

# Portesbery School

## Minutes of the Children and Learning Committee held at the school at 17.00 on 18 May 2017

Present	Mr Nathan Aspinall (Headteacher)
	Mrs Ruth Buchan
	Mrs Tracy Haigh
	Mr Hudson Holt (part)
	Mrs Jane Vaughan (Chairman)
In attendance	Mr Chris Hamilton
	Mr Chris Thomas (Clerk)

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Mrs Susan Carpenter had sent her apologies in advance. They were accepted by governors.

### 2. Declaration of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest in any of the agenda items.

### 3. Presentation on Intensive Interaction

Miss Chloe Gatehouse gave a presentation on the subject of Intensive Interaction.

### 4. Minutes of the meeting of the committee on 23 February 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting of the committee of 23 February 2017 were accepted as an accurate record, and were signed by the Chair.

*Mr Holt joined the meeting at this point.*

### 5. Matters arising from the Minutes

- a) Item 5, proposed governor workshop on support staff attendance; governors agreed that this proposal be discontinued and that, as agreed at the previous meeting, a full review of the role of support staff and how best they should be recruited should take place after the new Headteacher had had time to assess the position.
- b) The Headteacher explained the concept of a group cover policy, which involved groups of staff arranging cover themselves. Mrs Vaughan commented that at another special school, support staff had developed a system which identified when they were in a position to assist other classes.
- c) Item 5, Outcomes for Pupils (Item 6.b in the minutes of the meeting of 24 November 2016). The Headteacher said that the Senior Leadership Team had undertaken a monitoring session on the theme of 'My Outcomes'. It had been felt that the leadership team needed to go back to basics with the staff. He said that the Assistant Headteacher (Primary) would distribute a one-page briefing note on 'My Outcomes', based in part on input from staff using the system.

***ACTION: Sam Leach (AHT) to distribute 'My Outcomes' note***

- d) Item 7, 'Governor Monitoring.' Mrs Buchan recalled that she had undertaken a learning walk at the school on the 23 February 2017, and that at the subsequent meeting of the committee she had commented that she had not noted much evidence of visual support; she had suggested that the children needed help from symbols. She reported that had since then undertaken another walk, during which she had seen much more visual support in place for the children. The Headteacher commented that

it was important to acknowledge that not all classes were the same, and that needs differed, but staff could still learn from other classes; teachers performed learning walks within the school, and this could include consideration of the use of visual symbols.

## 6. Headteacher's Report

A copy of the May 2017 School Evaluation Summary had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) The Headteacher said that the next step for the school was to begin to aim at a self-evaluation of 'Outstanding' by using the outstanding teaching that was already in existence. There was potential for growth through the arrival of Newly-Qualified Teachers and experienced teachers new to the school. Mrs Vaughan commented that she had interviewed the NQTs and new staff, and one point that had emerged from that had concerned the planning of the team in the Secondary section, with perhaps a need for more of a team approach. The staff she had talked to had all said that they would like to observe teaching at other schools. The Headteacher felt that learning from one another was the best form of training; the school would look at working with similar schools locally, or possibly at arranging training with the (more distant) schools that the school co-operated with on assessment.
- b) The Headteacher reported that the middle leadership was now performing some joint observations. He was trying to develop a range of observations, such as learning walks, which were less formal and which allowed some of the less-prepared moments in the classroom to be noted. In the coming year, peer observation would be performed by groups of three teachers, one of whom would be a teacher assessed as outstanding.
- c) Mr Holt asked how staff knew when they were assessed as 'outstanding' or 'good'; the Headteacher said that they tended to know through inference. Mrs Buchan said that teachers should be clear about their assessment; governors discussed the issue in detail. Mr Holt asked whether the school had a system of Personal Development Planning; the Headteacher confirmed that it did. Brig. Shirley asked about the nature of the assessment process; the Headteacher explained about the range of areas that were studied, including learning walks, examination of workbooks, and formal lesson observations.
- d) The peer –review process, whereby a group of four similar special schools undertook mutual assessment, was continuing.
- e) Assessment and Data. The Headteacher said that the data reflected the quality of the teaching profile, and showed a good school. A great majority of the pupils was making progress that was good or better. His task now was to shift good progress to outstanding progress. Mrs Vaughan said that if the school were to be inspected by OFSTED in the near future, it would be asked how it was that so much pupil progress had been made in the six weeks leading up to the committee meeting. Governors asked if the progress had actually improved, or whether the tracking process had become more precise – the Headteacher felt that there was an element of both being true. The enhanced environment following the move of the school to a new building might also have been a factor.
- f) Mrs Vaughan asked whether the school foresaw changes in the assessment procedures used, such as in the 'My Outcomes'. The Headteacher said that the school was working on a project with another special school on streamlining the assessment process through the use of tablet computers. Mrs Vaughan asked when that development would be finalised; the Headteacher said that he hoped to pilot the revised process in September 2017. The partner school had developed an app to simplify assessment.

- g) Moderation. The Headteacher said that he had performed a moderation exercise on Personal, Social and Health Education; it had highlighted the need for consistency.

*Brig. Shirley left the meeting at this point, 18.15*

- h) Assessment cycle. Assessment overview flow charts had been circulated in advance. The Headteacher said that he planned to tighten some of the definitions used in assessment, and in general to make the process more objective. Mrs Vaughan commented that an OFSTED inspection would test the objectivity of the assessment process. Other schools with which she was familiar were also developing their assessment process.
- i) Staffing and Continuing Professional Development. The Headteacher said that there had been a number of resignations in May, almost at the cut-off date for resignations. He was hopeful that there would still be a chance to make new permanent appointments, but if that was in the event not possible there were fall-back plans in place.

The Headteacher said that the new staff induction process at the school was very thorough, and he had not seen it as well done at other schools. Mrs Vaughan said that she had talked to all new staff at the last round of appointments, and suggested that other governors talked to the most recent new staff.

***ACTION: Governors to arrange to talk to new staff***

There was to be an In-Service Training day during the week commencing 22 May 2017 on the subject of Attention Autism, with the objective of identifying what resources were in place.

- j) The Headteacher summarised his report by saying that he felt the school was a solid good school, which needed a push to get teaching and pupil progress to 'Outstanding'. Mrs Vaughan thanked him for his report.

## **7. Safeguarding**

- a) Mrs Carpenter and Mrs Dean were to make a safeguarding visit to the school on 23 May 2017.
- b) The After-School Club was now incorporated in the school's Safeguarding regime. The Headteacher reported that he had prepared a one-page letter to parents on the risks that they should be aware of. He said that there was now a joint meeting between the senior Leadership Team and the school nursing team at the end of each month to review any potential safeguarding issues, to classify them red, amber, or green, and to decide whether cases could be removed from the review.
- c) Mrs Vaughan asked that e-safety be considered at the next meeting of the committee.

***ACTION: Clerk to include e-safety as an agenda item for next committee meeting.***

## **8. Governor Monitoring.**

No reports.

## **9. Policy Reviews**

The Headteacher said that he planned to review all the policies in place, and had therefore not suggested policies for review at the meeting. Governors agreed to defer the review of policies until the next meeting of the committee.

## **10. A.O.B.**

The Headteacher reported that a pupil had returned to the school unexpectedly soon following major surgery. He had been very impressed by the staff's response to the

challenges in additional nursing and teaching workload that that had presented; everyone had been very positive.

The Headteacher had circulated a document on the school stop – start continuum. (???)  
Governors were positive about the approach and asked how it would be developed within the school. Mrs Buchan commented that at another school she had attended a presentation from Home-School Link Workers, which had showed the nature and extent of the work that the role involved.

**11. Date of next meeting**

To be held on Wednesday 11 October at 17.00.

*There being no other business, the meeting closed at 18.45*

*Signed.....Date.....*

*Chair*

**Portesbery School**

Children and Learning Committee  
18 May 2017

Action Items

Item 5.c, Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting

- *Sam Leach (AHT) to distribute 'My Outcomes' note*

Item 6.i, Headteacher's Report

- *Governors to arrange to talk to new staff*

Item 7.c, Safeguarding

- *Clerk to include e-safety as an agenda item for next committee meeting.*