

Meadowside Community Primary School - Local Governing Board

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12.6.2023

Present: Phil Calrow (Chair), Claire Curtis, Adrian Burrows, Sarah Dixon, Jenny Gill, Nicola Whyte, Kerry Woods

Apologies: Gareth Harris

In Attendance: Sarah Messenger, Alison Stokes, Alan Manuel, Dr. Carsten Kressel

Welcome and Apologies

Apologies had been received from Gareth Harris.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of personal or pecuniary interest in the matters to be discussed were made in addition to those recorded in the register of interests.

Governing Board

Governor Training

Mrs. Gill had attended headteacher's performance management training, which she found useful.

Information about two courses for the coming academic year was distributed. The only remaining local authority training course for the current academic year relates to Ofsted readiness.

Membership

Mr. Harris' term of office ended on 4.4.2023. No information was received about his reappointment. Mrs. Curtis will clarify the situation.

Action 1: *Clarify if Mr. Harris has been reappointed.*

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23.3.2023 were **agreed** as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising / Action Log

The actions from the last meeting had been completed as follows: -

- Action 1 - Children's books will be presented at the Standards meeting in July.
- Action 2 - Walkie talkies for emergency use by SLT - The use of mobile phones by staff has been reviewed and clarified. They are only expected to use them in an emergency if parents and pupils are in the vicinity. Walkie talkies are based in the office and can also be used if fast or emergency communication is required. **Governors asked** if walkie talkies

are used for outside PE. Mrs. Curtis answered that that could be reviewed. Alternatively, phones can be used in an emergency.

- Action 3 - Recording function on office telephones - The telephone system will be reviewed more widely. One of the issues that has been discovered is that if anyone is dialling out to a parent or other outside party, their direct dial number appears.

Action 2: *Present children's books at the Standards meeting.*

Headteacher's Report

Expectations for format and content of the headteacher's report will be clarified.

Safeguarding / Welfare

Mrs. Stokes and Ms Whyte had produced a joint report which Ms Whyte presented: -

- The vulnerable register was reviewed.
- The incidence of Early Help has reduced.
- Mrs. Stokes is forging good links across the trust and also works with Dallam for supervision.
- Links with families are proving to be positive.
- Persistent absence affects 44 children, 10 of whom have medical needs that contribute to their absence levels. Plans for dealing with all persistently absent children are in place, and their families receive support. Seven Children in Need are also persistently absent; their attendance is pursued with other agencies that support their families.
- Intensive support for children and their families through Early Help, particularly in the younger years, bears fruit, so that fewer children in the higher years need this support.
- SEND children display better attendance than non-SEND children, mirroring the national trend.
- Persistent absence will remain a focus of the school for the coming year, and letters will be sent to some families later in the summer term and at the start of the autumn term in order to remind them of the importance of good attendance.

Governors asked the following questions: -

- Do letters to parents of persistently absent children elicit a response? - Answer: Parents often ring to query why they have received such a letter, which can help to enter into a dialogue and remind them of the importance of good attendance.
- Have you tracked persistent offenders over the years? - Answer: Yes, we address those with a history of persistent absence early in the autumn term in order to establish a better pattern.
- Do we have the evidence for children whose low attendance is caused by medical needs? - Answer: Yes, the information is on file.

Mrs. Curtis reported the following matters: -

- She has reviewed the use of CPOMS, especially in respect of behaviour recording. Subsequently, she reviewed the Behaviour Policy.

- Holidays in term-time have escalated. Future term dates will be published early in order to dissuade parents from taking their children out of school to go on holiday. - Governors noted that this issue appears worse than ever across Warrington. Targeted fast-track prosecution can be used.

Governors asked the following questions: -

- Why do we not issue fines for holidays in term-time? - Answer: It is council policy not to issue fines, as they are difficult to enforce. In other local authorities, they are often not paid. In contrast, fast-track prosecution can lead to penalties of up to £1k; families need to alter their behaviour to escape them.
- What is an Operation Encompass notification? - Answer: It is a notification from the police to the school if a child witnessed an incident in the home that required police involvement. However, there have been delays in receiving such notifications; the news often spreads and reaches the school more quickly verbally or on social media.
- Have you checked the level of the education Safeguarding package with the local authority? Schools get different levels of support and information depending on the type of package they have taken. - Answer: We will check.

Action 3: *Check the level of the education Safeguarding package with the local authority.*

Finance

Sarah Messenger attended to present a budget update. She informed governors that the school was in deficit of £24,585 at end of period 8 and highlighted the following points: -

Income

- The ESFA budget was on track.
- Additional funding was combined with the national tutoring funding.
- Supplementary grant funding will become part of main funding from the coming academic year.
- Additional supplementary grant has been received since April and is paid separately.
- The level of Pupil Premium funding may need to be queried with the ESFA after the next quarterly payment, as the amount received has fallen.
- High needs income projections may be too high, due to the in-year loss of a pupil, which may lead to an adjustment.
- DP top-up funding is received as expected.
- Miscellaneous income reflects a grant from Greggs for the breakfast club. However, Helping Hands is still paying for some food. Breakfast and after-school club budgets will be reviewed.
- The letting to the Polish School continues. There have been some operational issues that need to be addressed. It is planned to resolve the issues, some of which also cause increased costs for the school and should, therefore, be reflected in the rent.
- Income for paid and funded nursery places is on budget.
- The wrap-around care budget is on target.

- The provision of nursery FSM has been reduced so that it is only given to those children, who are actually eligible. General nursery charges will be reviewed.
- Flood damage income may not be fully allocated before the next academic year.
- The catering budget is at a deficit at the moment. The situation may need to be reviewed. It was noted that other schools generate income from snacks.

Expenditure

- A £1k payment for teaching staff has been accrued pending agreement of a pay deal for teachers. Once applied, it leads to a £17k deficit.
- Since April, a figure for the anticipated support staff increase of £1,925 per staff member is being accrued.
- Agency supply continues to be overspent. No saving appears possible in the current academic year, but a saving in teaching staff will be made.
- Stationery is overspent, partly due to a leak in the photocopier room, which damaged resources kept in there.
- Hospitality is overspent, also as a result of the Ofsted inspection.
- Postage is overspent due to the purchase of stamps.
- Curriculum will be overspent on learning resources. Where possible, resources are recoded to the code for recovery premium, as the recovery premium money cannot be carried forward. National tutoring funding is also unlikely to be spent as planned previously following the departure of a learning mentor. It is, therefore, also allocated to different legitimate uses.
- Premises - Furniture and maintenance are partially met from the flood insurance payout.
- The invoiced cost of the cleaning SLA from the council is £3.5 k higher than anticipated. This is reflected in the budget for the coming year.
- The finance package will be updated, so that a purchase order will be required in advance for all expenditure items.

Mrs. Curtis highlighted the following points: -

- Ordering systems will be tightened, with clear authorisation required for all expenditure.
- The overspend of the budget for learning resources is caused in part by purchasing resources for two academic years, namely for the current and the coming year.

Governors asked the following questions: -

- Could a recovery premium underspend lead to smaller allocations in future? - Answer: We are working to maximise the benefit. Future allocations appear to be based on the current allocation. The school will ensure the best-possible impact of all expenditure.
- Do we have an indication of utility costs? - Answer: We expect them to come down.
- What are the plans for teachers' pay? - Answer: We err on the side of caution.

Draft Budget 2023/24

Mrs. Messenger highlighted the following points: -

- The budget contains two scenarios for teachers' pay, with assumed pay increases of 5% and 6.5%.
- The support staff pension contribution has reduced from 22.5% to 19.8%, giving an £18k saving.
- ESFA income up has increased by £81k, due to changes in funding and seven additional children on roll at the last census.
- DP funding from the ESFA remains unchanged.
- PE funding levels are unclear and have been based on last year.
- Tutoring funding - The required contribution by schools has come down from 75% to 50%. Nonetheless, the benefit remains under review.
- Pupil Premium funding is higher than last year, due to a higher number of eligible children and slightly higher rates per pupil.
- High needs income will drop due to the departure of four pupils to high school.
- Top-up from the local authority for the DP has not been confirmed yet.
- Universal infant FSM income is based on figures from last year.
- Nursery income for funded places is based on confirmed places that have been offered. Work is in progress to maximise income. The school may need to withdraw the current offer of 30 hours of free childcare for everyone, unless they are actually eligible.
- The catering budget is based on the current year.
- The budget for agency supply has been cut, as the aim is to find an in-house solution for staff cover whenever possible.
- Support staff cost is based on an increase of £1,925 per member of staff from April 2023 and a pay increase of 3% from April 2024.
- For everything else, including utilities, 5% have been added; 10% for the cleaning SLA.
- IT was increased by £10k to fund a rolling programme of hardware replacement in classrooms.
- With a pay increase of 5% for teachers, a £41k surplus is anticipated; with 6.5%, £14k.

Governors asked the following questions: -

- What does national tutoring mean? - Answer: Employment of someone to tutor identified children. Organising such tutoring can be complicated: It needs to be additional, and we need to show impact. We may pause the programme and review arrangements.
- If we do not offer 30 hours of free childcare to everyone, how do we support eligible parents to apply, given the complicated application process? - Answer: We will review how we can assist parents, maybe by offering support at coffee mornings.
- Is the supply budget realistic? - Answer: We will review how HLTAs can provide absence cover.
- Will it only be provided by HLTAs? - Answer: We can also use TA3s in some instances.
- Is that a general policy? - Answer: We will always look for the best solution.
- Would such arrangements be used to cover long-term absences or if teachers left mid-year? - Answer: We would look to appoint or to create the best solution.
- What other factors would be taken into account when planning appropriate cover? - Answer: Needs of the cohort, staff well-being, anticipated duration of the absence.

Health & Safety Audit

Mrs. Woods reported the following matters: -

- The entrance barrier to the car park was faulty and was removed.
- New fob-controlled gates will be installed.
- New pedestrian gates have been installed around the site to control access.
- The trust has approved a bid to reinstate CCTV.
- A fire drill was held. Whilst the drill was successful, improvements were identified.
- KS 2 and staff toilets will be replaced.
- Spot checks take place.
- Mrs. Curtis will attend asbestos management training. - Mrs. Curtis informed governors that a new asbestos survey may be required to bring the asbestos management plan up-to-date. Quotes are being obtained, with support from TCAT.
- Fire warden training has taken place.
- A Health & Safety audit is scheduled.
- Fire evacuation procedures for the Polish school need to be reviewed.
- A first aider for staff needs to be trained.
- Termly meetings for the Health & Safety team will be reinstated.

Mrs. Curtis gave the following update: -

- Following the fire drill, procedures will be reviewed.
- TCAT will carry out a business review.
- Job roles of the site team will be reviewed.
- Accident recording will be reviewed, to help identify trends.
- Playground work was carried out over Whit.
- Decarbonisation work is planned by the trust, including a check of insulation levels, heat pump installation, and solar panels. The overriding goal is to become carbon-neutral.

Staffing & HR

Mrs. Curtis reported that staff gave a positive response when they were surveyed by Ofsted.

Policy Review

Governors **agreed** the Behaviour Policy - Pupil voice and staff voice was incorporated; the aim was to clarify and streamline rules. An assembly was held, and the policy will be sent to parents. Children appear engaged.

Mrs. Curtis reported her plans to streamline the policy review process, also adopting trust policies wherever possible. She will review policies over the summer and share them with the Chair for immediate approval, before submitting them for ratification in the autumn term. Changes will be highlighted to aid visibility of changes. Governors agreed this approach.

Term Dates

Governors **agreed** term dates for the coming two years as presented.

Any Other Business

The PTA account needs new signatories to access the funds.

Action 4: *Work with Sarah Messenger to find out the current signatories of the PTA account and to change them to current members of staff.*

The multiplication check will take place in the current week.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting

13.7.2023, 4 pm

Dates for the coming year will be set.

Action 5: *Set meeting dates for the coming academic year.*

Action Log - June 2023

No.	Description	Responsible
1	<i>Clarify if Mr. Harris has been reappointed.</i>	Mrs. Curtis
2	<i>Present children's books at the Standards meeting.</i>	Mrs. Curtis
3	<i>Check the level of the education Safeguarding package with the local authority.</i>	Mrs. Curtis
4	<i>Work with Sarah Messenger to find out the current signatories of the PTA account and to change them to current members of staff.</i>	Mrs. Curtis
5	<i>Set meeting dates for the coming academic year.</i>	Mrs. Curtis