

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 22 September 2016

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Kevin Fry (KF), Fiona Bauermeister (FB), John Barker (JB), Richard Goodsell (RG), Ashley Harrold (AH), Gareth Chan (GC), Addy Balogun (AB), Peter Gerry (PG) and Andrew Wallace (AW).

In attendance: Ruth King (RK – staff), Lindsey Thompson (LT – staff – arrived 17.55 hours), David Harvey (DH – clerk) and Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager).

Quorum: 10 out of 12 governors present with 3 vacancies – meeting was quorate throughout.

0. Welcome.

1. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair** – The clerk noted nominations made for PS and PG for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of governors respectively for 2016-2107; both were elected unanimously by the FBG

2. Apologies for Absence.

- 2.1. Sally Hunt (SH) and Richard Mills (RM) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

3. Urgent Business - None

4. **Declarations of interest** – KF notified the FGB of his role as staff Unison (union) representative.

5. Minutes

- 5.1. The minutes of the meetings of 14 July and 19 July 2016 were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

6. Matters Arising

14 July 2016 minutes

Staffing structure – queries were resolved.

Letters on the school budget (Chair to local authority (LA); LA reply) – circulated to all governors.

LA Special Educational Needs report circulation – AH agreed to find out what had happened to this report for it to be circulated, confirming in passing that the school had not been referred to in it.

Uniform change – AH reported a mixed reaction in the school, confirming that permission had been given to wear the old uniform, to run down existing stock. The important issue was that all should be wearing some form of uniform. AH informed governors of a concern raised about pricing of certain items (which had been found cheaper elsewhere than the main supplier) – a complaint had been made. KF added that the older children seemed content with the new uniform; the overall reaction in the school had been positive.

Safeguarding – The Chair noted that the school policy had been updated and was due for review by governors.

‘Prevent’ training – weblink circulated to all governors. RK asked that those who undertook this training to report the details to her.

19 July 2016 minutes

Pantomime - PG gave the background to this issue to the FGB; namely that the show producer of Showtime Productions and Music Theatre 2000 had contacted governors, asking for reconsideration of the school’s decision to increase its Windmill Theatre hire charges for a planned pantomime this Christmas.

PG stated that he had prepared a financial analysis and calculation of the issue, from which he had arrived at three recommended options. PG reported that Showtime had accepted the second of these options – a small discount – on the understanding that this concession would not be repeated in 2017. The company had now paid the school a 10% deposit for this year’s production.

Governors asked if there was any possibility to tying Showtime productions into a three year fee and hire arrangement. PG stated that this had not been done before but thought it an interesting idea and agreed to look into it further.

The Chair commented that the issue should never have been put before all governors; it was a Finance Committee matter, to be dealt with at this earlier stage.

Governors expressed thanks to PG for all his efforts, who acknowledged this gratitude, pointing out that SH had produced significant work in resolving the issue as well.

7. Any matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

School events

The Chair drew governors’ attention to imminent events at the school – an open evening on 6 October at 18.00 hours; two open mornings on 10 and 11 October at 09.15 hours – to which all governors were welcome to participate. AH added that the mornings would allow visitors to see lessons in progress and be taken on a tour of the school by groups of students.

8. Staffing structure presented at the 19 July meeting - outcome

- 8.1. AH reported that just one competitive interview process had resulted out of the structure exercise; for two members of staff applying for one IT vacancy. One had been appointed as a result, with the other offered another role – resulting in no need for a redundancy. In addition, two queries had been raised on the question of role-evaluations, so these had been removed from the restructure process until they have been resolved. SH added that this would be completed by the end of October.
- 8.2. Governors asked if the union was involved in the role evaluation process. KF stated that it was on a passive basis, who intended to wait until the job description issue was resolved
- 8.3. Governors asked about the pay protection issue. AH stated that this had been resolved, following Human Resources (HR) advice. SH added that the school’s position on pay protection would be spelt out in a letter.
- 8.4. Governors asked if there were any vacant posts. AH acknowledged that the school was light in some areas and confirmed that all vacancies were now advertised. Some

applications had been received, but not to the extent expected.

- 8.5. The Chair noted the FBG's appreciation of all the work done on the staff restructure and offered its' thanks to AH, SH and all the staff involved. The Chair thanked KF too for his role in the process.

9. School budget update 2016/2017

- 9.1. The Chair recalled that his letter to the LA and its reply on this subject had been circulated to all governors. The Chair informed the FBG that a meeting between the school and the LA had been held on 21 September.
- 9.2. SH reported that the LA had looked at the funding situation, recognising the lack of equality with respect to children in need; specifically the fact of the school taking on more special needs children with statements/Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) than any other secondary school in the city; also that the system of allocating budget on the basis of average number of children did not work.
- 9.3. SH believed it was good to have this acknowledgement of the situation from the LA. However the LA only had a finite amount of money to disburse and it would be difficult to take funds away from other schools to assist Blatchington Mill. Nevertheless, the LA committed itself to providing the school with another £62K this year, with a promise to look at different ways of funding in the future.
- 9.4. SH reported that the school had shared details of its work on the budget in the summer with the LA. This had resulted in the deficit being reduced to £53K from £250K. Savings had been achieved largely as a result of the staffing restructure, also drawing back on the curriculum, and work with Hove Park on the Sixth Form provision. SH confirmed that receiving the £62K would mean the budget now being balanced.
- 9.5. Governors asked about plans for establishment of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) unit. AH stated that, if this went ahead, it would mean having twenty places commissioned by the LA funded from £10K to £15K per pupil – meaning a £80K net increase in income. The twenty places would not necessarily be all new, but could include existing children at the school.
- 9.6. Governors asked about timing. AH stated that the LA hoped to have such a facility in place by September 2017. AH believed that, because of the school's strong reputation and expertise in accommodating SEN children, it stood a good chance against other competing schools to secure establishment of such a new facility. AH stressed however that there was no guarantee that the school would be selected.
- 9.7. Governors asked whether all of this would have come about, had the school not requested this to be considered. AH doubted this, considering that it was clear the school had had to make its case to reach this point of resolution and outcome achieved.
- 9.8. The Chair offered AH and SH the FBG's congratulations in reaching this outcome, noting that the school could now set a budget that was not in deficit.
- 9.9. SH noted that the budget had to be signed off by the FBG and asked that the Chair do this, as part of the Finance Committee meeting's proceedings on 26 September. The Chair noted the FBG's agreement to this arrangement.

10. Headteacher report

School dog

- 10.1. Governors asked whether there was a budget to feed and care for the dog. AH informed the FGB that this came from the inclusion budget, with the dog now engaging with the students. Governors asked where the dog was accommodated. AH stated that, at present, in various locations in the school.

Student numbers

- 10.2. AH gave statistics on Years 7 to 11, as well as 12 and 13, highlighting the issues of sixth form numbers (outcomes to be addressed).

Admissions

- 10.3. AH spoke of his concern on how these were being administered by the LA; a process which was being complicated by plans for a new secondary free school, the site for which had not yet been fixed; also the impact of how catchment areas would be decided was still unresolved.
- 10.4. Governors asked if there was any progress on the single post 16 application form. AH stated that there was an acknowledgement by colleges to work more closely together; a single arrangement should be in place next year.

Examination data

Progress headlines

- 10.5. AH presented a series of tables illustrating statistics and data – how the school had done over the last three years, covering 5+A*C (slight drop), Progress 8 score (students did a half grade better than expected), value added measure (a big jump achieved). The sixth form picture was very complex, given the rules had changed this year – academic value added was weak.
- 10.6. AH highlighted the key factors in the Progress 8 score, with English and Maths both positive and the school doing well on progress. AH stated that the school had asked for a review on music, where all students had been awarded a 'B' grade, which was an unusual situation. AH commented that pupil premium students had attained below others in the school, resulting in a gap. However, these students had performed better than others nationally.
- 10.7. AH also drew attention to the whole school progress, comparisons to other schools in the city, expected progress on English and Maths and Challenge the Gap. AH highlighted that every group had done better than nationally – the Key Stage 4 results fit an outstanding rating.
- 10.8. Governors asked what pupils were achieving in terms of predicted grades and whether these were accurate. AH stated that here there was a mixed picture, with some being accurate but other not predicted correctly.

Sixth Form results

- 10.9. AH expressed unhappiness with the sixth form performance, which had not been satisfactory on academic subjects (but had been very good on vocational). AH stated that the academic results had been below the floor standard, but vocational above. AH stressed that, counter to this, the school had a good record of students reaching the next stage of further education
- 10.10. AH stated that the school could not continue with similar post 16 results. The school had adopted the right approach on Key Stage 4 (the school's Progress 8 score was the best in the city), which had to be replicated for post 16. AH commented that the school had a large range of options to tackle this issue and was preparing for a post 16 inspection, should this happen.
- 10.11. The Chair agreed that the GB should meet in special session to address this shortcoming, proposing the date of 20 October at 17.00 hours at the school to look at the data in more detail and decide on an action plan.

11. Safeguarding

- 11.1. RK confirmed that the majority of staff were now trained on safeguarding, adopting a more interactive approach and responding positively to the courses. RK stated that Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) had been discussed and storage of data. RK drew attention to the revised safeguarding policy, which had been subject to some last minute (LA) changes and proposed that governors review this document.
- 11.2. The Chair noted that this policy reflected Department for Education (DfE) guidance, which had been adopted by the LA, drawing on the 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' document. The Chair noted governors' point that this and other policies needed circulating seven days in advance of the meeting for them to be reviewed in good time. The Chair asked the FBG to endorse this policy, which was done – subject to the understanding that further comments could be made later.

Safer recruitment

- 11.3. AH acknowledged that some weblinks in this document needed updating. The Chair asked the FBG to endorse this policy, subject to these changes being made, which was done.

Online safeguarding

- 11.4. RK pointed to the significant update of the eSafety policy. The FBG endorsed this policy.

Whistleblowing

- 11.5. The Chair noted this policy applied to both staff and pupils. AH added that the school had made sure it was statutorily compliant. The FBG endorsed this policy.

12. Committee membership 2017/2017 (Finance, Pay & Personnel, Recruitment and Panels)

- 12.1. The Chair asked that a list setting out which governor was on which committee be compiled and circulated; for FBG members to say which one they wanted to join or leave. With regard to panels, the Chair commented that volunteers would be needed to

participate in the near future; also the FBG should continue with the present *ad hoc* system of membership.

13. Training

- 13.1. PG promised to circulate information on this subject to governors.

14. Governors' use of school email addresses

- 14.1. DH circulated registration and login instructions to all governors present, whereby they could start using their secure 'blatchingtonmill.schmail.org' addresses as soon as possible. DH asked that these addresses be used in future for all communications with regard to their governor duties. The Chair asked FBG members to send DH a test message, to confirm their successful registration.

Actions

- Special Educational Needs report circulation – AH
- Budget approval by Chair to be actioned as part of the Finance Committee meeting proceedings of 26 September – PS & PG
- Convening of GB special session ('deep dive' working group) to address post 16 performance strategy on 20 October at 17.00 hours – PS, RG, AH & KF.
- FBG and Committees membership compilation and circulation to all governors – Clerk
- FBG members to send the Clerk a test message, to confirm successful 'schmail' address registration – all
- Circulation of training information to governors – PG & Clerk

Next meeting – Thursday 15 December 2016 at 17.00 hours (curriculum)

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...