

Extra-Ordinary Governing Body Meeting Minutes

School: Oswald Road Primary School

Quorum: 4 (Met at this meeting)

Chair: Helen Dobson

Clerk: Karen Lowe

Date of meeting: 24 September 2014

Venue: Oswald Road Primary School

Attendance

Name	Governor type	'End of Term of Office' date	Present (P)/apologies (Ap)/absent (A)
Ellie Russell	Co-Opted	31/03/18	P
Richard Price	Co-Opted	31/03/18	P
Kathryn Whalley	Staff	25/09/16	P
Helen Dobson	Co-Opted (Chair)	31/03/18	P
Sheila Newman	LA	31/08/14	P
Emma Dawkins	Co-Opted	31/03/18	P
Deborah Howard	Staff (HT)	N/A	P
Janet Doherty	Co-Opted (Vice Chair)	31/03/18	P
Simon Bentall	Parent	23/09/18	P
Elaine Stokes	Parent	23/09/18	P

Others present

Name	Role
Karen Lowe	Clerk
Laura Flynn	Assistant HT
Helen Woolf	Assistant HT
Sue Lamb	School Business Manager

Agenda Items

1	Apologies		
No apologies were required.			
The Chair welcomed Elaine and Simon to their first meeting.			
	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

2	Declaration of Interests
	None

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

3 Flexi Schooling

The HT presented the Flexi Schooling Document, which had been issued to the governors following the last FGB meeting, and the following points were raised/highlighted in discussion. This document was made following the HT's meeting with the LA and, following on from this, email communication about the matter from the HT and the Governors. [The new parent governors had not received the document prior to this meeting. The Chair encouraged the new governors to seek clarification at any point during the following discussion.]

At the July Governing Body meeting it was raised that the HT was meeting with the LA about Flexi Schooling.

Home schooling is an opt-in process. It needs to be on an all or nothing basis. Flexi Schooling is different and with the agreement and support of the school, children can access this for one day (or more) a week. The school staff can see the benefits of Flexi schooling, but also the difficulties it brings. It is felt it aligns with the ethos of the school and can bring a range of different learning opportunities, however there are also concerns regarding the flow of week, missed teaching and the issues this brings, in addition to some slight disruptions for other children in the class. Oswald Road is the only school in the cluster that supports Flexi Schooling. 17 children (including 4 from Foundation Stage) currently access Flexi Schooling (with 2 of these accessing Home Schooling). In the last FGB meeting, it was agreed that Flexi Schooling would be reduced to one day a week (unless the school felt the child needed further alternative provision) and that school and Governors would await the advice of the LA before any further decisions.

The meeting with the LA highlighted that the school has been using attendance code B, which is the incorrect attendance code for Flexi Schooling. The school can use Code C (authorised absence) or Code D (unauthorised absence). Either way will impact on the absence and PA data, which will likely go above national. The salient points from the meeting with the LA as to how Flexi Schooling impacts on the school were;

- At present we have 17 families who access Flexi Schooling (2 of these are Home Schooled).
- School has been marking the children in the register as a 'B' code.
- At present it isn't done on a temporary basis (although it has always been at the Headteacher's discretion to stop the arrangement if a child isn't progressing)
- It would take the school down at least 0.6% per half term which would take us under National Average. On top of this, it would also mean these children would now class as Persistently Absent and we would be looking at our 1.3% figure rising by about 2.6% taking us to nearly 4% PA. This could affect the 'Behaviour and Safety' section negatively.
- If we don't authorise it and the children still go, then the family would get a Penalty Notice. After this fine, there is a potential that the parents/carers would be prosecuted.
- The majority of families attending believe very strongly in Flexi-Schooling, so any change will need to be handled very carefully, sensitively and with a consistency.
- At present, we have no children who the school feels it is essential they access Wood School or any other Flexi Schooling. This doesn't mean we wouldn't be open to hearing further information from the parents as to why that child needs to access it. The school staff however are certain the school and different staff within it, can provide for the children who currently access Flexi Schooling.
- There was Leadership and Governing Body decision to limit Flexi Schooling to one day a week in the majority of cases.

Via email over the summer break the governors agreed that the impact on the attendance data would not prevent Flexi Schooling, if the school feels that alternative provision is needed for the child. The 'impact' comments from the governors were recorded in the Flexi Schooling Document sent to Governors over summer.

Q. How are the 17 children split in terms of Home Schooling and the Wood School?
2 x Y6 Home Schooling; prior arrangement and shouldn't have been allowed in accordance to LA guidance on Home Schooling being all or nothing basis. All the others access Flexi Schooling for one or two days per week, which needs to be brought down to one day per week. Would like to honour the Home Schooling arrangement for the two children for their final year.

Q. Do any of the 15 children have learning difficulty issues or is it parental choice?
More parental choice. The school can cater for all of their learning needs. We have a newly formed Pastoral Team who will be provision mapping for pastoral needs (like the school provision maps for SEND and EAL children).

Q; How long have they been accessing Flexi Schooling?
Some years. Therefore, if taken away it will be a loss to the child. This needs to be considered.

Q. Are any of the children LAC, adopted or Pupil Premium eligible i.e could they be accompanied by a TA so the B code could apply?

No children being Flexi Schooled fit the criteria for additional funding. If a TA was to accompany them this academic year, we could then look at whether the B code could be used. This would need to be a conversation with the LA. However, this may not be a possibility due to no funding or spare TAs. This would then mean a TA being removed from other children in school if done this academic year. It would need consideration.

An issue is that the access to Flexi Schooling is not led by the school. Currently there are little issues regarding the progress of the children who access Flexi Schooling. If stopping Flexi Schooling the school needs to take into account the emotional welfare of the children. The Pastoral Team would pick up any children currently accessing Flexi Schooling. For any vulnerable children in school whom the school feel alternative provision could be beneficial for, then this would need to be in place and school led. It needs to be kept in mind that Flexi Schooling is not permitted at secondary school level.

Q. Is there an issue regarding the funding?

No. The feeling is that if the school approves it for a child, the school should be funding it. It may be that the school feels that a child needs alternative provision for half a day a week. If the parents agree, then the school would fund it.

Q. Is it widespread?

No. Across Manchester, possibly 6 schools.

The HT advised that the staff views include;

- The understanding that taking away flexi schooling is a big change
- Flexibility for the school
- Cannot maintain current status
- Needs to be school led

The school's preferred option is;

To allow the 15 who currently access it to carry on until July 2015 and for the school to understand there will be a dip in attendance figures. From September 2015, still support

alternative provision on the condition it is school led/funded and the teacher and parents agree it is a necessary for the child to access alternative provision due to the needs of the child. This will then be fully school led. The Pastoral Team will pick up those who are no longer accessing Flexi Schooling, during this academic year and next. A pastoral provision map will be in place and Donna Wealleans (AHT) will have met with all parents/carers of children who are Flexi Schooled and discuss needs of their children and put interventions / support in place in school.

The Staff Governor noted that if it is school led and the Pastoral Team is on board, then the teacher can work with the parents.

Q. Would this be bespoke options for each child?

Yes

One governor stated a preference for Option 2 in the document sent over summer; The school stops Flexi Schooling in the way it is done at present and pay for different classes to access an alternative provision half termly. This has not been budgeted for, so if this was a preference the HT would work with the SBM on the budget changes.

The school cannot have all children accessing Flexi Schooling; it should be a small number of children for a short period of time per child.

Q. I like the HT's preferred option; what is the impact on the budget?

It would need to be taken into account. HT and SBM would ensure this was taken into account in the next budget.

The two Y6 children who are accessing Home Schooling would continue to access this and then the school will invite the families in to look at potential transition to full time as nearing high school.

Q. What is the age of the children who access Wood School?

Various. The school is reducing this to one day per week per child unless there are significant reasons that the school feel can be addressed by Flexi Schooling.

Q. What would happen if they are taken out and their progress dips?

This would be picked up by the Pastoral team.

Q. How many children are on two days?

Two children.

Q. Can we establish what the parents like about Flexi Schooling, to see how the school can accommodate this?

There is a new teacher in school who is very much into outside learning; it is her passion. If the school could offer more outdoor learning, it could possibly result in less parental preference for Flexi Schooling.

Q. Presumably Wood School have had to deal with other schools?

Wood School has offered to meet with the HT. HT responded however Wood School have not yet got back in touch. HT would happily speak with Wood School however is clear there are many different alternative provisions that could be accessed.

The HT proposed;

Maintain the current position to July 2015 at the latest, based on one day per week. The new

criteria will be applied from September i.e school led/funded in written agreement between teacher/HT and parents, 1 day per week only in most cases. This will be fully school led and would not mean that children accessing alternative provision at present would necessarily continue to do so as it is on a temporary basis only and many children have already accessed this provision for a significant amount of time. School will lead the choice of alternative provision. Common criteria will be applied to all existing and any new requests. The 2 days per week to be phased out by the end of this term (Christmas). The new criteria will apply for new pupils. A policy and criteria will be developed by the school. The school will look at the impact on the budget.

For those eligible until July, the school will look to ascertain if the Code B approach can be used i.e if the Wood School access is on a Friday, a member of staff could go to the Wood School to access training and accompany the child/children. If not, the code will be a 'C' (authorized absence) Again, this may not be a possibility but will be considered.

The school now has a Pastoral lead who will ensure there is a comprehensive pastoral provision map in place.

The Chair advised that she would support the dip in attendance on condition that there was a transition plan, the up-skilling of staff, policy development and the improving of in-school provision in the outside area.

Q Are there any insurance issues if our staff were on site at Wood School / another alternative provision?

Presumably their insurance would cover it. SBM would check this if we were to have our staff on site at an alternative provision.

Q. How would this be communicated to the parents?

One to one meeting with the HT and a governor.

The governors approved the HT's proposal. The Resources Committee will review the cost implications in the late Autumn

Can any governors help out with the meetings with the parents? Helen, Richard and Ellie volunteered.

The HT will undertake the parent communication.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexi Schooling proposal approved 	Governing Body	Various throughout 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on budget to be agenda item for the Resources Committee 	Clerk	December 2014

4 AOB

School Dress Code
Background;

In 2011 the parents were consulted regarding an optional Dress Code. 52% of parents were in favour of a uniform. The school implemented an Optional Standard Dress Code rather than a

uniform. During 2013 staff raised concerns as to the difficulty with head counting when on school trips when all the children are dressed differently. The staff feel that for ease of identification there needs to be one branded item of clothing for the children. To address these concerns, at the end of last term, the school purchased and issued red branded jumpers and t-shirts to all children.

There has been some negative reactions from a number of parents, with two formal parental complaints received regarding the wearing of the jumpers/t-shirts.

Two issues have come out of the parental feedback;

- a) Why a school jumper and not a tabard
- b) Cost to school; why has the school spent monies on this, lack of probity etc.

The school needs to get a clear message to parents, and that this is not the implementation of a school uniform via the back door.

A Parent Governor advised that communication from other parents highlights mixed messages.

The HT confirmed that staff have not been instructed to give stickers to children for wearing the jumper. Children were not measured for the tops; however they were sized to ensure that there was no wasted spend.

A Parent Governor advised that communication from other parents highlights mixed messages. Two issues were raised;

- a) Pupils receiving stickers for wearing school jumper
- b) Pupils being excluded from photographs for not wearing school jumper

Governors requested clarification on both matters. The HT confirmed that staff have not been instructed to give stickers to children for wearing the jumper. She also explained that school has a range of photographs, in some all children are dressed in standard clothing, in others all children are dressed in non-standard clothing, and some photos include a mixture of dress. Hence some photographs do include only children wearing school branded clothing. The HT was asked to follow up with all staff to ensure that this is fully understood.

A governor raised the issue that over the last 18 months the Governing Body has had to address a number of parental issues from a small group of parents and that there is a bigger challenge than just the Dress Code. There needs to be strengthened communication with parents. A minority of parents would appear to be actively working against what the Governing Body and SLT are trying to do to move the school forward.

With 600 different families it is hard to get communication right; however this is something we have to work on to get right. We need to review how we have handled this.

It also needs to be kept in mind that a) there is a silent majority of parents out there whose views are not taken into account and b) the perception of poor communication is often from those who feel that they should be consulted on every decision the Governing Body and the SLT takes.

The new Community Liaison role will help with the communication issue.

Q. When is the new role starting?

Job descriptions are being sourced.

The HT and Chair have been discussing a communications strategy i.e how are governors accessible in a positive way.

In terms of the Dress Code how do we resolve the current mis-conceptions?

The governors agreed that FAQs would be an ideal way to raise and answer the concerns and misconceptions that are circulating within the parent community.

The HT will draft and send to Simon (Parent Gov), Helen and Emma (Chair of Buildings, H&S) and Richard Price (Chair of Resources) for review. It will then be issued to the parents.

The HT advised that inappropriate comments regarding both herself and the standard Dress Code have appeared on the PTA (FORS) Facebook page. The PTA leads are supporting the school. An anti - standard Dress Code parent campaign is however developing.

Governors IT Acceptable Use and Email Conduct

Governors are to be issued with their own school email address. The governors were each issued with the Governors Acceptable Use and Email Conduct policy

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FAQ to be developed and issued to parents	HT/ Simon/ Emma/ Chair	As soon as practicable