

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body
Mayfield School**

**28th February, 2024
Actions are in bold italic**

Present

Anna Chaudhri (Chair)
Sarah Stepney (Head)
Stephen Atkinson (Deputy Head)
Ann Nicholls
Ciara Murray

Patrick Gosling
Alison Cox
Eugene Krasnikov
Andrew Monteath
Jack Rudin
Graeme Cooper
Guilherme Zühlke O'Connor
Serin Dabb
Solma Erfan

1. Apologies for absence were received from Louise O'Gorman, Rehana Kousar and Jessica Rowson.
2. There were no declarations of interest.
3. Governor Issues

Graeme Cooper has moved from the Personnel Committee to the Resources Committee.
Rehana Kousar has moved from the Resources Committee to the Personnel Committee.

Jessica Rowson is stepping down at the end of the Spring Term, owing to a change in family circumstances. The GB thanks Jessica for all her work and wishes her and her family well for the future.

There is now a space for another Co-opted Governor and ***Louise will contact the LA in due course to see if a replacement for Jessica can be found. (Louise)***

4. Safeguarding

Alison Cox reported that she had completed a check of the Single Central Register of Appointments (SCR). She explained the function of the SCR to governors and commented that there were a few gaps which Kate Challis was chasing up. These show up in red on the Register and are easy to track. Essential Safeguarding training is recorded on the Register. This is up to date. Alison sampled some of the entries made for contractors and casual staff. Regular contractors and visitors to the school are DBS-checked by their organisations and Kate maintains a record of this.

There were no issues of concern to report to the GB.

5. Head's Report

Sarah Stepney presented the report to the GB which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Helena Osborne will return after Easter and continue the work on improving the quality of Writing at Mayfield. The focus is on accuracy and consistency in teaching writing across the school.

Governors will ask for an update on progress next year.

A report from the visit of the LA Maths Adviser is expected after her forthcoming visit. Meanwhile Stephen is working with the Maths Leads to target areas for improvement, following SATs analysis.

The new approach to Behaviour Management is being embedded and largely well received. Anyone flagged up as causing regular low-level disruption is being discussed by the Safeguarding
Signed _____ Date _____

Team in their weekly meetings, to ensure that early interventions can be made or underlying problems identified. Sarah told the GB that the children are giving positive feedback on the new behaviour policy.

The greater part of the discussion of Sarah's report focussed on Leadership and Management and she gave details of the meetings that have taken place with key people at the LA. Following her meeting with staff and governors, Emma Harkin, Head of SEND at the LA is visiting the school at our invitation on 12th March, to understand better the work we are doing. On the same day Ray Byford, the LA financial adviser will be coming to talk to us about setting the budget for the coming year and several governors will be attending the meeting alongside the SLT. A meeting with Daniel Zeichner is planned in May and Graeme Cooper has prepared a letter to him.

Our meetings with the LA have focussed on the high numbers of EHCP children being directed to Mayfield, in comparison with other local schools and the financial difficulties this is causing.

Q: Even if there was more money available from the LA to support SEND, would there not be a limit to the numbers a mainstream school could take, in terms of staffing and resources?

A: Yes; if the nature and complexity of needs continues to require more intensive staff support, we would not be able to meet all needs and to avoid compromising safety, we might have to send some children home. Other schools do this at need.

Q: How could we convince other schools who do not spend up to their limit on SEND to release the money to us?

A: This could not be done; the LA has pointed out that if they do claw back any underspent budget from schools, it goes into a general pot to be distributed across all schools in the LA. SEND funding for EHCPs is not ring-fenced in school budgets.

Governors expressed concern that we are required to balance a budget when we do not have full control over our costs in the area of SEND.

Anna explained the 'Safety Valve' position in which the LA is currently placed by the DFE. It is unlikely that more money will be forthcoming yet the LA continues to issue EHCPs.

Questions were also raised about the intake into Reception. We have been told over the past few years that our grounds for refusing to take directed children would be stronger if the school was full. This coming year numbers look quite healthy with 50 opting for Mayfield as first choice and a further 45 as second choice. Sarah explained the importance of maximum numbers on Census Day in October, since funding per child is based on that.

Q: Could any further cost savings be made through energy saving?

A: An adviser has come to look at this recently and will report their findings to the school.

6. Schools' Financial Value Standard

The document had been scrutinised by the Resources Committee at their recent meeting and was recommended for approval by the GB. The GB voted unanimously to approve the document to be **signed off by Anna Chaudhri. (Anna)**

7. SEND Update

There has been a great deal of discussion of levels of SEND at the school in meetings with the Local Authority. The focus at this meeting was on the recent monitoring visit by Patrick Gosling. Patrick circulated his report which focussed on aspects of compliance with the SEND Policy. Ann Nicholls went through the policy with Patrick and explained the ways in which the school meets its statutory SEND obligations. The GB thanked Patrick for his report and Ann for her clear explanations and time devoted to the visit.

8. Staff Consultation Update

The School has engaged in consultation with staff on necessary workforce reduction, in order to present a balanced budget for the coming academic year. The process is proceeding according to

Signed

Date

the timeline set out by the school at the beginning of the consultation. Kate Challis and Sarah Stepney are meeting individual staff who wish to seek advice or clarification on the process. The 16th March is the deadline for staff responses. While the atmosphere in school is positive, understandably some staff are showing signs of anxiety and more questions are arising among the Learning Support Staff.

Once staff responses have been received, the GB will be asked to approve the next phase of the process and full papers will be provided. An extraordinary meeting of the GB will be called on 25th March to deal with this issue.

In the week beginning Monday 20th May, a Governor Panel will need to be convened if the school is compelled to move to compulsory redundancies. Two governors have offered to serve on the Panel, Graeme and Will **but a third member of the Panel is still required. Anna will approach other governors to see who is available. (Anna)**

A matrix has been prepared, against which staff may be selected for redundancy, should the need arise and if any staff are at risk of redundancy, they will be called to individual meetings in the week beginning 15th April.

The school continues to hold the position of avoiding compulsory redundancy if at all possible and at present several staff are considering voluntary redundancy or reduction of working hours.

9. Reports from the Committees

Personnel: Minutes of the Meeting of 5th February have been circulated. The Link Visit on staff and management structures scheduled for the Summer Term is being prepared and a set of questions agreed by members of the Committee. **A date will be sought to carry out the visit. (Anna)**

Stephen Atkinson is finalising changes to the Team Leader and Subject Leader Handbooks and any governors undertaking the Link Visit will need to see a copy of each (Stephen).

Resources: Minutes of the Meeting of 15th January have been circulated. Discussion has been dominated by the forthcoming budget and cuts in expenditure needed to achieve a balanced budget for 2024/25. Kate Challis and Sarah Stepney have been working towards a three-year plan to turn projected deficit into a balanced budget by the end of three years. This is what the LA will require if we need to approach them for a deficit licence for the coming year. It is likely that a cash-flow loan will also be required to tide the school over certain pressure points in the financial year. Uncertainty continues regarding the number of EHCP children we may be directed to take for next year. If some of the children present very high needs, we shall be in the situation where we may need to increase learning support staff again. Governors expressed their reservations about this, since any increase in staffing hours would increase deficit at the end of next year.

Training Focus

Anna encouraged all governors to login to the Governor Hub to see what is available there. Louise has recently sent out details to everyone of how to login.

Anna then spoke to the GB about how to prepare for and conduct effective monitoring visits and the paper outlining good practice is submitted with these Minutes.

Date of the Next GB: Thursday 25th April, 2024

Signed

Date