

## THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE SPRING TERM MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF ORSETT C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Date and Venue:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at the School

**Present:** Mrs L Eve, Mrs L Bennett, Mrs W Willett, Mrs Fearnside-Still, Mrs R Popoola, Mrs J Wood, Mrs L Robinson, Mrs E Godfrey (Headteacher), Mrs J Pritchard and Mr R Meleady.

**Also in Attendance** – Ms F Chissim (Clerk) and Miss S Jones (DHT)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received and accepted from Mr C Coles and Mrs D Barrick. Mrs R Popoola arrived late for the meeting. Mrs Willett (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting in Mr Cole's absence.
2. **MEMBERSHIP:** Governors welcomed Mrs L Robinson to her first GB meeting. Governors noted that Mrs D Barrick has indicated that she plans to resign from the GB in the near future due to work commitments. Governors discussed that this will create a vacancy and agreed that Mrs Bennett should contact Rev Hanson to ask for possible replacements.  
**ACTION – Mrs Bennett to do.**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS/ PECUNIARY INTERESTS:** There were none declared in relation to any of the agenda items.
4. **AGREE ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** Governors agreed to discuss the following items at the end of the meeting:
  - a) Improvements required in governor attendance levels
  - b) HTPM Governor – Replacement for Mrs Barrick
  - c) Governors minutes being displayed on the website
  - d) Admissions Criteria
5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** Governors agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary GB Meeting held on 2-10-13 were an accurate account of the meeting and they were signed by the Vice Chair.
6. **MATTERS ARISING:**
  - a) **Safeguarding Training** – Governors noted that Mr Cole was going to arrange the training (planned date 4-3-14 at 6.30pm). They agreed that even if Mr Coles is unable to arrange this, the training session can be provided by Mrs Bennett.
  - b) **Parental Voluntary Contributions** – The HT confirmed that since writing the letter, the number of contributions has improved.

Mrs Robinson requested a list of acronyms used in the minutes and reports. **ACTION: The Clerk to circulate a glossary to Governors.**

**All other ACTIONS have been completed.**

7. **HEADTEACHER'S REPORT:** Governors had a lengthy debate about the content of the HT's report and the volume of information they are supplied for each GB meeting. The Clerk said that the quality of information supplied to the GB was outstanding and that it was essential that Governors are well informed and that the HT continues to be transparent and supply enough

information so that Governors can hold the school to account. She said this was a minimum expectation under the new Ofsted judgements about the quality of governance.

The HT said that although it is an onerous task, by supplying Governors with lots of high quality reports, it protects them from any sudden changes in leadership. It means that knowledge about all aspects of the school is shared.

The Clerk said that the key documents each term were;

- The HT summary report (in which other reports/minutes are referred to for additional information)
- SDP
- SEF
- Any external reports on standards which validate the SLT's judgements.

Governors discussed the possibility of putting key documents on the school website. The HT pointed out that, as she is currently the person updating the website, the creation of a governors section would be a lot of additional work for her.

Mrs Wood suggested that Committee Chairs should be sent the detailed documents pertaining to their Committee and highlight any salient points at the full GB meeting. The Clerk suggested that all Governors get sent everything and only read the supplementary information if they wish.

The HT's Report was discussed and Governors were invited to ask questions.

- a) **Admissions** – Noted.
- b) **Curriculum and Assessment** – Noted.
- c) **Update on Attainment and Progress** – The HT said that the school had been sent a letter from Mr D Laws to congratulate the School on its standards. Governors noted all the reports, data and analysis on progress and attainment.
- d) **Attendance** – Noted.
- e) **Update on Quality of Teaching** - Governors were pleased to see the increased % of outstanding teaching (58% overall). They noted the Autumn Term data.
- f) **School Improvement Plan** – The HT reported that a new plan is being developed in line with the new 2014/15 budget. **ACTION: The Clerk to note the approval of the new SDP for the next GB Meeting.**
- g) **Pupil Premium Report** – Governors discussed the detailed report provided.
- h) **Staffing/Personnel (incl. CPD)** Noted.
- i) **Serious accidents to pupils/and or staff** – None.
- j) **Premises & Finance (incl. security issues, thefts and illegal entries, health and safety and fire drills)** - Governors noted the reports. They noted that the hall decoration (not the flooring) is being done over half term. The carpet replacement is on hold until the new budget allocation has been received. There will be some 'dining-related' purchases necessary as a result of the Free School Meals at KS1 Government initiative from September 2014. The school may be

able to bid for some capital funding from Thurrock for extra tables etc.

- k) **Behaviour (incl. exclusions)** - Governors noted that there were no formal exclusions or reported racist incidents in the Autumn Term. Behaviour continues to be very positive.
- l) **SEN Pupils, Vulnerable Groups, and Safeguarding Update** – The information was noted. The HT described the changes to SEN from September. Governors asked what the impact of these changes would be to the budget. The HT said that it wasn't good news for school budgets. This will be discussed in more detail by the Finance Committee. On the subject of the budget, the HT said that she would continue to ensure that there are high quality staff in place, but that this was expensive over time.
- m) **Parent/Governors/Community** – Noted. Governors welcomed the high quality opportunities for pupils to be involved in projects such as the Royal Opera House outreach. The HT described a 'Royal encounter' on a recent educational visit. Governors discussed the fundraising for the planned sensory garden. They asked if the school had developed links with gardening centres and discussed the benefits of using links with business and the community to help the school with various school projects. Miss Jones said that there had been a limited response to the letters she sent out. She said that the link with Chadwell St Mary had been beneficial in terms of the gardening project. Mrs Wood suggested making use of the Community Service Team. The HT said that the school will ask the parents for input once they know what they want. Mrs Bennett suggested contacting local allotment associations.
- n) **School events and extra-curricular activities** – Noted. Miss Jones said that 75% of the pupil body were involved in a club. Governors were pleased with the range of extra curricular activities on offer, and how everyone was encouraged to get involved.
- o) **RE Inspection** – Governors congratulated the School on the successful outcome (outstanding). The HT described the inspection process, and thanked staff for their hard work. She said that when evaluating provision, the SLT was conservative and erred on the side of caution. She said that the inspectors were very impressed with provision and participation of staff. The HT said that the challenge for the school was to sustain the 'outstanding provision in all areas of the school. She described the development and use of a 'outstanding plus' benchmark so that the school continually strives for improvement.

- 8. **UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON 2013/14 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES:** This was covered in the HT's Report and is monitored by the Committees and through Governor visits to the school.
- 9. **RECEIVE LATEST SEF REPORT:** Governors received and approved the updated SEF.
- 10. **UPDATE ON ACADEMY STATUS:** The HT said that the Partnership Heads will meet again this week and this will be an item for discussion. The resignation of the HT of Bulphan Primary may change things, but the general feeling is that there are many benefits through working in partnership and that the academic route is one of a few options. The HT said that the problem with the 'D-MAT' proposal is the distance between schools. The HT described the valuable relationship developing between this school and Aveley Primary and Chadwell St Mary's.

11. **POLICY/DOCUMENT REVIEW AND APPROVAL:** Governors discussed and approved the following policies;
- a) **Equalities**
    - Equalities Policy and Action Plan
    - Equalities analysis and report
  - b) **Accessibility Audit**
  - c) **School Website Content** – Governors went through the statutory list and the HT confirmed that the website is compliant with statutory requirements (subject to the Sports Premium Report being included). Governors discussed the use of the Sports Premium as follows:
    - Purchased the gold package of Thurrock's Schools Sports Partnership
    - Used for sports related before/after school clubs
    - Provide CPD for staff
    - To fund competitions and G&T provision.
  - d) **Freedom of Information Policy**

12. **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

- **Latest Financial Report** – The finance report was noted (as per the Headteacher's report).
- **SFVS 2013/14** – Governors noted that the audit return needed a few updates, but that essentially it is the same as last year. **ACTION: Mrs Pritchard to update and email to the GB for approval.**
- **School Fund Balance** – Governors noted the December 2013 balance was £10,718.99. They noted that the School Fund was audited in December by Mr A Collier. They agreed to use his services again next year.
- **Receive the Finance and Premises Improvement Plan 2013/14** – Noted.

13. **SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION:** Mrs Wood's report was noted. She reported that she had conducted an audit, and that there were no issues or concerns to report. Governors discussed that the new Safeguarding Governor is now Mrs Bennett. The HT invited Governors to join in with the safeguarding training provided to all staff at the beginning of the academic year. Governors discussed the recent and forthcoming changes to safeguarding (identity/ CRB checks and training requirements). They discussed the importance of developing a vigilant culture, rather than over-reliance on police checks. They also discussed some of the myths around child protection and safeguarding regarding statutory requirements.

The HT encouraged all Governors to complete the Safer Recruitment training while it is still available. The website link was sent by Mr Coles.

14. **GOVERNOR TRAINING:**

- a) **Feedback from Training Link Governor** – Mrs Fearnside-Still encouraged Governors to attend the forthcoming Governors Conference (8-3-14) and other governor training courses available each term. **ACTION: The Clerk to remind the LA to send Mrs Bennett the training information so she can book onto the Induction training.**
- b) **Training Reports** – None reported.

**c) Training Needs – Safeguarding. Induction.**

- 15. GOVERNOR VISITS/MONITORING: a) Reports** - Governors noted that the following Governors have conducted visits since the last GB meeting;

Mr Coles  
Mrs Fearnside-Still  
Mrs Eve  
Mrs Bennett  
Mrs Willett

Mrs Eve reported that she has been in to conduct a Maths related visit this month (20-1-14)

Governors noted the report on the RE focused visits before the SIAMS Inspection (14-10-13, 15-10-13 and 17-10-13). They also noted the report about the visit by Mrs Wood (Dec 2013) which focused on 'what helps the pupils learn in school?'

Miss Jones went through the 'ragged' Governors Monitoring Programme 2013/14.

**ACTION: All Governor visit reports (and training reports) to be emailed to Mrs Pritchard. Governors to contact Miss Jones directly to arrange their visit.**

- 16. COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES:** Governors noted the following Committee minutes;

- Personnel on 3-12-13
- Church Schools Partnership on 27-11-13
- Curriculum on 26-11-13
- Finance & Premises on 4-12-13
- Admissions 29-11-13

**ACTION: Committee minutes should be emailed to Mrs Pritchard by the Committee Chairs. The HT requested that agendas be sent out at least 1 week before the meeting. Chairs need to liaise with the HT (and copy in Mrs Pritchard) well before the committee meeting so that the relevant papers can be organised.**

Governors agreed to change the remit of the Curriculum Committee to include wider pupil related matters such as attendance. The Committee will be renamed as 'Curriculum and Pupils Committee'.

The following changes to Committee membership were agreed:

<p><b>Finance &amp; Premises Committee</b> L Godfrey C Coles Y Fearnside-Still L Eve R Popoola J Wood</p>	<p><b>Personnel Committee</b> L Godfrey Y Fearnside-Still (Chair) J Pritchard W Willett R Popoola L Robinson</p>
<p><b>Admissions Committee</b> L Godfrey L Bennett</p>	<p><b>Curriculum &amp; Pupils Committee</b> L Godfrey</p>

Y Fearnside-Still J Wood (Chair) J Prichard	L Eve (Chair) R Meleady L Bennett L Robinson
<b>Church Schools Partnership</b> L Godfrey C Coles Rev E Hanson R Meleady W Willett	<b>Pay Committee</b> Y Fearnside-Still (Chair) J Wood W Willett R Popoola

**17. GOVERNING BODY ORGANISATION:**

- a) **Final version of the Standing Orders** – Approved.
- b) **New GB Code of Conduct** – Approved. The Clerk highlighted the recent changes to governance (as per the new Governor Handbook and the Governance Regulations)
- c) **Review Monitoring Programme** – This was done in item 15.

**18. INFORMATION UPDATE** – Governors noted and discussed the following documents/briefing papers;

- **DfE Home-School Agreement – Advice about content (July 2013)** - The HT to revise the H/S Agreement for new entrants, if necessary.
- **SEN Changes** (Redbridge briefing paper) – Noted.
- **Good Governance Pilot (Thurrock)** – Governors agreed to pilot this self assessment audit for the LA. They agreed to focus on a couple of areas at each GB meeting.
- **Lord Nash’s Speech to the NGA** – Noted.
- **Other Updates** – Governors discussed key changes to expectations about ‘attendance’, the introduction of free meals at KS1, and the increased expectation that schools involve pupils in decision making.

**19. CHAIR’S ACTION:** None.

**20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

- a) **Residential Trip** – Governors discussed and approved the residential trip to an activities centre in Surrey. The HT said that there were lots of team building activities and that it was crucial for the pupils to build confidence and have a try at various things.
- b) **New Curriculum** – The HT fully briefed Governors about the changes to the National Curriculum from September. Governors acknowledged that the changes were statutory, but agreed that the school should implement and interpret the curriculum to fit the needs of pupils. They agreed that the current curriculum is obviously fit for purpose as it produces such high standards in all subject areas. The HT confirmed that the staff will be attending training. She assured Governors that the teaching and learning in this school will remain creative, skills based and inspiring.
- c) **HTPM Governor** – Mrs L Eve was appointed as part of the HTPM Team.
- d) **Attendance** – The HT said that she was disappointed at the low level of attendance at some meetings, which at times have meant the meeting is at risk of being inquorate. Governors discussed the increased emphasis on governor attendance levels when Ofsted

judges the quality of governance. Mrs Popoola asked if meetings could be held at a more 'work friendly' time. The Clerk advised Governors that they are entitled to request time off for governor duties. Most employers support the work of governors in our schools.

**ACTION: The Clerk to follow up with Thurrock Housing Department (Mrs Popoola's employer).**

e) **Admissions** – Governors discussed and approved the Admissions Criteria for 2015/16. The document will need to go out to consultation once it has been checked by the Diocese.

f) **Website** – Governors agreed that the GB minutes should be made available on the school website (PDF versions). The HT said she asked for Governors' input about the changes to the website but didn't get any response. Mrs Eve said the website was good, but it would be useful if a topic overview for each year group was made available to parents so they can support their child at home.

**ACTION: Mr Meleady to look into this.**

Governors asked if photos of staff members could be made available so that parents (and governors) get to know them. This would improve communication within the school community. The HT said that this has not been popular amongst staff in the past. Governors suggested perhaps a whole staff photo with names at the bottom.

**ACTION: The HT and Mr Meleady to consult with staff and report back at the next meeting.**

21. **FUTURE ITEMS:** Budget approval. Thurrock self evaluation questions. Thurrock /GB briefing papers.

22. **NOTE TERM DATES AND AGREE NON-CONTACT DAYS 2014/15:** Governors noted the term dates and agreed the following Inset Days for 2014-15;

03-09-14, 05-01-15, 13-04-15, 01-06-15 (this date may change) & 22-07-15

23. **TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Governors agreed that the next GB meeting will take place on 7-5-14 at 5.30pm.

The following Committee meetings were agreed;

- Personnel on 26-3-14 3.30pm
- Church Schools Partnership on 25-2-14 4pm at Horndon
- Curriculum & Pupils on 18-3-14 2pm
- Finance & Premises on 5-3-14 and 2-4-14 4pm

**Next term:**

- Personnel on 18-6-14 3.30pm
- Church Schools Partnership on 3-6-14 4pm at Orsett
- Curriculum & Pupils on 24-6-14 2pm
- Finance & Premises on 25-6-14 4pm
- Admissions 7-5-14 4pm

24. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Governors were reminded of confidentiality.

End of meeting.

Chairman .....

Date .....