

West Midland Group Minutes

Notes of Meeting: Friday, 29th January 2010
Orchard School, Oldbury

Present:

Helen Atkins: Sandwell
Cath Malin: Sandwell
Tania Craig: Worcestershire
Tracey Pitt: Sandwell
Cathy Cleary: Wolverhampton
Nigel Smith: Walsall
Jane Edgerton: Birmingham
Fiona Woolford: Birmingham
Sharon Humphreyson: Wolverhampton
Gill Henderson: FLSE

Apologies:

Helen Bishton: Coventry, Grahame Robertson: Consultant, Heather Davies: Telford, Huw Powell: Dudley
Lorraine Dawney: Wolverhampton, Angela Valentini: Telford, Heather Lomas: Walsall, Debra Williams:
Sandwell

Notes of the meeting:

1. Election of Chair, Vice Chair, secretary and treasurer as follows:

- Chair: Cathy Cleary (Senior Adviser Curriculum and Innovation (Inclusion))
- Vice Chair: Helen Atkins (Orchard School, Sandwell)
- Secretary: Tania Craig (Kingfisher School, Worcs.)
- Treasurer: Tracey Pitt (Meadows Sports College, Sandwell)

2. Accounts:

- The conference in October was very successful with a profit of over £9k
- In addition, there are funds being accrued from the membership fees (50% of all membership fees are returned to the region)
- No bank account had previously been set up and all funding available to the region is currently being held centrally

Action: Tracey will arrange for an account to be set up so that funds can be transferred as soon as possible

3. Membership:

- Membership nos. are increasing and current details were circulated
- There appear to be no members from special schools in Dudley, Herefords, Warwicks, or from PRUs, mainstream or the independent sector
- It was agreed that local initiatives must be implemented in order to attract new members in order to strengthen the voice of the regional group
- Publicity materials to use to raise awareness about the FLSE would be useful
- The new website will be 'live' on Monday and will provide much more information than that which is currently available; it will also provide the facility to download information, updates from the different regions and ultimately enable membership applications and conference bookings to be made on-line.

Action: Gill: to circulate any information available. All: share information about the FLSE as widely as possible in order to encourage increased membership

4. CPD

Penny Lacey (Univ. of Birmingham/ Castle Wood School) joined the meeting and the following was agreed:

- SLD/PMLD: there is a non-award bearing, 10 session course planned in conjunction with Wolverhampton LA for the summer term. It is designed to develop knowledge and expertise in SLD/PMLD. This can be extended to other schools in the W. Mids.
- ASD: a one day course for teachers and teaching assistants, presented by Glenys Jones (Univ. Of B'ham), will take place at the Jennie Lee Centre in Wolverhampton on Feb. 11th. Again, this can be extended to other schools across the W. Midlands

Action: Contact jan.hill@wolverhampton.gov.uk for further information about either course

- AfL: Penny agreed to deliver a day's course with a focus on AfL for special schools at the Jennie Lee Centre, Wolverhampton on March 29th. The course will be free to any teachers from schools that are members of the FLSE, but will otherwise cost £100 (lunch will not be provided but can be purchased on site)

Action: Gill to draft flyers and application forms and send to the sub-committee to be finalised and distributed across the region

- BESD: The possibility of organising a day's course focusing on induction for teachers in BESD schools in conjunction with NAES was discussed

Action: Tania and Sharon to take forward at the forthcoming NAES conference in March

- Penny also asked the group for any other priorities for award-bearing courses that it may be useful for the University to consider; suggestions included training for middle managers with a specific focus on special schools
- Discussion followed about whether the award / assessment could be optional
- The possibility of running the course during the summer holidays would make it easier for staff to access the course, with the additional incentive of being paid
- Penny also requested any further ideas:
 - in the light of the SALT review
 - for any means of ensuring that SLD/PMLD training could continue through the University of Birmingham in the longer term if Penny left (no successors)

Action: Penny to take suggestions back to the University for further consideration

All: to contact Penny with any further feedback re-issues outlined above

- The practicalities of ascertaining who are FLSE members and, therefore, eligible for free places was discussed

Action: Gill to suggest to the National Strategy Group that all FLSE members have a membership no. which can be quoted on any application forms

5. Moderation:

- Further development of moderation is needed in the light of the Progression Guidance (as identified at the previous meeting)
- Concern also raised about Ofsted's interpretation of the Progression Guidance; Pauline Pitman has been working with Ofsted and is quite clear that it is a tool for schools and should not be used to identify national expectations
- Agreed that an event in the summer term focussing on these issues would be very useful; it should be free to members but there would be charge for any other delegates

Action: Helen to identify dates with Pauline Pitman and liaise with the sub- committee re- venue, publicity etc

6. Sharing best practice / Writing for PMLD pupils: to be deferred to the next meeting

Action: Cathy / Tania: add to agenda for next meeting

7. Next meeting:

This will take place at the Orchard School on Friday, 7th May (10.00 – 12.00)