

GLADSTONE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Learning to Succeed"

MEETING OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

DATE: Tuesday 13TH April 2021

TIME: 5.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mr Garry Johnson

Ms Jane Pepper

Mr Teddy Sulman

Mr Conor Waterman

Ms Kerry Johnson

Mrs. Jane McLeod

Mrs Helen Halliday

Ms Cheryl Govan (Committee Chairperson)

Mrs Michaela Livingstone

Dr Steve Moss

Miss V Lewis (Clerk)

ADDITIONALLY PRESENT:

Matt Blyton – Local Authority Principal School Improvement Adviser

Tina Jenkinson – Assistant Headteacher

Vicky Gill – Assistant Headteacher

Steph Boddy – Assistant Headteacher

MINUTES

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

Committee Chair (CG) welcomed members to the meeting. Brief introductions made for the benefit of the new members present (KJ, SM, CW). Matt Blyton also introduced himself as the Principal School Improvement Adviser for GRPS.

Action: None required.

2. Apologies for absence; consider acceptance of apologies (2 minutes)

SD: has some ongoing difficulties at home but has discussed with JP and Clerk and has special dispensation to not physically attend at present. This was agreed by all present.

Action: None required.

3. Confidentiality (2 minutes)

No items identified as confidential.

Action: None required.

4. Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item (2 minutes)

There were no declarations of interest in any agenda items.

Action: None required

5. Minutes of the previous meeting 05.01.21 and Matters Arising (5 minutes)

The Minutes from the meeting on 05.01.2021 were presented and agreed as a full and accurate record. Proposed by JP and TS. Minutes were signed by the Chair electronically and returned to the Clerk for filing / publishing as per procedure.

Action: Minutes from 05.01.21 to be filed/published as per procedure

By: Clerk

6. Correspondence (2 minutes)

None received.

Action: None required.

7. Spring 2021 Leaders' Impact Report (45 minutes)

This report is slightly less detailed than usual due to recent school closures and Covid impact etc.

Summary / Response to Governor Questions

Q: I noticed there is a deficit in teaching staff levels (14 resignations vs 11 recruitments). Is there a plan to recruit additional staff?

A: Although 14 teachers left and we have only recruited 11, this has not left us with a deficit of teachers. One major change is in the provision for SEND - we did not replace the SENDCo when she left, but instead the Assistant Head has taken over this role. Several of the other resignations were down to part time teachers; some of whom covered PPA/ Leadership & Management time. One of the existing part time teachers increased their hours to become full time. We also then changed our model so that PPA & Leadership time were covered by HLTAs. Some posts not replaced like for like as things have changed in terms of roles and responsibilities. Lots of supply staff in school to accommodate Bubbles and Covid measures. These don't show on substantive staff list.

Q: Have any of the health and safety risks been mitigated following the March 2021 report?

A: Of the 14 action plan points, 9 have been completed including all the 'high risk ones'. The outstanding points are Low risk and include appointing fire wardens and getting them trained, recommendation that ALL staff do fire awareness training, closing gap in infant corridor doors and ceiling to be replaced in Infants little boiler room.

Q: RE Policy – detail re assembly content and denominations?

A: assemblies are all non-denominational but the policy does need further review so this will be expanded upon and then we can agree at the next meeting instead of today.

Q: Notice changes to the pupil profile in terms of increased free school meal / pupil premium (PP) numbers. When will we feel the benefit of these additional PP?

A: April 2021 funding is taken from the October Census so anyone who has become eligible for PP since then will prompt funding from April 2022.

Q: Are there any more details about the Covid Catch up Funding?

A: the funding is being used across the school on focussed and targeted interventions for identified groups. For example, we are paying for external specialist staff to come in and work with children/groups. Triangulated impact to justify the expenditure. Focus on reading and phonics throughout school; using the NELI scheme in EYFS, staffing and additional resources in KS1, the Lightning Squad reading programme in KS2. Also, targeted Maths teaching. Outcomes, impact and expenditure will be reported on as we move forward.

Assessment Procedure Update (HH)

At this point we would normally share information about attainment and progress. Unfortunately, due to Covid, school closures etc we have needed to push the deadlines forward. On reopening and return we wanted children to settle back in and not go straight into formal assessments.

Ordinarily at the end of each term formal assessments and teacher assessments are collated to look at whether pupils are on track to achieve end of year age related targets. Teachers started assessing pupils the week before Easter, are continuing this week and will be completed next week. The progress may look different to previous years and hopefully we'll be able to see how effective our remote offer was. Hopeful that there won't be too much lost learning but the remote offer was more focussed on the core subjects (Reading, Writing, Maths), with less time spent on the foundation subjects during lockdown.

Assessment of Core Subjects RWM:

For these subjects teachers use a class tracker, which has identified end of year key objectives which indicate whether a pupil has met or exceeded age related expectations, or is still working towards. Each term teachers indicate the how well a child is able to do / understand each key objective within each core subject. Yellow = teacher has seen some evidence but not secure, Green = teacher has seen plenty of evidence to show the objective is achieved and the pupil is secure in this area. The end of year target is based on prior achievement and again shows whether a child is on track (green) or not on track / working towards (WTS) (yellow). Once those are completed, they are used to draw up statistics and reports showing percentage of children who are meeting the Age Related Expectation (ARE) and can be picked apart for vulnerable groups etc. These are all fully established procedures.

Assessment of Foundation Subjects:

New work has taken place on procedures to assess foundation subjects such as History, Art, DT, Science etc. Following 2019 changes to the Ofsted handbook there is a greater expectation for schools to be able to report on attainment and progress in these subjects. We have developed our new curriculum since March 2020, with subject leaders having worked hard to design new curriculum and Ofsted has acknowledged this is excellent. Not been able to fully implement it yet due to Covid, but we did start in earnest in the Autumn term when we were open fully. The expectation is to focus on children building on prior attainment and learning key knowledge, skills etc and that there is a visible annual building sequence. Clear end points for children to work towards. This planning and curriculum are all on the school website.

Once the developed curriculum was in place we looked at assessment criteria and procedures. The Autumn term showed that the system was too time consuming and onerous once implemented. It wasn't efficient and needed to be refined and developed. The new procedure is to again teacher assess against a series of key objectives for each subject – these key objectives are the building blocks we want pupils to have to enable them to build on knowledge and skills year on year. Clearer, more condensed progression evidence. Ofsted liked this system plan and wanted to know how it would be used in practice by teachers. To make it as simple as possible teachers are asked to record the initials of those Working Towards ARE and those exceeding ARE (Greater Depth GDS) against each key objective – those meeting ARE don't need to be recorded. From this, teachers will then record termly how many pupils are at least meeting the key objectives. Subject Leaders can then see how many are meeting ARE and the percentage who are above and below. This can then be used to look at pupil work, interventions and the curriculum.

This new system will be introduced for the Summer Term, and initial teacher feedback is positive. It is much less onerous and really does identify the key skills and end points. We teach everything but don't need to assess everything.

Q: still need to look at vulnerable groups. When it comes to core subjects will we have a breakdown?

A: yes, the system produces all sorts of statistics and all different groups such as PP, gender, late entry, age etc can be picked out and reported on. Don't want to swamp people at this stage when we don't yet have the data to present.

There is a session organised on 27.4.21 at 5.30pm for all governors which will run through data and how to monitor and interrogate this area. This learning need was suggested by the Autumn Term skills audit. The session will take place remotely via Teams and a meeting link will follow in due course. **All governors should attend if at all possible.**

Data is a signpost which then allows school to unpick groups, needs and detail to investigate causes, strengths and weaknesses. Data is just one tool of triangulation which also includes teacher assessment and pupil work scrutiny.

Q: is this system a live document that can be updated regularly and used to feed into individual targets and interventions?

A: yes, the spreadsheets will be updated termly in line with the tracking schedule and plan. We do have different systems used for SEND pupils. We use PIVOTs to track children who are on the SEND register and they have key objective PIVOTs trackers to assess termly progress. PIVOTs are an alternative assessment tool which break down key objectives into smaller steps which is an accepted issue with SEND pupils. More manageable to monitor progress more carefully and effectively.

Target trackers show the end of year expectations, but children have target cards and personalised focuses so assessment and teaching is tailored to children in lessons. Children assessed on PIVOTs access class learning to a certain degree but then differentiate and work on their PIVOT targets.

Safeguarding Caseload Update - JM

The summary is constantly fluid but for today is:

- Looked After Child (LAC) = 4
Child is in the care overview of the LA – may be placed with either a family member or foster carer.
- Child Protection Plan (CP) = 11
Highest level of support, social care involvement.
- Child in Need (CIN) = 5
Still has social care input but parental consent required for child to be on the level of support.
- Early Help (EH) = 24
Parental consent required for this support – is designed to start support early and avoid higher levels of need.
- Other Vulnerables (OV) = 31 Minor discrepancy re numbers at present due to daily changes and marrying up of information.
Internal school identified support group. Children not accessing any other level of support but we feel they need a degree of protection from school.

Over the last break Michael Robinson (Pupil Mentor) and JM contacted all LAC, CP and CIN families (plus a few identified high need EH families) to check in. Spoke with the children in almost all cases. Most parents were very grateful for the telephone call with some a bit surprised and wondered why ringing. Overall positive contact.

Since September there have been:

7 x Strategy Meetings

1 x ICPC (Initial Child Protection Conference)
15 x RCPC (Review Child Protection Conference)
51 x Core Group
4 x TAF (Team Around the Family)

Training Plan being drawn up for staff and will be clarified shortly.

Q: how are the OV children decided on?

A: usually either families with no step down plan from higher levels of support/involvement, those not reaching the threshold for EH, or just a general feeling that there is something needed to support the child and family. Children who don't always fit into a category but who you know have a higher need of support. Sometimes there is a concern that staff notice such as hygiene or food issues and a build-up of concerns. Pupils on the list are also followed up re attendance on a daily basis.

Q: what point do parents get contacted once an issue has been identified?

A: it's a jigsaw of factors that add up and then getting parents involved and on board with the support process – sometimes this needs to be done very carefully. It's about supporting the family. However, if an immediate issue such as lack of lunch or severe cleanliness on a particular day is noticed parents would be contacted immediately.

Q: is there any link in support need / numbers to school being closed during lockdown periods compared to not?

A: I think there may be an increase as we move out of lockdown. Staff are good at logging concerns on our CPOMs (Child Protection Online Monitoring System) so we can build up a picture very quickly. Have been more Operation Encompass notifications (these are notifications from the Police regarding domestic violence occurrences which a pupil may have witnessed/been present for) – partners at home together 24/7, no break from the children, financial concerns, other stresses. The majority of children are very happy to be back in school, not seeing a huge increase in mental health issues with our children and don't feel that this is a key issue we're facing. Some children find the first few days difficult but they come in and settle. The holiday telephone calls did suggest children were missing their friends and school. Situation with Covid has been daunting and there will be adjustment periods. But nothing out of the ordinary.

Governor Safeguarding Visits – allocation of governors - JP

Following Ofsted we had some safeguarding issues raised and our role as governors is to monitor the school's improvement plan to address these issues. Very intense period of work to bring all systems up to scratch. Plan for this half term drawn up before Easter – looking for monitoring and evidence to prove the systems are effective and robust. For example, if records suggest all staff have had training this should be checked by asking a cross section of staff a few questions to check knowledge and awareness.

The plan features JP and CG primarily but other governors are welcome to be involved. CW and SM interested in working with JP and CG – JP will contact to arrange this.

Safeguarding responsibilities will also feature as part of support staff appraisal performance management objectives.

Hopefully this will ensure governors have robustly monitored all aspects of safeguarding. After half term the LA are going to come in and undertake an inspection to check procedures and also that governors have effectively monitored. Important to remember that the primary need is to ensure all our children are safe.

Action: Send invitation link to 27.4.21 Data Awareness Session

By: Clerk

This document was circulated for agreement in principle before Easter. We know obviously there is work still to do. ***All present agreed to formally ratify. Proposed by JP and CG.***

Action: None required.

9. Formally Approve & Adopt Policies Agreed in Principle (before Easter) (5 minutes)

These policies were circulated for agreement in principle before Easter because they needed to be used at the Inset Day 12.4.21 and need to be formally ratified.

GEN021 – Whistleblowing Policy
HR007 – Standards of Conduct Policy
HR007A – GRPS Code of Conduct Procedure
ICT001 – Acceptable Use Policy

All present agreed to formally ratify. Proposed by CG and TS.

Action: File policies as per procedure (intranet, website, paper file)

By: Clerk

10. Other policies to Approve & Adopt (5 minutes)

Governors were asked to consider and review the policies listed below. They are all Model Policies.

Statutory Policies:

- CUR007 – Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy – STATUTORY
All present agreed to adopt and approve. Proposed by TS and JP.
- GOV003 – Complaints Policy – STATUTORY
All present agreed to adopt and approve. Proposed by JP and CW.
- GOV003A – Unreasonable and Serial Complaints Policy – STATUTORY
All present agreed to adopt and approve. Proposed by JP and CW.
- INF002 – Privacy Notices Staff & Parents / Volunteers / Pupils – STATUTORY
All present agreed to adopt and approve. Proposed by CW and KJ.
- INF003 – School Information Policy (FOI & Data Protection) – STATUTORY
All present agreed to adopt and approve. Proposed by SM and CW.
- INF003B – Information Security Policy – STATUTORY
All present agreed to adopt and approve. Proposed by SM and CW.

Other Policies:

- GEN006 – EYFS Policy
- GEN009 – Home School Agreement
- GEN010 – Mobile Phone Policy
- GEN014 – Self Assessment & QA Policy
- GEN016 – Whole School Food Policy
- GEN018 – Mission Statement & Curriculum Intent
- GEN019 – Appearance & Uniform Policy
- GEN026 – Parent / Carer Behaviour Policy & Procedure
- GOV007 – Acceptable Use Agreement for Governors, Volunteers & Students
- ICT007 – Internet Usage Agreement – Students
- ICT011 – Website Privacy Policy
- ICT013 – IT Access Policy NYCC
- ICT017 – Parental use of social networking and internet sites
- INF005 – Document Retention Toolkit (2019)
- SW006 – Policy for School Visits

- SW011 – Work Experience & Students Policy
- User Agreement – Home Learning (Teams)

All present agreed to adopt and approve the noted policies. Proposed by SM and TS.

CUR006 Collective Worship Policy deferred until next appropriate meeting on 15.6.21 for review and adoption.

Action: File policies as per procedure (intranet, website, paper file)

By: Clerk

11. Local Authority Input – Matt Blyton (20 minutes)

MB: Thank you for welcoming me to this meeting. The School Partnership Improvement Plan (SPIP) was circulated earlier today. Lovely to meet some other governors.

MB briefly outlined he is part of the School Improvement service which is part of the Children & Young People's Service (CYPS) in the Local Authority. SI service is a team of officers overseen by three Principal Advisers, a Head of School Improvement (since April 2021) with an assistant director. The team undertakes core visits to maintained schools as part of the service offer. The role of the named adviser is to meet with school leaders to 'challenge, support, monitor and intervene as appropriate'. Schools are categorised depending on level of risk, quality of education, quality of leadership, vulnerability to inspection and safeguarding. Graded 1-4 and reviewed termly. 1=light touch, very effective school, likely to be Good or better Ofsted, strong capacity. 4=greatest risk where we give our greatest level of support and resourcing. Consequently, Level 1 schools get a half day visit per year which allows us to prioritise our resources for 3 and 4 schools. Level 3 or 4 schools get a SPIP drawn up in conjunction with school leaders and Chair of the Governing Body.

Where is GRPS? Important to recognise that since January 2020 we have had and seen rapid improvement in many areas. The trajectory is a very positive one. All of the work the SLT and governors do has made a difference and the situation is far more positive now. Grading and support shouldn't be solely directed by Ofsted it should be directed by good quality and safe provision. Ofsted only evaluate and quality assure. So basically, we don't do the work FOR Ofsted but need to be mindful of it.

Every time the school is visited MB writes a report which evaluates the visit for the governor audience. Key measure for governors as adviser represents an external view without fear or favour. Important that the SI Committee and FGB receive each report and any revisions to the SPIP.

Clearly there was a stumble in March re safeguarding, which we all must take culpability for. Perhaps taken eye off the ball, which the Chair has stated in this meeting. It is what it is. View it as a trip, need to pick up and move on. Obviously serious, the Ofsted report is a public document. MB has been recommending GRPS be Level 3 which will still have a SPIP. He has argued the case with Head of School Improvement Tracy Swinburne who disagrees and says GRPS should be Level 4. The criteria does say that effective safeguarding is in Levels 1,2,3 and not 4. Will be revisiting this with her as the school has made changes which mean safeguarding should now be effective. Will be revising the strategy this term, needs to be refreshed and linked with the resourcing and support offer.

Level of intervention – that is when the LA step in to take over operational budget work, or strengthens governance. For example replace the governing body with an Interim Executive Board (IEB) or adds additional governors to the existing Board. GRPS is nowhere near that level. Level 4 is not a precursor to this intervention at all.

Ofsted Section 5 inspection expected as soon as possible as recommended in the Inspection Report. If the March inspection had been a full Section 5 inspection the school would have been judged as Inadequate so the fact the issues have been picked up now and on the Section 8 inspection is fortuitous to a certain degree.

As things stand Section 5 will be the Autumn Term, but Ofsted will continue their cycle of Section 8 Monitoring inspections this term which can now be converted to Section 5. Need to keep this in the back of our minds. If this were to happen the aim is to return the school to Good.

With that in mind want to explain the SPIP.

This plan will run from March 21 to December 21 and by that time we expect GRPS will no longer be RI! Lists those involved. Then KPIs to measure the success of the plan – shaped from Ofsted safeguarding objectives then broken down into actions. MB will then monitor and review, colour coding the outcome / monitoring. Four of the objectives relate to safeguarding quality assurance and MB is delighted with the changes and positive work already being undertaken. Remaining KPIs are the ongoing school improvement work building on the previous plan. Governors will see the updated SPIP after each visit to see the progress against the objectives and action plan.

Tracy Swinburne feels that to do 2 separate LA reviews (one focused on safeguarding, and the other on general school improvement) would not be practical and instead proposes a 3 day 3 person visit / review to combine safeguarding with the Ofsted style review. Date and details suggested as 7, 8, 9 June, although MB not sure at this stage whether all will be in school.

Rest of plan details the core work, recommended activities and costed activities.

27.4.21 data session – link to come from MB shortly and Clerk to circulate. Time 5.30pm.

Q: does category 4 mean we are funded for more support?

A: Level 1 schools get ½ day per half term from their named SI Adviser, Level 4 schools get 1 day equivalent per half term. So yes, do get more adviser time. However, additional support, subject to a positive budget position, will be covered from school budget as appropriate. Very important school in the area, and we want to support you to recover from this 'blip'.

Will focus on governors' monitoring role including data and teaching and learning at the session for all governors on 27.4.21. Key thing is to scrutinise and challenge the school leaders, governors should be a constructive critical friend.

Action: Provide invitation link to 27.4.21 session to Clerk for circulation

By: MB

12. A.O.B. (5 minutes)


Q: Will Y6 pupils need to work exceptionally hard to catch up when they move onto secondary in Year 7. Or do we think we're preparing our Y6's for secondary education?

A: Year 6 pupils are doing exactly what other year groups are doing in terms of catch up sessions, targeted focus, assessment, teaching essentials, adjusting the curriculum and monitoring of learning. Subject Leaders are considering the curriculum offer and teaching is in place to fill any gaps so the children will be ready to move onto secondary. Liaising with secondary staff re transition and support.

All governors agreed they would like to compliment all school staff on their efforts during the unique circumstances presented by Covid, it really is appreciated. Governors agreed that they are incredibly proud of how things have been managed during the crisis.

Action: None required.

The Meeting was closed by the Chair at 7.40pm

Signed _____  _____ Dated __13.7.21__

Signed electronically due to Covid restrictions.