

ESSA PRIMARY ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING
HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON WEDNESDAY 29 March 2017 AT 9.00AM

Present: Aatika Patel, Nigel Whittle (Chair), Sofiya Patel, Enid Cathcart, Ismail Kala, Phil Jackson, Nazida Patel, Salmah Akram and Jo Atherton (Principal).

In attendance: Andrew Cooper (CEO), David Mole (Finance Director), Michelle Pogson (HR Director) Russell Kinch (Item 6b) and Denise Hark (Clerk to the Local Governing Body).

Nigel Whittle in the Chair

Part 1

1a) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Angela Stephens and Tasneem Patel.

1b) LGB Membership update

The Chair welcomed, Phil Jackson to his first meeting as Co-opted governor.

Agreed:

That the following appointments be confirmed:

- Phil Jackson, Co-opted Governor for a one year term of office
- Tasneem Patel, Co-opted Governor for a one year term of office

1c) LGB Working Party Membership

Agreed:

- That Phil Jackson joins the Finance Working Party.

2. BUDGET AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Budget 2016/17

The Finance Director reported that there was an overspend of £23,000 as at the end of February 2017, which included a contribution from reserves to support the revenue budget and the pre-opening grant. It was explained that a proportion of the pre-opening grant had been spent on ICT. It was noted that since the budget had been set there had been increased pupil numbers, which increased the funding for the primary academy.

There had been some additional income in respect of Special Educational Needs for those children who had recently been given Educational Health Care Plans.

It was explained that the staffing budget had been slightly overspent but the teaching vacancies had been offset by supply cover costs. The vacancies for the Teaching Assistant positions had also been covered by supply staff. There needed to be an adjustment on the TA budget heading as it had been over-budgeted.

Spending on the premises budget was on target; however, a repair to the roof was required which was expected to cost around £15,000 to £17,000. The Finance Director explained that the board had agreed to fund this work last summer. The CEO asked why the work had not yet started and asked what the timescale was for the work to be carried out. Mr Jackson, the Facilities Manager explained that two surveys had already been carried out but he was looking for a consultancy firm to carry out a third survey as the first two had been contradictory. He added that hopefully this work would be completed during the summer break.

A fault with the electricity meter meant that the academy was not charged for usage. Despite informing the supplier, the fault was not rectified and the supplier then confirmed that it would not be charging the Academy. The money put aside for this purpose had been released back to the budget.

It was explained that an increased budget was required for photocopier lease costs.

There had been a reduction to the insurance costs as there had been a reduced per pupil cost.

The learning resources budget had been underspent in respect of ICT purchases. The Finance Director explained that he would ask the Board to allow some of this budget to be carried forward to next year as this had been part of the pre-opening grant.

Governors were presented with a copy of the creditors and debtors report; most of the debts reported were owed by a subsidiary.

The CEO asked, in respect of the use of reserves, if the contributions from the Board were not there how financially stable would the Academy be. The Finance Director replied that the Academy would have been able to balance the budget this year due to increased funding from increased pupil numbers. The CEO asked whether the staffing model was tight. The Principal explained that some additional staff had been appointed because of the contribution from reserves by the Board. This money had been used to provide additional Teaching Assistant and EAL support. The Chair pointed out that the Academy was still growing but the Governing Body needed to know that there would be a balanced budget going forward. It was noted that the reserves had enabled a member of staff to start work at the Academy earlier than planned. The Chair added that there had been budget surpluses in the first two years of the Academy opening.

Draft budget 2017/18

The Finance Director reported that work was not yet completed on the three-year budget plan. It was explained that the budget has to be submitted to the EFA by the end of July and would require approval by the Board at their July meeting.

It was explained that budgets were becoming tighter, as there had not been any inflationary increases to funding and costs, including Staffing costs were rising In addition the National Funding Formula is to be introduced in 2018-19.

The Finance Director reported that the indicative funding received for 2017/18 was based on 292 pupils. It was noted that pupil numbers could be slightly higher than this next year but this would not be known until the October census. A summary of the funding had been provided with the papers for the meeting. The central services recharge which covers a portion of the CEO's salary along with administrative, HR and financial services is likely to remain at 8.7% of the budget income for next year.

It was reported that the budget for 2018/19 appeared to be healthy but a deficit was expected for the year 2019/20. The Finance Director explained that while the school was growing it was funded on in-year numbers. Once the Academy has a Year 6 group, the following year the government would use the prior year's pupil numbers for funding. This would present an issue for the academy as the Year 6 class in 2018-19 would be a single class and would form the funding for the following year when there would be two year six classes. After 2020/21 the budget would start to balance out.

Indicative funding under the National Funding Formula showed that the academy would receive additional funding which should help with the shortfall for 2019/20. The Finance Working Group agreed to meet to look at the implications.

A report detailing the external audit findings which had been reported to the Board was provided with the papers for the meeting. All recommendations which had been made have either been completed or were in the progress of being completed. The Finance Director explained that some general accounting issues had been raised but these had not particularly been related to the primary academy.

Risk Registers

The Local Governing Body received a copy of the primary academy risk register and the Trust wide risk register. It was noted that risks included such areas as Ofsted inspections, literacy and numeracy levels and behaviour. The Trust wide group had also looked at mitigating actions to be carried out. The Finance Director advised that the risk registers should be reviewed on a termly basis. The Chair explained that in addition, the Risk Registers were regularly reviewed by the Trust's Audit and Risk Committee.

The Trust Health and Safety Committee had met and were currently reviewing Health and Safety policies. The Finance Director explained that the policies should be updated by the end of May and that Adele MacGowan was advising on the content of the policies.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted

3. HUMAN RESOURCES (Confidential item)

This item was deemed as confidential and as such is contained in the Part 2 confidential minutes

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Agreed:

- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

The CEO reported that he had checked the website and it was legally compliant.

New governors were reminded that they need to complete register of business interest forms and return them to the CEO's PA.

The CEO questioned how the Individual Learning Plans were progressing. The Principal replied that they were going well, particularly in Key Stage Two. There had been a turnout of 58% of parents to the meeting where the ILPs had been discussed. In future, updates of the ILPs would be carried out during parents' evenings. A governor asked when the next parents evening would be held. The Principal confirmed that the next parents evening would be held in the summer term.

A governor asked whether the results of the parental surveys were available. The Principal replied that they were currently being analysed.

It was confirmed that Tasneem Patel had agreed to take on the role of Pupil Premium Governor.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Governors made no declaration of pecuniary or conflict of interest.

6. EDUCATION, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT WELFARE

6a Principal's Report

6ai) Principal's Report

Phonics

The Principal reported on progress in phonics as follows:

In Year 1 11% of children had been on track at the end of the autumn term but by the end of Spring Term One the percentage had risen to 27.1%. In Year 2 the figures were 31% for the autumn term rising to 50% for the end of Spring Term 1, and for Year 3 22% at the end of the autumn term rising to 53.8% at the end of Spring Term One. The Principal explained that the children reported on in Year 2 and Year 3 were those children who had not passed the Phonics screening test when they were in Year 1. The Principal explained that the academy does not have to re-test the Year 3 children

but they would continue to work on phonics with these children. The Chair asked what the current external view was on Phonics. The Principal replied that an English audit had been carried out via the Teaching Alliance. The audit had looked at Phonics teaching, reading and writing and this had been very positive. The person who had carried out that audit had commented that the phonics programme was working well for the children. A governor asked what the final expectation for the Year 1 phonics testing was and how this compared against the previous year's results. The Principal replied that 58% of the Year 1 children were expected to pass the Phonics screening compared to 41% in the previous year. Mrs Akram added that at the last check it looked as though 66% of children were on track and this was due to a lot of the Phase 5 Phonic work being taught before the summer term.

It was noted that the Education and Achievement working group had looked at data in detail.

Mrs Cathcart reported on the Education and Achievement working group meeting. The group had looked at Fischer Family Trust data dashboard looking at achievement up to last summer. The group had also looked in detail at achievement summaries and looked at strengths and areas for improvement. Revised targets had been set for all children. It was reported that mobility and attendance was still causing an issue for the academy. There had been some changes to the curriculum and timetable changes with some staff being used in different ways. The Chair added that there were many intervention plans in place as there had been a heavy investment in this area. The Principal explained that after the February half term the Year 2 children had been split into five groups. One group was for children who were on track or were exceeding expectations; one group who should achieve the level but were not yet there. These were small groups of children who were working with the class teachers. Teaching Assistants were supporting SEN and EAL children. There was also a small group of INAs who were working with a one to one support work. The plan was to cater for the needs of the children and to look at the gaps in their learning. There was extra support provided for EAL children by a 0.5 teacher working to support Years 3 and 4. A governor asked how the success of the strategies employed would be monitored. The Principal replied that Mrs Akram takes a lead in this area and also the Senior Leadership Team looks at progress. Mrs Akram added that the additional teacher takes out the children who require Greater Depth work to master the skills at a higher level. A governor asked whether this teacher would stay on at the academy at the end of the academic year. The Principal replied that he would not stay as he was an additional member of staff appointed on a fixed-term contract. He would continue to work with Year 2 until after the SATs have been completed and the children are ready to transfer to Year 3 and then would move to support Year 1. A governor asked what support Year 1 was currently receiving. It was explained that they were currently only receiving support for EAL children but they were also being streamed for Phonics.

Attendance

The CEO pointed out that one of the biggest areas of concern was absence and persistent absence and Ofsted would be looking for evidence of improvement over time which was not currently being seen. The Principal replied that before half term

there had been 68 children who were persistent absentees but this reduced to 52 last week. Attendance currently stood at 93.9% compared to 91% for the same period last year. The CEO agreed that this would be seen as a positive indicator. The Principal said that the Early Interventions Team had advised that the academy could be more flexible when advising when children should return to school when sickness and following this advice an improvement in attendance had been seen. A governor asked what the national average was for attendance. It was explained that this had been 94.7% last year and it was noted that the academy would be still be vulnerable as it was still below the national average. The Chair questioned whether not having Year 5 and Year 6 groups in school yet impacted on attendance as generally the further up the school the better children's attendance seems to be, and in addition the more children on roll each child equates to a lower percentage. The Principal said that this could possibly be the case as 38% in the Reception class were persistent absentees. The CEO added that if children were not in school they were not learning. The Principal agreed and said that some of the persistent absentee children had huge potential but they were not attending school regularly. A governor pointed out that it could be demonstrated that the academy was increasing measures to improve attendance. The Principal explained that nine families were due to be taken to court regarding attendance and hopefully once this message goes out parents may take more notice. A member of the Early Interventions team had accompanied the Family Support Worker in making 19 home visits to persistent absentees. The Chair pointed out that attendance for Spring Term One had been better than attendance in the autumn term and attendance for Spring Term Two was increasing. A governor asked whether lateness to school was counted as an absence. The Principal replied that only if this was after the register was closed, and then the pupil would lose a mark for the morning session.

The following reports had been included with the papers for the meeting for information:

- A Safeguarding letter from Bolton Council
- Data Dashboard
- Updated Academy Improvement Plan

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

6b English Developments

Salmah Akram gave a presentation on English developments and reported that responsibility for English across the academy had been split with herself taking the lead with phonics and the library and Russell Kinch taking on responsibility for reading and writing. A team of six library champions had been chosen from Year 3 and Year 4 who would have responsibility for maintaining the library. It was planned that all children would be issued with an electronic reading card and the academy was looking at having parental volunteers helping with the library. Class visits were being

organised to High Street library in the summer term so that children would be able to understand the principle behind a library and also to encourage them to sign up to the public library. Mrs Akram added that she was working with the librarian from Essa Academy to set up this provision.

It was reported that work was ongoing with the Essa Precision Phonics Scheme and Mrs Akram said that she had carried out a learning walk with the external consultants. They had commented that transition stood out because children had been streamed for phonics. This arrangement had worked smoothly with children knowing where to go. The pupil engagement and behaviour for learning was positive. The staff carried out mock screenings every half term. It was reported that this had been very successful and there had been a growth in skills. The current position in phonics was 66.61% for Year 1, 83.7% for Year 2 and 84.6% for Year 3. It was explained that last year's result had been 42.1% and the pupils were already exceeding this score. It was pointed out, however, that the average for Bolton last year had been 80% and the national average had been 81%. A plan was being put together to plug the gaps in attainment in phonics and individual phonics meeting would be held with the Key Stage One staff, including Teaching Assistants.

Russell Kinch, English lead who had joined the Academy in January after leaving his position as a Deputy Head Teacher in Rochdale, gave a presentation on the reading and writing aspect of English. Mr Kinch explained that the major priority for the school was reading. At the start of term a third of his class did not have a reading record book and a lot of children were not reading regularly at home. A reading at home incentive scheme has now been put in place to encourage children to read at least four out of seven times per week. A governor asked whether this applied to school reading books only. Mr Kinch replied that ideally this was for school reading books but it could also extend to other reading experiences including reading a newspaper. If the children forget to take their reading record book home they are encouraged to have their reading noted on a piece of paper which they can stick in their books on their return to school. If they achieve their target they can get a small weekly treat and if they achieve it for five out of six weeks they can pick a book they would like to read as a reward. It was reported that at the start of the spring term there had not been any children in Year 3 who had managed to read on four out of seven occasions; by the end of Spring Term One this had increased to 42% of children achieving this level and last week 79% of the children had read and recorded their reading on at least four occasions. In Year 4 the percentages had increased from 0% at the beginning of term to 47% at the end of spring term 1 and to 67% by last week. There was a similar picture across the school. Mr Kinch added that he was hoping to see an improvement in reading because of this scheme. In response to a question from a governor it was explained that all reading books were book-banded and include a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. Target X books have been purchased which aim to encourage boys reading, in addition, these books had also proved to be popular with the girls.

Mr Kinch reported that he had met with Deb Butler, Local Authority Consultant to look at English. The current English action plan has now been re-written following a suggestion from Jo Linden that the targets in the plan should contain data expressed as a percentage. It was reported that the academy was participating in Beanstalk

Reader scheme which is a charity which gets an adult in school to read with targeted children who do not have opportunities to read at home. They get a half day reading session and carry out activities around it. There were currently two adults working with four children in Years 3 and 4 under this scheme. A governor asked whether parents were being encouraged to help in school. It was explained that this was an area being looked at but there was a need for the volunteer readers to model best practice and this was a skill which needs to be learnt by adults. The Chair suggested that a retired teacher might be a good person to carry out this work. It was explained that the Reception class has a mystery parent reader each week.

Mr Kinch reported that once reading has started to improve it should lead into an improvement in writing. He explained that currently basics were not being picked up often enough and added that teachers should make it clear to children what is expected and the non-negotiable targets need to be embedded in pupils' work.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

6c) External Support/Validation

The Principal circulated a written report from the Local Authority consultants Deb Butler and Laura Wright.

The visit had included a learning walk in maths and English. They had also looked at Phonics teaching and guided reading. It was reported that Year 2 results had been well-below average in 2016 and also that attainment for this year group, now in Year 3, was the lowest across the academy, however, it was noted that this cohort had experienced a disruptive journey. A parent governor commented that a good appointment had been made to Year 3 and improvement could be seen in the children's work, however, it was still a challenging class. The Chair agreed that the new staff member had already made a strong contribution to school improvement. Recommendations from the report were as follows:

- To improve the quality of teaching and learning in classes where this was not consistently good;
- To provide challenge for more able pupils;
- To provide more opportunities for children to work independently;
- To revisit the new guided reading programme and
- To engage in moderation with other schools.

The Principal explained that the guided reading programme would be amended to become a five step programme rather than a ten step programme to allow more texts to be introduced.

The recommendations for EYFS were as follows:

- To review maths and literacy opportunities for children so they become ready for a formal way of teaching;
- To risk assess the outdoor area in respect of supervision of children.

It was explained that the latter recommendation referred to an incident on the day of the visit when there had been 18 children in the outside area with only one member of staff and one child had needed to go back into school to use the toilet.

The Principal reported that from verbal feedback Ms Butler had said that she was confident that the school was moving towards Good at an accelerated pace.

On the day prior to the LGB meeting, Jo Linden, the Head Teacher from Heathfield Primary School had visited the academy with a focus on all aspects of English. The visit included looking at consistency and progression in pupils' books. Ms Linden had said that she liked the principle of the new phonics programme. There was some variability with provision but staff expectations were high. The five step guided reading programme was working well and EYFS has high quality provision. Ms Linden had also reported that work in the books was variable, but there were particular strengths in the Year 3 and 4 classes and also in one of the Year 1 classes. Ms Linden had advised that the academy should look at long and medium term plans for English.

A list detailing all external support and advice received for the current school year was distributed to show impact and intended future impact. It was explained that a maths review was due to take place during the following week. The Chair asked whether there was any other area where an external review was required. The Principal replied that phonics has now been addressed and reviews from Deb Butler and Jo Linden had taken place and added that she thought that enough external validation had been carried out for this year. The CEO added that this was an extensive picture and there was a lot of positive work going on which was starting to have an impact on progress.

6d) Service Level Agreements

Music

The Principal explained that the school currently spent £2,100 on wider opportunities music for Year 4 children to enable them to have ukulele lessons. As the school owns the ukuleles the Principal said that it would make sense for this provision to continue. Governors were asked to decide whether this should continue for one year group or whether to have a different offer for Year 5 children who could have lessons on steel pan drums. This would be at a cost of £2,400 with the music service providing the drums. It was noted that the Service Level Agreements were reviewed on an annual basis and the costs would double once there were two Year 4 classes. A governor asked whether the children currently learning to play the ukulele could continue having lessons next year. The Principal said that none of the teachers would be able to teach these lessons. A governor asked whether steel pan drums were the only instrument available for Year 5 children. The Principal replied that the children could have brass or woodwind lessons but they would be playing different instruments. Other

instruments on offer were Samba drums or singing. The Principal explained that steel pan drums were part of the culture of some of the families at school. Last year some children had had recorder lessons but this was not sustainable as the children took the instruments home because of hygiene reasons. The Principal explained that the ukulele had been chosen because children in Essa Academy learnt the guitar. After discussion it was agreed that improving attainment should be the main focus for the children. A governor suggested that the children could continue learning the ukulele in Year 5 to a higher level. It was agreed that learning a musical instrument should be restricted to one year group and this could be extended to two year groups once attainment had improved.

Agreed:

- To continue with the Service Level Agreement for the music service to provide ukulele lessons for Year 4 pupils.

Educational Psychology

It was explained that the academy had purchased 18 hours of support from the Educational Psychology service but this year had used 28 hours at a cost of £2,360. The Principal recommended that a 36 hour support package be purchased at a cost of £2,640 as adding to the original SLA in-year was significantly more expensive.

Agreed:

- That the 36 hour support package from Educational Psychology be purchased.

7. GOVERNANCE

7a Approval /Adoption of Policies

7ai Admissions Policy

The Admissions policy which had been approved by the Trust was presented to the Local Governing Body for adoption.

Agreed:

- That the Admissions Policy be adopted.

7b Governor Training and Development

Aatika Patel reported that she had visited Year 3 and met with Russell Kinch and looked at children's work in books. She reported that there had been a lot of positive changes for the class and progress was visible in books. Mrs Patel asked whether the correct level of support was being provided for children with SEND in that class

as their behaviour might have an effect on other children in the class. The Principal replied that children have to be in school for two terms before an EHCP support can be applied for, however, the academy does provide one to one support for children prior to this where needed. Throughout the school there are currently three children with EHCPs and another one expected to receive one shortly. Once an application for assessment goes to Panel they decide on the level of funding for the child. The school then pays the first £6,000 of support which equates to 12 hours per child. A governor asked how many children the academy was currently paying for support. The Principal replied that the academy was currently paying for three children plus the one who was part-way through the process and a further two children. It was explained that all testing of the children was carried out within two terms of them starting school and support had been put in place for these children.

The Chair reported that he had attended the SLT meeting where assessment and transition had been discussed.

Mrs Cathcart said that she had visited the academy to look at safeguarding, PSHE and RE and a further visit was planned in this area. Mrs Cathcart reported that she had also visited EYFS and explained that practice in that area had been held up as a model for other schools.

Governors were encouraged to make visits to the academy to meet with their link members of staff.

Mrs Cathcart had attended governor training provided by the Local Authority in the autumn term on the Pupil Premium and also on what Governors can expect from Ofsted.

8. BUILDING AND SITE

The Facilities Manager reported that the builders should have put the defects right within the first 12 months. Some minor defects have now been noticed which include a large number of finger guards having failed. The appointed project manager, Turner and Townsend had been reluctant to take responsibility for this area but have now agreed to look at the original specification and report back.

It was also reported that there had been problems with the drainage system which was not up to standard due to damage and blockages. The Facilities Manager explained that not much help had been received from the builders in this respect so a meeting with them had been arranged and the builders had undertaken that the Trust would receive up to date information later this week. The Facilities Manager reported that he had discussed all the building issues with the CEO and the Chair of the LGB.

Agreed:

- That the building update be noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business raised

10. CONSENT TO ABSENT GOVERNORS

Agreed:

- To consent to the absence from this meeting of Angela Stephens and Tasneem Patel

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:

- That the next meeting of the Local Governing Body be held on Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 9.00am

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association for the Academy the following matters be designated as confidential:

Minute 3

The meeting closed at 11.05am

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____