

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Fox Primary School held at the School on Monday 30 March 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

PRESENT

Sema Aydin (SA)	Paul Cotter (PC) (Headteacher)
Adrian De Segundo (ADS)	Emily Kerr (EK)
Sean Landers (SL) (arrived at 6:55 p.m.)	Rosalind Morgan (RM)
Kezia Pearce (KP)	Hannah Rickman (HR)
Andrew Sutcliffe (AS)	Jodie Terry (JT) (Chair)
Tina Villarosa (TV)	Benjamin Ward (BW)

OBSERVERS

Emma Madden (EM), Associate Headteacher
Ben McMullen (BM), Deputy Headteacher
Wendy Anthony (WA), Tri Borough School Admissions Manager (Item 3 Only) left at 6:55 p.m.

Carolyn MacLeish (CM), Clerk for Governors

Prior to the meeting governors received a presentation from Uz Afal on Mindfulness.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies of absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests given in respect of individual items on the agenda.

Discussion.

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3. ADMISSIONS POLICY CHANGES – PRESENTATION BY WENDY ANTHONY RBKC ADMISSIONS OFFICER

WA introduced herself to governors and thanked the GB for inviting her to the School. She advised that she had been in discussions with EK on the options open to the School and the LA to address the issues with access to the School for local people. The LA advised that the priority area had been created over 25 years ago to try and address the issue (it went as far as Gloucester Road. Map was shown to governors),

however it had been rendered entirely ineffectual. The LA had received a number of complaints, appeals and queries regarding the lack of access to places in the School for local people. Cllr Will the the LA cabinet minister for Education was particularly interested in improving the situation and ensuring fairer access to the School for all children regardless of their economic circumstances.

Governors were advised that when the offers of primary school places went out on 16th April the furthest non sibling place allocated was for a child living 70 metres away. The number of sibling places offered was similar too the previous year.

Governors stated they appreciated the problem and were fully aware of parents renting in the area to obtain a place for their child or children. They added they also knew that there were parents who had lived in the area for a number of years who couldn't access the School.

WA advised where there was improper conduct the LA has investigated further and where appropriate offers of places have been removed. She added that if parents apply for Fox the LA asks for additional evidence about their residence in the form of Land Registry document or tenancy agreement that must be for a minimum of 12 months. WA concluded that the LA believed the issues around admissions to the School to be very serious. The priority area no longer worked and that it was the LA's responsibility to rectify the situation and it was in the School's interest for the Governing Body to help address the issue. WA advised governors there were two options open to the GB and she presented them as follows:

Option 1 – Designation a specific number of places for Pupil Premium Pupils

New regulations permit LA's and schools to state they will prioritise admissions for Pupil Premium pupils and allocate a percentage of places for those pupils (i.e. 20%). The following points were raised in discussion:

- governors were advised only a few schools were considering the option this year and to date there was no real information or data to validate the success of the measure. The information would not be available until 2016 and the School would need the information before that to make the changes;
- it did not address the issue of average working class families on middle incomes not being able to access the School;
- the LA did not have all the information and resources to run the application process fairly and it would need a longer preparation time to set it up then was currently available. The LA had been tasked with resolving the admissions policy for September 2017 entry;
- WA responded to governors questions about the process and were advised that the LA would need to access FSM's information through a hub which would need information such as the applying parent's National Insurance number, all applications would need to be checked thoroughly, all community schools in the LA would need to agree to the admissions policy to ensure fairness;
- WA advised the LA were not in favour of the solution as it did not address the issue of people renting in the area to secure their children's places;
- governors stated that whilst they appreciated the issues behind the system they were keen to increase the number of PP pupils in the School. WA agreed to undertake some analysis to determine exactly how many families are in receipt of PP applied in 2013 and 2014.

Option 2 – Random Allocation of Places

Governors were advised that the allocation of places is decided randomly within the priority area which would go as far as Gloucester Road (1 mile away), Cromwell Road (0.5 miles) and Notting Hill Gate (0.2 miles). The system would ensure that those parents applying for places without siblings in the School were not guaranteed places and would hopefully deter parents from taking that course of action.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- WA responded to governors' questions about the number of places that would be allocated to siblings. She stated the sibling rule would still apply and that the LA were confident that issue would work itself through if the policy was introduced;
- WA advised that if governors wanted to consider the PP allocation the LA would be happy to consider the method once it had been introduced by West London Free and there was information and data to show the success of the measure;
- WA stated random allocation would guarantee approximately half of the places were allocated to pupils that would not have been able to access the School currently;
- JT asked if the School adopted the method could this include allowing staff members to apply for places. WA responded that this would need the agreement of all community schools in the LA and she would liaise with Senior Officers and Members as a separate proposal

Governors raised the following discussion points about both methods:

- governors asked if the School could implement both methods;
- RM stated that the Staff within the School were very committed to ensuring equal opportunity to all pupils regardless of their background;
- Governors asked if the LA had the power to ask how long people had lived in the area when applying for school places.
- WA advised that the LA could only ensure that applicants fulfilled the legal requirements and could not ask qualitative questions about the applicants to ascertain their links to the local area;
- Governors asked what a reasonable catchment area would be for admissions for Reception pupils. Governors added they understood that 70 metres away from the School was not acceptable;
- WA stated that in London 0.5 miles would be considered an average distance for oversubscribed schools, and can be considered as a local community school;
- governors were advised that the LA would need to start the consultation process in October 2015 and for it to be determined by January 2016.

Governors thanked WA for presenting to them, and advised she would prepare a briefing document with the final consultation proposals in order for them to vote on at their next GB meeting on Wednesday 20th May 2015.

Governors stated that they agreed unanimously in principle with the decision to change the School's admissions policy and to review and approve the proposed changes for consultation with parents and the wider community at their next meeting in May.

Discussion.

RESOLVED: that the GB of Fox Primary School voted unanimously in principle to approve changing its admissions policy for the September 2017 intake (in consultation with RBK&C admissions)

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015.

Discussion.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015 be signed as a true record.

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Governors were advised that the minutes from the committee meetings were available to view on the governors drive to review.

A) HR Committee (26 February 2015)

ADS, Committee Chair, reported on the issues discussed at the meeting, namely:

- the School was recruiting for TA's for September to assist with the School's interventions and was on course to have all positions filled;
- the School had appointed five new teachers to start with the School in September on Friday 27th March 2015.

B) Finance Committee (26 February 2015)

JT, Committee Chair, reported on the issues discussed at the meeting, namely:

- the committee reviewed the School's finances and would present the draft budget at the next board meeting;
- the School had an in year overspend to date of £105,000 and a carry forward of £75,000 going into 2015-16. The final figures would be confirmed at the next board meeting;
- the overspend had been largely accounted for in staffing costs;
- the School had advised there would be an overall budget deficit of £116,000 for 2015-16 however the School had not yet put in all its anticipated income and the committee were advised the figure reported would not be the actual deficit.

C) Curriculum Committee (24 February 2015)

SA, Committee Chair, reported on the issues discussed at the meeting, namely:

The committee had reviewed the School's latest data, the impact of interventions and had noted that all year groups were progressing and attaining above the national average.

D) Premises Committee (24 February 2015)

KP, Committee Chair, reported on the issues discussed at the meeting, namely:

The committee reviewed all the School's building and policies in particular reference to the ongoing building work being carried out on the School site.

Discussion.

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6. REPORT AND VOTE ON FEDERATION WITH ASHBURNHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governors were referred to the following documents:

- Federation Working Group Report
- Federation Consultation Responses (several reports details of comments and graphs collating the responses).

BW and JT highlighted aspects of the reports in discussion with governors:

- the number of parents in favour and not in favour of the federation was very close and there had been a high level of response;
- key concerns raised by parents were as follows:
 - how the federation would be organised
 - the federation would lead to the management's focus being taken away from Fox
 - parents felt overwhelmed by the changes to the building, the size of the School and the federation
 - there was a perception that staff had to attend a lot of meetings or were out of class a lot due to the work with Ashburnham
 - some parents felt the federation was a good idea but just not at the present time
- BW and JT had met with their Ashburnham counterparts to discuss the feedback and as a result of their discussions it had been agreed there would be a separate committees for Fox and Ashburnham which would focus on teaching, learning and standards. It was hoped that this change would reassure parents that Fox's standards had not and would not drop;
- the governor committee structure would be reviewed after a year to ensure it was working;
- governors were advised that there had been 90 responses to the questionnaire on the federations and there had been 160 responses to the buildings work questionnaire. The overall feeling was that the majority of parents were happy to federate and therefore did not express an opinion.

Governors raised the following points in discussion:

- SL asked if the parental response would contribute to the decision made regarding the proposed federation. He added that it was important to consider the responses as the GB had solicited the views. He added that he thought the concerns arose from the lack of evidence presented that the federation was of benefit to either school. He concluded that it was reasonable for parents to express concern about that the federation was not in their children's interests;
- BW advised that the GB had to make the decision based on the best interests of the School and its pupils and the future of the School and its future pupils. He stated that the GB could not consider the proposal based on concerns about personal situations. He added that the views expressed in the consultation were useful to help the School help shape the federation if approved by the GB;
- JT added that some of the individual concerns had been based on incorrect facts such as perceptions of teachers being out of class to support Ashburnham. RM

added she had not been to Ashburnham for months, however she was aware that if she was out of school parents assumed she was at Ashburnham and there could be several reasons;

- BW reported that staff had been supportive of the proposal to federate and were very passionate about the work with Ashburnham;
- PC and EM stated that there was now a genuine sharing of expertise and resources between the two schools. Fox teachers were using ideas taken from Ashburnham teachers in their practice and reporting back on ideas shared;
- PC added that Fox classroom teachers were no longer supporting Ashburnham teachers on a regular basis. He added the first year of the collaboration had been very labour intensive, this second year had been reduced significantly and the third year onwards would be a collaboration between the two schools. PC concluded that he genuinely could not see any detrimental affects to Fox from the work and collaboration with Ashburnham;
- governors discussed celebrating the successes of the collaboration with Ashburnham more and communicating better with parents on the successes and their concerns. Governors agreed concerns were partially heightened due to the building programme;
- BW added that the retention of the School's excellent staff was a key factor behind the proposal and was part of a compelling argument to progress with the federation.

Governors thanked JT and BW for all their hard work on the consultation, discussions and planning for the proposed federation.

Governors discussed the proposed and a secret ballot vote was taken and governors voted unanimously in favour to approve the proposed federation of the School with Ashburnham Community Primary School.

Discussion.

RESOLVED: the Governing Body of Fox Primary School voted unanimously to federate with Ashburnham Primary School from 1st September 2015.

7. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

JT advised governors that she had made and posted the following link governor reports on the governors drive for their information:

- Literacy – January 2015
- Spoken Language – January 2015
- PSHE – January 2015

JT reminded governors that before they circulate their visit reports they should ensure the member of staff they had visited was happy with the report and the report included any evidence of SMSC being promoted.

Discussion.

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8. REPORT ON THE SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CONSULTATION AND BUILDING PROGRAMME

KP advised that the School had had an eventful couple of months in relation to the building programme and the School believed the progression of the programme would now run more smoothly. She stated that it had been helpful to have buildings meetings with parents particularly in light of some of the School's parents expressing their wish to relocate the School during the building programme.

Planning permission had been granted by the LA however this had been referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government due to objections raised. Normally once pre-commencement conditions were agreed works could start, however due to the objections raised planning permission and the fulfilment of the conditions would need to be fully signed off and complete, therefore the work that had been planned to take place during the Easter break could not commence.

KP highlighted the following points to governors:

- governors were advised a group of parents had expressed their concerns about contamination on the School site and had raised the following concerns:
 - lead poisoning
 - dust
 - noise
 - learning disturbance
- parents had been advised of the following
 - there was no where for the whole school to go and relocation would involve using a number of sites which would be very difficult for the School to manage;
 - the LA and the School had assured parents that it was working with the contractors to ensure the above concerns did not affect pupils or the smooth running of the School. Additionally the contractors were very supportive and keen to cause minimum disruption to the running of the School;
 - there had been extensive testing of the soil through the open holes of the playground and there was no contamination

Governors made the following points in discussion:

- JT advised that some parents had raised legal concerns in reference to the School's and LA's decision to continue running the School on its existing site whilst the work is carried out;
- AS reported on the parent consultation and meetings held last week and stated there had been a good turn out;
- KP stated that the LA, EC Harris and the contractors had been present. She advised two meetings had been held and one meeting had been more positive than the other, however parents were positive that their views had been heard;
- KP advised that she had drafted and the School had issued a FAQ and answered all the questions raised by parents. This would be treated as a live document and updated as necessary.

Governors thanked and congratulated the School and in particular KP and JT for all their hard work in ensuring the programme continued progressing whilst dealing with all the difficulties and complexities that had arisen.

Discussion.

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9. **REPORT BY THE HEADTEACHER**

PC reported on the items in his report, focussing on the specific items below:

- attendance currently stood at 97.3%, this time last year it was 97.4% and the previous year 96.4%;
- accidents had been reduced since the autumn term and this was thought to have been due to the removal of the climbing frame;
- BM tabled a behaviour report which due to time constraints could not be reviewed in detail in the meeting. Governors were asked to review the document and send BM any questions they had for him to respond. Governors were advised the information was confidential.

Discussion.

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10. **GOVERNING BODY**

A) **Governor Appointments or Leavers**

AS advised that he would be standing down as a governor at the end of the year after many years as a governor of the School. He stated that he was delighted the Ashburnham federation had been approved and that the forthcoming GB restructure was a good opportunity for him to stand down and know the School and governance was more impressive than it had ever been.

EK advised that she too would be standing down at the end of the year as she was expecting her first child and relocating to Oxford.

Governors thanked both for their outstanding service for a number of years and stated they would both be missed. Governors were advised that their last meeting would be on the 6th July 2015.

B) **Current Governor Vacancies**

1 Co-Opted

Governors had agreed previously this vacancy would not be filled due to the Ashburnham proposed federation.

C) **Governors' Terms of Office**

No governors' terms of office due to end in the next three months.

D) **Report by Clerk on Governor Non-Attendance**

No issues to report.

Discussion.

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11. CHAIRMAN'S ACTION

All reported under the relevant agenda items.

12. DATES OF FUTURE GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Discussion.

RESOLVED: that the next round of governors' and committee meetings be held as follows:

- Summer 1 - Wednesday 20 May 2015 at 6:00 p.m.
- Summer 2 - Monday 6 July 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

13. ITEMS FOR FUTURE ACTION OR MEETINGS

Discussion.

RESOLVED: that the following issues be future agenda items:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Suggested By</u>	<u>For Meeting</u>
• Admissions Consultation and Proposal	GB	Summer 1
• Ashburnham Federation – Proposed GB structure	GB	Summer 1
• Building Programme	GB	Summer 1 and 2
• Approval of Draft Budget 2015-16	GB	Summer 1

**CHAIR'S
SIGNATURE:.....**

DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....