

Taw Valley Federation



A meeting of the Full Governing body was held on Monday 20th June 2016 at 7.00pm at High Bickington Primary School.

Present: Heather Dunn, Amy Suchacki, Briony Parsons (associate), Peter Lake, Sue Wells, Mike Clark, Jane Adams, Rob Norton (head), Helen Carn, Adrian Wells, Sarah Fast, Verity Lunn (clerk).



Sally Anoyrkatis (chair) arrived 19.07

MINUTES

Meeting started 19.05pm

- 1. Opening Prayer & Welcome. (MC/SA)**
In the absence of SA, AW welcomed all to the meeting. MC led the opening prayer.
- 2. To receive, and if appropriate, approve apologies for absence.**
Apologies received and approved from Colin Parsons and Phil Asson.
- 3. To declare any business interests arising from the agenda and remind governors of meeting confidentiality.**
None declared.

SA arrived 19.07pm.

- 4. To approve minutes of previous meeting**
Part II minutes from FGB 16th May distributed and read by governors. Governors agreed part I and part II minutes from 16/05/2016, and minutes from meeting with the Diocese 24th May 2016.
- 5. Matters arising from the minutes**
Governor self-audit – reminder to complete. Governors were requested to return these by the end of the week. **Action: VL to forward document to those that had not completed.**
RN commented on the need to have photographs – website/safeguarding purposes.
Photographs to be taken at the next FGB.
- 6. SIP – Finance leadership/Management**
All had received Adrian's report from meeting with RN. AW invited questions from governors.
AW – governors had set a budget for various items - one had come out a bit more than had budgeted (CPD) which was agreed at the time by governors.
SA – pupil premium – as in AW's report they had covered this at various times, but was important to cross reference this across all aspects.
RN – agreed. Had set a date to look at this with HC/SF.
SA – did anyone have questions or comments to raise?
BP – needed to be noted that the figures given were from last year's budget (2015-2016 financial year). The figures for the 2016-2017 financial year were different.
AW – had done that as 2015-2016 financial year was still part of this academic year.
HC – is the SEN training listed all for the development of AS as SENCO, or is that for all staff?

AS – explained that it was a mixture, depending on what was most appropriate. Some training was for her as SENCO, some more appropriate for others in the classroom.

7. Head's report – including use of outside space/environment within school.

RN gave a verbal report.

RN explained staff changes taking place.

Wetheridge – current early years teacher leaving, AS and teaching assistant from current Y1/Y2 class would be moving into this class. AS had great expertise for early years, and the small reception cohort next year would allow her an extra afternoon a week for SENCO work. This would work well in helping to close children's attainment gaps. Interviews for Y1/Y2 teacher were to take place on Wednesday.

High Bickington – had appointed Stacey Knowles (a NQT) for the KS1 class. Had appointed Liz Kennard for the class 4 (maternity cover) position – 0.8 appointment for a year. She had had 14 years' experience of teaching at secondary level. RN attributed the change of thinking of how to employ thinking to the CPD he had been receiving – it was possible for a new staff member to learn subject knowledge, but it was more important to look for correct level of emotional intelligence.

RN was currently working on an induction pack for the new staff members.

Data – phonics data was the only hard data available for this meeting. Although official pass mark had not yet been released, if it stayed the same as it had in previous years the results were:

Wetheridge – Y1 9/11 children had passed (82%), Y2 retake 1/2 children had passed.

High Bickington – Y1 and Y2 retakes all children had passed.

EYFS data – Wetheridge 61% of children had achieved good level of development, with good progress made by the remaining children. 12/14 (86%) in HB had achieved this level. Devon average is about 60%. RN felt this was good evidence of a strong foundation for these children's primary school careers.

Class 4 and Class 2 teachers at Wetheridge were due to be moderated on Thursday.

Parental engagement – staff at Wetheridge had felt this needed to be improved. They had introduced parent class visits at the beginning of the day, class assemblies, and holding parent forums (different class each week), this had been well received by parents. Had also invited parents in for 'let's get cooking' activities to cook with their children. This had also been good for the social skills of the children as they were responsible for greeting parents/taking them to classrooms.

Had had an incident of a parent from Wetheridge responding very positively to being challenged about the school's suitability.

Environment – on agenda at moment. Some work to be done to make the sites more exciting/loved. Providing the right environment was important for the children to want to learn to their full potential. They needed to make sure that they were using the available area to its full potential.

SF – Class 4 at HB – four Y6 leaving, thirteen Y3 who would be moving up next year. How was that going to work in the space?

RN – will be a total of 25 children, which would be fine in that classroom. The class library would probably be moved to the main library space, which would mean that the children were using the main library more often.

SA – there was also a further concern for the year after.

RN – was something they were going to be thinking about.

HC – at one point HB had a wildlife area in churchyard – was this still the same?

Discussed – was still available and sometimes used, but also had the Quarry Woods area now which was often used.

SA – outside area of what would be new Reception class at Witheridge needed to be improved for September start.

RN – agreed. Had started working towards this.

BP – timescales tight for happening this summer due to contractors' availability, but was in hand.

8. Approve appointment of new staff

RN stated that this would be approving the appointment of staff to cover three vacancies – replacing like for like. Class 4 HB covered at 0.8 for a year so not vague for applicants in terms of return of permanent staff member.

Governors approved the appointments. SA noted it was good that formal induction plans were in place.

9. Finance

Budget Monitor

BP – shows how current budget is going. Not a lot to say about it yet as early in the year. Carry forward bigger than expected, quite healthy. There was scope for the necessary changes to the environment that had been discussed.

Governors did not have any questions on the budget monitor.

Dinner Money – Possibility of increasing to £2.30 from September (current cost £2.20)

BP – had been talking to other school administrators. In this area schools generally currently charged £2.30 for school dinners, with most increasing to £2.40 in September. At HB and Witheridge the cost had been £2.20 for many years. BP proposed to put up the cost to £2.30 in September to cover the increasing costs of food and to maintain high standards. The main cost of providing meals at Witheridge was the contract with Devon Norse – as the federation had been successfully running the kitchen at HB for over a year now BP also wished to propose that they give notice to Devon Norse.

SA – why did they need to put up costs when were just above breaking even if it is not about making a profit?

BP – it is about wanting to improve what the children were getting.

SF – thought at the moment that children did seem to be happy with what they were getting. It was a worry that some parents would then stop buying the meals due to the increased cost.

BP – there are some standards that are not being met eg. availability of fruit juice, wholemeal bread, milk etc.

JA – suggested to start with increased cost see what the profits were like – if parents did stop buying school meals.

BP – would not be running for a profit, would be making improvements to the menus to use the extra money

Discussion about having sample menu for parents to see if they agreed with what the changes would be for the cost.

MC stated he had seen a definite improvement in the school menus over the past year at HB.

BP – could leave until April, but did not want to get to a position where they would have to put up the cost by a lot at once.

Discussion over 5p increase in short term – agreed this would take up more administrative time.

SW – proposed they did increase costs to £2.30. PL seconded. Majority agreed. Governors also agreed to giving notice to Devon Norse for Witheridge Kitchen. BP explained notice period required for this.

Witheridge Playground

Governors had seen information previously circulated. BP – at this stage needed governors to agree an amount that could then be used to improve as was best – max £6,500. Governors agreed.

10. Governor visit/training updates (governor feedback from any training undertaken – including online. Please bring copies of any certificates/feedback forms)

JA/AW been on safeguarding training provided to all staff across the federation, which included AS, BP and VL. JA felt attending had been worthwhile from a governor perspective. AW felt that what he had taken from the training was the need to be much more aware of what going on, and informing RN of these, even if feel it was out of context it might be the case that RN had other pieces of information that would then build up a jigsaw. Recommended that if saw anything that caused a concern to write it down, with date and time and give to RN.

VL had attended Babcock clerk's update.

11. Prevent Training (RN)

RN delivered prevent training to governors.

12. Update on MATs from working party

SA – it had been left at last FGB meeting that the working party were going to be looking at TEAM MAT and St Christopher's MAT in more detail. They had been on a further visit to TEAM, have not had contact back from St Christopher's – Janine Waring had been unwell/unavailable, and had not replied to messages so they did not have much to report back from them at this point. They will continue to chase this up.

Had been on visit to TEAM last week.

MC – had not been at original meeting where Paul Mulligan etc had done their presentation, also wasn't on working party but SW had not been able to make the visit. At a diocese training he had been at, Paul had been talking to AW/MC about forming a management partnership first for working together before possibly exploring a MAT.

JA – this would be as an interim measurement to provide support through that time.

MC – Paul had been very open that if they formed a management partnership first, then it would be okay to disband that if they felt they did not want to join their multi academy trust.

MC – felt that it would be part of the due diligence checks for governors.

AW – which TEAM would also need to be doing to protect their MAT.

HC – would that be as a way of supporting TVF?

HD – how would the support he's offering be different than that currently in place?

JA – he had been talking about support for RN, and also staff within TEAM that could work with staff in the federation’s schools.

HD – so throughout the management partnership RN would maintain his head role, and final decisions would remain with the governing body?

MC – yes that would be the case.

SA – was a financial implication with this proposal – TVF would pay PM’s deputy slightly more as compensation for the extra done during the time PM was out supporting TVF.

BP – would this been seen as enough in terms of Local Authority inspections?

AW – had been talking to the diocese on Monday, who have said they would support in this decision. PM of opinion that the arrangement would be fine for inspections as governors would be doing all that possibly can at that point.

SW – if were made to go with a sponsor academy, would the academy they were being sponsored to join then still be able to slow down as wanting to do due diligence?

SA – can be told that they have to process faster, as had been told by Janine Waring about some schools they had had to take on in this way.

SA – would be a different dynamic to the potential management partnership than the management partnership the schools within TEAM initially formed, as Brayford/Umberleigh did not have a headteacher. She had felt that PM had been wanting to do what Jo Dymond was currently doing at Witheridge (supporting teachers) rather than her continuing to do that. As JD had proven a success so far, SA wanted to hear more that PM would be supporting RN rather than the other staff.

HC – had felt that he said he could do that.

RN – had felt same as SA, that PM had been saying more about what would be happening if JD wasn’t there. Staff at Witheridge have got used to her way of working, and are seeing the improvements.

JA – if she is doing the job that is needed, then what is the point of replacing her?

BP – if PM was talking about no longer being CEO, what did governors feel about the MAT with no leader?

RN – would be several years before this was happening.

HD – felt there was lots change in a short amount of time – had been in federation for less than two years and already so much changed. Couldn’t necessarily plan that far ahead.

RN – the thing he worries about is that if they make a decision, is there then another option out there that would come along that would be better?

HD – is there any pressures that have happened since the last meeting that are speeding this along – had felt the need for an urgent decision had become lessened after the advice from the diocese.

JA – it would depend on the result of the July meeting on how urgent this was.

SA – had talked to PM about what would happen if got an Ofsted inspection - PM would come to that with the plan they had written.

Minutes moved to part II 20.58.

Minutes moved back to part I 21.56.

13. Policies:

Collective Worship – governors approved.

Finance – governors approved.

Curriculum – HD commented there was no information on early years. RN – need to add that it is curriculum for KS1 and KS2. HD to write/alter paragraph for ‘Letters and Sounds’. Governors approved with these changes.

SEND – governors approved.

RE – JA commented that there needed to be something about right to withdraw. Agreed.

Assessment – to be reviewed at next meeting.

14. Matters brought forward by the chair.

Reconstitution – VL informed governors of the requirement for governing bodies of federations to reconstitute so that governing bodies comprised of two parent governors, which could be from either school. As a two school federation, all other categories would remain the same. Governors agreed to do this for 31st July.

Remote attendance – governors agreed that to the principle of governors attending meetings remotely if unable to attend otherwise. **VL to find out further guidelines on this.**

Date change July meeting – several governors felt 11th July was not ideal as before 12th July inspection at Witheridge. Date agreed to be changed to Wednesday 13th July – 7.30pm at Witheridge.

Meeting ended 22.05.

Dates of future meetings (and associated portfolio)

20th June 2016 (HB) - Finance Leadership/management part of SIP. {Use of outside space/environment within school.}

11th July 2016 (W) - Achievement and Standards, SEND, Pupil Premium and overall.