

GOVERNING BODY MINUTES SPRING TERM 2009

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

Meeting held on Tuesday 10 March 2009 at 5.00 pm in the School.

PRESENT

Mr Adrian Woolley (Chair)
Mrs Kate Gessey
Mrs Sandra Thompson
Mrs Rosemary Theobalds
Mrs Sarah Buchan
Mr David Edwick
Mrs Alison Killen
Mr Alan Lynch
Ms Helen Gray
Mr Roland Beevor
Mr Peter Maxwell
Mr David Watson (Headteacher, HMS)
Mrs Christine Carruthers
Mrs Rebecca Alderson
Mrs Angela Mole
Mr Neil Morrison (Headteacher, QEHS)
Mr Robin Hodnett
Mr Andrew Hedley
Mrs Sue Boath
Mr Simon Kitchman
Councillor J B Jonas
Mr Peter Oliver
Mr Bill Wilson (Observer)
Mrs Di Harris (Observer)
Ms Helen Bailey (Observer)

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs Helen Pye (Clerk to Governors)
Mr P Latham (Chair of Governors, Corbridge Middle School)
Ms Grace Burke (Hexham East Regeneration Officer and Colleagues present for item 2)

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.

On opening the meeting Governors were saddened to hear the news of the passing of David Boas, Headteacher at Hexham Middle School 1992 – 2005. Regards would be sent to his family.

REGULAR ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence and their acceptance or otherwise.

Apologies were received and consent granted for the absences of Mrs Jane
Ch.'s Initials_____

ACTION

Wrigley, Mrs Annette Bedson and Mr Andy Byers.

2. Presentation by Grace Burke, Hexham East Regeneration Officer regarding Regeneration / Community Garden at Hexham Middle School.

Grace Burke, Hexham East Regeneration Officer attended the meeting with colleagues to discuss plans / 'the vision' for 'Transition Tynedale' to regenerate land on the Hexham Middle School site.

A paper was circulated for Governors information (copy filed in Minute Book) outlining who 'Transition Tynedale' were, the aims of Community Gardening, the timescale for the project, who would be involved and the funding of the project.

Governors were interested in the idea and in order to progress further the Chair suggested that Mr Watson prepare a report for consideration at the next meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee.

Ms Burke and her colleagues were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

3. Membership update

Governors welcomed, Mr Simon Kitchman, Councillor J B Jonas and Mr Peter Oliver (Community Governors) to their first meeting of the Governing Body.

Furthermore, Governors noted that there were two Community Governor vacancies presently remaining. There were no nominations for consideration at this present time.

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

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

The register of Governors' interests would be updated accordingly by new Governors.

A copy of the register would be retained in school for audit purposes.

5. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2009, having been circulated to the Governors, were adopted and signed.

6. Matters Arising

Item 4 – Membership Update

Panel met, Community Governor nominations considered / now appointed. Noted – no other nominations presently for remaining two vacancies.

**Mr Watson
Finance &
Premises
Committee**

Item 7 – Minutes

It was noted that it was the school's intention to publish a copy of the minutes once approved by the Governing Body, on the school's website.

Item 8 – Matters Arising

(item 4(iii)) – Pen Portrait presently being updated by B Shevlin. To arrange to forward copy to Mrs Helen Gray.

Item 10 – Annual Review of Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

Mrs Gessey mentioned consideration be given to the establishment of a Community Education Committee if appropriate – Refer to Item 9.

Governing Body Decision Planner – Chair to progress with Mr Watson / Mr Morrison and report back to next Governing Body meeting.

Item 11 – Headteacher's Report – Mr Watson

Partnership Middle Schools had decided to continue optional Year 8 SATs.

Item 14 - Planned Admission Number

The request for an admission number of 120 for Hexham Middle School had been refused. This was to remain at 150.

Item 15 – Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection

Mr Watson and Mr Edwick were to undertake training in April.

Item 16 – Health and Safety Policies

Both Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School were undertaking reviews of their current Health and Safety Policies and would consult Governors at an appropriate stage once the Finance and Premises Committee had discussed this. Concerns were duly noted that were expressed by Mr Beevor with regard to whether policies were adequate and legislative requirements were being met.

The Clerk suggested that further advice be sought from Mr John Froud, Principal Health and Safety Officer, Northumberland County Council.

7. Receive Minutes of Committees meetings

Governors received the Minutes from the following Committee meetings:

Headteacher Performance Management Committee

Mr Woolley gave a verbal report summarising the business discussed at the above meeting. Headteacher Performance had been reviewed and objectives set for the next annual review. Mr Woolley mentioned that the Committee would need to examine the 'vision and values' of the 'federation' and consider one single policy for performance management.

Chair

**Chair
Mr P Watson
Mr N Morrison**

**Finance &
Premises
Committee**

Furthermore, it was noted that performance management of other staff was in progress.

Staffing Committee – 23 February 2009

Minutes tabled at the meeting (copy filed in Minute Book)

Arising from the minutes:-

Queen Elizabeth High School – Noted – Pay Policy and TLR Structure – currently under review. School facing difficult budget projections.

Pupil and Curriculum Development Committee – 2 March 2009

The Chair made apologies as the Committee was unable to have minutes available due to the short time scale.

The main business discussed at the meeting included:

- i) Hexham Middle School – Progress with School Improvement Plan
- ii) Queen Elizabeth High School – updated sections of Self Evaluation form (SEF).

Also discussed were two items of business that required ratification by the full Governing Body.

Timing of School Day (Queen Elizabeth High School)

As Queen Elizabeth High School did not currently fulfil its government requirements of 2 hours / week Physical Education for Key Stage 4 (currently provide 1 ½ hours / week), it was considered that the only possible option would be to slot in an extra session every alternative Tuesday thereby extending the school day – later finishing time. The school would need to undertake a statutory consultation process of 3 months in order to invoke the change.

Following lengthy discussion, Governors were unanimous in supporting this decision.

School Uniform Policy (Queen Elizabeth High)

Governors discussed a draft amendment to the school uniform policy (draft document tabled – copy filed in Minute Book).

The school would hope to introduce the new policy from September 2009 and would be more rigorous in its application of the uniform code.

Governors were unanimous in their support of the introduction of the revised policy.

Finance and Premises Committee meeting – 4 March 2009

Arising from the meeting:

The Committee expressed continued concern in relation to the safety of the road outside of the school. The Chair had written to Northumberland County Council (response awaited) – copy also forwarded to local MP requesting support.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS

8. Report back on any matters previously referred / delegated to individuals / Committees

There were no further items to report.

9. Annual Review of Committee membership and terms of reference

Governors agreed to hold an informal meeting of Governors on Wednesday 17 June 2009 at 7.00 pm to discuss current issues.

Proposed agenda item for consideration - establishing forum for Community relationships / extended services

(Chair to have discussions in advance of meeting with Mrs R Theobalds).

Committee membership

The following changes / appointments to Committee Membership were agreed:-

Mrs Sarah Buchan – To change from Finance and Premises Committee to Staffing Committee

Councillor J B Jonas – Appointment to Pupil and Curriculum Development Committee.

Mr Peter Oliver – to be invited to attend Arts Management Board.

10. Headteacher's Report

i) Governors received and considered Mr Watson's report that had been circulated with agenda papers prior to the meeting.

Arising from the report:

- Present Staffing noted
- Forecast of pupil numbers discussed
- Key Stage 2 test results noted for information.
- Plans for Art Drama and Music events at the Abbey with Corbridge and St Joseph's Middle School on Friday 8 May 2009.
- Cycle Training – To look at cycling proficiency qualifications for those children who choose to cycle to school.
- Corbridge Middle school and Hexham East First School seeking to soft federate through due process.
- Noted increase in SEN numbers (just under 5% of school have a statement).

The Headteacher pointed out how increasingly difficult it was becoming to get statements from the Local Authority.

Budget Report received – considered by Finance and Premises Committee. Mr

Edwick / Mr Wilson attended meeting with school's forum committee to raise concerns / issues in respect of stated funding.

ii) Consideration was given to Mr Morrison's report which had been circulated separately prior to the meeting (copy filed in the Minute book).

Arising from the report:

- Pupil forecast noted and the implications for future staffing arrangements
- Exclusion and Racist incidents noted for the period 25 October 2008 – 27 February 2009.
- Examinations Data / Target Setting – noted for information * Mr R Beevor requested comparative data with previous years.
- Self Evaluation form – Draft Sections 1 – 5. Tabled for information, copy filed in Minute book. Key sections discussed with school improvement Partner.
- An updated school development plan is currently being produced and will be made available before the next meeting of the full governing body.
- Staffing – appointments / departures noted during the period 25 November 2008 – 26 February 2009.
- 14 – 19 Curriculum Governor Training session to be held on Wednesday 25 March at 6.30 pm in the conference centre, Queen Elizabeth High School. All governors invited to attend.
- Premises update – noted current improvements.

***Mr Morrison**

11. Budget Update – 2008/09

Schools were presently awaiting budget share information from the Local Authority.

The Finance and Premises Committee would make arrangements to approve the budgets for Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School by 1 May 2009. A report would be made available to the next full Governing body meeting.

12. Visiting Governors' Report

Protocols for school visits would be discussed at the informal meeting to be held on 17 June 2009.

In the summer term, it was agreed that, Ms Helen Gray and Mr David Edwick would undertake a visit focusing upon ICT.

**Ms Gray
Mr Edwick**

13. Consider Governor Support and Development needs

Mr Peter Oliver had been appointed to co-ordinate Governor training requirements. Specific training needs were to be identified and the Clerk advised accordingly.

Mr P Oliver

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS

14. County Council Maternity Provisions

Governors noted that they had the discretion to pay employees for Keeping in Touch (KIT) days. It was agreed that Mr Morrison and Mr Watson would review

**Mr Watson
Mr Morrison**

current leave of absence policies and report back to Governors.

Governors also noted the need to make an effort to provide facilities for new mothers upon returning to work.

15. Publication Scheme

Governors noted the statutory requirement of the Freedom of Information Act and agreed to make arrangements to complete a revised publication scheme for the school, using the template and guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (I.C.O.).

It was noted that this was being progressed by Mr Watson and Mr Morrison.

An update would be given at the next termly meeting.

**Mr D Watson
Mr N Morrison**

16. Community Cohesion

Governors considered the report on their duty to promote community cohesion and noted the need to complete part 6b of the Self Evaluation Form which was presently being progressed by the Headteachers.

Further discussions would take place with the School Improvement Partner and the outcome would be discussed at the Pupil and Curriculum Development Committee.

**Mr D Watson
Mr N Morrison
Pupil &
Curriculum
Development
Committee**

CONCLUDING ITEMS

17. Urgent Business

Narrowing the Gap – Consultation Document (Versions 1.0 & 1.1)
The Chair would circulate a copy of his Version 1.0 response (made in January) to Mr Frank Jordan, Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance to Governors. Comments were also sought from Governors on Version 1.1 (web link circulated in February) so that an additional response, if appropriate, could be composed and sent.

Chair

18. Dates of Future Meetings

Governors agreed the following date for the Summer Term meeting of the Governing Body:-

Tuesday 30 June 2009 at 5.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.55 pm.

30 June 2009 Chair

Ch.'s Initials_____