



Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

Minutes of a Meeting of the
Governing Body of Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools
Held at Hickling School on Wednesday 17th July 2019, 6pm

Attendance	<p>Sheila Watts (SW) LA - Chair Angie Johnson (AJ) – Foundation Martin Petersen (MP) – Co-opted Julie Wones (JW) – Co-Head Natalie Butcher (NB) – Co-Head Louise Lawson (LL) – Co-opted Jennie Nichols (JN) – Parent David Lloyd (DL) – Co-opted Natalie Fisk (NF) – Staff Justine Petersen (JP) - Clerk</p>
1. Welcome & opening prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SW welcomed all present to the meeting and thanked them for attending. ➤ The meeting was opened with a moment of quiet reflection
2. Apologies & absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ None received. LR sent apologies after the meeting. There had been confusion around the dates.
3. Declarations of Interest	<p>Governors were given the opportunity to declare any new business interests or potential conflict of interest arising from the items on the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SW is married to an MSA at Sutton. ➤ MP is married to the Clerk. ➤ AJ is a governor of the Blue Sky Federation and a parish councillor. ➤ LL is the owner of Treasure Box. ➤ DL is a governor of an independent school.
4. Minutes of Previous FGB Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2019 were unanimously approved without amendment.
5. Matters Arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AJ will sort the safeguarding check. ➤ SW will do one final follow up with the potential parent governor towards the end of the summer break. ➤ The parent governor vacancies will be publicised again in September. <p>Action – Parent governor vacancies to be publicised in September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SW has not contacted Happisburgh. NB advised that they are entering a partnership. ➤ LL will book governor induction training next term. She attended the NGN summer briefing. ➤ All other actions were marked as complete.
6. Committee Updates – 25th June 2019	<p>Achievement & Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments or queries. <p>Resources & Premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No comments or queries. ➤ The confidential minutes of the R&P meeting held on 4th March were unanimously approved without amendment. <p>Cluster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How did transition go? Stalham High only offered one transition day so Stalham Academy hosted an additional day of sport for all Yr6 children. This was very positive and all heads would like to repeat it next year. Yr6 at Catfield is a small cohort and this gave them confidence and the chance to make friends. Governors were pleased to see the schools working together for the benefit of the cluster. Why did the High School refuse to allow for the usual 2 transition days? This was decided by the Trust. All cluster heads expressed concern via Glenn Russell but the request was refused. ➤ Would the pre-schools also be able to move up a year on transition? Yes, this already happens on transition days. Sutton does it monthly with Rising 5s.

7. Headteacher Update

- JW advised that SEND is in a mess in Norfolk and schools are having to deal with it. The Federation schools are continuing to admit high needs children, and the impact is significant. All 3 environments are adjusting and adapting, and all have been successful so far.
- Norfolk still has more children with EHCPs than national and it is not hitting the 20 week deadline. **How long is it in Norfolk?** The Federation has been waiting for one for 7 months. One child has been waiting for speech and language for 3 years. **Is there anything governors can do to help with this?** No. SEND forums are taking place but nothing new is on offer.
- LL attended a speech and language market place event and has information to share.
- NB stressed the fact that staffing is already stretched.
- A new SEN Code of Practice is expected in September. Every teacher should have the same level of SEN CPD. It has been frustrating for JW and staff this year, as JW has been stretched and has been unable to support staff on the ground.
- Many schools are employing a specific SENCo, and Catfield is way above national for SEN. JW and NB have discussed this in terms of the SDP. Staff need to feel empowered.
- The problem is likely to get worse. Children joining the school are increasingly vulnerable. Speech and language need in EYFS is increasing.
- **Can this be flagged as a risk factor?** It is a core part of the SDP. The Federation needs to show it is responding by upskilling staff.
- Staffing may need consideration in the budget moving forward.
- **Is there any support from the cluster?** No, and the cost would be £210 for 2 hours of support. The only real support is internal.

- DL stressed the importance of attendance as a key factor on the SDP. Flexi-schooling should be included within this.

Flexi Schooling Policy:

- Governors need to be clear about the impact of this on the progress of different groups. The policy needs to be robust.
- The schools are responsible for those educated offsite and a risk assessment must be undertaken before any agreement. **Where are the records held?** There are forms to complete including a home risk assessment. JW tabled an example. **Is the school certifying that the education is supervised and that measures are in place to safeguard?** There will be records of risk assessments. The parent will provide information on what educational activities are taking place while the child is not on site. **What if a child is taken to an outdoor activity centre?** A risk assessment will not be needed because the centre would have its own. **What if the child is injured?** The child is on the school's roll.
- County has asked to change the coding on the register from B to C. The DfE agreed. There will be an impact on attendance figures.
- The relationship between the school and the parent is key. JW has rejected one application through County admissions where there was not a pre-existing relationship. The criteria were not met.
- **Do we know what they are doing when off site?** Yes, JW will be aware of the activity. **Is there still a gap there?** JW will investigate.

Action – JW to investigate whether there are gaps in flexi schooling safeguarding.

- **The policy still states register code B?** This will be changed to C.
- **Will attendance figures show it as authorised absence?** Yes. **So attendance figures will drop?** Yes, but questions can be answered by rigorous records. Hickling is a small school and the drop will be noticeable. It will draw attention.
- The schools already do case studies of SEN and PP. The same will work for flexi-schooling.
- JW will manage flexi schooling at Hickling but NB will monitor. **So NB will know if an activity is too repetitive?** Yes, she will be able to make those challenges.
- **Governors asked JW to tweak language on page 3 of the policy to make it clearer.**

Action – JW to make minor amendments to wording in Flexi-Schooling Policy.

- Governors asked for flexi schooling to be added as a standing item on future A&S agendas as another category of progress data.

Action – Flexi Schooling to be added as a standing item on A&S agendas.

- There will be a link governor for flexi schooling.
- **How will it be reported to governors if it is a single child only?** It will be reported non-specifically. Governors are expected to look at progress data despite the size of the

	<p>cohort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governors felt an annual review period was too long. JW advised that the first review would take place after one half term. She will amend the wording. ➤ Will the school manage the implementation with support and guidance from the LA? LA advice has been sought regarding the policy, and the coding was changed as a result. JW also spoke with the admissions team. ➤ Is the aim to accelerate the progress for the child? The aim is for the progress to be maintained while making the curriculum even richer. The Federation already offers a broad and balanced curriculum. <p>Summer 2019 Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Progress is the main concern – only 1/6 make expected progress in all areas. ➤ SPaG was 100%. ➤ Maths is improving. NB will complete an analysis with the subject lead and the LA Maths Advisor. Reasoning is the main area of weakness. ➤ 50% combined was well below national. ➤ Governors had been aware from the start of the year. There were no surprises. Is all in hand to address these issues from September? Yes. <p>SDP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governors requested a summary of impact be added to the document. <p>Action – Summary of impact to be added to SDP.</p>
<p>8. Attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attendance must be an area to monitor closely. ➤ Catfield has had an audit and much of what the school is doing is correct. A rigorous action plan was implemented from January and attendance has improved. A new policy will be in force from September. ➤ Strong procedures are in place linked to children missing from education. Parents must inform the school office if their child is absent, and not the class teacher. Will this be communicated to parents? It is already school policy but parents will be reminded. <p>Action – Parents to be reminded to inform school office if their child is absent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If a child leaves the setting an address should be sought, even if they are moving abroad. Is this best practice? Yes. What if the parents do not provide one? The school must ask. ➤ A whole school spreadsheet of children on the register is needed. This will be moved across from Pupil Asset. ➤ Each child must have at least 2 emergency contacts for safeguarding reasons. Could parents be asked to complete the forms every year? Yes, but it must be kept up to date. There needs to be 2 beyond the parent although this is hard for some families. ➤ Secretaries need to be proactive if children are not in school. Home visits should take place within a reasonable time. Are parents aware that this could happen? No but it will be included in the policy and parents will be informed. <p>Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fixed penalty notices for 10 consecutive unauthorised sessions or 9 sessions within a 6 week period. NB has discretion if it would put the family in financial distress. ➤ Fast tracking. How legally binding is this? Parents will be taken to court if the target is not met. They are reminded of their legal responsibility. ➤ Does the LA pay for legal proceedings? Yes if it reaches that stage. Action plans have worked so far but may not help with holidays. There is a shared medical protocol linked to safeguarding. One was submitted 4 weeks ago but no response has been received. Who was it submitted to? Ludham Surgery. Could we chase this up? Yes, it could potentially be a safeguarding issue and the response should be faster. ➤ NB stressed the need to be consistent. Governors considered the County letter that would be sent to parents every September and would give the school the right to issue fixed penalty notices. ➤ Hickling and Sutton are mainly holidays, Catfield is less holidays and more 'little and often'. Hickling has decreased over the course of the year. ➤ None of the schools have reached 97% attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SW invited governors to consider whether to issue the County letter and provide NB with the discretion to move to fixed penalty notices (FPN) or fast tracking. ➤ What is meant by 'headteacher discretion'? NB stressed the need to be consistent. Sutton alone would have had 12 potential FPNs this year, and some parents would have received more than one.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NB knows the families well and it could be a valuable tool to improve attendance. ➤ Governors were mindful that Hickling in particular would be under additional scrutiny due to flexi-schooling. ➤ Would an FPN be issued for every family holiday? Yes, of 5 days or more. ➤ SW reminded governors that the Federation had always avoided fining in order to maintain the caring, flexible and understanding approach, but it had never come under the attendance spotlight before. JN stated that the parents are appreciative. ➤ NB has taken steps to improve attendance at Catfield. These have been successful, although holidays were not the issue. ➤ NB felt that the headteachers discretion would be too grey. ➤ Not all families can take holidays out of term time, particularly those who work in agriculture or in the armed forces. ➤ Parent should realise the impact attendance has on schools. It could trigger an Ofsted at Hickling. Attendance has been a factor in school closures in the past. ➤ Fast track would create a significant workload. ➤ DL expressed concern that the moment discretion is used the school would be vulnerable to allegations of unfairness and discrimination. He would be concerned about any policy that put the headteacher at the front of making a legal decision. ➤ Has NB spoken to the union and asked their advice? This could be done. ➤ Fining is not effective. ➤ Governors unanimously agreed that NB and DL would draft an amended attendance policy including what is being done currently and what impact this has had. Clerk to add to next agenda. <p>Action – Amended attendance policy to be added to next agenda. DL and NB to draft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AJ will investigate the impact of fines online. <p>Action – AJ to investigate the impact of attendance fines online.</p>
9. Budget Update	No update at this meeting.
10. Future of Federation Moving Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governors agreed to revisit this in September. Clerk to add to agenda. <p>Action – Future of federation moving forward to be added to next agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ LL attended the partnership hub meeting. Collaborative working in the form of starting a hub was discussed. This could include children’s centres, play groups, nurseries etc. ➤ AJ advised that the small schools group had been disbanded because of changes to the format of cabinet meetings. She is investigating. ➤ Throughout the turmoil and changes at SLT level the schools maintained good Ofsted. This is a reflection of the level of commitment of SLT and governors.
11. Leadership Arrangements Moving Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AJ has requested a written list of reasons why the leadership decision was made. She will discuss with NB.
12. GDPR Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Federation was the subject of 2 GDPR audits in 2 days, including one by County. No issues or concerns were raised. ➤ AJ also completed a spot check on GDPR and safeguarding
13. Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MP has monitored the website. It is compliant with DfE requirements. ➤ The links to the schools and colleges website needs to be added. ➤ MP will work on the governor section of the website over the summer. ➤ He has been through the policies and has a reference document to forward to NB in September. Many are up for review.
14. Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NB and LR will review policies in September before they are ratified in the committees. <p>Action – NB and LR to review policies in September and bring to committees for ratification.</p>
15. Governor Training Log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The training log was updated after the last meeting. ➤ Governors will consider the Educator Solutions in-house training session in September, along with the skills audit and self-review.
16. Agree Meeting Calendar for Next Academic Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governors agreed to move the September committee meetings to 2nd October. ➤ No other changes were made.
17. Future Dates of School Events	None.

18. Any Other Urgent Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NF has resigned as staff governor with effect from the end of term. She has enjoyed the role and feels it has given her confidence. Governors thanked NF for her contribution during her term of office. ➤ NB will seek a replacement from September. There has already been interest. She would like 2 members of staff to join the Governing Board, although one would need to be co-opted.
19. Date and Time of Next Meeting	Tuesday 10 th September 2019, 6pm at Hickling.
20. Closing Moment with Prayer	AJ closed the meeting with a prayer.

With no further business the meeting finished at 20.00

Key Actions going forward

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility
5	Parent governor vacancies to be publicised in September.	NB – September
7	JW to investigate whether there are gaps in flexi schooling safeguarding	JW – next meeting
7	JW to make minor amendments to wording in Flexi-Schooling Policy.	JW – next meeting
7	Flexi Schooling to be added as a standing item on A&S agendas.	Clerk – next A&S
7	Summary of impact to be added to SDP.	NB – next meeting
8	Parents to be reminded to inform school office if their child is absent.	NB - ASAP
8	Amended attendance policy to be added to next agenda. DL and NB to draft.	DL/NB/Clerk – next meeting
8	AJ to investigate the impact of attendance fines online.	AJ – next meeting
10	Future of federation moving forward to be added to next agenda.	Clerk – next meeting
14	NB and LR to review policies in September and bring to committees for ratification.	NB/LR – September

Signed by the Chair of Governors as a true record of the meeting:

Date:

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