

## **Rhodes Avenue School Communications Committee Minutes**

Date: Monday 18th November 2019

Time: 6:30pm

Present: Deborah Smith (Chair), Adrian Hall, Katy Jackson, Helen Walsh, Fiona Doyle, Sophie Papworth,  
Lucy Freestone

1. Welcome and Apologies - Minutes from last meeting agreed
2. Matters Arising/Action Points from previous Communications and FGB

All matter had been followed up. Parents and staff had been informed about Alison stepping down as Chair. Mike had been pleased to receive the flowers.

3. Website updates/review – statutory audit, stats

Adrian shared an overview of Google analytics for the last month to show which pages were being visited/frequency. Term dates & diary had the most hits. Years 4 and 1 had the most hits, although there was no explanation for this. The number of hits was lower than for the beginning of the school year when the newsletters for each year were produced.

There was a discussion about whether parents needed to be reminded about looking on the website to find the homework. Some parents wanted to receive an email each week with the homework pages, without having to access the website themselves. Adrian felt that this would be too time consuming, and that it would be appropriate to send a weekly email with *links* to each year group's homework page on the website. It was decided that at the very least, parents could be reminded that homework would be on the website and that it was the responsibility of the parents to check it each week.

4. School to school support – supported school is merging in December, meaning that this school to school support will finish.
5. Governors Annual Report – Katy/Helen. The report will be finalised this week, with the aim of being sent out the following week. The report will be displayed on the website, and will be emailed to parents. Hardcopies will be available. The document is to be shortened, with more hyperlinks to pages on the school website. The report will include link governor reports as well as introductions to new roles.

A parent had volunteered to redesign the cover of the report. It was decided to review the Annual Report in the next academic term, and then to decide about whether to make any further changes for next year.

6. Policies

### **- Collective Worship Policy**

There was a discussion about whether 'other religions' should be included in the opening paragraph to make it clear that these were being taught as well as Christianity. It was explained that there is only a legal obligation to include Christianity, and that the other faiths are mentioned elsewhere in the policy. The example, 'Christians believe that ...' was only used to show *how* it was taught.

At Rhodes Avenue collective worship is provided within class as well as within daily assemblies. It was often taught in the context of core British values, celebrating achievement and expanding on cultural/spiritual development. It was decided that Adrian would take a look at the wording of the policy and email and amendments. This policy was agreed.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education, Sex Education and Collective Worship. They would need to contact the school if they wanted to do so. Some parents had withdrawn their children from Pathway led assemblies (Christianity assembly).

The poster at the end of the policy, illustrating British Values was praised. It was an excellent way to visually show how the school addresses British Values. The poster is going to be displayed around the school and in every classroom.

### **- Complaints Policy (changes highlighted in yellow)**

'The policy would be reviewed biannually' would be changed to 'every two years', in order to avoid any ambiguity over the time scale.

It would be stated that this was a complaints policy for parents (as opposed to local residents etc.).

There was a discussion about the 'legal language' of the policy. It is written in formal language in order to give clear a framework and boundaries for all involved. Parents are actively encouraged to discuss their concerns informally with the Headteacher in order to prevent it escalating into a formal complaint. This would be in the best interests of all parties including the school, staff, parents and children.

1.5 - The policy would be amended so that child protection issues would be directed to the Headteacher *and* DSL (designated safeguarding lead).

The use of audio equipment would probably be allowed to record meetings if specifically requested, but would not be explicitly stated in the policy.

There was a discussion about providing training for governors on a complaints panel. Training was available, but would be likely to go out of date quickly due to the numerous changes. In addition, there have been very few formal complaints at Rhodes Avenue (the last one was four years ago). In the event of a complaint, Hannah would coordinate and guide the complaints panels. There was enough information available online if anyone wanted additional resources. The policy was approved

#### - **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, Autumn 2019**

The policy was approved. Adrian and Deborah would continue to check that all the policies listed on the document as being on the website, were there. Rhodes Avenue has a copy of every policy. The majority of them are on the website, the rest were available as an e-copy.

Adrian to remove 'School report' from the list of documents.

#### 7. Governors CPD - Skills Audit Katy /Helen

This was a useful exercise, and was completed by most governors. The overall picture was positive. The main gaps were in finance and HR.

Rhodes Avenue employs an HR service and Helen is an employment lawyer.

It was felt that some of the governors did actually have sufficient expertise, and that this was not necessarily reflected in the audit answers. This was especially apparent for finance.

Helen and Katy had subsequently attended finance training.

- Future audits could address the socioeconomic gaps in the GB in order to be more diverse. It was an ongoing problem how to attract governors who may not be confident that they have the skills.
- It would be useful to ask governors to identify their training needs. This can be addressed with the 20 questions exercise that will be done in January with the FGB.
- Governors should be encouraged to do CPD surrounding their link roles, and in areas in which they lack the skills.
- Haringey finance training is available in June.
- It was suggested that the skills audit be completed once or twice a year. The next one could be done in early June in order to prepare governors for the strategic element of the Governor's day.

Governors should be reminded and encouraged to upload their training and visits onto the website. It should take no more than 5 minutes to upload.

Governors should be reminded to enter training resources into the "Useful Training Links" section of the portal. Adrian reminded governors to be mindful that that visits with teaching staff will require the school to find teaching cover for them. It would be useful to coordinate visits to reduce this pressure.

The skills audit was used earlier today when Adrian and Alison interviewed an applicant for the community governor vacancy. The applicant had finance and HR experience. He would be able to attend the meetings if he had enough notice. Being male, he would narrow the gender gap.

8. AOB – parents evening. There is a full list of governors to cover both evenings. This year there is a change in format for reception parents. There are no slot times. Parents are invited to come in with their children, and will have an opportunity to chat with the teacher. Parents have only been asked to book a formal slot with their teacher if there were concerns.

- Carol concert. Governors are invited to arrive at 6.00 for mince pies before the concert. A thankyou to Alison will take place that evening.

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9. Date of next meeting: Monday 27 January 2020

Minutes by Katy Jackson

Signed

Dated