



AUTUMN TERM 2017

MINUTES of the People and Personnel Committee meeting of the Governors of Holmer Green Senior School held at the School on Tuesday 21 November 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT:	Mr D. Greenwood (DG)	
	Mr M. Jones (MJ)	Headteacher
	Mrs L. Swain (LS)	
	Mrs C. Whitehead (CW)	
	Miss K. Willard (KW)	Chair
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs C. Hawkins (CH)	Assistant Headteacher
	Mrs L. Jackson (LJ)	Business Manager
	Ms E. Walker (EW)	Clerk
ABSENT:	Mrs A. Brodala (AB)	Apologies received and accepted
	Mr R. O'Connor	Apologies received and accepted

NB. Governors' questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following item of Any Other Business was notified:
Parent Partnership Meetings

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared specifically in items on the agenda although the Clerk declared that she is employed part-time as a non-teaching member of staff at HGSS. Mrs Lisa Swain declared that she is a Governor at Manor Farm Community Infant School.

3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017, having been circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record. These minutes would be made available for inspection if requested.

3.2 MATTERS ARISING

ACTION

Headteacher

3.2.1 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (Minute No. 6)

MJ circulated a paper giving a progress report of the action to date in relation to matters raised by staff as part of the Staff Survey. MJ highlighted the following:

- MJ now meets with Staff Governors prior to governor meetings to see if there is anything that needs raising;
- Staff governors are engaged in the Headteacher recruitment process.
- Staff briefings are held twice weekly for short, sharp CPG and to enable key messages to be relayed by all.
- The role of running Professional Learning Communities is being shared by SLT and Middle Leaders.
- Good practice in developing staff (within SEN and Art) is promoted across the school.
- The change in roles of some admin staff has been a success.
- Key School Improvement areas have been circulated amongst staff and are on display in classrooms.
- The next survey will take place in February/March.

A governor asked whether the next questionnaire would contain different questions.

It was noted that all questions would be reviewed for relevance.

MJ/LJ

3.2.2 GOVERNOR CPD (Minute No. 8.2)

Governors discussed the possible need for one of them to attend safer recruitment training in order to meet the requirement for at least one member of recruitment panels is trained.

It was noted that in all other instances there would be a senior member of staff on the panel who would be safer recruitment trained. However, this would not be the case for the Headteacher appointment panel.

Lisa Swain reported that she had attended safer recruitment training as part of her governor role at Manor Farm Infants. Cheryl Whitehead noted that her training was out of date and needed renewing.

A governor commented that we needed to capture the relevant training attended in other walks of life on the governors' skills matrix.

**Development
Governor**

4 STAFFING UPDATE

MJ referred to the information that he had circulated prior to the meeting.

There is currently one vacant IT technician post and there will be maternity cover required in PE, MFL and Drama.

A governor asked why there were more starters than leavers?

It was noted that agency staff have been covering roles, some of which have converted to become permanent members of staff.

A governor asked what had happened to Mr Mizen?

It was noted that Mr Mizen had been appointed to the graduate teacher training programme and had very quickly realised that he was not suited to teaching. He would be replaced from January.

A governor asked if a stability index is applied to staffing positions?

It was noted that it is not considered necessary.

A governor asked if staff that are leaving undertake exit interviews?

It was explained that exit interviews are offered with the Headteacher to everyone when they leave. There is no compulsion to take this offer up though.

A governor asked why we offer exit interviews and do not require them?

Although exit interviews can supply useful information it is rarely a requirement in businesses elsewhere for them to be compulsory.

It was acknowledged that some staff might not want to speak to the Headteacher, in which case it would be useful to offer an alternative – possibly a governor. It would need to be made clear that the information would need to be shared.

MJ

DG reported that he had conducted an exit interview in the past.

A governor asked what he had done with the information he had gleaned?

DG stated that he had referred the information back to the school for action.

A governor asked MJ if he was happy with the quality of teachers in school.

MJ stated that he was.

4.1 HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT UPDATE

DG explained that at the first meeting of the procedures panel earlier the panel had considered the timescales for appointment, the advert and candidate information pack and a communication plan for members of the school community. The panel were being guided by the experience of Stephen Nokes, an ex-headteacher.

DG reported that he would be keeping parents and governors informed of progress through a weekly report.

A governor asked how staff had taken the news?

MJ admitted that it had been a shock to many staff due to the length of time that he had been at HGSS. He felt that staff and parents needed to be reassured that the process of replacing him was up and running and that the momentum to improve would continue with the new headteacher.

MJ stated that it would be important for a governor to speak to the staff to reassure them and inform them that they would be engaged in the recruitment process in some form.

DG

Following discussion, it was agreed to give staff the name of a governor (DG) that they could talk to in confidence.

A governor asked about the reaction from the students?

There has been little feedback from the students, but it was felt that it would be useful for DG to address the end of term assembly also. Information could also be presented to the Student panel also.

DG

A decision about who would be used to advise the appointment panel – Stephen Nokes/ Ralph Batten etc - would be discussed at a later stage.

**Appointment
Panel/FGB**

5 STAFF ABSENCE REPORT

LJ reported that the teacher absence rate equated to just over 1 member of staff/day. It was accepted that this was a low figure and that generally staff were happy at HGSS and happy to come to work. There were, however, some genuine health issues affecting staff absence rates.

Two members of staff are on absence monitoring and this is the process by which staff are held to account for their absences.

A governor asked about the absence allowance for compassionate leave.

LJ explained that staff are given 5 days pro rata/year for absences affecting their personal lives. This allowance, which is recognised as generous, is a reward for the commitment given by staff.

LJ reported that the absence rate for non-teaching members of staff has been very low.

6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

MJ referred to the paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting – the Annual report on the impact of appraisal and decisions on performance-related pay.

A governor asked which subjects had agency staff in place currently?

It was explained that there was one agency member of staff in both Drama and English currently. HGSS has a good record of staff converting from agency staff to permanent teachers. The reputation of the school has improved, and it is a more attractive prospect for teachers, making recruitment slightly easier. MJ explained that his ethos was to empower staff but to ensure they were still accountable for their actions and pupil outcomes.

MJ explained the support that Dr Challoner's Grammar School was giving high prior attainers at HGSS. This has involved staff coming to HGSS to boost the confidence of students here. The intention is that the student voice will be heard more – for example at governors' meetings – as was the case in the past.

6.1 TEACHER APPRAISALS

CH referred governors to the paperwork that governors had received. She explained that the Appraisal process had been changed and reviews now reflect on student achievement, professional craft and personal objectives. The process recognises additional roles and responsibilities and asks teachers to reflect on their own career progression. There is a prompt sheet to help teachers set their targets which are linked to SDP objectives and the Teacher Standards.

MJ explained the use of the Teacher Standards in addressing capability issues also.

In response to a question, CH explained that the same process is used for NQTs and SCITT staff.

MJ comments on all staff appraisal statements.

CH stated that the appraisal process also links to CPG and to line management meetings also. The INSET on the Friday before half-term is used by all staff to focus on performance management. After 6 months there is a review process. The system is working well and has been received well by staff.

A governor asked if objectives are matched with targets to ensure there are no surprises at review stage.

It was confirmed that they were.

A governor asked if it would be possible to map the Teacher Standards on the SDP.

MJ agreed to go away and consider if this would be valuable and possible.

MJ

A governor asked where any issues are captured?

It was explained that this would happen at line management meetings and at review.

MJ explained that staff feel that the process is less judgemental now that observations have strengths and areas for development recorded rather than given an Ofsted graded judgement. As a result, the process is now seen more integrally as part of CPG and the feedback to staff helps with employee engagement.

Governors thanked CH for her report. She left the meeting at 19.15.

6.2 SUPPORT STAFF APPRAISALS

LJ reported that the appraisal process for support staff was different and would occur from April through to March the following year. She would feed back to a later meeting about the process.

LJ
Agenda 5.6.17

Governors felt that it would be good to modify and extend the good practice with teacher appraisal to the support staff.

6.3 HEADTEACHER'S PM REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

It was noted that the Headteacher's Performance Management Review would take place on 29 November as per the email information that had been circulated.

7 PAY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESSION

It was noted that anonymised information had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting.

MJ reported that teachers had been rewarded according to student outcomes and not based on lesson observations.

A governor asked if staff are clear of their likely pay outcomes at appraisal stage.

It was confirmed that they are although this information is not contained on the appraisal form. MJ stated that he was reluctant to include this information on the appraisal form as it would risk labelling staff. He reassured governors that there were no members of staff in place who were not doing a good job or, if issues had been highlighted, were subject to an improvement plan.

A governor asked who would decide if teachers are a 1, 2 or 3?

MJ explained that ultimately this was his decision as Headteacher, based on recommendations made by line managers.

A governor asked if HGSS has many teachers who are at the peak of their teaching ability?

MJ responded that the staffing position is stronger than it was last year. Certain curriculum areas had been transformed by the arrival of new teachers.

It was agreed to approve all pay recommendations as outlined by the Headteacher.

8 GOVERNOR CPD

LJ reported that she had been working with LS, Development Governor, to create a bespoke induction programme for governors at HGSS. It had been decided to purchase the online training provided by the NGA which is flexible and provides more than 50 online modules. Mr Leftwich, newly appointed governor, would trial the induction training and feedback about its usefulness.

A governor asked if they needed a separate log-in to access the NGA Learning Link?

This would be investigated.

Post-meeting note

Governors log in to the NGA website using their usual access details and then need to register on the learning link tab.

All governors

All governors were reminded to attend the annual Safeguarding training on 29 November as planned on the meeting schedule.

All governors

9 MAT UPDATE

MJ reported that the scheduled MAT meeting on 1 December had been cancelled due to a clash of governor commitments at SWR.

MJ reported that whilst this had been frustrating he understood that SWR's focus, with a new Headteacher in place, must be moving the school from Requires Improvement to a Good Ofsted judgement.

Governors noted that the 6th Form partnership is working well, and the benefits of this arrangement are being felt by both schools and the students.

It was agreed that DG would liaise with the chair of governors at SWR regarding the date of the next meeting.

DG

A governor asked what the risk to the MAT was of having a new headteacher at HGSS?

It was confirmed that the basic structure was in place and the existing close collaborative arrangement with SWR would be stressed as part of the recruitment process.

A governor asked if it was likely that the progress towards developing a MAT might stall for a while?

MJ reminded governors that the decision to become a MAT was a matter for the Governing Body, not the Headteacher, as such, the process should continue. However, SWR's focus currently is to move from RI to Good.

A governor asked if there needed to be an Executive Headteacher in a MAT?

It was confirmed that there did.

10 POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVALS

10.1. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES

It was agreed to approve this policy as reviewed.

10.2 ATTENDANCE

A governor asked if exceptions were made in respect of authorising pupil absence for forces families?

LJ stated that schools are not allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances, and holidays are not considered exceptional.

It was agreed to approve this policy as reviewed.

10.3 EQUALITIES AND COHESION

A governor commented that 'special education needs' is not a protected characteristic under equalities legislation.

A governor asked how the school promotes the Equalities and Cohesion Policy?

It was noted that students are made aware of equalities issues as part of their PHSCE curriculum.

A governor asked if all policies are subject to an impact assessment to ensure they are not discriminatory?

LJ stated that part of the process of reviewing policies is to check that they comply with equalities legislation.

A governor suggested that a statement could be included in all policies to state that they have been impact assessed for equalities. LJ

It was agreed to approve this policy as reviewed, subject to the comments made above.

10.4 MATERNITY, ADOPTION AND PARENTAL LEAVE

A governor asked about the maternity pay rights of teachers as compared with support staff.

It was explained that, in accordance with School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPC) teachers only had to return for a 3-month period to ensure they did not have to repay their maternity pay. For support staff this was 6 months. Governors questioned the issue of equality in this respect but recognised that this was an entitlement for teachers.

A governor commented that it should be clarified that a sabbatical would not count towards a person's maternity entitlement.

A governor asked about flexible leave entitlement for support staff and suggested this section be changed to state that requests would be considered if they were deemed to be to the benefit of HGSS. It was also suggested that the word exceptional should be removed to make it clear to staff that this is not an expectation. LJ

It was agreed to approve this policy as reviewed subject to the comments made above.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates of meetings are as per the circulated schedule of meetings.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 PARENT PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

It was noted that the questions asked at the recent Parent Partnership meeting, together with the responses, had been circulated prior to the meeting.

MJ reported that these meetings are held termly, and the action is always followed up and reported back to parents. It acts as a powerful focus group of parents.

A governor asked how many parents attended?

LJ stated in the region of 30-40 parents attended this meeting. There is a core group of parents that attend every time although it is open for anyone to attend. There are always lots of positive comments made about the school.

13 EVALUATION OF MEETING

Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions. It was confirmed that all members of the Governing Body would have access to these minutes.

The meeting closed at 20.22

Signed Date

CHAIRMAN