

**Didsbury CofE Primary School
Local Governing Body Meeting
Tuesday 15th November 2022 at 7.30pm – remote meeting
Minutes**

Present:

Abbie East	Foundation Governor
Paul Good	Chair (MDBE)
John Janulewski	Foundation Governor
Matthew Lee	Foundation Governor
Samantha Morgan	Staff Governor
Helena Miller	Executive Headteacher

Apologies

Catriona Arundale	Foundation Governor
Kate Catling	Parent Governor
Augustine Ihm	Foundation Governor
Philip Robinson	Parent Governor
Joyce Thom	Foundation Governor

In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
Emma Chamberlain	Deputy Headteacher
Kathryn Thompson	Phonics & Reading Lead

Any text in red bold italics represents a Governor question (Q); challenge (C); Governor and/or clerk support (S). Black bold upright represents decisions and actions.

1. Welcome, Introductions & Opening Prayer

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by Paul Good. Paul Good led the opening prayer.

2. Presentations

Kathryn Thompson - phonics and early reading implementation

The school was using a scheme that was not validated and have now changed to 'ReadWriteInc'. Resources used were varied and although some books were decodable this was not an easy process. Whole class teaching sometimes did not allow for full differentiation. The phonics audit and staff survey was undertaken and SLT committed to the adoption of a new programme in 2022. This was funded from fund-raising and pupil premium funding. The new scheme was launched in September 2022 and meets

government requirements. The implementation caused minimal disruption; the reading results are strong in this school.

Children have been grouped to their phonics level and there is daily teaching. Children now take home a fully decodable book based on learning from that week. The book bag book matches the phonics learning. Children also take home a whole language book and a library book. The online reading books have a quiz for children to complete and staff can monitor this.

The main objectives are firstly the production of accurate data on progression; secondly effective teaching of the new scheme; thirdly accurate and consistent review of the children's assessment; and fourthly staff will identify which children might need some fast track learning or catch-up learning.

The role of the phonics lead was outlined. The implementation has gone well and there is good feedback from children and parents. Phonics and early reading is well placed for inspection even though there is more work to be undertaken in embedding the scheme.

S: Governors gave formal thanks to Kathryn Thompson for her concise presentation.

Abbie East the link Governor for EYFS and English has undertaken a monitoring visit and confirmed the excellent work being undertaken in the classroom.

The Executive Headteacher noted the comments from parents regarding the enjoyment from the children when reading. Staff are still developing confidence with the new scheme. Kathryn Thompson confirmed staff are now becoming more familiar with the online system and this time next year there will be more resources in place.

Emma Chamberlain - writing and the improvement focus and next steps during this academic year

Emma Chamberlain reported the end of year data has helped identified the end of year priorities. The reading results are strong and this presentation on writing identifies writing at GD (greater depth) as an area to focus upon. The aim is for the writing attainment to be closer to the reading attainment. The school is above national and LA (local authority) averages at KS1 and KS2 in reading at GD. The school is concerned writing is not also above national averages.

The school was moderated for KS1 and KS2 for writing judgements and this went well at KS1. There were more in-depth discussions at the KS2 moderation, there were 13 children with SEND support plans including dyslexia and impairments which affected spelling. The guidance followed allowed this to be taken into account but some reports did not specify children might struggle to spell so this affected judgements. Going forwards the documentation will address these issues.

GD in writing requires children to independently edit their work and this cannot come from teacher prompts, in this school the expectation was greater regarding the use of vocabulary. The school was advised to encourage the children to produce shorter pieces of writing to keep the writing piece more accurate. The school will now do stand-alone editing sessions.

The staff want to explore a new handwriting scheme to gain more consistency across the school and for this to complement 'ReadWriteInc'. Spelling Shed is used in school and this can be developed for home use. 'ReadWriteInc' provides more writing opportunities without replacing the current writing curriculum. The SEND reading and writing attainment was huge. 54% of children with support plans attained GD in reading

which is amazing but not for writing. Reading is more accessible, and writing is more of a challenge and requires more stamina. The SENDCO is working with Emma Chamberlain on initiatives to support SEND pupils with their writing.

C: The school is now ranked 32nd in writing and was previously in the top five, is there any reasons apart from covid?

This ranking is based on KS2 data, the last data was 2019. The 2019 results were stronger. This is explained by cohort, the 2019 cohort had less children on support plans. The external moderation occurred in 2022 and there were issues with the evidence. More writing in other curriculum areas will now occur and there will be more moderation with local schools.

Q: Where are the schools from in this ranking?

This is from Manchester schools.

Q: Are there issues in the other years who did not have high numbers of SEND children?

Writing is always lower than reading but this difference was larger than other years. The moderator felt in a one form entry school there would be three GD and this school proposed six children. Matt Whitehead did challenge the moderation process, and this was after the data was submitted, this cannot be appealed. The school will now be stricter with moderation judgements and is moderating across the cluster. This will give the staff more confidence to challenge moderators. The school is taking the moderator advice on board and there will be more consistency.

Q: Are there any differences related to gender, traditionally boys are not as successful as girls, does this affect the child?

This fluctuates in each year group. In KS1 in 2022 boys writing was stronger and in KS2 girls were stronger, it is hard to see trends in a one form entry school. More boys do struggle with fluency, but this is a general observation that differs with each cohort. Boys in EYFS struggle more with fine motor skills. There are some gender differences in GPS (grammar punctuation and spelling)

Q: Does the data affect the differentiation activities?

Each cohort is different, and teachers provide teaching taking account of common trends. The staff aim is to be above national targets. Staff are given aspirational targets which include GD targets.

S: Formal thanks were given to Emma Chamberlain for her excellent presentation

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Catriona Arundale, Kate Catling, Augustine Ihm, Philip Robinson, and Joyce Thom.

4. Declaration on Non/ Pecuniary Interests

- Phillip Robinson, Kate Catling, Abbie East, and Matt Lee, all have children in the school. Paul Good has one grandchild in the school and John Janulewski has two grandchildren in the school.
- There are no other declarations other than those listed on the school website.

5. Approval of Minutes from the meeting 4th October 2022 & Matters Arising
Governors formally approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th October 2022 as an accurate record.

Q: *Would it prudent to find a new chair this year ready for 2023?*

This is a prime objective for the spring and summer term so there can be a handover period.

Matters Arising

Safeguarding issue

A statement was shared by the chair of governors informing Governors of the processes followed. The complaints policy does not include safeguarding issues. The school continues to work with appropriate bodies to continue to receive the best advice. Governors were asked to be mindful of the wellbeing issues of staff.

A letter from governors was sent to school staff given the social media coverage of this issue. There is a wider issue and a petition which governors were not made aware of. Parents in other schools have contacted governors and it was felt there is a wider aspect to be discussed. The reputation of the school is now being discussed in the local community. The CoG explained there may be legal action in the future and reputational damage to the school and the Trust. Confidentiality is paramount and the views of professionals need to be respected. Governors discussed and agreed there could have been more sharing of information regarding the social media coverage. Governors were concerned about the impact on staff. Governors discussed in detail what course of actions were followed and if this should be different. The Executive Headteacher will provide more information when legal advice is sought.

Governors discussed how social media precipitates issues and it was suggested schools need to be prepared for this. The CoG endeavoured to share information at the end of this process when all agencies including the DfE have reviewed policies and procedures.

Actions from the last meeting:

Action: Executive Headteacher to give the percentage of days lost as a proportion of total days and percentages for each reason for the absence.

This is included in the Headteachers report

Action: Clerk to share skills audit from The Key with all Governors.

This has been actioned.

6. Executive Head of School Report

Holiday dates

The aim is for all schools in the Trust to have the same INSET days. The pattern follows the usual term dates.

Governors formally approved the term dates for 2023/24

Parents meeting

There are changes to the parents evening arrangements this year. These are taking place in the hall with all staff together for safeguarding reasons. Kids Club will be in the classrooms. The challenge will be to keep to time allocated. Staff welcomed this being spread out over two evenings.

Curriculum Priorities

Staff will articulate their subject areas within the eight year curriculum and presentations will continue to occur.

Spanish from Yr3 to Yr6 is being introduced.

Allan Torr undertakes the QA visits and this year he will undertake “deep dives” in specific subject areas. Governors were invited to join the morning session and were asked to contact Helena Miller to arrange.

The Diocesan school advisor Jonathan Fish has visited the school.

A Link Governor for attendance is needed and it was agreed to link this with safeguarding. Paul Good is the link governor for safeguarding. A named governor is also needed for British values and it was agreed to link with ethos, the link Governor is Joyce Thom.

Q: Why has history chosen for the deep dive?

A website review identified some issues with this curriculum.

C: Governors were aware of a key fob issue and a child ended up in the park, is there an issue?

The exits are fire exits so these cannot be locked. The release button was at a low level, and this was discussed previously with governors. The issue is the door giving entry to the car park, the double gates are locked. Any classrooms on the ground floor are vulnerable as they all access the playground and there is a low fence. This is a difficult balancing act as children need access to outdoor play and a fast way to exit the building in an emergency. A mechanism will be installed to give added security.

Q: How quickly can the button be made higher?

Doors into the building require a fob, doors out of the building have a button. There is a contractor coming to look at this, finances are not an issue but how long this will take is not known.

Q: Why is there expected to be a dip in the staff wellbeing survey?

The current safeguarding situation is an issue, staff are aware there is an issue but not what it is. There are historic issues being unpicked and investigated regarding current practice and consistency. The change of culture from the new leadership takes some adaptations. Parent issues also have required staff to be supported.

Q: Have you gathered staff together and shared the processes being followed?

Phase leaders have communicated this in their meetings. Staff meetings have discussed how to move this forward.

CPD

Trauma informed training is an area to develop.

Staffing Issues

Congratulations were given to Emma Chamberlain on the news of her pregnancy.

7. Behaviour and Safety update

The CPOMS (child protection online monitoring system) log has recorded four alleged incidents of bullying, these were investigated but in fact were friendship issues. One homophobic incident has been addressed by the Kids Club manager. There has been an increase in the number of negative behaviours (71 incidents) 41 were from the reception class. There are six children finding it difficult to settle and engage in the learning areas. There is more staffing allocated to support the reception teachers and

work is occurring with parents to establish routines. This is similar to other schools in the Trust and across the city, and much work on behaviour is occurring with children new to a formal educational setting.

8. CEO Report

There was no CEO report at this meeting.

9. Finance Update

The school budget will be shared in the January meeting, the leadership will receive this on the first of December. One of the Trustees is reviewing the Trustee governance and delegation of responsibilities.

10. Governing Body Matters including:

Skills audit report – Paul Good

Governors were reminded to complete the skills audit and return to the clerk.

Training undertaken

Governors were reminded to update their training onto Governor Hub.

11. Policy approval

Teaching statement

Governors formally approved the Teaching Statement

British Values

Governors formally approved the British Values

Behaviour Policy

This has been slightly tweaked in the wording. This policy will be reviewed in one year.

Governors formally approved the Behaviour Policy

Communication Policy

This has been reviewed by the SLT. Class emails were established pre-Covid but since then teachers are receiving too many emails from parents which are not urgent and about issues that could be dealt with by the office. The homework reading journals and face to face conversations are more appropriate at times and the number of emails is onerous for teachers. Emails will now be sent via the office who can respond quicker.

The wording was changed to say responses will be given in five days, but parents often need a more urgent response, and this creates a pressure for staff. The leadership wants to create a welcoming culture where parents are welcomed to talk to staff.

Abbie East agreed to work with the school leadership on written communication to parents.

Governors formally approved the Communication Policy

12. Any Other Business

Governors asked for an update on the school safeguarding issue before the January meeting the it was felt this was best done by a remote meeting rather than email.

13. Dates for 2022/23 meetings

Tuesday 17th January 2023 at 7.30pm - remote

Tuesday 7th March 2023 at 7.30pm – in school

Tuesday 2nd May 2023 at 7.30pm - in school

Tuesday 27th June 2023 at 3.30 (meet the children)

14. Closing Prayer

Paul Good led the closing prayer.

Meeting closed at 21:30

Summary of actions

There were no actions from this meeting