

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 12 December 2019 at 17.00 hours

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AsH - headteacher), Claire Harrington (CH), Janet Such (JS), James Moncrieff (JMo), Judith Mackenzie (JMa), Adam Harvey (AdH), John Barker (JB), Alex Morrison (AM), Richard Mills (RM), and Addy Balogun (AB).

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

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

1. Apologies for Absence.

1.1. Deborah Hillier (DHi), Mariea Christodoulou (MC), Lee Redmond (LR) and Gareth Chan (GC) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

2. Declarations of interest – None.

3. Minutes

3.1. The minutes of the meeting of 19 September 2019 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

- Setting up and taking forward putting in place of the new Curriculum Committee – done, first meeting held on 5 December 2019.
- Addition of SDP as an agenda item for the next meeting of the FBG – done.
- Circulation of KCSIE document to all governors – to be done.

5. School budget

5.1. SH recalled that the Finance Committee had met on 18 November, which had been presented with an outturn forecast up to the end of October. SH drew attention to the anticipated surplus of £53K by the end of the financial year; a change from the original budgeted figure of £80K. SH accounted for this difference by pointing to the whiteboards overhaul programme (£25K).

5.2. SH drew attention to the anticipated staff salary savings; a shortfall in the insurance reimbursement (an advance payment had been made in the previous financial year); receipt of reimbursement for the IT and hardware work; improvement to the catering provision; work with the local authority (LA) on a covered walkway.

Hove Park School issue

- 5.3. SH highlighted the financial dispute with Hove Park school, with regard to the partnership funding for the Sixth Form provision. SH explained that Blatchington Mill had presented an account for £36K; Hove Park had offered – and now paid – only £20K.
- 5.4. Governors asked if any party was helping the school to negotiate this matter. SH stated that the LA was involved; also that Hove Park had been asked to supply a rationale of figures for the £20K it had paid.
- 5.5. The Chair asked if there was anything more to be done. AsH believed that the process was on track; the next step would be to escalate the matter to the LA. AsH believed that Blatchington Mill's case was very strong, the data underpinning it was of high quality. The Chair suggested that the FBG should engage with Hove Park's governors at some stage.
- 5.6. Governors asked for information about Hove Park's response. SH regretted that Hove Park had not provided any response to Blatchington Mill's case.

Staffing

- 5.7. AsH anticipated that the budget would be increased by 3.9% in the new financial year, across all formula factors. SH added that the school could now claim back the teachers' pension grant reimbursement.
- 5.8. The Chair asked about an increase in Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding. AsH stated that the LA had opened a consultation process with schools over disbursement of an additional £2.5M, in terms of identifying areas of highest pressure.
- 5.9. Governors asked about the Term Time Only (TTO) support staff back pay issue. AsH explained that this had arisen over an LA miscalculation of holiday pay, resulting 2.5K staff being underpaid. AsH stated that the LA had now agreed to pay 5 years and 3 months back pay to these staff; but had initially required this settlement to come out of schools' budgets. AsH informed the FBG that schools in Brighton and Hove had objected to being landed with this bill; whereupon the LA agreed to pay half, with the remaining half falling to schools to pay over a ten year period.
- 5.10. AsH stated that schools continued to object to paying half of the settlement; the LA intended to suspend making a final decision on this issue for a year.

6. Headteacher report

Attendance

- 6.1. The Chair noted that figures for this academic year were lower than the last. AsH explained that the pattern last year was good to start with, but then had deteriorated. However AsH pointed to a positive indicator with Year 11; last year was 93.8%, this year was 95.2%. AsH highlighted the priority being given to

improving this situation and the large amount of work being done.

- 6.2. Governors asked for an explanation of terminology used in the Whole School Attendance Data table. AsH pointed to Pupil Premium (PP); Free School Meals (FSM), True or False (T and F), Ethnicity, Gifted & Talented, English as an Additional Language (EAL), high, middle & low attainment (HML), Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan, all other types of SEN (K).

Behaviour and attendance

- 6.3. In terms of work ethic, the Chair noted the reduction in categories, from six to three for the rewards system. AC drew attention to the incentives programme, with rewards for pupils e.g. good attendance and punctuality; also teachers' use of the achievement points (AP) system by seeing and judging pupils' work ethic, effort and independent learning.
- 6.4. Governors asked about how attendance fed into the reward system; making allowance for medical conditions. AC stated that there were also religious considerations to bear in mind on this issue, with regard to the passport system. AC stated that points could be achieved in different ways; children would not be disadvantaged for medical reasons. AsH added that one major issue was managing authorised as opposed to unauthorised absences.
- 6.5. Governors asked when the system would be rolled out. AC stated that data collection was done ten days ago, with consideration being given to having additional training material for staff.
- 6.6. Governors emphasised the importance of highlighting where improvements were needed. AC pointed to the report setting out where improvements were required, adding that Year offices would be in touch with those most in need.

6.7. *Student development*

- 6.8. CH drew attention to the Key Stage 1-2 liaison work being carried out, in particular geography skills afternoon given to primary colleagues, in which best practice, field work and mapping were discussed.
- 6.9. The Chair asked about cluster meetings. AsH drew attention to Ruth King's (RK) work with primary feeder schools on curriculum, including transition on levels of learning for Year 7, including music.

Barriers to learning

- 6.10. AsH drew attention to a visit from the Portsmouth LA inclusion team, which had been very successful.

Finance

- 6.11. SH highlighted installation of a new service point in the Quad; refurbishment of a snack bar and servery area; the massively improved food offer which reflected student requests. The Chair welcomed AsH's offer of an invitation to governors to attend lunch at the school.

New website

6.12. AsH stated that the new website was well on the way to completion.

7. School Development Plan (SDP)

7.1. AsH gave a presentation setting out the interlinking processes devised to put the SDP in place, describing the various levels as follows :-

- evaluation (context and process, ongoing over a three year cycle, with the issue of attendance data on a weekly basis);
- design stage (consider areas for development, scale, scope and capacity);
- consulting & refining stage (individual plans & middle leaders);
- governor approval (presentation of the SDP to the FBG);
- governor oversight (to receive regular reporting, e.g. in the headteacher report).

7.2. AsH then went on to describe the work that lay behind the headings:-

- ethos statements (three focus areas – attendance, SEN & PP progress and workload & continuing professional development (CPD));
- top level action plans (ten, with each having five steps e.g. teaching and learning, leadership and SEND);
- ethos statements (three – love of learning, inclusivity and engaging the school community);
- headline area 1 (behaviour – reward and improvement);
- headline area 2 (student outcomes – teaching, achievement and resources);
- headline area 3 (environment – development and workload).

7.3. AsH next set out a worked example, with an area of focus (workload), action plan, five steps, context, goals, actions, by whom and deadline. AsH acknowledged that it would be a challenge to keep all this linked to what was actually being done; and agreed to circulate this presentation to governors.

7.4. Governors asked if this was a standard structure used by other schools. AsH stated that the school had drawn on a number of different examples to come up with this system.

8. Curriculum Committee (CC)

8.1. JS informed the FBG that the first meeting of the CC had taken place on 5

December and drew attention to its Terms of Reference, originally based on a National Governance Association (NGA) model text and subsequently adapted by AsH. The Chair noted the FBG's approval of this document.

- 8.2. JS stated that she had been appointed Chair of the Committee, with JMo as the Vice Chair; work had begun on looking at examination results set against school predictions, the inspection data summary report (IDSR) and an investigation into the science faculty by the School Partnership Adviser (SPA). With this last point in mind, AsH acknowledged that results were not showing improvements made; but the external view was that this improvement was coming. JS noted that the SPA had noted an improvement in modern languages.
- 8.3. JS highlighted that attainment results were good; also the progress 8 average. JS drew attention to the good preparation work and report done by KC, showing the development work done on the curriculum, put into practice at the twilight sessions. JS commented that she had also raised Analyse School Performance (ASP), on which governors could draw to see school results in more detail. AsH added that the school drew on both the ASP and ISDR for data information.
- 8.4. JS highlighted planning for governors' visits e.g. the homework club – her own experience of coming to the school and seeing this initiative was positive, noting the high attendance of pupils. The Chair recommended that other governors use the homework club as a focus for future visits. AsH welcomed this idea, stating such visits could be carried out on any day, from 15.00 to 16.30 hours. The Chair asked that any governor carrying out such a visit, complete a monitoring report.
- 8.5. Finally, JS drew attention to the two further dates scheduled for the next meetings of the Committee; a total of three for the year; also that CH had produced the draft minutes with the help of AsH.

Examination results

- 8.6. KC drew attention to successes in attainment, English, mathematics and humanities. KC stated that progress 8 was average, both locally and nationally. KC pointed to areas where improvement was needed, which included the school doing more for disadvantaged students. KC stated that the school would work on review and planning processes, in terms of what improvements needed to be made.
- 8.7. KC highlighted the major effort being made on the curriculum in CPD, in the twilight session. KC explained that this was about encouraging teachers to think about what they taught, pitching ideas at the right level and the order that things were done to avoid repetition. KC drew on the examples of linkages between the subjects of history and English; the second twilight session would look at strands of guidance on improving literacy.

9. Safeguarding

- 9.1. AsH undertook to ensure circulation of the Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) document.

10. School policies

Appraisal

- 10.1. AsH explained that this document was based on the LA model text, adapted for the school's needs and recommended approval. JMo added that this document had been seen and agreed by the Pay & Personnel Committee. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous approval of this policy.

11. Governor training

- 11.1. The Chair noted that AM and DHi had both undertaken the LA new governors' induction course. AM endorsed the value of this course and highlighted the usefulness of having a governors' induction policy. The Chair agreed this point and undertook to work with AM and JS on a template and produce a version for adoption by the FBG.

12. Actions taken by Chair

- 12.1. None.

Actions

- Preparation of (whole school attendance data table) terminology glossary – AsH
- Invitation to governors to lunch at the school – AsH
- Production of governor induction policy – PS, AM and JS
- Circulation of SDP presentation - AsH

Next meeting – Thursday 30 January 2020 - curriculum

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...