

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 14 December 2017 at 17.00 hours

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AH - headteacher), Addy Balogun (AB), Andrew Wallace (AW), Lee Redmond (LR), Gareth Chan (GC), Richard Goodsell (RG), Richard Mills (RM), Claire Harrington (CH) John Barker (JB) and Janet Such (JS).

In attendance: Ruth King (RK – staff), Sarah Hextall (SHX – school business manager), Kate Hovell (KH – staff) and David Harvey (DH – clerk).

Also present: Matilda Barrowman (MB – student governor), Aya Alaedine (AA – student governor) and Louis Skatulla (LS – student governor).

Quorum: 11 out of 15 governors present with 1 vacancy – meeting was quorate throughout.

0. Apologies for Absence.

Lindsey Thompson (LT – staff), Peter Gerry (PG), Fiona Bauermeister (FB) and Sally Hunt (SHu) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

1. Urgent business

- 1.1. The Chair introduced the three student governors, setting out the intention to arrange specific items on future FBG agendas for them to speak about. The Chair informed the FBG that he, AH and DH had met the student governors just before the present meeting to go over their expectations about their roles. The Chair stated they had raised practical aspects of life as a student in the school, focussing on issues such as inclusivity, accessibility, IT equipment and being outside in the cold weather during break times.
- 1.2. The three student governors thanked the FBG for the opportunity to attend and contribute to its meetings. They left the room at 17.15 hours.
- 1.3. The Chair informed the FBG that he and AH had met a prospective candidate for the vacant co-opted governor role – Michael Bedingfield (MB). His application form had been circulated to members of the Governor Recruitment Committee. AH added that MB was offering valuable experience in the areas of public relations, marketing and strategic oversight; in addition he had been a former pupil of the school and was presently a member of the Brighton Museum Board of Trustees.
- 1.4. As a result of their meeting with MB, both the Chair and AH felt confident in recommending MB's appointment to the FBG as a co-opted governor and invited members to consider his application. The Chair added that MB had offered to join the Finance Committee. The FBG noted MB's experience and

keenness in contributing to its work; and agreed his appointment unanimously with effect from 14 December 2017.

2. Declarations of interest – None.

3. Minutes

- 3.1. The minutes of the meetings of 21 September 2017 (main set and confidential annex) were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

- Transmission of Governing Board Code of Conduct to school for publishing on website – done.
- Recirculation of Committee membership list to FBG members – done.
- Notification of co-opted governors' terms of office renewal to LA – done.
- Circulation of dates morning and afternoon visit to the school by governors – to be done.
- Appeal to Schools Adjudicator on LA PAN decision – done.

5. Any matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda – None.

6. School Budget update 2017/2018

- 6.1. SHx drew attention to the outturn forecast, highlighting the expected deficit as being £150K – an improved situation, given the authorised LA licensed figure was £220K. SHx drew attention to the movements on staffing, with the figures set out representing where the school was in November. SHx stated that the outturn took account of changes to staffing, pay progression awards; also the local authority (LA) recommended 2% rise for teachers on the main scale. As a result of this last payment, SHx stated that £5.6K would be added to the teachers' pay forecast figure.
- 6.2. SHx expected the school's financial situation to improve as it approached the end of the year. As a condition of holding a licensed deficit, the LA required monthly reporting from the school. So far, the LA was satisfied with the school's reporting in this regard, in particular the strategies adopted to deal with the situation.
- 6.3. Governors asked about the staffing forecast figure of £180K. SHx explained that closer to the end of the financial year, the school would be more accurate about the final spend figure.
- 6.4. Governors asked about developments with regard to the in house catering situation. SHx stated that the contract with Chartwells would finish in 2019 – it would take a year to put in place the termination process, which was in hand. The school had decided proceed in this fashion and not break the contract, to

avoid having to pay compensation.

- 6.5. SHx raised the issue of the Finance Committee being short of members. AH added that this gave an impression of weakness, given the school was operating a licensed deficit and setting next year's budget would be a challenge – a consistent approach of full engagement was needed. The Chair noted that the newly appointed co-opted governor, MB, would be joining the Committee; LR offered to become a member as did the Chair himself.

7. Headteacher report

Examination Data

- 7.1. AH introduced KH, who explained that she would be presenting information on data and assessment.

Key Stage 5

- 7.2. KH stated that the key measure here was Value Added of progress. KH explained that the information set out in the headteacher report was broken down into two groupings; academic (A levels) and applied general (BTech). KH expressed disappointment in the levels achieved on both; -0.68 and -0.29; as both were below the national floor standard figure of -0.5. KH stated the school was not where it should be and the situation would improve next summer.
- 7.3. KH felt that technical and applied attainment had gone well, but acknowledged that Value Added would be huge area for improvement.
- 7.4. Governors asked what measures would be put in place to address this issue. KH stated that learning walks, work scrutiny, student by student monitoring, close review of mock exam results and a check of individual plans would be carried out. AH added that last year the delivery of Post 16 lessons had been considered; with a view to modifying techniques, rigour and methods of working. AH was confident that the quality of teaching in lessons was good, but agreed that outcomes could be improved.
- 7.5. Governors asked about the monitoring of students' revision techniques. AH drew attention to the open learning area, which was used by students outside of lesson time; acknowledging that they could do more at home. KH added that teachers also provided revision sessions, out of school hours.
- 7.6. Governors asked how close the predictions and projections made in 2017 were to actual results achieved. AH acknowledged that Year 13 did not do as well as hoped and this might have happened as a cause of overconfidence by teachers. RK pointed out however that, given the small groups involved, just one student's poor results could bring down statistics of all the rest.

Key Stage 4

- 7.7. KH spoke of progress and attainment here being the key measures. Progress achieved was positive and above the national figure. For Grade 5, results for

English and Maths GCSEs were above LA and national averages; as was for the EBacc figure of 30%.

- 7.8. Governors asked about the Progress 8 score of 0.02. KH stated that this compared to the national figure of -0.03, making the school's result broadly in line. AH added that this compared well to other local schools.
- 7.9. KH stated that predictions for summer 2018 pointed to an expectation of a significant Progress 8 score and an improvement on maths.
- 7.10. The Chair asked for a breakdown of the Progress 8 data, particularly on Free School Meals (FSMs) students' progress with English, Maths, Science and humanities. KH agreed to take an overall look at Progress 8, to see how each pupil had done and check their target grades. KH stated that the Analyse School Performance (ASP) facility had this information already (formerly RAISEOnline); the school was in the process of evaluating it.

Year 12

- 7.11. KH stated that outcomes here were much better and stronger, which reflected a lot of work done last year. KH highlighted the fact that disadvantaged were matching results achieved by non-disadvantaged students; in addition, prospect for GCSE maths resits were looking good, but that English needed to match this expectation.

Groups

- 7.12. KH circulated a table setting out a breakdown of figures, highlighting gender (boys not doing as well as girls); Pupil Premium (PP); FSMs; Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND – not as much progress achieved as was needed). KH drew attention to the school's good record with higher and middle ability pupils; which was not as good for lower ability.

Attendance

- 7.13. Governors noted the lower absence figures of disadvantaged children and the clear differences between those for PP (282 pupils), FSM (134 pupils) and others in the school. KH stated that, with regard to the disadvantaged students, the school was keeping a close eye on their individual needs. KH spoke of twenty SEND/FSM/High Ability students and measures being taken to support their attendance.
- 7.14. AH added that there had been a small group of students in Year 11 who had not been engaged with the school and had had poor results. These had had a negative impact on the broader data picture, particularly on the FSMs.

(Note – KH left the meeting at 18.00 hours)

- 7.15. AH stated that attendance remained a major focus for the school (as well as persistent absence), with Year 11 a particular issue. AH pointed to the school having a strategy in place, given there was a direct correlation between groups' attendance and results. AH highlighted some of the measures being taken,

such as interventions and rewards.

- 7.16. Governors asked if parental support was a factor. AH acknowledged that some parents had mixed views about supporting the school's efforts in this regard and they had a wide range of views on attendance, particularly when issues of anxiety and phobias arose. AH stated that, by reaching a percentage of 95.6%, the school was above the national level.

Children in Care (CiC) / Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

- 7.17. The Chair asked about the situation with regard to CiC. AH stated that a number had been housed locally, but were very diverse in nature – e.g. some in full residential, others in temporary foster care; with stability varying massively.
- 7.18. The Chair asked about the outcome of the PLAC review. AH stated that this was a positive picture; progress had been rated as 'good'; all other outcomes were 'outstanding'.

Staff Training

- 7.19. Governors asked if they could visit on the INSET day of 3 January 2018. AH agreed this was possible, highlighting the teachers' focus on this day on assessment and feedback.

Behaviour

- 7.20. AH believed that the school was doing well in this regard. AH highlighted the fact that it had the lowest exclusion rate in the LA, reflecting the hard work done to reduce numbers. AH pointed to a better process being introduced to manage internal exclusions and drew attention to the 'restore and repair' system. This was to allow teachers to address minor incidents with students, during a ten minute period at the end of the day and so avoid the need for imposing formal detentions. The format included an opportunity for both parties to have a structured conversation about the incident of poor behaviour in question.

External Partnerships / Revision

- 7.21. The Chair noted the positive aspect of the Space Design challenge; also the Year 11 revision and curriculum plan. AH drew attention to use of PP money to pay for an online revision package – GCSEPod – which was being widely used by students.

Sixth Form consultation

- 7.22. RK drew attention to the consultation exercise undertaken by the LA on its website and due to conclude on 19 December. Once the consultation was closed, the LA would consider how to take forward the results and make a decision on the Sixth Form closure proposal.
- 7.23. RK added that the facility offered on the school's website for people to offer comments had resulted in just one response. In two weeks, the LA had had barely a dozen responses, ranging from agreement to disagreement.

Pupil Admission Number (PAN) update

- 7.24. AH drew governors' attention to the imminent expectation that the school's adjudicator was shortly to make a decision about the PAN issue; which due to other circumstances might happen anyway.

8. Long Term Financial Strategy

- 8.1. AH informed governors that the ongoing Teaching & Learning Responsibilities (TLR) audit would be completed in four or five days. The Chair asked when decisions on the outcomes of the audit would be made. AH stated that next half term a comparison exercise would be done; with a focus on workloads and the inconsistencies between those and pay.

9. Teaching School Alliance (TSA)

- 9.1. AH stated that Blatchington Mill would hear about its bid for school improvement funds by 20 December.
- 9.2. AH spoke briefly about the loss of one of the designated schools within the Alliance; as a result Blatchington Mill would reapply for this status.

10. Safeguarding

- 10.1. RK informed governors that a new deputy safeguarding lead had been appointed; with a background of spending time with more vulnerable children.
- 10.2. RK stated that a presentation would be given at the school on 17 January 2018 (18.45 hours) to parents by a representative of the Breck Foundation, on the subject of online safety and the risks of grooming. Governors were very welcome to attend this event.
- 10.3. Governors asked whether, in the face of current general interest in harassment, the school had strategies in place to monitor such incidents. RK stated that all safeguarding incidents (including those of sexual harassment) were picked up and recorded on Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS). RK was aware of a very few number of cases, which had not occurred on the school premises.
- 10.4. RK added that this issue was covered in staff training, e.g. 'sexting' and was monitored by the safeguarding and Personal Social Health & Economic (PSHE) education teams. On all occasions, staff emphasised the importance of respect and consent.

11. School Visits Programme

- 11.1. AH informed governors that a LA SEN team from Portsmouth was visiting the school in February 2018 – governors were welcome to attend.
- 11.2. LR informed governors that he had attended the school to look at the issue of equalities; he had reviewed the approach on policy and engaged with stakeholder groups. LR promised to put a framework in place and show a draft to the FBG at its next meeting.

- 11.3. SHx informed the FBG that she and RG would be meeting shortly to carry out a health and safety visit; also that JB would be doing a finance drop in, to do a check on procedures.
- 11.4. AH spoke briefly about the open door policy, stating that a science day would be the next to take place.
- 11.5. RM volunteered to visit the school to look at external partnerships; AH suggested this take place on a Thursday morning, when a Year 6 class from one of the local primary schools would be using the new science facilities.
- 11.6. The Chair agreed that a list of potential dates for visits by governors would be drawn up and circulated.

12. School policies

Safeguarding

- 12.1. AH stated that review and amending of this policy was now complete; it would be tied with the one on accessibility which was still being worked on.

Pay

- 12.2. The Chair noted that the Pay & Personnel Committee (P&PC) had approved this policy at its meeting of 6 November.
- 12.3. The Chair added that the sequencing of decision taking in the next academic year on pay would be done differently. The headteacher pay panel would meet before the first session of the P&PC, so that the latter could reach a decision in time for the first FBG of the term.
- 12.4. The Chair informed the FBG that the headteacher pay panel had met and the process completed. The Chair commented that the external performance adviser had written to him afterwards, in very positive terms over how everything had been conducted.

13. Governor training

- 13.1. The Chair noted that LR had undertaken the LA governor induction training course; also that JS had attended the LA Governance, Strategy and Partnership (GSP) meeting.

14. Actions taken by the Chair

- 14.1. The Chair reported having attended a meeting of Governors' Chairs of Secondary Education on 6 December. The Chair highlighted discussion on the issues of :-
 - LA views on the implications of KS4 & 5 outcomes;
 - marketing of Sixth Forms;
 - the National Funding Formula;

- headteachers' stance on the proposed new free school (the DfE would make a decision on this project, the LA did not have a role).

15. Any other business

15.1. None.

Actions

- Equalities framework draft – LR
- External Partnerships school visit – RM
- Circulate list of dates for potential visits by governors – PS/AH

Next meeting – Wednesday 31 January 2018 at 17.00 hours (Curriculum). **Please note changed date from that originally advertised (i.e. 25 January).**

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...