

Aim High, No Limits

ANSTEY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting Held on Wednesday 22 March 2017 at 5.30pm

Present: Geraldine Dawson (Chair) Nigel Lowe
Jenny Jones (Head Teacher) Clare Walker
Tracie Brown Paul Denton
Suzanne Hayden Caroline Prescott

Apologies: Daniel Healy Tim Yates
Lewis Johnston Martin Green

In Attendance: Rachael McGrath (Deputy Head)
Juliet Woolman (Clerk) (Items 1-8)

		Action
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</u> The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. Apologies were accepted.	
2.	<u>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests</u> There were no declarations.	
3.	<u>Curriculum / Teacher Report – Spelling</u> The Headteacher presented information to the meeting on spelling in place of Emily South who was unwell. Governors started the item by discussing why spelling was important. Reasons included that misspelling caused others to make value judgements about the writer and could also change the meaning of what was written. Children also had to be taught to use the correct homophone. Correct spelling was now integral to 2 out of 4 subjects assessed at KS2. Poor spelling last year had contributed to lower pupil achievement in writing and SPAG. Children in Y6 were now being assessed half-termly and at the end of the year on KS2 SATs spelling tests. Vernon spelling tests also took place termly. Children in Ys 3,4 and 5 were sitting Rising Stars tests half-termly. The Headteacher then circulated examples of Y6 spelling tests which tested children's knowledge of spelling rules. To meet expectations, a child had to spell most words correctly from the statutory lists for their year group. Spelling results had been 4% below national levels last year. The goalposts for writing had been very uncertain but HCC had now produced examples of writing and teachers were assessing more securely. The majority of marks were gained in the mechanics of writing, including punctuation.	

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	<p>Governors commented that the time spent trying to help children understand the use of punctuation such as colons detracted from time that could be spent on creative writing. The Headteacher concurred that there was concern that this emphasis might stop children from enjoying writing and therefore they allowed opportunities for the children to write freely from time to time.</p> <p>Items included in the action plan were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HIAS had come in to advise on spelling and look at the school's action plan; - staff meetings had taken place looking at resources and different approaches to teaching including the use of investigative approaches; - an independent consultant had helped to clarify the vision which focused on passion, understanding, problem-solving and transferable skills; - increased provision of teaching time from half an hour to one and a half hours per week on spelling. Lessons were now slightly shorter in line with secondary schools; - ensuring coverage of the national curriculum including resources like spelling books which help to teach children the rules of spelling; <p><i>Governor Q: is this different to the way it was taught in the past?</i> Headteacher – it was only taught once a week before. We have always taught the spelling rules but now children have more time to go over it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parental engagement – children have spelling investigations to tackle at home and information is provided for parents; - high expectations including rewarding effort and putting support in place. <p><i>Governor Q: does this demoralise some children or are you able to take all children along?</i> Headteacher – for some children, year words will be too difficult and they will have some additional interventions including focusing on high frequency words which they will be tested on.</p> <p>In assessed work, a teacher could not correct spelling but one child could correct another. Children were also allowed to use word banks. No child was held back from meeting expectations in writing through spelling because they were given opportunities to redraft their work and would use this opportunity to check spellings. They also had to be conscious of their handwriting.</p> <p><i>Governor Q: does it work with one child correcting another's work?</i> Headteacher – the children are all really supportive of each other and we have done a lot of work on this.</p> <p>Other initiatives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring that word lists are produced to support a topic; - interventions including 57 children receiving support with Phonics and 21 using Toe to Toe; - learning walks by Rachael McGrath and Emily South to inform staff training. <p>Next steps would include celebrating success, sharing good practice and continuous monitoring.</p> <p><i>Governor Q: are there any writing competitions for primary age children?</i> Rachael McGrath – we entered some into the 500 Words competition. We make sure that every piece of writing has a purpose but we have to strike a balance with ensuring that work fits in with the national curriculum.</p> <p><i>Governor Q: are teachers confident with the new approach?</i> Headteacher – there is probably less passion for it at the moment than for maths but we are now starting to see results which helps to demonstrate the impact. Rachael</p>	

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	<p>McGrath – we also try to share best practice and innovative ideas between teachers. The Headteacher confirmed that a Parents' Evening had now been booked for spelling and reading. Governors expressed their thanks to Emily South for all her work in this area.</p>													
4.	<p><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters Arising <i>Item 4 (11.1) Safeguarding</i> – Governors were reminded to let the Chair know when they had read the Keeping Children Safe in Education document. New Governors should also attend the HCC training on this. Tracie Brown and Suzanne Hayden had completed training online. <i>Item 4(11.3) Induction</i> – mentors had now been assigned to new Governors. <i>Item 6.2 Governor Website</i> – work was in progress on the Governor part of the website. <i>Item 8 Training</i> – Tracie Brown and Lewis Johnston would be meeting to consider suitable training. Tracie Brown would also arrange a meeting for Summer 1 for Governors to consider the SEF. <i>Item 10.1 Health and Safety Policy</i> – complete.</p>	<p>ALL PD/CP</p> <p>TB</p>												
5.	<p><u>Headteacher's Report</u></p> <p>A written report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Governor Questions</u> 1) <i>How are NQTs assessed?</i> Headteacher – they are measured against different standards to teachers. They are observed more often against clear criteria as part of a rigorous process. Judgements are 'working towards', 'meeting', or 'exceeding'. We have 2 NQTs this year. 2) <i>What happened with the LLP visit?</i> Headteacher – we have the report from this. Pam Simpson, the School Improvement Manager, oversees the District and has recommended a package of support as a result of which an advisor will be coming in. The Chair clarified to Governors that this visit had not taken place until this term and, in the meantime, the SST had already identified the support the school needed. <i>Governor Q: would it have been helpful if she had come in earlier?</i> Headteacher – even though we have already acted on our results, she has to come in but it is too late for the support she suggests to influence results for this year as SATs are in May. My report lists all the support which we, as a school, have already put into place.</p> <p>The Headteacher then provided Governors with predicted SATs results for this year based on tests and pupil reviews:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 1872 1332 2038"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>% Meeting Expectations 2017</th> <th>% Meeting Expectations 2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Reading</td> <td>80</td> <td>64</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td>76</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths</td> <td>76</td> <td>45</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		% Meeting Expectations 2017	% Meeting Expectations 2016	Reading	80	64	Writing	76	50	Maths	76	45	
	% Meeting Expectations 2017	% Meeting Expectations 2016												
Reading	80	64												
Writing	76	50												
Maths	76	45												

			Action
SPAG	70	59	
Combined	60	33	
<p>3) <i>Why is combined r,w,m lower?</i> Headteacher – this percentage represents children meeting ‘ARE’ in all 3 subjects. Often a child will meet the standard in 2 subjects but not the other and this pulls the percentage down. Approximately 12 children are below in one subject and we think we can move 6 of them up to ‘ARE’. This should put us above national average compared to last year but, of course, other schools will also move up this year.</p> <p>4) <i>Has the HIAS Science inspector published an article on AJS in their magazine?</i> Headteacher – this hasn’t happened yet but we will publicise it if it does by circulating it and putting it on the website.</p> <p>5) <i>Why has reading data gone down for Y3?</i> Headteacher – this is due to the use of the Rising Stars test which used words such as “geocaching” and “digital technology” which was not at an appropriate level for Y3. We are not worried about Y3 and have now looked at much more user friendly tests which we will be ordering.</p> <p>6) <i>Why is the r,w,m result for Y4 very low?</i> Headteacher – this is mainly due to writing which we are working on and putting all necessary support in place.</p> <p>7) <i>Why has unauthorised absence increased?</i> Headteacher - we used to be able to authorise absence but, in 2015, the Government changed the rules so that we can’t authorise it unless there is an exceptional reason, even if a child’s attendance is very good. Also, parents are expected to send in a letter if their child is absent and some parents forget to do this. One child has been taken to the Attendance Legal Panel but HCC is unsure where to take this next as the child refuses to attend school. This child will remain on the school roll in the interim. The IoW case is now going to the Supreme Court and we are unable to fine parents until this is decided.</p> <p>Governors commented that the requirement to send in a letter was not well known and parents needed reminding.</p> <p>8) <i>How has quality of teaching been assessed?</i> Headteacher – in recent assessments, it is 60% outstanding and 40% good with none below. We will never get to 100% due to staff turnover but all the input from staff meetings is being put into place and we have a really strong team.</p> <p>Governors congratulated staff on this achievement.</p> <p>The Headteacher and Chair had had a meeting with Brian Pope and the Head of SEN in January about the difficulties the school had faced last year with 17 children with complex needs. They had discussed the number of children coming into the school with challenging needs and the lack of support from HCC on this. It had been clear from this meeting that HCC didn’t have enough staff to meet the demand for producing EHCPs and providing support. They had also voiced the school’s dissatisfaction with the support received from HCC after last year’s results. AJS had a reputation for having expertise in assisting children with additional needs but it was possible the school could reach a tipping point beyond which this would not be possible.</p> <p><i>Governor Q: we have a high proportion of SEN children (25%) compared to the national average (12%) – do we have the resources to deal with this?</i></p> <p>Headteacher – some of our funding is SEN based. In contrast to this high percentage, we have a very low percentage of children with English as an additional language. In 2016, we had 2.4% EAL compared to 20% nationally which can offset the higher number of SEN children. We are almost at capacity anyway so it is likely that we won’t have space to accommodate more children.</p>			SH

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	<p>9) <i>Is there a problem with reading in Y5 (38% 'ARE')?</i> Headteacher – again, this is due to the Rising Stars test. We have tested one class on last year's SATs paper and they did better.</p> <p>10) <i>How does a child get onto the SEN register?</i> Headteacher – this includes children with EHCPs. There are different categories of SEN including learning and social and emotional. Different evidence is needed for each category. The Government states that we have funding to deal with these needs so should be able to do so.</p> <p>Tracie Brown then confirmed that the October census dictated the general funding for the budget the following April. However, a school could apply for SEN funding regardless of when a child joined the school.</p> <p>The Headteacher then requested that Governors let her know by email if they could act as invigilators during SATs. They would be needed in the mornings from Monday 8th to Thursday 11th May. She then circulated the LLP report.</p> <p><u>National Funding Formula (NFF)</u> The Government had consulted on their proposed new NFF. HCC had calculated the effect of the NFF on each school and AJS would lose £25,000 from their budget. Most schools in East Hants would lose out and, in Alton, all except one school would lose money. Joint letters had been sent to the MP, Damien Hinds.</p> <p>Small schools and schools in areas of greatest deprivation were losing most. This was because HCC used to give a larger package to these schools but now the funding would come straight from central Government in accordance with the proposed formula. Eastbrooke was the most deprived area in East Hants. Consultation on the NFF had just ended.</p> <p>Governors were surprised that the NGA had agreed that change was needed and the suggestion had been made in the media that the NGA were broadly in agreement.</p> <p><i>Governor Q: when will decisions on this need to be made at AJS?</i> Headteacher – at present, we have teachers who are not classroom based so we wouldn't need to lose a class teacher. A lot of small schools will face more difficult decisions.</p> <p><i>Governor Q: are other schools in Alton full?</i> Headteacher – most are full. The Butts and Wootey Juniors will be expanding.</p>	ALL
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p><u>Chair's Issues</u></p> <p>The FGB agreed to continue to buy into Governor Services training and the Chair emphasised the importance of using this resource.</p> <p>Governors would meet in Summer 1 to complete the SEF.</p> <p>The Chair stated that Daniel Healy would now be stepping down from his role as a Co-opted Governor and another candidate was now needed. Lewis Johnston would be taking on the role of Chair of Finance.</p> <p>The Chair pointed out that the FGB meeting on 12 July, originally scheduled to start at 7.30pm, would now be starting at 6pm.</p>	

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7.	<p><u>Governor Training</u></p> <p>Tracie Brown had circulated an email concerning whole GB training.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Committee Reports</u></p> <p>8.1 Finance Committee Minutes had been circulated.</p> <p>Lewis Johnston had completed the School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) assessment form and sent in a statement to confirm that the school continued to adhere to all regulations which would continue to allow the SSP to be funded.</p> <p>Over the coming months, he and Tracie Brown would be putting in place a new timetable to scrutinize the school's financial systems and ensure that any findings are shared with Governors. The SFVS return was approved.</p> <p>8.2 Curriculum and Standards Minutes had been circulated.</p> <p>8.3 Strategic HR Minutes had been circulated.</p> <p>8.4 Pay There were no items to report.</p> <p>8.5 Environment Nigel Lowe requested that Governors volunteer for half-termly health and safety checks with Todd Bewley, completing the pro-forma provided. Tracie Brown would email suggested dates to Governors.</p> <p><i>7.23pm Juliet Woolman left the meeting. Tracie Brown continued the minutes.</i></p>	TB/ ALL
9.	<p><u>Policy Review</u></p> <p>9.1 Committees' Policies Schedule This was deferred as the school would be moving to The Key's Compliance tracker for policy reviews.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Wednesday 12 July 2017 at 6.00pm</p>	

Signed

Date

