

Southfields Academy Local Governing Body Meeting
Wednesday 18th March 2020
6pm

Governors Response sheet

Agenda

3. Minutes of last meeting

a. *Corrections*

i. *None noted*

2. Matters arising

a. *Comments*

b. *Questions*

3. Headteachers' report

W. Golinska

a. *Comments*

- i. *I want to acknowledge and thank the staff for their tireless commitment to Southfields. Their hard work is appreciated.*

Thank you.

- ii. *I would like to commend the Maths department for their excellence in provision, which is now widely recognised.*

Thank you.

b. *Questions*

- i. *How urgent is the need to expand the mental health trailblazer work to the staff community? Do you feel you have vulnerable individuals in need of support at work (beyond what is already in place)? Specifically, how will further support for staff impact student welfare (e.g. less absence, improved teaching quality, less colleague led support mechanisms required)?*

We will be gradually be increasing the work that we do for staff mental health and well-being so that we can gauge the success of what we do. Most staff with specific issues are already receiving external support. We are in the process of focusing on wider staff well-being with the associated aim of reducing staff absence. This will in turn have a positive effect on teaching and learning and student outcomes.

- ii. *How much does the IT project cost and what are the full roll out timelines? Can we see the budgetary impact and risk assessment (of doing it and doing nothing)?*

Doing nothing is not really a viable option now. We have to move to Windows 10 as our current operating system is no longer supported. We have focused on staff computers first so that we can guarantee both the teaching/learning IT but also the back-office functions will work. The new PCs will be leased over four years. This is more cost effective than buying them outright. The usual annual cost will be around £14k a year but we are expecting to get up to £12k in buyback of current equipment which should reduce the first year cost to around £2k or less.

iii. *Given our focus on inclusion, how did we get to a position where our SEND provision is lacking? Could you give us an insight to what happened and how we safeguard against this occurring in the future? What are the risks to delivery of the strategy?*

We identified that the Senior Teacher (SEND), SENCO and SEN staff were underperforming and took action that led to two staff resigning last school year. We now have Assistant Head Teacher, Gemma Legrande leading our SEN provision. She was previously head of English and our Literacy lead. From September 2020 we will be training Gemma Legrande and Karen Marshall in the national SENCO qualification at Roehampton University. We believe that, in the relatively short time that Gemma has taken the lead, we have already seen a real improvement in our SEN provision. Even making administrative changes has meant that we are now able to maximise our SEN income from local authorities which gives us more resources for this important area.

iv. *Can you update us on the COVID-19 response? How many children and staff are in school? Are you planning to provide a safe place for key worker and vulnerable students during the holidays? What steps have you taken to safeguard students studying remotely?*

There were 18 students in on day one and that has now reduced to six a day. We have been using a rota system of volunteer staff who live locally or can drive in so that no staff are using public transport.

All Southfields students have been given workbooks to use at home and they can access online learning through Google classrooms. This is being led by Tracy Gray, Dave Whitfield and Karen Marshall.

Wanda and Jackie have decided that the school will remain open in the Easter holidays for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Again this will be covered by volunteers and there will be senior staff on site at all times the school is open.

We have also offered to house students and staff from Burntwood and Saint Cecilia's during the Easter break.

v. *Is a 3 year KS3 a typical approach or are we trailblazing? I have read the changes being implemented to Yr9 to help with the transition and can understand the benefits. Is there a downside to this approach that we should be aware of?*

It was usual for school to run three year Key Stage 3 up to eight years ago. We have now returned to that model as it is expected by OFSTED.

c. *Preferred curriculum area (see final page of report)*

i. *Pastoral, SEND*

4. Financial report

(inc. cashflow and internal audit report)

S. Elson

a. *Comments*

i. *Congratulations to the Finance Team for a successful internal audit outcome. Thank you.*

b. *Questions*

i. *What is the financial impact of the COVID-19 response?*

It is probably too early to tell. We expect some savings from utility bills. We will continue to pay staff as normal and that is our biggest outlay. There will be some reduction in income such as catering and some rent from local hirers. There may be government support to help pay for the service we provide over Easter. Overall we might expect it to be broadly neutral as our biggest source of income – government funding – is protected.

- ii. *Why are the premises issues considered unplanned expenditure, when we have been reporting them for a while?*

They are more unbudgeted than unplanned. If we include all possible premises expenditure in the day to day school budget it will be impossible to set a balanced budget without cutting other expenditure areas. We have taken the view that, considering our reserves, we will keep large items of premises expenditure outside of the budget and fund from reserves when necessary. This is an anomaly for academies really as local authority school capital expenditure will all be outside of the school's accounts.

5. Standing items to report

ECM Governors' minutes including safeguarding

J. Valin

- *Comments*

- *Questions*

- Premises and Health & Safety

J. Valin/S. Elson

- *Comments*

- *Are there any plans (costed) to provide more communal staff areas? I recall reference to mid-building areas to get drinks and food.*

This is being considered now as part of staff well-being. Though staff do have access to departmental staff areas, they have told us that they would like an area where they can get refreshments during the day. We have identified an area to do this and are now looking at the detail of how we will serve the refreshments safely.

- *Questions*

Any other comments.....

- What is the HR impact of the COVID-19 response?

We have been entirely sympathetic if any staff have felt the need to self-isolate. We have also identified, and encouraged staff to self-identify, staff who may be in vulnerable groups and need to be at home. All staff working now are volunteers and we have set up a rota system to minimise the time that staff are at school.

26/11/2020