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## Little Paxton School Governing Body

### **Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on Monday, 19th October 2015, at 7:30pm**

**Present:**

Ellen Barrett	Co-opted Governor	David Jones	Parent Governor
Penny Conway	Authority Governor	Mike Kendall	Co-opted Governor - Chair
Neil Donoghue	Co-opted Governor	Gemma Manning	Parent Governor
Diane Hawkes	Staff Governor / Head Teacher		
<b>In attendance:</b>	Alison Gatward	Clerk to the Governing Body	

1. Apologies for absence received and accepted - David Jones Parent Governor
2. Declaration of interests – as updated summary attached to minutes.
3. Minutes and Matters Arising

It was confirmed that the Equality Policy had been agreed at FGB.

4. Staff Update

a. Staff Absence

The member of staff who has been on long term sick leave is back at work on a phased return with 2 weeks at 50% followed by a further 2 weeks at 75% including half term. DH is monitoring this.

b. Maternity Leave

The teacher on maternity leave has returned for several keeping in touch days which have been very useful and have enabled her to be included in performance management and appraisals for her own team. She plans to also join the training day on Friday and further Senior Leadership team meetings. She still plans to return 4 days a week in January with her days being Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. This has been agreed and can be flexible as she will not be classroom based this academic year.

In addition, a request has come from another senior teacher who currently has a reduced contract which enables her to spend two afternoons a week working at Open Door Church. This has been an ongoing arrangement for many years and has always been flexible in the school's favour. However, work load and demands are making it increasing difficult for this teacher to leave school in a timely manner on the two afternoons she is not employed and therefore has requested a change to a full day's release rather than the two afternoons. PPA cover can be swapped and the other employer, the church, is happy with the proposal. It is proposed that Thursday be the day out of school which will not be the same day another senior teacher is not in school. There would be some advantage in working this way as it frees up another afternoon.

This would require a slight contractual change to a 0.8 contract. **QU:** Is this proposed to be a permanent move? For the foreseeable future. Governors agreed to this change.

Governors enquired about the well-being of the staff and senior leaders in particular. The half term has gone very fast and the staff appear to be generally happy. There have been some challenges but there is a strong culture of support which helps especially during the tougher times. DH endeavours to have one day a half term working from home to minimise the time she is out of school but to help with work that requires focus.

#### 5. Performance Management Update

TA reviews are complete and targets set. All teacher reviews are complete with just 3 or 4 members of staff to set targets formally for the forthcoming year – initial conversations have been had regarding proposed targets. Aim to be completed as soon after half term as possible.

#### 6. Succession Planning (Cambridgeshire Governor Services Suggested Item)

This ties into the academy discussions and development of middle management. **QU:** In what way can the governors in this committee support succession planning? Definite succession planning is really hard specifically putting people into future roles, the wider aim is to grow leaders and equip them with skills to take them to the next level. We aim to give people opportunities to be exposed to other elements of running the school. **QU:** What are the contingency plans should there be a death in service of the head for example? What would the short term plan be? How would you cover this in the interim until recruitment could take place? There is a strong senior management team who would step up and enable a senior position to be covered. This would be supported by County and our PPP partners, the Priory Schools, would also step in should the need arise.

**QU:** What are the thoughts on the strategy for the future of the school and how do we move pieces into place ready for being a larger school? There will need to be different layers of leadership. There are already thoughts as to the tiers of management that would be required for a 14 form school. Additional people managing different layers will be required in the next couple of years **QU:** Is this reflected in performance targets? It is already being considered and included in targets where appropriate. **QU:** How do recruitment plans take the growth of the school into account? We have already looked for teachers who are ready to take on more and this is part of the recruitment strategy. Once there is a timescale for the extension then firmer plans can be made. The SLT are already discussing options. **QU:** Are you considering roles or personalities? We are looking at what roles are required; what does the school need to run effectively? Do we have people within school that can do that position or do we need to recruit. **QU:** Is a balance of experienced and new teachers are essential? New teachers are adaptable to the culture of a school but experienced teachers bring other benefits too. Each has a part to play. **QU:** What role does the governing body have to help? Once we definitely know what we are aiming for, we need a plan in place for the proposed growth. We will need to look at the structure at every level, teachers, TA's. We will probably start with 14 classes and work back to see how it can be managed during the growth. **QU:** Is this where the savings and reserves come into play? The reserves will enable us to bring in the right people possibly ahead of when we need them to ensure that they are in place when required. It may mean offering a full time

position when initially the role would only be part time. DH explained that decisions have recently been made in this way. Any plan or proposal will be reviewed firstly in the personnel committee before going to the FGB. The governors' role will be to challenge what has been proposed. This will be added as a standing agenda item.

Recruitment for September 2016 will begin at Easter so this is when the decision regarding requirements for teaching staff will need to be made. In Sept 16 there are likely to be 11 classes. Need to decide what level we need to recruit at. Easter 2016 we would make the decision.

## 7. Review of policies:

### a. Governor Induction Policy

**QU:** To new governors: please let us know if this is a fair summary of your experience and give us feedback? New governors felt that some things were done but others weren't. It wasn't clear what the information pack was or who the main point of contact in the first instance should be. It was recommended that the new governors attend the Cambridgeshire Training Course for new governors. The initial liaisons should be with the clerk. **QU:** Is it important to meet the head and visit the school? It would be good for someone outside of the school to meet the head teacher. Someone may have become a governor for their own personal development and may not be known to the school. It may be any member of the SLT who give the tour of the school. Amend the policy to give more flexibility as to who would be responsible for new governors and take responsibility away from the Head. It needs to be clarified that the check list is for the governors own personal use. Much of the orientation is driven by proactive interaction from the new governor rather than the school.

**ACTION:** AG to amend policy

### b. Governor Visits Policy

P3 Be prepared - remove first sentence and bullets. Leave in "If you identify any concerns..." Minimum commitment – it was felt this should be left in as the desired level and be referred to when looking for volunteers for school visits. It was commented that any meeting in school e.g. financial reviews, are essentially school visits. This policy is usually reviewed by the Curriculum Committee but was brought to this committee in this instance to enable it to be reviewed sooner to support new governors undertaking a visit shortly and so that it can be loaded onto the website.

Subject to agreed amends the policy was approved and adopted.

**ACTION:** AG to amend.

## 8. Identify questions for Governor visit re: new staff induction

This school visit is to look at staff who are new to the school and new to their current year group. The aim is to establish if they are being looked after and supported in their new roles. This will then facilitate a review of the Staff Induction Policy to see if this is required and/whether it needs to be amended.

New to school -

1. What formal or informal induction have you had?
2. What internal and external training have you had to support you?

3. Is there anything that you feel could have been done, or you feel was missing from your induction?
4. Regarding the new Staff Handbook, did you receive this and genuinely was it useful or not? Was this a good source of information?

New year group – Questions 2 & 3 from above

Staff to speak to were identified as

- Laura Freeman Y3 - new teacher and new to the school
- Jo Sheppard Y4 - new to the school but experienced teacher. Also mentor to Lara which is a new role to her.
- Jess Anscombe - F/Y1 as a new year group

## 9. AOB

PC had emailed governors ahead of this meeting to confirm the composition of Review Panels in case they are required. Governors agreed to the panels in principle and therefore they are ready should the need arise.

Safer Recruitment – feedback from Cambridgeshire County Council internal audit team show that schools across the board are at a moderate level with this. There are 6 areas for concern;-

1. Job descriptions and person specifications
2. Review of application forms
3. Shortlisting and interviewing
4. Pre-employment checks – these are carried out and evidenced including the right to work in the UK
5. DBS check
6. Single Central Record

All areas were complied with in full as the normal practice in school. The only note of concern was no 5. Regarding the right to work in the UK. This was assumed to be the proof of identity required before commencing employment. If the person does not hold a UK passport then further questions are asked. EPM carry out the checks on our behalf. **QU:** Do EPM confirm that they have undertaken all these checks? What is sent back to school as evidence of this? This is not clear and needs to be looked into further.

**ACTION:** DH to confirm with EPM how no. 5 is managed and confirm what information is given to the school regarding the checks that have been carried out.

**QU:** Is there an individual audit for each school? This review is based on a small number of schools who were randomly audited and some information collected from self audits.

**QU:** Where do we currently stand on safer recruitment training? PC has done recently. DH needs to refresh as has done 4 years ago. GM trained 2 years ago.

**ACTION:** AG to investigate how many Governors have this training and identify if further governors are able to be trained.

It is felt that this is a hot topic in Cambridgeshire and schools are being advised to ensure that all evidence is available for Ofsted. It is less clear that this is such a high priority for Ofsted but it would be good practice to ensure that the correct processes are in place and are being followed. Following on from this it may become necessary for all Governors to be DBS checked.

5 schools have failed Ofsted inspections on safeguarding for this reason. Governors who are regularly in school should be DBS checked. More on this to follow in future meetings.

PC asked Governors if they would be willing to allow an observer to come to the next FGB meeting. This is a chair of another GB who would like to watch how our meetings are run. No objections were raised.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm