



Aston Rowant C+E Primary School
School Lane, Aston Rowant, Oxon OX49 5SU
01844 351671 office@aston-rowant.oxon.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs Helen France

Meeting of the Governing Body of Aston Rowant CE Primary School

Wednesday 22nd September 2021 @ 18:30

STRATEGY MINUTES

In attendance: Steve Taylor (ST) *Chair*; Sam Goose (SG); Tom Sowerby (TS); Helen France (HF); Alexi Olsen (AO); Georgina McCleary (GM).

NB: Governor questions are in *red and italics* throughout as evidence of their “challenges”.

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and prayer

Apologies: Alan Melady (AM), Des Foote (DF).

2. Election of Officers and Review of Committees

Election of Chair: ST was nominated by SG and seconded by TS. ST elected Chair of Board of Governors unanimously. In the absence of the incumbent Vice-chair, the election of the position was postponed until the next meeting.

It was agreed that the current committees (finance, teaching and learning, safeguarding and health and safety, and performance management) were necessary and effective. Committee chairs were re-elected with no dissenting votes. It was noted that the names of the committees in OCC’s annual schedule was did not match those that we currently used.

Action: ST to speak to Rachel Caseby and check that all mandatory committees are in place, and whether it is necessary/best practice/common practice to rename our current committees to be in line with those in the annual schedule.

Committee	Committee Chair
Teaching and Learning	AM
Safeguarding and Health and Safety	TS
Finance	SG
Performance Management	ST

Action: ST to create ‘governor grid’ with roles and responsibilities

3. Declarations of business/pecuniary interests

Pending formal declarations to be completed, TS declared his training company verbally, there were no other declarations of business and pecuniary interests. **Action: ST to discuss with clerk and source form for recording interests.**



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4. Minutes of previous strategy meeting 7 July 2021

Approved.

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

ITEM	ACTION	Responsible person & update
1	Amend EGR report	No response, ST to follow up
2	Investigate and implement staff survey	(AM) Agreed to repeat Autumn 2021
3	Draft an advertisement for a SEN governor.	TS – awaiting size of ad depending on where it would be displayed. Expanded below.
4	Circulate the 15 th July 2021 budget submission.	SG – received today, for distribution with minutes.

Governor recruitment – HF had possible candidate (passed on by Robin Sharples, Oxford Diocesan Board of Education) and has attempted to contact, but not heard back yet. ST agreed to try to get something ready for AR Parish Notes, though print deadline Friday 24th.

6. Headteacher Update

HT update was circulated prior to the meeting by HF. An email address has been set up to CC governor challenges made by email, for the purposes of recording such instances: fqb.challenge@gmail.com.

Challenges submitted by AM by email (full exchange in annex) the following were discussed:

- i. *Website requires urgent update.* All agreed. HF has given each teacher a non-teaching day to update their relevant parts of the website. Update and maintenance is considered a high priority as 'front door' for both parents and OFSTED.
- ii. *Is the foundation class full – understood 16 was aim?* 15 is a full year intake (105/7) and increase above this would give >30 class size when amalgamated in Y1/2. Can be increased at HF discretion, but 15 is an appropriate number given the full class in the year above – 30 is the statutory maximum class size for children aged 4-7.
- iii. *Safeguarding – can we see total number of incidents and per child?* Governors present agreed that we felt we had enough information generally to understand the situation in school. Too much information unnecessarily risks compromising confidentiality (particularly in a small school). Detail is understood by safeguarding governor – this is considered appropriate oversight.



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- iv. *Should HF be SENCO as HT? Is this best practice?* Not ideal and not best practice, but attempts being made to improve the situation, but no progress at this time. Note with the retirement of Sheila Reynolds as Foundation Governor, ST has assumed the role of SENCO Governor.

TS challenges:

- i. *Re summer term challenges, had the situation with the child who required medical input changed?* HF reported that the situation was difficult and took a lot of time from staff members, but were managing the situation as well as possible – it was noted that the school had led on the management of this in the absence of other external input.
- ii. *Re parental bereavement – how is this situation progressing?* GM reported that things were improving, but could be up and down through this school year – going as well as can be expected.
- iii. *What were the reasons the children that left the school prior to this academic year did so?* Variety of reasons, but none for negative perceptions of the school (one child’s travel arrangements become untenable, one had been waiting for a place with a sibling at a local school, one to private schooling and the remainder moving away from the area)

ST Challenges:

- i. *Following up on AM question about monitoring school performance against expectation, do we meet targets?* HF responded – year by year results as per her report, will be using O-track and other internal measures, but external measure of KS1/2 impossible to compare nationally in the absence of SATs last year. Noted the importance of making some comparison available to GB. In terms of governor monitoring, HF is preparing ‘OFSTED questions’ for teachers which will be shared with Governors.

Discussion of subject monitoring for the forthcoming year, decision made to align governors with teachers groupings:

Subject Lead Teacher	Subjects	Governor
HF	RE, Collective Worship, PSHE, SENCO	TS
GM	Science, History, Geography	SG
AO	Mathematics, Art, Design Technology	AM
Diane Harriman (DH)	English, Modern Foreign Languages	ST
Rachel Hall (RH)	EY, Music, Computing	DF
Andrew Manning (AMa)	PE	TBA



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- ii. *How do we ensure and record how the money received for SEN is directed appropriately?* HF – Important consideration that we track money from particularly pupil premium, sports premium and catch-up premium to ensure it is spent appropriately. This is provided in the headteacher report. **Action: SG to coordinate with Jane Oakford (JO) to provide separate breakdown of expenditure within those three particular areas for governors to familiarise.** Discussed some examples of how the pupil premium and sports premium had been spent.

GB discussed funding more generally – could the school introduce a voluntary lump sum donation for parents to cover the expense of trips etc throughout the school year. **Action: SG to bring to finance committee for feasibility discussion/decision.**

GB discussed school policies review. Particular importance is safeguarding policy but all policies required review. **Action: HF to upload to 'for review' folder in Governor Hub and send policy log/summary to TS. TS to divide up between appropriate governors and each governor to review and move to reviewed folder in governor hub.**

ST asked if we had to use the OCC template for the safeguarding policy. Answer (HF and TS) – yes – it is a carefully drafted template and involves a lot of legislative issues. School can have procedures to complement the policy but the template should be used as the main policy.

7. Safeguarding\Health & Safety

TS advised that a safeguarding meeting was due next week.

TS presented the results of an 'interim' staff stress survey he had conducted. 3 respondents, difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions from a small sample, but generally the feedback was that there were significant levels of stress and it was affecting staff, but it was generally considered 'manageable' and staff thought they were supported by the school to the extent that was possible. The next stress survey is due for dissemination in October, which will include the new teaching staff.

A health and safety meeting is planned.

8. Finance

SG fed back from a telephone call with the bursar from 2 days ago. Biggest concern was looking ahead to next year's budget which will depend on the census coming up in early October. Currently 75 pupils rather than the projected 81 as mentioned above which puts us into a deficit position for our projected 22/23 budget. OCC have urged us to look for savings where possible.

9. Teaching and Learning Committee Update.

No update



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10. Strategy, EGR actions, Annual Schedule

The focus of the GB was discussed. Need to consider long term plan, but OFSTED was considered to be a high priority given the implications for a poor result, particularly on the ability for the school to attract pupils and maintain an appropriate level of funding.

The board agreed to hold another meeting (proposed date Tuesday 5th October, TBC) to action the remaining points of the OCC annual schedule.

Action (relevant committee chairs): ToR for committees not yet distributed should be done so ASAP, and before 2nd October for perusal prior to proposed meeting and approval at that meeting.

11.AOB

HF will disseminate the school improvement plan for governor awareness.

The meeting finished with HF sharing with the GB, the 'High Quality Inclusive Teaching (HQIT)' method of teaching which is new to Oxfordshire. This method has been successfully implemented in Hertfordshire schools over the last 7 years and is now being introduced into more local authorities. Aston Rowant School is in the vanguard of the Oxfordshire schools roll out. AO and GM were very supportive of the new methods and enjoyed using them. Their experience to date has witnessed a real difference in pupil engagement. Governors were impressed with the new system and looked forward to further updates. HF had shared news of this new approach for Aston Rowant in the school newsletter.

12. Dates of FGB meetings

Dates for 2021/22 have been disseminated by CoG.

ACTIONS SUMMARY

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
1	(Carried over) Investigate and implement staff survey	(AM) Agreed to repeat Autumn 2021
2	(Carried over, amended) Create advertisement for AR Parish Notes for a SEN governor.	ST
3	Carried over) Circulate the 15 th July 2021 budget submission.	SG
4	Action: ST to speak to Rachel Caseby and check that there were no mandatory committees that are not in place, and whether it was necessary/best practice/common practice to rename our current committees to be in line with those in the annual schedule.	ST



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5	Action: ST to create ‘governor grid’ with roles and responsibilities	ST
6	Action: ST to discuss with clerk and source form for recording interests.	ST
7	Action: SG to coordinate with Jane Oakford (JO) to provide breakdown of expenditure within those three particular areas for governors to see.	SG
8	Action: SG to bring to finance committee for feasibility discussion/decision.	SG
9	Action (relevant committee chairs): ToR for committees not yet distributed should be done so ASAP, and before 2nd October for perusal prior to proposed meeting and approval at that meeting.	Committee Chairs
10	Action: HF to upload to ‘for review’ folder in Governor Hub and send policy log/summary to TS. TS to divide up between appropriate governors and each governor to review and move to reviewed folder in governor hub.	HF, TS

ANNEX 1 – Replies to Governor Challenge by email from AM.

From: Mrs France <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>

Sent: 19 September 2021 21:58

To: Alan Melady <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>; Steve Taylor <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>

Cc: fgb.challenge@gmail.com <fgb.challenge@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Comments ahead of FGB meeting on 22nd September

Dear Alan,

Head Teacher's Report: Challenge

- Thank you for sending in advance providing sufficient reading time.
- Great to see the positive comments from external review bodies. **Good to have external validation**
- Regarding the OCC report, it should be clear that there is more to do to ensure the school is delivering at the level "Good" identified by Ofsted **Yes, lots to do, as reflected in the SDP**
- Website - is it compliant with minimum requirements? There are items from FGB missing (ToRs, attendance records etc.) **The website needs a lot of work still. I am working through the latest guidelines but really do need someone to take this on. My time needs to be on other elements in the school.**
- Admissions: I thought we were aiming for 16 in Reception. So we were not full intake, but 1 short last year and this. Am I mistaken? We should aim for 16 as there is always attrition. **Our official number remains at 15, so we are a full intake and were full last year too. Our school number is 105 which is 15 per year group R to Y6. At my discretion we can take an additional child into any class providing it does not take us over our maximum number, which is 30 . However, we must remember that if we go to 16 per year group the mixed year classes will therefore be 32 . We would need to be clear if as a small school we want above average class sizes.**
- Safeguarding - can we see the total number of incidents and per child? **In theory, but it is a lot of work, so we would need to be clear of the benefits. I can see it as DSL. The Safeguarding Governor is the person who would probe this.**
- Safeguarding - ongoing issues of injuring & intimidation were mentioned in previous reports. Is there a plan to resolve? Or is it just to be managed? **To be managed. One specific child has moved on. One SEN child may also be moving, but her behaviour is carefully managed and recorded.**
- What action is there on Covid performance gap closure - we will include in Teaching & Learning committee but should be summarised in this report - If this is only the PP activity - what was included? **We have a Covid catch up plan. It will be summarised in the FGB business Headteacher's report, this was an extra report to bring Governors up to speed**
- Can the school performance and standards be seen graphically? It is difficult to read across the terms. Again - this could be covered at the T&L committee **We are looking at what OTrack can do**
- Helen as SenCo - is this an overburden and not best practice? Should be reviewed. **It is far from ideal. We have advertised, we have approached OCC, I have raised it at THP, I have directly approached a number of different schools. There are a number of schools in our position.**

- Regarding Performance Management of staff - what are the focus areas to turn around the 20% that requires improvement? The 20% was one individual who has left the school. Remember this was the 2020-21 cycle. And how soon will the 2x new teachers be assessed? We have a regular M&E programme. Performance management is completed by the end of October every year. Can cover at T&L. Performance management cannot be discussed in any detail with Governors who are also parents.
- School Improvement: the points listed are the "What". Can we add the How and When? Doesn't need a lot of detail. But some key focus points. This is covered in the SDP Can cover at the T&L. And will be in the SIP - could a summary be here? There is a risk of duplicating documentation.
- What actions are being taken in response to the findings of OCC regarding Year 3/4 class behaviour for learning? Included in both the SDP and M&E