

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 11 July 2019 at 17.00 hours

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AsH - headteacher), Claire Harrington (CH), Janet Such (JS), Mariea Christodoulou (MC), Lee Redmond (LR), James Moncrieff (JMo – arrived at 17.45 hours), Judith Mackenzie (JMa), John Barker (JB), Alex Morrison (AM), Deborah Hillier (DHi) and Addy Balogun (AB).

In attendance: Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager), Ruth King (RK – staff), Richard Mills (RM), and David Harvey (DHa – clerk).

Quorum: 12 out of 15 governors present – meeting was quorate throughout.

1. Apologies for Absence.

- 1.1. Gareth Chan (GC), Adam Harvey (AdH) and Michael Bedingfield (MB) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

2. Declarations of interest – None.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. The Chair welcomed AM to his first full meeting of the FBG, who introduced himself to governors.
- 3.2. The Chair notified the FBG of MB's decision to step down as a co-opted governor and of his (Chair) discussion with AsH on how to fill this vacancy. The Chair informed the FBG that RM (previously a parent governor) had been approached (and agreed) to take on this role, subject to governors' approval. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous agreement to this appointment and stated that it would begin with effect from 5 September 2019.

4. Minutes

- 4.1. The minutes of the meetings of 16 May and 20 June 2019 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

5. Matters Arising

- Submission of school budget to LA by 24 May – done.
- Review of link governor responsibilities table – on the present agenda for discussion.
- Change of May 2020 Finance Committee meeting date – done.

6. School Budget

- 6.1. SH drew attention to the meeting of the Finance Committee on 8 July, at which

the out-turn had been discussed, showing an estimated surplus of £100K by the end of the year (compared with a budgeted figure of £80K). SH recalled explaining to the Committee that a number of adjustments had been made to the budget, mainly due to salary payments. SH considered that the budget was in a healthy position, with no surprises to report. SH promised to give the FBG an update in the autumn, at which time the budget would reflect the impact of staffing changes.

- 6.2. JB (Finance Committee chair) asked AsH to give background information about a debt of £30K owed by Hove Park School to Blatchington Mill. AsH stated that the origin of this issue had started when the two schools had entered into a shared Sixth Form provision arrangement. AsH explained that this had worked by each school taking on the others' pupils in order to maintain the courses on offer, in a mutually beneficial manner. AsH stated that an agreed Memorandum of Understanding had underpinned the precise details of this arrangement.
- 6.3. AsH commented that, in the event, it had turned out that Hove Park had sent more students to Blatchington Mill, than the other way around. AsH stated that the issue of disputed payment (to do with how many students were on courses) arose when Blatchington Mill had taken the decision to close its Sixth Form and increase its Published Admission Number (PAN). AsH commented that Blatchington Mill had agreed to defer payment for the money owed, but this had still not been forthcoming from Hove Park. AsH confirmed that Blatchington Mill had specific records on which students had attended courses and had invited Hove Park to compare their information.
- 6.4. JB recalled that the Finance Committee had agreed at its meeting that governors should write formally to Hove Park, in order to resolve this dispute. SH added that this proposal could go forward for the FBG to consider in September.
- 6.5. Turning back to general budget issues, the Chair asked for more information about the predicted £100K surplus. SH explained that some of this was due to staffing savings and deferred recruitment of successors. AsH added that the school's income was starting to rise again, due to closure of the Sixth Form and the first year of the increase PAN.
- 6.6. The Chair, on behalf of the FBG, paid tribute to the hard work done by SH and AsH to improve the school's general financial situation over the past two years.

7. Restructure consultations

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) & Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR)

- 7.1. AsH confirmed that both consultations had now been closed and finalised, with staff directly affected notified of changes put in place – which would take effect in September. AsH highlighted that, with regard to the TLR restructure in particular, there had been five vacant posts, three of which had been filled and the remaining two with candidates set to be interviewed.
- 7.2. The Chair commented it had been noteworthy that the school had managed to

avoid redundancies in both consultation processes. AsH acknowledged this point, adding that those staff whose salaries had been adjusted would be eligible for pay protection.

8. Headteacher report

- 8.1. AsH drew attention to the new format of his report, in particular the summary of work done by leadership colleagues.

Teaching and learning (T&L)

- 8.2. AsH highlighted LT's T&L overseeing role, also the well-received Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme – which fitted well with the new OfSTED framework. AsH also drew attention to the sections on well-being and implementation of the homework review.

Homework

- 8.3. Governors noted the homework system amounted to a big change, with the EEF guidance on effective homework setting being a key reference point. Governors noted that the system had been tightened up in the setting of homework and would be a good opportunity to involve children in learning.
- 8.4. AsH confirmed that there would a change in approach to homework, in that students would not be sanctioned for missing pieces. AsH stated that, instead, teaching would direct their energies to a subject based homework in a positive manner. AsH undertook to invest in the homework system (which needed improvement), with Key Stages 3 and 4 putting on homework clubs.
- 8.5. Governors asked where matters stood at present with homework. AsH stated that additional measures would be put in place, with some areas being project based, support for planning homework, tasks to include reading and literacy. AsH stated that the aim was not to be too rigid, making it subject to a quota rather than a timetable.
- 8.6. Governors asked about rewards for students. AsH stated that the school was working on a digital badging award system.
- 8.7. Governors noted that there were some good after school activities in place. AsH stated that the homework activity needed to happen every night and would be able to assess how this was working by February or March. AsH suggested that governors arrange an official visit to the school, to see how the homework clubs were working.

Curriculum cluster

- 8.8. AsH drew attention to LT's work with Heads of Faculty and curriculum meetings, which were an important part of what was being done in this area. AsH informed the FBG that LT would be leaving the school shortly. The Chair, on behalf of the FBG, asked that its thanks for her work be transmitted to her.

Well-being

- 8.9. The Chair asked about the well-being sessions, with regard to teacher workload implications and impact on the school. AsH stated that he took part in a teacher workload working party, at which ways of working efficiently to remove unnecessary tasks (e.g. some data analysis). AsH drew attention to the idea of taking out an old initiative when a new one was brought in; e.g. homework sanctions. AsH hoped that, as a result of this work, the intervention culture would be broken down with a look at improving classroom procedures.

Curriculum

- 8.10. AsH drew attention to:-

- the curriculum assistant headteacher (AHT) taking on the issue of barriers to learning;
- students had behaved well during the examinations period;
- a few vacancies in admissions;
- completion of the school calendar, with next year's staff timetable done.

- 8.11. The Chair asked if the student timetables would be available electronically. AsH stated that this would be launched in September.

Careers information

- 8.12. AsH drew attention to:-

- the AHT role on careers information advice and guidance (of increased importance, given the closure of the Sixth Form);
- also revision of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

- 8.13. The Chair asked about those students left in the Post 16 provision. AsH stated that there were 21 Year 13 students, who were being looked after by staff and supported for their next steps.

Attendance

- 8.14. AsH drew attention to:-

- the AHT behaviour and attendance role,
- the city wide data comparison (autumn term figures had been the best in the city, but had worsened over the year, now hovering around the 95% figure).

- 8.15. The Chair asked about Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged students. AsH reported no changes in attendance patterns.

Special Educational Needs

- 8.16. The Chair asked about the intervention groups, now more overseen by qualified teachers rather than teaching assistants (TAs). AsH stated that this reflected a previous practice of having some literacy and mathematics being delivered by TA led groups; now, due to timetable improvements, these were led by teacher subject specialists.
- 8.17. AsH also drew attention to an overhaul of assessment processes by the AHT in this role; and his work on the educationally disadvantaged which was now showing a positive impact. AsH highlighted too the updated website, on which the Pupil Premium (PP) report had been posted.
- 8.18. The Chair asked, with regard to the PP report, when success was evaluated. AsH stated that this was done on a six monthly basis, to assess the impact on failing students. The Chair recommended that the FBG consider another governor monitoring visit, on reviewing data processes.

News items

- 8.19. AsH drew attention to outdoor education, with Years 9 and 10 going out on bicycles (the mayor of Brighton had joined in with cycling with girls).

Basic Needs Funding

- 8.20. AsH drew attention to:-
- the covered walkway in the east wing corridor - an additional covered walkway would be built with local authority funding;
 - an IT upgrade (a root and branch exercise to take place at the end of July, to replace school infrastructure such as new servers, networks, PCs, broadband and Chromebooks).
- 8.21. AsH added that 800 Chromebooks would be brought into use in the new academic year, but a limit of 10% of student time would be spent on IT. AsH stated that the benefits would be that teachers would no longer have to book computer room time; also the homework clubs would have access.
- 8.22. AsH also pointed to the replacement programme planned for the music room, i.e. going over to Windows from Mac to bring in improvements for live and recording space.
- 8.23. Governors asked about disposal plans for redundant equipment. AsH stated that existing PCs and laptops were in a poor state and would have to be assessed to see what was still useable. SH added that, in any case, the school used a registered disposal company to deal with those units deemed surplus to requirements.

9. Safeguarding

- 9.1. RK drew attention to the 2019 safeguarding audit completed on the school, circulated earlier to governors, in particular to the specific Red, Amber and Green (RAG) sections which had been amber rated.

Leadership, Governance & Accountability

- 9.2. RK explained that this was to do with what areas staff needed to know about and a survey to be carried out with this in mind. RK stated that training planned for September would take gaps in knowledge into account.

Single Central Record (SCR)

- 9.3. RK stated that this was to do with a review of the SCR, which had been monitored twice this year. The Chair added that he had met with CH and gone through the SCR, had been impressed with the detailed references (including on supply staff and contractors) and stated the SCR appeared to be diligently maintained. The Chair believed that, after a few more minor items had been checked, this amber section could now be rated green.

Safer recruitment

- 9.4. RK provided a list of staff who needed to do refresher safer recruitment training. The Chair added that this training should be made available to governors as well, as it would be useful for those who were involved with recruitment. The Chair noted that he, MC, AB and JMo had all completed this training; and welcomed the offers of JS, DHi and RM to do it as well.

Outside organisation staff & volunteers

- 9.5. RK explained that this was to do with ensuring such persons working at the school had had safeguarding training. In particular, RK stated, this principle applied to the peripatetic music teachers; those from the local authority had access to this training, but not personnel from private companies (who should pay for this service from the school). RK added that examination invigilators were put through training, but not the canteen staff (who had to be checked to verify they had done it).

SEND

- 9.6. RK stated this was to do with training for designated safeguarding leads, provided by the LA; three day core training which could be updated by refresher sessions. RK stated that the SENCo at the school was presently on the waiting list to undertake the three day course.

Attendance

- 9.7. RK explained that part of this section only was amber rated, drawing attention to the behaviour and attendance panel and an issue to do with access to safeguarding information on the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS), when dealing with managed moves. RK stated that this matter had been raised with the panel, who wanted managed moves to work in the best way possible, on the basis of full information which presently was not readily available.

Emotional & Mental Health & Wellbeing

- 9.8. RK stated that this was to do with managing staff absences, acknowledging that practice in this area could be improved.

Conclusion

- 9.9. The Chair asked if there would be any follow up action on the audit by the LA. RK stated that it used to be the case that the LA safeguarding lead visited every school in the city to discuss these reports, but this practice was no longer the case. RK stated the school had had no comment from the LA about their audits for the last two years.

Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE)

- 9.10. RK highlighted changes to the policy and procedures, as a result of the new updated Department for Education (DfE) draft guidance. RK stated that the LA would compile a new model policy on the basis of the DfE document; it would be fairly similar to previous versions, but include newer issues such as upskirting, serious violent crime and a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) focus. RK added that the new KCSIE would be used in staff training.
- 9.11. RK also mentioned the guidance on teaching of online safety, to look at where this should be done to ensure school compliance.

10. Health & Safety

- 10.1. SH circulated an annual H&S report to governors, drawing attention to:-
- an audit done by the LA in March 2018;
 - meetings of the school H&S committee (two since Easter), with the presence of two link governors and circulation of the committee's recent meeting minutes;
 - analysis of accidents and incidents reported to the LA;
 - risk assessments (majority completed, those outstanding to be done by August (including the fire risk assessment));
 - culture of risk assessments across schools;
 - training in risk assessments planned for CPD next year;
 - focus on processes and systems in the school; carrying out of regular site walks;
 - presence of First Aider on site (during school time and holiday periods);
 - training (H&S roles & responsibilities – completion by all design staff of three day course for specialist machinery);
 - tragic incident of summer 2018 (confirmation of the LA investigation now being closed, but the school were still waiting for the outcome of the

Health & Safety Executive (H&SE) one). The Chair confirmed that he had produced a response to the LA report on behalf of the FBG; the school had undertaken similar action separately. The Chair added that a recent email from the LA setting out a list of recommendations to be carried out; all but one (still in progress) of those falling to the school were complete. Email to be circulated to all governors.

- 10.2. Governors asked if there was a process in place whereby remedial works could be actioned urgently, as soon as they were identified. SH confirmed that such a system, by email, was in place.
- 10.3. Governors asked about staff carrying out duties which were subject to H&S issues for which they had not been trained. SH confirmed all staff were instructed that no team should undertake a high risk activity for which they were not trained.

11. School policies

Acceptable Use of Phones

- 11.1. The Chair noted that this policy was due for review in September.

Minibus

- 11.2. SH asked that review and approval of this policy (a draft had already been shared with key people involved with the school minibuses) be deferred until September.

12. Governor roles and responsibilities

- 12.1. The Chair drew attention to the current list, circulated earlier to governors and asked all members of the FBG to review their roles, with a view to seeing if these should change for the new academic year.

Succession planning

- 12.2. The Chair notified the FBG of his intention not to stand for the LA nominated governor role again, when this was due to expire on 4 July 2020. The Chair asked all governors to consider succession planning carefully and stepping forward for consideration for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair, when these positions fell vacant.

13. Governor training

- 13.1. LR confirmed that he and MC had undertaken the LA headteacher appraisal training course.
- 13.2. The Chair noted that AdH and GC would undertake the H&S training in the new academic year; and also drew governors' attention to the LA OfSTED new framework training on 18 July.
- 13.3. AM stated that he and DHi were booked to do the LA governors' induction

course in October.

14.Actions taken by Chair

- 14.1. The Chair reported none taken. The Chair took this opportunity to thank governors warmly for all the work they had undertaken on behalf of the school and board over the past year.

Actions

- Approach by FBG to Hove Park School in September to resolve Sixth Form students attendance outstanding debt – PS
- Scheduling of a governors' homework club monitoring visit in September – PS
- Scheduling of a governors' data process monitoring visit in September – PS
- Undertaking of safer recruitment training – JS, DHi and RM
- Review of minibus and acceptable use of phones school policies in September – AsH and SH
- Review of governors' roles and responsibilities in September - PS

Next meeting – 19 September 2019 (Exam data (interim picture))

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...