

Main Set of Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 26 March 2018 at 17.00 hours

(Note – this meeting rescheduled from the original date of 15 March)

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AH - headteacher), Addy Balogun (AB), Lee Redmond (LR), Richard Goodsell (RG), Claire Harrington (CH), Janet Such (JS), Richard Mills (RM), John Barker (JB), Sally Hunt (SHu) and Michael Bedingfield (MB).

In attendance: Ruth King (RK – staff), Sarah Hextall (SHx – school business manager), Lindsey Thompson (LT – staff), Matilda Barrowman (MaB – student governor), Aya Alaedine (AA – student governor) and David Harvey (DH – clerk).

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

0. Apologies for Absence.

Peter Gerry (PG), Andrew Wallace (AW), Gareth Chan (GC) and Fiona Bauermeister (FB) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

1. Urgent business

1.1. None.

2. **Declarations of interest** – None.

3. Governors' School Visits

3.1. The Chair recalled that four governors (PS, MB, AW and JS) had undertaken an official visit to the school on 6 March; also that a report had been circulated earlier to the FBG. The Chair introduced AA to the FBG, explaining that she had been one of the guides during the visit. The Chair expressed thanks to AH, members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the student governors for arranging this very useful visit.

3.2. The Chair highlighted issues for consideration, set out in the report, some of which would need longer discussion – such as that of particular aspects of the link roles. AA commented that she had appreciated the chance to show governors students attending lessons. The Chair asked which particular aspects were highlights; AA pointed to the school theatre, the sports facilities and the canteen.

3.3. The Chair welcomed the opportunity for governors to see conduct of the school day and movement of students between lessons; asking if the latter was an issue, given that on occasion students were waiting in corridors to enter classrooms. AA felt that movement was generally well organised, with teachers on hand to provide assistance.

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- 3.4. The Chair asked about the provision of wheelchair access, for students such as MaB. AH welcomed the raising of this issue for governors to be aware, which would become of increasing importance when the school would admit a greater number of students (330) in September.
- 3.5. Governors suggested that awareness of improvements in this area should be raised. AH undertook to enter this issue into the accessibility plan; as well as access to water fountains. RK added that, on this last issue, both Friends At Blatch (FAB) and the school council had discussed where these fountains could be installed. Now it was a question of addressing questions of finance, plumbing and locations. SHx noted that the key aspect of accessibility in general was to allow all students to be independent.
- 3.6. The Chair asked about how students were kept engaged and involved in lessons. AA stated that this was helped by teachers who encouraged students to read out loud (in English lessons) and conduct experiments themselves (in science lessons). The Chair asked if lessons were challenging enough. AA believed that in general they were – teachers always offered additional work if this was required.
- 3.7. Governors asked if students knew how to raise issues with teachers and governors. AA stated that, now she was known more in her role as student governor, she was approached by other students about issues. Governors asked what was raised the most often with her. AA stated that pupils wanted more activities, such as science, maths and sports clubs – it was sometimes the case that these were so popular as to be full up, thereby discouraging attendance.
- 3.8. The Chair asked for more views on the issue of accessibility. MaB stressed to importance of her having access to lifts and for these to be switched on. The Chair asked about her access from the corridor to the canteen. MaB stated that one lift was presently not working; and there was a ramp for the stairs to attend science classes. AH offered to consult MaB once the accessibility plan was produced, which she welcomed.
- 3.9. The Chair asked if there was anything else about the visit the student governors wished to raise. MaB stated that it seemed to be short on time, with only the possibility of showing a fraction of the school. The Chair acknowledged this point but stated that nevertheless the governors had been given a good tour.
- 3.10. The Chair informed the FBG that governor link responsibilities would be reviewed at the next meeting and suggested another visit be arranged. AH agreed to put forward two dates for consideration.

(Note – At this point (17.30 hours) both AA and MaB left the meeting)

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- 4.1. The minutes of the meeting of 31 January 2018 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

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5. Matters Arising

- Passing of FBG's commendation to school staff for budgeting efforts in achieving savings – done.
- Governors' visits of 22 February or 6 March (email to request governors to indicate which date they would be able to attend and confirm date on which more governors were able to attend) – done.
- Notification of rescheduled meeting of the FBG on 26 March to all members – done.
- Notification of cancelled meeting of the Finance Committee on 5 February and additional meeting on 21 May to all members – done.

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

School Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

- 6.1. The Chair notified the FBG that this document had been completed, reviewed by the Finance Committee and the subject of a specific visit by JB and GC on 20 March. The Chair noted that, as a result, the SFVS was commended to the FBG for approval by both the Committee and JB & GC. The FBG duly approved the SFVS document unanimously; the Chair signed it and passed to SHx for submission to the local authority (LA). SHx agreed to arrange circulation of the final version to all governors.

7. School Budget update 2017/2018

- 7.1. SHx recalled that, at the last meeting of the Finance Committee on 5 March, she had presented the end of year out-turn forecast document. SHx highlighted that this showed an end of year deficit of £88K, which was much better than the anticipated figure calculated in the previous year of £220K – which was the current LA licensed deficit.
- 7.2. SHx explained that this document fed into the work being done on the three year budget, i.e. 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. SHx drew attention to the impact on 2018/2019 in particular, of the reduction in income expected as a result of the Sixth Form closure. SHx explained that the lagging Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) and growth fund income did not match the Sixth Form funding loss; another factor to keep in mind was that Special Educational Needs funding did not match the school's expenditure in this regard. SHx expected, on current calculations, the in-year deficit for 2018/2019 to be £195K. SHx highlighted too the across the board salary increase of 2% and National Insurance increase in payment for support staff.
- 7.3. SHx stated that, although the school had been allowed a licensed deficit of £220K, it still needed to show the LA how it would balance its budget within a five year period – this would be a challenging task. AH added that the school had made structural adjustments to reduce the deficit and was also working on curriculum plan which would review the allocation of teachers to classes and

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their sizes. AH stressed that the school would make sensible recruitment decisions, with the SLT planning on the future shape of the school, e.g. the number of form tutors.

- 7.4. Governors asked about the LA position on SEND funding. AH stated that there was no movement in this regard, with the LA recently moving funding to the high needs block.
- 7.5. The Chair asked the FBG if governors were receiving enough information on the budget, noting that there were now eight members of the Finance Committee. AH suggested that the FBG could take a more in depth review of the school's finances, once the three-year budget was completed.

8. Headteacher report

Progress

- 8.1. AH drew attention to the current progress 8 and attainment 8 projections, compared to last year. Governors noted that progress 8 predictions overall were higher than for 2017. AH stated that, whilst attainment 8 was similar, progress 8 was projected as higher, as an academically lower-achieving cohort upon entry was set to make greater progress.
- 8.2. The Chair commented that SEN students' progress 8 on English looked low. AH explained that this was swayed by each grade and double weighted. This was lower than hoped for, so greater intervention would be needed.
- 8.3. AH highlighted the information given on all predicted outcomes for all students; in particular Pupil Premium and SEN groups. Governors asked about the science entries, which showed the same figure of 296 twice. AH explained that the science GCSE was a double award for the same set of students.
- 8.4. The Chair asked about the English and Maths quadrant figures. AH stated that the English and Maths thresholds still mattered, in terms of resits – 74% were predicted 4+, 56% 5+ (in both), 11% predicted 4+ in English only; 2% (7 students) were predicted 4+ in Maths but not 4 in English – this might mean putting in place an intervention group.

Attendance

- 8.5. AH described this as a whole school priority, to go above the 95% target. AH stated that closer examination of the statistics showed a yearly pattern – figures were worse in winter than summer last year. AH commented that the same was true this year, but the decline being much sharper this time when figures dropped. AH acknowledged that the figures for Spring 1 were bleak, but Spring 2 had improved reflecting the effort made by the school – this period however was not as good as last year.
- 8.6. Governors asked what the reasons were for this decline. AH stated that the two week half term break in the autumn had had a major impact; along with high levels of illness and persistent absence issues. The Chair noted that the LA had consulted about the autumn half term, stating that the biggest response had

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been in favour of scrapping the two week break.

Blatch 6 closure

- 8.7. AH stated that this had now been agreed and finalised by the LA.

Behaviour

- 8.8. The Chair questioned if the lower number of behaviour points issued was an improvement. AH stated that was the case, and the situation was improving with fewer sanctions imposed than last year. AH provided detail about the levels of points issued, with B1 the lowest, going through to B3 (restorative action), B4 (detention) and B5 (exclusion).
- 8.9. Governors asked for details on numbers of students receiving and not receiving points. AH explained that the Year teams would say how many had no negative points and that this was often over 250 from 300 students in each year group. AH acknowledged that the system might not be robust enough to rely on the data for close analysis, with inconsistent issuing of achievement and behaviour points by staff – this would be addressed.
- 8.10. Governors wondered whether, at the end of this report, there could be reference to how sports teams and individual athletes were performing. AH noted that achievements of this nature were posted on the school website and twitter feed; but was open to other ways of flagging up positive news. AH agreed that hyperlinks could be built in to his Headteacher report, to flag up positive achievements.

Transition

- 8.11. Governors asked about the cohort expected in September 2018, in terms of abilities and absenteeism. AH stated that the LA produced a vulnerability index, in which attendance featured and factors such as SEND were scored. AH was confident that the school had clear data and information on which students to focus.

Staff Well-Being

- 8.12. LT reported that the first staff well-being twilight session had taken place. It had taken the form of two areas, i.e. theoretical and practical workshops. LT stated that staff had given very positive feedback on this exercise.

9. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) restructure

(**Note** – text reflecting discussion on this agenda item appears in a confidential annex to these minutes)

10. Teaching School Alliance (TSA)

- 10.1. AH stated that the TSA had put in a successful round two Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) bid for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training on attendance and exclusions.

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11. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- 11.1. SHx confirmed that the school's implementation of this regulation needed to be in place by the end of May. SHx explained that this would replace the current Data Protection Act and contained more specific conditions. SHx stated that the school was in process of auditing its software; also that policies would be reviewed to make sure they were GDPR ready.
- 11.2. The Chair asked who in the school would be taking on the GDPR responsible officer role. SHx confirmed that she would take on this task.

12. Safeguarding

- 12.1. RK reported that FB had visited the school on 21 March to talk about safeguarding issues. RK also stated that the FAB had discussed eSafety issues with parents and carers on 13 March, e.g. on monitoring of children's use of mobile phone apps.

13. School policies

Mobile devices acceptable use

- 13.1. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous approval of this policy.

Online safeguarding

- 13.2. The Chair noted the FBG's unanimous approval of this policy.

14. Governor training

- 14.1. The Chair noted that MB and JS had provided details of training recently undertaken. The Chair also drew attention to the list of training courses recently produced by the LA for 2018/2019, particularly the Governance Partnership Forum on 20 June (to be hosted by Blatchington Mill School).

15. Chair's action

- 15.1. The Chair noted that, on behalf of governors, he had ratified the headteacher's decision to lift a sanction of suspension on a member of staff.

Actions

Production of accessibility plan, in consultation with student governors – AH

Scheduling of further governors' visit to the school – AH

Circulation of SFVS form to governors – SHx

Next meeting – Thursday 17 May 2018 at 17.00 hours (Progress and Final Budget).

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...