



**Minutes of Willingham County Primary School
Full Governing Body Meeting
held on Tuesday 9th February 2016 at 7.30pm**



Present

Bev Lawrence (BL)	Chair
Vyv Francis (VF)	Headteacher
Jo Aldhouse (JA)	
Marc Ben-Nathan (MB)	
Liz Bowen (LB)	
Fiona D'arcy (FD)	
Jamie Efford (JE)	
Hannah Francis (HF)	
Emma Fuller (EF)	
Steve Harding (SH)	
Gemma Hartman-Ayers (GH-A)	
Vicki Hayes (VH)	
Caroline Hyde (CH)	
Louise Johnston (LJ)	
Ian Kelly (IK)	
Laura Latham (LL)	
Nick Thompson (NT)	
Ben Tregenna (BT)	

Apologies: Apologies for absence from the meeting were presented on behalf of Paul Joel and Cath Lee.

Also in attendance: Cathy Bamford and Kate Van Dort (Honeypots) and Christine Brandon (Camclerk)

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

The Chair introduced Kate Van Dort, Manager and Cathy Bamford, Deputy Manager of the Honey Pot Pre School and invited them to update Governors on the current position of the Pre School. Kate reported that currently 74 children were registered and that there were only three sessions remaining available for three year olds and 8 for those aged two. In terms of breakdown, this number comprised 4 funded places out of a total of eleven two year olds, seven places qualifying for receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium and two receiving deprivation funding.

The Pre School currently had four full time staff members all on Level 3 or above and one part time member of staff. Three unqualified but experienced relief staff were also available.

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In terms of the end of the school year, Kate announced that there would be 43 children transferring to the Primary School and that this number comprised 17 girls and 26 boys. Kate also was aware that Ofsted was due to visit the Pre School from September 2016 and that she and her staff had begun to look at the implications of the introduction of 30 hours funding from September 2017 with regard to the mix of age groups that might be established and the effect of extending the length of the working day. Governors were advised that six authorities would be piloting the new scheme. In response to a question from the Chair, Kate advised that fees per session amounted to £12 for the under 3's and £11.50 for the over 3's.

Governors were informed that strong links between the Pre School and Primary School had been established and opportunities now existed for the Manager to attend Senior Leadership Team meetings and meet the teachers of the reception classes to facilitate transition of the children to the primary school. There were also regular meetings between the designated persons for safeguarding.

The Chair thanked Kate and Cathy for taking the time to attend the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received from those present.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 15th December 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Head teacher's report

The Head teacher circulated a copy of her report to Governors and indicated her intention to highlight sections of it. Given the late circulation of the data presented, Governors were invited to raise any questions they might have with the Head teacher outside the meeting.

In general terms, Governors noted that there were 353 children on the school roll as at 26th November 2015. Attention was drawn to the number of children in various categories as for instance 'Looked After' and 'Adopted from Care'. The Head teacher was also pleased to report that wi fi was now operational throughout the school which had helped teachers make good use of new iPads and access the online assessment system. Governors' attention was drawn specifically to a key action which had emerged from the recent Ofsted report and the intention to produce and implement a Pupil Premium Plan. Reference also was made to the growing success of the After School Club and its beneficial impact on pupil premium children and improvements observed in their self-confidence and social skills. **Caroline Hyde suggested that there were mechanisms which enabled the impact of non-empirical influences to be measured and that she would contact Julie Briscoe for advice and feedback to the Head teacher.**

However of major concern to the Head teacher was the significant number of exclusions, currently 16, which the school had experienced in the academic year to date. The Head teacher stressed that a decision to exclude a child was 'an act

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of last resort' and only taken having used checklists to reach the right conclusion which were enclosed in the Exclusion Guidance issued by the County Council in December 2015 and Regulations published by the Department of Education. Of the six children excluded, 2 had joined the school within the last 12 months and two were highly vulnerable. Governors were assured that the Senior Leadership Team looked for support from the County Council particularly when there were SEN/Disability/vulnerable group considerations. The Head teacher explained that each case was discussed very carefully ^{with the Senior Govs} within the Senior Leadership Team before a decision was taken to exclude a pupil and that post exclusion, there were a range of actions which could be taken to rebuild relationships and reduce the risk of repeat incidents.

In response to a question from a Governor, the Head teacher explained that in these circumstances she would normally contact a parent by telephone and follow up with a written letter which would give information on available support and details of the County Inclusion Manager who could be contacted for advice. The letter would also itemise the number of days that the pupil had been excluded in the academic year and offer a re-integration meeting for example. Laura Latham emphasised that the process was measured and thorough, that all involved were spoken to so as to gain a clear understanding of events and that no decision to exclude was taken ~~quickly~~.

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In reply to a further question, the Head teacher stated that it would depend on the circumstances involved whether she would contact a parent before investigation of an incident and the meeting of the senior leadership team been held. Given the involvement of year 6 boys and girls, a Governor asked whether the incidents had been connected and the Head teacher responded that this had not necessarily been the case but the same principles, in terms of the process, would apply to a multi child incident. Governors understood from the Head teacher that the Senior Leadership Team had to consider the context of each situation and that thresholds of behaviour might vary for different children. Ultimately, however, the school had to act consistently and protect the safety of the children in their care and the learning environment.

The Head teacher confirmed that general expectations of behaviour in class were discussed with children without making specific reference to any incidents that may have occurred, that focus was placed on managing behaviour in the classroom and that a huge effort was being made by staff around these situations to support children and their families.

Governors were reminded of their role in the process and the opportunity for a parent to request a review of an exclusion decision. In closing, the Head teacher stated that a decision to exclude a child permanently would only be taken as an act of last resort. She added that once a child had been permanently excluded support sometimes became available which might otherwise have been difficult to access.

5. Budget 2016-17

The Chair reported that following a recent meeting with the School Financial Advisor concerns were raised about the school budget for 2016/17. Having

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reminded Governors of the way in which the school was funded, the Chair advised that there would be a shortfall of £30K in 2016/17 and potentially a cumulative shortfall of £100k plus in future years. Governors also were reminded of their previous decision under 'Raising Standards' to retain 13 classes, a number of non-classroom based teachers and as many TA hours as could be afforded. Regrettably, it had become essential to re consider, as a matter of urgency, the school's financial position and the Chair proposed that a Working Party be established for this purpose to draft a business plan for submission to the next Governing Body meeting or to a Special Meeting should one need to be called earlier.

In response to a question from a Governor, the Chair explained that given the potential impact on staff of any budget changes it was imperative to act as quickly as possible. Having discussed the possibility of mixed year classes, it was

RESOLVED

that a Special Working Party be established comprising Liz Bowen, Vicki Hayes, the Head teacher and Jo Aldhouse and that it be authorised to consider the 2016/17 budget and options for future years expenditure with a view to producing a proposed business plan for presentation to the next Governing Body meeting or special meeting whichever is the earliest.

6. Reports and Updates from Committees

Personnel Committee - In the absence of formal minutes, Governors were advised that the Committee had discussed the recruitment policy and ways to lessen the Head teacher's involvement in recruitment and new staff appointments. The Committee also had received a presentation from the manager of 'Honeypot Pre School' as delivered earlier at the meeting.

TALBS Committee - A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2016 having been circulated, the Chair drew attention to the outcomes of the Ofsted Inspection and the need to update the RAP. The Committee also had received a presentation on the new STAT system and how this had begun to operate across the school. In response to a question regarding training on the new system, it was explained that teachers would learn as they progressed and that they were readily able to share technical concerns. Governors were reminded that the pass mark for Year 6 tests would not be set until all papers had been marked nationally.

Finance Committee - The Committee had been updated on a number of premises related items including works to the boiler, energy consumption and lower tariffs and tenders for various works on the site. The remainder of the meeting had been concerned with discussing the budget for 2016/17.

7. Governing Body Business

- i. The meeting was reminded that the Governors' Annual Conference would be held on Saturday 5th March 2016 at Swavesey Village College from 9.15am to 1pm. Vicki Hayes undertook to attend on behalf of the Governing Body.

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ii. Governors were encouraged to attend the Termly Workshop to Improve Governance to be held on 23rd February 2016 at 6.30pm at the Cambridge Professional Development Centre.

iii. The Chair reported that Paul Joel would be attending training on safeguarding. Given the recent requirement for Governors to become involved in various quasi-judicial processes at the school, Caroline Hyde enquired as to whether the Governing Body could receive training on grievance, disciplinary and complaints procedures to ensure that individuals were familiar with and comfortable with these processes should they be called upon to use them. **The Clerk undertook to explore what courses were available and to ascertain whether the Governing Body could receive the training free of charge.**

iv. The Chair confirmed that parents had been invited to express an interest in the parent governor vacancy via 'parent mail'.

v. The Governing Body noted appointments made to the Link Governor roles.

vi. Vicki Hayes undertook to draft a Communications Policy for consideration by the Governing Body at a future meeting.

vii. Ben Tregenna undertook to draft guidelines for ensuring the security/confidentiality of IT and School Documents for consideration by the Governing Body at a future meeting.

8. Any Other Business

School Visits/Events

The Governing Body was pleased to note that a football team had successfully represented the school at a County tournament recently held in Ely and had achieved 3rd place.

It was reported that 30 children would be involved in a dance event at the Royal Albert Hall on 28th March 2016.

Resignation of Chair

In view of her impending departure from Willingham, Bev Lawrence indicated her intention to resign from the position of Chair at the meeting of the Governing Body in March but would continue to serve as a Governor until she leaves the village. **The Governing Body would be required to elect a new Chair at the next meeting.**

9. Review of Outcomes & Key Messages

The Chair concluded the meeting by reminding Governors of the impact that exclusions and behavioural difficulties had had on the Senior Leadership Team during the academic year to date and the work that would now begin on the school budget in the next and future years.

10. Date of Next Meeting

22nd March 2016 at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.14pm.



Chair