

**REDCAR AND CLEVELAND GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2014**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:**

Mr M. Bateman, New Marske Primary School  
 Mr M. Bloomfield, Belmont Primary School (Treasurer)  
 Mrs A. Clayton, Westgarth Primary School  
 Mr B.Coulston, Sacred Heart RCVA School (Chair)  
 Mrs N. Cromack, Newcomen Primary School  
 Mr O.E. Evans, Coatham CE Primary School  
 Mrs D. Falconer, Wheatlands Primary School  
 Mr D Gallagher, Redcar Academy  
 Mr J. Horkan, St Gabriel's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy  
 Mrs Y. Joy, New Marske Primary School  
 Mr C. Marley, Riverdale Primary School  
 Mrs R. Nicholls, Saltburn Learning Campus  
 Councillor M. Ovens, Green Gates Primary School and Pathways School  
 Mr V. Peel, Lakes Primary School  
 Mr A. Smithson, Teesville Primary School  
 Mrs P.Taylor, Bydales School  
 Dr D. Thomson, Kirkleatham Hall School

**ALSO PRESENT**

Glennis Smith, Redcar and Cleveland School Governor Support Service (Minutes)  
 Mr J. Dooris, Head Teacher, New Marske Primary School (for part of the meeting)

The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting and everyone present introduced themselves in turn.

1. **PRESENTATION FROM JOHN DOORIS ON PUPIL PREMIUM**

- 1.1 Prior to the commencement of Mr Dooris' presentation, discussion took place regarding whether the Association still wanted Rosemary Nicholls to write a newsletter article now that the School Governor Support Service was no longer sending hard copy newsletters to governors. Mrs Smith explained that the newsletter hadn't been produced for some time due to work pressures and priorities, but might be replaced with an electronic briefing sheet. Options for circulating an article and /or report from the Governors' Association meetings included e-mailing it either to representatives of governing bodies in membership of the Association, to all chairs of governors, or all governors, and / or publishing it on the Local Authority's web-site. Association members agreed that the report was still useful and asked Mrs Nicholls to continue writing it. Further discussion would take place at the Executive Committee meeting about the best method of distributing the report.

(Mike Bloomfield arrived at the meeting)

- 1.2 Mr Dooris, Head Teacher of New Marske Primary School, delivered a Powerpoint presentation on the use of Pupil Premium funding at the school. He emphasised that this was just one approach to the use of the funding,

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which worked for his school. However, there was no prescribed way to use it, so long as it made a difference and closed the gap between disadvantaged children and others. At New Marske Primary, the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium was constantly being reviewed.

- 1.3 Mr Dooris gave the background to the introduction of the Pupil Premium Grant, which now amounted to £2.5 billion nationally. Initially schools had tended to use it to fill other funding shortfalls, but this would be criticised by Ofsted. Careful targeting of the funding had shown that it made a difference in terms of closing the gap. There was an increasing focus from Ofsted on the use and impact of Pupil Premium and, where they had concerns, they could recommend that the school would be subject to a Pupil Premium review. Mr Dooris showed a slide detailing recent findings from Ofsted, which were much more positive and showed that schools were using the funding much more effectively.
- 1.4 At New Marske Primary School, 20% of pupils were eligible for Pupil Premium funding, which was just below the average for schools nationally and average on the IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index). When Mr Dooris had taken up the post of Head Teacher at New Marske Primary, there had been an increasing gap between the achievement of Pupil Premium children and other children at Level 4 plus, despite a fairly substantial amount of funding. Attendance had been disappointing. The majority of late arrivals tended to be free school meals or Pupil Premium children. More often than not the more able pupils were not Pupil Premium children and no Pupil Premium children had achieved level 5 in reading and maths. A lot of teachers' time was being spent contacting parents regarding attendance, homework and consistency in reading.
- 1.5 Mr Dooris' first action had been to appoint a Parental Support Worker (PSW). She was an existing Teaching Assistant (TA), whose role was changed. He gave details of her role. The PSW had invited Pupil Premium children to attend the Breakfast Club so that they arrived at school early. As part of her role she could work with any pupils, but she had a clear responsibility to look at barriers to learning for Pupil Premium children. Work had taken place to tackle underperformance in their reading. The PSW had liaised with other agencies regarding support for tackling behaviour issues, including, for example, Middlesbrough Football Club.
- 1.6 The Head Teacher emphasised that he remained responsible for data and ensuring pupils made progress, but it was helpful having another person who could be asked to explore data and barriers to learning. Unfortunately, the PSW had left her post and consideration was now being given to how this could be filled in school. A governor asked whether any decline in performance was evident since the PSW had left her post. The Head Teacher indicated that one of the effects of the PSW leaving was that he had lost his access to information. The PSW had been his link through to that group of pupils. He gave an example where a really good relationship had been built between the PSW and home in respect of one pupil, which had changed since she had left.
- 1.7 A governor asked how quantitative the data was as opposed to being

subjective. Mr Dooris would be providing data later in his presentation. Evidence included attendance scores and lateness figures as well as achievement data, but some evidence was anecdotal.

- 1.8 The Breakfast Club at New Marske Primary School was funded directly from the Pupil Premium Grant and all Pupil Premium pupils could attend free of charge. For other children the charge was £2.50 per family per week. Mr Dooris was not concerned that the Pupil Premium Grant was used to subsidise paying families. 72% of Pupil Premium children attended. Overall attendance at school had increased from 94.6 to 96.7%. Lateness had reduced from 0.76% to 0.56%. Illness had reduced, so it was possible that Pupil Premium was also impacting on the health of the pupils, although this couldn't be proved. Unauthorised absence had increased because of holidays in term time.
- 1.9 Mr Dooris had been working on increasing the awareness about Pupil Premium with all staff, senior leaders and governors. He gave details of graphs used to analyse pupils' progress against targets after every assessment period. Staff awareness of the performance of different groups of children had increased significantly. Mr Dooris had details of interventions in place to improve achievement. Although the overall aim was for the funding to have an impact on Pupil Premium pupils, Mr Dooris had no concerns if this also benefited other pupils. At New Marske, Level 5s achieved had increased from 0% in 2013 to 11.1% (reading, writing and maths) and 22.2% (reading) in 2014. The school was reducing the gap at Level 4+ (down from 26% in 2012 to 15% in 2014). The gap was still bigger than Mr Dooris would like but he was pleased that it was closing and hoped that continuing initiatives would help to reduce it further. A governor asked what the average figure was for the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally. Although Mr Dooris did not have this figure to hand he was sure it would be available. New Marske Primary School had achieved a grade of Good for Leadership and Management in its Ofsted inspection in May 2014, despite being a Requires Improvement school overall. A quote from the Ofsted report, acknowledging the improved provision and outcomes for Pupil Premium children, was included in Mr Dooris' presentation.
- 1.10 Mr Dooris also showed figures demonstrating improvements in attendance, late arrivals and illness. He referred to the book "visible learning" by John Hattie, which gave details of effective strategies and observed that all use of the Pupil Premium funding made a difference but some initiatives made more of a difference than others. The Key was in identifying the most effective strategies.
- 1.11 Yvonne Joy, Chair of Governors of New Marske Primary School reported that the governors on the Resources Committee had asked the School Business Manager to produce a separate sheet detailing what Pupil Premium funding was being spent on. More in depth data was submitted to the Curriculum Committee, who monitored the impact and ensured that money was spent correctly and appropriately. Governors sometimes attended staff meetings to see how staff were analysing the performance of Pupil Premium children. It was evident to governors that staff were far more aware than they had been in the previous year of who the Pupil Premium children were and what action

needed to be taken.

- 1.12 In response to a question from a governor, it was clarified that the PSW had been funded through the Pupil Premium Grant to work 17.5 hours per week.
- 1.13 A governor asked whether there were any other interventions that were making a difference other than the PSW and Breakfast Club – especially in terms of achievement of level 5's. Mr Dooris felt that the raised awareness by the teachers of pupil progress was the most significant area. The school had set out the progress expected of every year group, including more able and Pupil Premium pupils. In 2013 75% of children had made two levels progress. This had risen to 97% in 2014. In response to a governor's question, it was confirmed that Reading Recovery had been included in the strategies used, as well as the development of phonics and use of Read Write Inc. The phonics scores had also increased gradually.
- 1.14 A governor observed from his own experience that recording of accurate data was one of the key "building blocks". His own school had worked on improving attendance and had tried 1:1 tuition. The latter was expensive but didn't provide the rewards and was seen as a punishment by the students. The governor reported that his school had a focus on English and Maths but this was at the expense of other subjects and he was concerned about the effect on the quality of education. It was difficult to identify strategies that worked and were cost effective. Mr Dooris reiterated that there wasn't a single solution. The most important thing was knowing the pupils. He gave an example of research on the impact of divorce on GCSE students. Mr Dooris emphasised the importance of ensuring that any initiative introduced made a difference.
- 1.15 Mrs Joy, Chair of governors at New Marske Primary, reported that the governors had agreed a restructure that reduced KS1 class size so that children were at the expected level by KS2. This had allowed the school to target support where it was needed. Previously, support staff hadn't been involved in staff meetings and PD days. Contracts had been changed so that all TAs worked 33 hours which enabled them to attend meetings. Pupils requiring intervention were often with support staff and so it was important that they understood the data as much as teachers. It had been a difficult process but support staff were now an integral part of the team.
- 1.16 A governor commented on the importance of identifying different solutions for different schools but felt that it was easier for governors to get involved in more depth in primary than secondary school in terms of tracking pupils. She acknowledged that knowing who the Pupil Premium children were and tracking their progress was key.
- 1.17 Mr Dooris had attended a Fisher Family Trust (FFT) Aspire training session recently in Middlesbrough and reported that they had changed their D and B targets. They now had interactive screens which allowed in depth analysis of pupils, including those eligible for Pupil Premium. The system looked very useful and the LA was considering using it. As it rolled out it would be possible to pinpoint more precisely those children who were not making progress.

- 1.18 A governor highlighted that his school had identified quite a lot of families who narrowly missed qualifying for Pupil Premium but still needed support. He applauded schools that used the Pupil Premium for the wider benefit of such pupils. It was noted that secondary schools using FFT Aspire would be able to track children back to primary school to see where they had struggled. This would help schools to better understand their students. It was noted that there was a stigma attached to receiving a free school. Mr Dooris also recognised that some families earned just above the level that would qualify them for free school meals, which was part of his reason for subsidising the Breakfast Club charge to maintain it at £2.50 per week.
- 1.19 Discussion took place regarding how governors were provided with information and it was noted that schools were required to publish a Pupil Premium statement online. A governor reported that his school had a spreadsheet that drilled down to individual pupil level. A governor from a special school reported that the school had employed a family support worker for a period of time, and now had a counsellor who was funded through Pupil Premium. Behaviour incidents had dropped by 42%. There was more emphasis on children in special schools learning life skills, so Pupil Premium also funded opportunities for residential visits and activities such as horse riding.
- 1.20 In response to a question from a governor Mr Dooris confirmed that New Marske Primary School was not an academy.
- 1.21 The Chair thanked Mr Dooris for an extremely useful presentation and he left the meeting.

The AGM followed and is minuted separately. Mr Bateman left the meeting prior to the AGM.

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of the following governors:

- Mrs M. Woods, St Margaret Clitherow's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy
- Mrs J. Bieda, St Margaret Clitherow's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy
- Mr D. Atkin, Nunthorpe Primary School
- Mr D. Campbell, Grangetown Primary School
- Mr S. Elliott, Ormesby Primary School

### **3. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair.

Clerk /  
Chair

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

##### 4.1 Bank Mandate (Arising from Item 3.2)

As reported in the earlier AGM, the Chair had taken the necessary documents into the bank and would soon be included in the list of signatories on the bank mandate.

##### 4.2 Reimbursement of Train Fare (Arising from Item 3.4)

Mrs Nicholls had now received reimbursement in respect of her train fare to the NGA conference.

##### 4.3 Crime Task and Finish Group (Arising from Item 3.5)

John Tombs, who had volunteered to attend the Crime Task and Finish Group on behalf of the Association was not present at the meeting to provide a report. The Chair explained the background to this item.

##### 4.4 Payment of Auditor (Arising from Item 5)

The auditor would be paid in the near future.

##### 4.5 Governor Training (Arising from Item 6)

Mrs Smith had attended a recent regional meeting where the DfE had been present. There had been no indication that they were considering introducing mandatory training for governors. However, they were considering making DBS checks mandatory for all governors, despite recent guidance that governors should only be checked if they were involved in Regulated Activity.

##### 4.6 Presentations from Previous Meeting (Arising from Item 9)

Mrs Smith had sent the presentations from the previous meeting to Governors' Association representatives. She agreed to forward them to Mr Gallagher and Mrs Taylor as well as sending Mr Dooris' presentation to all representatives.

Mrs Smith

#### 5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The following matters arose from consideration of the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee meeting held on 9 July 2014:

##### 5.1 Meeting Venue (Arising from Item 11)

Mrs Smith had not yet received a response from Steven Harrison at Kirkleatham Hall School about the possibility of using their FE Centre as a venue. She would check availability of Sacred Heart School for the Executive Committee meeting on 3 December.

Mrs Smith

5.2 Topics for Future Meetings (Arising from Item 4)

The Chair encouraged governors to put forward ideas for suitable topics for the next meeting. Mrs Smith highlighted that the LA had appointed three new school advisers who might be invited to a future meeting. Mrs Joy agreed to convey to Mr Dooris how much governors had enjoyed and appreciated his very informative presentation earlier in the current meeting. The Chair also agreed to e-mail Mr Dooris and Mrs Smith would provide his e-mail address. He agreed he should e-mail all speakers after the meetings in future as a matter of courtesy.

Mrs Joy/  
Chair/ Mrs  
Smith

6. INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

It was acknowledged that most governors now had direct access to NGA information. There were no specific matters raised under this item

7. CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE / REPORT

The Chair had received no items of correspondence on behalf of the Governors' Association.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business

(The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.)