

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: Tuesday 26 March 2024

Sefton Park School
Ashley Down Road
Bristol
BS7 9BJ

ITEM	AGENDA ITEM AND NOTES		PAPERS CONSIDERE D
1.0	Welcome and apologies and declarations of interest and resignations/new appointments		
	<p><i>Present:</i> Corrie Bell (CB), Dan Simson (DS), Emily Shuker (ES), Jane Wheelock (JW), Ben Crowley (BC), Amy Lewis (AL), Amy Campbell (ACL), Rachel Wills (RW), Claire Kearney (CK), Shabaana Mitha (SM), Sally Dore (SD)</p> <p><i>Apologies:</i> Megan Arnold, Andy Lillie, Ben Seal, Carrie Spittlehouse</p> <p><i>Absent:</i></p> <p><i>Attending:</i> Alexandra Casley (AC)</p>		
	<i>Present: 11</i>	<i>Quorum met: Yes</i>	
2.0	Previous minutes/matters arising		
	<p>The previous minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>The actions arising were discussed and it was noted that these had been completed.</p>		<i>Previous minutes</i>
3.0	Governing body		
	<p>A Governor has requested a leave of absence due to personal reasons - it has been agreed that they would touch base in term 6 to decide how to proceed moving forwards. The governors were happy with this proposal.</p> <p>There are three spaces for co-opted governors on the board. A further application had been received from a parent, which was very strong and her skills would complement the existing skills on the board. Her application form was circulated, and it was agreed that the governors would consider her appointment at the end of the meeting, once they had had a chance to consider her application.</p> <p>It was agreed that, when considering further appointments, the governors would look at how to address diversity and inclusion. Ways in which the school could recruit governors</p>		

	from the local community included articles in local newspapers, which could highlight the fact that the schools are looking for governors at the bottom of the article.	
4.0	SLT report	
	<p>The report was taken as read.</p> <p>Q - it was noted that there had been a drop in numbers within the junior school, and it was difficult to replace children who were leaving at this level - is this common across the sector?</p> <p>A - there are a multitude of reasons for children leaving the junior school, for example relocation, losing children to the private sector, and year 6 had 11 fewer children at present than normal, which was having a considerable impact. The PAN across Bristol is falling, which is out of the school's control, and this was an ongoing trend, with some schools closing classes, or closing altogether.</p> <p>The school has always seen small numbers moving to the private sector, and while the numbers are growing slightly, there is no one particular reason for this. The school strives to offer everything it can to its children, there are advantages to both sectors and parents make decisions based on what is best for their children. Class sizes, concerns about secondary school places and SEN are all drivers.</p> <p>A large number of local schools are currently down on numbers and families are more likely to get their first choice school due to this easing of pressure on places. DS had not noticed a decline in the number of people coming through the door for open evenings, but all the schools are competing for the same small pot of people.</p>	<i>SLT report</i>
5.0	F&R	
	<p>The minutes would be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p>Q - what was the context for lettings fees?</p> <p>A - it was more beneficial for the school and for the companies involved to move to the proposed model of providing two PP places per club - this increased diversity for the clubs, and the providers were happy with that.</p> <p><u>Policies:</u> • Health & Safety Policy • Lettings Policy • Recruitment • Charging & Remissions were all approved by the governing body.</p> <p>By way of update on the leak in Oak class, a lot of work would be done to address this issue, as well as damp around the school, and the work should be completed by the beginning of the next academic year.</p> <p>It was agreed that food provision would be considered by a future F&R meeting.</p>	
6.0	CCS	
	<p>The minutes would be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p>RE had made the changes to the SEND policy that were discussed at the meeting, SEND Policy was approved subject to AL checking that all the changes had been made.</p> <p>BC had provided the committee with an overview of the work being done to tackle toxic masculinity, and ES had given an overview on lesson planning sequencing and the work being done within the school on writing.</p>	

7.0	Parental feedback	
	The next parent survey was due in term 5, and CB asked anyone who was interested in taking this on to get in touch with her.	
8.0	English - Madeline O'Loughlin and Heather Sampson	
	<p>MOL and HS joined the meeting to discuss writing and English.</p> <p>Data trends show that attainment in Maths and Reading at the school is above national standards, but writing is significantly lower. One of the key ways in which this was being addressed was via the sequencing of learning, which had been covered by ES at CCS. The school had held 8 CPD sessions throughout the year focussing on writing and while this focus is not sustainable in the long-term, once the relevant systems are embedded, it will become easier over time.</p> <p>HS took the governors through what the team do in year 6. The teachers plan around a different book for each term and they aim to ensure the children are writing every day, not necessarily large pieces, but the aim is to see small pieces of well thought out writing. The team are conscious that this particular cohort were in years 2 and 3 during lockdown so there are gaps visible in their writing. Having a structured plan at the beginning of term, with a clear learning sequence, was really beneficial and made it easier for staff to manage their workload.</p> <p>Q - given that having time to plan is so valuable, are there ways in which the school can provide that time in term 4?</p> <p>A - yes, as long as time is factored in in a strategic way. A balance has to be maintained between the different subjects, some of which provide less flexibility than others (such as Maths). Writing is teacher-assessed so there are so many nuances, unlike Maths and reading, which are both assessed via formal papers.</p> <p>Q - how much do teachers look at the physical skills of writing? Are teachers aware of left handed children and how to teach them writing skills?</p> <p>A - left handedness is generally spotted in infants, while children are developing gross motor skills, and the school has a holistic approach to this. There are a number of left handed staff who can provide guidance etc..</p> <p>Q - how do staff address children with dyslexia in terms of self esteem? How is time best spent in marking, given the timing impact of this on staff?</p> <p>A - for children with dyslexia, the school looks to support them by providing visuals to reduce the cognitive load, with marking and feedback aimed at specific points. Some pupils will always find transcribing difficult, but knowing the children and what motivates them, as well as liaising with Helen, is important.</p> <p>In terms of marking and feedback, there has been a lot of research on heavy marking being negative for children, so the school have looked at making this lighter for staff and easier for children to understand. Verbal feedback in English is more beneficial, and this is identified in books. Marking does add to teacher workload, and can have an impact on wellbeing - this is an ongoing conversation and the school seeks to give teachers additional resources and information to ensure that they are not starting from zero when looking at writing.</p>	

9.0	Zones of Regulation - Rebecca Earnshaw	
	<p>RE outlined the whole school framework in place to support emotional literacy and addressing the needs of children who are struggling to regulate their emotions. The Zones of Regulation approach is very evidence based, and enables the school to have a common language and shared visuals upon which to hang childrens' learning.</p> <p>The four different zones are:</p> <p>Green zone - calm state, focussed and ready to learn - the most comfortable feeling.</p> <p>Yellow zone - more heightened state, still in control but may be anxious/nervous/frustrated.</p> <p>Red - extreme and very intense emotion, very hard to be in control.</p> <p>Blue - sad, sick, low energy.</p> <p>The key message is that no zone is bad, and to give the children tools to help themselves when they are in that zone, helping them develop cognitive strategies moving forwards.</p> <p>The Zones of Regulation had been introduced in a staff meeting, with an invitation to try it and provide feedback. ES, BC and RE had also visited another school to see how it had been implemented there. Phase two had seen a whole school inset day to look at it, including TAs and SMSAs. Parents have had a handout and newsletter, and the school is planning a workshop for parents to enable them to support their children at home.</p> <p>The impact can be seen throughout the school - classrooms have displays, and children are using the Zones of REGulation, moving themselves into different zones and articulating why. There has been buy-in from all the teachers, and BC has done some conferencing with children, in his role as PSHE lead, where all the children could talk about zones, colours and reflect personally on how they can use it. Next steps will be weaving it into every school day.</p> <p>Q - are there challenges/barriers to doing it every day?</p> <p>A - this is ongoing work, and coaching and training is available on how space can be created within the day to use it. Best practice is shared around the school and this is ongoing for staff.</p>	
10.0	Pupil wellbeing - Rachael Fortune and Jane Harris	
	<p>JH and RF took the governors through their work with children and the interventions that are put in place to help children, some of which are for the whole school and others for groups of children who are identified as needing specific help.</p> <p>Children struggle with anxieties, confidence, anger, memories among others - the interventions put in place are done in a fun, light-hearted and comfortable way so children feel they can talk. RF showed the governors some of the resources that are used in this context. Discussions are confidential, unless there are serious safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>The school communicates with parents and carers, talking through each step and consulting before interventions are put in place. Checking in with adults who know the children best helps gather as much information as possible to enable the school to help those children.</p>	

	<p>The need throughout the school is considerable, and is growing. Focussing on prevention is key, rather than letting a situation arise and finding a solution.</p> <p>Q - is there anything that the governors can support them with?</p> <p>A - if a child is feeling that they need to disclose something, at the moment there is no private area within the school that they can go to have that discussion. JH is talking to RE about forming a confidential area where children can talk freely and feel safe. The sensory room is designed more for younger children, and may not be appropriate for those in the juniors.</p> <p>Q - how are the Zones of Regulation working and are they making a difference to RF and JH's work?</p> <p>A - if anything, it has increased their workload as children are more aware of their feelings, and that those feelings are OK. It will have a longer-term benefit to the children, as it gives them the language and communication skills to regulate their emotions themselves.</p> <p>Q - how do JH and RF feel about their workload and wellbeing?</p> <p>A - the workload is huge, and it is difficult to leave at the gate - it can be overwhelming at times. However it is very rewarding. A lot of what they are doing should be covered by a specialist service such as CAMHS. There is training available, with follow ups via Zoom, but it can be difficult to obtain more resources for this area.</p>	
	AOB	
	<p>CB will ask for feedback on governor visits via SurveyMonkey.</p> <p>SRB - the council have had the revised SLA, which had been copied in to the Director of Education at BCC.</p> <p>Clerk - CB and SD had interviewed two strong candidates, and had appointed Jess Wewer, who would be joining next term and shadowing AC until the end of term 5.</p> <p>Recruitment of governors - the governors unanimously approved Helen's appointment as a co-opted governor.</p> <p>DS was asked to pass on governors' thanks to everyone involved in the meeting.</p>	

Meeting closed: 12.30pm

Actions Agreed at Meeting		
5	Food provision to be added to future F&R meeting agenda	
6	AL to check changes made to SEND policy	
7	Governors to contact CB about taking on the parent survey	

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

Agenda Item	Policy/Document	Action
5	Health & Safety Policy	Approved
5	Recruitment	Approved
5	Lettings Policy	Approved
5	Charging & Remissions	Approved
6	SEND	Approved