

THE GOVERNING BODY OF HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HARD FEDERATION

MEETING: Wednesday 3 March 2010 at 5.00 p.m. in the Conference Centre, Queen Elizabeth High School

Present:

Mr Adrian Woolley (Chair)
Mr David Watson (Headteacher, Hexham Middle School)
Mrs Kate Gessey
Mr J Jonas
Mrs Rosemary Theobalds
Mrs Sandra Thompson
Mrs Angela Mole
Mr Alan Lynch
Mr Peter Maxwell
Mr Andrew Hedley
Miss Christine Carruthers
Mr Neil Morrison (Headteacher, Queen Elizabeth High School)
Mrs Sue Boath
Mr Roland Beevor
Mrs Helen Gray
Mr Simon Kitchman
Mr Robin Hodnett
Mr Neil Watson
Mrs Jacqui Cameron
Mrs Sarah Buchan
Mr Bill Wilson (Associate Member)
Ms Di Harris (Associate Member)
Mr Andy Byers (Associate Member)
Ms Helen Bailey (Associate Member)
Mr Neil Cassidy (Associate Member)
Mrs Susan Hope (Associate Member)

Also present: Mrs Helen Pye (Clerk to Governors)

PART 1 (Classified non-confidential)

Items discussed under Part 1 of this agenda will not be classified as confidential: consequently the minutes and supporting documents should be made available to any person wishing to inspect them.

REGULAR ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence and their acceptance or otherwise

Apologies were received and consent given for the absences of Mr Peter Oliver, Mrs Jane Wrigley and Mrs Alison Killen. Consent was also given to the absence of Mrs Annette Bedson.

2. Membership Update

The Chair, on behalf of the Governing Body, welcomed Mrs Jacqui Cameron (SGT/Hexham Middle School) to her first meeting of the Governing Body.

Mrs Theobalds put forward a nomination for Reverend J Anderson to be

Action by:

appointed as Community Governor. Governors unanimously supported the nomination for appointment. Furthermore, it was noted that a further Community Governor vacancy remained on the Governing Body.

3. Declaration of personal or pecuniary interest in any agenda item

Governors declared that they had no pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda.

Reminder – register of Governor interests to be updated for new Governors.

4. Consider & Adopt Minutes of Governing Body Meetings

Minutes of the following meeting, having been circulated to the Governors, were adopted and signed as a true record:

18 November 2009 – subject to the following corrections:

Item 7 – Mr Woolley not Wooley

Item 9(iii) – Mr Woolley not Wooley.

5. Matters previously referred or delegated to individuals or committees

Item 3 – Election of Vice Chair

Governors clarified that in the event of a tied vote, the Chair should have the casting vote.

Item 5 – Register of Governor interests

The register would be updated by Associate Governors.

Item 7 – Code of Conduct

Ms Gray/Mrs Wrigley – work in progress. To update at Summer Term meeting.

Item 9 (iii) – Tynedale Virtual College

Update by Chair – local residents in Prudhoe unhappy apparently with location.

Item 10 – Governing Body Decision Planner

Point 14 – dismissal of Headteacher. Clerk clarified that indeed a Committee should have responsibility for dismissal.

Item 9 (i) – Staffing Committee – 30 June 2009

Headteacher to forward minutes to Clerk.

Item 21 – Venue for Meeting

Discussed accommodation issues at Hexham Middle School. Agreed to continue to meet at Queen Elizabeth High School, Conference Centre.

N Morrison

6. Receive Minutes of Committee Meetings

Governors received the signed minutes from the following committee meetings:

- a) Finance and Premises – 1 February 2010
- b) Staffing – 7 December 2009 – confidential Part II
- c) Pupil and Curriculum Development – 10 February 2010
- d) Community Engagement – 10 December 2009/13 January 2010

Noted – Minutes 13 January 2010 – Item 2 – Point of accuracy by Mr D Watson – development of links were with Acomb First School and not Hexham East First School.

- e) Finance Committee – 24 February 2010 (Minutes tabled at meeting)

Mr P Maxwell reported on business discussed at meeting. Queen Elizabeth High School facing significant financial problems largely due to two main contributing factors – reduced pupil numbers in Year 9 and sixth form. The principal purpose of the meeting was to recognise the school's position and consider actions to be taken. The Staffing Committee would need to determine criteria for reductions although all areas were to be explored.

Governors were saddened that staff were threatened by reductions. The Chair in particular wished to reassure staff members that it would be a fair and transparent process and both the Chair and Headteacher would be willing to meet with any member of staff with concerns.

7. Review of Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

Governors considered committee membership and terms of reference.

Arising from the discussion:-

- It was agreed that Committees should have delegated powers to approve policies on behalf of the Governing Body.
- Mr Morrison suggested that Barbara Sherlin drew up a schedule of policy review dates.
- Clerk to provide list of statutory policies.
- Governors agreed to include the following statement in the Staffing Committee's Terms of Reference:

“To oversee any management actions of overseeing process for reducing staff.”

Mr Morrison

Clerk

ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS

8. Head Teacher's Reports

Governors considered the reports from the Head Teacher's that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Hexham Middle School (Mr Watson)

Arising from the report:

- Teaching staff noted. Early retirement of staff member anticipated at end of academic year.
- Increase in exclusions noted.
- Federations – in discussions with Governors and Leadership of Hexham East First School and Corbridge Middle School with a view to soft federating.
- Circulated for information – SEF document (draft), SIP report.

Queen Elizabeth High School (Mr Morrison)

Arising from the report:

- Admissions – noted reduced intake for September 2010.
- Attendance – improvements being made.
- School Improvement Partner – visited school. Report available at next meeting.
- Exclusions and Racist Incidents – noted.
- Examinations – discussed policy for entry for examinations. (Mr Beevor questioned examination data.)
- Development Plan – key areas identified as priorities from updated SEF.
- Staff changes noted.
- Continuing Professional Development – noted.
- NORTLE Platform – Mr Lynch and Chair to meet with Ms Bailey.
- Curriculum and Options – options process underway.
- Premises – noted in particular that synthetic pitch was in need of replacement – past its life expectancy – quotations currently being received and external funding investigated.

**Mr Lynch/Chair/
Ms Bailey**

9. School Policies

The following policies were recommended for ratification by the full

Governing Body:
Child Protection Policy

Policy approved in principle. Mr Beevor to discuss areas of concern with Di Harris. (To review Section 5.1) To update at next Governing Body meeting.

Di Harris

Looked After Children – Approved.

Gifted and Talented – Approved.

Drugs Policy

Approved subject to clarity on use of solvents. Di Harris to amend. Link Governor – Mr N Watson.

Di Harris

Attendance – Approved.

Single Equalities and Diversity Policy

Approved. Link Governor – Miss Buchan. (It was noted that the Racist Policy would be subject to annual review.)

Staff Requests to Change Contracted Hours Policy – Approved.

Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

Approved. (Mr P Maxwell made observation that would be directed to the author of the report.)

10. Budget Update

- a) Hexham Middle School – Mr Wilson explained the reason for the historic Hexham Middle School deficit budget – due to SEN funding mechanism changes and changes to formula funding.
- b) Queen Elizabeth High School – as previously noted (Item 6).

11. Governors' Report

Governors received and considered the report from Ms H Gray and Mr R Beevor.

The purpose of the visit was to look at information and communication technology teaching in Key Stage 3 with particular reference to progression between the two sites.

Ms Bailey pointed out a couple of observations regarding the report following which Ms Gray agreed to re-write the relevant section for clarity. An updated report would be forwarded to the Clerk.

Ms Gray

The Clerk suggested that in future, it would be good practise to agree reports with co-ordinators of the visit prior to presentation to the Governing Body.

12. Governor Support and Development Needs

Governors received the report from Peter Oliver and noted the long term benefit in Governor Mark.

A Byers to run session during course of current year on 14-19 education

13. **School Voluntary Accounts**

Governors received a certified copy of the school's voluntary account. (Hexham Middle School – copy filed in Minute Book)

14. **Federation Strategic Issues**

- a) Request for 'Soft Federation' discussions from Corbridge Middle School – Chair to discuss with Mr Snell.
- b) Developing the Hexham Middle School site to release spare classroom space and achieve a sustainable financial position – D Watson investigating potential of making site more financially viable.

Volunteers to discuss matter. Mr D Watson, Mr N Morrison, Chair, Mr S Kitchman.

15. **Improving Governing Body Meetings to handle business more effectively.**

Mr Jonas led discussion on improving efficiencies of the Governing Body.

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS –

Copies of documents available on www.northumberlandlea.net

CONCLUDING ITEMS

16. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

17. **Dates of Future Meetings**

Governors agreed the date of the next meeting as follows:

- Summer Term – Wednesday 23 June 2010 at 5.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

INFORMATION – Governors noted items sent to Chairs of Governors:

- Termly Briefing Paper to include revised Ofsted guidance and suggestions from the Chairs briefing meetings on how documentation associated with governance can record and reflect challenge offered by governors, specifically in relation to holding the school to account.
- School Improvement Planning Framework information.

Chair

Chair

23 June 2010