

## MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Monday 22 June 2009, 19.30hrs



**Present:** Ysanne Austin, Steve Clarke, Nina Gane, Paul Jobson, Ian Lewin, Ankit Mathur, Carlos Montes (Chair), Sue Romero, Ruth Sapsed, Roger Lilley (item 1 only), Emma Faid (Clerk).

### 0. **Welcome & introductions**

0.1. The Chair welcomed Roger Lilley (i/c Pupil Voice) and Nina Gane (recently appointed as Acting Deputy Head) to the meeting.

### 1. **Pupil Voice Project**

1.1. Roger Lilley explained that at the start of the current academic year, Milton Road had been invited to participate in year 2 of an LA project about listening to the voices of children/young people. Following year one of the project, the LA's PHSE service had produced its own policy initiative, which aimed to help schools build up a dossier of best practice on how to increase pupil involvement/ownership of the curriculum across all key stages, and provide an opportunity for good schools to share best practice.

1.2. A meeting in Huntingdon (attended by Roger together with Matt Human) had provided an opportunity for schools to meet, and share information on achievements so far with other schools. One of the most useful documents from this meeting was an audit sheet, to help identify how involved children actually are. Having worked through the audit sheet, Roger and Matt felt that a number of examples of good practice were already in place at Milton Road, for example the school already had an active school council, and pupils had been involved in the design of the courtyard, and in interview programmes for prospective employees. The school needed to identify a fresh project that would be appropriate and manageable, and develop an action plan for implementing it. The chosen project was pupil involvement in personalised learning in spring term yr 5/6 children (these year groups being best able to achieve the independent work required).

[Ysanne joined the meeting at this point.]

1.3. After giving examples of the work done in both year groups, Roger's conclusion was that the project had been a success in both year groups, both in terms of the children building on work they had already done, and independent thought/ideas that came out of the process. Additionally Nina Gane gave an example of a year 2 project where a similar approach had been tried during a project on weather forecasts, and this had generated a huge variety of independent thought/ideas/project work. In conclusion, Roger suggested that the audit would be worth repeating every 2-3 years to review/check progress, incorporate further examples of good practice from other schools etc.

[The Headteacher joined the meeting at this point.]

1.4. On behalf of the committee, the Chair thanked Roger for his very helpful and informative presentation, and looked forward to receiving further updates at future meetings as the project continued to progress.

1.5. [Roger Lilley left the meeting at this point.]

### 2. **Apologies for absence**

2.1. Apologies were received and accepted from Hilary Hladky.

### 3. **Minutes of the previous meeting (2 March 2009)**

3.1. The minutes of the meeting of 2 March 2009 were agreed, and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### 4. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

- 4.1. Item 4 (governor visits): There was a short discussion on topics/dates for governor visits for the autumn term – possibilities included Pupil Voice and Extended Schools? It was also agreed that presentations by school staff at Curriculum committee meetings were extremely valuable, and the committee hoped that these could continue. It was agreed to discuss both issues with Stephen Burton, and agree details of governor visits and topics for presentations at Curriculum Committee, at the start of the autumn term.

**Action: Curriculum Chair**

- 4.2. Item 5 (Community Issues): There was a short discussion on how the school could continue to develop its links with the local community, and incorporating discussions on relevant community issues at Curriculum Committee meetings. Kidscape was identified as an area for governors to research/investigate further. There was now a community cohesion element in the SEF – school, wider community and global/international. Noted that Stephen Burton had a strong interest in this area; it was agreed to review the community cohesion element of the SEF, and arrange to visit Kidscape, once Stephen had taken up his post in the autumn term. Other areas identified for further work included increasing parental involvement, and enhancing extended schools provision to provide activities in the school holidays, as well as during term time before/after the school day.
- 4.3. All other action points were agreed as either agreed, or covered elsewhere on the agenda.

#### 5. **Parents Questionnaire**

- 5.1. A summary prepared by the Curriculum Chair, based on the detailed analysis by Ysanne Austin, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. In discussing the key points of the summary, the committee noted the positive responses running throughout the report. So that the summary would be available as a public document, the committee asked the Clerk to append the summary to the minutes of the current meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

- 5.2. The committee then considered those areas where further work could be done. These included further work to ensure the complaints procedure was accessible to all those who might need to access it, and also to look again at homework diaries and how they were used. In response to a query from one governor, the Headteacher confirmed that information on how to access ParentMail was on the school website, and also included at the top of every newsletter sent to parents.

#### 6. **Governor Visits**

- 6.1. A short discussion took place on the consolidated report on the Maths visit, with governors noting that a number of observations made by governors during their visits, corroborated the information given by Roger Lilley in his earlier presentation. With regards to the future, governors noted that new advice on Maths was coming out on a regular basis from the LA's Maths team, and Jo Pulford was passing on the key messages to staff.

#### 7. **Discussion on possible SDP priorities for 2009/10**

- 7.1. Nina Gane circulated a bullet-point list of possible topics for inclusion in the 2009/10 SDP, and the Headteacher elaborated on each of these in turn. A brief discussion on each of the key points then followed. Governors agreed to share the current list with Stephen, together with a covering letter setting out the three areas (personalised learning, reviewing the school structure/roles/responsibilities, and developing community links) to which governors attached high priority.

**Action: Headteacher**

- 7.2. In the meantime, it was agreed to carry forward the current SDP objectives for the next couple of terms, to allow Stephen Burton to develop ongoing priorities when he took up post in September 2009.
- 7.3. Ruth Sapsed provided a précis of the governors' conference "The Governors' Big Picture"

which she had attended – the main focus of the conference being learning outside the classroom.

- 7.4. In conclusion, the committee considered the current schedule of Link Governors. The Clerk confirmed that all statutory links were in place, but there were some gaps in the recommended/desirable links. Agreed to add this item to the agenda for the first meeting of the committee in the autumn term.

**Action: Clerk**

## 8. **Community Issues**

- 8.1. Discussed earlier on the agenda (see item 4.2 above).

## 9. **Any Other Business**

- 9.1. None on this occasion.

## 10. **Date of next meeting**

- 10.1. This was the last meeting of the current academic year; a draft year planner of meetings for the 2009/10 academic year would be circulated with the papers for the Full Governing Body meeting on 6 July 2009. The Chair said that he would canvass governors' views as to preferred day(s) of the week, and timings, for governing body meetings.

**Action: Clerk, Chair of Governors**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:20 hours.

Approved by the Committee on 15/10/09

## 2008 Parent Questionnaire Summary of Results May 2009<sup>1</sup>

The questionnaire was responded by a total of 83 parents. Summary of these responses is presented below:

- 1) Parents agree that they are well informed about the arrangements for their children to settle in at the start of school year
- 2) Parents also feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem. The teachers are busy in the morning.
- 3) 50% of parents do not quite understand the procedure follow by the school for complaints. This is partly because parents have not needed to complain.

*Possible suggested action:* Make complaints procedure more prominent on the school website.

- 4) A majority of parents find the reading record books/homework diaries is useful way of communicating with the class teacher about my child's reading/homework. However, a significant minority answering the questionnaire does not agree.

*Possible suggested action:* Explore ways to use record book in a more consistent way.

- 5) A majority of parents considers that it is not a good idea for the child to attend parent consultation meetings.
- 6) There is a strong appreciation for the Head teacher's newsletters as being useful and informative.
- 7) The class teacher's term newsletter is considered useful and informative by the majority of parents and parents would want this newsletter to always be available.
- 8) The website is considered by the majority of parents as useful and informative but a significant minority recommends some improvements.

*Possible suggested actions:* the school may consider exploring the possibility of updating information more regularly and increasing its use. There are many ways in which this can be done, i.e. providing information from teachers and possibly some types of class activities, etc.

9. The majority of parents consulted find the school brochure useful and informative but there is a minority (about 25%) that disagrees.
10. The parents prefer school to home communication is the email, but about 20% would want both emails and paper mail.

*Possible suggested actions:* School may consider using email and paper letters, at least initially.

11. Parents find that the ParentMail is a useful method of distributing school to home information and almost all parents receive ParentMail but it is important that the ParentMail is relevant.

*Possible suggested action:* Ensure that ParentMail is relevant.

12. The questionnaire finds that a small minority of parents, about 10%, do not have internet access for children.

13. *Other suggestions:* Parents provided a number of other suggestions including, an open school group assembly, the use of website by children in each school year, more inter-active communication through website, website space for parents to communicate, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Summary prepared by Carlos Montes (governor) based on questionnaire tabulations prepared by Ysanne Heald (governor)