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**Castle Vale Nursery School
Full Governing Body Meeting 13th July 2023**



MINUTES

Present:

Mark Phillips (MP)- Chair of Governors
Sally Leese (SL) – Head Teacher
Kate Bateman – Staff Governor
Caroline Hopkins (CH) – Parent Governor
Sara Hartshorn – Co-Opted Governor

In Attendance:

Christina Meakin – Deputy Head Teacher
Jackie McCorrison (JAMC) – Clerk
Izzie Darby – Assistant Head

Apologies

Kirstie McElroy-Stringer (KMS) – Co-Opted Governor

The Apologies were accepted

1) Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

MP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Anneka Anwar and Kirsty Harper are absent from the meeting

2) Declarations of Interest

There are no changes to Pecuniary Interests since the last meeting.

3) Minutes of the Last Meeting

SL proposed and MP seconded the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2023. The Governing Body approved.

Matters arising

These were reported as follows:-

- SL to update Governors via GovernorHub regarding the Castle Vale not a pilot, not a resource base.
- September Admissions were discussed and the Nursery is full in each area with a waiting list. There are not other options on the Estate for parents, however there is a plan to have a new PVI at the back of the Church ready for September.
- The LA have said we cannot increase our PAN as that would be seen as the position of last resort.
- It was noted that parents want to put their children on the waiting list as soon as they are born. The Governing Body acknowledged that we have a commitment to the children on Castle Vale who are deprived 2 and 3 year olds with 15 hours eligibility. They agreed that the 3 year olds on Castle Vale need to be prioritised as they are the children who are due to start school the following year. They are concerned that children with complex needs will not be identified and supported before they start school.
- If there are any children who do not get a place then they asked SL to direct them back to the LA.

- SL is in communication with EDSI and Acivico regarding the Portacabin and this is now moving forward. A fee proposal is being written and planning permission will be applied for and then the project will go out to tender. Having this will free up space to support children with SEND. It is separate and different provision, and the children will be considered additional to the PAN.
- The plan is to move mainstream children to the mobile building and use the Greenhouse and Buttercups to better meet the needs of our SEND children
- **Action:- SL invited all Governors to visit school in the Autumn Term to see the teaching in practice.** Caroline said she came to a parent workshop and it was an excellent morning. Mark supported the children visiting Sutton Park. Mark is visiting on Thursday 26th October to look at baseline and Autumn 1 teaching and learning.

4) Feedback from the Personnel & Finance Committee

The Finance Committee have just met and the feedback was given as follows:-

There are still issues with Oracle, the Indicative budgets have been very inaccurate and we have not had our actuals for at least 2 years.

It is very difficult to know what is happening with regards the Budget and carry forward, schools are yet to receive the final file with charges and income for financial year 2021/2022 and 2022/23. Therefore it has been necessary to forecast the anticipated surplus balance because the 22/23 budget has not closed down.

The anticipated surplus balance is £257,582.

Account needs to be taken of the DLP expenditure. SL said that confirmation has been received that we can use the underspend to continue outreach and coordination into the next year to bridge the gap between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the DLP.

The Committee discussed a proposed change for the timing of the school day and TA hours.

SL reported that there are issue with timings of the school day. In order to adhere to the requirements of the white paper. It is the DfE's expectation for mainstream state-funded schools to deliver 32.5 hours per week (or 6.5 hours per day) of school time. Local schools have changed their timing and this has made our times untenable. From 3pm there are a steady stream of parents coming to pick their children up, this means that they are missing out on story time and it is very disruptive to the other children.

SL suggested that the timing of the school day be altered for September as follows:-

Morning 9am-12 noon (currently 8.50am – 11.50am)

Afternoon 12.30pm – 3.30pm (this is currently 12.20-3.20)

The knock on effect of this change is that staff are only paid until 3.30pm and SL proposed increasing the hours of the TA's and Play workers to 35 hours per week to cover this additional time. The cost to the budget is £32,185

There was a lengthy discussion where a number of questions were asked.

The Committee recommended that the FGB agree to trial the change in times for September. They agreed for SL to consult with staff with regards the change in hours. The Governing Body approved the above recommendation

The Committee were informed that there is enough money in the budget to match fund the Portacabin and this expenditure was approved by the Governing Body.

The Committee recommended that the FGB approve the updated Business Continuity Plan.

This was agreed.

MP reported that the Head teachers Performance Management has been completed and a recommendation was made and approved.

Gifts and Hospitality. NL showed the Committee the report and there is a nil return.

H&S Policy This has been added to GovernorHub and was approved.

The Governing Body thanked ML for his feedback and approved all the recommendations made.

5) Head Teachers Report.

This had been added to GovernorHub and SL fed back as follows:-

Information about the modular classroom has been discussed. The plan is to move mainstream children to the mobile building and use the Greenhouse and Buttercups to better meet the needs of our SEND children.

Action:- SL to add the timeline relating to the modular classroom to GovernorHub.

Developing Local Provision

Phase 1 Early Years DLP project will end in July 2023. However, we have been told by the LA that we can use the underspend to continue to provide Stay and Plays and Outreach support until Phase 2 has been agreed.

Stronger Practice Hubs

We have promoted Heart Stronger Practice hub at a number of events, attended Birmingham Networks, held subject specific webinars and sent newsletters. We have had a good success with engaging Childminders across the whole of the West Midlands with our SPH colleagues - Thrive - based in Walsall.

Childminders can be hard to engage but after a lot of hard work there were 49 who attended one evening event and 30 who attended another. This is excellent engagement.

For year one we only need to build and strengthen Network activity for our local area (Birmingham) but will need to branch out in year 2.

We have recruited to Tales Toolkit, most of Concept Cat research programme (44 places out of 45) and Counting Collections

There was an event where we had to present top tips and what went well to the new hubs, ours was judged to be an excellent presentation and our delivery plan was said to be the best.

Our trip days

Broomey Croft Farm has closed, we had coaches booked for 3 days and nowhere to go. Christina and Aimee visited Sutton Park and planned 4 work-stations: a bear hunt,

Billy Goats Gruff with duck feeding, activity hill and Forest School at the park. Greenhouse and Rainbow children had an amazing time.

Mark attended the trip and said it was an excellent visit and very well organised, Caroline said her daughter is talking about the visit and remembering it.

Staff did not feel that Sutton Park was appropriate for our Buttercup children. SENSE came and arranged a sensory day in Greenhouse for the children. We invited parents to come and take part too. It was a lovely day and the space made a huge difference.

SL reported that the SEF and SDP is on GovernorHub.

Peer review

We are part of a Peer Review group made up of 3 other Nursery Schools: Osborne, Jakeman and St Thomas. Our review took place on Friday 23rd June. It was very positive, the staff involved look at the curriculum in place, the progress of the children and interactions with staff. Members of the group have taken many ideas to share back at their schools. There are some things to work on – some staff were not as confident in answering questions as others, but overall the review was very positive.

Governors commented it is positive to have some external validation. They asked to see the report when it is available.

Action:- SL to add the report relating to the Peer Review to GovernorHub.

Safeguarding Update.

Rachel (DSL) we welcomed to the meeting and she fed back as follows:-

- We have 7 x DSLs (8 from tomorrow) – it is good practice to have so many DSLs.
- Safeguarding training is delivered to all staff on the 1st day of term and there is regular refresher opportunities if there is anything staff do not understand.
- All staff are prevent trained
- Rachel is Safer recruitment trained.
- Kate is a trained as a grade care profile practitioner, she is able to identify and record any little concerns that may build up a picture so support can be given where needed, issues can include dental, hygiene, nutrition, she can also visit homes. Rachel is also being trained on this system.
- Child Protection statistics were given, there are some children who live with their grandparents, they are given full time places when possible.
- The S175 Safeguarding Audit has been completed and submitted.
- Transition is underway, staff have met the new teachers face to face, they have passed on social worker details if there has been any involvement.
- There was an open day and a lot of parents came, transition forms have been completed and the information will be collated.
- There are weekly CASPA updates and Operation Encompass alerts are checked twice a day.
- NL and Rachel manage the SCR, this is checked by SL. There was an SCR audit from Ellen Osborne – compliance for schools and she made no recommendations. KMS also checks the SCR when she comes in for meetings.
- There was a meeting last year where there was a discussion about food pantries and there is a plan to set one up in the Falcon Lodge Community Centre. This will be going ahead, it is a facility which will provide good-quality food to families at a low cost, while also reducing food waste Annual membership is £1 and families can purchase a bag of food items every week

worth approx. £15 for just £3.50. It is not means tested. This was all ready to go at Pegasus last year but there were barriers – for example there was no wheelchair access.

- It is hoping there will be a real community buy in for this, it could be used as a warm place and somewhere where there can be meetings, trainings, SEND and Safeguarding support etc. Next door there is a Uniform shop.
- SL said that Castle Vale Education Partnership are leading on this and working with Compass Support, she is Chair of this group. The idea is to help families better utilise the food they have and plan their meals etc. Part of the work is to promote sustainability and making the environment a better place by not having to pay for plastic carrier bags so there will be tote bags with a Castle Vale logo on it, this will work to promote the food pantry but also to reduce stigma. It is hoped this will be open for 1 afternoon and 1 evening per week depending on volunteers. Holidays are also important so the children can be fed.

Governors thanked Rachel for her feedback and she left the meeting.

Staff well-being and Supervisions

Izzie reported she did all of the supervision and it was an excellent way to get to know the staff. She was able to identify their areas of strength and what they are most interested in and this has been taken into account with staff deployment aligned to the SDP, this will be built on in future years.

There were 3 main tasks:-

Collating the strengths and areas of development to find commonalities.

Supporting with confidence – some staff said they were not confident enough to share ideas.

Training – work is being done on training and individualised support programmes.

Computer skills will be more supported, if staff need a laptop to do their job, these will be provided, there is the technology in place to access the material more readily and use of IT will be waved into staff training.

Another common theme was the progression of children aligned to the development of the curriculum. This is a new approach and staff are getting to grips with it. Staff have access to the progression map and intent statements so that can see links to the development needed so that staff can make sure the learning and skill is appropriate. This is working well already, staff are more confident with talking in planning meetings as they understand the curriculum more.

Training was discussed and there is a clear structure for each term. There are some non-negotiables but this is interwoven with support for particular training needs.

Izzie will look to do more supervision next term to see progression

Governors asked how Izzie has found the process and what it is like working in the Nursery?

She said that the process was an excellent way to get to know staff, she was an expert mentor and loved developing staff to improve their confidence and practice and impact more children. She lives in Staffordshire and had no idea what was available in Birmingham and there is a huge amount of support and initiatives.

Izzie was thanked for her feedback.

Garden School

Cat was welcomed to the meeting to feed back about garden school.

This started as an area that was full of weeds, it has been completely stripped back and a lot of work has been done since then, incredible progress has been made. The children love going into the garden area, they have learned about planting seeds, watching them grow and carefully transporting them. They have learned about roots and the importance of taking care of them, they have dead headed flowers, composted different materials and have developed a wildlife pond. They have grown a whole variety of things. The children have used some of the things they have grown in their cooking. The children have grown a huge variety of things, there is a portfolio of evidence that was shown to the Governors. The children have carefully labelled the things they have grown – this includes pumpkins, 4 different types of tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, potatoes cucumber, beans, peas, courgettes, different herbs, chilli sweetcorn, strawberries, sweet peas, clematis, rocket, garlic, spinach mint etc.

There is a wildflower garden and a perennial border for pollination and also rabbits the children care for.

Year 1 has been a real learning curve with huge progress made, we are ready for Year 2 with a lot of plans, there is a woodwork shed and SL said her mom wants to make a contribution and school will purchase a greenhouse. We have joined up with the nature project and this comes with funding.

Cat has struggled to devote the time needed to the garden school and next term she will share green group with Katie so she can focus more on garden school and outside. The garden is called 'Short meadow' and the children will be part of a video that will be shared to Gardeners World.

Our curriculum

Our curriculum has been reviewed. SL asked Izzie and Christina to speak about the new Intent statements and Progression document.

The Intent statements were shared last year and there is a progressive document in place that is aligned with the intent statements.

There is a clear intent for each of our cohorts of children about what we want them to know and be able to go on to do by the time they have finished that stage of their education.

Leaders have worked hard to break down learning of knowledge and skills for children to learn, there are weekly meetings to plan learning opportunities that build on what has been taught before and children have learned or developed. We also use this to ensure we are building knowledge and skills in a sequenced and aspirational way. The document is colour coded and all documents to support are hyperlinked and accessed via iPads. These include small steps and ideas to support learning and any planning.

There was a peer to peer review and the intent statements and progression documents were shown and there was positive feedback given.

Healthy lifestyle curriculum

Ann Marie was welcomed to the meeting, she is the Healthy Lifestyle coordinator and she looks at what is provided in before and after school sessions as well as at lunchtimes to ensure that the children are being encouraged to be healthy. School are working with the Startwell project which aims to help for children under 5 to eat healthily and be more physically active. The Startwell programme is based around 8 key characters and we use their messages to teach children about a healthy lifestyle.

Each week Ann Marie helps to plan different and healthy recipes and works closely with Bernie and has rewritten the summer menu. Each day starts with some exercise, this is in the form of a lot of different things, dance, etc. She works with the children each session about food choices, cooking, exercise, cleanliness and how to look after their teeth. Each child was given a toothbrush and parents are sent recipes to use in the 6 week holidays.

The children are involved in cooking and make different dishes and examples were shown to the Governors, these include blueberry and strawberry ice cream, brown wraps with lettuce and cream cheese, herby cheese muffins.

The very youngest children in the Greenhouse pour their drinks and show excellent control. They are developing independent skills and are more willing to try different food.

From September it is hoped to work more with Cat so as to use the vegetables and herbs the children are growing in their food.

Caroline asked parents can be given the recipes to try?

Ann-Marie said that there will be a challenge sent home weekly based on a different character. Parents can upload evidence to Tapestry and get a Startwell certificate.

SL said that next year Ann-Marie will not have a group and will be able to devote her time and energy to her Healthy Lifestyle role.

Ann Marie was thanked for her feedback and she left the meeting.

Reading Update.

Teresa was welcomed to the meeting.

This has developed well, Teresa took the lead in the peer review and there has been excellent progress made.

Staff are currently trying to get the books in and have sent out messages to families. Some books are missing and an order will be placed to fill in any gaps. The stories and books for next year are being looked at to ensure that they are still appropriate.

The books are differentiated for each different area of the school and the children accessing the books. The offer will be evaluated with each new cohort. The books are levelled to match ability there is a programme of books to send home. In each pack there is an explanation for parents as to how they can support their children and the vocabulary to use.

Support and prompts that staff have are being looked at.

Parents were sent a google form home to ascertain their experiences with the reading books and the feedback was very good. The only comments to improve was to allow the children to change their books more often.

Having the investment in good quality books has really had the impact wanted to with the parents who have respected and appreciated what has been provided. Parents have noted that the books have helped the children improve with their speech and learn new words. They have appreciated the activity ideas.

The plan for next year is to provide more books with a maths focus and for there to be 2 book tabs per book.

Governors noted that the financial commitment to the books has been an excellent investment and thanked Teresa for her support in such a very well thought out approach.

Oracy

Ruby was welcomed to the meeting to share about an Oracy project and how it will be used moving forward.

Ruby was congratulated on qualifying as a teacher.

School is using the Oracy Framework to develop children's oracy skills and are part of a 2 year project.

This approach has been trialled to see how it works and we have started with the most able.

Ruby showed the Governors clips of the children speaking about a scenario based in The Toll by Julia Donaldson– the more confident talkers engage in back and forth collaborative discussions.

Taking their lead it was arranged for them to go on a troll hunt and the children spoke extremely articulately.

Oracy is more about skills, in the videos the children listened to each other's points of view / opinions and did not interrupt each other and although they were excited and enthused, they did not shout.

The children had ownership of the troll hunt, their ideas were fully formed – doing the activity through a book as very helpful – they then moved on to Jim and the Beanstalk and are looking at measurements.

The impact has shown real progress in terms of the children having conversations and collaborating and working with each other. It was noted that the majority of the high achieving children are ones we have had for a long time and / or are eligible for 30 hours entitlement.

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

DLP Update.

The impact of the DLP has been positive, Kate has supported a lot of parents and has done amazing work with parents of children who have not even started with us.

12 children who will be with us in September have been picked up through the information gathering forms, some are siblings and others have been identified through the DLP.

5 have high level or medical needs and the rest have Speech and Language difficulties,
All have a SEND Plan, referrals are in place and ready to sign and the graduated approach will commence immediately, so there is no delays.

There are also approx. 24 or 25 children where there are concerns. Families have been supported before they start and have been signposted in terms of SEND, Safeguarding and also potentially the food pantry.

Governors commented that we will be in a much better position in September with less unknowns.

Assessment.

MP and CM met and looked at assessment and MP had asked for some case studies to be shared.

CM gave brief anonymised feedback (with parental permission)

Child 1:-

The child attended a private nursery and joined us in 2021. The child was non-verbal, walked on tiptoes, flapped, gave no eye contact etc. and was on the pathway for a diagnosis of autism.

On entry, the child could not be screened for Welcomm, during their time with us the child had a diagnosis of Autism, targets were reviewed and the child was given S&L Support.

The child made amazing progress and will be attending a mainstream school.

The child's mother has written that their child has gone from strength to strength and has developed more than they ever expected, the team have consistently worked with the child and parents, have provided S&L support and the child is not happy and talkative, they have gone from being non-verbal to never being quiet and have gone from eating dry food to a variety of different things,

Governors thanked the staff for all of their support and noted that this progress is priceless.

Child 2.

The child will attend Mainstream, the child attended part time and is a returner. The child is disadvantaged with attendance in the first year of 56%.

Early Help has been offered to support attendance and a full time place and their attendance improved to 90% this academic year. The child will be starting Primary on track, having come back in September 3+ steps below. Monitoring and in house support has ensured the child made accelerated progress. The parent has said that their child is happy, is getting on well and able to express themselves.

Child 3.

The child has complex SEND needs and did not transition and was kept with us because a school could not be identified to meet their needs, The child was non-verbal, and they now have functional language and recently drew a recognisable person. The child has a Special School place for September.

Governors commented that it is really important to hear about case studies and learn about the progress of the children and it is wonderful to understand the impact of all of the support the children get.

Governors thanked the staff for their hard work and for attending the meeting and for feeding back.

Governors thanked SL for her report and all of her hard work.

6) Policy Approval

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

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- Managing Medicines Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Principles Written Statement
- Accessibility Plan
- British Values Statement
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

The Governing Body formally approved the above policies.

Information about Supporting Children in schools with medical conditions was shared along with Medicines in School.

7) Any Other Business

None

8) Date of the next Meeting

Tuesday 7th November – 9.30am F&P Committee
10.30am FGB meeting