



# THE HIGHLEES & EYRESCROFT FEDERATION



## Meeting of the Resources and Relationships Committee at Eyrescroft Primary School on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 3pm

### MINUTES

Present: Mike Edwards (Chair), Em Ward (Executive Principal), Elaine Hedgecock, Matt Mecham, Debbie Holmes.

In Attendance Sophie Dines (Head of School - Eyrescroft) for items 1 to 6.3.8  
Mark Hooper (Site Manager - Eyrescroft) for items 6.1 to 6.6  
Vanessa Ainsworth (School Business Manager - Eyrescroft) for items 6.1 to 6.27  
Jo Swanborough (Head of School – Highlees) for items 7 to 9  
Matt Sanderson (Site Manager - Highlees) for items 7.1 to 7.4  
Vicki Brown (School Business Manager – Highlees) for items 7.1 to 7.2.14  
Suzanne Arnold (Clerk)

#### **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Amy Gardner and Jemma Lane.

New parent governor Debbie Holmes and prospective Foundation governor Matt Mecham were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chair issued a general reminder about the confidentiality of governor discussions.

#### **2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

2.1 Elaine Hedgecock noted that she was a governor at Watergall Primary School.

2.2 Mike Edwards noted that he was shortly to be appointed as a governor at Gladstone Primary School.

#### **3 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference for the Resources and Relationships Committee were noted, following review and approval at the Local Governing Body meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January.

The Chair referred governors to item 4 of the minutes of the meeting of the Resources and Relationships Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> October, where the financial delegation levels had been discussed and approved.

#### **4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed as such by the Chair.

## **5**     **MATTERS ARISING**

- 5.1     Governor visit for premises  
The Chair confirmed that he had carried out a premises visit at Highlees.
- 5.2     Staff absence data  
Elaine Hedgecock had researched staff absence figures for the sector and reported that, nationally, 55% of teachers were absent at some point during a school year, with an average of 7.9 days lost per teacher per annum. Figures for support staff specifically in the schools sector were not available; however, the figure for public sector workers generally was 6.6 days lost per staff member per annum.
- 5.3     Staff performance management  
The Executive Headteacher confirmed that staff performance management at Highlees had been completed by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October.
- 5.4     Financial Audit 2013-14  
Governors referred to the audit recommendation for implementation of a risk register for Highlees; the Executive Headteacher would follow this up.

### **Action: Executive Headteacher to arrange for implementation of Risk Register**

- 5.5     Premises  
The Headteacher provided an update on premises issues, further to concerns expressed by governors at the last meeting regarding delays. Work contracted to EC Harris had been chased up by the Property Manager at The Elliott Foundation Academies Trust (TEFAT).
- TEFAT were currently in discussions with Peterborough City Council regarding the costs of the asbestos removal at Highlees. Agreement had already been reached with the Council to meet the cost of asbestos removal work at Eyrescroft.
- The Site Manager at Highlees was applying to Peterborough City Council for the cost of rectifying problems with the roof caused by the installation of solar panels.

## **6**     **EYRESCROFT**

- 6.1.1   The Site Manager Mark Hooper and the School Business Manager Vanessa Ainsworth joined the meeting at this point.
- 6.1.2   Mark Hooper presented the Premises Report, copies of which had been previously circulated.
- 6.1.3   Governors discussed the asbestos removal work required for the ceiling in the school kitchen; it was hoped that this could be carried out over the Easter break. An independent analysis would be required both before and after the removal work took place; it was confirmed that this analysis would be funded by the City Council, as well as the actual removal work.
- 6.1.4   Governors discussed the meeting held with Amey to discuss the service level agreement (SLA) for servicing and testing; it had been noted that servicing had been carried out late in some cases. The Site Manager recommended that quotations should be sought from alternative providers. Governors suggested that this work should be carried out in conjunction with Highlees, with a view to arranging consistency of provision across both academies. The Chair would follow this up with the site managers,

for reporting back to the committees in due course.

**Action: Chair and Site Managers to review SLAs for property servicing/testing and report back**

- 6.1.5 It was noted that first fire drill since the academy conversion had been carried out, and that a good evacuation time had been achieved.

A fire risk assessment was due in June 2016; the Site Manager had requested a quotation for this from Serco.

- 6.1.6 The Site Manager advised that, due to financial constraints, the school was focusing on necessary repairs only, with no new projects commissioned at present. However, playground re-surfacing and work to the carpark needed to be addressed; governors asked the Site Manager to submit cost estimates to the next meeting.

**Action: Eyrescroft Site Manager to submit cost estimates for work to playground and carpark**

Governors referred to safety concerns regarding the school's gateway area; the academy would be engaging with the Road Safety Team to find ways of alleviating this.

Mark Hooper was thanked for his report and left the meeting at this point.

- 6.2.1 The School Business Manager Vanessa Ainsworth circulated and presented the School Business Manager's Report for February 2016.

- 6.2.2 An update was provided on the academy conversion process. It was noted that the sublease to the on-site preschool had not yet been finalised.

- 6.2.3 Teething issues regarding the implementation of software required by TEFAT were reported, particularly the PSF financial system.

- 6.2.4 The school was awaiting confirmation from the Local Authority (LA) as to whether any additional funds were owed to the school on close-down as a maintained school.

- 6.2.5 A revised budget forecast report was circulated. A carry forward for the end of the academic year of £9,999 was forecast. The Executive Headteacher emphasised that financial sustainability could only be achieved by staffing restructure and that the academy would be working with EPM to take this forward. The ultimate aim was to align the staffing structures at both academies.

- 6.2.6 Governors agreed that the revised budget should be uploaded to the PSF system. Going forward, the School Business Manager would provide management information showing the percentage spend in each area of the budget, to inform any virement decisions.

Governors were advised that the revised budget reflected current pupil numbers, which had fallen, and revised figures for the pupil premium grant, as this had also reduced due to the reduction in the pupil roll. **Governors discussed the reasons for the reduction in the pupil roll and the impact of pupil mobility in and out of the school.** Governors were invited to visit the school to see how the ScholarPack pupil information system could be used to track pupil mobility.

- 6.2.7 It was confirmed that work on next year's budget would commence soon, for agreement by governors in June.
- 6.2.8 Governors were advised that the current Broadband provision through Peterborough City Council was to expire in March, with a replacement to be arranged through E2BN. The new system was expected to be quicker, and would not carry installation costs. However the cost of the provision per school would be dependent on take up. The School Business Manager had sent in an expression of interest.
- 6.2.9 The gas and electricity contracts were due to expire in June; governors asked the School Business Manager to explore contracts available through ESPO and through energy brokers.

**Action: Eyrecroft School Business Manager to explore options for energy contracts**

- 6.2.10 Admissions numbers for the Reception cohort in September were promising, with 38 first preferences; this was an increase on last year's figure.
- 6.2.11 Collaboration with Highlees staff in the areas of administration and site management was reported.
- 6.2.12 A report on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for administrative and site staff was reported.
- 6.2.13 Governors were advised that the PA to the Senior Leadership Team would be taking maternity leave later in the academic year, and that her duties would be covered internally.
- 6.2.14 Governors discussed possibilities for developing school meals provision at the school to operate on a profits basis. Suggestions such as creative menus, event days, and incentives for children to take school meals were discussed. **Governors suggested that the provision should be proactively marketed and promoted to parents, as not all parents were aware of the quality of the provision** (e.g locally sourced ingredients etc).
- 6.2.15 Governors were advised that teachers' pay scales had been revised in 2014, and were not in alignment with the Highlees or Peterborough City Council scales. The Executive Headteacher was discussing this with TEFAT.
- 6.2.16 **Governors asked for an update on safer recruitment training for staff.** The School Business Manager confirmed that this was being organised, and would be made available also to governors and to staff from other schools.
- 6.2.17 Write offs would be reported to the committee from the next meeting onwards.
- 6.2.18 It was confirmed that the school held an up to date Asset Register; governors asked for date of purchase and current value to be included on this.

**Action: Eyrecroft School Business Manager to check Asset Register for inclusion of date of purchase and current value of assets.**

- 6.2.19 It was confirmed that a register was in place for recording gifts and hospitality. The School Business Manager reported gifts of chocolates and wine from agencies; these would be raffled.

6.2.20 Governors asked whether there were currently any parental debts for school meals and asked for a breakdown to be submitted to the next meeting showing value and age of the debts.

**Action: Eyrecroft School Business Manager to provide information on school dinner money debts, as above.**

6.2.21 The Eyrecroft School Business Manager was thanked for her report and left the meeting at this point.

6.3.1 The Head of School Sophie Dines circulated copies of the revised Staffing Report.

6.3.2 The Head of School reported processes which had been implemented for the management of staff absence, in accordance with TEFAT procedures.

In response to governor questions it was clarified that the data presented showed absences from January 2016. Governors expressed concern at the significant level of absence indicated and discussed the possible reasons for this, and the action the academy would be taking to address the issue.

The Head of School advised that the school was attempting to resolve issues at the informal stage wherever possible, before escalation to the formal stage of the process, although a high number of staff were already meeting the trigger for action as stipulated by the TEFAT policy.

Procedures for reporting absences had been tightened, and now followed the TEFAT policy.

Governors felt that improvements in staff morale would impact positively on absence levels.

Governors noted that, as well as the time lost through absence, there was an impact on administrative time in managing the absence procedures.

6.3.3 The Head of School provided a report on temporary staff currently engaged by the school. The academy was exploring the possibility of employing the sports coach from Premier Sports on a permanent basis. The Executive Principal emphasised the importance of sports provision in promoting healthy lifestyles and self-esteem.

In response to requests from parents extra-curricular clubs were to be re-introduced by the academy after half term.

6.3.4 Staff resignations were reported. In response to governor questions the Executive Principal confirmed that the school would be holding exit interviews with staff who resigned.

6.3.5 Internal promotions and appointments to permanent posts were reported.

Governors asked why a large number of Midday Supervisors had been appointed and were advised that this had been to fill vacancies, as other staff had been carrying out this role due to a shortage of midday staff.

- 6.3.6 Two part time members of staff had been appointed to a shared role as Key Stage 1 leaders. This was on a temporary basis until the end of this academic year, for review.
- 6.3.7 The Executive Principal noted that there was a high percentage of part time staff in school and that it was hoped that this would reduce to a more manageable proportion in the future.
- 6.3.8 Governors were advised that the school had discontinued its Phonics Counts intervention as insufficient impact had been evidenced. The staff member who had been delivering the intervention would be redeployed to other responsibilities in school.

The Head of School was thanked for her report and left the meeting at this point.

- 6.4.1 Recruitment of Head of School (Eyrescroft): see separate confidential minutes

## **7 HIGHLEES**

- 7.1.1 Highlees Site Manager Matt Sanderson presented the Premises, Health and Safety report, copies of which were circulated.
- 7.1.2 Amey had been asked to produce a property services SLA which met the needs of both academies.
- 7.1.3 Governors noted that the fire risk assessment for Highlees had expired in November 2015. The Property Manager at TEFAT had assured the school that they were not in breach of legislation and had confirmed this in writing. The Site Manager was asked to forward this correspondence to the Chair, who would seek clarification.

### **Actions:**

**Highlees Site Manager to forward correspondence from TEFAT regarding fire risk assessment to Chair of Committee**

**Chair of Committee to seek advice from TEFAT on legal position**

- 7.1.4 The Site Manager was thanked for his report and left the meeting at this point.
- 7.2.1 Highlees School Business Manager Vicki Brown presented the School Business Manager's Report for February 2016, copies of which were circulated.
- 7.2.3 A comparison chart was circulated, showing costs and provision for Broadband offered by Peterborough City Council through E2BN, compared with provision through BT and through RM. Following discussion governors agreed that the school should sign up for the Peterborough City Council provision, although this decision would need to be reviewed if an insufficient number of schools signed up to make this viable.
- 7.2.4 A quotation was awaited from RM for a comprehensive survey of the school's IT provision; this would be used to inform future improvements.
- 7.2.5 Governors were informed of the outcomes of an audit report for TEFAT schools; copies of the report were circulated.
- 7.2.6 Governors discussed ParentPay, and whether this should be offered as an option to parents at Highlees. Following discussion it was agreed that the school would buy in to the ParentPay facility and would promote this to parents at the coming parents'

consultation evening. It was confirmed that parents could continue to make payments via the school office if they preferred.

7.2.7 Governors discussed the option of uploading the revised budget to the PSF system; following discussion it was agreed that the original budget should be retained, as this provided a sounder basis for financial management throughout the year; it was recognised that retention of the original budget would mean that more variances were apparent.

7.2.8 Governors provisionally approved the quotation received from E4Education for new websites for each school. It was confirmed that each school would have its own website, linked to each other and linked to the TEFAT website. Matt Mecham would check the costings and specification to ensure that all requirements were covered.

**Action: Matt Mecham to check specifications for new websites.**

7.2.9 Governors were advised of the circumstances surrounding a dispute with a company regarding a download of a picture used on the school's website. Governors approved the school's actions in declining to pay the charge made by the company.

7.2.10 Copies of the budget were circulated and variances were reported. A projected carry forward to the next financial year of £278,582 was recorded.

7.2.11 Governors noted the expenditure for YMCA counselling services for pupils and asked whether a report was to be submitted to governors detailing uptake of this scheme. The Head of School Jo Swanborough clarified that credits had been purchased for a certain number of hours of counselling, and that targeted children would be referred on recommendations from class teachers.

7.2.12 The Highlees School Business Manager reported that staffing reductions had been made to ensure balanced budget projections for future years. Two temporary Teaching Assistant positions would be concluded at the end of the academic year and the Vice Principal secondment had been discontinued. It was noted that the proportion of the school's funding spent on staffing prior to the reductions was significantly in excess of the national benchmark.

7.2.13 The Asset Register was made available and write offs were reported, for signature by the Chair.

7.2.14 The Gifts and Hospitality Register was submitted for signature by the Chair.

The Highlees School Business Manager Vicki Brown was thanked for her report and left the meeting at this point.

7.3.1 Highlees Head of School Jo Swanborough presented the staffing report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

7.3.2 Changes had been made to the policy for the management of sickness absence; all instances of absence were now followed up by a return to work interview with the line manager.

7.3.3 See separate confidential minutes

- 7.3.4 New staff appointments were reported, and governors were advised of a pending maternity leave.
- 7.3.5 Governors were advised that Mrs Jo Anderson would be leaving at Easter, on promotion to the position of Deputy Headteacher at Welland Academy.
- 7.3.6 The Executive Headteacher and Head of School would be meeting to discuss leadership roles in view of vacancies which would arise through staff changes.
- 7.3.7 The school had advertised the post of Interim Vice Principal internally, ahead of external recruitment for a permanent position in due course.
- 7.3.8 The Head of School noted that data for injuries to staff showed a decrease in incidents since the autumn term; behaviour in school was outstanding.
- 7.3.9 The Head of School was thanked for providing data for staff absences; going forward the staffing report would include the cumulative figure for the year.

**Action: Highlees Head of School to provide date period for reported staff absences, and cumulative figure for the year**

- 7.3.10 Governors were advised that staff performance management was up to date, and were advised of where informal support arrangements were in place to help develop teaching practice. The impact of the Learning and Development Leader in supporting staff development and improving teaching provision was noted and discussed.

**8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Confirmed as Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 at 3pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 5.55pm.