

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 19 September 2019 at 17.00 hours**

**Those Present:** Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AsH - headteacher), Claire Harrington (CH), Janet Such (JS), Lee Redmond (LR), James Moncrieff (JMo), Judith Mackenzie (JMa), John Barker (JB), Richard Mills (RM), Alex Morrison (AM), Deborah Hillier (DHi) and Gareth Chan (GC).

**In attendance:** Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager), Kate Claydon (KC - Deputy Head Teacher), Alessandro Capozzi (AC - Deputy Head Teacher) and David Harvey (DHa – clerk).

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

- 1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair** – DHa noted the nominations of PS and AB to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair respectively; also the FBG unanimous approval of both appointments. DHa drew attention to PS' intention to step down as Chair and nominated local authority (LA) governor in July 2020; and the importance of governors considering the consequent need for succession planning in this regard.
- 2. Apologies for Absence.**
  - 2.1. Ruth King (RK – staff), Mariea Christodoulou (MC), Addy Balogun (AB) and Adam Harvey (AdH) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.
- 3. Declarations of interest** – None.
- 4. Introduction**
  - 4.1. PS welcomed the return of RM, noting that he had previously been a member of the FBG as a parent governor; now re-appointed to the Board as a co-opted governor for a four year term of office with effect from 5 September 2019. PS also welcomed the attendance of KC and AC, in their newly appointed roles as Deputy Headteachers (DHTs) as a result of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) restructure exercise in the previous academic year.
  - 4.2. SH provided details of the new system of identification badges and lanyards; green signified a member of staff who had undertaken safeguarding and child protection training and could move about the school unaccompanied and teach pupils on a one to one basis; blue for e.g. contractors, who could move about the school the school unaccompanied but not interact with pupils; orange for visitors e.g. governors, who could move about the school only on an accompanied basis.

## **5. Minutes**

5.1. The minutes of the meeting of 11 July 2019 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

## **6. Matters Arising**

- Approach by FBG to Hove Park School in September to resolve Sixth Form students' attendance outstanding debt – the Chair noted that progress on this issue had not advanced and undertook to consult with AsH on the way forward.
- Scheduling of a governors' homework club monitoring visit in September – to be discussed later in the meeting.
- Scheduling of a governors' data process monitoring visit in September – to be discussed later in the meeting.
- Undertaking of safer recruitment training – to be done.
- Review of minibus and acceptable use of phones school policies in September – to be discussed later in the meeting.
- Review of governors' roles and responsibilities in September - to be discussed later in the meeting.

The Chair also drew attention to the fact of all previous FBG minutes now being published on the school website and now up to date (not including the latest ones, i.e. those of 11 July 2019, which would be done subsequently to this meeting). AsH added that the new school website would be finalised this week, with these documents duly transferred across. AsH explained that the closure of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form college had precipitated this move, affording a welcome opportunity to refresh the website.

## **7. Governing Board Code of Conduct 2019-2020**

7.1. DHa pointed to the fact of this document being based on the updated National Governance Association (NGA) model text of September 2019, highlighting the key changes and additions of text on a fourth core principle (stakeholders) and the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous approval of this document and signed it accordingly.

7.2. Governors drew attention in particular to text on the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets; and asked for information to facilitate this aspect of their monitoring responsibilities. Governors considered that it would be useful to know about targets and objectives, in order to be able to answer questions from OfSTED inspectors.

7.3. The Chair thought it would be possible to provide details of this nature, e.g. the School Development Plan (SDP). AsH added that the school was half way through its present three year plan (2018/2019/2020), pointing out that there was a great deal of detail beneath the key sections of the SDP and agreed to go over this document at the next meeting of the FBG.

## **8. Committees' membership for 2019-2020 (Finance, Pay & Personnel, Recruitment and Panels).**

- 8.1. The Chair drew the attention of the FBG to JS's proposal to chair a new governors committee, to monitor the school curriculum. JS explained her view that governors needed an opportunity to review the school's results in a more forensic manner, noting that these came about as a result of initiatives being put in place. JS believed that governors wanted to know about more basic aspects of school life, such as pupils' enjoyment of lessons. JS drew attention to the anticipated issue of progress results in October and thought that a Curriculum Committee could question the school on how it had done; also look at academic outcomes and what was taught, e.g. subject knowledge.
- 8.2. Governors noted that the new OfSTED framework was an improvement on the existing one, focussing as it did on the three 'I's – Intent, Implementation and Impact – which should be the remit of this new Committee. Governors suggested that it could also link up with research and Partnership work done on the subject.
- 8.3. AsH welcomed this idea of a new Committee; that it could report on outcomes to the FBG in a sequenced manner over the year.
- 8.4. Governors suggested that the Committee should agree a scope of what it could review. The Chair noted that, historically, there had been such a committee in place. However, following the government's encouragement to governors to reconstitute their boards, the Chair stated that the school had slimmed down its approach in this regard, passing responsibility for data monitoring to the FBG.
- 8.5. The Chair noted that JS, JMo, CH, DHi, GC, PS and KC would participate as members of this new Curriculum Committee; with JS as Chair to organise the setting up of it with KC; and to have its first meeting before the December FBG.
- 8.6. The Chair noted that governors agreed membership of the Finance, Pay & Personnel and Headteacher Appraisal Committees would remain the same as last year; with the addition of JMa joining the Finance Committee.

## **9. Governors' school visits and approach**

- 9.1. The Chair spoke of a recent visit to the school and being impressed with the take-up of the new homework club. AsH provided the FBG with a background of this initiative, which had been notified to parents and begun on a trial basis. AsH suggested that governors arrange a visit to the school in January 2020 to have a look for themselves and speak to the students attending the club.
- 9.2. AsH explained the reasoning behind the initiative as the school wanting to grant students access to complete their homework assignments; at the same time removing the sanctions and punishment element of the situation and bring in rewards. AsH noted that attendance of the club had started at about 70 or so, recent figures indicated an increase to 125 per day.
- 9.3. AsH explained that there was one member of staff in overall charge, with support from others to monitor that homework was being done and register attendance. JMo offered to assist with Partnership work from BHASVIC, to encourage their mathematics students to come over and help. SH added that

food would be made available to students at the club from January 2020 onwards.

- 9.4. Governors asked about the engagement of students with the initiative. AsH stated that, at the start, it had only been the keen pupils who were coming along; now many others were attending and some were working harder in this environment than the lessons themselves (!).
- 9.5. Governors agreed that the Curriculum Committee would consider how to follow this up with a visit, probably in the Spring Term.

(**Note** – JMo left the meeting at 18.00 hours)

## **10. School Budget**

- 10.1. SH reported no significant changes to the budget and highlighted that the school was better off by £37k, because of staffing changes made since submission of the final version in May 2019. SH pointed to this budget anticipating a £80k surplus by the end of the financial year – now a surplus of £115k was expected.
- 10.2. The Chair asked about the teachers' pay deal. AsH explained that the government had agreed a 2.75% raise across all ranges; the school had budgeted for 2% and the 0.75% addition would be funded by the government.

## **11. Headteacher report**

- 11.1. AsH drew attention to his report circulated earlier to governors and highlighted the following:-

### *Attendance*

- 11.2. AsH reported that the school was not actually full, in terms of student numbers, given that the local authority was still processing applications from the waiting list. AsH acknowledged that attendance overall last academic year did not reach 95%; improvement of this statistic had now been written into staff appraisal targets.
- 11.3. AsH acknowledged too that the climate change protest strikes had had an impact on the school's attendance figures; but the statistics could be modelled taking this aspect out. AsH added that a further strike day was anticipated to take place on 20 September, with a number of students already notifying their intentions to be absent. AsH believed that OfSTED would compromise on this issue and take absence statistics in this regard in context of the local picture.
- 11.4. Governors asked if those students participating in the protest marches would be asked to produce some form of work as a task. AsH stated that he was considering instituting some form of follow up activity in this regard.

### *Information technology*

- 11.5. Governors asked if the school's IT services had experienced any unexpected problems in the system change over during the summer. SH

reported a difficulty with one of the two servers; also with the Schools Information Management Service (SIMS) – but most everything else was working well, e.g. the Chromebook roll out.

- 11.6. Governors paid tribute to the school's IT services, praising its efforts with regard to a successful completion of this project, given the magnitude and complexity of the task undertaken.

### *Behaviour and Attendance*

- 11.7. The Chair noted that AC's appointment had signalled a development to the school's approach in this regard. AC explained that this had been refined, with a step change introduced. AC stated that there was a promotion of middle leaders' use of measures and messaging about behaviour; interactions with pupils and praising positive behaviour, peer to peer engagement, assemblies, salient and messaging about cultural diversity. AC stated that the aim was to firm up and adapt existing systems, introducing changes to duties and producing guides. AC commented that, in the two weeks since the start of term, behaviour was very good in lessons with children's attitudes positive.

### *Quality of Education*

- 11.8. KC spoke of children working well in lessons, with staff fully engaged. KC pointed to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme of the last academic year, which was carrying on in this one; embedding what had been learnt and achieved already. KC highlighted the importance of subject leaders leading their areas, in making the right decisions for their students.
- 11.9. Governors asked about how the school rewarded staff, improving their welfare and valuing their contributions - with particular regard to duty refreshments. AsH believed that workload reduction plans were now in place and were improving, especially when backed up by resources. AsH wanted to promote a healthy and happy workforce and reduce absenteeism and believed the best way of doing this was to give staff the best tools to do their jobs – another major aim was to discourage staff from taking work home. AsH assured governors that all new systems were designed not to create extra work.

### *Examination results*

- 11.10. AsH drew attention to the three spreadsheets circulated earlier to all governors, i.e. the grade breakdowns for all qualifications and summer predictions for the years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. AsH pointed to these containing detailed statistics about last year's results, predictions and actual results. Overall, AsH stated that the school had done better in 2018-2019 than 2017-2018; in both progress and attainment.
- 11.11. AsH also highlighted a governors' citywide results presentation circulated earlier and went through the accompanying slides; drawing attention to the difference in pass rates between 2014 and 2019 for English and Mathematics (58% and 78% respectively); eight out of ten students leaving school with all

options open to them; 82% of students passing Mathematics and 87% English (language and literature); the local picture with regard to - the school's third place position on attainment 8 (last year's being seventh); the school's third place position on progress 8; average grade just above 5; passes and strong passes in English and Mathematics; EBacc and 2 passes in science.

11.12. The Chair commented that the overall picture was positive in terms of improvement, showing that the predictions were very close and a tribute to the system working well.

## **12. Safeguarding**

12.1. The Chair noted that last term a new version of the government's Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) had been shown to all staff. AsH added that additional information had been packaged into Section 1, Annex A; and recommended all governors read this text, undertaking to circulate it to all. The Chair added that Annex H showed where all the changes were.

## **13. School policies**

13.1. The Chair informed the FBG that the Department for Education (DfE) had recently revised its list of statutory policies for schools. AsH drew attention to the compliance tracker which produced alerts to changes; and gave an undertaking for the school to stagger the policy approval process across the whole year.

### *Acceptable Use of Phones*

13.2. The Chair informed governors that the FBG would come back to this policy.

### *Minibus*

13.3. AsH confirmed that this policy had been reviewed over the summer and recommended it to the FBG for approval; which was done unanimously.

### *Behaviour*

13.4. AsH informed governors that the school would be looking at revising this policy.

## **14. Governor training**

14.1. The Chair drew attention to an email sent to all FBG members by the LA Governor Support, with a reminder of upcoming training courses, including one for aspiring chairs and a new governor induction programme. AM confirmed his booking for the one on 12 October; the Chair and AsH for their attendance on a health & safety course on 20 September.

## **15. Actions taken by Chair**

15.1. The Chair had no actions to report.

**Actions**

- Setting up and taking forward putting in place of the new Curriculum Committee – JS & KC
- Addition of SDP as an agenda item for the next meeting of the FBG – DH
- Circulation of KCSIE document to all governors - AsH

**Next meeting** – 12 December 2019 (Exam data (full picture))

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...