

The Governing Body Sefton Park School

Infants and Juniors

Chair of Governors: Corrie Bell

Headteacher: Dan Simson

Clerk to Governors: Alexandra Casley

Sefton Park



Infant and Junior Schools

Full Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday 29 March 2023

Sefton Park School

Ashley Down Road

Bristol

BS7 9BJ

ITEM	AGENDA ITEM AND NOTES		PAPERS CONSIDERED
1.0	Welcome and apologies and declarations of interest and resignations/new appointments		
	<p><i>Present:</i> Corrie Bell (CB), Dan Simson (DS), Amy Lewis (ALS), Rachel Wills (RWS), Jane Wheelock (JW), Ben Crowley (BC), Maggie Smithson (MS), Carrie Spittlehouse (CS)</p> <p><i>Apologies:</i> Amy Campbell (AC), Sally Dore (SD), Megan Arnold (MA), Andy Lillie (AL), Shabanna Mitha (SM), Neville Catton (NC)</p> <p><i>Absent:</i></p> <p><i>Attending:</i> Alexandra Casley (AC), Ruth Watts (RW), Louise Howlett (for part) (LH)</p>		
	<i>Present: 8</i>	<i>Quorum met: Yes</i>	
2.0	Previous minutes/matters arising		
	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.		
3.0	Recruitment update		
	<p>DS and CB gave an update on the deputy head recruitment. Six candidates had been called to interview on Monday, four had been put through to the second day and there had been one clear frontrunner, with a wealth of experience, who had been offered the role.</p> <p>HT presented rationale for changing the staffing structure to a leadership team with HT, DHT and Assistant Head Teacher given the uncertainties around school budgets and skill set of individuals.</p> <p>The pay grade for the new deputy would be L6-L11, which would need to be approved by the governors, and having one appointee now would allow the budget time to settle down. DS felt that the person appointed has the capacity to do the role. There would be</p>		

	<p>gaps, but these would be filled temporarily (for example appointing an assistant head, going down the TLR route, a phased leadership model). The school would have 4 leadership days per week, instead of the 6-8 that it would have had if two candidates had been appointed. The new deputy would take on the DSL role, and she has experience in this area.</p> <p>The governors approved the change in pay grade for the new deputy head and ratified the appointment of the successful candidate.</p>	
4.0	SVFS	
	<p>This was approved for signature by CB and submission by RW.</p> <p><i>RWS and RW left the meeting.</i></p>	
5.0	CCS	
	<p>ALS took the governors through the minutes from the latest meeting, in particular the feedback from the Ofsted visit and the section on attendance.</p>	
6.0	Clerk's report	
	<p>The governors confirmed that they were happy with the way in which the governors' emails were being used and managed.</p>	
7.0	Policy review	
	<p>The Health and Safety policy was approved.</p> <p>The Charging and Remissions policy was approved, but it was agreed that the school would revisit the option for parents to contribute over and above their requested contributions, which may help those families who are struggling. DS would check how this could be done via Arbor.</p> <p>The policy approval cover sheet was approved.</p>	
8.0	Governor visits	
	<p>CB had uploaded the suggested timetable to GovernorHub and she asked governors to check their diaries and volunteer for slots. She would also re-circulate via email.</p>	
9.0	SLT report	
	<p>The report was taken as read.</p> <p>Q – was it possible to proactively take into account diversity in teaching staff during the recruitment process?</p> <p>A – at present, there is no clear indication during the recruitment process as to the ethnic diversity of candidates as it is anonymous, and this had been particularly noticeable during the deputy recruitment process, when there had been 24 candidates from which to shortlist, but the gender or ethnic diversity of candidate had not been clear until the successful shortlisted candidates had been called to interview. Current school staff are not ethnically diverse, although there was a good gender balance, and this was representative of Bristol school staffing. Secondments could be sought from schools with a positive ethnic balance in the future as a way of addressing this, as well as speaking to</p>	

	<p>other head teachers to see how they achieve a better balance, but there was little that could be done during the recruitment process for legal reasons.</p> <p>Q – what are the advantages of using Socrative? A – it is a quick, easy, novel, IT-focussed assessment tool that is not burdensome on staff. It can be personalised, and is a quick and easy way of establishing knowledge retention.</p> <p><i>LH joined the meeting</i></p>	
10	Presentation from subject lead – Phonics	
	<p>LH had prepared slides and these would be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>All Reception and year 1 staff had been trained on the new phonics programme, that the school had been using for a few terms now. Any gaps in the scheme had been identified and drop-in sessions/observations had been used to ensure that all teachers were following the scheme – this was done in a supportive way and would continue throughout the year. These two year groups had now completed 3 assessment cycles, and the school would be looking at the data as well as emerging trends. The scheme would be introduced into year 2 from September.</p> <p>LH was providing training to staff, and was forging links with Chester Park (the only other school in Bristol using this particular scheme). The school was hoping to use the intervention system for the programme with the junior school, as well as the infants.</p> <p>The programme also gave access to a reading assessment programme, which amounted to 10 minutes per child per term and involved decoding words, reading and comprehension.</p> <p>From an equalities perspective, the scheme was providing positive outcomes for PP children and those with additional needs. Every teacher delivering the scheme could look at the data packs and target specific issues within groups of children, particularly the lower 20% of pupils by attainment.</p> <p>The school is trying to be proactive with suggestions as to what teachers can do in class, ensuring that phonics is embedded and upskilling teachers as they go. The school was keen to retain the key SP pedagogy and not simply putting in place phonics interventions.</p> <p>LH highlighted the phonics inset day overview, which would offer some bespoke time for each individual year group to address any gaps.</p> <p>Q – was the workload for assessments heavy for teachers? A – there is no major uptick in workload for the programme itself, as it is a pick up and teach scheme. There was a slight increase in workload for the assessment process, but it is an assessment with a purpose and is worth it.</p> <p>Q – how have the children responded to the structure? A – the school was previously delivering structured phonics lessons, albeit in a playful way, so it was not a huge change for them.</p> <p>Q – is the scheme making an impact?</p>	

	<p>A – yes, a positive one – it closes the gap and everybody moves through the scheme at the same time. Any additional support needed is given outside the specific lesson. The current cohort had been impacted considerably by Covid in terms of language development.</p> <p><i>LH left the meeting</i></p>	
11	Presentation from Subject Leads - PSHRE	
	<p><i>Tom joined the meeting and presented on PSHRE with BC.</i></p> <p>Tom and BC took the governors through their slides. It was noted that the curriculum had been reviewed 3 years ago, with the development of a bespoke SP programme, and the previous academic year had seen completion of the first full cycle of teaching of this curriculum, which was continuing to be embedded.</p> <p>The school has taken a thematic approach to the subject, with every year group studying the same area at the same time. Whole school assemblies link the topics together, and it forms part of the rhythm of the school year. The curriculum document itself is useful, providing clear guidance to teachers as to what is to be taught at specific times of year. Further work was needed to ensure consistent regularity of teaching across the various age groups.</p> <p>Floor books are used as a tool in each class to capture learning, and these make explicit the learning goals from lessons – some examples were circulated to the governors at the meeting. Specific tools used in class, such as emotion wheels, were highlighted in the slides.</p> <p>Q – what impact was the school seeing from this in terms of children’s emotional literacy and how it was translating into other areas of their school experience? A – the school was definitely seeing an increase in engagement in the subject, although impact in terms of broader emotional literacy was more difficult to measure. While it would be possible to carry out a children’s wellbeing survey, it had to be noted that a lot of their emotional state is impacted by what goes on at home. BC will be holding subject leader training and is hoping to establish how to answer some of these questions.</p>	
<i>Governor visits to 4 classes</i>		
12	Feedback from class visits	
	<p><i>ALS left the meeting</i></p> <p>The governors had been impressed by the engagement of children in both PSHRE classes</p> <p>The phonics lesson had been very interesting – it had been very structured, which it was noted could be a challenge in a class containing children with differing needs.</p>	
13	Parental feedback	
	<p>It was agreed that a survey would be useful in term 5/6 – having it at the same time each year would help with consistency. It was further agreed that questions around parental attitudes towards attendance would be useful.</p>	
14	F&R Committee	

	<p>The SFVS had already been covered above.</p> <p>The outturn was showing an in-year deficit, which was unsurprising given the unfunded pay rises.</p>	
15	SLT – further points	
	<p>Headteacher wellbeing – following on from the Ruth Perry tragedy, the primary heads association in Bristol has sent out feedback forms to headteachers. There have been negotiations around amendments to Ofsted inspections, including a request for firmer timing information about the timetable of likely inspections. The result of the SP Ofsted inspection had been the result that DS considered the school deserved, but it was noted that waiting for the call from Ofsted was paralysing, and heads find it incredibly difficult. This pressure does need addressing, as does the single grading system, as the shame of a grading change, with the individual headteacher name on the report, must cause unimaginable stress. As SP is made up of two schools, this means twice as many Ofsted inspections, and an increased level of pressure on DS as head, as well as on DSLs due to the focus on safeguarding. The inspection regime won't change unless people raise issues.</p> <p>It was agreed that a broader conversation was needed among governors, and it would be interesting to see what organisations such as the National Governance Association are saying in terms of inspections, given recent events. Consideration would be given as to where the governors would be best place to provide input.</p> <p>SEN unit update – the architects have gone back to BCC, and the school should hear by the end of the week if their recommendations had been accepted. The surveyor who had carried out the conditions survey had commented that it was one of the better buildings that he had inspected, albeit some work around the ceilings and drains was necessary. RWS had undertaken some fact-finding work around obtaining legal advice on the SLA and would report back after Easter.</p> <p>Consultation information had been added to the website, and DS was hosting an evening event to gauge parental opinion. ALS had volunteered to attend to provide the governor point of view. DS had received two responses from parents so far, and it would be highlighted further in the school's newsletters both before and after Easter.</p>	
AOB		
	Next meeting: Monday 22 May 2023, 7pm	

Meeting Closed at 12:08

Actions Agreed at Meeting		
7	DS to check how parents can contribute additional sums towards costs of trips via Arbor.	
8	CB to re-send governor visit timetable.	

Summary of Documents and Policies Agreed/ Ratified/ Adopted or if sub-committee – to be recommended for adoption by FGB

Agenda Item	Policy/Document	Action
7	Health and Safety policy	Approved
7	Charging and Remissions policy	