

THE GOVERNING BODY OF ROBERTTOWN CE (VC) JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 6:30 pm at School on Tuesday 30 January 2024.

PRESENT

Mrs M Hoole (Chair), Mrs E Bolt, Mrs C Cockerill, Ms V Farrell, Mrs S Laycock-Smith, Mr J Pickles, Rev S Wallace-Jones, Mrs L Wood.

In Attendance

Ms L Deane (Minute Clerk, Observer)
Mrs C Hall (Minute Clerk, via recording)
Mrs L Mulvaney (Observer)
Mrs J Murphy (Observer)

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Bentley (consent), Ms K Hydes (consent), Mrs H Wells (consent) and there were no declarations of interest.

Governors agreed to take the agenda out of order and to deal with agenda item 12 next.

47. SUBJECT LEADER PRESENTATIONS**(a) Art**

Mrs Jenny Murphy gave Governors an overview of the objectives of the Art curriculum, including a broad range of opportunities, fostering creativity and enabling all children to succeed and achieve to their full potential in Art. The school aimed to develop children's skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, art and craft and design techniques and had recently bought into the Access Art scheme, which included links to video-based demonstrations and CPD for staff. This was a flexible scheme that provided a pathway and options for teachers to use and included links to other areas of the curriculum.

The school was aiming to raise the profile of Art this academic year: all classes were named after artists and children were exploring the style of their class artist, with displays around school, including the whole school fish collage. Staff CPD on Inset day had included a session around the effective use of sketchbooks and best practice arising from the recent Ofsted art review.

Q: What made you choose Access Art over other schemes?

A: We looked at Kapow Art and we visited the Art Lead at another local school where they use Access Art and gained insight into the scheme.

Q: What about availability of materials, was that an issue?

A: Every class had a budget for resources for Art Week and we still have some materials, which will continue to be useful.

Q: What has been the impact on staff confidence?

A: Staff confidence has been boosted by the training and the practical projects we have done. Staff have been enthused and become passionate about Art and they have seen how much the children get out of it.

Q: Can you say a bit more about the impact on SEN children?

A: It's been lovely to see how proud children are of their artwork and it's very special to see SEN children achieving in Art, where they might struggle in more traditional subjects.

(b) SEN

Mrs Lucy Mulvaney provided Governors with an overview of SEN at Roberttown compared with Kirklees and National trends. The main focus in school was on inclusive, high-quality teaching, making use of the LA toolkit and resources and a graduated approach comprising 'Assessment - Plan - Do - Review'. Assessment looked at barriers to learning and how staff could remove them, including observations and SENCo referral and support. Interventions were carried out in the classroom or in a group of peers, so children were not segregated. Specialist teams including SEN, SALT, Visual and Hearing Impairment, Interaction and Communication were regular visitors to school to support staff and pupils.

Q: How many children are in progress for SEN assessment?

A: We have six children with an EHCP and we currently have one pupil going through the assessment process. There is a backlog in processing EHCP assessment requests. At present we don't have any others to apply for.

Q: Are you finding your SEN requests and the level of need increasing?

A: Yes, SEN is definitely increasing and the level of need is quite varied as well. As SENCo I will be looking to improve transition for children coming in from pre-school settings.

(c) English

Mrs Louise Wood gave a presentation on the English curriculum, which comprised Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Within each element there were varying aspects as appropriate to the age and progress of pupils. The Little Wandle scheme was used for Phonics, including interventions for extra reading support. At KS2 reading fluency incorporated the three-part reading practice of decoding, prosody and comprehension plus text marking, a fourth element adopted from EEF, which was having an impact on writing as well as reading. Little Wandle elements continued in KS2 where pupils were working at a lower level and needed extra support.

There was a reading challenge with a free book and a certificate for pupils completing a stage and a trophy for the year group with the highest number of pupils doing five home reads in a week. Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar was taught in discrete lessons as well as via reading and writing, with a statutory test in Year 6. Writing progression was based around a mixed selection of six texts per year and the school had created an authorial process comprising 'Plan - Draft - Edit & Re-edit - Publish'.

Mrs Wood explained handwriting expectations across the curriculum and outlined the celebrations in school.

Governors thanked Mrs Murphy, Mrs Mulvaney and Mrs Wood for their presentations.

Mrs Murphy and Mrs Mulvaney left the meeting at this point.

48. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

One item was notified for Any Other Business: Correspondence.

49. REPRESENTATION

The following matter of representation was noted:

<u>Appointment Name</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>With effect from</u>
Mr Gareth Bentley	Foundation (Designate)	22.1.24

50. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 30 November 2023 be accepted as a correct record, subject to the amendments that would be submitted to Governor Clerking Services.

51. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

52. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Mr Pickles, Chair of the Standards and Effectiveness Committee, reported on discussions held at the meeting held on 18 January 2024:

- Detailed review of data highlighted lower attainment in Year 2.
- Tracking of cohorts showed higher need amongst boys in KS2.
- Phonics assessments were in line with expectations across the school.
- Year 6 mocks had correlated well with PUMA testing.
- Targets had been set prior to FFT data being available. FFT data then showed a good match with targets set in school.
- Policies had been reviewed.
- Reading across school was considered a strength and the new KLP had been complimentary about the approach to reading throughout the school.

53. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT (INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING)

The Head Teacher referred to her report, the current SEF and the Health and Safety report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Health and Safety report highlighted thinning and dieback of the trees on the boundary to a footpath, which could impact on the school's security and the safeguarding of children. Governors discussed alternative ways of securing the boundary including installation of fencing and planting to replace the trees.

Governors received copies of the Safeguarding summary provided to staff. The Head Teacher briefed Governors on the main safeguarding issues encountered by pupils from Roberttown: bullying, social media, child-on-child abuse and online safety, drawing attention to the diagram on contextual safeguarding and circles of influence.

The Head Teacher highlighted the analysis of challenges and successes in November 2023 and January 2024 for comparative purposes. Staffing capacity and staffing changes remained challenges for the school.

Q: Are you having to cover the roles you are recruiting for? Is this via agency staff?

A: Yes. This is giving us some continuity in classes where we felt there was most need. We are getting a lot of support from TAs for gaps, particularly at lunchtime, which is much appreciated.

The Chair thanked the Head Teacher for her informative report.

54. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING/BUDGET REPORT

Governors noted the comprehensive reports received in advance from the School Business Manager.

55. ATTENDANCE

The Head Teacher and the Chair had reviewed attendance in detail with reference to the guidance note. Governors noted that the level of PP was 18.96% and enquired about any correlation with Persistent Absence. The Head Teacher advised that SLT members were dealing with PA individually, talking with parents and seeking to understand the reasons and offer support to improve children's attendance.

Q: Do you think our known barriers to good attendance are similar to other schools? Are they holiday related? Is there a change in attitudes to term-time holidays post-COVID?

A: There seems to be a level of mental health concerns, a change in attitudes and a desire to keep family close. It is a nationwide issue.

Governors appreciated the useful format of the report on attendance.

56. WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Governors were pleased to hear feedback from staff that they generally felt supported and they were aware of the offer from Employee Healthcare.

57. SCHOOL PLANS FOR 2024 TESTS AND EXAMS

The Head Teacher confirmed that KS1 SATs were no longer required and she advised that SLT had considered using KS1 SATs papers for testing in Year 2. They had concluded that they would continue to use the PIRA and PUMA tests, which would give better consistency and continuity of assessment throughout the school.

58. POLICIES FOR REVIEW BY FULL GOVERNING BODY

Governors noted that the Head Teacher had made minor updates to the Online Safety Policy and IT support had checked that the firewalls were robust. A reference to peer-on-peer abuse required amendment to child-on-child abuse in line with KCSiE September 2023.

ACTION: Head Teacher to amend reference to peer-on-peer abuse in the Online Safety Policy to read child-on-child abuse.

ACTION: Head Teacher to remove 'Insert details' from policies.

Governors considered the Charging Policy, the Remote Learning Plan and the Food Policy.

Q: How do you find the process of monitoring packed lunches and snacks?

A: Teachers observe snacks, lunchtime staff monitor packed lunches, and they are particularly vigilant for nuts and nut products.

RESOLVED: That the Online Safety, Charging and Food Policies and the Remote Learning Plan be approved, subject to the amendments agreed.

59. EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Governors received an updated schedule of costs for proposed educational visits and noted the level of contribution per child including coach costs, the positive response from parents and the opportunity for payment by instalment.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of educational visits be approved.

60. SPENBOROUGH CO-OPERATIVE TRUST

The Head Teacher advised that there were new Heads at Heckmondwike and at Headlands, moderation within the Trust was an ongoing strength and the Christmas concert at the local Town Hall had been a wonderful opportunity for the Trust schools to come together and sing and had provided a memorable experience for parents and children.

61. ACADEMISATION/MULTI ACADEMY TRUSTS

Governors discussed the presentation from Learning Accord MAT and appreciated the opportunity to take up references and the potential for a trial period. The Chair advised that Mrs Laycock-Smith had tendered her resignation and her last day with the school would be 31 August 2024. Governors considered the recruitment process for a new Head Teacher together with the impact of potential academisation. Queries and comments from staff about academisation were around pay, pensions, terms and conditions and the positive aspect of the school retaining its own identity.

Governors considered the increased level of support, school improvement opportunities, CPD and access to resources that would be available to the school through joining a MAT and the retention of the school's identity that would be a benefit of joining Learning Accord MAT. Governors referenced their recent SWOT analysis and noted that joining a MAT would help the school alleviate weaknesses identified. Governors agreed unanimously that it would be in the best interests of the school to look to academise and that the school should approach Learning Accord MAT with a view to becoming an associate member initially, subject to the appropriate consultations and due processes.

RESOLVED: That the school move to academise.

RESOLVED: That the school seek to become an associate member of Learning Accord MAT.

ACTION: Mrs Laycock-Smith and Mrs Wood to review next steps and Learning Accord associate membership paperwork.

ACTION: Mr Pickles to contact Learning Accord to advise of the Governing Body's decision.

ACTION: Chair to liaise with SLT and Vice-Chair and keep Governors informed of developments.

62. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND GOVERNOR VISITS(a) Governor visit: Ms Farrell

Ms Farrell reported on visiting Breakfast Club, commenting on how lovely it had been to meet the children using the facility, who were all very enthusiastic. A written report would follow.

(b) Governor visit: Mrs Cockerill

Mrs Cockerill advised that she had carried out an online visit and her written report would follow.

(c) Governor visit: Mr Pickles

Mr Pickles advised that he had carried out the second part of his Safeguarding visit and had spoken to pupils.

(d) Governor visit: Rev Wallace-Jones

Rev Wallace-Jones had visited regarding Wellbeing and workload.

63. ANY OTHER BUSINESS(a) Correspondence

The Chair referred to Mrs Laycock-Smith's letter of resignation and advised that Governors would be kept informed of the process and timeline for recruiting a new Head Teacher.

Governors accepted Mrs Laycock-Smith's resignation albeit with regret and thanked her for her many years of dedicated service to the school and its pupils and staff.

(b) Next steps

ACTION: Mrs Hoole (Chair) and Mr Pickles (Vice-Chair) to deal with communications with the LA, the Diocese and the MAT regarding academisation and Head Teacher recruitment, as appropriate.

ACTION: Full Governing Body meeting to be held at the School at 4:00pm on Thursday 8 February 2024 to discuss School Vision and Head Teacher recruitment and to agree membership of the recruitment panel.

64. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the next meetings of the Governing Body be held in School as follows:

Thursday 8 February 2024 at 4.00 pm, with the option of remote attendance via Teams

Thursday 14 March 2024 at 6.30 pm
 Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 6.30 pm
 Monday 1 July 2024 at 6.30 pm

RESOLVED: That the next meetings of the Committees be held in School at 6.00 pm on:

Resources Committee
Thursday 7 March 2024
Wednesday 26 June 2024

Standards & Effectiveness Committee
Thursday 18 April 2024
Wednesday 26 June 2024

65. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.

ACTION LOG:

Number	Action	By Whom
1	Amend reference to 'peer-on-peer abuse' in the Online Safety Policy to read 'child-on-child abuse'.	HT
2	Remove 'Insert details' from policies.	HT
3	Mrs Laycock-Smith and Mrs Wood to review next steps and Learning Accord associate membership paperwork.	SLT
4	Contact Learning Accord MAT to advise of the Governing Body's decision.	Vice Chair
5	Liaise with SLT and Vice Chair and keep Governors informed of developments.	Chair
6	Mrs Hoole and Mr Pickles to deal with communications with the LA, the Diocese and the MAT regarding academisation and Head Teacher recruitment, as appropriate.	Chair and Vice-Chair
7	Full Governing Body meeting to be held at the School at 4:00pm on Thursday 8 February 2024 to discuss School Vision and Head Teacher recruitment and to agree membership of the recruitment panel.	All Governors