

**OAKINGTON C OF E (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 19 January 2017, 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Edmund Buss (EB, Chair), Sally Daggianti (SD, Head), Ann Webster (AW), Lindsay Born (LB), Paul Lloyd (PL), Jenny Prince (JP), Dawn Mansell (DM), Clare Chapman (CC), Jo Bryant (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Peter Nicholas (PN), Sharon Oakley (SO), Anne Christie (AC), Karen Sutherland (KS)

Prayer: AW opened the meeting in prayer.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from SO and PN, who were unwell, and AC and KS due to personal circumstances. These were accepted by the governing body.

2. Declarations of Interest, Register of Pecuniary Interest

None were declared.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

There had been no further progress in obtaining a Local Authority governor. Two names were mentioned as possible governors to ensure succession.

Action 96. Approach potential governors (Jessica Summers and Jo Mills) by March full GB meeting (EB, JB).

CC confirmed she had DBS registration. LB's registration is ongoing.

Action 97. Check Single Central Record regarding governors' DBS registration and target those not recorded (JB).

An updated Complaints Procedure was now available from CCC. Action 77. Circulate to all governors (JB).

Disaster Plan. Action 98. Meet to discuss LA guidance on Emergency Planning (KS, CC, SD).

SD confirmed that staff profiles on the school website were up-to-date.

CC was to take portrait photos of all governors present for display in the school entrance.

SD told the meeting that LCVAP funding for the seventh classroom has already been applied for.

JP had circulated the governor monitoring visits plan for the current academic year, together with a report template.

JB had circulated the governor contact list. Action 99. Set up chair@oakington.cambs.sch.uk, clerk@oakington.cambs.sch.uk, bikeit@oakington.cambs.sch.uk etc addresses (JP).

5. Spring TOP

The Autumn and Spring TOPs comprised 3 key priorities:

- i) To revisit/embed the policy for Marking and ensure that it is consistently effective in helping pupils across the school to improve their work. Quality marking is a standing item in staff meeting, and regular book scrutinies have been put in place. It is intended that response time will be planned in to lessons on a regular basis.

- ii) To embed a new system of assessment for all year groups including baseline. A new slimlined TPS tracking system was set up in the Autumn Term, and the focus in the Spring Term is for teachers to be trained by the head teacher in the use of the new combined floor standard.
Although Baseline Assessment is no longer compulsory, the school is to continue with the County/SIMS version.
- iii) To investigate possible multi academy trust structures that are appropriate for school and look into the possibility of setting up a MAT.

6. Financial Benchmarking

This year Oakington is compared with Cheveley Primary School, and the National Average for schools of a comparable size. Income per pupil is broadly similar although it is not known yet what the impact of the government's Fairer Funding formula will be.

In 2015-16 Oakington received £4291 in SEN funding, whereas Cheveley received none and the figure for the National Average is £20, 352. Income from Pupil Premium was £14,820 for Oakington, £33,760 for Cheveley, and £36,450 nationally. This is because there are fewer children in this category at Oakington.

Income from contributions to visits etc. was double that of Cheveley (£7,698 compared with £3,475) but significantly lower than the national figure of £11,407. It was noted that, while the school had increased its subsidy of visits and events in response to parents' comments, people may not be aware. **Action 100. Inform parents of amount of subsidy given to school visits and events by the end of term (SD).**

Teaching costs at Oakington are slightly above Cheveley (by £2,236), but lower than the National Average. Part of this is due to more experienced staff who are on upper pay scale. Little is spent on Supply Teaching. The cost of other staff covers such things as After School Club. JP asked if TAs have graded increments to their pay. It was felt that there is a good mix of staff, those who are experienced and those who are less so, in school.

A significant amount has been spent on ICT, both equipment and resources but this is still within budget.

£19,669 was spent on direct revenue financing – this represents the school's payment towards the new classroom.

Caretaking costs are minimal and, in comparison to Cheveley and the National Average, what the school pays for water and rates is low.

Oakington spent more on development and training (£12,201) than either Cheveley (£9,386) or National Average (£7,288) but it was felt that this was money well spent.

7. Academisation Update

It is no longer compulsory for schools to become academies, although it is a trend and the stated aim of the government. There are different types of affiliation:

Partnership – an informal arrangement

Collaboration – a formally recognised partnership

Federation – where several schools share a governing body

Academy or multi-academy trust (MAT) – the new status is formally and legally recognised. It is irrevocable.

EB's view was to consider a partnership in the first instance. Oakington is already working with Petersfield School, Orwell and this could be a possible partner. Primary schools in and around Swavesey are part of a "soft" federation and it was felt that visiting them, as well as talking to schools within DEMAT, would be useful. Concern was expressed that Oakington may be pressured to "adopt" a struggling school. SD was keen to try for LCVAP funding for the seventh classroom before this became impossible. To pursue the possibility of academisation the following Actions were agreed:

Action 101. Request links promised by Tim Coulson (DfE Regional Commissioner) at the last full GB meeting (SD).

Action 102. Create a shortlist of local schools to ascertain the benefits of academisation (CC, SD).

Action 103. Delegate governors to visit these schools (EB).

Action 104. Begin to produce a set of questions to ask (JP).

The next full GB meeting in March will focus on academisation, and RAISEonline.

8. Staff Well-being Questionnaire

All members of staff at the school were given the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire and 17 out of 21 did so. Overall staff were positive as indicated in the graphs relating to each question.

Question 1: I enjoy working here

82% of respondents agreed, although the atmosphere outside the classroom was felt sometimes to be not as positive.

Question 2: I feel safe in school

Just over half of the respondents agreed. People do not feel unsafe in school, but there were some issues that needed to be addressed, such as workmen on site. SD explained that all contractors are diocese-approved, have DBS certification and have to sign in to the Hazards file. A new buzzer on the school gate had been operational from Tuesday of that week.

Action 105. Revisit the security of the school gate (SD, EB).

Question 3: I feel my work is valued

There was wider divergence of views on this. Governors are not seen by some as supportive, and staff and governors do not interact much. LB was concerned that governors should address their profile with staff, and do more to make staff feel valued. DM said that the GB should respond promptly to the concerns raised by the questionnaire.

Action 106. Look at cost of paying TAs for 1 extra hour per week so that they are paid from 8.50am when school opens (SD).

Question 4: My workload is manageable

Most agreed with this, although some issues such as last minute changes and increased pupil numbers were raised.

Question 5: There is effective communication within the school

Only 25% of respondents agreed and this question drew the greatest number of negative comments. Concerns about home-school communication have been raised before; details like incorrect dates on letters home cause confusion; and JP emphasised the importance of proofreading. Getting all staff together for a staff meeting is problematic.

Action 107. Consider communication within school and with parents (SD, All)

Question 6: I am listened to by colleagues and leaders

Staff felt they were listened to by some and not others, and that sometimes their views were not taken on board evidenced by a lack of response or change.

Question 7: I have the materials, equipment and any other resources I need to do my work.

A number of issues were identified, some of which have already been addressed e.g a new projector in the hall, and new interactive whiteboards in some classrooms. Many responses highlighted problems with the printer/copier. The school has a finance contract for it that expires in 18 months' time.

Action 108. To investigate the costs of leaving existing contract for printer copier as it is unsatisfactory (SD)

Laptops are being replaced next year as there has been a lot spent on resources this year. A suggestion to improve the phone system and have a separate line for After School Club was welcomed.

Question 8: The school makes appropriate provision for professional development

Over half agreed with this, 2 disagreed and the remainder were neutral. SD said that teaching staff have to have an annual review. Staff will be asked to contact Sally if they have not had a performance review recently.

Question 9: I have developed strategies to help me if I feel anxious or stressed-out, or know where to seek help.

Most respondents agreed with this. LB emphasised that mental health is extremely important. Some replies indicated that people were coping on their own, and there was some discussion as to how governors might give them support. Girton Primary School uses a counselling session provided locally by Relate and this is available to all staff. DM recommended Claire Harris.

Question 10. I know what we are trying to achieve as a school.

The responses to this question were generally consistent and emphasise the importance of communication and how it affects morale.

It was decided to repeat the survey in Spring 2018. It was agreed that it was important to show that governors have acted in response to the survey and that this has made a difference.

Action 109. Email all staff to thank them for their contribution to the well-being survey (EB).

Action 110. Attend a staff meeting with another governor to report back on the findings of the survey, and what the governors intend to do as a result (EB).

Action 111. Discuss what the GB should do following the survey in the March full GB meeting (EB, All).

9. AOB/Future dates

The postponed Resources Committee will now take place after half-term. The next full GB meeting is on Thursday 16 March 2017.

The meeting concluded at 10.18pm.