

Taw Valley Federation



A meeting of the Full Governing body was held on Monday 21st March 2016 at 7.00pm at Witheridge Primary School.



Present: Sally Anoyrkatis (chair), Rob Norton (head), Sue Wells, Adrian Wells, Amy Suchacki, Heather Dunn, Helen Carn, Jane Adams, Colin Parsons, Mike Clark, Sarah Fast, Briony Parsons (associate), Verity Lunn (clerk), Steve Baber (guest).

MINUTES

1. **Opening Prayer & Welcome. (AW/SA)**

AW led the opening prayer.

SA welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Steve Baber, chair of directors at Chulmleigh Academy Trust, who was observing the meeting.

2. **To receive, and if appropriate, approve apologies for absence.**

Apologies received and approved from Peter Lake.

Rob Foster had informed SA that he was resigning from the governing body due to work commitments meaning he was unable to continue to contribute to the governing body at the full extent he had been. Governors wished to note thanks for his valuable contributions during his time as school governor.

3. **To declare any business interests arising from the agenda and remind governors of meeting confidentiality.**

None declared from governors. VL conflict in item seven as administrative assistant at High Bickington Primary School.

4. **To approve minutes of previous meeting (22nd February 2016 – previously circulated)**

Follow up to JA's query on attendance policy – notes received from EWO. JA thought options needed to be more visibly available to parents, did agree that problem was across all schools as far as could see, not just federation. SA suggested possibility of formalising these in some way. Agreed attendance policy as presented for last FGB. Minutes agreed and signed.

5. **Matters arising from the minutes**

Governor/leadership responsibilities – Postponed to next meeting – SW to bring sheet from her training module.

HD queried whether best practice to have safeguarding governor same as staff member responsible for safeguarding – SB said on recent audit he had been told no staff member should be the safeguarding governor. Agreed to look to put someone in place to take on the role – course available in May. AW and CP said they would be happy to consider taking on this role – SA to discuss with them.

Governor self-audit (previously circulated) – Some had completed – agreed staff governors also needed to do this. Discussion of making sure short biography section consistent for appearance on websites. RN would edit if needed.

ACTION: Those not completed governor self-audit to have done by end first week of holidays, so RN can work at this. Approx length of four sentences.

6. Terms of Reference for Portfolio Holders

Current status: governors meeting in their portfolio pairs to work on these.

7. Budget update/finance portfolio report (BP/AW)

All had received budget.

Portfolio report circulated to those who had not received in advance.

Lettings policy/charges - explained after meeting of AW and BP. Governors accepted the scale of charges.

AW explained the budget monitors. Two proposals as in report.

VL left room.

Proposal for Teaching Assistants pay change – Agreed as proposed.

Proposal for Business manager to be made able to authorise payments– increase in administrator job grade. BP explained difference. Agreed as proposed.

VL returned.

Additional cost to that shown in budget – BP could show how this would affect budget.

Final budget to be prepared for next month.

8. Wellbeing and Christian Care portfolio report (MC/SW)

Governors had received learning walk write up.

SW showed photographs from walk to illustrate their walk.

Can be seen as benchmark to see where things are going from here – seeing links with church becoming stronger/progression of points raised.

9. Head's report (verbal)/report from Mock Ofsted at Witheridge (RN)

Data from last FGB – queries around children at below age related at Christmas, the situation has now improved somewhat as more of the curriculum has been covered, over Learning Community schools and beyond this is not an unusual position to be in.

Staff about to resubmit assessment levels – will give more up to date picture.

LA DFE informing all schools that day after end of teaching sequence (when child starts on invent) can still count as independent evidence. Staff will be asked to look at what gaps are in the list of what needed to be obtained for each child so they can make sure children are given every opportunity to be able to fill these. Floor target of 65% at mastery, with coasting threshold at 85% mastery.

SB asked if they found boys struggling more with this new curriculum than girls were - RN reported not so easy to generalise like that due to small cohorts.

Although Mock Ofsted was at Witheridge, staff were taking the points made as needing improvement and also applying to HB where appropriate. Focus of Mock Ofsted was on writing. Overall slightly disappointed in terms of what evidence they had gleaned and in terms of what local authority advisor previously said. Now to work on what needed as shown in the report. Expectation was that the head challenge lead learners to challenge children to improve their standards. Did identify progress made in books in Y6, which did evidence the influence eg HD had achieved. Overall teaching inadequate, but KS1 good – still shows KS2 issue. Although still areas for improvement in KS1, particularly in writing which AS was already working on. Had learning behaviours been sufficiently good, felt rating might have been higher. Two week action plans for staff to work on – first one on learning behavior.

Quality and quantity – Learning behavior still requiring improvement (not behavior in general) – improvement from previous where behaviour overall was bad.
RN had observed class three last week – majority of year group getting on with independent work as required, but were others that although not disruptive, were not getting on with what was required – need to be assured that support there if needed, put back on task etc. Important that staff need to keep dipping in and out even if independent activity. Need to get learning behavior right so that they can produce the evidence.

CP – feels important that we have improved – did those carrying out the Mock Ofsted also agree that improving?

HC – Mock Ofsted last term had amber in terms of getting where need to for July, this judgement shows red for the same issue, so not improvement?

SA – explained that they agreed they had seen improvement, but not pat on back moment at all, but need to make the improvements faster.

CP – asked whether what inspectors were saying matched RN's view of what was going on.

RN – It is talking about tweaking things mostly, some things are requiring more input. Sense of teachers motivating students.

JA – has latest status triggered more support from county?

RN – not directly from this – half termly monitoring. This extra monitoring a good thing, as now have two meetings interim before July to get support along the way.

Excellence for all program – getting to where need to be.

HD – graded to red, how much of that is related to data, would improvement in the data following the new advice from DFE on assessment help us?

SA – not convinced it will, as there were other elements to their assessment, a large part was due to the quality of work in the books. And we know from RN's work in other schools locally that our books are significantly below where they should be.

CP – felt that good evidence that leadership in right place now.

SA – the overall judgement was inadequate, because T & L was inadequate, but also Leadership and Management were judged as 'Requires Improvement' not 'Good'.

The need to get teachers to good practice level as quickly as possible was discussed. SA felt that it would be beneficial to support RN by ensuring some leadership/people management training to enable this.

HD – felt it would be beneficial to have RN having time in the classroom modelling good teaching.

SA – not necessarily that an issue, found that what came up was things that had been mentioned in staff meetings before, nothing new, needed to work out how to improve staff taking these things on board. Was there an agreement to fund this training?

SW – does RN feel this is needed?

RN – Thought that would be beneficial.

SF queried if it was something to look for somewhere outside of education rather than only school based training.

RN – Is going to be a question of driving all staff to be doing the same thing. Has to challenge staff all the time, which is hard for the staff concerned.

JA – really hard/lots of pressure when being scrutinised all the time, but have to see how the end result will be that they have learned so much, and a sense of achievement however hard at the time.

SB – Also about building middle leadership, having done this himself.

CP – Is there written evidence of inspection last week?

RN – Yes, this will be forwarded out to governors.

BP – is it worth SA also going on this course so can support each other in this, especially if going to outside training rather than in education?

Agreed that would help.

AW – where might someone look for a course, how would it be put in budget?

SA – would look at options – did have a recommended name that could pursue.
Governors agreed for this training to take place.

ACTION: SA to look at training option for RN
ACTION: RN to forward out Mock Ofsted report to governors.

10. Safeguarding update

Referred back to earlier discussion on safeguarding governors.

HD had done refresher level 3 course.

RN – attended statutory prevent radicalisation training, get disseminated to lead learners – needed to go to all.

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

SF had been on Babcock induction training – reported that she had found it useful.

HC – GEL module on ‘role of SEND governor’.

12. Approve policies:

Collective Worship – moved forward.

13. TTMLP/LLC update

SB left at this point of the meeting.

SA/SW reported on TTMLP meeting earlier;

Main part of meeting was whether the Cooperative Trust Schools would be forming a MAT – government budget announcement now stated all have to be MAT so no choice on whether, only a matter of when and with whom. SW stated from her perspective the other three schools seemed keen to have a MAT formed between the five schools, were keen to make that decision at the meeting. SA had emphasised that the federation had not made the governing body decision to do that. TTMLP would have to prove they were already supporting each other and that there was the capacity to drive through the school improvement required at Witheridge – the other schools felt they could justify increased support input to Witheridge if we were committed to going down road of MAT with TTMLP, but not if we were looking at other models.

SA - Five schools had been tasked with looking at different models – looking at how co-head/executive head would work – RN/SA had been to look at Pilton Bluecoat Junior School (MAT with Umlerleigh and Brayford) – went to see how structure worked – both positives and negatives. Head had stated they would have interest in TVF joining the existing MAT there. SW – felt that five schools were very much sense of wanted four heads working together, sense of carrying on as are. BP – had minuted at the meeting that they would be working towards their final ideal structure.

SW – although from that, if the federation did join a pre-formed MAT (as would happen with Pilton), where would that leave RN?

SA – felt that what had been saying on the day was that the numbers in the schools in the federation justified having a head within the bigger model. Had asked if five schools wanted to join would he be open to that – had said not against, but worried about the leadership model in place. What did RN think?

RN – felt needed to look at bigger picture, not just about him. From the visit had felt very much based on size of schools – deputy heads/individual heads of schools.

AW – how many children in Pilton MAT – 250 (main school church school), about 40 in each of the other two schools.

HC – so would actually be advantageous to them to have us join them?

SA - yes, they have been told they need to take on more numbers.

Schools in TTMLP - Winkleigh 180, Morchard Bishop 140. KN 42.

Each would need investigating, TTMLP, Pilton, Chulmleigh also interested. Felt needed to look at other academies – SMCC also keen for initial meeting.

Worry about if formed MAT out of Chulmeigh area in terms of feeding into the secondary school, especially if a different secondary school involved.

SA – Different risks with different options - do have history of working well together in five schools, and may have problems of not having so much freedom when joining a pre-existing MAT.

SA – Did BP have anything to add from a business point of view?

BP – had met with business manager from Chulmleigh – long time to create a MAT from new, no cost savings from converting to MAT. May be cost savings if joining other schools.

MC – with five schools, if looking at other options, where does that leave the other three schools, they can't form on their own?

RN – left as open at end of meeting.

AW – if formed with secondary school that wasn't Chulmleigh, what would that mean in terms of children feeding in?

SA – would still feed in to Chulmleigh as in catchment area, it would very much be in Chulmleigh's interests to continue to work with us in order to keep those, and we would need to continue to work well with them too for the children who would still be transitioning to Chulmleigh. However it could possibly make relationship with Chulmleigh a little more difficult.

SW – felt momentum picking up this afternoon, felt that with three schools in the possible TTMLP MAT church schools, heads felt may be too many foundation governors/directors, trying to soften that with diocese. Worried about the implications of that. Pilton Bluecoat church school, which did have strong foundation directors in place.

MC – is it worth looking at diocese MAT (St Christopher's) as opened for new schools again?

RN – had thought 4/5 years ago that good possibility if needed at the time.

AW – concerned about the dangers of spending time on this issue when we need to be prioritising the improvements required to the school now.

RN – having option there ready to go if have to go if forced, so know where choice is.

SA – at this inspection had felt for first time that if the federation were part of something bigger then could move forward quickly.

SA – hoped we would come away with some sense of a decision over what governors felt about possible five schools MAT.

AW – think from what heard is that five schools have not come forward in the way he hoped they would.

RN – from meeting got sense that this would not necessarily change if did form MAT.

SW felt needed additional meeting, too much to fit in to a FGB meeting with other items on agenda.

Talked about having sessions with some people from various MATs talking to governing body as a whole.

ACTION: SA/RN/BP to organise people from various MATs discussed to come in to see governors. Ideally Pilton Bluecoat, Chulmleigh and St Christopher's.

ACTION: RN/SA to have meeting with all staff to update on position/allay fears over what is happening.

14. Part II – staffing

9.25 – HD, AS, SF, JA left the meeting at this point.

Minutes for this part of the meeting are kept separately.

Part II minutes ended 21.46.

15. Matters brought forward by the chair.

Possible date change for July FGB meeting – to 11th July.

Agreed most able to make.

Meeting ended 21.47.

Dates of future meetings (and associated portfolio)

18th April 2016 (HB) - Learning and Curriculum

16th May 2016 (W) - Wellbeing and Christian Care

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.