



WALTON & LEES HILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL EXTRA-ORDINARY GOVERNORS MEETING

MINUTES OF THURSDAY 16th JANUARY 2020

1. Apologies for Absence

Action

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs F Ritson and also Mrs F Stobbart and Mrs L Rooney who both declared an interest in the agenda item.

Present:

Mrs M Alston (MA-Chair), Mrs K Lamb, Mr G Lamb (GL), Mr G Shaw (GS), Mr P Cronin (PC), Mrs L Irving (LI) and Mrs T Mitchinson (Clerk).

Also present were David Salmon and Lynsey Slater, LA General Advisers.

2. Declaration of Interest in an Agenda Item

Mrs Stobbart and Mrs Rooney both declared an interest in Item 3 - A Way Forward for September 2020 – A Plan of Action! prior to this meeting.

3. A Way Forward for September 2020 – A Plan of Action!

Mrs Alston started by explaining the purpose of the meeting and provided all present with a handout sheet explaining the 4 options of succession planning that were available for consideration tonight.

- Advertise for Permanent Headteacher.
- Co-headship (Job-share)
- Executive Headship (Hard Federation)
- Partnership or Collaboration (Soft Federation)

In addition to these Mr Salmon also pointed out that we had 2 further options of –

- Continuing with the current Acting Headteacher in the interim period
- Asking the LA to close the school if no other option is deemed viable.

All the options available were discussed at length by all present weighing up the pros and cons of each individually.

If Governors were to go down the option of continuing with the current Acting Headteacher in the interim period, which everyone agreed would be the preferred option as this would have the least disruption for the children and school and that it would confirm the commitment and support the Governors have for the staff involved, then they would still need to have a succession plan in place to show that the governors are actively seeking to resolve the temporary situation.

It was asked, in this situation, how do the governors determine a timescale for making a permanent decision? Mr Salmon explained there was no exact timescales to be adhered to but that this could not be a solution for any more than a couple of years at most, i.e. if Ofsted were to come back again for their next inspection and the school was still working with an Acting Headteacher and no progress had been made then this would not look good. This is more of an option to cover the post until current employees have the chance to gain

Signed as true and Correct

the experience needed to take over officially.

Concerns around going down the Executive Headship/Federation routes were would current staff and governors at school loose the control that they had at present over the day to day running of the school and the schools own individual identity. Mr Salmon said this would not be the case with a soft federation, the school would retain its own identity, governing body and current staff. The Executive Headteacher would retain legal responsibilities and powers for all schools. Each school in the Federation would have a Head of School or a Deputy Headteacher. There is a local case study of this situation working effectively that Governors were encouraged to look at.

Once Governors had discussed the options they asked Mrs Alston to feedback on discussions she has had with Mrs Stobbart as to how she feels she would like to see the situation progress. Mrs Stobbart feels that she would like to continue as it currently is until the end of the academic year 2021 when she feels a Co-Headship option with current staff at school should be considered, as by then all involved will have gained further experience and expertise to make a permanent appointment going forward.

In consideration of Mrs Stobart's wishes Mr Salmon asked Governors to think carefully about what provisions they would put in place for all staff well-being, as well as Mrs Stobbart, to see them through, and beyond, this proposed temporary arrangement.

Mr Lamb suggested that an independent contact should be asked to have informal 'chats' with Mrs Stobbart, and staff if applicable, to monitor the situation and feedback to Governors if they think this is necessary; otherwise no pressure should be placed on these discussions. Mrs Slater added that she felt that Mrs Harrison and Mrs Stobbart have a very good relationship and everyone agreed this could be beneficial. Mrs Alston agreed to meet with Mrs Harrison, Irthington School to discuss this.

It was also felt by all present that an important factor in the schools future is the well-being of all involved and that it may have detrimental effects to staff, children and the community if the Governors do not show the level of support and confidence they have towards the current situation.

Mr Salmon asked how the budget would cope if the current situation was to continue? Mr Shaw explained that the current budget had been planned with the inclusion of maintaining this level of staffing for the next 3 years so this would be a viable option; to which the Clerk added that the Governors are also in a buoyant position with their Governor School House account and could also look at using some of this money should they see fit.

Mrs Alston asked Mr Salmon if the LA would be happy for school to maintain this planned situation in the interim. He agreed this could continue as a viable option in the short term but that we would need to meet again on this to plan for outcomes when the arrangement finishes.

All were in agreeance for Mrs Stobbart to continue in her current role of Acting Headteacher 0.6fte with support from Mrs Harrison at Irthington School and Mrs Rooney as Lead Teacher within school 0.4fte until August 2021 on the basis that a permanent appointment based on 1 of the 3 options below will be in place from September 2021:

- Appoint a full -time Headteacher
- Co-Headship
- Form partnership/collaboration with another school

It was agreed to continue with the support from Mrs Harrison, if she was willing, as this would have the least impact on the stability of the arrangements and the well-being of all involved. Mrs Alston agreed to meet with Mrs Harrison on behalf of the Governors to discuss this.

Mr Shaw asked if we did go down the route of Executive Headship would the schools in the partnership have to be of the same type? Yes, an academy could not collaborate with a voluntary controlled or aided school but it would be acceptable for a non-Church of England school to collaborate with a Church of England school should all possibilities of a CofE school be exhausted.

Mr Salmon agreed to the proposed arrangements that the Governors had decided upon but did ask us to formalise the enhanced support from Mrs Harrison and also have more involvement between herself and the Governors; again, Mrs Alston will discuss this with Mrs Harrison on behalf of the Governors.

4. Date of Next Meeting(s)

Full Governing Body –
Thursday 27th February 2020, 7.30pm at Walton & Lees Hill School

Committee Meetings –
Finance & Leadership – Thursday 30th January 2020, 1.00pm at Walton & Lees Hill School