

Minutes of a (virtual) meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School held on 27 January 2022 at 17.00 hours

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), James Moncrieff (JMo – arrived 17.30 hours), Judith Mackenzie (JMa), Mariea Christodoulou (MC), Lee Redmond (LR), Mark Sorrell (MS), Jim Henderson (JH), Vernon Bamforth (VB) and Kate Claydon (KC - Head Teacher).

In attendance: Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager), Ruth King (RK – deputy Head Teacher), Alessandro Capozzi (AC - deputy Head Teacher), Lizzie Edmed (deputy Head Teacher) and David Harvey (DHa – clerk).

Quorum: 9 out of 15 governors present – meeting was quorate throughout.

1. Apologies for Absence.

- 1.1. Gareth Chan (GC), Richard Mills (RM), Alex Morrison (AM), Claire Harrington (CH) and Deborah Hillier (DHi), had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

2. Urgent business

- 2.1. The Chair notified governors that he would be discussing the availability of governors to participate in the vacant deputy Head Teacher position interview process and a forthcoming suspension panel
- 2.2. The Chair took this opportunity to offer AC congratulations on behalf of the FBG in securing his new position as head of the sixth form in InterHigh; also thanks for all his hard work on behalf of Blatchington Mill.

3. Declarations of interest – None.

4. Minutes

- 4.1. The minutes of the meetings of 9 December 2021 were agreed by governors as a true record; to be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity

5. Matters Arising

- Setting up of governors' classroom visit programme for September – to be done, prevailing pandemic conditions permitting.
- School admissions discussion for next FBG agenda – done.
- Safeguarding discussion for next FBG agenda (as the first item) - done.

6. Safeguarding

- 6.1. RK drew attention to three documents circulated earlier to governors, namely the *safeguarding report of December 2021*; *safeguarding audit 2021*; and the *Prevent Duty Risk Assessment Action Plan Nov 2021*. RK noted the good practice of the FBG to retain safeguarding as a standing item on all agendas and the meetings held last academic year with MC and PS.

Safeguarding report

- 6.2. RK explained that this report would now be issued on an annual basis, in the first term of the new academic year. RK stated that it would contain an overview of all issues in the school and the processes followed. RK commented that it had been challenging to draw comparisons this time around with the last academic year for pandemic reasons; the next report would be more detailed. RK drew attention to the separate sections contained in the report:-

- *Leadership and Management*

- 6.3. RK stated that this set out details of key personnel and training undertaken. Governors asked if the school needed more governors to participate, given the absence of CH. RK confirmed that the involvement of PS and MC was sufficient.

- *Single Central Record (SCR)*

- 6.4. RK explained that the SCR contained details of employment of staff and who had seen what documentation, e.g. qualifications and policies. RK stated her role was of general monitoring and SH on appointments; and noted that OfSTED would look at the SCR at its next inspection of the school. The Chair noted that (nominated) governors were expected to monitor the SCR on a regular basis.

- *Audit & Action Plan*

- 6.5. RK drew attention to the Red, Amber & Green (RAG) ratings and emphasised that this separate audit document was dynamic and living in nature; i.e. subject to constant amendment and revision.

- 6.6. The Chair noted that this document was a standardised format and based on a local authority (LA) template used by all schools in Brighton and Hove. RK added that the LA safeguarding lead officer sent it out to schools and it was a centralised form used by schools and other educational establishments. The Chair noted that it was good to see the majority of RAG ratings as green; this was a tribute to how well systems were running in the school.

- 6.7. Governors asked if staff used the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS). RK confirmed this was the case and explained that different staff had different levels of access, which included KC, EE, the designated & deputy designated safeguarding leads (DSL and DDSLs), heads of year, assistant heads of year, admissions & medical teams

- 6.8. RK explained that CPOMS was a software programme used to record any incidents of student safeguarding concerns; it was especially good for chronology purposes. RK stated that it was possible to choose different categories for recording incidents; distinctions between them were available to staff in order to record incidents correctly. RK added that it was possible to carry out a form of data analysis, using these categories. RK stressed that CPOMS was not used for behaviour; this was kept separate to child protection.
- 6.9. RK highlighted the sole red RAG rated item – use of the ‘Safer Schools’ app. RK explained that this was no longer rated as red; the school eSafety officer was now looking at how this could be implemented, talking to the company and planning a demonstration to students – this item was now amber rated.
- 6.10. RK drew attention to the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment action plan, which was now in place.
- 6.11. Governors noted the priority given to Prevent activities but not as much to criminal exploitation by gangs. RK explained that the Prevent agenda, in terms of what schools had to have in place, had been driven by the government over a number of years. RK stated that the school, in practice, focussed on these other areas such as child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) equally.
- *Training*
- 6.12. RK drew attention to the staff training that was completed each year, which contained elements and data specific to Blatchington Mill. RK stated that training was done at the beginning of the academic year and highlighted her running of the Blatchington Mill child protection and safeguarding groups; with the latter looking at processes – this was part of training and development.
- 6.13. Governors asked if there were any unaccompanied minors at the school. RK stated that there were not many.
- 6.14. RK added that the school had delivered training to all staff well beyond the LA package. RK stated that a staff survey was often carried out to identify needs; for example, more slides had been introduced, on issues such as self harm.
- 6.15. Governors asked about support for the DSL and DDSs, in dealing with traumatic situations. RK stated that the school had drawn on the LA designated lead officer’s provision of financed monthly and half-termly supervision sessions; in addition, the school held meetings regularly with all child protection (CP) staff to share good practice and support each other.
- *Recruitment & Selection*
- 6.16. RK reported that safer recruitment training had been completed by all SLT staff, some were currently updating this action; and also drew attention to the sections on *policies and documents related to safeguarding*; and the *Prevent Risk Assessment action plan*.

- 6.17. The Chair suggested taking note of the work to be completed with governors. Governors asked about how the school managed to deal with aggressive and challenging parents. RK stated that the school had a good record in dealing with aggressive parents, with two specific members of staff available to help; for really disturbing cases, the school secured specialist assistance.
- *Referrals & Multi Agency Working*
- 6.18. RK stated that this was regularly reviewed, drawing on CPOMS data for the last academic year and the present one. RK drew attention to the early help plans in place and emphasised that pupils who had had bad experiences felt able to talk to staff.
- 6.19. Governors asked about the volume of work and the levels of cases raised. RK stated that there was only a term's worth of data available on this document, with it being new; hence the use of data showing the last whole year and purely a term this year to date. RK added that future reports to governors would have a direct comparison available.

7. Headteacher report

- 7.1. KC drew attention to her report circulated earlier to governors.

Quality of Education

Data predictions

- 7.2. AC highlighted the data snapshots and stated that there was not much pupil attainment data available, making comparisons challenging. AC commented however that it had been possible to use data to pick up trends. AC drew attention in particular to the increase of take up in eBacc; the options system had included creative subjects and a language.
- 7.3. AC stated that, on Progress 8, there was a value added score of 0.3 predicted for this year. AC added that the school was improving its examination preparation and confident of government mitigation on content – a drop in predictions might therefore not be seen.
- 7.4. AC commented that predictions were based on pupils' work and target grades had not been set. AC added that scores on English and mathematics were down 5% in passes – robust plans were in place to ameliorate this situation. AC drew attention to the prediction of Free School Meals (FSMs) and Special Educational Needs (SEN K) students achieving net positive progress; this was very pleasing. AC stated that, overall, it was likely that attainment would be slightly down but progress was good.
- 7.5. Governors noted that the absence of target grades for students was to avoid bias. AC stated that Fischer Family Trust (FFT) target grades were available in the background, but not notified to teachers last year. AC explained that target grades had been found linked too closely to predicted grades; so although the former existed, target grades were used sparingly, given they were not effective. AC confirmed that parents had been informed of this process.
- 7.6. Governors asked how underachievement by individual students was picked up. AC explained that this was tackled by using the school's central

'educationally disadvantaged' philosophy. AC stated that this was done on a subject by subject basis, baselines were set and ranked, subsequent assessments were ranked as well. AC explained that Year groups were then classified in three sections – 15% below expectations, 65% at expectation and 20% in the top tier. AC stated that a review and planning process then took place, with a commitment to changes and help to the 15%, address gaps and analytical skills, with a plan and review written to ameliorate the situation. AC undertook to provide a guide for governors.

- 7.7. Governors commented that there was a gap between the data information provided on data predictions and the mock examination results. Governors asked about the process for teachers and subject leaders in terms of what they took out of the mock results to inform predicted outcomes.
- 7.8. AC explained that predictions were based on target tracker training, when staff considered how to make predictions; with all assessments mapped and well triangulated to generate predictions. In terms of bridging the gap, AC stated that he met with subject leaders every week, to show data with regard to mock examination results and predictions; and review plans to guide teams talk about the quality assurance process. AC confirmed that each subject leader had a plan to bring students up.

(Note – JMa left the meeting at 18.30 hours)

Attendance

- 7.9. The Chair noted the comparison drawn between the figures presented for autumn 1 and 2; and the increase of 0.79% for 2 over 1. EE commented that although there had been an increase in attendance for autumn 2, Covid-19 had had a massive impact.
- 7.10. Governors commented that, to achieve 90% in the current circumstances put the school in an encouraging position. Governors asked what the average attendance percentages were, pre-Covid, i.e. three years ago. AC stated that this ranged between 94% to 96%; at this time Blatchington Mill were second highest in Brighton and Hove.
- 7.11. Governors asked how the school compared to others at the present time. EE stated that Blatchington Mill was in the top three, Brighton and Hove was doing well nationally.
- 7.12. Governors asked if there was more detailed information available. KC stated that the school was preparing more detailed information for OfSTED and keeping a track of particular students. EE added that every Year office was aware of these students and the measures taken, i.e. interventions.

Catch up plans

- 7.13. The Chair asked about the catch-up funding, how much had been allocated to the school and when it needed spending. SH stated this was £128K but the LA had not specified a deadline for expenditure – but this was anticipated to be July.
- 7.14. The Chair asked about impact monitoring. SH acknowledged the need to report the monitoring strategy plan. AC added that the government had recommended a template report for completion by the school and the Senior

Leadership Team to approve. AC explained that this consisted of three strands; day to day support; wider school processes; and targeted interventions.

Examinations

- 7.15. Governors asked about processes in place to help students cope with the dual nature of examinations. KC stated that the school listened to student feedback and provided additional support, both on a pastoral and academic basis. KC believed that students were as well informed and prepared as they could be.

(Note – AC left the meeting at 18.40 hours)

School Development Plan

- 7.16. Governors praised KC for the quality of the *mission statement* and the *five year overview planning* documents; commenting too on the improved progress for students, explicit information about personal development and welfare – overall a very good structure. Governors asked in particular about plans for innovation in year five.
- 7.17. KC stated that it was important for innovation to fit within a manageable framework; it made sure that there was a balance for staff between stability and improvement. Governors commented that a sequential process on innovation would be important, particularly with regard to new initiatives and projects; discussion about language on how this could be embedded would be of value.
- 7.18. Governors asked if they could see blank student profile forms. KC agreed to send out redacted ones.
- 7.19. Governors suggested insertion of a column in the development plan for OfSTED detailing impact. KC agreed with this suggestion.
- 7.20. Governors asked about the Covid catch-up plan. KC stated that the accelerated reading programme would be one major use of this funding.
- 7.21. Governors asked about Student Voice. KC stated that teams of senior students were active; also there would be a meeting of the student council shortly

BAME stakeholders group

- 7.22. KC explained that this group would be renamed; also that it would meet again after half term.

8. School's & governors' OfSTED preparedness

- 8.1. KC informed governors that OfSTED would be starting up the inspection process from 31 January. KC added that work with subject leaders was underway in the form of preparing for deep dives; checklists of questions were being built up and work being done on quality assurance. KC stated that the letter informing parents of the inspection had been completed; also that MC and JMo would be meeting her to go through key aspects.

9. School policies

- 9.1. The Chair noted that none had been presented for review and approval.

10. Admissions

- 10.1. KC reporting having undertaken a headteacher induction course with the LA last week, at which the issue of falling attendance rolls, had been raised. KC stated that there was an acknowledgement by the LA of the impact this would have on secondary schools; however no long term strategy was yet in place.

11. Governor training

- 11.1. JH reported being registered to undertake the LA governor induction course on 8 February and 1 March.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1. The Chair drew attention to two emails asking for governor participation; involvement in the deputy headteacher interview process on 8 & 9 March; and in a suspension panel.
- 12.2. The Chair asked DH to circulate an email on the former asking for volunteers; on the latter he would suggest alternative dates for the panel to meet.

Actions

- Provision of educationally disadvantaged system guide for governors – AC
- Circulation of email asking for participation in the deputy headteacher interview process - DH

Next meeting – Thursday 24 March 2022 (Budget)

The Chair asked about the format of this next meeting, i.e. whether to continue on a virtual basis or attend in person on the school premises. KC provided details of current positive Covid cases detected in the school and measures in place to restrict visitors. The Chair agreed to decide nearer the time about the format and stated that official governor monitoring visits should continue to be held in abeyance.

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...