

# Exeter Children's Federation

Meeting of the Full Governing Body

Meeting Minutes

Clerk: Neil Keen

Date: 14 November 2016	Venue: Wynstream Primary School	Time 18:30
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Present:

Peter Vickery	Local Authority Governor (Chair)
Michaela Young	Parent Governor
Terri-Anne Hornby	Co-opted Governor
Chris Neads	Co-opted Governor (Vice Chair)
Martyn Boxall	Ex Officio
Emma Bowler	Co-opted Governor
Gill Brown	Associate Governor (no voting rights)
Marion Phillips	Associate Governor (no voting rights)
David Coven	Staff Governor
Grace Williams	Co-opted Governor

Apologies presented and accepted:

Lisa Sayers	Co-opted Governor
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In Attendance (Part ¼ only)

Dave Woodland	Safeguarding Deputy at Montgomery
Stuart Fraser	Safeguarding Deputy at Wynstream

## 1/1 **Apologies Received**

Lisa Sayers presented apologies and these were accepted by members.

## 1/2 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Agreed and accepted as an accurate record.

## 1/3 **Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)**

PV distributed copies of the Devon Governor publication and referred governors to the new training schedule and that as usual all requests for training should go through the clerk.

## 1/4 **Safeguarding Update**

DW and SF gave governors an overview of their role as safeguarding deputies within the schools.

A recent safeguarding audit highlighted that governors need to be fully aware of safeguarding policies and procedures and that this wasn't just the safeguarding governors' responsibility. The audit highlighted that there needs to be a governor to act as a deputy to MY. Governors

were informed of the processes and polices and the varying levels of child protection as well as the difference in thresholds between children in care and children in need.

TAH asked DW if SEN pupils are more at risk. DW explained that they were and that also children with disabilities were also more vulnerable as sometimes they may not be able to speak up about the abuse and the same applies to children who do not have English as their first language.

DW also talked about the government's PREVENT Agenda where children may be radicalised and emphasised that this could be any type of extremism and also female genital mutilation which is on the increase nationally.

DW explained that the staff code of conduct policy needs its profile raised within the staff base. It is also important that governors are aware of any issue that might be raised directly with them relating to a staff member and that they should take this directly to the chair or the head teacher's.

PV asked DW and SF for assurances that the policies that are in place are working for them and enabling them to carry out their duties. SF felt that E-Safety needs a piece of work as it is ever changing, but other than this, both staff members share the view that the policies work really well and they also thanked MY for her really pro-active approach in carrying out her role as safeguarding lead as she attends regular meetings and ensures compliance around the policies and procedures.

PV thanked both staff members for their contribution to the meeting and their continued work around the safeguarding of children.

TAH wanted to place on record her thanks to both staff members as she has found it a delight to work with them both previously.

MY also wanted to place on record her thanks to Alison Betts.

Governors agreed that they would need to name a governor as deputy to Michaela as well as look at E-Safety and Social Media policies in the near future.

#### **1/5 Schools Finance Reports and Updated Budget Position**

MB presented the budget position for both schools.

Devon County have an overspend of 4.5 million in the SEN budget and have told schools that they plan to claw back this deficit by taking £55 out of the age weighted pupil funding unit. The Devon Association of Primary Heads have written to DCC about this and the fact they didn't act quicker to redress this, but the budget position is based on a worst case scenario which included this money being taken out of the budget.

In April all schools will have an apprenticeship levy placed on them which will be 7k at Montgomery and 10k at Wynstream.

The headline figures are that Wynstream will be down 38k and Montgomery 34k.

So there will be a carry forward at Wynstream and the school will continue to reinvest where investment is needed but the carry forward will reduce for 206k to 35k and the Montgomery budget will be in deficit by 17k.

MB also informed members that the education service grant which is used to take money out of the budget for the core services which are commissioned and provided by Babcock. The government are planning on taking this grant away and therefore whilst not a cut directly, there will be a loss to some of the services that are accessed and the schools will need to find money to purchase services which means that even more prudence will be needed when setting the budget for next year.

CN has been in for a portfolio visit to look at the budget in detail.

CN explained that he has challenged MB on a few things within the budget which will need some attention. CN has recommended shutting down the Montgomery Budget lines for the subject areas so that there is no more spend from them.

CN also challenged MB on the £15k costs around paying for temporary staff members and asked if some of this could be picked up in house by absorbing staff absences with assistant heads picking up teaching responsibilities.

CN feels that longer term, the bigger savings lie in the catering and cleaning contracts which are escalating year on year. CN has tasked MB with looking at those contracts to see what savings could be realised by bringing them in house.

PV asked if the energy money at Montgomery could be used on a short term basis to bring the Montgomery budget into a healthier position. MB explained that the money from the energy is required for the upkeep and maintenance of the systems, however it could be explored if some money could be invested in more cells at other schools if the MAT goes ahead which funding could be source from the capital budget or crowdfunding.

CN asked what the situation was regarding the salary of MB and specifically if any of the other schools were currently contributing towards his salary costs. MB explained no this isn't the case and can't happen until the MAT is in place and then the salary costs can be stripped down and worked out on an equal cost basis

It was agreed to accept the recommendation of closing down the Montgomery budgets for subject areas immediately. MP requested that MB share with her the finer detail of what was sitting in those budgets.

MB agreed to go away and come back to governors regarding the catering and cleaning contracts.

MB updated governors on the latest position regarding the application to form the Connect Education Trust. The application was submitted back in April/May and MB has been in regular contact with the Department for Education since.

The policy change coming out of the Dfe has seen a decline in conversions being agreed and the frustrating thing is that all correspondence has been verbal with nothing being put in writing to date.

MB has complied and done everything that has been asked of the trust to date.

All schools have achieved above the required floor standards but the DFE have concerns around the trust's capacity to build in school improvement.

The pre head teacher panel convene in the next couple of weeks and it might be possible that the application goes before them for a decision, if not, it would be January.

There is a meeting of all 4 schools Chair of governors tomorrow to try to map out the future plans and get a consensus from the group on how best to proceed. MB explained there isn't anything else that can be done at this time and it is crucial a decision is made as this is now impacting on the schools that need to know their staffing/budget positions.

MB explained that the Department are driving schools towards 2 other MATs that operate within Exeter (Primary Academies Trust and the First Federation) as these are seen as strong MAT's with a record of school improvement.

GW asked why the school would rule out joining these MAT's. MB explained that the First Federation did come and speak to the governors at Montgomery and it was felt at the time that the model being proposed didn't reflect the values and ethos of the school, nor did it retain any of the community values which was evidenced by no local governing bodies which cannot be seen as a good thing for the communities. It was felt at the time that the other MAT's were very corporate and would take away personal identity and whilst MB was sure that the model would work for failing schools it wasn't the right fit at the time and would lead to an overall of admin and SENCO staff.

PV was of the view that it may be wise to listen to what is on offer rather than just take MB's word for it and therefore it would be the governing body making an informed decision.

It was agreed that PV would feed into the meeting tomorrow that the governors would be prepared to listen to what other MAT's are around but that this isn't the preferred choice of way forward.

TAH asked that if the CET does not get the go ahead could we be looking to formally federate? MB explained that this would be an option that would be open to governors or an umbrella trust could be formed.

PV agreed to put forward the view of the governing body at the meeting tomorrow and formally feedback to governors via email.

## 1/7 **RAISE Online Data and Scoping Brief Reports**

Both schools achieved the required floor targets expected from the government.

GW asked that whilst it was key to look ahead, what actually did go wrong to bring the results down. GB explained that the reading paper was really hard for the children as well as the questions being in a mixed order, rather than the easiest first and then the paper leading up to the more difficult questions which led to a lot of children panicking.

GB added that the Wynstream cohort were previously blue on the raise online data, so were significantly low at Key Stage 1 level.

EB stated the school are losing a very experienced year 6 teacher and is worried about the impact this will have on this year's cohort. MB and GB reassured her that there is a plan in place.

MP explained that cohort at Montgomery were a low achieving cohort from Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2. Children did not catch up and this has been addressed in the school improvement plan but what governors need to question was how robust strategy for knowing where children were at year 3, 4 and 5.

MP distributed a document detail the analysis of data after the first 3 assessment points. Teachers are being a lot more accurate recording and ensuring children are either at the level or not.

MP should focus planning on delivery. A lot of what you have planned is mapped out. Keeps an consistent approach across all year groups,

Year 6 data has seen an increase in a 2 week period of intensive teaching and delivery, these are a high attaining cohort and need to get back on track and the gap needs to be closed. PV picked up that year 5 look to be a problem. MP agreed, but stated that those children haven't had the additional teaching support yet and will shift back on track when the cycle focuses on this cohort.

PV was worried that the gap was growing too great in years 3 and 4 and wanted assurances from MP and MB that they are confident the school has the ability to identify and put measures in place to rectify these problems. MP explained that there is a cycle and a vigorous and evidence based system in place.

PV explained that when the governors meeting in cycle 3 the governors would have all the data to be in a good position to compare. MP also explained that governors need to be looking for themselves that the targets are being met by looking in student's books when they are in for learning walks.

MP now going to do some standardised assessment. Now need to get global picture of where children are, happening in next few weeks for year 3, 4 and 5. That is a bought in test 4 different ones across all schools.

GB explained that the Wynstream reports were slightly different and had not been tied to assessment cycles in the same way as Montgomery. Can't evaluate some of the subjects that are in the briefs.

In all of the reports there is the significant data from last year which is driving them and listed within them is what has been put in place already.

GB what looks concerning is year 1. – MB year 1 has a lot of significant need, these are the children that went into 3 classes due to the high need. MB explained governors need to be thinking about What are barriers? And what actions are in place? Is it having the impact? This is what governors need to be doing on learning walks.

GB have had a year 1 teacher off for stress for 4 weeks and a HLTA has been in the class, when it came to assessment the TA wasn't as confident as a teacher to so put the majority of them off track, these children may not be off track and we would expect to see them shifting back on track in time.

MB explained that all teachers are now shifting their mind set and realise that everything is tied to year 6, and all teachers realise it is a high stakes.

GW asked if future reports could contain the whole school performance at the bottom for ease.

PV thanked both GB and MP for their reports and reminded governors to keep all data in order to ensure they can compare, challenge and benchmark at future meetings.

#### 1/8 **Pay Progression/Review**

A meeting was schedule for 21<sup>st</sup> November to receive the reports and recommendations from on pay awards. The meeting will be at Montgomery and commence at 4pm.

#### 1/9 **Reorganisation of Portfolio Areas and determine schedule for learning walks**

Governors discussed portfolio areas. PV agreed to become the lead for outcomes for pupils. PV is also going to speak to LS about becoming the deputy safeguarding officer.

MB reminded governors of the need to carry out the learning walks and focussing on what are the barriers, looking for progress and impact.

#### 1/10 **SEND Policy**

Governors approved the policy for adoption

#### **Date of next Meeting**

6<sup>th</sup> February, 6.30pm, Montgomery Primary School

MB suggested that NK, PV and both heads get together prior to plan the agenda.

