

Parents Group

Minutes of meeting, with Liz Tunnard of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). 14/01/16.

Present: Will Hopkins (Parents Group chair), Smaira Sadique (extended services coordinator), Liz Tunnard (IEB), Mark Raynor (PCSO), Richard Millns (PCSO)

Parents: Mushtaq Ahmed, Raqia Begum, Nagina, Hossaid Roza, Aishab Mohammed, Nura Ali, Musta, Jemila

WH introduced IEB (and showed the letter of 2/11/15), and Liz Tunnard.

LT introduced herself: she was Interim Head at this school before, and has lots of experience in this area of Sheffield.

LT explained that the IEB had taken over the responsibilities of the Governing Body, probably until September. These include:

- Overseeing finances
- Overseeing leadership of school
- Overseeing teaching and learning

She stressed this is not managerial, but that the IEB acts as a “critical friend”.

The IEB meet fortnightly, but LT visits the school regularly, and will try to come to more Parents Group meetings.

LT then took questions from parents:

1. Why did the previous Governing Body get disbanded?

If a school is judged by Ofsted to be not Good or Outstanding, then they either Require Improvement or are placed in Special Measures. The Local Authority (Sheffield City Council) can appoint an Interim Executive Board to improve the school quickly. The IEB has a set timescale. Members of the board will have an appropriate background and experience. Once the school is improved to Good or Outstanding, the Governing Body will be reconstituted.

2. How long will the IEB be in place for?

Originally the IEB was to be in place until Easter, however they have applied to remain until September. They will await Ofsted's next inspection.

3. Will the school be made into an Academy?

At present the school is a Local Authority school, however it Requires Improvement, and so if it were to become an academy, it will need to be part of a chain of academies or linked to an Outstanding academy to sponsor. This is a long way off, and will be based on the progress of the school.

4. What are the problems you see in the school?

There is a big challenge with recruitment, and there are still some vacancies for teaching staff. The school cannot have too many Newly Qualified Teachers, and there are 3 in post already. We need experienced teachers. The school has a new Deputy Head, she is very good. The established staff are very dedicated, despite the high turnover last year.

5. What input can parents have in improving the school?

There are no parent representatives on the IEB, and this is deliberate, as the board needs to be small. Once the Governing Body is reconstituted then parents could consider running for election. Parents can help in other ways:

- Ensuring their children attend school, and are here on time.
- Supporting children's learning at home.

Behaviour at the school is good, although there are some challenges – LT says these are dealt with.

[Following on from the point about behaviour, a specific instance was brought up: a parent received a phone call from their child, who was clearly upset and crying, to explain that they had made bad choices in class. The parent was concerned about this practice, and thought it was inappropriate. She suggested that the staff member ought to have rung and explained the situation themselves. LT to investigate.]

6. What level should the school be at?

The school should be Good or Outstanding, we are currently Requires Improvement. To improve the school needs good teachers (which can be hard, as there is often a turnover of staff when a school enters Requires Improvement or Special Measures). However, the needs of the child are paramount in the school's thinking. There are big changes to the way that children are assessed at Year 2 and Year 6, which is a change made nationally. The IEB will look at how the school communicates these changes.

7. What is the likelihood of becoming an academy?

It is quite likely – but the changes will not affect daily life at the school much. When a school becomes an academy most of the staff transfer, however the top management may change. For instance, Tapton is an academy with a number of primary schools included, which have another layer of management at the top. It may happen at this school, although it isn't currently being planned.

Schools hit tricky patches when they are in the process of becoming academies, but they will get through them. This school is improving, and will improve more.

8. Question from the Ofsted report – apparently brighter students are not being challenged enough.

What inspectors saw in lessons was that work was given to children depending on their ability, however the brightest children still found their work was not challenging enough. The IEB is asking what the school can do to really push these children, and how teachers can plan work at higher levels, rather than increasing the volume of work.

9. The Ofsted report also highlighted professional development for teachers as a concern – what is being done to support teachers?

Newly Qualified Teachers need good experienced teachers to mentor them, and the IEB has ensured this is happening. Ofsted noted that a systematic Continuous Professional Development plan was not in place at the time of the inspection. The school was partnered with another school, and training was taking place in smaller amounts, but more frequently. It needs to be more substantial; training is now more fully in place, and the IEB are looking at how to improve it further.

10. What does the budget cover? Does it include trips?

The budget is spent on staffing and maintenance; the majority of money goes on paying staff. Trips are not covered as part of this, so voluntary contributions must be made to pay for these. If there aren't enough contributions, then a trip cannot take place. Obviously, parents who find it difficult to pay these contributions should come to the school and explain their situation, and the school will help. The school is not allowed to exclude children from trips if they haven't paid, and these contributions must be voluntary. The Pupil Premium can be used to support children who are entitled to Free School Meals, and the IEB will ask about using Pupil Premium money to ensure students don't miss out. LT will then email an answer to WH, who can feed back to parents. Parents Group funds may also be used to fund extra-curricular activities.

PCSOs introduced, Mark Raynor and Rich Millns. They can come into school, and will cover topics such as bullying and drugs with children. Looking to build relationships in the community, and are happy to meet people!