



# Minutes

---

## Meeting of Fir Bank Primary School Local Advisory Committee

Thursday 13th June 2019  
at the school  
at 5.30pm

<b>Present:</b>	Mr Alex Reed	Committee Member (Chair)
	Dr Rachel Cowen	Committee Member
	Mrs Rachael McLaughlin	Co-Headteacher and Committee Member
	Mr Rob Walker	Co-Headteacher and Committee Member
	Mrs Lorraine Bowler	Committee Member
	Mr Peter Ferris	Committee Member
	Mr Paul Matthews	Committee Member
	Miss Jennifer Wright	Committee Member
	Mr Stephen Kirkland	Committee Member
	<b>Also Present:</b>	Mr David Challen
Mrs Gillian Hindle		Chief Operating Officer -The Oak Trust
Mrs Christine Copson		Chief Financial Officer - The Oak Trust
Mrs Suzanne Millar		School Business Manager

The Chair welcomed everyone in attendance to this meeting of the Fir Bank Primary School Local Advisory Committee (LAC).

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received as all Committee members were present at this LAC meeting.

### 2 REGISTER OF BUSINESS, PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

Committee Members were invited to declare any additional business, pecuniary or personal interests to those which had been declared previously in the school's 'Register of Declaration of Interest'.

Mr Paul Matthews declared a personal interest by virtue of his wife Helen working at the school.

### 3 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 Arising from minute 4.2, the following links to the school's priority areas were agreed by the Committee:

English Curriculum and Outcomes.	Mr Peter Ferris
Maths Curriculum and Outcomes.	Mrs Lorraine Bowler
Finance, Risk and Compliance (including health and safety).	Mr Paul Matthews (supported by Mr Stephen Kirkland)
Safeguarding and Pupil Well-Being (including attendance)	Dr Rachel Cowen
EYFS	Mr Alex Reed
Inclusion (covering SEND/PP/INA)	Miss Jennifer Wright

In accepting these roles, the Committee members asked that they be given support in carrying out the responsibilities attached to these links.

**Challenge/Support:** In response to a question, it was explained that Pupil Voice/School Council should be considered as a strand across all these areas and that any areas not covered by the above linking arrangements would be considered at meetings of the Standards Sub-Committee or at LAC meetings.

### 5 FINANCE AND STAFFING UPDATE

5.1 Mrs Copson introduced herself as the Trust's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and highlighted the following key points in respect of the school's financial management:

5.1.1 Financial management was now much more stringent as an academy and subject to much greater scrutiny than was the case previously.

5.1.2 She has been working with the school on its accounting systems and financial mechanisms. The Trust has purchased a new system for financial reporting (PS Financials) and the reason she was attending this meeting was to take the Committee through the latest management accounts report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

5.1.3 Mrs Copson explained that Mrs Millar continues to

carry out the work on the school budget and will report on it to Committee members at future meetings.

5.1.4 The management report covers the period from 1st February 2019 (when the school joined the MAT) to the end of May 2019 (period 9). A separate management report will be produced for each of the schools in the Trust in addition to an overarching report to cover the whole Trust.

5.1.5 With regard to the management report circulated, Mrs Copson drew the Committee's attention to the following sections of it:

5.1.5.1 The income and expenditure figures.

5.1.5.2 Spending for the year to date and the variance with the original budget figure.

5.1.5.3 Monthly management meetings are held to monitor the budget.

5.1.5.4 The original budget predicts an in-year surplus of £575 by the 31st August 2019 and the school must set a balanced budget.

5.1.5.5 The current management report does not yet include any inherited balances.

5.1.5.6 The forecasted in-year deficit of £4813.08 by the end of the financial year is affected by the profiling tool and may be a timing issue.

5.1.5.7 Included on the final page, the capital plan includes devolved formula capital income and capital expenditure and will always balance with expenditure on the capital plan.

5.2 **Challenge/Support:** The Committee questioned Mrs Copson on the following aspects of the management accounts report:

5.2.1 The Committee questioned the variance between the actual GAG income received (£285,096.80) and the figure in the original budget (£294,305.00), which was £9208.20 higher. Mrs Copson explained that the variance was caused by profiling and pupil premium income being less than predicted.

5.2.2 The Committee questioned the expenditure on agency staff, which was already £2,542.45 over the original budget figure. Mrs Millar explained that most of this was as a result of covering the long term absence of a member of staff and the school was awaiting an insurance refund from Oldham Council in respect of this.

5.2.3 In a normal financial year, the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) will pay funding into the

school budget on a monthly basis. Due to the funding held in the Oak Trust bank account, there are no concerns about cash flow.

- 5.2.4 In his role as the link to Finance, Risk and Compliance, Mr Matthews can report back to the Committee on any benchmarking and best value issues.
- 5.2.5 There are no concerns in respect of the current budget and it expected that there will be greater clarity around the budget in the new financial year.
- 5.2.6 There are some issues with regard to the annual cost of some service level agreements (SLAs) that run for different periods and the need for these to be adjusted going forward.
- 5.2.7 Mrs Millar and Mrs Copson are currently working on the school budget for 2019/2020 and it was agreed that once completed, the draft budget plan be circulated to all the LAC members. It was further agreed that Mr Reed and Mr Matthews be given the delegated authority to approve the final budget plan.

**ACTION:** Mrs Millar/Mrs Copson/Mr Reed/Mr Matthews

## 6 CO-HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

**Challenge/Support:** The Co-Headteacher's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and Mrs McLaughlin and Mr Walker responded to questions from the Committee in respect of the following points

- 6.1 The report was based on a template provided by the Chair and reported on the progress made so far with regard to each of the priorities in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and next steps.
- 6.2 Phonics leads had been identified to support the consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in lower school. This will now need to be revisited as the staff identified are leaving the school.
- 6.3 With regard to the quality of teaching and learning, Mrs McLaughlin explained how the school are looking to address the inference priority within reading comprehension. The English lead would be attending a course in the near future at which she would gain an insight into the national picture in respect of this.
- 6.4 Mr Walker explained that the school was to apply to the NW1 Maths Hub, which develops Mastery pedagogy in Primary Schools, to enhance the White Rose Hub Maths already used by the school. The school had bought into a package of training with the White Rose Hub. Staff are now confident about what is needed and this needs to be followed up with the 'how' and the

questioning element.

- 6.5 In response to a question about what the school are doing for those children not working at age related expectations, the Co-Headteachers explained that there is a core of children, in each year group, who are not working at age related expectations. The school are intending to trial more of a nurture intervention approach for these pupils in the future and it is hoped that this will have a greater impact on their progress.
- 6.6 The school's SENCo was about to complete the SENCo award and had reviewed the school's systems, so that there is an earlier identification of SEND children and to ensure all children make progress.
- 6.7 In EYFS, the indoor and outdoor provision have been greatly improved and staff had worked hard to achieve this. Further changes are needed, to ensure that the wetland area is developed and used more by pupils, and other areas are developed so that learning can take place outside during all weathers.
- 6.8 The Robinwood residential had been a very valuable experience, which the pupils had enjoyed. The visit had been subsidised for pupil premium pupils and the transport had also been subsidised by the school.
- 6.9 Following on from the appointment of the Co-Headteachers on a permanent basis, an advertisement had been placed for two permanent teaching posts. Miss Dolan had been appointed for Year 3 and an experienced teacher from another school had been appointed for Year 2. In addition, from a large field of applicants, a level three teaching assistant had been recruited from another school as well as a number of other internal teaching assistant appointments.

Mrs McLaughlin reported on the class organisation and staffing in place for September 2019. It will not be possible to retain a Year 6 booster teacher for September 2019.

- 6.10 29 children are on the list for the Reception class in September 2019 but the class is expected to be full when the school re-opens after the Summer break.

**RESOLVED:** that the Co-Headteachers be thanked for their comprehensive report.

## 7 **REVIEW OF SCHOOL CLOSURES 2018/2019**

- 7.1 The Committee was informed that the school had been closed for three days during the course of this academic year for water related issues.
- 7.2 The school had been closed for two days because of flooding

and for a further day when the school had no water supply.

## 8 STANDARDS/PROGRESS

- 8.1 Progress reports for each year group from Reception to Year 6 had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration by the Committee.
- 8.2 The Co-Headteachers explained that the Trust now requires the data from target tracker to be shared with them on a termly basis and these same reports are the ones circulated for consideration by the LAC.
- 8.3 **Challenge/Support:** The Committee questioned the Co-Headteachers about the data and the following issues were considered:

- 8.3.1 Strict deadlines are to be set for staff to ensure that all the recent data on pupils has been added to target tracker and that this is up to date.

### Reception

- 8.3.2 Achievement in Writing is an issue in Reception. All staff have been trained on Talk for Writing which it is hoped will impact of pupils achievement over time. For Spring 2, 6 children have been identified at risk in Writing and 2 in Reading. At Autumn 2, no pupils had been identified as being at risk so during the intervening period, some pupils had not progressed with the steps expected and this may impact on the progress measures in Writing.

To address this, the school was now putting in more expectations around Writing in Reception and an independent piece of Writing for each child was now expected weekly.

### Year 1

- 8.3.3 Mrs McLaughlin explained why one child was reported in the figures as having not been assessed at Spring 2 but who would be assessed during the Summer and included in the Summer term data

Progress in Writing at the bottom end is a similar concern to that reported for Reception pupils.

### Year 2

- 8.3.4 The Year 2 data will be updated to take account of the SATs outcomes. Most children had performed as expected by the school and it is expected that there will be more children at greater depth in Writing

It was reported that the targets set for pupils to achieve greater depth were extremely challenging and the Committee members questioned whether this might impact on staff morale if the targets were missed.

It was noted that there are now three assessment data points during the year and that pupil progress meetings are held involving teachers, the Co-Headteachers and SENCo.

### **Year 3**

- 8.3.5 Whilst there would appear to be a concern about the low percentage of pupils at the required level in Maths, it was felt that this may be more of a confidence issue in the assessment of where children currently are at and the point at which they should be move dto the next level.

If the children are still at the same level once next week's tests have been analysed, then additional support would be provided for these pupils.

The Committee was informed that the school are working towards a situation where there is quality first teaching and support in class across the school, rather than using interventions.

### **Year 4**

- 8.3.6 The Committee noted that there were 8 pupils at 'just below' in Writing and they were informed that there is an HLTA in this year group supporting individual pupils. Mrs McLaughlin explained that there had been some issues around coverage this year and so it had been decided to increase the number of Talk for Writing sessions during the week.

### **Year 5**

- 8.3.7 Similar to Year 4, the Committee questioned the high percentage of pupils at risk in both Writing and Maths. Mrs McLaughlin explained that Mr Swann had been moved to support Writing in Year 5 and to identify those pupils requiring additional support.

The Committee was informed that, last week, the school had been moderated for Writing in Year 6 and the Local Authority moderators had agreed with the school's judgements, including two greater depth children. They had suggested that the school might do more work earlier on formality.

## Year 6

- 8.3.8 It was hoped that the SATs results, expected on 8th July 2019, would be similar to the predicted outcomes and the Co-Headteachers agreed to email these to Committee members when they are received.

**ACTION:** Co-Headteachers

- 8.4 The Committee agreed that the performance of the various groups should be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee.

**ACTION:** Standards Sub-Committee

## 9 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 9.1 The Committee was informed that a health and safety audit would be carried out on Wednesday 26th June 2019.
- 9.2 Mrs Bowler had carried out a bi-annual health and safety walk around the school. No major issues had been identified and there were no health and safety incidents to report to the Committee.
- 9.3 A successful fire drill had taken place earlier this term.

## 10 POLICIES

The following policies had been circulated for consideration by the Committee. It was reported that each policy had been reviewed by the school and only minor changes had been identified:

- 10.1 English Policy.  
 10.2 Handwriting, Marking and Presentation Policy.  
 10.3 Maths Policy.  
 10.4 Medicine Policy.  
 10.5 Emotional and Well Being Policy.

**RESOLVED:** that all the above policies be approved and adopted by the Committee.

## 11 REPORTS FROM LINK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mrs Bowler reported on her health and safety walk around the school.

## 12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

**RESOLVED:** that the next Committee meeting be held on Thursday 10th October 2019 at 5.30pm (Mr Peter Ferris submitted his apologies for absence in advance of this meeting).

## 13 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

### 13.1 Pupil Attendance

The Committee considered the attendance report that had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee was pleased to note that persistent absence is reducing and that overall, pupil attendance remains good.

### 13.2 The Oak Trust

The Committee discussed the following issues related to the development of the Trust:

13.2.1 It is expected that Mrs Gillian Hindle will attend future Committee meetings to provide information and give advice as required.

13.2.2 The Executive Management Board meets fortnightly and there is a great deal of positivity about the anticipated benefits from being part of the Trust. Communication within the Trust is much better but there is more to do in implementing new systems and processes.

13.2.3 The level of scrutiny is far greater than as a Local Authority school.

13.2.4 Mrs Hazel MacKay is no longer involved in mentoring the Co-Headteachers but is still involved in other Trust projects. The Co-Headteachers felt that the level of mentoring provided for them is now much more manageable and the school continues to buy in support from a School Improvement Partner (Gillian Kay).

13.2.5 Joining the Trust has meant a huge change for the role of the School Business Manager and the increase in MAT activities and attendance at various meetings has impacted on teaching staff, although they are being supported with their workload by the Co-Headteachers.

### 13.3 Standards Sub-Committee

It was agreed that all the members of the LAC be invited to join the membership of the Standards Sub-Committee and that the next meeting be held on Thursday 26th September 2019 at 5.30pm.

## 14 CONFIDENTIALITY

There were no items of confidentiality.

(There being no further business, Committee members were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was declared closed at 7.20pm).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_