

Governor's Forum – 14th January 2020

Governors present; Tracy Sell-Peters (Chair), Claire Coulson, Lindsay Curtis, Chris Martin. Absent: Tim Hide

This is a summary of the discussion and not a verbatim account. The Governors would like to thank all parents for their input, both on the night and in returning the survey. A summary of the survey will be posted on the website shortly.

Ms Sell-Peters summarised the recent ISI inspection. This was a compliance-only inspection looking at administration and the problems highlighted were procedural in nature, not substantive. Unfortunately, we were not only transitioning between inspection regimes but also had just appointed a new Senior Management Team (SMT). Many of the requirements of the new ISI regime were already being worked through but this work was not taken into account by the Inspectors.

An 'Expert Practitioner' from the ISA had visited school on Friday, 10th January 2019 to check through our Action Plan in response to the report and advise accordingly. After a few minor changes, he was happy with the Action Plan and it will be sent in for approval.

Lindsay Curtis addressed how the points raised in the Inspection had been addressed:

AP1 The revised Safeguarding Policy has been updated and is available on the website.

AP2 A Safeguarding training session took place on 10 January for all recently appointed staff and was also attended by governors. The whole staff training (every 3 years) is booked for the April Inset. In addition, all staff are required to do online training through Educare with targets set for each half term. New procedures for staff induction have been implemented.

AP3 The system for recording and monitoring concerns has been redesigned to comply with statutory guidance.

AP4,5,6 Format of register to be altered to meet the requirements.

AP7 The complaints policy has been updated and is on the website.

AP8 Complaints procedures and forms have been updated.

AP9 The governors have ensured that all of the above points are addressed in a timely manner, engaging with external consultants where necessary.

A number of questions were raised and the following was confirmed in response:

- all issues raised by the ISI inspection pertained to documentation
- in terms of the recent Ofsted inspection, we were deemed compliant by Ofsted. Much of our paperwork (policies, procedures etc) was still in this (Ofsted) format, which was the problem.
- the recent changes to the school gates and entry policy did not stem from the inspection – this is something we had been trying to encourage for some time.
- the school was limited in terms of when it could share the report with parents

– a draft report was received by the school, ,we were able to challenge any factual elements (which we did) but we were not allowed to share or publish either the draft report or our response. We were informed by ISA when we could publish the report.

- the school and the governors were aware of the ISA standards and were working towards them. Very soon after joining ISA, Mr Velasco asked the ISA local representative if there was anything we should be doing and was told that as our most recent Ofsted inspection had been rated 'Good', everything would be fine and we were unlikely to be inspected in the short term (AV was told 2-3 years).

-in terms of learning from the experience, in hindsight, we were perhaps ill- prepared in terms of the amount of work required on our policies/procedures and we should have called in an Expert Practitioner sooner.

-there was no complacency about timescale. We are a small school and other areas were taking priority but the policies were being worked on at the time which is why we have been able to put them into place so quickly.

-One of the reasons we moved to ISA membership is because we felt that the regime would suit the type of school we are better, so we feel we are in a strong position should we have a full inspection.

Mrs Rudge gave an overview of current school initiatives:-

-We are introducing a new Code of Conduct and discipline policy (demerits will be abolished)

-Work is being done on a new Marking and Homework Policy. The emphasis is on wellbeing using the Jigsaw scheme throughout the school. The children seem to be responding well to this.

School Counsellor – We do not consider that we need a dedicated school counsellor. The current thinking is that the welfare of each child is the responsibility of every adult in the community. All staff have received training in this area from Mrs Rudge at their safeguarding training and Inset courses. Both Mrs Rudge and Mr Bermingham are trained mental health first aiders.

Equal opportunities in sport - it was strongly felt by some that girls should be able to participate in any sport and should not feel that some sports were only for boys. The governors will provide a comprehensive response about the approach to sport after discussions with Sports staff and SMT.

Diversity in teaching staff – the school will always appoint the best candidate for the position. We have used TES to advertise staff vacancies in the past but it did not yield good candidates and was very expensive.

Selection and appointment of Governors - We have recently lost 2 Governors, through retirement and relocation, and are actively recruiting, with an emphasis on finding candidates with an educational background. We would hope to make appointments shortly.

The Governors will be discussing the issue of priorities for the school at their meeting this Thursday and an update will be posted on the website. We have experienced some problems with the governors' email addresses, which we are seeking to rectify. If parents email the governors and do not receive a reply (all emails should generally be sent to the Chair), they should contact the School Office to inform them of the problem.