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CARE - THINK - INSPIRE - ACHIEVE

Headteacher: Clare Bladen BA (Hons) PGCE, NPQH

**MINUTES OF THE 1ST FULL GOVERNORS' MEETING IN 2015/16
HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 5.30pm**

Present: Clare Bladen (Head Teacher) **CB**, Peter Smith (Deputy Head, Staff Governor) Rebecca Huxley (Local Authority Governor, Vice Chair) **RH** *left 8*, Andrew Roland (Parent Governor, Interim Chair) **AR**, David Seymour (Parent Governor) **DS** *arrived 5.50*, Kelly Faye (Parent Governor) **KF** *arrived 5.40 left 7.25*, Colin Cook (Local Authority Governor) **CC** *left 7.15*, Joey Potgieter (Co-opted Governor) **JP**, Rachel Goode (Co-opted Governor) **RG**, Jenny Crewe (Co-opted Governor) **JC** *left 7.50*

In attendance: Ursula Irvine (clerk) **UI**

Apologies for absence - approved: Susanna Pressel **SP**

Summary of actions – to be carried out by the next meeting, unless stated otherwise

Section 4

- **UI** to send governor handbook link to new governors.
- **Claudi Thomas (CT)** as new ESW chair to arrange a new date for ESW1 and review ESW2 and 3 dates.

Section 5

- **CB** to ask legal services whether a legal declaration is necessary to protect the school in the case of any incidents outside school hours.
- **JP, RC and JC** to arrange general school visits with **CB**.
- **HPR and ESW** chairs to ensure governor visits are arranged, in particular those focusing on SDP priorities, once governor responsibilities have been allocated.
- **DS** to continue to chase OCC to get a date for the second fire exit to be installed in the hall.
- **CB** to encourage more stress survey responses, **CC** to prepare a report if sufficient responses are received.
- **CB** to report to FGB2 on the first months of logging behaviour incidents using Integrus, and to present behaviour reports to ESW3 for review and discussion.
- **CB** and **KF** to liaise in relation to the safeguarding audit.
- **DS** to liaise with **CB** and **PS** concerning a general, school wide pupil survey to be conducted by the end of November.
- **RG** to lead with **CB** on strategies for communicating school priorities to parents.
- **RH** to review SEN policy with the staff member responsible.

Signed

Date.....

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Section 6

- **CB** to further develop the SDIP by the end of October to include objectives and measures.
- **CB** to arrange for two members of staff to attend 3 to 5 year development plan meeting on 28th November, **RG** to arrange a meeting venue and **JC** to work on the structure of the plan and liaise with AR and CB.

Section 7

- **CB** to ensure that Mary Watts is appointed de facto SIP by FGB2 and to progress mocksted plans.

Section 8

- **RG** to lead in assisting the school to improve its communications with parents, in particular with regard to the Head Teacher's monthly values letters and a regular newsletter.
- **KF, JP, RG, JC** to provide Jo Car as soon as possible with photos that can be used both for the governor notice board and to the newsletter.

Section 9

- **JC** to work with **CT** on a role description for the ESW chair.
- **CB and AR** will, prior to HPR1 and ESW1, draw up a list of areas of responsibility with particular reference to the SDIP priorities and with a named member of staff to liaise with so that areas of special responsibility can be allocated to governors at the first committee meetings.
- **CT** to nominate a data governor who will attend training that they then pass on to other governors, in particular all members of ESW.
- **CB** to provide **UI** with possible dates and times for a one hour briefing on RAISE and other school data for new governors.

Section 10

- **CB** to update the policies matrix over the October half term and circulate it as soon as it is ready. (**DS** to use the old matrix in planning for HPR1 in the meantime.)

1.0 Administration

Updated contact details for governor use and for the school notice board, the telephone tree and pecuniary interest forms, were circulated by **UI** for checking/completion by governors.

2.0 Notification of Any Other Urgent Business, racial or health & safety incidents (if any) and any complaints

KF arrived at start and DS during this discussion

H&S

CB reported that there had been one accident resulting in a broken wrist, the uneven playground surface may have been a contributory factor.

Complaints

Two complaints had been received. One, handled by **RH**, had been concluded. **CB** said that the other, which concerns the behaviour policy is on going and hopefully moving to a solution. Advice has been taken from governor services and the union of head teachers. A meeting with parents has been arranged to explain and discuss the behaviour policy and a governor statement on the policy will be prepared.

The behaviour policy had been reviewed by **ESW** last academic year. Whilst the strategies had been tightened the changes were considered minor and as such were not thought to require formal consultation with parents. The recent letter setting out details of the policy had in fact resulted from a request during the year 6 start of term meeting, prior to the complaints being raised.

A general discussion followed about how complaints are handled. It is clearly understood that involvement in handling a complaint should be limited to designated governors, so that others will be able to come to the matter fresh to deal with any appeal. Whilst a matter is on going little can be said about it when queries are raised by parents, beyond that it is being handled in accordance with the school's complaints procedure. – Clearly the detail of the complaint should not be discussed. However, the recently appointed governors were concerned that knowing nothing about the recent complaints at all, they were unable to respond with confidence and reassure parents who approached them, which may have fuelled rather than alleviated parental unease. It was agreed that in the event of any future complaint that attracted widespread interest or concern, a brief statement would be issued to governors to confirm what they could say to parents if asked.

This tied in with the wider aim of improving communication with parents including providing information about the governing body, individual governors and their roles (see section 8 below).

3.0 Procedural items

3.1 Quorum The meeting was quorate.

3.2 Declaration of Interests relevant to agenda None

4.0 Statutory Items

4.1 ESW and HPR terms of reference for 2015-16 Approved

4.2 Code of Conduct and Governor Handbook

Governors formally agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct. Governors were also reminded to refer to and comply with the Governor Handbook. **Action: UI** to send governor handbook link to new governors.

4.3 Confirmation of Dates for Committee Meetings

Agreed subject to ESW chair, once appointed, arranging a new date for ESW1 and reviewing ESW2 and 3 dates. **Action Claudi Thomas (CT)**

5.0 Matters arising or outstanding from the minutes of FGB4 9 July 2015

5.1

- Liability for incidents outside school hours: CB will ask legal services whether a legal declaration is necessary to protect the school in this respect, taking this over from Jen Crouch. **Action CB**
- Governor Visits: Last year's governor behaviour/lunch time visit had not taken place and CB urged governors to undertake visits this academic year. The three new governors aim to undertake general visits as a way of getting to know the school better and will arrange these through CB. **Action JP, RG, JC**. Once areas of particular responsibility for each governor have been allocated by the committees, focused visits will be agreed and arranged through the HPR and ESW committees. Governors should arrange visits through CB giving at least 2 weeks' notice. RH confirmed that she will visit early years/foundation this term.
- Fire Exit: The formal assessment has confirmed that the hall should not be used for large gatherings until a second fire exit has been created. In the meantime, key stage 1 are having assemblies in the hall and key stage 2 in the year 6 classroom which does have a second fire exit. It is understood that OCC will pay for the fire exit work, but it is unclear when funds will be available. October had been mentioned as a possibility. DS will continue to chase and will report further to HPR1. **Action DS**
- Stress Survey: CC reported that there had been no responses before the summer holidays. Following two reminders this term, just 7 had been submitted which is insufficient. He offered to again attend a staff meeting to discuss the survey with staff and encourage them to participate but CB's preference was to issue another reminder. She will ensure that this is raised at the next TAs' meeting to try to

ensure that responses are received from across the whole staff. A cut off point will be set of the end of October. The aim is for the survey to be undertaken annually, the same month each year to build up useful comparative data. In meeting with staff previously, CC had explained the benefits of taking part in the survey in terms of seeking to safeguard staff wellbeing and being able to identify and patterns of concern or other issues that need to be addressed. It is thought that staff are simply not getting round to doing it. The name, content and means of undertaking the survey were all further discussed. **Action CB** to try to further encourage responses, **CC** to prepare a report if sufficient responses are received.

- Logging behaviour and measures taken and evaluating impact: Ofsted expects to see hard data and evidence concerning behaviour and the school wants to demonstrate that its behaviour strategies have impact and that behaviour in the school is good or outstanding. Behaviour incidents will be logged on the child's profile on Integris which is for the school's internal use only. Any whole school data that is compiled will be anonymous. (Incidents are recorded to OCC only in the rare event of severe behavioural issues that may need the referral to and involvement of outside agencies. It is anticipated that Integris will help staff to spot patterns of bad behaviour which can then be investigated and resolved.) CB said that provided Ofsted are satisfied that the Integris system is being used properly then the absence of bad behaviour reports on the system will help to demonstrate good behaviour in the school. Staff will start using the system during October (continuing to log incidents on paper but then transferring their logs onto Integris) and the results will be analysed on an on going basis. **Action: CB** to report progress to FGB2
- Provision of Behaviour Reports from Integris to governors: It is expected to take a while to generate useful data. CB will present the reports generated to ESW3 **Action CB** but, once appointed, the governor responsible for behaviour can liaise with her about this in the meantime.
- Safeguarding: Once CB has done the safeguarding audit, KF is to review it. They will liaise by email and meet to discuss as appropriate, then report to FBG2 **Action CB and KF**. It was confirmed that all governors and staff need to be aware of the safeguarding policy. All staff get training on the policy, with extra training for leaders. Time is spent at staff meetings looking at safeguarding issues.
- Pupil Survey: PS undertook a behaviour and safeguarding survey last May and analysed the results himself (next time QPD services could be used for this). He reported the findings to staff and thought about how to implement them, which led to some of the fine tuning of the behaviour policy to address pupil concerns for greater consistency. In the future surveys could be used in respect of part only of the school and/or focussing on particular issues or more generally. The next survey will be general and for the whole school, to be undertaken after October half-term and by the end of November. **Action: DS to liaise with CB and PS** concerning this and to report the findings to FGB2. It was noted that the school council is another forum for pupil concerns and suggestions to be voiced.
- Communicating School Priorities: CB and RG will liaise on this going forward and school priorities will be covered in the next newsletter. The priorities should be clear to governors from the school self evaluation form and SDP. The key is to communicate clearly to parents the leadership team's assessment of where we are now, the priorities arising from that assessment, the actions to be taken, how and when progress will be assessed and the outcomes sought. Again this ties in with the wider aim of improving communications between the school and parents. (see also section 8 below) **Action CB and RG**
- SEN Policy: RH confirmed that she and Suzi Batterton will review this in time for RH to report to ESW1. **Action RH** There had been a thorough review relatively recently so little is expected to change.
- After School Club Charity: RH and AR are waiting for the trustees to sign off the paper work bringing this matter to an end.

5.2 The minutes were approved and signed by the chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

6.0 School Development and Improvement Plan

6.1 SDIP for 2015/16

KF asked about the process and timing of building the SDIP and the nature of staff involvement. She had expected there to be a full SDIP for the academic year by this stage. CB said that it was still a working document. Each member of staff is involved to some extent in its development to ensure that the SDIP reflects their knowledge and input and that everyone takes ownership of it. It is not simply imposed downwards. In particular, the KS1 and 2 and early year leaders are involved. They develop detailed action plans for their stage, taking into account the input of the staff reporting to them and these action plans then feed into the SDIP. They then have a key role in making and reviewing progress on the actions required under their own action plans and the SDIP. Pupil progress and trends data are all taken into account in setting priorities. The outline headings come from Ofsted. CB said that the SDIP operates on a year's cycle and that whilst she might seek to bring it in line with the academic year in the future this was not essential. KF explained that she had expected it to run in line with the academic year since the data relevant to it would do so. She had a particular concern that writing which was a concern from last year's results did not appear to feature in the outline priorities. In addition, KF said she would have liked to receive an explanation to support the priorities in CB's list (effectively the assessment of "where we are now" from the school self evaluation form which CB had not provided to governors) even if the details of actions to be taken, out-comes sought and how success will be measured are to follow later once the SDIP is further developed.

It was agreed that CB will develop the SDIP by the end of October to include objectives and measures. She intends to use a new style of plan recommended by Mary Watts (see item 7 below) with more focus on measurability of objectives. The approach of involving all staff in developing the SDIP was supported. It was agreed that more detail was needed before the SDIP could be properly scrutinised. It will be revisited in FGB2.

6.2 3-5 year SDIP

A working group of governors and teachers will meet to discuss this on Saturday 28 November, 2-4.30. AR, JP, CB, RG, KF and JC will attend. **Actions:** **CB** to arrange for two members of staff to attend also, **RG** to arrange a meeting venue and **JC** to work on the structure of the plan and liaise with AR and CB.

CC left at this point

7.0 Appointment of School Improvement Partner

Mary Watts (MW), the former Head of Appleton Primary School will be asked to undertake desk-top risk analysis for the school, similar to acting as an SIP. CB had decided not to invest further time in undertaking mutual mocksted inspections herself and instead to pay an experienced inspector to undertake a mocksted for the school. **Action CB** to ensure that MW is appointed by FGB2 and to progress mocksted plans.

KF left at this point

8.0 Parent Survey Feedback

DS referred to the papers he had circulated. He noted that there had been a difficult context to the survey with many parents concerned about staff departures. Many of the criticisms had been forthright but there had been a good response on the core objectives of the school. The key concerns were communication and bringing parents along with the leadership. Some issues were operational for the SLT to address, but issues of leadership and management fell to the head teacher, SLT and governors to address together.

It was suggested that if other factors about the school were good then in reality it was likely that the leadership was good too, but at the least there is a problem with how the leadership is perceived. RG noted that asking specific questions will always generate complaints. The head teacher will always be a target for criticism to

some extent. She asked whether any comparative data was available. Whilst the survey had been conducted in previous years, this was the first time that the results had been analysed externally so there was no exactly comparable data.

It was recognised that communication will always be an issue in schools, and indeed in most other organisations. It will always be on the agenda. However, RG suggested it may be possible to make some small improvements that have a big impact. The following were discussed:

- **Newsletter:** To come from the leadership team ie Head teacher and governors. The aim is for three per year, (ie each double term) to be timed as most appropriate to the content and with the option of having additional newsletters as and when appropriate to cover particular matters or themes. In the first instance, the aim is to issue the first newsletter during the week before October half term (to include parent survey feedback the process of governance and school priorities and how they are arrived at. An additional newsletter may be produced in December with a more celebratory theme. RG will help with this.
- **Head Teacher's monthly values letter:** Again, RG will help with this. An invitation to complete the Ofsted parent review form will be mentioned in this each time.
- **Brief Weekly Newsletter:** This will continue as normal.
- **Visibility of staff in the playground at the start and end of the day:** CB and PS are encouraging this.
- **Staff Handbook:** PS and CB have been working on this to improve internal communications and consistency and reported that it has been welcomed by staff.
- **FAQs:** These could be used to clear up any misconceptions or areas of confusion.
- **Website:** staff will continue to provide photos reflecting class activities to Lisa Penton to be uploaded, and will be encouraged to provide commentaries. This should also be a source of current (as opposed to retrospective) information about subjects and projects etc. and other helpful information about the school.
- **Parent Forum:** This is under review and may be relaunched, perhaps with a remit to focus on supporting SDIP priorities rather than as a forum for the raising of concerns. Linked to this, PS made the point that quite often there are sound reasons why parent suggestions cannot be adopted or there is not a practical solution to a problem that has been highlighted. The focus then needs to be on explaining why this is the case ie communicating back to show the school is listening.
- **Governors:** Their role/remit and who they are should be clearly explained. The new governors are to send a photo to Jo Carr which can be used on the school notice board and to introduce them in the newsletter. **Action: KF, JP, RG, JC**

9. Governors

9.1 Staff Governor

PS is the new staff governor and will join ESW. (No other member of staff had wished to put themselves forward for the position.)

9.2. Allocation of new governors to committees

JP and RG - HPR

JC – ESW

9.3 Election of HPR Vice Chair

RG was elected to this role.

9.4 Election of ESW Chair and Vice Chair

No members of the committee wished to stand for the role of ESW Chair. Claudi Thomas had offered, in this event, to act in the capacity of Associate Governor, as interim Chair of ESW. It was agreed that this would provide a much needed bridge in expertise following the departure of a number of experienced governors from the board. Given CT's many years of service as clerk to ESW and FGB she is clearly on top of ESW's remit. She was appointed interim chair for the current academic year and in line with other associate governor appointments will have full voting rights. JC was elected vice chair of ESW for the current academic year. She may in due course wish to be considered for the role of chair. JC will work with CT on a role description for the ESW chair, using any existing role description as a starting point. **Action JC**

All committee roles will be revisited at FGB4.

JC left at this point

9.5 Allocation of areas of particular responsibility to individual governors

CB and AR will, in time for HPR1 and ESW1, draw up a list of areas of responsibility with particular reference to the SDIP priorities and with a named member of staff to liaise with. The committee chairs will then allocate particular responsibilities to their members at their first meetings.

9.6 Governor Training update

Notes and links from the Clerk's update had been circulated by UI. The August 2015 advice about conducting interviews and taking references in relation to the appointment of new governors was briefly discussed. It is suggested that the board approaches the appointment as one would for a paid job. The decision to appoint the most recent governors had been made before August. Nevertheless, there had been a considered process of identifying the skills needed on the governing body and identifying JP, RG and JC as being able to fulfil these, given their professional roles, and this had been investigated and confirmed in detailed discussions with them, albeit not formal interviews. A more formal approach will be adopted in respect of any future co-opted governor appointments.

All the new governors confirmed that they are booked onto Governor Induction training. JP had attended a preparing for Ofsted course, and DS was signed up for pay review policy training and a two part Finance course. They were asked to circulate any key points arising from these and will forward the papers to other governors on request.

9.7 Governor Training Needs

Data Analysis Training: the ESW chair will nominate a data governor who will attend training that they then pass on to other governors, in particular all those on ESW.

In addition, CB will give an hour's training on RAISE and other school data for the new governors and any others who wish to attend. She will provide UI with a choice of dates and times for circulation. **Action CB**

RH left at this point.

10.0 Policies

10.1 The updated Safeguarding policy prepared by CB was approved with no queries or corrections raised.

10.2 Policies Matrix: The importance was stressed of ensuring that the date on which policies are reviewed/revised is clear on the face of the policy and within the policies matrix. AR was concerned that the school must be able to clearly show that its policies are up to date, also that it must be clear to HPR and ESW what policies they need to work on and by when. Updating the policies matrix is key to this. **Action: CB** to

update the policies matrix over the October half term and circulate it as soon as it is ready. Meanwhile, **DS** will refer to the old version in planning for HPR1.

11. Update on Staff Changes

CB briefly reported that all new members of staff are settling in well. She also mentioned that one of the Year 1 teachers is providing one extra day per week cover in reception and early years.

12. AOB None

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 10th December 2015, 5.30pm at WOCPS

ANNEX 1

TABLED PAPERS

- ESW and HPR draft terms of reference
- (ESW and HPR meeting dates and brief protocol re meetings, agenda setting and circulation of papers annexed to FGB1 agenda)
- Governor Code of Conduct
- FGB4 draft minutes
- WOCPS – outline objectives for new SDIP
- Parent Survey – DS Summary of Findings, Full Report from QPD Services, Parent Comments Document
- Draft Safeguarding Policy
- Clerks Update training summary and agenda with document links