

Main Set of Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 17 May 2018 at 17.00 hours

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Ashley Harrold (AH - headteacher), Richard Goodsell (RG), Claire Harrington (CH), Janet Such (JS), Peter Gerry (PG), Andrew Wallace (AW), Gareth Chan (GC), and Michael Bedingfield (MB).

In attendance: Ruth King (RK – staff), Sarah Hextall (SHx – school business manager) and David Harvey (DH – clerk).

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

0. Welcome.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Addy Balogun (AB), Lee Redmond (LR), Richard Mills (RM), John Barker (JB), Sally Hunt (SHu) and Fiona Bauermeister (FB) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

2. Urgent business

2.1. None.

3. Declarations of interest – None.

4. Minutes

4.1. The minutes of the meeting (main set and confidential annex) of 26 March 2018 were agreed by governors as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

5. Matters Arising

- Production of accessibility plan, in consultation with student governors – AH confirmed that there was a plan in place and an adaptation process discussion was underway.
- Scheduling of further governors' visit to the school – to be done.
- Circulation of SFVS form to governors – done.

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

Resignations

6.1. The Chair drew attention to a letter sent to him by PG, in which was set out notification of his resignation from the Board. The Chair noted that PG had expressed his appreciation of the time spent in service of the school, as part of his governor duties; and expressed regret that PG was leaving. The Chair also noted PG's offer to stay on until the end of the academic year, in order to

continue his duties as Chair of the Finance Committee – the FBG accepted this proposal.

- 6.2. AH echoed the thanks expressed by the Chair for PG's hard work on behalf of the school, noting that it had been a challenging job and expressing gratitude for his support.
- 6.3. The Chair drew attention to co-opted governor term of office renewal item on the agenda, noting that SHu had in fact decided not to seek another four years in this role. The Chair expressed appreciation for SHu's service on behalf of the FBG and undertook to write her a letter of thanks.

Recruitment of successor co-opted governor candidates

- 6.4. The Chair noted that this additional resignation meant there were now two co-opted governor vacancies on the Board; commenting that the Governor Recruitment panel would have to meet shortly to consider successor candidates. The Chair undertook to contact the local authority (LA) in the first instance, to identify suitable candidates. AH added that he would promote and advertise these vacancies through suitable forums.
- 6.5. Governors emphasised the importance of, from an audit point of view, filling the skills and knowledge gap; also taking account of gender and ethnicity considerations. The Chair acknowledged this point, stating that the first step was for a candidate to complete an application form; then invite him or her to visit the school and speak to him and AH about the role.

Policy on attendance at Board meetings

- 6.6. The Chair drew the FBG's attention to an approach from a parent to attend a Board meeting, in order to discuss a specific school policy. The Chair noted that, according to existing and established policy, meetings were closed and so this parent's request had been declined. The Chair informed the FBG that the LA had advised him that there was no statutory obligation for the Board to hold meetings on an open basis; regulations permitted attendance by governors, the headteacher, associate members, the clerk and other persons determined by the Board.
- 6.7. The Chair accordingly proposed that the Board maintain its existing policy to hold its meetings on a closed basis; also that it could invite persons as it so determined but not to those who sought invitations. The Chair added that it was important to avoid establishing a precedent; AH agreed the point made about governors' discretion to issue invitations. The FBG agreed unanimously the Chair's proposal to maintain the existing policy.

School trips policy review

- 6.8. AH noted that this original request had stemmed from an enquiry about the school trips policy and aspects of expenditure. AH drew attention to work being done by LR to review this policy, who had suggested some changes as a result. RK added that LR had met with her to discuss the policy, which set out how

students and staff went about going on trips, taking into account aspects such as appropriate behaviour.

- 6.9. RK stated that LR would be holding a follow up meeting at the school, to go over his suggested changes; such as variations in the text on who could go on trips and the relevant process, also access to grants. RK noted that LR had highlighted wording in the policy which stated that all trips were open to all. However RK commented that this was contradicted by e.g. the Geography trip which was open only to one year group and only to those following this particular subject course; similarly the New York trip which was for IT and business students only. RK acknowledged that this point would be made clear and wording suitably changed in an amended policy document.

7. School Budget update 2017/2018; 2018/2019

- 7.1. SHx notified the FBG that the final 2018/2019 budget had been submitted to the LA; stating that there had been little difference between the draft already shown to governors and the final version. SHx stated that the draft budget had been in a much healthier state than originally expected. SHx pointed to the anticipated surplus of £25K as an outcome to the 2018/2019 budget. SHx stated that this was following on from the 2017/2018 budget, which had been operated under a licensed LA deficit of £220K; this budget had in fact been closed off with a £3K surplus.
- 7.2. SHx commented that this had been achieved by means of managing movements of staff very carefully, with a simultaneous review of curriculum and timetabling requirements. AH added that the school had been reducing its expenditure over the whole year, noting that a similar picture had emerged in other schools in the city over the same period. AH drew the FBG's attention to the fact of the LA now being £1.1M less badly off than expected and now considering issues over its budgetary tracking.
- 7.3. AH noted that the LA's action in refusing to tolerate deficits had forced headteachers to balance their books and reduce expenditure. SHx added that the original school budget for 2017/2018 had made assumptions of all staff making pay progress increase points and full payments of pension and national insurance contributions; not all in the event had had to be made.
- 7.4. AH stated that the 2017/2018 position was a very positive one for the school and was grateful to all who had made an effort to reach this point. AH drew attention for example to those who had not used the full curriculum budget. AH commented that the draft three year budget contained projections of surpluses, but this assumed further savings being made; also adjustments when taking account of the Sixth Form closure and the Published Admission Number (PAN) increase.
- 7.5. Governors asked about the LA £15M basic needs funding. AH stated that this was money held by the LA for three years, for the new secondary free school – a project now not going forward. AH commented that the LA had now decided these funds would go to meet basic school needs, on buildings and infrastructure; however it was not clear how the allocation had been decided

across the city (Blatchington Mill had been allocated £500K).

- 7.6. With this in mind, AH informed the FBG that he had met with the LA to set out a proposal of expenditure, with a list of adaptations (including works on toilets, a first aid centre and covered walkways). SHx added that there had not been time to submit a fully costed bid, just to present a list of priorities.
- 7.7. Governors asked when a decision was likely to be made on disbursement. The Chair stated that no long term funding decision had been made, but the LA were going to look again at the issue and consult further; for another discussion in July.

8. Headteacher report

Progress

- 8.1. AH highlighted the final predicted grades for Year 11 and Post 16; with the progress and attainment 8 figures – overall the final score was 0.32. AH stated that this was a third better than expected in each subject and across the school; a substantial improvement over last year. However, AH acknowledged that this was not as strong for all groups; English and Maths was strong (but with Maths less than English, as starting points were lower). AH noted that this was the first year of the new (1-9) grading system for GCSEs, so some volatility had to be expected.
- 8.2. Governors asked if it was the case that students were spending more time on other subjects. AH noted that, as soon as students were receiving college offers, they started to prioritise other subjects apart from English and Maths. AH added that the school would take a more long term look at the curriculum model as a result.
- 8.3. AH turned to the performance of disadvantaged students who would be meeting expectations, which was a significant turnaround. AH noted that figures were up in Maths and the EBacc and level in English. AH believed this might be showing a pattern for students who found school challenging and might not be selecting the right courses – this would be reviewed later this year.
- 8.4. Governors asked about the new grading system, with regards to Maths, a year on from its implementation. AH stated that Maths and English was greatly improved and expressed confidence in the predictions. AH added that disadvantaged and Special Educational Needs (SEN) students under attainment 8 had made better progress than last year. AH noted that, although this was lower than two years ago, progress was better.

Attendance

- 8.5. AH stated that the pattern had emerged as hoped and figures were starting to come back up – in summer 1, most groups had increased by 1%.
- 8.6. Governors asked if individuals were skewing figures disproportionately. AH stated that attendance was improving in general, but it was true that the number of persistent absentees was growing. AH commented that the whole school

figure was 95.4% for summer 1 but that Free School Meals (FSM) children for this period was 90.6%. AH added that when setting staff appraisal targets, the issue of whole school attendance was included.

- 8.7. Governors asked about issues in the past with regard to Years 10 and 11. AH stated that the picture here was better, with Year 11 on 93.8 this year over 93.5 in the last. AH noted that Years 10 and 11 were the only ones below 95%; who had the highest proportion of SEN and FSM pupils.
- 8.8. The Chair asked about the PAN expansion, with respect to admission appeals. AH noted that parents could appeal at any point, with 17 having been made last year; compared to 45 in this. AH stated that the school had had to produce a report an impact report on this 45 for the panel, to say yes or no as a whole, then examine each case individually. AH commented that the school was not planning to take on an additional 30 students.

Teaching and Learning

- 8.9. The Chair asked about teaching and learning, with respect to the twilight Inset session (Best of Blatch) planned for 11 June. AH described this as being a celebratory event, of things done well, spreading best practice across the school and an award ceremony. AH emphasised that governors were welcome to attend this event.

Ramadan

- 8.10. AH highlighted the support for students observing Ramadan, noting that parents had thanked the school for its support at this time.

Health and Safety

- 8.11. The Chair noted the H&S audit of March, which had resulted in a rating of Reasonable Assurance. AH felt this was a good result for the school.

9. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) restructure

- 9.1. AH stated that the consultation on this exercise had now started, with the Pay & Personnel Committee approving the action proposed (including possible redundancies) about a number of specific roles at its meeting of 10 May.
- 9.2. AH stated that the school had organised a launch meeting, attended by staff and union representatives, who had been handed information documentation on the proposed restructure. AH noted that the response to the exercise had been generally positive, when taking account of the rationale to improve students' outcomes by bringing all student support together centrally.
- 9.3. AH drew attention to a number of specific roles within this restructure, with regard to proposed changes, which would involve regradings. AH commented that those directly affected had put questions and requests with regard to e.g. hours; some had been accepted and others were being considered. AH stated that he had issued a mid-point state of play, taking account of staff reactions and views; noting that e.g. on training this would be given.

- 9.4. Governors asked about those individuals who had not yet reacted to the proposed changes. SHx stated that all efforts would be made to contact and inform them of what was being planned. AH added that there was no intention to change anyone's terms and conditions without proper consultation.

10. Teaching School Alliance (TSA)

- 10.1. AH proposed a more in depth discussion on developments with regard to the TSA, given that these were very positive in nature. AH commented that the school would soon start to receive revenue from its TSA activities, which was beginning to become a viable concern.
- 10.2. The Chair asked AH to come up with suggested dates for this discussion; AH agreed, adding that Ellen Mulivhill, the TSA director, would be invited to talk to governors on the subject.

11. Link Governor Responsibilities

- 11.1. The Chair asked governors to check the circulated table of responsibilities, to see if the allocated roles were correct. The Chair welcomed CH's offer to sit on the Governor Recruitment panel. The Chair informed the FBG that he would take on children adopted from care/special guardian order and children in care as special link roles.
- 11.2. Governors raised the outcome of the governors' visit carried out on 6 March and the undertaking to increase their contact with the school. The Chair agreed to consider how to take this further.

12. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- 12.1. SHx reported that the privacy statement was nearly complete and would be circulated to the school community next week. SHx added that a school policy (data protection) on the subject, based on the LA template, would be presented to governors for approval at its meeting of 12 July.
- 12.2. SHx stated that the school's network services unit were compiling a rolling schedule of compliance, taking into account and checking all licenses and subscriptions. SHx commented that the school was also taking steps to rationalise the number of third parties it dealt with, in terms of controlling the export of student data.
- 12.3. SHx considered that the school was, overall, taking all the right steps and a long way forward on the route to compliance by 25 May.
- 12.4. Governors asked if a full audit had been carried out across all media. SHx stated that all areas of the school were aware of GDPR requirements and a constant review process was in place.

13. Safeguarding

- 13.1. RK drew attention to a briefing paper circulated earlier to all governors – the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board – Working together to tackle

Vulnerability, Violence and Exploitation (VVE) in B & H; and that the school was focussing on this issue. RK highlighted the specific areas of connections between urban centres, drugs distribution, child criminal exploitation and coercion.

14. School policies

- *education of children adopted from care/special guardian order (CAfC/SGO)*
 - *education of children in care (CiC)*
- 14.1. AH stated that this policy, now updated, reflected current working practice, based on an audit process which showed that school procedures were good.
- 14.2. Governors highlighted the figures contained therein and asked if these had been queried. AH believed that these had not changed and would be available during meetings.
- 14.3. Governors questioned the value of entering precise figures. AH stated that some carers wanted to know the exact situation; information like this showed how much funding was available.
- 14.4. The Chair noted that both policies stated that governors would be given a report on these children once a year. AH stated that he provided information to governors on a regular basis, as appropriate, at FBG meetings during the year. The Chair suggested AH reword this section to reflect that governors received reports during the year.
- 14.5. Governors noted that the Chair had volunteered to act as link governor for both CAfC/SGO and CiC
- 14.6. The Chair noted the FBG's approval of both policies.
- 14.7. AH noted governors' request to highlight changes from previous versions in future draft policies presented to the FBG for approval.

15. Governor training

- 15.1. PG noted that MB had undertaken the governors' induction course and was set to do one on finance in October 2018.

Actions

- Letter of thanks to SHu for her service to the school as co-opted governor – PS
- Contact with local authority to identify co-opted governor candidates for the Board to succeed PG and SHu – PS
- Promotion and advertisement of co-opted governor vacancies – AH
- Proposed dates for a governor discussion on the Teaching School

Alliance – AH

- Highlight changes in updated drafts of school policies to previous versions - AH

Next meetings –

- Thursday 14 June 2018 at 17.00 hours (extraordinary meeting to discuss the SEND restructure)
- Thursday 12 July 2018 at 17.00 hours (development plan)

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...