

**Castle Vale Nursery School Full Governing Body Meeting
Tuesday 8th November 2022**



MINUTES

Present:

Mark Phillips (MP) - Chair of Governors
Sally Leese (SL) – Head Teacher
Kate Bateman – Staff Governor
Kirstie McElroy-Stringer (KMS) – Co-Opted Governor
Sara Hartshorn – Co-Opted Governor

In Attendance:

Christina Meakin (CM) – Deputy Head Teacher
Jackie McCorrison (JAMC) - Clerk

Apologies

Sue Martin (SM) - Co-Opted Governor
Kerri Treasure (KT) – Parent Governor (joined at 10.38am)
Tracey Quirk (TQ) – Co-Opted Governor

The Apologies were accepted

1) Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

MP welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

Appointment of a Co-Opted Governor.

Sara Harthorn was welcomed as a prospective Co-Opted Governor. Sarah is the Deputy Head at Firs Primary School.

Mark Phillips proposed that Sara Hartshorn be appointed as a Co-Opted Governor and Sally Leese Seconded.

The Governing Body voted unanimously in favour and agreed to appoint Sara as a Co-opted Governor.

2) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk asked for nominations for Chair of Governors.

Mark Phillips – Proposed by SL
Seconded by SH

There were no other nominations and Mark Phillips was elected as Chair by a unanimous decision.

Election of Vice Chair

Sarah Hartshorn - Proposed by SL
Seconded by MP

There were no other nominations and Sarah Hartshorn was elected as Vice Chair by a unanimous decision.

The following roles were also agreed:-

Head Teacher Appraisal Panel:-

MP and TQ

Finance Committee

It was agreed to appoint SH to the Finance Committee. There are no other changes to the current membership.

Governor Links

These were agreed as follows:-

Kirstie McElroy-Stringer - Safeguarding and SEND

Kate Bateman - EYPP and Training

Tracey Quirk – Prevent

Kerri Treasure – Health and Safety

Mark Phillips/ Sarah Hartshorn – Teaching and Learning (to liaise with Christina Meakin)

Action:- for the Governing Body to appoint a Mental Health Link Governor.

3) Written Declaration of Business Interests Forms

It is important to establish a register of business and personal interests for Governors, and for all staff. This should include the details of any other educational establishments that they govern, and set out any relationships between school staff and members of the GB such as spouses or relatives.

Action:- Governors can complete pecuniary interest forms or complete their declarations via GovernorHub.

4) Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th July 2022 have been uploaded to the Portal and were approved.

Matters Arising.

Membership of the Governing Body.

SL said that she has been unable to contact Sarah Swords and it was agreed that she be disqualified for non-attendance.

Action:- SL to contact Sarah Swords to inform her she is no longer a Governor. School to hold a Parent Governor election in the Spring Term.

At the last meeting, the FGB agreed with the proposal for use some of the Devolved Capital Balance to purchase laptops for staff and SL confirmed this has been done.

At the last meeting it was agreed to review the staffing in light of the decision regarding the new pilot project.

Action:- MP and SL will discuss a proposal about staffing and will report to the Governors either via Governor hub or at the next meeting.

Governors asked SL to detail the support Nursery is giving to support work/ life balance for staff at a future meeting and she confirmed that staff will come to this meeting to speak about wellbeing

5) Annual Approval of Policies

The following policies have been added to GovernorHub and were recommended for approval:-

Data protection Policy

Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

E-safety policy, FOI Policy
 Revision to the PREVENT duty
 Safeguarding Policy
 Safer Recruitment Policy

The Governors formally approved the above policies.

Governors were also asked to read KCSIE 2022 and Working Together to Safeguard Children Inter Agency Guidance

Approval of the LA Staffing Policies on the HR Portal

The School Staffing Regulations say that Governing Bodies must establish procedures for the regulation of the conduct and discipline of school staff. Governors are advised to adopt or re-adopt such procedures annually, so that a relatively recent minute of the GB is readily available as a record of the adoption.

The Birmingham HR Service for Schools has produced model policies and procedures that enable schools and Governing Bodies to discharge their responsibilities under general employment legislation. The model policies can be accessed through the Schools HR Portal.

Governing bodies considering the adoption of different policies or procedures or making changes to models recommended by the local authority must take responsibility for consulting the recognised unions on the contents of those policies and procedures.

The Birmingham model policies and procedures can be accessed through its Schools HR Portal, for which the main user in school is usually the Bursar or Office Manager

This includes policies such as:-

Pay policy for schools - *reviewed annually*- This has not yet been completed
 Performance management/Appraisal policy for teachers
 Disciplinary procedure
 Grievance procedure
 Capability procedure (teachers)
 Competence procedure (support staff)
 Managing Attendance Procedure
 Procedure for dismissal for some other substantial reason

This list is not exhaustive and there are a number of other policies that can be obtained from the HR portal.

The procedures are updated from time to time. To ensure that our school is always using the most up to date versions, the Governors agreed to recommend adopt the personnel procedures approved by the LA on the schools HR Portal.

The version used will be that which is current on their website when the relevant procedure needs to be used. Where there is no separate procedure for non-teaching staff, the procedure for teachers will be used and in that procedure, where appropriate, the word 'teacher' will be read as 'member of staff'.

As the authority reviews its model policies on other HR matters from time to time Governors will need to check each year whether any new models have been recommended to schools during the previous twelve months.

The Governors agreed to adhere to the recommended model policies on the Birmingham HR Portal.

SL reported that the LA pay Policy has not come out as yet.

Governors agreed to adhere to the LA Pay Policy when it is released and to take the options in the Policy that were agreed last year and reflect what happens in school.

Safeguarding Policy.

This is the LA recommended model.

As a school we always approve the Safeguarding Policy on the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) and historically, Governors agreed for the Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor to approve the Policy so it can be implemented immediately. They agreed that this will continue and also that if there are any subsequent changes required that the policy will be approved.

The Safeguarding Policy was approved.

Governors also agreed the approval of any codicils recommended by the BSCP by the Chair and Safeguarding Lead. This means schools can avoid having to reprint and ratify the whole policy, the codicil insert that can be included in any existing policy.

6) Feedback from the Finance & Personnel Committee.

The Committee have just met and MP gave a verbal update.

He reported that the Nursery is in a good financial position.

There was a carry forward balance of £353,387 and some of this will be utilised this financial year to ensure there is sufficient staff on site and to look at increasing leadership capacity.

There is also additional external funding that is coming into school.

The following policies were recommended for approval:-

- *Terms of Reference*
- *Delegation Statement for the Head teacher*
- *Charging and Remissions Policy*
- *Best Value Statement*
- *Freedom of Information Policy*
- *Inventory*
- *Whistleblowing and Serious Misconduct Policy*
- *Governor Expenses Policy*
- *Statement of internal Control*
- *Division of Duty*
- *Gifts and Hospitality Policy*
- *Business Continuity*
- *Purchase Card User and Limits*

All of the above policies were uploaded to GovernorHub and have been recommended for approval by the F&P Committee.

The Governing Body approved the above policies.

The Minutes of the meeting detail the information that was presented relating to the budget.

Virements were discussed, there are none to report, only additions to funding.

Orders over £10,000 were discussed and approved.

Community Environmental Trust - £31,500 (for the Forest School)
Coomb's Catering - £23,149.78

The Governors approved this expenditure over £10,000 as detailed above.

MP reported that the LA have implemented a new finance system from 1st April 2022 called Oracle and it has not gone well for a lot of schools.

There was also an issue for the actual funding for last year, the LA for the 2 year olds and EYPP allocations the wrong way round and they have not rectified this.

The Governors thanked MP for his feedback and approved the recommendations from the Finance Committee.

7) Head Teachers report.

This has been added to the Portal and was discussed.

School were not successful with being able to set up a Resource Base, but has been chosen to be a pilot for a new way of working with children under 5 with SEND.

The LA said that being a Resource Base was not the answer as the children need to have an EHCP to access the provision, there is a problem with getting this in place quickly enough for children in the Early Years.

Sue Harrison the director of Children' Services came to the nursery and SL explained the issues with Early Years SEND and Sue Harrison said there needs to be a pilot – she has since said it is up and running and Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years, Childcare and Childrens Centres at Birmingham City Council and Jas Didiaily, Education Infrastructure Head of Service visited the Nursery to look at how the project will work.

SL said she explained the pathways and they asked why the pilot was needed. SL said that the children who attend our Nursery do very well, but those who do not are sometimes not supported well enough.

SL said that 27 of the 30 children who went to Topcliffe this year came from our Nursery and the transition was excellent, this was the same for 2 children who were supported through the DLP Project. One child came from a PVI setting and the transition was very poor, the child had not received the support they needed.

The project is about working with all partners to identify and intervene earlier. There is a plan to have a provision for 24 children under the age of 5 with SEND.

Once children have been identified by any partner we will work with them in a number of ways:

- In our extended Buttercups provision
- In the home (through the Early Support team)
- In their current setting (outreach support)

In order to extend Buttercups we need to extend our mainstream provision. The LA are supporting this through building a portacabin on the site of old outbuildings and

part of the unused driveway. The working group would like provision to begin in January.

Governors asked when it is expected that the support will be in place?

SL said that the LA want this in place from January, this is not feasible as there needs to be some building work undertake, but it may be possible to do some outreach work.

Governors asked what the funding allocation will be per child?

SL said that this information has not been shared.

SL said it will be important to recruit properly if the pilot is put in place, school need to appoint approximately 8 to 10 new staff. There will need to be additional admin staff, additional SENCO outreach work undertaken and possibly more Leadership support.

There will be support for children between 2 – 5, it is anticipated that at the end of their Reception year the Nursery will have a good grasp of whether the children can attend a mainstream school with support or whether they need to attend a Special School.

This will work for the LA, there will be no surprises and it will help the local authority planning for sufficiency.

Sensory Unit.

SL has included some photographs in her HT Report showing the new Sensory Unit and this is being well used and it an excellent resource.

Staff Wellbeing.

Niki and Kate fed back about the support that staff are getting with their wellbeing.

- All staff have been given a uniform – a hoodie and 3 T-shirts.
- There is a real open door policy, some staff are trained Mental Health First Aiders and staff will speak to them about various things, these are recorded in a password protected log and there are reminders to do a follow up (e.g. after a member of staff has a medical appointment). MH first aiders will not give advice, they signpost to support on offer.
- Each member of staff have a stress container, it helps them to order their thoughts by understanding the causes of stress and recognising the ones that they can do something about and which ones are outside of their control.
- On the last day of term, staff have a breakfast together and sometimes Leaders bring in cakes and hot cross buns etc. during the term.
- On a staff training day, lunch is provided.
- Volunteers are treated the same as staff employed at the Nursery. They can have a uniform and all have lanyards, they have access to supervision, have a school email address, an IPad/Laptop and also access to training.
- Birthdays are remembered and celebrated.
- When people join the school their either have a cup provided if they drink tea or coffee, or they have a water bottle provided.
- There are baskets of toiletries in the bathrooms with things like sanitary items, painkillers, deodorant. The hand soaps are also very good quality.

Governors asked if the staff are able to identify what is causing their stress and if any was work related?

The majority of stress is to do with their own health or for external reasons, but some staff feel they do not have the time to do their job to the best of their ability. SL said that Lana is joining the team on Monday as an additional member of staff who can provide release for PPA.

SL said she will always try and be flexible with any requests staff have to alter their working patterns if needed.

Action:- Governors said it is important to discuss staff wellbeing at each meeting and have a wellbeing update.

SL said that there is ongoing work on workload and work/life balance.

Staff strengths are utilised well and as the curriculum is delivered, resources are being saved to the year grid along with planning and the skills the children need to learn, this can be accessed by staff year on year. Then staff are reading stories which are saved in tapestry and these can be used again next year, along with the pack of resources and prompts and questions.

This will support the Nursery at getting better to address their work/life balance each year.

Governors thanked Niki and Kate for their feedback.

DLP Update.

Kate reported that this continues go well, there is another member of staff doing outreach in Sutton. There was a conference at the MAC and it was clear that our name is getting out there and more services are recognising what we are doing and signposting to us.

The Stay and Plays are going well, there are representatives from S&L and OT and a charity called SENSE who come and support at these. Last term there were a lot of 2 year olds, but they are now at Nursery and so that there are mainly babies at these sessions.

SL said that Kate and Ellie are both doing an excellent job,

There was a question as to how people can access the DLP Support?

SL said it is possible to self-refer - There may be parents sharing concerns with schools and they can direct them to the contact us form and the DLP Co-ordinators can offer support for all children under 5 with SEND or possible SEND and the DLP Co-ordinators can offer support both prior to the child and family starting school but also while they settle.

There is also an offer of outreach support to reception or nursery staff to support children schools have concerns when they start in September.

Helen has trained to be a Level 3 SENCO award trainer and Ellie is a Level 2 SENCO award trainer and school will get funding for the support they offer.

Is it possible to identify and work with the settings who are not contacting the DLP?

SL said that this is done through word of mouth and via the consortia and different groups, plus the new pilot can be used as an extra pathway.

Kate was thanked for her feedback.

Early Reading Update.

Theresa was welcomed to the meeting.

SL explained that Theresa has been a TA in school for some time and has a real passion for children's books and she has supported the planning and writing of the reading curriculum and has done an excellent job.

Theresa explained that since September there has been a lot of work done on the reading curriculum and involving parents. There has been a lot of money spent on good quality books and it was important for parents to value the books and understand what has been invested and these were handed out in a reading workshop.

There has been a good take up of the sessions and if parents cannot attend their allocated time, the appointments are being rearranged.

Teresa said she starts the sessions with parents by informing them that research shows that children benefit from daily sharing of high-quality stories and poems from a young age: they learn language faster, enter school with a higher vocabulary and become more successful readers.

There has been a lot of feedback and in the HT report there are photographs of the workshops in action. The children get a book bag with a story tag and activity, and prompts for questions along with a reading at home leaflet. Parents are asked if the children have a favourite story at home and one mother has posted a video on Tapestry of her reading a book at home in her home language. There is good engagement on Tapestry and the feedback is very strong, families are enthused and are given all of the resources to make reading excited.

There is story time every day where children have a 'story of the week'. The story of the week is one of the core books that children can also look at independently in the reading area. So that children can listen to the same story at home too, there are videos on tapestry of staff reading these books as well as giving parents ideas of things they can do at home too.

Theresa and Christina have carefully selected books that children can access independently. Children will be able to experience books read at story time and will also have access to a selection of books and supporting resources during child initiated play.

SL said that this also supports staff wellbeing, the reading is all planned and resourced meaning that the children can concentrate on working with the children.

The books are levelled and differentiated to match ability and are fully inclusive, there are board books and other books with simple interactive books with repetitive text such as Dear Zoo, Noisy Farm and Brown Bear etc. The books are categorised with the reason for why the book was chosen so that staff know why they are reading it.

How do staff make sure all of the children get to take the books home?

Theresa said this is monitored via a spreadsheet.

This will also show if parents have missed a workshop and staff will meet with them after school if needed.

Teresa was thanked for her feedback and she left the meeting.

The census numbers were discussed (as reflected in the HT Report)

The numbers are strong.

It is expected that the number of children eligible for 30 hours will increase after Christmas.

It was noted that the CIN and CP plans and also the instances of EH are low. This is not reflective of the demographics and there is a lot of Early Help support that is not recorded.

At the end of last year there was free new and used uniform offered to parents and they were very happy to utilise this opportunity, it was very welcome and needed.

Intervention Team.

Gemma, Shelley, Tammy and Hannah were welcomed to the meeting to talk about the intervention sessions they lead.

Gemma said her main role is leading in Buttercups and Shelley delivers Wellcomm and intervention in Rainbows. Tammy does a lot of nurture and other interventions and is a key worker in the Greenhouse and Hannah also delivers intervention and nurture.

Some of the staff are working on SOGS with the children (Schedule of Growing Skills) This gives a good indication of a child's developmental level, including areas of strength and potential delay. We assess 7 out of the 9 key areas. It shows steps of progress over time and also if there is a delay, indicating where a referral might be necessary.

SL said it is a really holistic approach and it is possible to see the progress and it is more suitable for the children who struggle with Wellcomm.

Staff are doing Wellcomm and intervention, a lot is done through play and the children have a lot of fun and it also supports them with PSED, some of the children prefer a smaller group where it is more quiet and calm.

SL said it used to be the DHT who did all of the Wellcomm screening and it is excellent that other staff who know the children on a day to day basis are doing this. The whole team are very dedicated.

Gemma, Shelley, Tammy and Hannah were thanked for their support and they left the meeting.

Stronger Practice Hub.

SL reported that we have applied for this and will be working with 3 other nursery's and a PVI – Bloomsbury will take the lead.

Stronger Practice Hubs will

- Support other early years settings to improve outcomes for children in their local area across the EYFS and in the first year the remit is:-
- Establish local networks of settings to share knowledge and effective practice
- Having a good quality website to share information and advice.

Governors asked if there are any targets / KPI's?

SL said that there are none at present.

There is £900,000 funding for this but it is unclear how / when this will be allocated.

Christina Meakin is working on the DFE EY Recovery programme and is an expert who is supporting settings that are either nominated by the LA or ones who have put themselves forward who are either judged to be RI or have a high level of SEND / disadvantaged children. Initially CM was to support 2 settings a term but she is doing an additional 0.5 days which will be 1 more setting. She has been working with a PVI in Ladywood and is supporting in Stafford this evening.

There is some funding that will ensure that there is cover in her absence.

Governors commended SL and CM for being so outward looking but reiterated it is important that they do not burn out.

Assessment

MP and CM met and discussed assessment.

CM has uploaded all of the report to GovernorHub and fed back the main headlines as follows:-

- The minority of SEND children are on track for their stage of education compared with the majority of children without SEND.
- Disadvantaged children will need significantly more support in the specific areas: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design.
- Full Time Funded and Full Time Vulnerable children are achieving significantly better than Part Time children, particularly in the specific areas: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design.
- September 2021 returners are significantly more on track than September 2022 new starters, particularly in the prime areas.

Governors noted that this data shows the real impact of having children for more than one year.

KMS suggested that CM share 2 case studies, one showing where a child is not making the required progress despite significant support and another where a child has had support and is making good progress.

Action:- KM to share case studies as detailed above at her data update meeting with MP.

Kate referred to PIC which is another assessment tool which is used to work out what the children can already do and inform the targets and any interventions that are needed.

Action: - Kate to share the impact of the PIC assessments at the next meeting.

Transition Questionnaire Responses.

SL referred to the Transition Questionnaire Responses and Governors noted that the feedback was excellent with some lovely comments.

Governors asked if there is any parent feedback taken after a workshop?

CM said that parents feed back through Tapestry, but it would be useful to have feedback and some quantifiable evidence as to whether the workshop had an impact on parents confidence and knowledge etc.

Action:- Leaders to look at putting something in place to enable parents to feedback after a workshop.

SL had sent a link to the new website and Governors commented it is excellent, there is a lot of information for parents and some excellent signposting.

Governors thanked SL for her feedback and continued hard work.

8) Chairs Action/ Correspondence/ Training

The Chair of Governors reported that he has no Actions to report.

The Friday Update from Governor Support is sent to Governors on a fortnightly basis.

Training information continues to be disseminated.

Any Other Business

Model Code of Conduct.

This was added to the Portal and was discussed.

The model Code of Conduct is worded in such a way that it becomes a corporate code that is signed by the Governing Board and not individual governors. This enforces the principle that, first and foremost, responsibility for good governance rests with schools themselves.

The Governing Body agreed to adhere to the Model Code of Conduct.

Ofsted Training.

MP asked for some Ofsted training to be delivered after the next meeting and this was agreed.

10) Date of the next Meeting

Thursday 16th February 2023 – 9.30am Finance
- 10.30am FGB