

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governor Network and Forum
held on 2nd March 2020**

Meeting commenced at 6:30pm

Present: Gwendolen Bradshaw (Killinghall Primary), Lee Clayton (St William's Catholic Primary), Stuart Fildes (Beechcliffe Special School), Graham Hardman (Trinity All Saints CE Primary), William Holmes (Riddlesden St Mary's CE Primary), Lisa King (All Saints' CE Primary), Victoria Leather (Baildon CE Primary), David Mann (Bingley Grammar), Ibrahim Maynard (St Matthew's CE Primary), Annet Nottingham (Menston Primary), Nathan O'Brien (Baildon CE Primary), Val Sherred (Hoyle Court Primary), Pam Speed (Parkside School)

In Attendance: Shirley Broadbent (SGS), Tracy Isherwood (Clerk), Evelyn Haigh (Governance Officer), Richard Lait (Education Advisor), Sue Lowndes (Strategic Manager, School Standards and Performance), Karen Roper (Admissions and Exclusions Team)

Action

All were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Moore (Sandal Primary, Silsden Primary, Swain House); Ann Moralee (Eastburn); Sue Mawson and Ruby Bhatti (BDAT, Miriam Lord Primary).

These minutes should be read alongside documentation circulated at the meeting.

Relationships and Sex Education – Evelyn Haigh – in the absence of Jenny Fox, Evelyn Haigh introduced the update on this item.

Key notes include the following;

- From September 2020 all primary schools (maintained and academies) must teach relationships education.
- Relationships and sex education must be taught in secondary schools.
- This is the law and it applies to all schools.
- All schools except those which are independent will also be required to teach health education.

Children across the age groups have always had lessons about dealing with the world around them and getting along with others – this has been delivered as part of the citizenship curriculum, this reflects concern from the Government regarding bullying and to reflect the diverse communities whilst promoting respect of differences. Primary schools will not have to teach sex education though some deliver age appropriate content such as puberty. Secondary schools have taught sex and relationships education on a statutory basis since 2000. Teaching will be age appropriate and respectful of faith and diversity. If a school reflects a specific faith group the subject should be approached in a sensitive manner. All pupils are to be taught about relationships education including those protected groups named in the Equality Act (2010) including SEND; schools have a duty to prepare children for adulthood from early childhood, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

See supporting notes regarding the rights of parents to withdraw their children from relationships and sex education.

Whilst no specific LGBT lessons will be taught, schools will teach children to be respectful and fair to people from all types of families. RSE lessons will be inclusive for young people who

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identify as LGBT. The DfE has included this requirement in order to promote respect for diversity, and to prevent bullying for all children.

See supporting notes regarding other areas covered by this curriculum.

You have to consult parents on your relationships and sex education policy before implementing any changes. Parents should be asked for their views about when and how topics will be covered and for feedback on planned resources. Schools have to teach the curriculum set out by the DfE in the statutory guidance.

Questions/comments were invited;

Q. do you have to consult with parents annually?

A. No, this is just done initially.

Q. is it correct there is a tool box of resources available?

A. whilst no particular publisher is being promoted; some resources of a good quality will be available.

A Governor present informed the meeting that they use Scarce resources, they commented that since the resources have been made available the parents at the school have been calmer.

Ofsted update and discussion – Tina Housley (Governor St Luke’s Primary)

Tina reported that she had joined the school as a Governor in September 2019; the week before the inspection she had agreed to become the SEND Governor. As the notice period is one day, she urged those Governors at schools due for inspection to check their emails regularly as the more who could attend the meeting with the inspectors, the better. With more Governors in the meeting, support is shared. The meeting on the second morning of the inspection which took place at St Luke’s was structured more like an informal chat rather than direct questioning; whilst no data was discussed, the inspectors asked about parental surveys, how the school feeds back in meetings etc. As a Governing Body we recognised that we needed to understand the SEND group more – but I had only been appointed the week before so had not completed any training, they were happy with this explanation as a plan was in place. The Governors could provide examples of where as a school and as a GB, decisions had been made to positively impact the education of the children.

Feedback from the Inspectors was given on the afternoon of the second day for approximately 45 minutes, no input was allowed from Governors. The school can choose to have someone record (minutes) the feedback. The report is restricted by word count and covers only 2 sides of A4. The report is designed for parent feedback and if not minuted at the feedback session, areas of development may be forgotten or missed. Inspectors can comment on the financial aspects of the school.

St Luke’s had 4 deep dives with additional shallow dives in PE, languages, RE books. Whilst specific data is not required a wider knowledge is expected.

Richard Lait added that within the inspection process are deep dives – Head teachers and senior leaders should consider in advance what they would like these to be, the inspectors may be guided to these subjects. Reading is always one area of deep dives (English in Secondary schools) – with a likelihood of a focus on early reading (particularly phonics with support from phonically decodable reading books). Schools were reminded that if they are due an inspection they could arrange bespoke training sessions in preparation.

Governors can take an A4 sheet of notes into the meeting with areas of impact from governance and decisions made in meetings i.e. Reading schemes etc. and what the next steps are. Inspections remain dependent on the Team visiting the school – visits are currently running 10-12 weeks ahead of the expected date.

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In secondary school 5 deep dives are completed including behaviour/attendance (and off-rolling)/exclusions etc.).

Early preparation is key to a more successful inspection to ensure Governors can inform them of what is going well.

The curriculum transition period has been extended to July 2021 – see extract from the Ofsted Handbook, circulated at the meeting. Governors roles include the following;

- Confirmation that the school is delivering the statutory curriculum.
- Ensure Governors understand the school's current position on the development of the curriculum.
- To receive regular updates on different curriculum areas to monitor the implementation of the curriculum.

Pupil Exclusions – Karen Roper (Admissions and Exclusions Team)

In 2017 statutory guidance was introduced to inform Governors regarding exclusions. Most often we see pupils on part time timetables (if the parents have agreed to this) – sometimes it is in the best interests of the child to attend part time with incremental increases as their school journey. Those attending in this way would be marked with code C for attendance – *other authorised circumstances*.

See supporting documentation regarding exclusions guidelines and processes. (Including 2 documents circulated at the meeting)

- Fixed term exclusions – reflect serious breaches in the school's behaviour policy. These must be reviewed by the GB within 15 school days if;
 - It is a fixed period exclusion which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term or
 - It would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test
- Permanent exclusions – should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school. See PowerPoint for exceptional circumstances where, in the head teacher's judgement, it is appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a first or 'one-off' offence.

Schools have a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race. Schools should give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion. Where a school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, it should try and identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. Particularly vulnerable groups include SEND and some ethnic groups i.e. Roma. Boys are 4 times more likely to be excluded than girls – SEND pupils on school support are 7 times more likely.

The Governing Board must consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of exclusion if;

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a fixed period exclusion which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term
- It would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test.

Permanent exclusions in maintained schools or PRU's need to invite Karen Roper or a member of her team to the PDC. At the majority of meetings the Governors ask searching questions of the Head teachers and the process followed.

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Q. Some Governing boards do not have to invite the LA representative; however the Strategic Director is responsible for all children in the LA – why do they not have to have LA involvement?

A. Under the statutory guidance, academies do not need to invite the LA; parents can take advice and contact the Team directly – they would then be guided and signposted to further advice/support if necessary.

In reaching a decision on whether or not a pupil should be reinstated, the governing board should consider whether the decision to exclude the pupil was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, taking account of the Head teacher's legal duties and any evidence that was presented to the governing board in relation to the decision to exclude.

See PowerPoint and supporting documentation for Head teacher considerations.

Questions/comments were invited;

Q. is training on exclusions available?

A. EH informed Governors that this is available and can be arranged if demand requires. Karen Roper was happy to be a part of this and complete some anonymised case studies to show examples of the exclusions process. Meetings can be emotionally charged for parents and Governors should be mindful of this.

Q. What percentage of parents use the opportunity to involve the Independent Review Panel and what percentage have permanent exclusions overturned?

A. So far this year, of 54 exclusions, 2 have involved the IRP and one has been overturned.

C. Governors and a group of senior managers at one school met to ensure there were no mis-alignments between pupil and school moving forwards – this was very useful.

Areas of Concern for Governors – Sue Lowndes – (Strategic Manager) & Richard Lait (Education Advisor)

- Head teacher recruitment in maintained schools – Governors were reminded that any potential or actual Head teacher vacancies must be reported to the LA as they are the 'employer'. The LA will aid the school to appoint a good leader for the school; the Director of Children's Services has the statutory right to be represented at the appointment of the Head teacher in maintained schools. If Governors become aware of a potential vacancy they should inform the LA; the HR provider should be used to determine to accuracy of the vacancy i.e. consider alternative leadership models. Processes should ensure employment law and equality statements are adhered to - to recruit a candidate of high quality. The DfE Guidance – Recruiting Head Teachers (2017) is due for review in 2023 and should be followed.

Q. What role does the LA play in the recruitment panel?

A. The LA has no vote in the process, but is available to offer advice. Sue Lowndes has been involved in the appointment of 269 Head teachers. HR support is recommended as the process can also become an administrative burden. Richard Lait added that his team works closely with HR to complete the recruitment i.e. prepare tasks for the interview.

- Head teacher's Performance Management – the summer term is the end of the HT PM cycle when new targets are set; trained Governors should be on the committee – the next training session takes place on 23rd June 2020 at MMT. Most schools set targets in the autumn term; these are then cascaded to the SLT and through the Performance Management review of the wider body of staff. Another requirement for the HT PM is for an external qualified specialist should be a part of the process; the current team can be used on a buy-back basis. It is good practice not to use the same advisor for more than 3 years.

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Q. is this a statutory requirement? What if the head teacher does not want to complete the process?

A. They have to complete it as a part of their development; the Head teacher is an expensive asset in school.

- Coronavirus - Covid 19 – Guidance is available on the DfE website; this includes guidance sheets to display around school.

Q. We have a parent who decided not to send their child to school for 14 days as another child in the class had been to Thailand. Should this be logged as unauthorised absence?

A. Yes

Governor Support Update – Adele Baines

NGA Chair's Development Programme – the third cohort of trainees will begin on 20/05/20 – see PowerPoint for training schedule; 2 funded Governors from each school can attend.

External Reviews of Governance – BBto19 have been awarded a contract to train reviewers for external reviews of governance. Expressions of interest should be sent to Christian.bunting@stedmundsbradford.org.uk by 16/09/20.

Skills 4 Bradford

All Governors were asked to ensure they could log on to the site to access many services, support and training.

Q. is the Governors monthly update sent directly to Governors?

A. Yes, though details should be updated if there are any changes to email contact details, some trusts do not inform the SGS of updates resulting in updates not being received.

Governors were advised to also check their spam folders to ensure the update is not in there.

Information from the School Governor Service and discussion of requested topics – Evelyn Haigh.

The new safeguarding website is <https://saferbradford.co.uk/>

Governors can sign up for the new newsletter which may be useful for link Governors.

EEF updates – the Family of Schools database can help you to identify the nearest school which can support you in your area and is a very useful site.

Key Stage 1 SATs to be replaced – from September 2020 all new Primary School pupils will take a Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks on entry to Reception. The Key Stage 1 SATs will be replaced by this test when those children reach the end of KS1 (academic year 2022/23). The progress measures to the end of Key Stage 2 will be based on progress from the RBA from 2026/27.

Q. Have teachers been trained to use this assessment?

A. They should be, some parents may be concerned and consideration may be needed regarding the information sent out to them.

General questions/comments were invited;

Q. Will the LA support schools with falling numbers on roll? Some schools are in financial difficulties.

A. This is a national and not a local problem; declining birth rates coupled with Brexit are affecting large areas of the Eastern European community. There are some local issues also as some schools expanded recently due to an expected rise in birth rates or expected housing builds; the rationale is not clear for these decisions but it causes concern for some schools. Some schools need to reduce in size which will impact staffing. An approach is being discussed.

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Q. How soon will the strategic approach be available? What transition arrangements will be in place?

A. RL proposed that schools inform their Education Advisor of their concerns and also raise the issue at their KIT meeting; Andrew Redding is more than willing to support schools in the review of their budget. EH will inform Governors as soon as any documentation or guidance is available.

Meeting ends 8:30pm.

All present were thanked for their attendance.

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