had put in during this very difficult period.

Mr McHale commented that the next stage will be difficult, keeping up with measures with society opening up. Parents/carers at Fairlands have been excellent, although there have been some challenging conversations regarding the younger pupils wearing face coverings.

MEGB20/21:28 HEADTEACHER REPORTS

Mr Warman thanked the headteachers for their informative and valuable reports. The reports were taken as read but the headteachers were asked if they wished to outline anything further:-

Mr McHale reported as follows:-

Attendance has remained strong despite everything.

Fixed Term Exclusions are rare in Fairlands. However, there were 15 last week which are down to a couple of specific issues which have been dealt with and are being managed. The Trust is providing support. Year 8 have missed out on a lot of activities during the past year and have not been able to mix. The restrictions have caused frustrations for the pupils. There is a small group causing difficulties in a year group of 122. Some of these and other Year 8's will have an enhanced transition to the Kings Academy. The Year 8's are checked daily and separate work is being done to improve behaviour for some pupils.

A governor commented that it is good to have the support of the Trust with these pupils carrying on to Kings at Year 9.

Another governor added that it is a small number getting it wrong and making the wrong choices. The rest of the year group is delightful.

A governor asked had this group anything to do with the recent break-in.

Mr McHale replied that those believed to be involved were older children with one being a former pupil. Neighbours rang the police who were on the scene quickly. Footage of the incident has been passed to the police.

Thankfully there was minimal damage.

Mrs Trinel and Mrs Sheppard have taken on development work for the Trust and Mr Vincent is the lead for SEND.

Consultation is being held with middle leaders regarding the re-structuring of TLRs. The current model is not sustainable with the financial situation. The Curriculum Leaders have been very insightful with the reduction in positions to reduce staffing costs.

Two members of staff are on long term sickness. One of these will be leaving at the end of the academic year. One member of staff is considering her return following maternity leave.

The new IT technician has started well and Mrs O'Neill has returned to the canteen following an accident at home which resulted in injury.

There has been one complaint which has been dealt with.

A governor commented that a recent social media incident in Year 5 had been dealt with well by Mr Passingham.

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Mr Ewens provided information as follows:-

Three weeks after the schools returned there was a really useful data drop. Shipham ARE 81% - good number considering lockdown. There is disparity between Shipham and Draycott and moderation is being undertaken to check the judgements are accurate.

The extra money for Covid is being used on interventions for children who are behind or are vulnerable. Mrs Rawles, who is a recently retired maths specialist, is doing the intervention groups and a HLTA is working with phonics. It is making a difference and staff are being asked to provide evidence of this. Selected pupils attend breakfast club paid for by the Covid fund and then have a 25 minute phonic session.

A governor asked if the money was being recorded with details of the impact.

Mr Ewens confirmed that he had a template to complete obtained from Mrs Hobbs, Director of Learning at the Trust.

John Jeffery, SIP, is pleased with the Covid funding plans and what has happened in the schools.

Mrs Dodd, Senior Teacher and SENDCo at Shipham, has resigned from both these roles. Mr Perrett, Senior Teacher at Draycott, will cover both the Senior Teacher roles on secondment. Mrs Dodd will continue as a class teacher in Shipham.

Governors commented that Mr Ewens had acted decisively following Mrs Dodd's request and established a good leadership model. At the same time recognising the skills of Mr Perrett and others to work across the two schools.

A governor asked how the parents at Draycott were reacting with the news that Mr Perrett will not be available as much in Draycott.

Mr Ewens confirmed that he had sent a letter to parents/carers and no negative feedback had been received.

A governor asked why Draycott SEND pupils are lower with their reading.

Mr Ewens replied that it is small cohorts. Mrs Cottee, the SENDCo, will work across both schools to look at moderation and best practice.

A governor commented positively on the creativeness of the headteachers with their Covid funding.

A governor asked about the 10% for supplies and services. Mr Ewens replied that he thought it was Covid related. A governor added that it is also where the top slice comes is recorded.

A governor commented that the feedback from both SIPs was very positive noting what had been achieved in difficult situations.

A governor added that Mr Ewens' letter to parents regarding staffing changes was very well written.

The headteachers were thanked for their reports and everything they are doing at the current time.

MEGB20/21:29 GOVERNOR ROLES GOING FORWARD

Mr Warman apologised for the short notice in providing governors with a paper on the afternoon of the meeting entitled 'LGBs:Focus on Learner Development' The paper from the Trust sets out details of aligning local governing bodies with the Trust's leadership structure.

Mr Warman also attended a meeting with Mr Ball, CEO of the Trust and Mr Kirkup, Chair of the Board. Mr Warman was reassured by the meeting which had answered questions he had arising from the paper.

Mr Warman provided a brief summary of his meeting and the changes to local governing bodies:-

There is work in progress of streamlining and centralising business services such as ICT, HR, Health and Safety, etc. There is a significant degree of accountability of senior staff in the school to the Trust's ELT so local governing bodies do not need to get so involved in non-educational school management. Governing bodies would focus on the quality of educational

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processes and outcomes provided at the school.

Governing bodies would be refined and encouraged to focus on tasks with more meaningful discussions.

The governing bodies would be made up of between 6 and 10 governors depending on the size of the school. Governing bodies would be disbanded and reformed in a focused way. The terms of reference would be updated and there would be no committees. Governors would apply for a position. There would be six meetings a year. The current ex-federation local governing body would need to establish as two separate governing bodies for Fairlands and Draycott & Rodney Stoke/Shipham.

Governors were then asked for their views:-

A governor asked if it is happening to all multi academy trusts?

Mr Warman replied that he did not know but suspected it was as the Trust had favourable response from the Regional School Commissioner on proposed changes. He went on to say that the Trust really value governors giving up their time and are appreciative of governors' support.

A governor commented that the deadline for applications of 16 June is very tight. Is there further guidance on the process and if so, where does it come from?

Mr Warman replied that it is a tight timeframe and went on to say that there is a space on the two governing bodies for all existing governors with other places. We would look to take a structure to the Trust of what the two governing bodies could look like, which would help us to find people to step into different aspects and ensure the headteachers have uninterrupted and continued support.

Governors need time to reflect. Mr Warman will have a conversation with each of the governors on their feelings and how they see the structures moving forward. It is important to keep talking to each other.

A governor asked whether there was staff representation.

Mr Warman replied that people are needed with the right skills. Staff representation was important although should not be required. The headteacher is there to represent the school. Being a staff member does not preclude staff.

A governor commented that the relationship between the Trust and staff was very much employer and employee.

Mr Warman added there is nothing to stop a staff member being a governor.

A governor commented that a lot of good things have been done by the Trust and they are more involved now in aspects such as finance. Focusing on pupil progressions is definitely a good thing. Definitely good to have teacher representation. A main concern is retaining the sharing of best practice across the previous federation but now it will be sharing across the Trust.

Mr Warman added that there have been valued relationships in the Federation and it promoted close collaboration.

A governor commented that it was difficult joining the Trust at the very start of the pandemic. Schools who joined later on have probably had better engagement on joining. Support for the headteachers is good and there is real challenge. The Trust is now 16 schools, but local schools will seek counsel from each other when needed.

A governor commented that it is difficult with the finance committee to get the dates right to fit with the Trust schedule. Their initial view of the paper is negative; however, you can see how supportive they are being to schools with time and resources. It feels as though a lot of communication comes from the Trust but there is not the opportunity to feed back.

A governor added that their initial feeling is negative but you can see the reasons why from the schools point of view. It would have been nice for a discussion to be held before the paperwork was issued and to have an idea of what The Trust envisage governing bodies will be like and what the jobs will entail.

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Mr Warman commented that governing bodies can shape their structure to what their schools need. Link roles will be retained. It may feel like a bumpy road initially to achieve the long term improvement and if change is needed then it is good to implement the changes and start benefiting quickly. A governor acknowledged the good points raised and that Mr Warman was clearly reassured from his discussions with Mr Ball and Mr Kirkup. The governor then asked if a consultation session could be held with Mr Ball and Mr Kirkup.

Mr Warman replied that Mr Ball and Mr Kirkup are meeting the Chairs of all the schools in the Trust who will have similar questions. Mr Warman will ask the Trust if a short Zoom meeting could be held. He added that the Diocese have engaged with the process and are supportive.

AW

A governor commented that there are not enough governors for two governing bodies.

Mr Warman replied that we would have 13 if everyone stays and then a few more would be needed. There are seven focuses for the governing bodies outlined in the paper but these can be flexible based on school needs.

A governor commented that it would be good to see how it operates and how successful it is in Cheddar.

It was acknowledged that the meeting was the last one for the ex-federation governing body and it was agreed that another meeting will be held to look at early years and pre schools and also recognise that it is an end of an era. Mrs Andrews will look into dates and confirm to governors.

DA

MEGB20/21:30 OTHER REPORTS

Safeguarding – Mrs Sleeman commented that the issues had been covered in the headteacher reports and Covid reports. She thanked Mr McHale, Mr Ewens and Mrs Heffernan for their management of safeguarding and dealing with issues. Mr Maddock added that he had been reassured by the one issue he had been involved in.

Maths and English - visit reports are on TTG.. Mr Holmes is arranging another meeting with the Fairlands maths team next week

Finance - A meeting was held on Tuesday 4 May. Mrs Golding summarised as follows:-

The committee went through the three year budgets, which are being put together with the Trust Orovia software. All schools have money to balance their budgets, although all are still very tight and being carefully managed. There have been no budgets presented for this year. Another meeting is scheduled for 21/05 to look at the current year.

Foundation – no meeting held.

SSI – minutes from the meetings have been uploaded on TTG.

MEGB20/21:31 AOB

Governors gave Mr Warman a vote of thanks for his hard work as Chair.

The meeting closed at 20.00

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