

## Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 26 January 2017

**Those Present:** Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AH), Andrew Wallace (AW), Peter Gerry (PG), Fiona Bauermeister (FB), Richard Goodsell (RG), Addy Balogun (AB), Gareth Chan (GC) and Richard Mills (RM).

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

**Quorum:** 9 out of 12 governors present with 3 vacancies – meeting was quorate throughout.

### 0. Welcome.

- 0.1. The Chair informed governors that he had just been attending a Holocaust Memorial event at the school, organised by the Brighton Holocaust Education Project. Feedback from the organisers about the school was entirely positive; stating that staff and pupils should be proud about Blatchington Mill, noting good behaviour in particular. The Chair noted that the event had gone very well, with good presentations and students engaged and involved.
- 0.2. The Chair drew governors' attention to an Argus article of 25 January, presenting Blatchington Mill as the newspaper's 'school of the week'. The Chair noted that the article was positive in nature, highlighting issues such as the progress achieved by disadvantaged students.

### 1. Apologies for Absence.

- 1.1. Sally Hunt (SH), Kevin Fry (KF) and John Barker (JB), had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

### 2. Urgent Business - None.

### 3. Declarations of interest – None.

### 4. Minutes

- 4.1. The minutes of the meeting of 15 December 2016 were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

### 5. Matters Arising

- Student Commissioners 'work so far' presentation for next FBG agenda – the Chair agreed that this could be deferred until the next meeting of the FBG.
- Follow up of teaching school alliance proposal – on the current agenda for discussion
- Appointment of health & safety link governor – RG and AW volunteered to take on this role in a joint capacity. RG confirmed that he had already done the Local Authority (LA) training course on this subject. SH informed RG and AW that the

school health & safety committee met once a term and it would be useful for either governor to attend these sessions and report back to the FBG.

## **6. Any matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda**

- Governors' skills audit – The Chair noted that this was nearly complete, with just one response awaited.
- Use of official school email accounts by governors – FBG members confirmed that this was largely working and asked DH to continue the practice of sending out prompts to their private accounts.
- Participation in hearing panels – issue to be addressed later in the present meeting.

## **7. School budget update 2016/2017**

- 7.1. SH drew governors' attention to the last outturn forecast shared with members of the Finance Committee at its meeting of 16 January, which showed a projected surplus of £60K SH commented on the hard amount of work that had been done to achieve a balanced budget. SH stated that there were a number of vacancies in the school (leadership, administration, teaching assistants and classroom assistants) which partly explained the surplus figure; but in addition it was notable that staff in general were being very careful on expenditure and achieving savings – awareness of budget constraints was high.
- 7.2. AH added that he had recently examined the possible deficit projected for 2017/2018 of £140K (taking into account the projected surplus figure of £60K). More remodelling of the staffing structure would be required, but AH was confident this could be delivered without redundancies. Specifically, work on this issue was being done with the curriculum teams, with solutions being identified (e.g. moving staff across).
- 7.3. PG (Finance Committee Chair) informed the FBG that the committee was looking at smaller scale figures to reduce incremental costs; also possibilities of generating income. SH stated that the surplus at the end of the year did not necessarily point to the budget being balanced, given that the LA picture on funding was difficult.

### *Scheme of Delegation (SoD).*

- 7.4. SH drew attention to the SoD, which was based on the LA model policy, highlighting the spend level authority levels set out therein. PG added that the Finance Committee had examined this document twice, most recently at its last meeting and approved it, recommending similar endorsement by the FBG.
- 7.5. The Chair noted PG and SH's statements with regard to the SoD and recommended FBG approval of the document, which was given unanimously.

### *Staffing restructure*

- 7.6. SH noted that this exercise, carried out in July 2016, was almost complete. SH drew attention to her restructure report circulated to governors earlier, which was an update and similar format to the initial report. SH commented that it was notable that all changes had been achieved without the need to seek or impose redundancies; one case remained outstanding (a role change & reduction).
- 7.7. The Chair paid tribute to the Senior Leadership Team's (SLT) handling of the exercise, which had been a difficult procedure to deal with. SH added that the staff's general response had been positive, recognising that a better functioning structure was now in place. AH believed that better quality recruits for vacant positions had come forward as

a result.

### *C South project*

- 7.8. SH informed governors that construction was now complete, with just one section needing a further adaptation. The new building was proving very popular with staff and pupils, with a positive impact on working atmosphere and behaviour particularly notable. The Chair and PG stated that they too were impressed by the new building.

## **8. Headteacher report (including RAISEOnline early release data)**

- 8.1. AH stated that the examination analysis had been finalised and checked, with comparisons with the national picture now available – governors would now be aware of areas in which the school had done well and those of needing improvement. AH drew attention to the appendices circulated with his report:-

### *Appendix 1 (Key Stage 4 overall summary)*

- 8.2. AH drew attention to the breakdown of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 statistics, containing information about English, Mathematics and Faculty subjects. AH stated that the bottom lines was the school had done well on progress (i.e. a comparison from between when the pupil had joined the school and when finished) and attainment; when previously progress had not looked this good, the picture here now was much improved.
- 8.3. The Chair asked for a more detailed explanation on what the tables here showed. AH drew attention to the overall box, which showed headline figures on how disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students had done; also the low, middle and high attainment bands (again figures for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students); the progress 8 score (how much of a grade, above or below and a comparison to national figures - the bar for disadvantaged students was very high, with the school at 0.2 and nationally 0.3).
- 8.4. Governors asked if these figures were shared with parents. AH stated that this information was the school level evaluation only; a broad brush message was set out in the newsletter.
- 8.5. The Chair noted that the figures gave a good visual idea of progress being achieved by the school, e.g. on attainment 8 the figure for disadvantaged students was -7.53, compared with the national non-disadvantaged figure which showed a four point gap. AH stated that the school was keeping an eye on grades being achieved by high attaining disadvantaged students when they came into the school – but there was a difference of 91% to 96% in terms of attendance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.
- 8.6. The Chair asked about the science provision. AH believed that this was very good in the school, with the raw figures giving a favourable impression. However some students had not achieved a qualification in this subject.

### *Appendix 2 (inspection dashboard)*

- 8.7. AH noted that figures here were broken down in different ways, e.g. achievements by boys and girls. AH explained that indicators appearing above the line meant the school was doing better than nationally, with the whole having to be above or below to show significantly above or below.

- 8.8. Governors asked about the 'coasting' issue. AH confirmed that the school was not classed as 'coasting' as it did not meet any of the criteria in this regard. AH added that the considerable improvement in value added could be seen – the last OfSTED inspection had highlighted negative value added.
- 8.9. Governors asked about the written elements of the dashboard. AH considered that there were many useful headlines here and expected that OfSTED would look at these reports and pursue key lines of enquiry (e.g. languages and Post 16).
- 8.10. The Chair noted the weak record on attendance. AH acknowledged this point and stated that for KS4 outcomes for students would be outstanding.

*Appendices 3 & 4 (Sixth Form)*

- 8.11. AH highlighted the information contained in Appendix 4 on the English and Mathematics retakes. AH added the information here showed how Post 16 students performed in the various subject areas; with the overall headline being negative in 'A' levels and positive in BTech. AH went into detail with regard to three cohorts of students (last year's results were a lot better), teaching and learning issues (external moderation being used and a lot of work being done to address this); 'U' grades (these were pulling value added down, however 3 years ago there had been 30 'U's, last year only 2). AH was confident the school could show a route through this issue and demonstrate a three year improvement with data to back up this assessment.
- 8.12. Governors made points about the effect of students dropping out of subjects and the loss of funding affecting the next cohorts. AH acknowledged how this could hit the school, over the last three years there had been a 10% loss of funding for the sixth form.
- 8.13. Governors paid tribute to the excellent improvement from 30 to 2 'U' grades. RK drew attention to the target grade setting process, also on positive value added and decision making with regard to students doing the full two year course rather than just the AS grade.
- 8.14. Governors asked about the potential impact of the UK exiting the European Union, with regard to the EU students attending the school. AH stated that these comprised 20% of the Sixth Form and were funded in the same way as UK students. The school could cope with a small Sixth Form, so long as the courses were small as well.
- 8.15. RK drew attention to how well the school was doing financially, with its partnership arrangement with Hove Park. AH added that the two schools were doing a joint quality assurance of lessons process; Blatchington Mill were very happy with what it had seen from this exercise so far.
- 8.16. Governors asked about the possibility of moving away from a small sixth form. AH believed that the school had done well to cope with the situation and was above the threshold. Concern about numbers was secondary to ensuring the quality of outcomes.
- 8.17. Governors drew attention to the RAISEOnline data, in terms of disadvantaged, Free School Meals (FSMs) and Pupil Premium (PP) students, where it appeared the school was not doing as well as nationally. AH stated that a PP analysis was done every term, reviewing performance and how funding was spent; but noted that the school was above the national figure on progress.
- 8.18. The Chair drew attention to Appendix 3, where it appeared that value added had been

going down over the past three years – the indicator was now a lot below the line. AH explained that the value added calculation this year was a lot harder, with merit awards now being worth less; this was also affected by the 30 ‘U’ grades in 2014/2015.

#### *Appendix 5 (National Benchmarking)*

- 8.19. AH stated that Blatchington Mill had finished in the top 18% of schools nationwide on progress; and was in the top eight in a like for like schools table. AH commented that progress was strong, but that achievement on languages needed attention for which the school was taking measures to improve.
- 8.20. Governors asked for more information about the languages situation. AH explained that there had been a change in demographics, with regard to the students taking languages. There had been a small number taking the subjects (e.g. French & Spanish), but in Years 7, 8 & 9 the curriculum was not meeting learners’ needs. The school had encouraged more students to take the courses, but could see that KS4 pupils were not making enough progress. Measures to improve the situation included a focus on memory, comprehension and structure – teaching & learning techniques – aimed at especially the lower attaining students.

### **9. To receive an update on the Pavilion & Downs Teaching School Alliance (to include set-up and possible establishment of an educational trust)**

- 9.1. AH stated that, in terms of setting up a trust (the technical and legal structure), matters were no further forward. However work was being done on how it would be run and looking into revenue streams. The five schools involved (Blatchington Mill, Hove Park, Dorothy Stringer, Varndean and Steyning) had carried out an audit, in terms of which aspects to lead on and what services would be provided.
- 9.2. AH had met up with other headteachers who had set up teaching schools, with the result of better understanding the issues involved. Another aspect looked at included school to school support work, with funding of staff time; the school would be able to offer help on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as well.
- 9.3. Governors asked about budgeting for the start-up costs. AH acknowledged that the £60K draw down fund would not be enough and the school would need to contribute money. AH did not think this would be a problem, as there were sources of funds and grants available for teaching schools.
- 9.4. Governors asked where costs would be covered from for setting up the legal structure. AH stated that this would have to come from the seed funding, to which the school would be contributing £10K in the first year. AH added that, although in the first attempt Blatchington Mill had not succeeded in securing teaching school status, it would try re-apply.
- 9.5. Governors asked that this item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, for an update on progress.

### **10. Safeguarding**

- 10.1. RK drew attention to the hire of new staff in January and the training that had been given to them. RK also referred to bespoke training given to individuals; also to Sixth Formers (in particular with regard to care for younger students). RK referred to E-Safety and Cyberbullying as being key issues to be aware of.

## **11. Governor training**

- 11.1. PG asked that governors keep him informed of all courses undertaken, noting the list recently circulated by the Governor Support Unit.

## **12. Governor hearing panel participation**

(**Note** – this section appears in a confidential annex to this main set of minutes)

## **13. Governors' use of school email addresses**

- 13.1. GC asked that the possibility of having official school emails being made accessible from mobile phones be investigated. AH agreed to consult with the school IT department about this request.

### **Actions**

- Student Commissioners' report update on agenda for next meeting - DH
- Pavilion & Downs Teaching School Alliance to be on agenda for next meeting – DH
- Receipt of official school emails on mobile phones - AH

**Next meeting** – Thursday 16 March 2017 at 17.00 hours (Budget)

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...