

Burnt Yates Church of England Voluntary Aided (Endowed) Primary School

Minutes of a meeting of parents/ carers, governors and NYCC officials held on 26 January 2017 at the school at 6.30pm to discuss the recent Ofsted report

Present:

Helen Leslie, Chair of Governors
Sue Wass, Acting Headteacher
Andy Lancashire, Principal Adviser, Primary Education
Steven Holmes, Lead Improvement Adviser for the school
Fiona Beevers, Deputy Diocesan Director of Education
Members of the Governing Body: Annette Cadwallader, Janet Newell, William Moore, Mark Stoddart, Diana Kitzing, Helen Myers, Jean Tither
Chair of the Trustees: John Fawcett
Staff members: Mrs Chan, Mrs Lilley, Mrs Ingle, Miss Halford
The Reverend Paul Harford
22 parents/carers (see attached list)

- 1 The Chair of Governors welcomed parents to the meeting. This was followed by introductions and an opening prayer.

2 Key findings of the Ofsted report

Andy Lancashire, using a Power Point presentation, went through the content of the report. He began by listing the strengths of the school: the governors, who are all volunteers, have worked tirelessly to secure the future leadership of the school; the pupils are happy and well-behaved and parents are satisfied with the level of care the children receive. He then went through the key findings of the inspection report:

- Safeguarding – school leaders were not following agreed procedures and regular health and safety checks were not in place. In answer to a question by a parent on whether his/her child was safe in school, the Head spoke about the current position and reported that all checks are now in place. She explained that the documentation on this had not been available to the Ofsted Inspector because it had not been uploaded to the central record file. The admin officer has now received training on this. The entrance gates to the playground have now been made secure with padlocks and the flats risk assessed. The local authority (LA) has since carried out a check and is satisfied.
- The governors have been too trusting that the information given to them at meetings was accurate. In answer to a question on what do governors do, the Chair spoke about the important work they have done in recruiting a head and putting in place the arrangements for the provision of a nursery, in addition to the routine work that has to be done. As Chair, she devotes at least one day a week to school governance. The governors have shown dedication to the school by choosing not to walk away from the school following the issues raised by the report which will now involve them in considerably more work. Governors hold 5 meetings a year and, in addition, its School Development Committee also meets once a term when challenging questions and issues are raised by governors. She went on to say that the previous Head had judged the school as good in all respects and since Mrs Wilson then went on to be promoted to a school improvement officer for the authority the Chair had every confidence in

her judgement. A further inspection by the local authority school improvement partner on 13 October also supported Mrs Wilson's judgements. When the interim head raised concerns about the evaluation, she asked Steven Holmes to re-inspect on 31 October, but there was not time to put improvements in place before the Ofsted inspection on 1 December. In conclusion, the Chair said that she did not think the governors had been too trusting or lacked understanding of their role, as stated by Ofsted.

Andy Lancashire reported that the previous Head has since offered her resignation from her new post and this has been accepted. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the judgements made by the county's school improvement officer and a replacement would now be appointed. He accepted that the county inspection service had failed the school in this respect.

- Quality of teaching and learning: discussions will go on with teachers, the LA and the Diocese concerning this.
- Reading books do not meet children's needs: the resources and types of material required will be addressed.
- The expectations and needs of pupils are not being met: this needs addressing.
- The absence of any induction procedures for staff and governors: these are now in place.
- Self-evaluation is inaccurate and plans for English and Maths don't focus on the school's needs: the Head commented that she had already identified this and was working on it before the Ofsted inspection.

There followed discussions on the judgements of the Ofsted inspection and the responsibility borne by the LA in failing to identify the decline in the quality of teaching and to monitor the previous Head's performance.

3 What does the school need to do to improve?

- Advisers are already coming in to advise the school on early years' education and reading and this will continue.
- Issues in Key Stage 2 will need to be addressed.
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Improve the quality of teaching (Asked by a parent if this included the school improvement service, Andy Lancashire said yes). There was also an accusation that the LA was setting the school up for a fall and this was denied.
- Undertake an external review of governance – this will look at the monitoring role of governors and how it can be done. A range of providers for this review will be offered to the governors to choose from.

4 Statutory guidance

The statutory implications of the Ofsted findings were presented:

- The school is eligible for intervention – the LA has various powers to intervene.
- Conversion to an academy with a strong sponsor (DfE); the school will receive a directive academy order from the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).
- The RSC will consult the Diocese about an appropriate sponsor.
- RSC has the option to direct closure if the school is not able to make sufficient improvements or is not viable; they must consult governors, LA and Diocese.
- Local Authority Statement of Action

Fiona Beevers described in more detail her role in advising on a suitable Multi Academy Trust (MAT) for the school. There are three possible MATs that would be compatible with a church school and she will work with her Diocesan colleagues to assess these. She stressed that the Diocese can't force the school into a MAT, it can only advise.

5 **LA powers of intervention**

The LA has no plans to use these which include powers to: suspend the governing body's delegated authority to manage the school's budget; to appoint additional governors; to appoint an Interim Executive Board; to propose closure where there is no prospect of sufficient improvement.

6 **Questions** (answered by Andy Lancashire unless otherwise stated)

What happens if no sponsor comes forward, as it would seem small schools are being picked on as part of a political agenda?
The school continues to exist until a sponsor is found. The second part of this question was denied, as this situation applies to large and small schools.

What would be the time-scale for closure of the school?
This varies.

How many times does the LA inspect schools?
Inspections take place once a term and more frequently if this is deemed to be necessary. However, the school improvement officer does not do a full inspection and will not ask to see the central record file.

What is the possibility of the school closing?
Don't know the answer to this. The school is expected to improve which will be helpful when the RSC looks at its viability. Academy sponsorship could take 12 months during which time the school will remain open and in the meantime could come out of special measures. However, if this does happen it will still have an Academy Order. There are no deadlines for securing sponsorship, but the stronger the school gets, the stronger position it will be in to attract a sponsor.

Can the school get out of the Academy Order?
No.

Should the LA write to Ofsted and take responsibility for the inadequate report, since the termly inspectors had failed the school and were, therefore, responsible for its Ofsted failure?

It is not possible to do this.

How optimistic is Fiona Beevers about finding an academy to sponsor the school?

This will depend on the number of pupils in the school. The Diocesan staff will be talking to the RSC and the Academy Trusts, including the one led by St Aidan's which is the closest and most well established of the three possibilities, but there is no timescale to report at this stage.

Will Ofsted do another check on safeguarding?

There was uncertainty surrounding this so it will be followed up.

Will a drop in number on school roll make it unviable?

There is a possibility it will become unviable, but the possibility of improvement was also emphasised. There won't be another Ofsted for two years and this will have an impact on the prospective intake.

How will trust in the LA come back?

Trust will come back through the LA's improved track record.

Can the LA request a re-inspection of the school by Ofsted?

This is not possible, but once it becomes an academy it will be taken out of special measures. There will also be regular parents' forums once a month to report on progress. The first of these will be in three weeks' time to update parents on Academy progress and improvements. It was emphasised that the school was not inadequate in every way.

What can be done about the negative press coverage that will follow the report and will have a detrimental effect on uptake?

The LA will put out information focusing on the improvements the school has made.

What plans are there for recruitment/retention of staff at this difficult time?

Apart from wishing to secure a head, nothing further can be said at this stage.

The consistency of teachers and teaching assistants was questioned.

The Head said it was difficult to plan in the face of sick notes at 2-3 week intervals. This has been a stressful time for teachers and appropriate support is being given from the occupational health service.

A question was asked about Special Needs funding, but this involved a specific child and is to be followed up with the Head by the parent.

The Head clarified the situation concerning the Special Needs Co-ordinator. This post has now been secured and the holder is working towards qualification as a SENCO. The documentation had not been in place for Ofsted.

What has been communicated to the children concerning the Ofsted report?

The Head replied that the children have been told that the school and the children are still the same with the same talents and the school is still proud of them. They are a credit to you and to the School. The objective is still to ensure the best education to them through the school and the community.

What can parents do to help? They have many skills to offer the school.

It was agreed that these skills could be offered to the school.

Why weren't the school's failings picked up before?

There is a need to regain trust and ensure that it doesn't happen again. Organisations fail for various reasons and it is not an ideal world. The school has been in decline since 2011 and it is essential that we now make sure that teaching and learning is good.

Are other plans for the School (eg the nursery) on hold?

Not in the long term. The Head said that she is having on-going discussions with county advisers on the nursery.

Will the current ratio of the Head's time between Burnt Yates and Ripley be reassessed in the light of the improvements required at Burnt Yates?

This will be looked at.

Does collaboration have to stop?

It doesn't have to stop, but the current situation can now be discussed with the Ripley governors.

Do governors think that collaboration is a positive?

The Chair replied that it is essential for the viability of the school, since it is unable to fund a full-time head. Many benefits have resulted from it, including joint ventures for both children and staff, as well as opportunities for professional development. Andy Lancashire added that it was also an example of what could be done in a MAT.

Andy Lancashire was asked to confirm the change in the school improvement officer for the school.

In confirming this, he said that the school would be ready for another inspection by the end of this academic year. SW informed parents that a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) will take place on Tuesday. This has nothing to do with the Ofsted inspection, but follows a national framework for CE and Methodist schools. Parents will see the report which covers RE/worship/leadership re the school's Christian ethos. However, the school's Ofsted result means that its SIAMS grade will be capped to one grade above its Ofsted grade.

The Chair of the Trustees said that the Trust tries to support the school in various ways (Buddies and Baby Buddies) and is happy to continue to do this.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.