

THE HIGHLEES EYRECROFT FEDERATION
MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD
Monday 18th January 2016 at 4pm

MINUTES

Governors present:

Elaine Hedgecock (Chair), Em Ward (Executive Principal), Mike Edwards, Amy Gardner, Jemma Lane, David Hawman

In Attendance:

Suzanne Arnold (Clerk)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Steve Warburton and Susie Hall.

Governors were advised of the resignation of TEF appointed governor Stephen Jenkins.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2.1 David Hawman noted that he carried out work for the school through his business "David Hawman – Data and IT Services".

2.2 Elaine Hedgecock noted that she was a governor also at Watergall School.

2.3 Mike Edwards noted that he had been invited to join the governing board at Gladstone Primary School and also that he was participating in a group set up by the Local Authority (LA) to look at the role of governance in school leadership.

3 MEMBERSHIP OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

3.1 TEF Governors

The local governing board agreed to nominate Susie Hall as a TEF appointed governor (nominated by David Hawman, seconded by Emma Ward).

Susie had been asked to undertake a link governor role for "closing the gap". This would supplement Jemma Lane's link responsibility for the schools' provision for pupil premium children. **Susie would be working with the schools to identify where the main gaps were in the progress and attainment of groups of learners, and would be monitoring the action the schools were taking to address these.**

3.2 Parent Governors

Nominations had been requested by Eyrescroft School for a parent governor. The clerk advised that four nominations had been received so far and the school would therefore be required to hold an election.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2015 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed as such by the Chair.

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Safeguarding Audit

It was confirmed that copies of the Safeguarding Audit had been circulated to governors.

5.2 Performance Management Targets

As requested, the Executive Principal would submit anonymised staff performance management targets to the Principal's Performance Management Committee.

Action: Executive Principal to submit anonymised staff performance management targets to Principal's

Performance Management committee.

The Executive Principal informed governors that no performance management process was in place at Eyrescroft School for support staff and that not all teaching staff had been issued with performance management objectives for 2014-15. This had caused difficulties in making salary decisions and the Executive Principal was seeking advice on this matter from EPM.

The Executive Principal confirmed that performance management for all members of the Senior Leadership Teams at both schools had now been completed following the TEFAT Appraisal policy and the Head of School is in the process of meeting teaching staff to establish initial targets.

5.3 Safeguarding

Governors asked whether safeguarding training had now been completed for staff at Eyrescroft; the Executive Principal confirmed that this was the case – delivered by Jo Swanborough, and that staff had also received training on the Prevent duty. However, a need had been identified to train more senior staff at Eyrescroft as designated child protection staff.

6 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported from an audit on safer recruitment processes carried out by herself and Susie Hall earlier in January. Several actions had been identified and were being addressed.

The Executive Principal advised that the recruitment pack for recruitment at Eyrescroft was being revised, using templates which had proved to be effective at Highlees.

7 FEDERATION WITH EYRESCROFT SCHOOL

The Chair reported that the Highlees Eyrescroft Federation had been formally approved by the Elliot Foundation on 11th December 2015.

8 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GOVERNOR LINKS

8.1 Copies of the existing committee structure for the governing board had been previously circulated. Following discussion, the following was agreed.

8.2 The membership and remit of the Strategic Committee would remain as previously agreed.

8.3 Mike Edwards would continue to chair the Resources and Relationships Committee. Heads of Schools and School Business Managers would attend all or part of the meetings. Membership of the committee would remain as previously agreed.

8.4 The Curriculum Committee would be re-named the Teaching and Learning Committee. The membership of the Teaching and Learning Committee would remain the same as previously agreed, with the addition of Susie Hall. David Hawman would continue to chair the committee.

Action: Chair to invite Susie Hall to join Teaching and Learning Committee

8.5 A vacancy had arisen for the role of SEND governor following the resignation of Stephen Jenkins. It was agreed that this was a key role for the schools in view of Ofsted recommendations arising from the last inspection at Eyrescroft. Following discussion it was agreed to ask Steve Warburton to undertake the role of SEND governor, moving Steve's safer recruitment responsibility to Elaine Hedgecock.

Action: Chair to invite Steve Warburton to swop governor roles, from safer recruitment to SEND.

8.6 Jemma Lane would retain the role of governor for the pupil premium, and Susie Hall would undertake governor responsibility for "Closing the Gap".

Governors discussed the priorities for the pupil premium; the Executive Principal advised that pupil premium children did well at Highlees, compared to their peers. However, a significant gap in performance was evident at Eyrescroft. The Executive Principal was currently reviewing the way in which pupil premium funding was directed at Eyrescroft, and would be making some changes.

8.7 The Executive Principal's Performance Management committee would continue as Mike Edwards, David

Hawman and Steve Warburton. The Salary Review committee would continue as Mike Edwards and Elaine Hedgecock.

- 8.8 It was agreed that the Pupil Discipline committee would be convened as and when required (see also item 9.2). Consideration would be given to arranging training for governors in dealing with pupil exclusions.
- 8.9 The location of meetings would alternate between the two schools. The Clerk would add meeting locations to the schedule of meeting dates and would circulate this to governors.

Action: Clerk to issue list of meeting locations for remainder of academic year

- 8.10 The existing Terms of Reference for the Resources and Relationships Committee had been previously circulated and were adopted for the Federation, subject to a check on the wording to ensure that the document clearly referred to both schools.

Action: Clerk to revise Terms of Reference for Resources and Relationships Committee to reflect federated arrangements

- 8.11 Proposed terms of reference for the Teaching and Learning committee had been previously circulated. The following was agreed.
- Responsibility for the safeguarding policy and the single central record to be transferred from the Teaching and Learning terms of reference to the terms of reference for the Resources and Relationships committee. It was noted that the single central record was monitored by the schools' Progress Partner and it should therefore be sufficient for the committee to receive a report that this had taken place.
 - Reference to British values would be added to the terms of reference for the Teaching and Learning committee, using the phraseology from the Ofsted school evaluation handbook.
 - An addition would be made to the terms of reference to reflect the responsibility of the committee for the evaluation of the sports premium.
 - Governors discussed whether it would be helpful for Progress Partner visit notes to be circulated to governors. Following discussion it was agreed that a summary of the recommendations would be circulated. This would provide governors with a starting point for monitoring the schools' progress against their priorities and would also provide the opportunity for governors to evaluate the impact of the Progress Partner on school improvement. An addition would be made to the terms of reference for the committee to receive summary reports of the Progress Partner's recommendations.

9 TEFAT SCHEME OF DELEGATION

- 9.1 The Scheme of Delegation had been previously circulated. Governors discussed whether the Scheme remained appropriate for the new federated model, or whether any changes should be recommended to TEFAT.
- 9.2 The procedure for the approval of permanent exclusions was discussed, as the TEF Governors' Handbook suggested that this could be delegated from the local governing board. The Clerk was asked to check legislative guidelines, and to request clarification from TEFAT.

Action: Clerk to ask TEFAT for clarification of responsibilities of the local governing board in confirming a Principal's decision to permanently exclude a pupil.

- 9.3 The delegation column for the Principal would be changed to Executive Principal.
- 9.4 Governors discussed the staffing responsibilities in section 4 of the scheme, and whether certain of the responsibilities should be delegated to the Heads of School. Sections 4.10 and 4.11 relating to the suspension of a Vice Principal should refer also to the Heads of School. Advice would be sought from TEF as to whether the dismissal of a Head of School would be delegated to the Executive Principal, or to the local governing board.

Action: Clerk to contact TEFAT for clarification of section 4 of the Scheme of Delegation, and any amendments necessary in view of the federation arrangements

- 9.5 A further review of the Scheme of Delegation would take place at the next meeting, once advice had been received from TEFAT as above, and once the job descriptions for the Heads of School had been completed, as these may also impact.

10 EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- 10.1 The Executive Principal's reports including executive summaries had been previously circulated for both schools.
- 10.2 Governors noted that a number of pressures identified at Highlees related to issues such as parking, the asbestos situation and lack of PCSO support; these would be followed up by the Resources and Relationships committee.
- 10.3 The Executive Principal reported significant concerns common to both schools relating to the reduction in support centrally to help schools cope with children who had significant behavioural and emotional difficulties. The expectation was that more and more of the support for these children would be met by the school; professional support and advice was difficult to access, and the financial cost to the school of managing the children was high.

Governors asked how many children were affected and were advised that this was around 10, and that other schools in the locality were facing similar problems. **Governors suggested that schools could work together on a cluster basis to identify the barriers which were being faced by schools, and to work with the central services to resolve the issues.**

It was agreed that the Chair and Executive Principal would write to the Cabinet Member for Education at the City Council, Councillor Holdich, expressing the school's concerns.

Action: Chair and Executive Principal to write to Councillor Holdich to ask for action to be taken to improve support services to schools for children with behavioural and emotional needs.

- 10.4 **Governors queried the disparity in the number of complaints received at Highlees and at Eyrescroft, as far fewer had been logged at Eyrescroft.** The Executive Principal advised that procedures for logging and resolving complaints at Highlees were extremely thorough, and that similar processes were not yet embedded at Eyrescroft.

Governors asked whether any analysis was carried out to identify common themes; the Executive Principal advised that there was no single aspect which flagged up as a cause for concern. The Chair advised that she had reviewed the complaints log, and sometimes complaints were raised due to a lack of communication.

The Executive Principal confirmed that complaints were dealt with promptly.

It was noted that new guidance had been issued by the DFE, which made a distinction between concerns and complaints; the Executive Principal would be reviewing processes for the schools to ensure that they reflected the new guidance.

- 10.5 **Governors noted that the Eyrescroft report identified high levels of staff absence, particularly for support staff.** The Executive Principal advised that all staff had been issued with letters advising them of their current attendance, and that return to work interviews had been implemented to follow up on absences. Staff had been advised of the financial cost to the school of high rates of staff absence.
- 10.6 The Executive Principal advised that the figure for pupil persistent absence at Eyrescroft was high in comparison to Highlees. The indicator had been changed by the DFE from 85% attendance to 90% and more children were now classed as persistent absentees as a result of this. The figures at Eyrescroft were a concern, as the attendance of some children was exceptionally low.
- 10.7 Concern was expressed by the Executive Principal that the pupil roll at Eyrescroft was falling; this would impact financially and the school had no reserves to draw upon. It was possible that a staffing restructure programme would be necessary.
- 10.8 Governors noted that children at Eyrescroft did well in the Reception year, but that performance then

deteriorated as they moved up the school. Some families sent their children to Eyrescroft for Reception, and then moved them elsewhere.

- 10.9 **Governors asked what aspects were currently good at Eyrescroft.** The Executive Principal confirmed that EYFS performed well, and that staffing stability was improving. The Learning and Development Leader Gemma Brown was working across both schools and this was having an impact.

Key Stage 1 was performing better than Key Stage 2 but was still considered as requiring improvement. Leadership needed to be developed at Eyrescroft, with an investment in professional development to enable leaders to proactively drive improvement.

- 10.10 Governors discussed the financial situation at Eyrescroft; the Executive Principal advised of strategies implemented to save money, such as reducing costs for photocopying, energy and premises maintenance.

- 10.11 Governors thanked the Executive Principal for the reports, and confirmed that the format was effective.

11 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 11.1 The Executive Principal advised that the baseline report for Eyrescroft had been received in draft.

- 11.2 The Action Plan for Section 14 funding had been previously circulated, and included areas where Highlees was incurring costs for sharing staff expertise at Eyrescroft.

- 11.3 The Termly Operational Plan for Eyrescroft had been drafted; a summary version would be circulated to governors. There would be an emphasis on systems and processes for the coming two terms. It was expected to be some time before the impact on teaching and learning fed through.

The Termly Operational Plan for Highlees had been extended to last for the remainder of the academic year, and was ambitious.

Action: Executive Principal to circulate summaries of Termly Operational Plans

Priorities for visible leadership were included for both schools.

12 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 12.1 Resources and Relationships Committee
Chair of the Resources and Relationships Committee Mike Edwards referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2015, copies of which had been circulated.

- 12.2 Curriculum Committee
Chair of the Curriculum Committee David Hawman referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2015, copies of which had been circulated.

The committee had taken part in a book scrutiny; this had proved a valuable monitoring exercise.

- 12.3 Strategic Committee
Chair of the Strategic Committee Elaine Hedgecock referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2015, copies of which had been circulated. The committee had discussed the federation with Eyrescroft and how the local governing board would be structured under the new arrangement.

The Chair was in the process of drafting a governors' report for the school websites.

Governors asked whether a joint website would be used going forward; the Executive Principal advised that the sites would remain separate, but would include links to each school and to the TEF website. Both school websites were to be updated and improved.

Governors were asked to submit personal profiles for inclusion on the websites.

Action: Governors to complete profiles for governor sections of websites, and submit to Chair

- 12.4 Executive Principal's Performance Management Committee

It was confirmed that the performance management for the Executive Principal had been carried out, and that an interim meeting had been held in December 2015.

- 12.5 Salary Review Committee
It was confirmed that the Salary Review Committee had met to approve salary changes.

13 SAFEGUARDING

- 13.1 Safeguarding reports had been circulated for both schools.

- 13.2 Safeguarding governor Mike Edwards would arrange a meeting to monitor safeguarding actions which had been identified at Eyrescroft.

14 GOVERNOR MONITORING VISITS

- 14.1 The Chair referred governors to the learning walk protocol and record sheet on the TEF website. Governors were asked to liaise with the Executive Principal to arrange their monitoring visits. Going forward, the board may agree to focus on particular key priorities for governor monitoring. Governors were asked to copy in the Chair when submitting their governor visit reports.

- 14.2 Governors would be participating in an internal monitoring review at Highlees on 8th and 9th February.

- 14.3 David Hawman would be carrying out a curriculum visit covering both schools on 29th January and would also be meeting with the Executive Principal to look at ways of reporting data across both schools.

15 GOVERNOR TRAINING

- 15.1 The Chair proposed a joint training session with the Heads of School, governors and the Executive Principal focussing on priorities for leadership and management across the federation. It was suggested that this could be held off site in the early summer term, and that a representative from TEF could be asked to attend.

- 15.2 Governors were advised that TEFAT would be holding a Governors' Conference at the National College on 11th March.

- 15.3 A training session on the pupil premium was to be held at Jack Hunt School later in the month; the Executive Principal would be attending this with governors Dave Hawman, Jemma Lane and Mike Edwards.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors were invited to a Maths event in school for parents on 27th January, 1pm to 2pm, at Highlees, and a Harry Potter event at Highlees on 4th February 3:15pm to 4:15pm.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Confirmed as Monday 25th April 2016 at 4pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 6pm.