

Elm Church of England Voluntary (Controlled) Primary School

Minutes of the Meeting of Governors of Elm School held on Tuesday, 1st February 2011.

Present

E Chenery L Exell M Guarino T James D Mason P Rhodes S Rhodes
M Thompson F McCallum C Jobson (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Z Drew, C Ingle, O Rogers. D Roy, K Tucker, P Webb and J Wickes

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

3. Correspondence

The Chairman advised the meeting that Mr Roy had resigned from the Governing Body. This is due to the fact that they are in the process of becoming foster parents and he need to spend more time at home. It was agreed that we buy a thank you gift. It was agreed that the clerk writes a letter of thanks to Mr Roy.

The clerk advised the meeting that Cambridgeshire Governor Services have advised that when a Governing body are finding it difficult to fill Local Authority Governor places they will identify persons interested in becoming a governor in the area and will email the application of interest to the Chair of Governors. It is then the responsibility of the Chair to contact the applicant within four weeks for an informal discussion with a view to nominating them to fill the vacancy.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th November 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th November 2010 were signed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Notification of any Other Business items.

Mrs Chenery Elm Centre
Mrs Chenery & Mrs Exell School Website
Mrs McCallum Lettings.
Mrs T James School Meals

7. Report from the SDP Committee

The SDP Committee minutes were distributed prior to the meeting.

With the resignation of Mr Roy, the chairman requested an additional member for this committee. Mrs L Exell agreed to attend the meetings.

Mrs McCallum outlined details of the focus groups. It is therefore, important for the teachers to look at assessments creating groups with similar strengths and weakness. At the moment the teachers try and work with each of their groups on a weekly basis, but this may not be the best use of their time. There is a change in the way teachers are approaching learning and it may be necessary to work with the same group every day over the week in particular Maths or English lessons. The next week you can work with a different group and over the term all groups have experienced the same amount of teaching. Groups may not always have 5 or 6 children but may be 10 children focusing on a similar area.

Mrs McCallum stated that the change in the curriculum to a much more creative curriculum across all areas will be much more interesting.

It was agreed that the School Development Plan is much improved from previous School Development Plans, much more targeted to specific needs.

It was proposed by P Rhodes, seconded by S Rhodes and agreed unanimously that we approve the School Development Plan.

A discussion took place in respect of the Drop in Fridays and that it had been very well received by parents, children and staff.

Mrs McCallum stated that she had ordered some stickers, certificates and a pack that included book, ruler and pencils to award good attendance. The stickers will be used weekly, certificates for termly good attendance and ruler sets for 100% attendance. At the moment she had not investigated any incentives for parents.

8. Head Teachers Report

The Heads Report was distributed prior to the meeting, together with the Energy report and graph.

The Roll

The meeting was advised that the roll has increased to 206 with one new pupil joining Year 4 today, but this will go back to 204 as two pupils are moving out of the area. This will mean that we will have one place in Year 1, one in Year 3, one in Year 4 and three in Year 5.

Attendance

The attendance is 94% just above the permitted level, but this may change during the summer term, when children are taken out of school for holidays.

Finance and Property

Mrs McCallum stated that a quotation had been received from Priors a company recommended by the structural engineer for the work on the Year 5 wall at £4500 for the steel rods and £1500 for the pointing of the brickwork. This was higher than was anticipated by the structural engineer who had estimated that this would be about £1500 for the steel work and £500 for the pointing a total of £2,000. We are still waiting for a quotation from Mr Cowling a local builder, but he is waiting for a price for the steel rods. It is expected that this work will be able to be funded from the Devolved Capital budget. After a discussion it was agreed that we obtain a quotation from another building. Mrs Exell agreed to let the school have the name and address of a builder who carried out work for her parents.

Other Items

- Mrs McCallum advised the meeting that Year 5 will be going to London.
- The 5 hours medical hours for a reception child is working very well and since the start of this term we have had no incidents of sickness at lunchtimes.
- Mrs McCallum advised the meeting that a Year 4 pupil, who is autistic and to date has not been awarded a statement is having significant difficulties. He is very unhappy in school. Mrs Brown the Teaching Assistant in that class is spending a considerable amount time with this child at the detriment of the other children in that class. This is having an impact on the teacher, teaching assistant and pupils. It is therefore, necessary to put emergency Teacher Assistant hours in this class. One of the candidates, Miss J Porter, that applied for the maternity cover was an excellent candidate and has been contacted to see if she can cover these emergency hours on a casual basis for three or four weeks until we know what is happening with the statement. If the hours awarded are 15 or under they will have to be funded from the school budget. It has been suggested that this will change and the first 10 hours will be funded by the school and any hours above this will be funded by the County. Mrs Brown will continue to work with the pupil as she is known to him and Miss Porter will support the rest of the class. The cost of the extra hours until the end of this financial year, 31st March is £1300 and this will

be funded out of the carry forward. These hours will be budgeted for in the new financial year. The Chairman requested whether any one had any objections to employing Miss Porter to cover these emergency hours and there was no response.

- Mrs Brown is attending a Level 4 course in Therapeutic Play and has requested to carry out her placement at Elm. She will need to work with two or three pupils in therapy play.
- Mr Kaufman has started working with year 3 and Year 4 one afternoon a week teaching pocket cornet. If anyone is enthusiastic to continue we will set up peripatetic brass lessons, but they will have to be funded by parents as will the violin lessons from the 1st April 2011, the start of the new financial year.

9. Parents, pupils & staff Questionnaire

Results of the three questionnaires were distributed prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that the parents' response were very poor only receiving completed questionnaires from 27 parents.

It is expected that the Pop in Fridays will make the parents more informed. The Annual report to parents is to be changed to give parents more information. When children have a change of reading band the parents will be informed by letter and we always use this as a celebration of each child's improvement.

Mrs McCallum stated that she is in the process of speaking to Mrs Exell as to what information we share with new parents as part of the inductions programme.

It appears that we have received mixed messages regarding homework as 15% stated that they have too much. It was felt that homework given is very erratic from class to class. It was agreed that as they get into Year 6 it is important that they have homework as when they move on they receive a lot more homework and by being given homework it helps with discipline to help them to work at home and to work independently. The parent questionnaire seems to say that the school gave a clear understanding of what is taught, but Mrs McCallum stated that she felt that there was more work to do on this.

The meeting was advised that the Homework Policy was being looked at by the Curriculum Committee at their next meeting.

10. Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy

A copy of the Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy was distributed prior to the meeting.

Mrs McCallum advised the meeting that the Teachers and Teaching Assistant spent the morning of the Training Day at the beginning of this term looking at this Policy and reflecting on the cohort that had left last year. There had been set up a ladder of consequences. Teaching Assistants and Lunchtime supervisors are now using post it notes so that the teachers had a note of all behaviour so that they can pick up on any patterns.

Some concerns were voiced that parents are not receiving the bump on the head letters and Mrs McCallum will speak to all staff to ensure that the teachers speak to parents before the child goes home.

It was agreed that the School Development Plan meeting will look at the Anti-Bullying Policy on the 22nd March 2011. It was agreed that the final sanction would involve exclusion from school of the individual either a fixed period or permanently. This was agreed that this should be used as a last resort but should be used.

After a discussion it was proposed by M Guarino and seconded by T James and agreed unanimously that we adopt this policy.

11. Whistle Blowing Policy

A copy of the Whistle Blowing Policy was distributed prior to the meeting.

This Policy is important as we need to be confident that any member of staff can report an incident without fear of reprisals.

After a discussion it was proposed by E Chenery, seconded by M Thompson and agreed unanimously.

12. Self Evaluation Form

A copy of the Self Evaluation Form was distributed prior to the meeting.

Mrs McCallum advised the meeting that one of the ways we prepared for OFSTED is the SEF and this is very time consuming and consists of approximately 50 pages and it is responsibility of the Head Teacher to write this document. It is important that Governors and staff have an input. Staff at the end of the Autumn term were working on a section of the SEF. Mrs McCallum stated that she would like to submit this fairly soon so if any Governors have any comments on the document they have been provided with to let her know as soon as possible. Some of the sections which were previously put down as good she has changed to satisfactory such as Learning and Progress and Foundation Stage as it is important that this document is honest as we have to prove and have evidence on any statement made. If we want to be a good Governing Body we need to be aware of the SEF and contribute to it.

This is a document that is being withdrawn, but County have recommended that schools continue to complete this until there is a replacement.

13. Governor Training – In House Training Monitoring & Evaluation through School Visits.

The clerk had received correspondence stated that the dates available for this training would be the 3rd May and the 12th May 2011. It was agreed that as we have a meeting on the 3rd May and in the week of the 9th May we request an alternative date on any evening of a week we have no other meetings.

14. Reflections of a Chairman of the Governing Body

A copy of Mrs S Rhodes report was distributed prior to the meeting

It was agreed by all Governors that last year was a very difficult year due to the fact that two of our most senior members of the Management Team were retiring and a lot of time was taken up by members of the Recruitment Panel in finding a new Head Teacher. The retiring Head had felt it difficult to make any changes due to the fact that he would not be in school to see them to their fruition.

Part of the report stated that the information coming from our last year's School Improvement Partner did not reflect our SAT's results as they actually were and it was until our new SIP compared our results to other schools it actually became clear that our level of achievement was not good. Mrs McCallum stated that this is a service that would probably be withdrawn under the proposed cuts and it was agreed that it is important that we look at budgeting for this service.

It was also agreed that the Vice Chairman should take a more active roll on the Governing Body to support the Chairman and more Governors become Chairman of the different committees to share the responsibility.

15. Any other business

Elm Centre

Mrs Chenery requested two other Governors to join the Elm Centre Committee. At the moment due to lack of members they are meeting two months, but if more members were to join the committee they could go back to meeting every three months. We had no volunteers at this meeting.

Elm School Website

Mrs Exell and Mrs Chenery advised the meeting that they had looked at the website and felt it was very good. Mrs Exell stated that she had looked at other school's websites and ours was far superior to that of many schools. The only criticism would be that some of the information is out of date.

Letting

Mrs McCallum advised the meeting that Norfolk Constabulary would like to use the school on the weekend of the 12th and 13th February as the control room for a missing persons search, which is a old case being reopened. They wish to camp on the field and to use the school for the toilets and water. They will give a donation to cover our caretaker costs and electricity and water. Mrs McCallum stated that she will write to the parents on the Thursday or Friday to let them know what is going on. It is expected that there will be a great deal of media attention. Our relief caretaker will be opening on Saturday morning and locking up on Sunday evening. They will be using Year 1 classroom door to have access to toilets and water.

School Meals

Some concerns were voiced by a parent governor regarding the lack of choice for school meals especially for those children who are last to get their lunch. Mrs McCallum stated that she had looked at different options including children choosing their meals in the morning and be given coloured bands according to what they have chosen or to have no choice and for the catering staff to cook with no choice. It was agreed to place this item on the agenda for the next Governors Meeting.

At this point of the meeting Mr Rhodes was presented with a Book Token in appreciation for all his hard work as chairman.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Date of next meeting 29th March 2011.

Dates of Governors Meetings 2010/2011

10th May 2011

28th June 2011

Resources Committee

15th March 2011

3rd May 2011

7th June 2011

School Development Plan Committee

22nd March 2011

21st June 2011

Curriculum Committee

1st March 2011

14th June 2011