

ESSA PRIMARY ACADEMY

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

HELD AT THE ACADEMY ON WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 9.00AM

Present: Nigel Whittle (Chair), Sofiya Patel, Aatika Patel, Enid Cathcart and Jo Atherton (Principal).

In attendance: Andrew Cooper (CEO), Sharon Weaver (Deputy Principal), David Howarth (Finance Officer), Sayeh Mariner (EYFS Lead – item 4b only) and Denise Hark (Clerk to the Local Governing Body).

Nigel Whittle in the Chair

Part 1

1a) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ismail Kala and Salmah Akram.

1b) LGB Membership update

The Chair informed governors that Razia Khan had resigned her position as parent governor. The Principal explained that parents had been invited to express an interest in the parent governor vacancy, six parents had come forward but the majority of them had not understood the role of governor. Two applications were then made by parents, one of which subsequently withdrew. The deadline for receipt of applications has been extended and if this results in more applications a secret ballot would take place.

1c) LGB Working Party Membership

The Chair requested that governors consider joining one of the working parties as membership of the working parties needed to be increased.

Agreed:

- Membership of the Education and Achievement Working Party: Nigel Whittle, Enid Cathcart, Aatika Patel and Sofiya Patel.
- Membership of the Finance Working Party: Nigel Whittle and Ismail Kala

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

A governor requested an update on pupil numbers. The Principal reported that there were currently 230 children on roll with three offers pending for places in Year 1. A governor asked whether the Reception class and Year 1 classes were full. The Principal replied that there was one available place in Reception which had now been offered and there were 14 spaces in Year 1. The Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 classes

were all full and there were two appeals due to be held in December, one for Year 3 and one for Year 4. The Principal informed governors that the Local Authority was under the impression that the admission number had been set at 34 for the Key Stage Two classes and pointed out that if the Local Governing Body decreased this number it could be a disadvantage as the academy had already demonstrated that it can cope with increased numbers. A governor asked whether the Local Authority would default to the published admission number for September 2017. The CEO advised that the published admission figure is the legal position. The Principal added that the academy had been asked to admit additional children last year to the Year 3 class and this year the Local Authority have offered an additional four places to the Key Stage 2 classes. The Principal explained that this could leave the academy in a vulnerable position. The CEO said that the academy has a published admission figure and that admissions last year had been exceptional and this should not be thought of as a precedent. If there were to be any change to the admission number then this would need to go through consultation. He advised that the Local Governing Body should be wary about agreeing to admit additional children in case of setting a precedent.

Agreed:

- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 September 2016 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment on minute 4ai) to say that Read Write, Inc had been introduced in the second year of opening.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Governors made no declaration of pecuniary or conflict of interest.

4. EDUCATION, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT WELFARE

4a Principal's Report

4ai) Principal's Report

The report circulated with the papers for the meeting included data from the first data capture of the school year. The Principal had held pupil progress meetings with all teachers and she said that she felt that the data provides an accurate picture. It was noted that the EYFS data provided a snapshot of the baseline data and was not a report on children's progress. The CEO advised that the amount of data provided for the meeting could be overwhelming and suggested that the primary academy uses the Trust's data analyst to provide a simple summary sheet for governors showing targets and summary progress to date. The Principal explained that this was a work in progress as she had already met with the data analyst for this purpose. The Chair requested that this report be made available for the next meeting of the Education and Achievement Working Party. A governor asked whether the predictions provided were for the end of the autumn term. The Principal replied that the predictions were for the end of the school year. They also recognised the mobility of pupils as there could be different children in the class by the end of the school year. The Deputy Principal explained that the Age Related Expectations were for this part of the academic year

and would change each half term as children move through the year. A governor asked whether the data indicated that children were not on track. The Principal explained that because of the low baseline a lot of children were not yet at Age Related Expectations which were a national benchmark. A governor asked whether the targets were the academy's own targets. The Principal confirmed that these were the academy's end of year targets. The Deputy Principal added that targets had been set for pupils to make accelerated progress because of their low starting points in order for them to achieve Age Related Expectations. A governor asked why there were fewer pupils at the end of Autumn 1 at Age Related Expectations than there had been at the start of the term. The Principal explained that in Year 1 42% (17 pupils) at the start of term had been at the baseline; currently 39% of pupils were at this level (16 pupils) with one pupil having moved to the level above. It was explained that it was expected that more pupils would move to the higher level as the school year progresses. The Principal explained the difference between Age Related Expectations and progress and said that governors should find that all pupils have made progress but all would not necessarily have reached Age Related Expectations. It was noted that for writing 85% of pupils had made at least expected progress this term.

Action: Governor training to take place on Age Related Expectations

Phonics development had been identified as a major issue and in response to this Anna Lucas had been commissioned to develop a bespoke package for the academy. The new system allows children to work in their year groups on phonics in the morning and then have the opportunity of two additional micro phonics burst where teachers and teaching assistants would be able to address any misconceptions immediately. These sessions would take the format of 10 minute group activities. A governor asked how the success of this initiative was being monitored. The Principal replied that a Phonics data capture takes place every half term and this could be added to the data sheet for governors. The Chair added that this would be helpful as governors had not realised that Phonics had been an issue until the end of the school year.

George Lloyd, HMI, at his recent visit had suggested that an individual learning plan be produced for every child in the academy to ensure that all children are making rapid progress. This would provide evidence of progress and involvement with parents. The Principal explained that the SLT was meeting to devise a pro-forma for the learning plans which would be shared with staff before being put into place from the start of the spring term. It was explained that there would be one to one meetings with parents to discuss their child's individual learning plan. The CEO added that this could be a powerful way of tracking individual progress and developing contact with parents. It could also be linked to a review meeting with parents. A parent governor added that this would be a helpful way forward for parents following the removal of levels.

A governor commented that there had been a number of staff changes this year and asked whether anything had been done to drill down why this was the case and suggested that exit interviews be held to give a fuller picture. The Principal explained that staff mobility was a significant concern for the Academy, and added that for two out of the three members of staff who had left there had been very specific reasons for leaving. One member of staff had already been on a support plan and progress had

not been made. Another member staff had only been at the academy for a short space of time and had already identified that the academy was not the right place for her. The third teacher has not yet left and has personal reasons for leaving. The Principal acknowledged that a lot of staff had left, however, in the long-term this was the right outcome for the academy. The Principal agreed that exit interviews could be introduced as the academy grows. Supply teachers are now covering the Year 1 and Year 2 classes and support packages are in place for these staff and this intensive coaching programme would be rolled out to other new starters.

4a ii) SEF

It was agreed that the SEF and AIP would be looked at in more detail at the next meeting.

The current SEF judgement was Grade 3 in all areas with the exception of Behaviour and Welfare which was graded as a 2.

Action: Agenda item next meeting.

4a iii) Academy Improvement Plan

A governor asked how the AIP would be monitored by governors. The Principal replied that the plan would be updated each half term and would be RAG rated and presented to governors at each meeting.

4 a iv) Updated Pupil Premium Report 2015-16

A governor asked for an explanation why the expenditure shown on the PPG report was greater than the income. The Principal explained that additional expenditure had allocated to reflect those children who probably should be entitled to the grant but are not. A governor asked whether parents had been encouraged to complete the paperwork to apply for FSM and asked whether parents had not applied because of the universal free meals in Key Stage One. The Principal said that some of it was due to Universal Free meals; however, there was not an uptake of FSM once children reached Years 3 and 4. The CEO said that all the academy could do was to keep chipping away at attitudes. A governor asked whether parents were aware that applying for FSM was an advantage not just for the child but also for the school. The Principal added that some of the trips had been subsidised so that the PPG children only needed to pay a nominal cost. It was also explained that letters were sent to new families informing them of how to apply for FSM.

A Housing Benefit officer had attended the last parents' coffee morning to speak to families about claiming the right benefit. It was noted that there was also some issues regarding the immigration status with a lot of families not receiving the support that they should have. A governor asked whether this should be raised at Individual learning plan meetings. The Principal replied that families could be signposted to meet with the Family Support Worker but it was not for the class teacher to discuss benefits at progress meetings.

4av) Attendance Report

Attendance for the term to date stood at 93.37%. The Principal explained that persistent absenteeism, which relates to 60 children, is the biggest concern. It was explained that persistent absence relates to those children with attendance below 90%. The academy was one of five primary schools which are receiving intensive support from the Local Authority for attendance. There were five pending penalty notices, most of which were related to holidays in term time. A court date had been set in December for two children regarding the second non-payment of a penalty notice. All children with attendance below 80% had been targeted first. An Early Help form had been introduced which gives a mechanism to support the needs of the family concerned. It was noted that if additional support is required from the Local Authority the Early Help form must already be in place. Early Help forms were in place for 20 families. A governor asked whether the attendance percentage was increasing as the term was progressing. The Principal replied that it was up and down and there had been a significant sickness in one of the Reception classes before half term which had affected eleven children. This sickness was notified and appropriate action was taken to avoid a further spread of the illness. It was noted that the main issue still remains holidays in term time. A governor asked whether the children concerned were the same children from the previous year. The Principal replied that this only related to the ones with court dates. The Principal explained that in addition to working with the Local Authority on attendance, meetings have been arranged with parents prior to warning letters being sent out. A governor asked whether the measures introduced had made a difference. The Principal replied that following the interventions some children are no longer categorised as persistent absentees. The Chair pointed out that the year groups with the poorest attendance were Year 2 and Year 4 and said that their attendance was not improving as they moved through the academy. The progress data provided also compares the progress of persistent absentees to non-persistent absentees. A governor asked whether parents had been made aware of the effects of non-attendance on their child's education. The Deputy Principal explained that parents are made aware, and staff now talk about non-attendance being a criminal offence and how it can affect a child's performance. The Principal added that for those families who refuse to attend these meetings the Local Authority writes to the families and then attend the follow-up meeting with the family. A governor asked whether home visits were still made regarding attendance. It was confirmed that they still went ahead.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

4avi) School Data Autumn 1

This item had been covered under item 4ai).

4avii) Autumn Term Census

It was noted that the autumn census has been completed. A governor asked how many children had been on roll at the time of the census. The Principal replied that there had been 228 children at the time of the census and the budget had been adjusted accordingly.

4aviii) Targets for the Academic Year

Targets for the academic year had been included with the papers for the meeting.

4aix) PMR Review and Outcomes

PMR reviews have been carried out for all teachers and most of the support staff. All staff who had been at the school previously had achieved their targets and had received new targets for the current year. For the new staff information had been requested from their previous setting and targets had been set for the current year. One target was school related concerned with the outcome of children in their class and the other target was personal/ professional development which relates to their subject leadership role in school.

Agreed: That the report be noted

4b) EYFS Updates and Phonics Developments

Sayeh Mariner, the EYFS lead, gave a presentation regarding the updates to EYFS and phonic developments in the academy. Improvements to the outdoor area of the EYFS had taken place over the summer holiday and the area now had a bespoke outdoor design with nine different areas of outside learning. The outcome of this action is outstanding outdoor provision to enable children to learn through play and also to promote their independence. The academy has also held training for local schools on the use of continuous provision in the outside space. A governor asked whether consideration should be given to providing this type of facility to the older year groups. It was explained that there was some continuous provision in place for Year 1 pupils but this space was different to the provision for EYFS children as indoor provision was the main focus for Year 1.

Following the low results in phonics last year a new phonics system had been developed by the consultant Anna Lucas and a systematic scheme had been designed. The timings of the sessions had been changed in order to create a drip-effect with phonics being embedded in every area of the curriculum. Every class has a phonics board which is used as an assessment tool. If children fall below the expected line on any one day they would receive intervention immediately. Staff are now more aware of where children are experiencing difficulties and the early signs have been positive with the children enjoying the delivery of phonics in this way. The Teaching Assistants have taken on board the training and the new scheme. It was explained that the impact of the changes should become evident in the Autumn 2 data collection.

4c) Breakfast Club

The Principal reported that the Academy had received a grant of £5,000 from the Local Authority to open a Breakfast Club. All places had been taken up and would be free of charge. The club would run from 7.30am to 8.20am each day and children would receive a free breakfast and would be given help to complete their homework and there would also be a range of games available. The club would be led by two Teaching Assistants and there were 20 children signed up to attend each day. There was also a small waiting list. It was noted that attendance at the club was expected in order to maintain the place and procedures had been put in place to this effect. The Breakfast Club was expected to start early in December once the members of staff concerned had undergone the basic food hygiene training. A governor asked what would happen to the club once the initial grant money had been used up. The Principal replied that there had not been any commitment to making the club free of charge on a permanent basis. In response to a question from a governor the Principal explained that the club would run free of charge for a full year. The Principal explained that going forward the Academy could also look at accessing further support from companies who fund breakfast clubs. A governor asked whether the places for the club had been offered on a first come, first served basis. The Principal replied that this had mainly been the case but priority had been given to some children because of their needs and going forward the academy would give priority to children with attendance issues if it was felt that attendance at the breakfast club would improve their attendance.

5. GOVERNANCE

5a Approval of Policies

5ai) Music Policy

5aia) Computing Policy

5aiii) Appraisal Policy

Agreed:

- That the Music Policy be adopted.
- That the Computing Policy be adopted
- That the Appraisal policy be adopted

5aiv) Policy Checklists Report

A report detailing the implementation of policies in the Academy had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Agreed:

- That the Principal and CEO follow up on the implementation of policies.

5b Governor Review and Training 2016/17

The CEO reported that a review of the effectiveness of the Local Governing Body was planned which would identify the training and development needs for the academic year. The Chair added that the skills audit would prove helpful in analysing training needs.

6. FINANCE AND RISK

6a) Budget

The Finance Officer presented the budget report detailing expenditure for the year to the end of September and informed governors that the report showed savings against the original budget plan due to increased pupil numbers. This additional funding is currently held in the contingency budget. The large positive variances under Teaching Assistant budget was due to a post not having been filled in September. The supply staff budget showed an overspend, however this balanced out against the teaching staff budget as supply staff were being used to provide cover for some permanent posts.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

6b) Admissions Consultation

The CEO reported that the Admissions Policy had gone out to consultation to all interested parties. It was explained that all academies should consult periodically on admissions and this consultation had been brought about because of the secondary academy's consultation. It was explained that there were some minor changes proposed to the policy regarding the over-subscription criteria. This would give priority to those children who had attended Essa Nursery. The Local Governing Body had also also given the opportunity to respond to the consultation which would finish on 19 December. Any responses to the consultation should be forwarded to the Finance Director. A copy of the proposed policy was also on the academy's website. The CEO added that it would be seen as good practice to consult on an annual basis.

Agreed:

- That the report be noted.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES (*confidential item*)

This item was deemed as confidential and as such is contained in the Part 2 confidential minutes

8. BUILDING AND SITE

The Principal reported that there were still ongoing issues regarding the handover of the building. The twelve month defect meeting should have taken place on 1 September but this had been cancelled and a date for the rearranged meeting was still awaited. ISG would be rectifying some of the issues and there were also some internal areas that needed some action. Approval had been received from the Board for the work on the roof and quotes for this work were currently being sought by the Buildings Manager, however, it was proving difficult to find companies prepared to carry out this work due to the size of the project and to date only one quote had been received. The Principal explained that due to the urgency of the issue with the roof leaks this first quote might need to be accepted.

It was reported that there was a child in Year 2 who used a wheelchair and there was an issue around the fire access doors which have a dropped step rather than a ramp. The Principal suggested that a wooden plinth could be purchased to use as a ramp. The Principal explained that she had discussed this issue with ISG who had said that they did not have to meet all fire regulations because of it being an old building. A governor asked whether there were any outstanding health and safety issues in respect of the building. The Principal replied that there were still some issues with some of the fire doors which were not opening and closing as they should do but these are on ISG's list for them to rectify. A governor asked whether the classroom for the child who uses a wheelchair could be changed each year. The Principal said that the issue would be addressed and added that the issue is the fire escape which is the same in each classroom and not access around the building as this is suitable for disabled access.

Agreed:

- That the building update be noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 DfE Visit (*confidential item*)

This item was deemed as confidential and as such is contained in the Part 2 confidential minutes

9.2 Website

A governor asked whether the new website was in place. It was explained that it was due to go live in the next week.

9.3 School Crossing Patrol

A governor reported that she had attended a parents' coffee morning at the academy, and parents had raised the lack of a school crossing patrol as an issue. The Principal

replied that the Local Authority at their visit in June had said that there were not enough children at the academy for a school crossing patrol to be a priority. They then carried out a survey, the results of which would be presented to a Local Authority panel. The CEO said that senior staff at the secondary academy had also been expressing concerns about traffic and parking and asked whether the traffic survey had taken account of the site as a whole. He added that if the car park was closed on a daily basis this would further exacerbate the traffic problem.

Agreed: That the CEO take this issue to the Trust Senior Team.

10. CONSENT TO ABSENT GOVERNORS

Agreed:

- To consent to the absence from this meeting of Ismail Kala and Salmah Akram.
- Not to consent to the absence from this meeting of Sahar Amran.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed: That the next meeting of the Local Governing Body be held on Wednesday 25 January 2017 at 9.00am.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association for the Academy the following matters be designated as confidential:

Minutes 7 and 9.1

The meeting closed at 10.55am

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____